



Whitchurch Down Management Plan 2025 - 2030

**A partnership plan
to protect
Whitchurch Down
for the future**

WHAT IS THE WHITCHURCH DOWN MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document is a five year plan for the management of an area of land owned by Tavistock Town Council that also falls within the Dartmoor National Park boundary. It provides information on the history of the land, its diverse ecosystem, and the importance of the area to the local community.

The plan is a working document intended for those managing the land. That said, the document will also be made available to the public as a tool to help inform anyone who may be interested in learning more about Whitchurch Down.

The management plan was developed through close collaboration and consultation with the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group. The management plan details how members of the Consultative Group work together to proactively preserve, enhance and celebrate what makes Whitchurch Down such a special place.

Whitchurch Down Consultative Group Members:

- Tavistock Town Council
- Whitchurch Down Commoners Association
- Plasterdown Parish Council
- Dartmoor National Park
- Tavistock Cricket Club
- Tavistock Golf Club



“Whitchurch Down is a cherished part of Tavistock, offering a valuable expanse of easily accessible open land on the edge of the town. For many residents, it provides one of the only places where dogs can be exercised off the lead throughout most of the year. It is also a place to enjoy fresh air, striking views of Dartmoor, and a quiet moment among the wild ponies and open skies. Others value the Down as a setting for sport and recreation, particularly golf, or for its role in traditional grazing. Its appeal lies in the freedom it offers and the variety of ways it can be enjoyed. That is why the Town Council believes ongoing care and investment in the Down is essential to ensure this remarkable space remains open, safe, and welcoming for everyone, now and in the years ahead.”

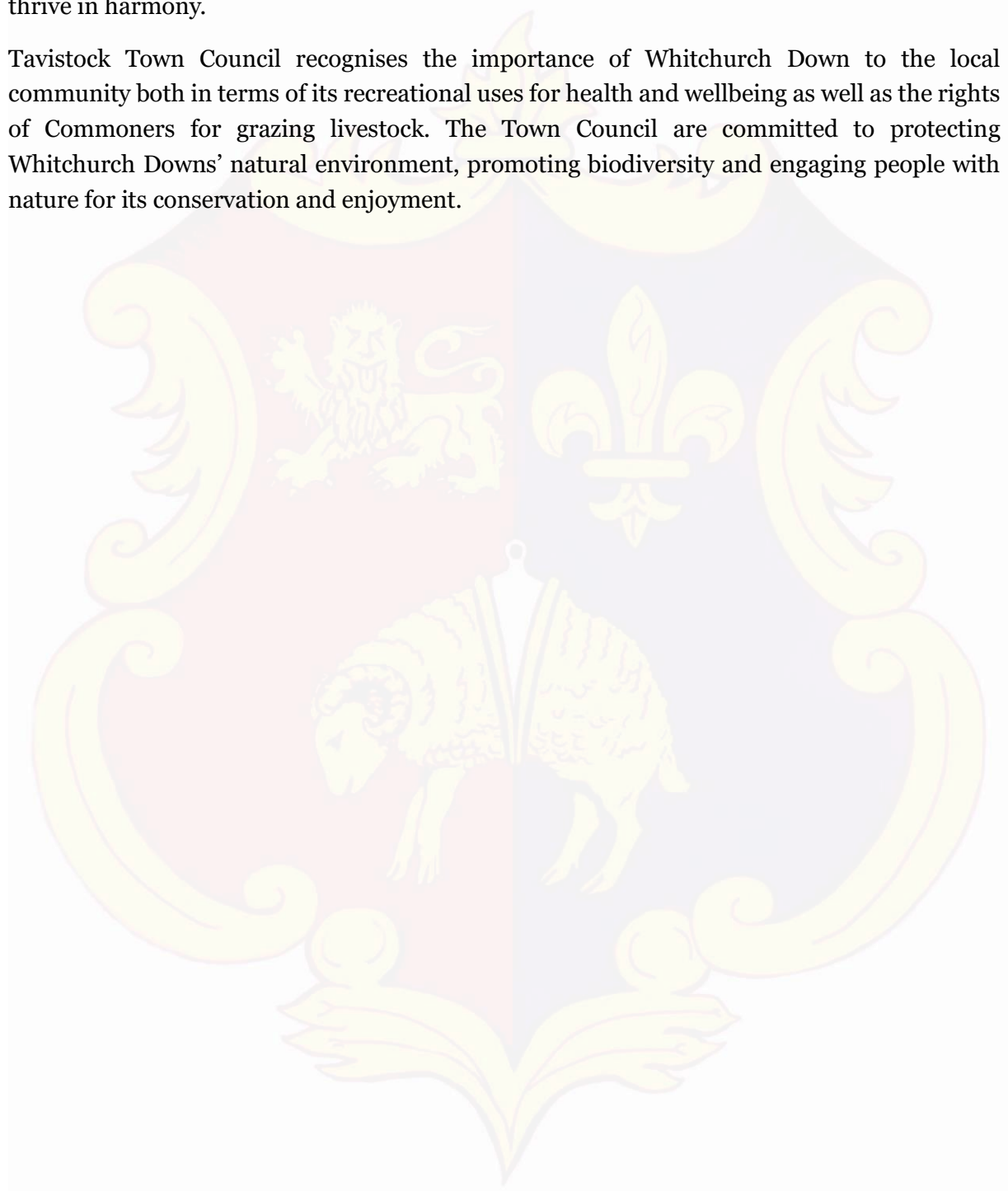
*Tavistock Town Council Town Mayor
Councillor Steve Hipsey,
2025 - 2026*



MISSION STATEMENT

To protect and conserve Whitchurch Downs' natural, historical and farming heritage whilst maintaining and enhancing a protected, connected landscape where people and nature can thrive in harmony.

Tavistock Town Council recognises the importance of Whitchurch Down to the local community both in terms of its recreational uses for health and wellbeing as well as the rights of Commoners for grazing livestock. The Town Council are committed to protecting Whitchurch Downs' natural environment, promoting biodiversity and engaging people with nature for its conservation and enjoyment.



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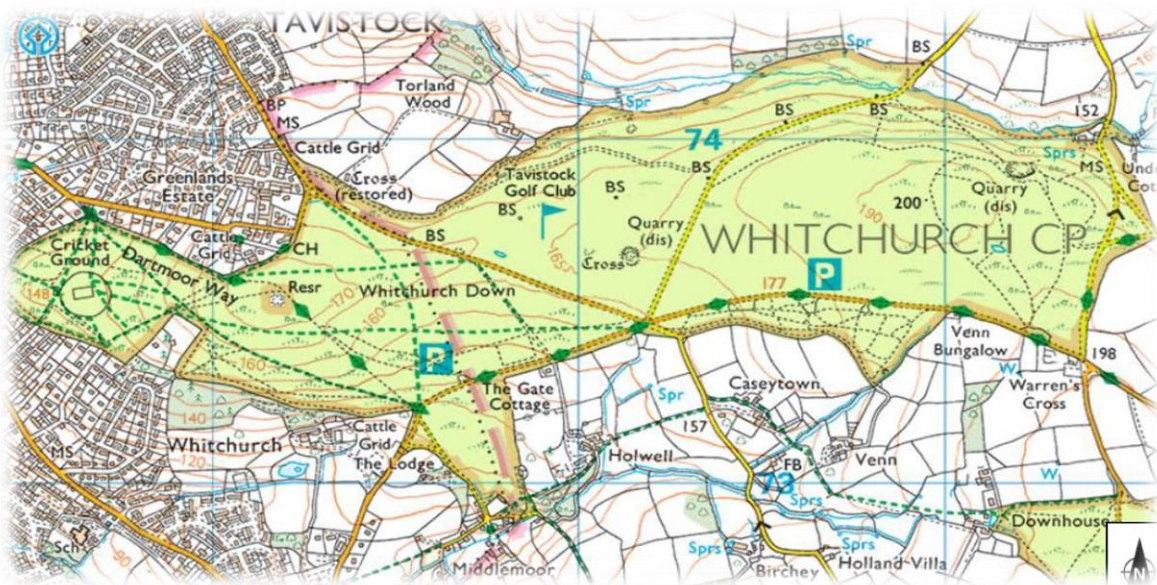
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INTRODUCTION

Whitchurch Down is an area of spectacular open moorland scenery which holds significant agricultural, ecological, recreational, and historical value.

The area which covers 460 acres (188.34 hectares) and comprises of open moorland, a number of public rights of way and bridal paths, livestock grazing, a Golf and Cricket Club respectively as well as the iconic, and fondly named “Pimple”, holds a strong sense of place and wellbeing for both the local community and visitors.



Whitchurch Down is owned by Tavistock Town Council who has Manorial Rights' (essentially free hold and mineral rights, subject to old leases and commoners' rights). Whilst the Town Council own Whitchurch Down, 335 acres (135 hectares) are within the boundary of Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) and the remaining 110 acres (44.5 hectares) fall within the boundary of West Devon Borough Council (WDBC).

The public rights of way, tracks and car parks attract visitors throughout the year and are maintained by the Town Council. The whole of Whitchurch Down is designated access land under the CRow Act 2000. On the north side of Whitchurch Down is an area designated SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

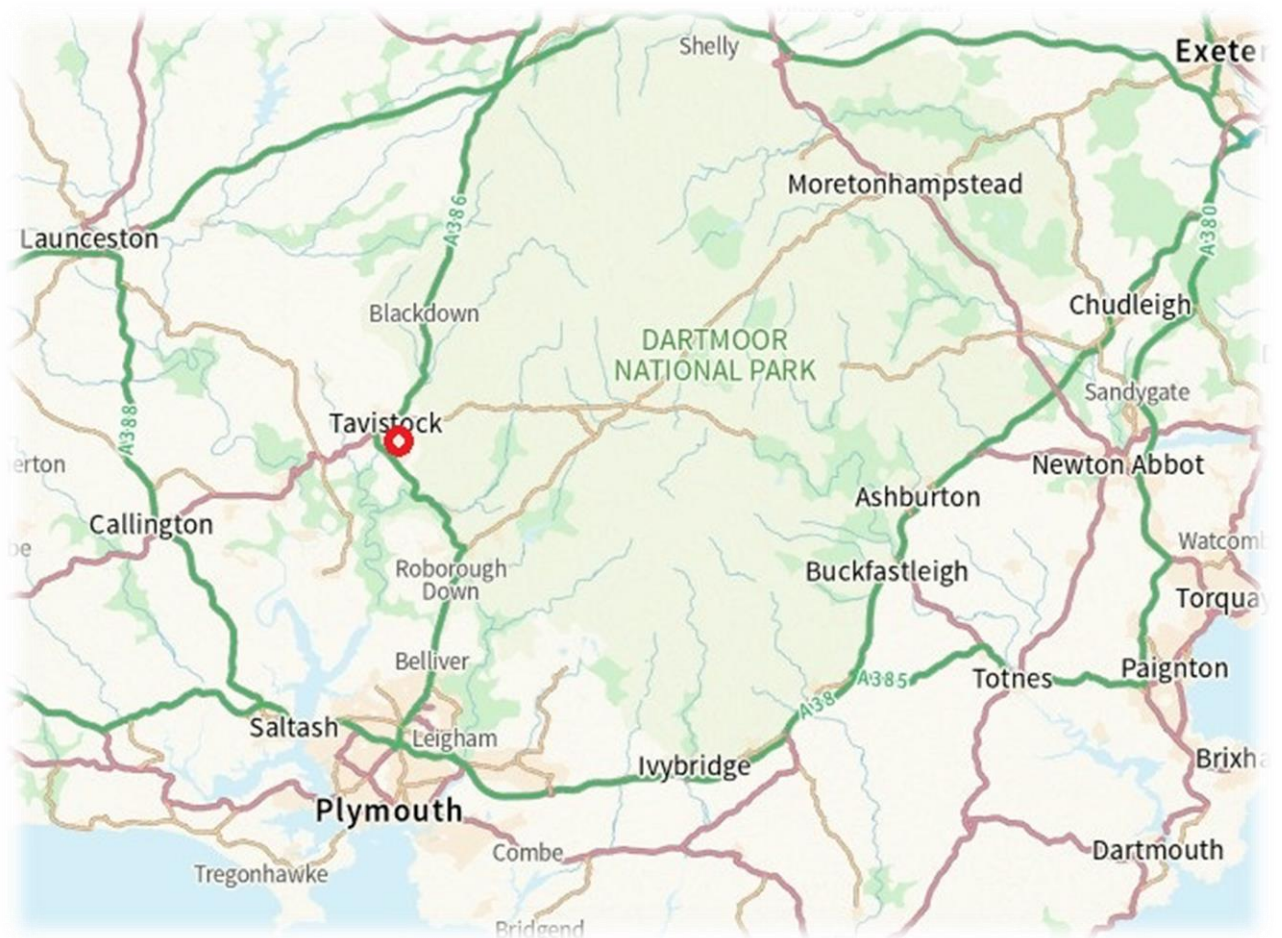
Whitchurch Down is registered as common land and as such the area welcomes grazing from sheep, Dartmoor ponies and cows. The livestock grazing is managed by the Whitchurch Commoners Association.

