

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Council Chamber, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton EX14 1EJ on 24 April 2024

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.32 pm

123 Minutes of the previous meeting

Under Rule 21.1 of the Agenda & Rules of Procedure, Rule 4.2 which states that the meeting should be held at the offices of the Chair, was suspended in order that this meeting could take place at the EDDC offices.

Minutes of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee meeting held on 27 April 2023 were agreed by the committee.

Officers were asked to report to the next meeting with an update on minute 117, specifically the development of the new Mitigation Strategy and how this Committee can be involved in its development.

124 Declarations of interest

Cllr Martin Wrigley: personal interest – his property overlooks the estuary and he is a member and Treasurer of Cockwood Boat Club.

125 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

126 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

127 Confidential/exempt items

There were none.

128 Monitoring Petalwort at Dawlish Warren

The Economy and Delivery Manager introduced this report and associated Vegetation Survey and Assessment concerning Petalwort monitoring at Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve in 2023.

Petalwort is a nationally scarce plant in the UK, and Dawlish Warren is one of seven sites in England where the plant is recorded and one of the special interest features for which Dawlish Warren Special Area of Conservation is designated. The Vegetation Survey and Assessment suggested that without management intervention, there is a high risk that Petalwort may disappear from Dawlish Warren entirely.

Comments from the Committee included:

- It was noted that whilst the Vegetation Survey and Assessment set out a number of recommendations, the current focus was the Petalwort translocation scheme as the preferred intervention, the evidence from which would inform the future decisions of this Committee.
- In the event that translocation is unsuccessful, then it would be appropriate to consider the interventions recommended in the Vegetation Survey and Assessment.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee

1. Notes the vegetation survey and assessment report and the recommendations set out therein.
2. Receives an update from Teignbridge District Council at the next meeting regarding the status of the proposed Petalwort translocation scheme.
3. Subject to (2) above, considers funding the next survey on the conservation assessment of Petalwort in 2026.

129 **Dawlish Warren NNR - 2023 trampling and nutrient enrichment assessment**

The Economy and Delivery Manager introduced this report and associated Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve Trampling and Nutrient Assessment 2023.

The Assessment had been commissioned in 2010 by Teignbridge District Council, to consider the impacts of recreation on Dawlish Warren and to identify the extent to which access was impacting the site. The Assessment suggested that the impact of trampling (people treading on plants) was somewhat nuanced, in some places contributing to maintaining the preferred habitat conditions, but in other places leading to significant erosion problems.

Comments from the Committee included:

- Concern was expressed that whilst informative, the reports do not set out what is being done to respond to the changes that are happening. Moreover, they do not consider the wider context including foreseeable changes such as rising sea levels, the impact of planned work by Network Rail, and the Environment Agency's intention to remove the geotube from the back of the Dawlish Warren, now planned for 2050.
- Whilst recognising the aforementioned concerns, it was not possible to know what changes will have occurred decades from now.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the results of the trampling and nutrient enrichment assessment relating to impacts associated with human activity at Dawlish Warren NNR.
2. Receives an updated trampling and nutrient enrichment survey report as part of the ongoing monitoring programme in 2026.

130 **Branding update**

The Delivery Manager introduced this report which provided an update on branding for the work of South East Devon Wildlife, the public facing brand for the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee, together with a revised Communications Protocol.

A recent review of how the organisation, partnership, project work and committee are referenced had shown that the use of plain English and standardisation of the name would reinforce and improve awareness, and it was therefore recommended that the

organisation be consistently referenced as South East Devon Wildlife across all communications.

Comments from the Committee included:

- Confusion could arise from referring to Habitat Mitigation Officers as Wildlife Wardens, given that other organisations have Wildlife Wardens too; however, it was argued that it was not important for the public to distinguish between the different roles, since they were doing similar work.
- Members sought to understand what changes had been made to the Communications Protocol, and the Delivery Manager stated that she would request a copy of the original Protocol to be shared with the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the branding update for South East Devon Wildlife, South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee.
2. Approves the revised communications protocol for the partnership and Committee.

131 **Habitat mitigation team update**

Members noted this report which provided an update on the work of the Habitat Mitigation Delivery Team.

At Members' request, future update reports will set out where there has been a change in personnel.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution to the meeting.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Bialyk (Chair), Exeter City Council
G Jung, East Devon District Council
M Wrigley, Teignbridge District Council

Officers in attendance:

Naomi Harnett, Delivery Manager, East Devon District Council
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor, East Devon District Council
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer, East Devon District Council
Fergus Pate, Economy and Delivery Manager, Teignbridge District Council
Dale Cooper, Principal Projects Manager, Exeter City Council

Chair:

Date: