



Dartmoor Roundhouse Innovation Centre

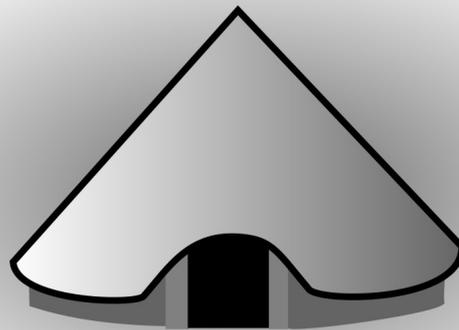
**A Project Proposal:
Working with Dartmoor National Park Authority on the development of
the Low Impact Development Policy (currently DMD30) and providing an
example of the policy in practice**

This is a proposal for an initial three year temporary planning permission

Affinity Woodland Workers Cooperative Ltd

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Introduction

Dartmoor has a unique landscape that is reflected in its history, culture and traditions. Our proposed Dartmoor Roundhouse Innovation Centre will give visitors to the National Park an inspiring introduction to Dartmoor that brings to life its special qualities and helps people to understand and enjoy them.

The Centre we propose will link Dartmoor's past and future by showing visitors the evolution of roundhouses up to the current day. We will demonstrate ways of living lightly on the land, taking inspiration from traditions and technologies from the Bronze Age to today. We will design the project with the tools and principles of permaculture, and will demonstrate these and run training in using low impact technologies.

The Centre will be an example of sustainable development that conserves and enhances the natural beauty and wildlife of this part of the National Park, with the land being managed in accordance with a Conservation Woodland Management Plan approved by the Forestry Commission.

The project's centrepiece will be a Bronze Age roundhouse reconstruction that will serve as the Centre's venue for courses as well as an attraction in its own right. Although our focus will be on roundhouses we will explore other ecologically sound Dartmoor lifestyles such as medieval longhouse living.



The woodlands of Dartmoor have traditionally been places of considerable human activity such as coppicing, charcoal burning and woodworking. The woodland in which the Centre will sit has a long history of being worked and lived in, with Steward Farm having been a working farm with a farmhouse until the early 20th century. The land was then converted to plantation woodland, including a tree nursery, by Dartington Estate. This continued until around 1960.

The members of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative are presenting this proposal to the officers and members of the Dartmoor National Park Authority as a beneficial and valuable use of the land at Steward Wood, and would like the Authority to work alongside them to help make this project successful.

Suitability of the site for this project

The site is close to Moretonhampstead, the entry point for many visitors to Dartmoor, so is ideally placed for visitors to learn about some of Dartmoor's traditions and archaeology and to appreciate and understand what they see in the National Park. Our proximity to the town also means people are likely to visit other nearby attractions, and to spend money locally on accommodation and food.

The site sits beside the Wray Valley Trail and we will encourage visitors to travel on foot or by bike. There are good public transport links, and we already have access and parking for people who come by car.

The site's location in woodland means that it is screened from view. Furthermore, the resources of the woodland mean that the land's carrying capacity will not be exceeded by those living there.

Benefits

Living Museum

Visitors will be able to come and discover the stories of life and technologies dating back to the Bronze Age, as well as those going forward into a sustainable future, all set within Dartmoor's beautiful landscape.

Visitors will enjoy the Living Museum's 32-acre site. There will be a regular programme of craft and technology demonstrations, including roundhouse construction, blacksmithing, basketry, green woodworking and current renewable technologies. Visitors will also be able to take a walk in the woods on the signposted wildlife trail, and enjoy a picnic or cook on the fire.

The proposed reconstruction roundhouse would be a valuable addition to the ones already existing on Dartmoor at Lower Merripit Farm and Heatree Activity Centre which by contrast are generally not open to the public.

Low Impact Affordable Self Build

The project will provide a small quantity of the much needed affordable housing in the area.

Wildlife and conservation

The Dartmoor Roundhouse Innovation Centre will occupy a small section towards the bottom of the 32 acre site. This and the rest of the woodland will be managed with conservation and wildlife habitat provision as its focus (as outlined in a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan).



Environment

Although there will be a minimal impact on the woodland itself, this will be more than offset by environmental benefits provided by this project (as outlined in this proposal).

Economy

Being a small scale visitor attraction, the project will benefit the local economy. It will also provide employment opportunities for staff and course and workshop leaders.

Education



The project will provide education in the form of courses, workshops and demonstrations, all of which will be open to individuals, families, school groups, and other group visitors.

Environmental Context

To tackle environmental issues, the UK Government published its 2005 strategy for sustainable development, called 'Securing the Future - The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy'. In this it identified the following 'four shared priority areas for immediate action':

1. Sustainable consumption and production
2. Climate change and energy
3. Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
4. Sustainable communities.

These vital environmental issues are also upheld by National Parks, with the DNPA stating that 'the principal aim of planning [is] sustainable development'. The UK government summarises sustainable development as 'ensuring everyone has a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.'(DNPA document 'Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006 – 2026', p.8).

The principal aim of the Dartmoor Roundhouse Innovation Centre is to demonstrate how life can be lived on the land whilst minimising harmful effects on the environment, and to educate the public about how this can be achieved. While doing so, it will take inspiration from past traditions and utilise appropriate modern technologies.

Under a detailed Management Plan, the Centre will implement systems designed to reduce or eliminate harmful environmental effects in the following areas:

- Energy provision
- Water supply
- Waste
- Buildings
- Transport

It will also set out how livelihoods can be made from the land, by growing food and harvesting timber, and how natural habitats are to be conserved and enhanced to maximise wildlife.

These timber and conservation elements will also be covered under a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan, along with the extraction of non-native trees, and the planting of native broadleaf trees.

A Community Impact Assessment will also be carried out as part of the Management Plan, to identify potential impacts (social and economic) on the host community (both positive and negative) and provide a basis from which to identify and implement any mitigation measures that may be necessary. Also, the environmental impact of the project, measured in global hectares per person, will be calculated annually with a scheduled target of 1.88 gha within three years.

The project will be taking inspiration and guidance from the Welsh One Planet Development scheme.

This scheme will also be in-line with the 'One Planet Dartmoor - Dartmoor Low Carbon Strategy' that was launched jointly by DNPA and Dartmoor Circle at the Met Office in 2011.

Outline of Proposal Applicant

Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative Ltd

Location

Part of Steward Wood, 32-acre woodland site at TQ13 8SD, approximately 1 mile south of Moretonhampstead, off the A382.



Infrastructure

The project could consist of the following infrastructure:

- Bronze Age Roundhouse reconstruction as a venue for courses/workshops
- No more than five low impact resident workers' roundhouses
- Workshop for craft and technology demonstrations
- Solar panels and a hydro-electric system for power generation
- Composting toilets for residents and visitors
- Improved access

Practicalities

Infrastructure

This proposal involves the deconstruction and removal of all structures currently at Steward Wood with the exception of the one current roundhouse.

Funding & Organisation

The project will be seeking funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and possibly other sources.

The project will be managed by a Business Manager, who will work with the resident workers, tutors and volunteers. The project will be overseen by the directors of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-op.

The project will be run in consultation with academics and technical specialists including archaeologists, historians, conservationists, and woodland management experts.

Open Days

The project will have regular Open Days.



Planning Application

The planning application for the project will be for a three year temporary period as specified under policy DMD30. If the project is running successfully after this time, a permanent permission will be sought. This planning application will outline how the criteria of DMD30 will be met, and will ensure that all concerns and reasons stated by Planning Inspector Freer for refusal of the planning application for Steward Community Woodland are fully addressed. The application will include the following documentation:

- Management Plan (based on One Planet Development policy and guidance)
- Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan
- Business Plan
- Technical Drawings for all proposed structures
- Results of public consultation
- Document showing how this proposal meets all the concerns raised by Inspector Freer concerning the 2015 planning application at Steward Wood
- Environmental Footprint Analysis
- Document showing how all planning policies relevant to the proposal are met (including DMD30)

One Planet Development Principles

Icon	Principle	Description
	Health and happiness	Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing
	Equity and local economy	Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade
	Culture and community	Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living
	Land and nature	Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife
	Sustainable water	Using water efficiently, protecting local water resources and reducing flooding and drought
	Local and sustainable food	Promoting sustainable humane farming and healthy diets high in local, seasonal organic food and vegetable protein
	Travel and transport	Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport
	Materials and products	Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.
	Zero waste	Reducing consumption, re-using and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution
	Zero carbon energy	Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables

Planning Policy

Forward Planning

The first stage of the Local Plan review consultation made it clear that a Low Impact Development (LID) policy is important for Dartmoor but that there needs to be more detailed guidance.

We (the members of the Co-operative) have been working, and will continue to work with Dartmoor Circle and consult with experts in the field who have qualifications and/or experience of LID and planning policy in other parts of the country.

We will circulate a questionnaire to ascertain what Dartmoor residents feel is appropriate in terms of LID on Dartmoor. Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative Ltd will present its findings to the Authority.

Although it is probably not appropriate for the DNPA to take on One Planet Development guidance in full, we believe it has sound principles and is a valuable resource in formulating guidance to assist with decision-making around Dartmoor's Low Impact Development policy and possibly other policies. We are happy to work with the DNPA and other groups to help with this in any way we can.

Dartmoor's Cultural Heritage

Over the centuries, Dartmoor has been shaped by multiple cultures. Some of the earliest dwellers lived in Roundhouses such as those whose remains can be found at Grimspound. Roundhouses form one of the most important cultural features on Dartmoor.

About 5,000 roundhouses have been identified so far on Dartmoor (Gerrard, 1997, p.37). Historians state that roundhouses represented the key Dartmoor dwelling for around 3000 years from the Bronze age (2500 BC) up to the the Romano-British period in the first few centuries AD.



Therefore, a project involving roundhouses will be of significant benefit to learning about Dartmoor cultures for those living in and visiting the Park.

The project aims to demonstrate ways of living gently on the land from ancient times (such as a Bronze Age roundhouse) to modern times (such as a modern low impact roundhouse), showcasing technologies from different ages that can assist in this.

For example, blacksmithing and Green Woodworking both date back on Dartmoor to the time of the Whitehorse Hill woman (Early Bronze Age between 1730BC and 1600BC) as evidenced by the artefacts recently found in her burial cist (www.dartmoor.gov.uk/wildlife-and-heritage/heritage/iron-age/whitehorse-hill). Blacksmithing can still be performed in a low impact manner using bellows or a fan powered by renewable energy, sustainably

harvested charcoal, and by reusing pieces of metal. Green Woodworking can also be a low impact craft with a traditional pole lathe and sustainably harvested wood.

The craft of charcoal burning easily dates back to Roman times and remained an important industry up until relatively recent times. The actual process has changed very little since those early times and in some cases is still practised today.



Dartmoor also has a history of renewable energy technologies. Water power has been used since medieval times as a power supply for the tin industry. Leats provided water to power water wheels in corn mills and fulling mills used by the wool industry. In places such as the Finch Foundry at Sticklepath, water powered the bellows, trip hammer and grinder used for the production of tools. With input and advice from experts and organisations such as the Devon Association for Renewable Energy, the project will demonstrate both older renewable technologies along with modern ones such as hydro-electric generation and photovoltaic solar. This will form an interesting overview of renewable energy over time and how that might be taken forward into the future on Dartmoor.



A successful example of a Low Impact Development under a similar policy to DMD30

Lammas

The Lammas project was created to pioneer an alternative model for living on the land (under the One Planet Development scheme). It empowers people to explore what it is to live a one-planet lifestyle. It demonstrates that alternatives are possible here and now.

The project centres around the ecovillage at Tir y Gafel, in North Pembrokeshire, which has been designed using a model that can be replicated across Wales. It combines the traditional smallholding model with the latest innovations in environmental design, green technology and permaculture.



The ecovillage was granted planning permission in 2009 by the Welsh Government. At its heart, it consists of nine smallholdings positioned around a Community Hub building, and it is supported by a range of peripheral projects and networks.

The project actively supports aspiring low-impact projects in Wales through providing guidance and resources as well as supporting independent academic studies.

Concluding Words

This project will enable the DNPA to celebrate its forward thinking as it is one of very few local authorities with a Low Impact Development policy. The project will provide a professional and successful showcase of a working model under DMD30, which the DNPA will be proud of.