With far reaching panoramic views of Dartmoor, and Cornwall, Whitchurch Down offers a unique landscape for people and nature who through their respective interests in the area are intrinsically linked.

Where is Whitchurch Down?

Whitchurch Down is located in West Devon, nestled between the historic market town of Tavistock and the western border of Dartmoor National Park. Due to Whitchurch Down's close proximity to the centre of the historic market and stannary town of Tavistock (less than a mile's walking distance) the area is frequently referred to as the Western Gateway to Dartmoor, thus further strengthening the connection to Dartmoor National Park.

Whitchurch Down marks the southernmost limit of the land owned by the Town Council. Tavistock Town Council owns and manages a small area of land called Piddle Green which is adjacent to the hamlet of Middlemoor at SX497727.



Whilst there is a wealth of archaeological evidence of humanity from the Iron Age period on Dartmoor, there have been no finds on Whitchurch Down dating back to the 8th Century that would suggest Bronze Age pastoral habitation. That said, eleven hand axes made of stone not local to the area were found near Tavistock, which historians believe suggests Whitchurch Down was a key trading route in prehistoric times.

Surprisingly to some, Whitchurch Down played an important part in the World War II D-Day Landings. From July 1943 to May 1944, American soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division of the US Army were based at Abbotsfield Hall in Tavistock. Due to the vast open moorland of Whitchurch Down and Plasterdown, the army used the area to prepare for the military manoeuvre. Locals recall tents and military vehicles on Whitchurch Down, as well as a field hospital and landing strip. Footings of the aforementioned buildings can still be seen today.

Quarrying

In the past stone has been quarried at various points on Whitchurch Down. The Down lies on the metamorphic Devonian and Carboniferous beds, which surround the Dartmoor granite and the shales and slate rocks. When extracted, quarried stone provided useful material for local buildings across the rural landscape for generations. Whilst the area is now a haven for wildlife, there are remains of a quarry at the Western most point of Whitchurch Down, just behind the cricket pavilion. The remains of another disused quarry are seen south of Torlands (this was later used as a dumping ground which was then backfilled) as well as close to Pixie's Cross.



Aerial imagery (2025) of the Pennycomequick disused quarry – as you can see nature has very much reclaimed this area of land

Pennycomequick is the largest disused quarry on Whitchurch Down (SX511739) and up to the 1920's it was used for extracting stone for building purposes. In recent years local climbing groups and the army cadets have used the steep natural rocky outcrop to practice. However, these activities have lessened and nature has reclaimed the area. The Town Council are responsible for managing the safety fencing around the quarry as well as ensuring there is appropriate signage.

Mining

Evidence of mining exists at points along the Down's northern boundary, on the southern slopes of Taviton Brook. There lays relics of small scale working for copper dated to the 18th and 19th centuries, known as Wheal Surprise and Whitchurch Down Consuls. The workings are based on copper lodes which run east-west along the valley. The earliest known mine lies downstream from Furzy lane Bridge at SX503740.

HISTORICAL FEATURES

Medieval Crosses

There are two medieval wayside crosses on Whitchurch Down that date back to the 10th century AD that served to mark the route between the Tavistock Benedictine Abbey, which was established in 974, and Buckfast Abbey, which was established in 1018 – the so-called Abbots Way. The route also became known as the Jobbler Cawse because of its use by traders of wool, as well as the Tavistock Monastic Way.



Whitchurch Down Cross



Pixies Cross

The smaller of the two crosses, known as the Whitchurch Down cross, measures approx. 1.21m. With a northwest – southwest alignment, the cross stands on the junction near Green Lane (SX493738). Evidentially, the cross suffered damage at some point in the past, the cross is lower than its original height and shows signs of having been restored (the shaft is of a different stone from that of its head and arms). A short distance east (SX501737) is the larger of the two crosses, known locally as Pixies Cross. The cross is set approximately 183m meters in from the road in what would have been a small quarry. It is of thicker and more regular shape, and excess in height of over six feet. Both crosses are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).

Boundary Stones

Historically important boundary stones mark the old parish boundary of Whitchurch. The boundary stones run from the cricket ground to a garden wall at the top of Down Road and then in the direction of Taviton. The stones have a runnel along the top pointing in the direction of the next one along. The map below indicates the boundary stones, noted on the map as “HER” Historical Environment Record.



Hedge Banks and Walls

The hedge banks and walls are believed to date back centuries, originally built to protect the in-bye (cultivated land) from grazing livestock or deer. The position of mature trees within the boundary walls gives some insight into the timeline of their existence. Interestingly, almost all of the hedge banks have been built of small stones in very regular fashion, unlike those of the nearby lanes which are of irregular pieces of granite. The boundary hedges also contain a large quantity of white quartz. Although a historical feature of the Down the hedge banks and walls belong to the in-bye landowners and are therefore beyond the scope of this Management Plan.



The Pimple

The tower is three-sided, constructed in Hurdwick stone, with fine rafters and a slate roof flaring up to a capped point. The original roof was clad in Delabole slate; however, it was re-slated in 1993. The tower covers access to the service reservoir below – inside the tower is a metal stairway that leads down to a buried concrete tank – although this has been sealed off for safety reasons. The reservoir was part of a commission from Major Gallie for the design of Littlecourt (house at the top of Down Road, also designed by Lutyens). The reservoir was to supply water to this house and future houses on Down Road. The local water supply, including the reservoir was taken over by Tavistock Urban District Council, and then transferred to North Devon Water Board, and subsequently incorporated into South West Water Authority before passing to the privatised South West Water.



Following a campaign lead by Mrs Margaret Wedd (who lived at Littlecourt, Tavistock) the Pimple was listed in December 1983. In the early 1990's a new source of water was piped across Whitchurch Down, which effectively by-passed The Pimple thus making its reservoir redundant. South West Water sold the Pimple in 2000 to a private buyer.

LAND MANAGEMENT AND FARMING

Tavistock Town Council plays a lead role in protecting and shaping the future of Whitchurch Down and recognises the importance of the area for the local community, the many varied recreational uses, the rights of the commoners, and the intrinsic value of the natural habitat that it provides.

Whitchurch Down is a place where peace and tranquillity reside and whilst there are recreational areas of enjoyment such as the Golf Club, users of the Down, be it local people or visitors, as a whole have a mutual respect for each other and the environment enabling, the place to be one where people can relax and enjoy the scenery, and one where nature does thrive.

Fortunately, Whitchurch Down has escaped excessive tourism, the soft tourism is sympathetic, with visitors engaging in low-impact recreation and as such the environmental impact has been minimal.

In partnership with the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group, the Council seeks to manage the area for the enjoyment of all on the basis the land and its ecological value is not compromised. Maintaining Whitchurch Down's rich identity is what underpins land management decisions and future strategies.

The Whitchurch Down Consultative Group meet in person twice a year in a formal setting, as well as meet annually to walk the land. Throughout the year contact is maintained, to discuss arising issues, concerns or proposals as well as share information. By forming a strong working partnership where stakeholders are united in a shared vision to protect the landscape, Whitchurch Down reaps the rewards.

Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council

Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council represents the rural communities of Sampford Spiney Parish, half of Whitchurch Parish and Plasterdown. Its Boundary follows the River Walkham from North of Merrivale hamlet, passing under Ward Bridge towards Horrabridge. Here it skirts the village and rejoins the River Walkham to Double Waters, where it follows the River Tavy North, to Crowndale. It heads back East via Whitchurch Down, and below Cox Tor, to Merrivale.

There is grazing land at Middlemoor, Shortsdown and Plasterdown, as well as most of the land used by Tavistock Golf Club.

Traditionally, the Boundary is checked, on foot, every 7-10 years. This Beating of the Bounds was recently carried out in three stages, over the last eighteen months.

Tavistock Golf Club



Tavistock Golf Club was founded in 1890, where they have since had a presence on Whitchurch Down. This was formalised in May 1957 when 225 acres of land were formally leased to the Golf Club for a period of 99 years at a peppercorn rental of £10 a year. The course enjoys the distinction of being one of the oldest golf courses in Devon, and the first in the country to move away from natural sand-dunes to heath and heather.

In 1894 a new clubhouse was built (to replace the old 'iron house') and in 1895 an 18-hole course was completed. The eleventh Duke of Bedford became a patron in 1900. At the beginning of the 20th century, the wish to expand the course brought the club into conflict with the Whitchurch Down Commoners. After a lengthy dispute the Duke granted permission for the golf club, but it was not until 1927 that a lease was drawn up whereby the golf club was allowed to set up an 18-hole golf course and 4 shelters, with rights over the whole of the eastern half of the Down, in return for rent payable to the Duke. With the break-up of the Bedford Estates the rental lapsed, and the course treated as common land, with free access. The arrival of the motor car and the changed attitudes of the 1920s brought an influx of weekend golfers. The golf club celebrated its centenary in 1990. Today 91 hectares (225 acres) of land is leased to the Trustees of Tavistock Golf Club from Tavistock Town Council. The Golf Club maintains the golf course, and ensures that the Downs are clean and accessible for all members and guests alike, including paying some £6,000 per year to the Commoners in recognition of the disturbance to their rights.

The club has a commitment to the environment, in addition to improving the playing surfaces whilst continuing to preserve the environment, developing, and maintaining relationships with our fellow Stakeholders, and making each other aware of the environmental issues. This all goes hand in hand with acknowledging the area's landscape and history.



Tavistock Cricket Club



There has been a cricket pitch on Whitchurch Down since 1849 when "the ring" as it was known then was transferred and thus Tavistock Cricket Club was formed under the patronage of the seventh Duke of Bedford.

