



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

Annual Report 1999-2000



Exmoor National Park Authority

Working to ensure that Exmoor remains beautiful for all to enjoy, in harmony with a thriving community.

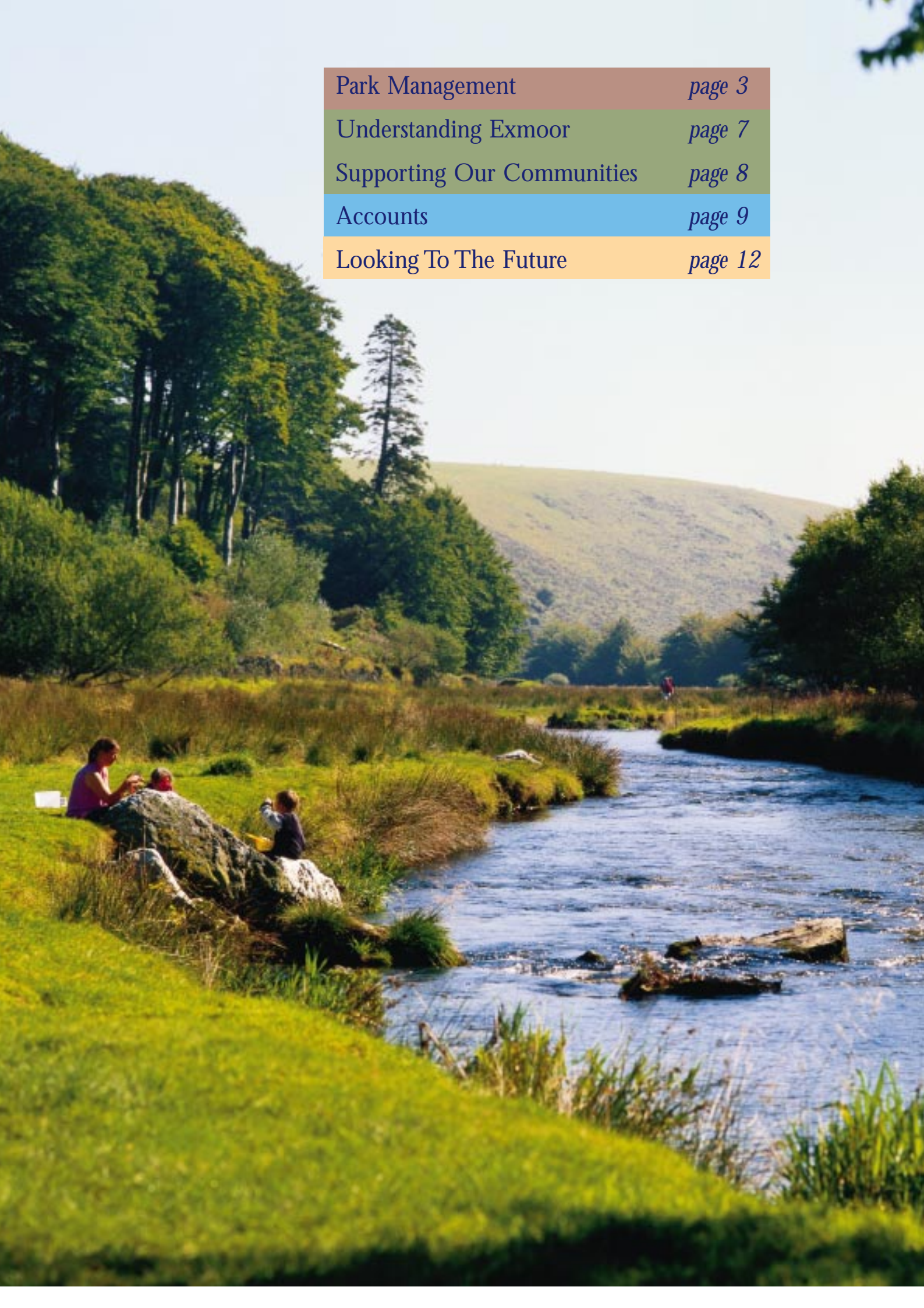
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Chairman's Foreword



Last year was dominated by Keith Bungay's retirement and the search for a worthy successor. Keith's contribution to Exmoor was outstanding in many ways, not least his rapport with the people of Exmoor and the respect that the staff, the Authority members and partner organisations had for his wisdom and guidance.

This was emphasised by the packed house at the dinner I hosted for Keith and Jackie on behalf of the Authority, and the generosity of people's contributions to his leaving gifts.

His successor, Nigel Stone, was the unanimous choice, and Nigel's first few months have demonstrated that he was the right choice – as he has settled into the management role and begun to gain the confidence of Exmoor communities.

Other key issues for the year were:-

- the successful bid for Objective 2 funding from Europe, with the inclusion of Exmoor within the joint Plymouth-Devon Arc Objective 2 region.
- the recurrent problems of hill farming and agricultural recession
- the ongoing debate on hunting and the future of the Red Deer herd
- the effect of the strong pound on our tourism sector
- the widening gap between incomes of the younger people and the funds needed to buy a home on Exmoor as well as the more routine issues of planning pressures on extremely sensitive landscape.

On a personal level, I have now served as Chairman for over seven years – longer than any of my predecessors – and I think the time has come for me to stand down. Although I thoroughly enjoy the job, I do not think anyone should stay on indefinitely and in many ways I would love to continue. I have announced my retirement from June 2001 and I have asked the Authority to identify a successor to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Humphrey Temperley
Chairman

*On a personal level, I
have now served as
Chairman for over
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predecessors*

Introduction

Nigel Stone, National Park Officer



The National Park Authority can only be successful by working closely with local people, particularly those who earn their livelihoods within the National Park.

Starting my new role on Exmoor in October 1999 has been an exciting and enjoyable challenge. As only the fourth Exmoor National Park Officer, I am very conscious of both the rare opportunity to hold such a post and the excellent reputations and achievements of my predecessors. This is my first introduction to the Exmoor National Park Authority Annual Report and much of the credit for the achievements over the past year should go to my predecessor Keith Bungay. Keith has led the work of the Authority for over ten years and has achieved a great deal during that time. We all wish him well in his retirement.

Since moving to Exmoor, I have been struck by the good humour and positive attitude of the people I have met, often despite very difficult personal circumstances. Earning a living from farming is a hard life at the best of times and the past year has been a particularly difficult one for many Exmoor farms. The National Park Authority can only be successful by working closely with local people, particularly those who earn their livelihoods within the National Park and whose roots are firmly based in Exmoor's history and traditions.

In my early days at the Authority I have benefited greatly from the advice of Park Authority members and from their links and contacts with local communities. I am also pleased at the knowledge and commitment of the Authority's staff, all of whom have committed a large part of their working lives to Exmoor, and who retain their enthusiasm for achieving National Park purposes.

The format of the Annual Report reflects the twin purposes of the National Park Authority with sections on 'looking after the landscape' and 'promoting understanding and enjoyment of Exmoor's special qualities'. Throughout this essential work, the National Park Authority also seeks to bring tangible social and economic benefits for local communities and some of the past year's achievements are set out in a third section of the Report entitled 'Supporting our communities'.

None of these achievements would be possible without the support of Government, the other local authorities in the National Park, agencies such as the Countryside Agency, English Nature and English Heritage and local communities and organisations. The final section sets out how the Authority has allocated its funding in 1999/2000 and a short introduction to our future plans and priorities.

Looking after Exmoor's landscape, wildlife and historic environment

Conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national park is one of the most important parts of our work. Most of the national park is privately owned so, it is only by working with those who own and manage the land that we can achieve our purposes.

Three of the species highlighted in the Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan



Heath Fritillary Butterfly



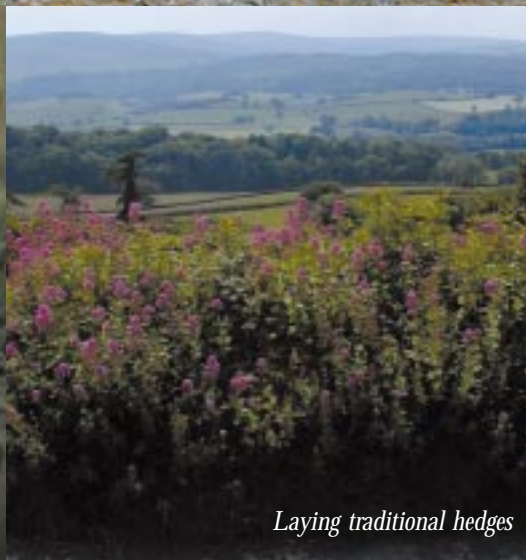
Ballerina Wax Cap



Some of the projects supported by grants from the Authority



Re-gilding the clockface at Dunster



Laying traditional hedges



Landscape - highlights of the year's work

In 1999/2000 the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Continued to deliver a comprehensive conservation advisory service, to operate management agreement and grant aid schemes, and to manage the National Park Authority's extensive and diverse landholding in order to achieve National Park purposes.
- Published the Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan which sets out conservation measures necessary to protect species and habitats selected for their rarity, and/or their rate of decline. Exmoor is a very rich area for wildlife and many of the priority habitats and species identified by the UK Plan are found here. Seven species and seven habitats have been selected with a second group to be added at a later date. The Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan has now been sent out to interested individuals and organisations for consultation.
- Carried out research on the distribution and ecology of: ticks, heath fritillary butterflies, Dartford warblers, hornet robber flies, dormice, river jelly lichen – a few of Exmoor's special, rare species.
- Held a technical workshop for the exchange of information on ticks.
- Provided fifty conservation grants to a variety of schemes including restoration of traditional field boundaries and packhorse bridge, provision of timber field gates made from local hardwood, planting of new orchards.
- Worked with West Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council to carry out air quality monitoring at Dunster.

Woodlands – highlights of the year's work



Children planting new woodland

The National Park Authority is working towards increasing the area of native woodland within the National Park and ensuring that existing woodland is managed for the long-term benefit of wildlife, public enjoyment and the local economy. Individual trees and orchards are also an important part of the landscape and we work with landowners to safeguard their future.

In 1999/2000 the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Helped to secure funding from the Forestry Commission for the creation of two new native woodlands (comprising species such as sessile oak, ash, willow, alder, birch, rowan, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn) covering 27 hectares at Lype Hill and Glenthorne. At Glenthorne this also involved clearing 8 hectares of rhododendron before commencing planting.
- Worked with conservation agencies across the National Park, giving them the opportunity to comment on 14 Woodland Grant Scheme applications involving tree planting and woodland management.
- In partnership with the Greater Exmoor LEADER Project and the Exmoor Society, we launched a Wool and Wood Design Competition to encourage the production of locally made goods from local raw materials.
- Undertook research into veteran trees and rare whitebeams, some varieties of which are unique to Exmoor.
- Prepared plans for the Exmoor Millennium Wood near Winsford and the first phase of planting carried out. People living on Exmoor and elsewhere in the country sponsored many of the trees.
- The Greater Exmoor Woodland Initiative completed agreed targets and 68 hectares of Rhododendron control was undertaken. Rhododendron is a highly invasive plant which, if left unchecked, stifles out other species. It is also of no conservation value since birds and animals will not live in or under it.
- The Greater Exmoor Woodland Initiative completed and published a woodland product and services directory to encourage the use of local timber and promote local businesses.

EXMOOR MILLENNIUM WOOD

The first phase of the Millennium Wood has been planted on 20 hectares of Park Authority owned land at Bye Hill, Winsford. The land is steeply sloping, running down to the River Exe and is mostly bracken covered with some grassland and areas of wet land in the valley bottom. The whole site has open access for people on foot. The trees to be planted will all be native to Exmoor: sessile oak, ash, willow, alder, birch, rowan, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. Open space will be left within the woodland to provide habitat for silver washed fritillary butterflies.

Sponsor a Tree

The woodland planting has been funded by generous donations from members of the public, the Exmoor Society and parish councils. People are sponsoring trees in the name of friends and relatives, for newly born children and to commemorate a special day such as a wedding. The project is to close at the end of 2000.

The first phase of the Millennium Wood has been planted on 20 hectares of Park Authority owned land.

Moorland – highlights of the year's work

Fire caption to come

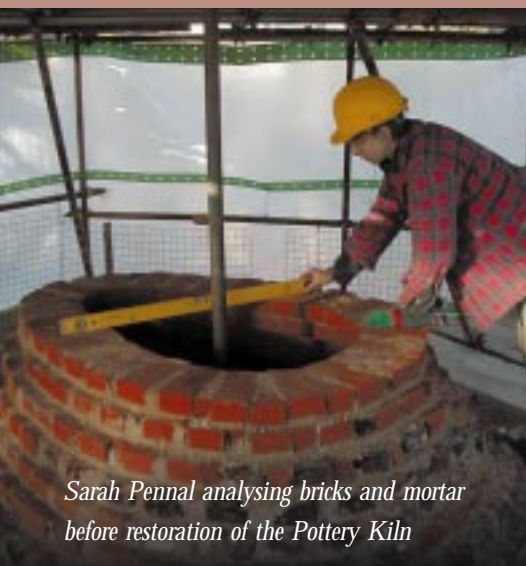


The moorland of Exmoor is of national and international importance and we work with others to care for the existing moor and heath areas and enhance the variety of wildlife. In the future we would like to increase this area, where appropriate, by restoring former moor and heath previously cultivated to increase agricultural productivity.

In the year 1999/2000, the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Continued to work on the Moorland Fire Management Project in partnership with other bodies including Somerset Fire Brigade and the Devon Fire and Rescue Service, supported by the Greater Exmoor LEADER Project. The acquisition of a Supercat (an off-road vehicle which combines low ground pressure with the capacity to carry heavy loads of water) and foam/water fogging fire control system has meant that a much larger number of controlled burns is possible. This year the group achieved:
 - 14 of 16 planned burns completed, plus
 - 10 burns for other landowners
- Undertook research into moorland restoration, the heath fritillary butterfly and moorland insects
- In partnership with the Environment Agency, English Nature and the University of Exeter, we completed the baseline hydrology, vegetation and invertebrate surveys and hydrological monitoring network for the Moorland Improvement and Restoration on Exmoor project (MIRE). Work then started on removing the fairly recent drainage ditches in blanket bog to prevent the bog being drained any further and encourage restoration of the bog habitat.

Historic environment – highlights of the year's work



Sarah Pennal analysing bricks and mortar before restoration of the Pottery Kiln

From prehistoric communities to the present day, people have left the remains of their houses, settlements, fields, enclosures, monuments and burials that form the landscape of Exmoor today. We offer specialist historic environment advice and operate grant aid schemes to ensure that this valuable part of our heritage is looked after for future generations.

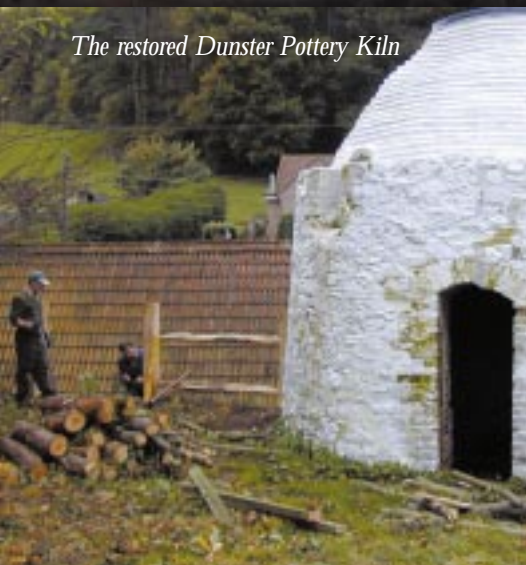
In 1999/2000 the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Continued to deliver specialist historic environment advice and operate grant aid schemes in order to achieve National Park Authority objectives for archaeology, historic buildings and conservation areas.
- Prepared a draft Historic Environment Research Strategy.
- Carried out a survey of industrial archaeology on the Brendon Hills
- Continued very successful agency arrangements with English Heritage for the management of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Continued, in partnership with the National Trust, the Early Iron Working Project and negotiated a management agreement to protect an important site discovered by the Project. (Carbon dating of mining waste on a site on Exmoor last year showed that iron has been smelted on Exmoor since Roman times).
- Worked with Bristol and Exeter Universities on the radio-carbon dating of peat and wood samples in order to help understand the past environment of Exmoor and the impact of human activity.
- Continued to provide grant aid and other incentives to encourage historic building conservation and to explore other mechanisms to support this work following the ending of the Exmoor Conservation Areas Partnership with English Heritage.
- Restored the Dunster Pottery Kiln, a rare example of an updraft kiln which has been restored with support from English Heritage and Forte Heritage Hotels with permission for access from the National Trust.
- Funded major conservation project at Lower East Lyn Farm in partnership with English Heritage. The project involved the rehabilitation of an important farmhouse, part of which is medieval.
- Contributed to English Heritage's book on the archaeology of Exmoor – to be published in 2001.
- Provided and published advice on listed buildings to raise awareness of their historic importance. The Authority's Historic Buildings Officer works with owners to help ensure that any repairs or maintenance to listed buildings are carried out in an appropriate manner.
- In partnership with English Heritage, an aerial survey of the historic sites of Exmoor was undertaken. This important project is done on an annual basis helping us to build up a picture of changes in the landscape.

DUNSTER POTTERY KILN

In partnership with Forte Heritage Hotels, the National Trust and English Heritage, we have restored a pottery kiln in the garden of the Luttrell Arms Hotel in Dunster. Heritage Hotels have granted the Authority a long lease for the kiln and also made a substantial contribution towards its restoration and upkeep, which is being matched by English Heritage. The National Trust granted access to the kiln over their land to enable the public to gain access from the car park at Dunster Steep.

The restored Dunster Pottery Kiln



Development Control – highlights of the year

Local people have their say.



The Exmoor National Park Authority is the statutory planning authority for the national park. Planning is an important tool in maintaining the quality of the built environment and controlling development in the open National Park countryside. The Authority's policy is to negotiate on planning applications to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes wherever possible and this policy can impact on the percentage of applications determined within eight weeks

In 1999/2000, the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Received 375 planning applications, an increase of over 7%, compared to 347 in the previous year. The approval rate of applications has also been steadily rising and represented 95% of those received by the Authority. Of these, 209 were issued by the National Park Officer under delegated powers, representing 60% of all applications determined, an increase of 5% on last year.
- Completed a full survey of 154 planning permissions of tied agricultural dwellings.

Facts & Figures:

- There were 4 site visits made by the Planning Committee before determining applications representing 3% of all applications determined by committee.
- The Special Duties Officer investigated 208 new alleged planning contraventions.
- The number of appeals against planning permission rose with 10 being lodged against the Authority's decisions, compared with 6 last year. Of these 6 were dismissed and 4 allowed.
- Two successful pilot Planning for Real events were held to assess their effectiveness as part of the consultation process for the next Local Plan.
- National Park Management Plan – draft sent out to many individuals and organisations for consultation.

Forward Planning

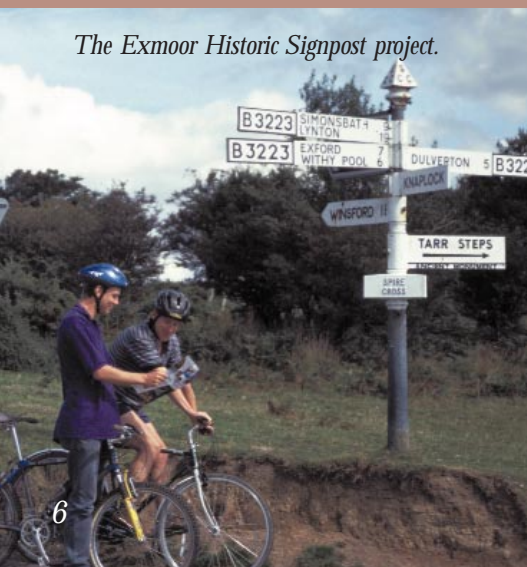
To assess and record the social and economic database for the National Park, to enable the preparation of the National Park Management Plan, Review and monitor the Development Plan and implement the duty to foster the social and economic well-being of the Park's local communities.

In 1999/2000, the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- Issued a draft National Park Management Plan for consultation. The document is a plan for Exmoor, not just for the Authority and we will only succeed in looking after the national park if our partners sign up to it.
- Carried out the second annual survey of house prices on Exmoor.
- Contributed to the successful achievement of European Objective 2 status for Exmoor as part of joint Plymouth-Devon Arc Objective 2 region. This will mean that there is potentially millions of pounds available in grants to the area.
- The Exmoor Historic Signposts project was completed and a cycle trail leaflet was produced highlighting some interesting things to see on the way.
- Continued to part fund projects through the Greater Exmoor LEADER project as a lead partner. The project has funded some 90 projects with European grant money of over £1 million which has attracted a further £2 million of public and private money to bring in a total of more than £3 million to benefit communities and businesses in Greater Exmoor.

95% of planning applications received were approved.

The Exmoor Historic Signpost project.



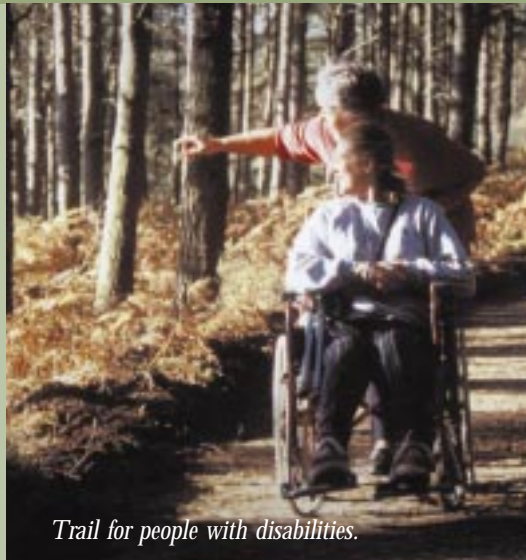
Understanding and Enjoying Exmoor

Highlights of the year's work

People enjoy Exmoor in many ways and an important feature of a national park is the provision of tranquil areas for quiet enjoyment. As well as looking after the practical side of things such as car parks, visitor centres, public toilets and picnic areas, the National Park Authority is also responsible for maintaining the extensive rights of way network that thousands of people enjoying using to explore Exmoor every year.

