

Dartmoor Steering Group



Twenty-Second Annual Report

of the
Dartmoor Steering Group
to the

Secretaries of State for Defence and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

October 2011

DARTMOOR STEERING GROUP

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Covering the Period January 2010 to December 2010

Introduction and Membership

1. The Dartmoor Steering Group (DSG) was established in 1978 following the recommendations of Baroness Sharp's Inquiry into the Military Use of Dartmoor in 1975. Its Terms of Reference and current membership, together with that of the Dartmoor Working Party (DWP), which provides officer support to the DSG, are at Annex A. As required by the Terms of Reference, an Annual Report is submitted jointly to the Secretaries of State for Defence, and for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

2. Since the 2010 Annual Report submitted in May 2010, the DSG has met once, in October 2010, under the Chairmanship of Mr Richard Thomas, the independent Chairman. The DWP, which has met three times: March 2010, June 2010 and September 2010, continues to fully support the DSG under the rotating Chairmanship of the Joint Secretaries.

Sustainable Military Training on Dartmoor

3. **Duchy Licence** - Military training occurs within the Dartmoor National Park under licence agreement with private landowners including the Duchy of Cornwall. The renegotiation of this licence, which expires in 2012, has been ongoing for the past 9 years. DSG has continued to support this process by ensuring that issues and aspirations are addressed thoroughly and in a spirit of understanding of the various parties' positions.

4. **Lessons Learnt** – DSG has continued to note lessons learnt from the renegotiation process with the intention of making recommendations to Ministers following completion of the licence renewal. It is intended that the report and recommendations will be finalised after the new licence has been signed and sealed.

5. **The Management Plan** – The Duchy of Cornwall have stated their intention that the new licence will require the production of a management plan to demonstrate how positive management of the Dartmoor Training Area and MOD obligations under the licence will be implemented. This will be taken forward in the form of an Integrated Rural Management Plan (IRMP), which demonstrates Defence Training Estate's (DTE) stewardship of its responsibilities on Dartmoor. A draft version of the IRMP, compiled in consultation with local Statutory Bodies and groups with specific expertise, was circulated in September 2010 for comment. The intention is to publish the final version of the IRMP after the new licence has been agreed. DSG has welcomed the introduction of the new Plan in advance of the start of the new licence as it will assist in reconciling the national need to train our Defence Forces with the National Park purposes.

6. **Issues and Aspirations Work Plan.** During the renegotiation process various issues and aspirations were identified by the local Statutory Bodies, including the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA). These were compiled into a prioritised Work Plan to

enable them to be addressed within the DSG, by its Working Party and specially formed task groups. Progress in 2010 included:

- Progress has been achieved on the Dartmoor Mires Project – a partnership to trial the restoration of degraded areas of blanket bog for a range of benefits (improved biodiversity, water management and carbon storage).
- National Significance of Military Artefacts - an English Heritage research priority is in jeopardy due to redundancies and Government funding cuts.

7. **Local Food Procurement.** Work to explore the potential to develop local supply chains for food used in MOD establishments on Dartmoor (and in connection to it) has continued. DSG intends raising the profile of Dartmoor food procurement and soliciting Defra and MOD support for further work in this area to look at procurement regimes in general.

8. **Mid Term Stocktake.** To review the impact of military training, Ministers require that a Mid Term Stocktake be undertaken to coincide with the mid term of the proposed new Military training Licence to be granted by the Duchy of Cornwall (Circa 2023). The Terms of Reference of the Mid Term Stocktake are being developed for discussion by the DSG. Studies and records informing the Mid Term Stocktake will be incorporated into the DTE IRMP as part of the monitoring action plan.

9. **Access and Recreation.** A booklet was published by DTE explaining the vital need for Dartmoor to be used for military training, explaining the necessary safety restrictions and supporting the National Park purpose of promoting enjoyment and understanding.

10. **Management and Training.** DTE's Service Provider's, (Landmarc Support Services) staff have been equipped and trained to assist with fire fighting on Dartmoor, but this remains on a voluntary basis.

Ten Tors

11. Ten Tors, which challenges 2,400 teenagers to a self sufficient expedition in teams of 6 during which they have to visit Ten Tors on routes of 35, 45 and 55 miles within 34 hours, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. In parallel, 300 less able teenagers took part in The Jubilee Challenge over shorter distances.

12. 43 (Wessex) Brigade, the Regional Army formation for the South West, organises the annual event as part of its community engagement. The exercise, named Wyvern Tor, also enables the military to practice its joint operations with civil emergency services as part of its preparedness to provide aid to the civil community.

