

# Exmoor National Park Authority

## Achieving accessibility and enjoyment for all . . .the story so far



Exmoor National Park Authority aims to make equality central to the way that the Authority works, in order to create:

- better informed decision making and policy development
- better-quality services which meet varied needs
- more effective targeting of policy and resources
- better results and greater confidence in public services
- a more effective use of talent in the workforce

The Authority has a Comprehensive Equality Policy that states our commitment to equality of opportunity and our aim to ensure that our employees and the people we serve are not discriminated against on any grounds including: Age; Disability; Employment Status; Ethnic or national origins, or race; Gender; Gender reassignment; Marital Status; Pregnancy; Religious or political beliefs; Responsibilities for dependants; Sexual orientation; Social and Economic Status.

Since 2007 we have been working in partnership with our customers and other organisations to improve the accessibility of our services, improve access to the beautiful Exmoor landscape and the recreational opportunities it provides, and continue to make the Authority a great place to work. In particular, our 2007-2012 management plan has focussed on engaging young people and non-traditional audiences and in enabling greater accessibility. Read on for more about the progress we have made.....

## Designing Services

Provision of equality of opportunity for everyone across the national park would have to cover a huge number of permutations if everyone were to get the experience of their choice in the setting of their choice. This is almost certainly an impossibility given the Exmoor environment, however based on consultation feedback the following approaches have been adopted by Exmoor National Park Authority when formulating policy and strategies for equal opportunities in its service provision:

design facilities for everyone (universal or inclusive design) so that facilities and services will be integrated and used by all members of the community

provide a continuum of services that meet the needs of many different people so that the design and management of facilities and services become more flexible and able to respond to diversity when needs have to be met

E.g. don't provide services for people with disabilities; provide services for disabled walkers and disabled cyclists and disabled campers etc (so that existing opportunities are modified and adapted to accommodate a

range of people and provide equal opportunities rather than creating new separate opportunities just for disabled people)

recognise how different people are and how that will impact on their use of services (so that services for independent people can be as accessible as they are for those who need or choose group support as a way of undertaking activities).

The Authority is increasingly focussing on empowering others to independently access the recreation opportunities Exmoor provides and to comment on and help design the services we provide. We have also been working to improve access to our buildings and facilities such as a new access ramp to Exmoor House and replacing old toilet blocks with accessible facilities.



Improving Accessibility to the Countryside	2
Supporting Local Groups and Communities	2
Mosaic Young Champions Project	3
Mosaic Project– Building Links with BME Communities in National Parks	3
Equality in Employment	4
Engagement	4



## Improving Accessibility to the Countryside

To further understand the barriers people face in accessing the National Park and Authority Services, the Authority has sought feedback from residents, visitors, community groups and partner organisations, such as Somerset Access and Inclusion Network (SAIN); Disabled Activities in West Somerset (Open DAWS); Partnerships for Older People (POPP) ; Calvert Trust, Exmoor; National Trust; South West Lakes Trust.

The Fieldfare Trust works with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the coun-

tryside for everyone and we have benefited by working with them, achieving a real focus on where priorities should lie to achieve accessibility and enjoyment for all.

Our Education, Interpretation and Ranger teams are actively involved in improving core services and increasing opportunities for access to Exmoor. For example, the team has designed a more inclusive events programme and developed an inclusive-publication design guide. Their work includes support for groups and organisations such as Calvert

Trust, North Devon Deaf Children’s Group, CARE Community at Blackerton, local Residential Homes/Day Centres, Women’s Institute groups.

External funding grants have also helped us work with partners to open up sites associated with the industrial heritage of the National Park, such as the all ability trail at the West Somerset Mineral Railway near Watchet.



For more information about how the SDF can support your community project contact Dan James, Sustainability and Economy Officer [DTJames@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:DTJames@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

## Supporting Local Groups and Communities

The Authority has been able to support initiatives that directly benefit residents and visitors who may otherwise experience barriers to accessing Exmoor through grants awarded as part of the Sustainable Development Fund. The fund supports innovative projects with community involvement where the projects clearly further one or both of the statutory **National Park purposes** which are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- **To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public**

**Wimbleball Sailability** – contributing towards accessible changing rooms for the disabled sailing club.

**Moor Rover** – helping to support and promote a new demand responsive transport for leisure use that is fully wheelchair accessible. This new service allows people to access areas of the countryside that was previously difficult for them to reach because of a lack of suitable transport and gives people more independence in determining their own routes.

**South West Fishing for Life** – funding for equipment and instructors for this breast cancer support group.

**Doverly Manor museum, Porlock** – providing a grant to help create easier access to the first floor plus a virtual reality tour on the ground floor for those unable to make it to the top.

**Dunster Tall Trees Trail** – provision of a grant for a new all ability access trail. The trail will be accessible to wheelchair users and pushchairs and provide an opportunity to view some of the tallest trees in the country.

**Accessible Exmoor** - Exmoor for All research into accessibility on Exmoor by the Field Fare Trust.

**Countryside Mobility** – A new project run by Living Options to encourage greater access to the countryside for those with limited mobility. This project will set up two tramper hire points on Exmoor allowing individuals, following an induction, to hire a tramper mobility vehicle. The project will include audits at hire locations to ensure routes are suitable for tramper users and mitigating any potential negative impacts. The project will also organise a number of events at which a number of tramper vehicles will be provided. Some of these events will be specific one off events, whilst others will join with existing Exmoor National Park Authority events, such as ranger led walks, to allow integration between those with differing levels of mobility. This aspect will ensure that users of the scheme can benefit from a range of locations allowing events to be held at locations not normally staffed (and so not appropriate for a long term hire point).



The Moor Rover—providing responsive, accessible transport



Trampers— will provide greater access to the special qualities of Exmoor

## The Mosaic Young Champions Project 2010

The Mosaic Young Champions Project is empowering young people to champion the opportunities offered by National Parks to their peers and other young people primarily aged 16-25. The project to date has recruited 18 young people from deprived urban wards to develop projects that would enable other young people to access the special qualities offered by Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks. The project was delivered by Mosaic, a partnership between the Campaign for National Parks, the youth Hostel Association and the nine national park Authorities in England.

The Mosaic model is based on the principles of building confidences, skills and partnerships to bring about long-term sustainable change. This is change both for the volunteers themselves and the organisations they work with by giving under-represented groups a voice within the organisation.

At a time when research shows that under 25's are most at risk in facing long term-unemployment, the ongoing engagement with young people in this way not only inspires a new generation of people to enjoy and look after National Parks, but also develops their skills, confidence and future employability.

### Building links between BME Communities, Faith Groups and National Parks

The Mosaic Project was developed in response to evidence that although about 9% of the population is of a black or minority ethnic (BME) background, they account for only 1% of visitors to National Parks. The project is not about forcing people to go to a National Park; it is about ensuring that all people have an equal opportunity to do so. The Campaign for National Parks who lead the project identified the key barriers to access:

- ◆ Perceived barriers such as a lack of knowledge about access rights
- ◆ Social barriers such as feeling unwelcome
- ◆ Physical barriers such as a lack of public transport

One way Mosaic overcomes these barriers is by training leaders from ethnic minority communities to become Community Champions, promoting the National Parks to others. This means that people can return independently

**“The experiences with Mosaic were really useful in the job interview. I could talk about the press releases and everything I had done.” (Milan, Young Champion)**

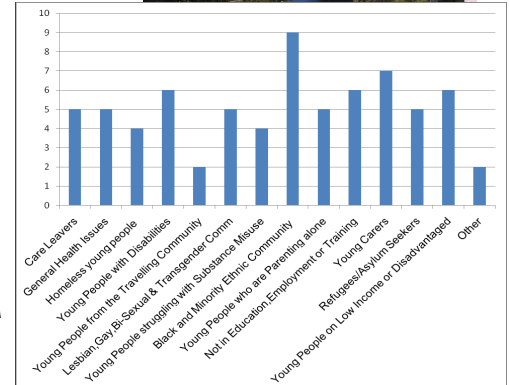
Young people are helping to plan and shape future services:

**Consultation:** ENPA website: ENPA went to youth clubs where the young people acted as consultees on the design of the ENPA website.

**Service Delivery:** Mosaic Young Champions “Mystery shopped” ENPA visitor services. This led to them gaining an accredited Leadership Award

**Volunteering:** Young people, with young workers and Authority staff are developing an Exmoor Volunteering festival with the NPA.

**Promotion:** Mosaic Young Champions have written and released press releases on behalf of the Mosaic Partners.



**Backgrounds of Young Champions and the young people they worked with**

**Kaylie - Young Champion, Bideford “ It has been a real pleasure to meet and get involved with other young people. Now we just need to get more young people to Exmoor, I'd love to come back.”**

and it ensures long-term change. Mosaic also helps the National Park Authorities make long-term changes in their organisations to better reach new audiences.

Working alongside colleagues from Dartmoor National Park Authority, 15 community champions have been recruited as a result of initial group leader visits and 'taster' experiences. These individuals are active in their local communities particularly in Exeter, Plymouth and Bristol.

Over the coming months, individual training and action plans will be developed to ensure lasting and on-going contact with the National Parks and National Park Staff.

<http://www.mosaicnationalparks.org/>



## Exmoor National Park Authority

Exmoor House  
Dulverton  
Somerset  
TA22 9HL

Phone: 01398 323665

Fax: 01398 323150

[www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

### *Enhancing the Qualities that make Exmoor Special*

## The Authority as an Equal Opportunities Employer

We have been working to create equality of opportunity for our employees. The introduction of a job evaluation scheme has ensured equality in terms and conditions across the Authority.

The Authority has demonstrated its commitment to employing people with disabilities and is permitted to use the Job Centre Plus' Disability Symbol. All candidates meeting the minimum requirements of a vacant post who declare a disability on their application form will be guaranteed an interview. We have successfully worked with employees to maintain employment when they have become disabled.

We are able to offer a range of flexible working patterns to help employees balance home and work responsibilities.

Employees receive training and development to help increase awareness and knowledge of equality issues in service provision, and demonstration of active engagement with service users and improving access to all is embedded within our values and appraisal processes. Contact Rachel Oxenham, Personnel and Support Services Manager for more information about employment issues [roxenham@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:roxenham@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

## Other ways that Exmoor National Park Authority is engaging people and improving accessibility:

### IMAYLA

Authority engagement with BME communities and young people from Bristol through residential experiences at the Authority's Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education.

### Wiltshire Breakaway Project

Authority engagement of young carers from Wiltshire – residential experiences at the Authority's Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education.

### Somerset Rural Youth Project

Practical conservation projects for young people excluded from or at risk from exclusion from mainstream education – vocational countryside skills.

**Heritage Ambassadors** (Field Studies Council, Quantocks AONB, Somerset Wildlife Trust, National Park Authority partnership)

Targeted engagement with young people and local communities through the ReCreation Centre in Bridgwater.

### Local Access Forum



This forum is an independent advisory group made up of volunteers who offer their time and varied experience, advising the Authority on ways to improve access and recreation opportunities on

Exmoor for the benefit of all. If you are interested in becoming a member of this group contact Abbie Keeper—  
[ajkeeper@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:ajkeeper@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

### Me in My Exmoor (MIME)

Working with young people within the National Park area to explore and express their feeling about remote rural living and encouraging dialogue with other sections of the community.

### Exmoor Curriculum/Junior Rangers

Working with Dulverton Middle School to utilise the local environment as a core value of the local curriculum. Developing vocational programmes that will lead to a ½ GCSE equivalent (potential national 'first').

### Walking for Health initiative

Engagement with Primary Care Trusts and delivery of a programme of guided walks aimed at improving fitness and demonstrating the benefits of the countryside to promote healthy lifestyles.

**Pinkery Centre** (the Authority's Centre for Outdoor Education)

Delivers residential and experiential learning for predominantly young people approximately 60% of whom could be described as coming from 'areas of multiple deprivation'.



### Exmoor Conservation Volunteer Partnership

Offers opportunities for a range of individuals to become involved in practical countryside management activities and non-practical activities. The Authority has been working with the Calvert Trust to develop opportunities for people with disabilities and their friends, families and carers ([www.calvert-trust.org.uk/](http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk/)).

### Planning Surgeries and Consultation

Community based planning surgeries provide local access to the Authority's Development Control staff for those unable to access services from Dulverton. Surgeries are currently held on Monday mornings in Porlock and Wednesday mornings in Lynton.

Nearly 1000 people turned out to express their views on how they wanted to see their community in Exmoor evolve over the next 15 years. The first three months of 2010 saw 21 events throughout the National Park. There were also 13 school /college events giving Exmoor residents of all ages a real opportunity to influence future planning policy.

### Interactive Visitor Maps

The Interpretation and Access teams are building up an interactive map of walks and cycle routes on the Authority website to help people decide the best places to visit for them, based on the grade of walk (Easy-Strenuous) or cycle route (Easy to Severe) <http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/visiting/visitor-map.htm>