In the year 1999-2000 the Exmoor National Park Authority:

- 393,800 people visited our five National Park Visitor Centres at Combe Martin, Dulverton, Dunster, Lynmouth and County Gate.
- In partnership with the West Somerset Free Press, we published the free newspaper for visitors, Exmoor Visitor and two editions of Park Life, our community newspaper for Exmoor residents which is delivered to every household on Exmoor
- In partnership with The Crown Estate and the National Trust, a new set of displays was installed in our Dunster visitor centre. The displays trace the history of the area and provide information for visitors, encouraging them to enjoy the area in a more sustainable way.



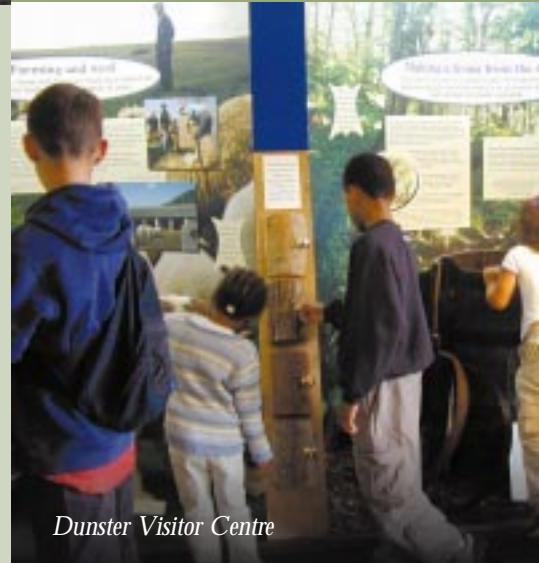
Trail for people with disabilities.

- Three trails were created for people with disabilities in partnership with the National Trust. The project also benefited from Exmoor Access for All, a multi-funded initiative with two elements. The provision of one kilometre circular trails near Selworthy Beacon car park and at Webber's Post on the Trust's Holnicote Estate and, in partnership with the Lillycombe Estate, the Authority's estate team built a 200 metre boardwalk and wheelchair accessible kissing gate to improve access to a popular beauty spot near Robber's Bridge.
- Snowdrop Valley - Park & Ride - More than 3000 people enjoyed the snowdrop display using the park and ride buses and thus reducing the damage to the environment caused by the use of vehicles down the narrow road



Mountain biking is one of the activities at Pinkery

- 99% paths signposted. Exmoor's distinctive signposts are made by our estate team using locally grown oak and hand-routed and finished.
- Hundreds of metres of fencing are completed every year by the estate team who are also responsible for keeping Exmoor's path network clear from encroaching vegetation.



Dunster Visitor Centre

- The Pinkery residential outdoor environmental education centre played host to 65 schools and a total of 2,500 children were able to use Exmoor as an outdoor classroom.
- Our web site was used by thousands of people to learn more about Exmoor.
- Our education service looked after a total of 243 groups with 9,523 participants.
- More than 4500 participants enjoyed our guided walks, events and talks. These are led by our Rangers or trained Voluntary Guides.



Exmoor Paths Partnership

This year 21.25 kms of paths were improved. 30 new businesses on Exmoor became partners of the Paths Partnership and are using various methods to collect funds to assist the Paths Partnership's work by means of voluntary visitor payback. So far £11,570 has been collected in voluntary contributions. The 50% EU funding came to an end in August 2000 but the Authority is working hard to ensure that the small team is maintained to continue the practical work and the visitor back scheme will be serviced by existing Park Authority staff for the time being.

Supporting our communities

Some of the projects the Authority has been involved with during 1999/2000:

- Somerset Rural Youth Project was set up to reduce disadvantage experienced by young people in rural areas. We have offered practical and mentoring assistance and together with the Greater Exmoor Woodland Initiative have formed a partnership with the aim of creating a rural skills workshop for 16-18 year olds.
- Following the formal offer of the European grant, the project to bring electricity to remote farms on Exmoor began in 1999. The Park Authority played a significant part in securing EU and MAFF funding and has contributed around £94,000 from its own resources to the project to help offset the cost of putting much of the cabling underground.
- The Authority conducted the second annual house price survey on Exmoor, showing that house prices rose by some 14% on last year. The average house price on Exmoor in 1999 was £146,822, with smaller properties showing the sharpest increase. As part of the review process of the Local Plan, the Authority is seeking powers to restrict occupancy of new properties to defined 'local needs' – a system that has already been successfully implemented by two other national parks.
- Designed a new Millennium Green for Brompton Regis and helped attract £64,000 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Millennium Green Scheme and other bodies.
- Designed landscape schemes at Exford and Dulverton Schools and Hawkcombe playground.
- Supported the transfer of 6 farms (1077ha) in the National Park Authority's Farm Conservation Scheme into the Exmoor Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme to benefit the farms and the landscape.
- Our Village Information Agency scheme, works with local village shops to provide information about the national park for visitors and local people. This year the village shop at Molland joined the scheme, bringing the total to ten in all.

The Exmoor National Park Authority was one of 10 European protected areas chosen to pilot the introduction of a European Charter for sustainable tourism. In January 1999, a twelve month project to trial the Charter with tourism operators on Exmoor was initiated by Mandie Berry, tourism development worker. Customer feedback in many businesses has shown that guests were pleased to see the use of local products, fair trade tea and coffee, recycled products and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling. There is now an opportunity to build on the work and carry the work forward.

*The Authority is
seeking powers to
restrict occupancy of
new properties to
defined 'local needs'.*

Landscape Officer Sarah Menear with Barbara Page of Millennium Green Committee at Brompton Regis



One of our ten Village Information Agencies



Securing resources for Exmoor Annual Accounts

Revenue Account for 1999/2000

1998/99	Expenditure	1999/2000
£ 000		£ 000
497.3	Conservation of Natural Environment	564.4
104.6	Conservation of Cultural Heritage	113.5
271.5	Recreation Management	291.8
471.2	Promoting Understanding	509.4
25.2	Traffic and Transport	24.3
404.5	Rangers, Estate Services and Volunteers	405.1
172.4	Development Control	176.2
163.1	Forward Planning	186.5
642.2	Management and Administration	692.4
21.6	Training and Staff Development	27.5
2,773.6	Total	2991.1
	Income	
1,607.0	National Park Grant	1733.0
-	Additional National Park Grant	98.0
535.7	Levies on local authorities	577.7
679.0	Other Income	644.0
(38.8)	Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	44.7
2,782.9	Total	3008.0
9.3	Surplus for year carried to Revenue Reserve	16.9

Balance Sheet

1 April 1999		31 March 2000
£ 000		£ 000
	Fixed Assets	
7,214.8	Land and Buildings	7697.0
159.1	Vehicles Plant and Equipment	97.3
109.8	Community Assets	-
7,483.7		7794.3
	Current Assets	
52.7	Stocks	62.9
200.0	Short Term Investments	400.0
238.7	Debtors and Payments in Advance	156.1
111.9	Cash and Bank	461.6
	Less Current Liabilities	
(279.7)	Creditors and Receipts in Advance	(688.9)
323.6	Net Current Assets	391.7
7,807.3	Total Net Assets	8186.0
	Financed by	
4,081.5	Fixed Asset Restatement Reserve	5001.0
3,402.2	Capital Financing Reserve	2793.3
2.0	Unapplied Capital Receipt	4.5
105.0	Reserves – Capital Match Funding	184.5
115.9	Capital earmarked	10.0
-	Revenue earmarked	84.1
100.7	Revenue general	108.6
7,807.3	Total	8186.0

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) sets the level of funding for the Authority. In 1999/2000 this was set at £2,310,700 of which 75% is received from DETR as the National Park Grant. The remaining 25% is levied on the four local County and District Councils in proportion to the number of members appointed to the Authority. The Authority set an annual balanced budget based on the National Park Grant, the levies on the councils and the estimated income for services provided. Additionally, the Authority either takes the lead role or actively participates in a range of partnership schemes to secure external funding. During the year the Authority received additional national park grant of £98,000 from the DETR increasing the level of funding to £2,408,700.

Net revenue expenditure amounted to £2,391,797 giving a small surplus for the year of £16,903, which has been added to the general reserve and carried forward to 2000/01

During the year £62,295 was transferred from reserves to meet specific revenue purposes. Transfers to reserves totalled £125,588 to meet specific revenue and capital purposes including provision for specific projects underway but for which works had not been completed. The most significant provision was £50,000 towards the Authority's contribution to the Rural Diversification Project which will fall due in the next financial year and the Authority earmarked this sum from the additional National Park Grant received late in the year.

The figures for land and buildings are based on a capital valuation carried out during the year of property assets as at 1 April 1999. This re-assessment of asset valuations is taking place at intervals of no greater than 5 years. Valuations adjustments are accounted for via the Fixed Asset Restatement Reserve and additionally a review of all capital assets was also carried out which has necessitated adjustments to both the Fixed Asset Restatement Reserve and the Capital Financing Reserve.

Reserves during the year have moved to reflect either the actual expenditure of or the future commitments to specific projects. The Revenue General Reserve is set aside to meet contingencies and provide working capital.

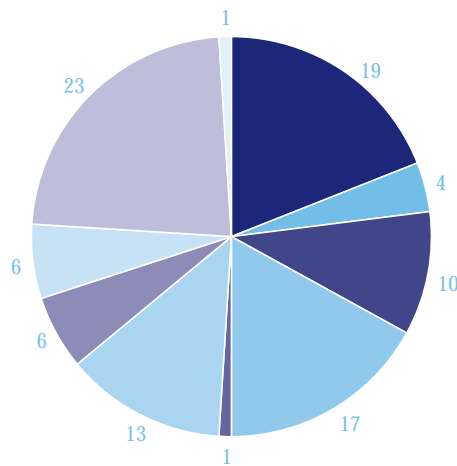
The Authority has met its financial targets, achieved the objectives of its work programme, and maintained its strong financial position. The Authority is therefore pleased with its financial management and its financial performance for the year.

Financial Analyses

A full set of the Authority's Accounts which are audited by Robson Rhodes can be obtained from the Chief Finance Officer. The figures in this report are unaudited at this stage and have been taken from the accounts that have been presented for audit.

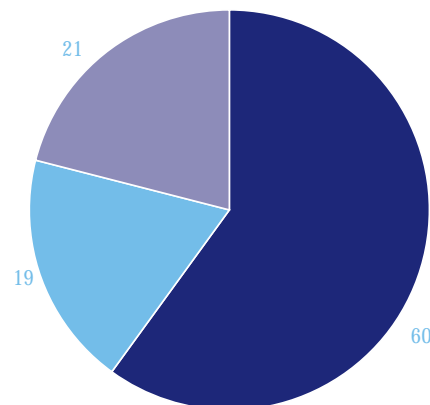
Analysis of net Revenue Expenditure %

Category	%
Conservation of Natural Environment	19
Conservation of Cultural Heritage	4
Recreation Management	10
Promoting Understanding	17
Traffic and Transportation	1
Ranger, Estate Team and Volunteers	13
Development Control	6
Forward Planning	6
Management and Administration	23
Training and Staff Development	1



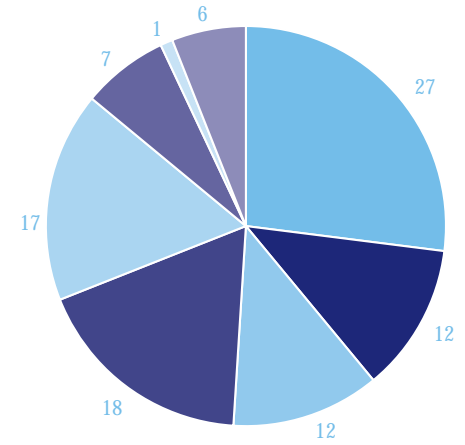
Analysis of Income Pie Chart %

Category	%
National Park Grant	60
Levy of Local Councils	19
Self Generated Income	21



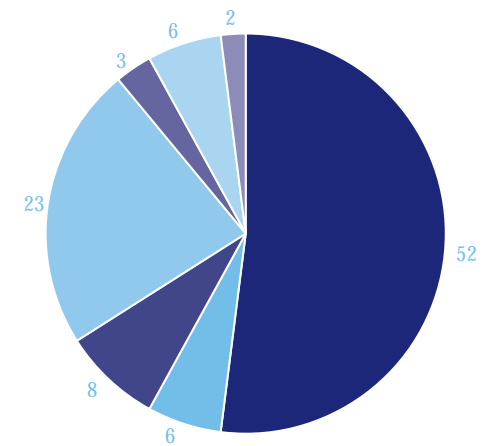
Analysis of Self Generated Income %

Grants from Statutory Bodies	27
Grants from European Sources	12
Rents/Grazing Licences	12
Fees and Charges	18
Goods and Resale	17
Interest	7
Donations	1
Miscellaneous	6



Analysis of Expenditure by Type %

Employees	52
Premises	6
Transport	8
Supplies & Services	23
Grants	3
Payments to Farmers/Landowners	6
Capital	2



Effect on Local Economy

National Park designation benefits the economy of the local community through:

providing employment for 98 people the majority of which aid the local economy. The pay bill including employer's costs amounts to £1.5M making grants and payments to local farmers totalling £185,877 attracting funding of £74,543 from European sources which provides employment and opportunities for local contractors.

Making Council Tax payments of £36,000

Attracting grant aid for projects amounting to £174,628 from the Countryside Commission, English Heritage etc.

The receipt of Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) payments from MAFF of £1.6M to Exmoor's farmers (this equates to the National Park Grant that is received).

It is interesting to note that every £5 that the Authority spends £3 comes from the Government by way of grant, £1 from self generated income with £1 raised through the local Council Tax (which itself attracts some grant income).

In line with government policy, we produced our first Best Value Performance Plan. Best Value is about seeking to secure continuous improvement in the services that the Authority provides. The plan runs to 46 pages and can be found on our web site at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or at our visitor centres and an abbreviated version is available as a leaflet from Exmoor House.

Looking to the future

There is a new National Park Management Plan for Exmoor for 2000-2005. Here are some highlights extracted from it:



For Exmoor's landscape the vision is for:

A wilder, more beautiful, landscape with increasing areas of semi-natural habitat such as moorland, native woodland and mires.

Sustainable farming practice which conserves landscape features such as hedgebanks, orchards, unimproved grasslands and farm woodlands.

This vision means for:

Moorland

protecting the existing moor and heath and ensuring that it is managed to conserve and enhance the variety of wildlife and landscape.

extending the area of moor and heath, where appropriate, in particular where it has been lost.

Woodlands

continuing to encourage the management of ancient woodlands

planting new native woodlands

restoring sites where native woodland once existed

Wildlife

For wildlife the Plan links with national plans for the conservation of species, targeting not just rare species but more common ones. On Exmoor key species include the ballerina wax-cap toadstool; lungwort lichens; heath fritillary and high brown fritillary butterflies; the dormouse and, of course, the red deer.

A wilder, more beautiful, landscape with increasing areas of semi-natural habitat.



The local traditions and characteristics of buildings and settlements on Exmoor will be maintained.



Cultural Heritage

Much of the character of Exmoor is due to human activity. There will be emphasis on conserving aspects of Exmoor's culture whilst making it relevant for present day needs. Suitable alternative uses will be sought for buildings of architectural or historic interest, where this would enable their continued use. The local traditions and characteristics of buildings and settlements on Exmoor will be maintained. There will be emphasis on:

- recording both physical historic remains and traditional ways of life and customs
- maintaining customs and encouraging new cultural activities and art which are distinctive to Exmoor.
- support for local varieties of crops and breeds of farm animals



Farming and Forestry

The future of the farming and forestry industries will have a crucial effect on the landscape of Exmoor and the well being of local communities. The problems of such industries cannot easily be tackled at the local level, hence one of the objectives in the NPMP is to influence government and European Union policy for the uplands to achieve a prosperous community and farming which contributes towards National Park purposes.