It was then permission was granted for the iconic granite posts to be erected around the circular playing area. A pavilion was built in 1873 and enlarged in 1894 by the eleventh Duke. A lease was drawn up in 1920 between TTC and Tavistock Cricket Club for 8 acres of land at a rent of 25p per year.

In 1953 the ground was enlarged and further facilities added in the



early 1960's. Today, just over 8 acres (3 hectares) of the Down is leased to Tavistock Cricket Club by TTC, and is maintained by them under the terms of their lease.

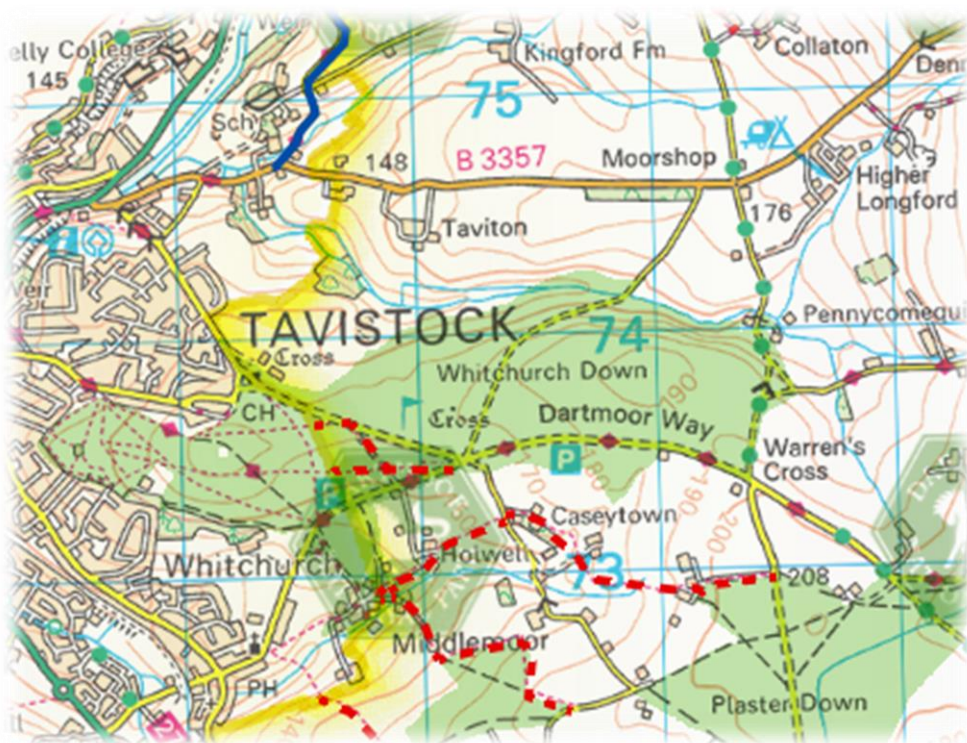
Tavistock CC is very much at the heart of the local community, supporting 3 senior teams, including a women's team, 6 junior teams, including two girls (8 to 13 years) teams, alongside a thriving All Stars and Dynamos (5 to 11 years) section, with links to many of the local primary schools and Tavistock college. The "square" is an area of fine turf that is fenced off all year round to provide optimum playing conditions whilst the outfield is open to all users when cricket is not being played. The outfield is maintained during the season in the form of mowing by gang mower to maintain a grass height suitable for cricket. Tavistock Cricket Club are committed to providing a dedicated and fantastic space for their players and the wider community, to continue to grow the club for a sustainable future, expanding links with the local schools and developing a cricket offer to include SEND, community and social cricket for all ages.

Dartmoor National Park Authority



The Dartmoor National Park Authority is a national park authority in England, legally responsible for Dartmoor National Park in Devon. It came into existence in its present form in 1997, being preceded by a committee of Devon County Council and the Dartmoor National Park Committee from 1 April 1974.

Dartmoor National park is 368 square miles or 954 square kilometres. It's about 20 miles from North to South and 20 miles from East to West. National Parks were created by The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Dartmoor National Park is created from land owned by a range of people including lots of farmers and The Duchy of Cornwall (Prince William).



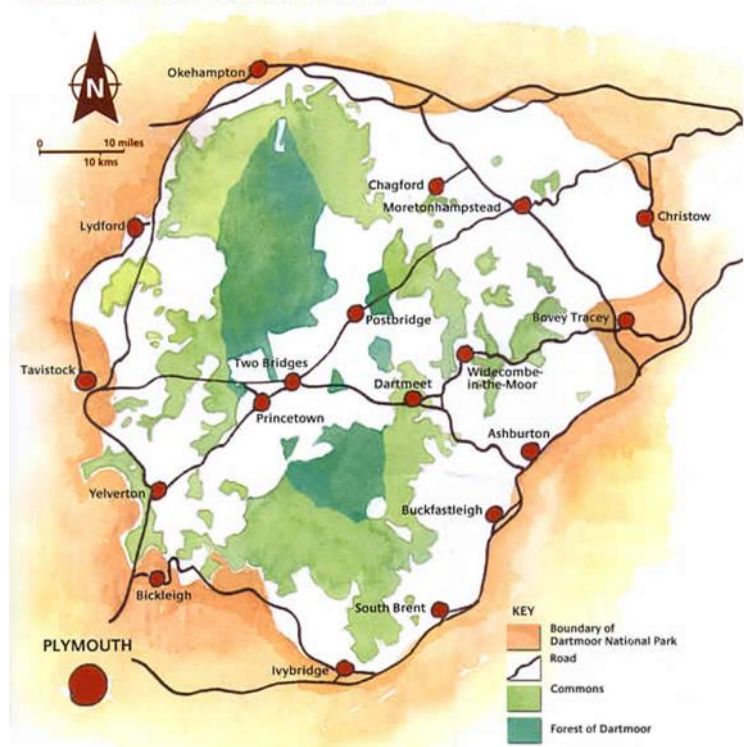
The yellow marker on the map indicates the DNP boundary on Whitchurch Down

The Whitchurch Down Commoners Association

Whitchurch Down is an area of open unenclosed land, that whilst is privately owned by Tavistock Town Council, the area is registered common land and as such is subject to traditional “Rights of Common”. Common land is an area of land under private ownership whereby other people have certain rights to it, be it through use, access, or resources.

Common land accounts to 3% of England’s rich landscape. In respect of Dartmoor, nearly 36,000 hectares (88,900 acres) of the area is common land, which equates to 37% of the park's whole area and more than 75% of its moorland.

COMMON LAND ON DARTMOOR



The Rights of Common that can be exercised do vary and depend on each individual area of land. However, in general terms they involve the taking of natural products

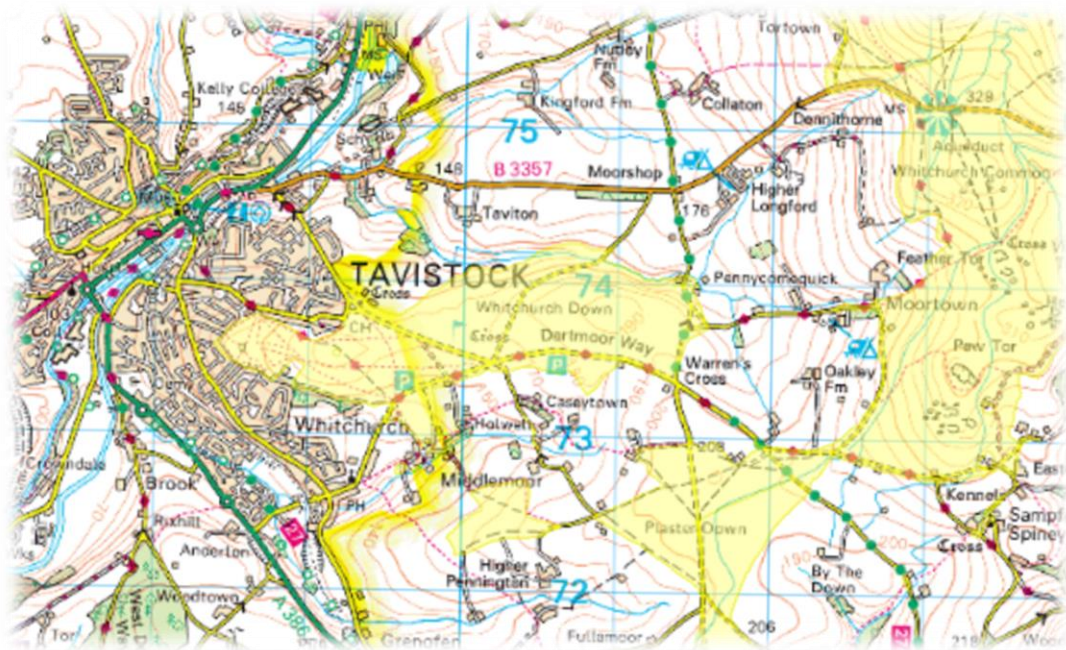
Examples of Rights of Common:

Pastorage	Common in the soil	Turbary	Estovers	Piscary	Pannage
•The right to graze livestock on the land	•The right to take minerals, sand, gravel or stones from the land	•The right to cut peat or turf for fuel	•The right to collect wood for fuel	•The right to fish in bodies of water on land	•The right to turn out pigs to forage for acorns and beechams

Specific to Whitchurch Down, records detailing the origins of farming on the Commons are limited. However, as with other uplands in Devon it is highly likely the grazing of land for livestock on the open moorland dates back to prehistoric times. Until the First World War the traditional breed of cattle to graze was the South Devon which was crossed with a Galloway or Highland bull. In the early part of the last century there were no Dartmoor ponies on Whitchurch Down and very few sheep but there was, quite surprisingly large numbers of geese, mainly owned by smallholders. This provides an interesting link to the annual Goose Fair event held in Tavistock which dates back to the 12th century where following the Kings market charter in 1105, gaggles of geese were bought to town for market.

Today, grazing gaggles of geese on the Common are a thing of the past. However, the farms which border Whitchurch Down exercise their rights of common by grazing sheep, cows, and Dartmoor ponies. These farms have Rights of Common written into their respective farm leases for keeping certain numbers of sheep, cattle, and ponies.

These Rights are registered and depend on the size of the farm. It is understood Rights of Common were written into leases from the 14th century and those who have Rights of Common today on Whitchurch Down include more than fifty owners of agricultural land in the Tavistock area.



The yellow areas on the map indicate registered Common Land

In medieval times Rights were strictly regulated; landowners appointed officials known as Reeves to monitor this ancient custom. Such control lapsed during the 20th century and as problems such as over-grazing and under-grazing occurred, with reports of poor animal health and husbandry, the abuse of Rights was widespread. During this period, public pressure increased for access to open land and outdoor recreational activities were on the rise. In order to address the challenges presented, in 1985 an Act of parliament was passed, the Dartmoor Commons Act (1985).

Under the Dartmoor Commons Act (1985), the Dartmoor Commoners' Council was established in 1950 to represent the Commoners, who used the open moorland to graze their livestock, to make regulations about most matters, which concern the management of the Commons and the welfare of the stock de-pastured on the Commons, and to enforce the Dartmoor Commoners' Council Regulations. In addition to Statutory legislation there are a number of byelaws that apply to Commons within Dartmoor National Park. These can be viewed at www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk. Dartmoor Commoners' Council Regulations were drawn up to govern the activities on Commoners' and were passed in 1990. These can be viewed at www.dartmoorcommonerscouncil.org.uk.

The extent of individuals rights on holdings/farms are recorded on the Commons Register, held at County Hall, Exeter, and copies are also held by local Councils. The Rights of Common and Ownership were established by the Commons Registration Act 1965 and at the subsequent hearings under the jurisdiction of the Commons Commissioner.

The 1965 Act states that " no right of common shall be exercisable over any such land unless they are registered under this Act or under the Land Registration Act 1925 and 1936". In effect, if they are not on the Registers, these rights do not exist. Shortsdown is registered under CL 56, Plasterdown CL84 and Whitchurch Down CL86.

Any objections to provisional registrations were heard before the Commons Commissioner during the 1980's. The Commons Commissioner made written decisions on matters brought before him for each of the Commons land units e.g. Plasterdown CL84 decision, dated 11 July 1983 by Commons Commissioner Baden-Fuller Esq.



The Whitchurch Down Commoners Association forms the west quarter of Dartmoor. Under the Dartmoor Commons Act of 1985 each quarter elects five Commoners to represent them on a central Dartmoor Commoners' Council. All must be from different associations and one of the five must be a 'small grazier' with a right to graze less than 10 livestock units (each unit equals one adult cow or pony or 5 sheep).

The Council also has seats for two representatives of owners of the Commons, two from the Dartmoor National Park Authority, one from the Duchy of Cornwall, and a vet. It can co-opt two more members in addition to the 26 just named. The Commoners' Council makes regulations about most matters, which concern the management of the Commons, the welfare of the stock de-pastured there, and arbitrates in disputes between Commoners. When necessary, it enforces against breaches of the Regulations by going to court. The National Park Authority makes byelaws to regulate public access and behaviour under the same Act.

Whitchurch Down Commoners Association, "Rights of Common", is that of pasturage, the Right to put livestock out to feed on the land. Whilst the area of Whitchurch Down itself contains no farmsteads, farmers on its borders exercise their grazing right. The Commons' vegetation is in agricultural terms to 'rough grazing' and as such, is a critical asset to those farming the Commons. Grazing on the Common allows for efficient sustainable livestock management, with the vegetation providing a consistent and natural source of food for the animals. The ability to exercise their Rights is integral to the longevity of the local farming community and this time honoured traditional farming method.

In addition, the Right to graze is fundamental in supporting the ecosystem and the future conservation and maintenance of Whitchurch Down. There are many benefits from grazing such as reducing the cover of invasive grasses which in turn stimulates new plant growth and capturing carbon in vegetation and soil.

Grazing on Whitchurch Down also means there is no reliance on fertilizers or herbicides to manage the vegetation which further supports the health and wellbeing of the areas precious ecosystems.

The Town Council recognise farming is much more than an occupation, it is a way of life where ancient knowledge is handed down through generations and where such knowledge is integral to keeping the equilibrium of the local landscape, its precious ecosystems, and breeds of livestock which roam.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Biodiversity

Whitchurch Down is characterised by lowland heath, which is defined as open uncultivated land 300m in altitude, dominated by dwarf shrubs such as ling, cross leaved heath, and European gorse, intermixed with acid grassland, bog bracken, scrub and scattered trees. In Devon, lowland heath represents parts of a continuum of overlapping, related habitats between the upland heaths of Dartmoor and Exmoor, and the lowland wet grassland of the Culm Measures and Blackdowns (Rhos pasture).

The UK's lowland heathlands are of international importance and represent some 20% of the total area of the habitat in Europe. Devon's lowland heath represents one fifth of the total in the South West, and has a unique character. Devon's lowland heathland, like many of its special wildlife habitats, is subject to great pressures and has declined markedly in the course of the last century. Losses to agricultural improvements, with former heathland being converted to more productive pasture and forestry, which now covers substantial areas of former heath, have reduced the country lowland heaths to some 4,000 hectares.

There are several ponds, small flushes, and scrapes on Whitchurch Down. The largest of the ponds is located near the Pennycomequick disused quarry. The Sacred Pool or Dew Pond as it is known, was written about by Dr Tom Greeves in a 2019 article titled *'Dartmoor's Sacred Pools. Design in the Prehistoric Landscape'*. The large pool of water is an integral part of the Down's identity and whilst it does dry up to some degree annually through the hotter periods, it is renowned for attracting the grazing livestock and as such is an important water source.



The "Living Dartmoor" documents describe the whole of Whitchurch Down as outside any of the designated Key Wildlife Areas of KWA's. However, there is a neutral grassland KWA to the south and Whitchurch Common to the east of Whitchurch Down is a moorland KWA. Further

to this on Whitchurch Down there have been recent recordings of Cuckoo, Small Pear Bordered Fritillary and Purple Hairstreak Butterflies, and it is likely that the usual moorland bird species can be found on Whitchurch Down.

Wildlife

The temporary pools and ponds are also an important habitat for Fairy Shrimp *Chirocephalus diaphanous* (image courtesy of <https://jeremybiggs.wordpress.com/fairy-shrimps>) a rare crustaceans which has been identified on Whitchurch Down. Interestingly, Fairy Shrimp have a rapid life cycle and have adapted to living in temporary bodies of water that are prone to drying out (ephemera) – their eggs can lay dormant in soil for long periods of time until such a time when the rains return and the pools are once again filled. Fairy Shrimp are rare and face considerable threats due to the habitat loss – where the temporary ponds / watering holes are backfilled due to aesthetics or health and safety concerns or due to the reversion of pasture to scrub.



Fairy shrimps are an important food source for insects, amphibians, and other invertebrates, proving an important link in the food chain.