13. The Ten Tors' organisers and participants were delighted to welcome their Patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, to the 50th Anniversary. During his visit he met many teams, volunteers and organisers, and presented several participants with their medals. To celebrate the 50th Anniversary an award system was introduced to recognise long service and dedication by adult volunteer Team Managers and 57 medals were awarded. The longest volunteer service was for 49 years service. In collaboration with the Ten Tors organisers, a book by Mr Simon Dell titled 'Ten Tors, the Challenge' was launched on 13 November 2010 at the Museum of Dartmoor Life, Okehampton.

14. Review of Ten Tors. In 2008 the then Director of Ten Tors had given an undertaking to conduct a review of the event and the DSG subsequently directed DWP to set up a Task Group with representatives from Statutory Bodies and Team Managers to review Ten Tors and report by October 2011. The agreed terms of reference directed that attention to whether the management measures to mitigate environmental and socio-economic impacts, as set out in the January 2008 Ten Tors Review Paper, have been effective, and how the benefits of the event to local communities, the National Park and participants can be maximised.

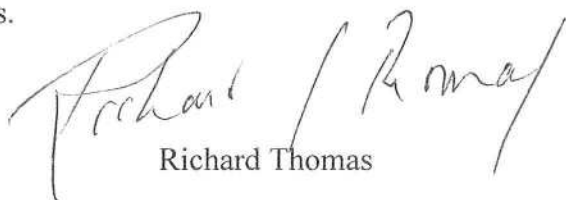
15. An Inquest into the death of a young participant whilst training with a school team on 4 March 2007 ended on 26 October 2010 with a Narrative Verdict from the Jury. HM Coroner made three recommendations under Rule 43 and the Ten Tors Organisers, guided by the Health and Safety Executive and Devon County Council and supported by DSG reviewed and updated the Training Guidance with a view to giving reassurance to parents and participating schools, clubs and cadets.

Support to Armed Forces

16. The Chairman of the National Park Authority offered to host a trip to the National Park for serving members of the armed forces and/or their families to be hosted at an event on the moor.

Conclusion

17. All parties continue to regard the DSG as a valuable and effective body, and contribute substantially and constructively to its work. Support of the Armed Forces use of Dartmoor and the low level of complaint indicates that MOD continues to have regard for the National Park purposes.



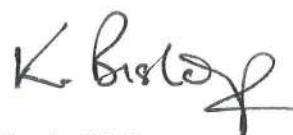
Richard Thomas

Chairman



Lt Col Chris Robinson

Comd DTE SW



Dr Kevin Bishop

Chief Executive (NPO) DNPA

Joint Secretaries

Dated: 31st Oct 2011

Annex A DSG and DWP Terms of Reference and current membership

File Ref: G:\DTE SW\E-Filing DTE SW\06. Conf & Meetings\G1-178 DSG Meeting

DARTMOOR STEERING GROUP AND WORKING PARTY

Terms of Reference of the Dartmoor Steering Group — as set by Parliament in 1978 and subsequently amended

- 1 To keep under review:
 - a. Progress made in considering those recommendations contained in Lady Sharp's report on Dartmoor and accepted by Her Majesty's Government in Comnd 6837.
 - b. The achievement of the aims of Government as set out in paragraph 9 of Comnd 6837 namely the best possible reconciliation of the requirements of military training, conservation and public access.
- 2 To consider any matters referred to the Steering Group by the Working Party and to receive reports from the Working Party.
- 3 To report annually to the Secretaries of State *for* Defence and for the Environment.

The Steering Group will meet as often as required and may co-opt additional members. The Group may also invite other bodies to contribute on occasions to discussion of particular items.

Membership, Advisers and Joint Secretaries

- revised 1996

- organisation updates 2001, 2007, 2009

STEERING GROUP

Members:

Independent Chair (appointed by the Secretaries of State for Environment and Defence)
Commandant Commando Training Centre Royal Marines
Commander 43(Wessex) Brigade
Defence Estates
Dartmoor National Park Authority (3)
Duchy of Cornwall
Natural England
English Heritage
Dartmoor Commoners' Council
Government Office (South West)

Additional Advisers & Joint Secretaries:

Commander Defence Training Estate South West
Chief Executive (National Park Officer), Dartmoor National Park Authority

Co-options and Additional Advice:

The Steering Group may co-opt additional members and invited representatives of other bodies to contribute on occasions to discussion of particular items.

WORKING PARTY

Members:

- Commander Defence Training Estate South West
- Chief Executive (National Park Officer), Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Dartmoor National Park Authority (1)
- Duchy of Cornwall
- Natural England (2)
- English Heritage
- Defence Estates
- Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (2)
- Headquarters 43(Wessex) Brigade
- Commandant Dartmoor Training Area
- Dartmoor Commoners Council (2)

Co-options: Additional members may be co-opted from time to time as required.

Arrangements: The Joint Secretaries will alternate every two years as lead Secretary (convener, agenda, and minutes) to the Steering Group and Chair (convener, agenda and minutes) to the Working Party.