Exmoor National Park Authority will:

- press for improvements to the Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme
- continue to experiment with funding methods that suit both farmers and National Park purposes
- support initiatives that increase the diversity of the wildlife of semi-improved grassland and maintain important hedgerows
- encourage organic farming and the reduced use of chemicals

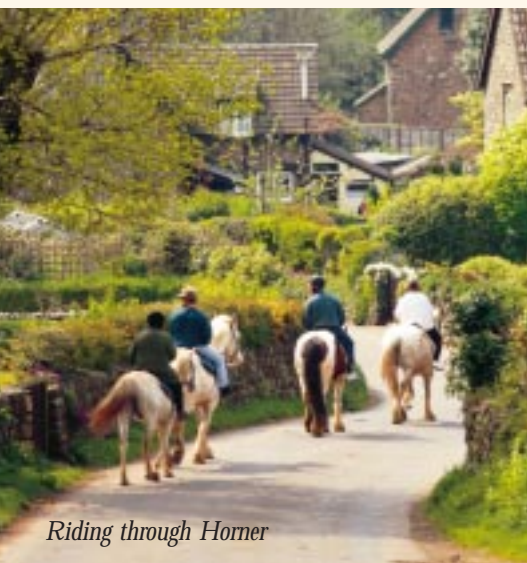
For the forestry industry the emphasis of policy will be to help improve the infrastructure so that hardwoods can be processed locally and the manufacturing of sustainable products from Exmoor woodlands increased.

Employment and the Local Economy

Exmoor National Park Authority will work with others, as part of its duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities, to continue economic development programmes set up with European funding and will continue to work to secure additional funding. The Local Plan Review will contain policies to enable diversification proposals and allow new businesses compatible with National Park purposes to locate within the National Park.



Developing environmentally sustainable forms of tourism to bring economic benefit and to secure community facilities.



Riding through Horner



Exmoor Explorer Mountain Bike Marathon Challenge near Withypool

Housing

The main objective for housing will be to ensure that all new-build housing within the National Park meets an identified local need and is compatible with the conservation of the landscape and natural resources. This will be done through development control and by local authorities working with housing associations and other bodies to secure high quality affordable housing which meets the needs identified in Parish Housing Needs Surveys. A high standard of design will be sought in keeping with the character of the settlements in the National Park.

Local Services

It is important to maintain a reasonable and affordable range of services and facilities so that residents of Exmoor are not unduly disadvantaged as a result of living in a remote rural area. Publicity will be supported to encourage visitors to purchase locally produced goods and products.

Tourism

Tourism will be encouraged to develop in a way which is based on, and conserves and enhances, the quality and value of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park by:

- developing environmentally sustainable forms of tourism to bring economic benefit and to secure community facilities
- sourcing goods and services locally
- continuing the work of encouraging visitors to contribute to the costs of maintaining Exmoor.

Recreation and Access

There will be much new work for Exmoor National Park Authority with the management of the new right of access to open country if proposed Government legislation proceeds. There will also be a need to tell people where they can walk and to explain their rights and responsibilities.

The priorities for access will be to:

- ensure the public can enjoy open access while protecting farming and nature conservation interests
- maintain a public rights of way network which is open, well maintained and provides opportunities for enjoyment by people of all abilities

Reducing traffic and car parking in the wilder parts of Exmoor while ensuring they remain accessible for quiet recreation.



Visitor Facilities

Exmoor National Park Authority will work with the tourism industry to:

- monitor the supply of accommodation on Exmoor, and the demand for it.
- support the provision and maintenance of a network of Youth Hostels, camping barns and campsites suitable for backpackers.
- improve access for people with disabilities wherever practicable, and provide information about facilities which are available to visitors with disabilities.

Traffic and Transport

An integrated Strategy for Transport and Traffic Management for Exmoor and a 5 year Action Plan will be drawn up. Measures will include:

- Exmoor National Park Authority, local communities and the Highway Authorities working together to find solutions to traffic problems which manage private car traffic and encourage alternative modes of transport.
- developing initiatives to meet the needs for travel of people in local communities.
- reducing traffic and car parking in the wilder parts of Exmoor while ensuring they remain accessible for quiet recreation.

Communicating with the Public and Organisations

Exmoor National Park Authority will:

- work with others, especially those involved in the tourism industry, to promote Exmoor's special qualities and provide information for the visitor where they can most effectively receive it, for example hotels, cafes, restaurants, and other places.
- develop services for both the local community and visitors to the Park in Exmoor National Park Authority's five visitor centres.
- continue with the extensive consultation mechanisms that have been established to provide an opportunity for dialogue on all our functions.



*Janet Anderson, Tourism Minister,
visiting Dunster Visitor Centre*



Learning is fun at Pinkery centre

Education Services

In its educational role, Exmoor National Park Authority will also try to broaden the scope of its services and widen its audience to as much of the public as possible. It will also develop its services through new technology. Exmoor National Park Authority will develop its Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre as a centre of excellence in the delivery of services for outdoor education and associated health and safety, and for its domestic management.

Success in achieving these will only come about with support from government, other organisations/people and our ability to secure extra funding, including Objective 2.

*We aim to make our Visitor Centres
stimulating for children of all ages.*

Working to ensure that Exmoor remains beautiful for all to enjoy, in harmony with a thriving community.





EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK



Exmoor is one of 11 areas designated as a national park in England and Wales covering some 10% of the landmass. More than 70 million visits are made to the parks in any one year and they are home to nearly 250,000 people.



The National Park Authorities have formed an Association (ANPA) which speaks for them to government and its agencies. ANPA promotes collaboration and provides a focus for their corporate international activity.



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

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