Fairy shrimps have been described as a living fossil, as similar forms have been found dating back 140 million years. Unfortunately, they are now classified as vulnerable in the British Red Data Book. This means the species is fully protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and listed as a Species of Conservation Concern under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

A number of specialist bird species breed on the county's lowland heathland including Nightjar, Dartford Warbler, Stonechat, Whinchat, Tree Pipit and a dwindling number of Curlew in wetter areas. Of these species the Nightjar and Woodlark are listed as Species of Principal Importance in England (NERC Act, 2006).



The rare Dartford warbler (image courtesy of <https://www.birdguides.com/dartford-warbler>), a UK resident has been spotted on Whitchurch Down, favouring the gorse bushes for shelter and as perch for them to sign from. The small, dark, long-tailed warbler has struggled in the past, with the population serious declining in the 1960s, however since then the warbler has gradually recovered, increasing in both numbers and range. Its

conservation status is still regarded as an Amber List species but there is considerably hope for this birds future.

The character of Devon's lowland heathland is provided not just by heather which is less predominant in Devons heathlands than it is in the other heathland areas further to the east, but by a varying mosaic of heather, Western gorse, Bristle Bent, Cross leaved heath and Bell heather. Other frequent plants are bilberry, bracken, tormentil and lichens of the genus

Cladonia, with bracken sometimes predominating. Heath lobelia, pale dog violet and marsh clubmoss are listed as Species of Principal Importance in England (NECRC Act 2006).

More than 35 species of butterfly and 21 species of dragonfly and damselfly breed on Devon's heathland, making heathland one of the most important invertebrate habitats in the county. The following butterfly species are listed as Species of Principal Importance in England (NERC Act, 2006) – the silver studded blue, pearl bordered fritillary and grayling. Dragonflies and damselflies of conservation concern on Devon's lowland heaths include the keeled skimmer, southern damselfly and the small red damselfly, of these species the southern damselfly is listed as the Species of Principal Importance in England (NECRC Act 2006). Other insects include the narrow headed ant, raft spider, bog bush cricket, wood cricket and small grass emerald moth. The narrow headed ant is a species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006).

High Brown and Pearl Bordered Fritillaries

The high Brown Fritillary (image courtesy of <https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies/high-brown-fritillary>) and Pearl Bordered Fritillary are two species of fritillary butterflies found in Britain, with Dartmoor being a key location for both of them. The High Brown Fritillary has a pale green hind wings with mottled white, black and orange markings. The adults start to emerge in mid June and can be seen until early August. They lay their eggs on violet leaves, the larval food plant or on bracken or leaf litter close to violet plants. HBF caterpillars are brown with dark pink spiky hairs, and are very well camouflaged in decomposing bracken litter. They overwinter in the egg stage and hatch in March when warm conditions are needed for the larvae to develop rapidly.



Whilst both fritillary species are still widespread across most of Europe, they have suffered dramatic declines in England and Wales in the last 50 years, with losses being more widespread and critical for high brown fritillaries. The pearl bordered fritillary is now locally extinct in most of Wales and central and eastern England. The high brown fritillary can now only be found in parts of Devon, Wales, Cumbria and Lancashire. The average count of HBF over the five years has remained stable at an average of 13 sites, which is a decline of about 50% since the 1990's on Dartmoor. They are most abundant in the extreme west and east of Dartmoor, in the Dart and the Walkham Valley. Both of these fritillaries are monitored as part of the Two Moors threatened Butterfly Project. Through the project sites that populations of high brown and pearl bordered fritillaries are brought into suitable management via Agri-environment schemes.

Both common lizards and adders are drawn to Whitchurch Down due to the unique landscape favouring open moorland, heathland, and woodland habitats. Whilst Adders *Vipera berus*, the only venomous snake found in the wild in the UK, are usually shy and retreat when disturbed, they can bite if they feel threatened and so the Town Council strongly advise visitors to be vigilant and give them space, especially when walking dogs or with children.

Dartmoor's open spaces and wooded valleys are home to Deer and there have been sightings on Whitchurch Down.

Wild Tavi, a community based group in Tavistock undertook a survey of Whitchurch Down in 2023. This formed part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme. A population of bats were surveyed.

Trees

The open areas of Whitchurch Down are mostly dominated by naturalised Gorse *Ulex europaeus*. In terms of trees within the open areas of Whitchurch Down, Common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* is the next most dominant species, followed by Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, and to a much lesser extent, Common holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. The age range of these species generally range from young (in low numbers) to mature (in much higher numbers). For example, the Gorse is a mix of young through to mature. Equally, periodic management of the Gorse produces young growth but from mature stools. Hawthorn are mostly at the mature stage, but there are young to semi matures coming through in low numbers. Whereas the rowans and oaks are generally of semi to early mature age.

In contrast, the Devon boundary hedgerows of Whitchurch Down are densely populated with large mature trees and a healthy mature understorey in more wooded parts. For example, the small, wooded extent to the west of the Down. Understorey species typically include Common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Common holly *Ilex aquifolium*. The large trees mostly consist of Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and European beech *Fagus sylvatica*, with Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and



European ash *Fraxinus excelsior* in lesser numbers. There are also a few numbers of species such as Turkey oak *Quercus cerris* inter-planted with the oaks. Interestingly, these larger beech and oak are generally found in single species group, with oak dominating the north western extent of the boundaries that border eastern residential edge of the town, whereas the beech dominate more along the southern boundaries, close to Whitchurch House. These oak and beech do, however, inter-mix in parts. For example, along the south eastern boundaries and around the boundary of Trevaunance.

Environmental Challenges

Much of the loss of lowland heathland over the course of the 20th century in Devon has been

due to agricultural improvement of land by drainage, ploughing, re seeding and fertilizer application. Losses to this cause have largely come to a halt now, though some of the smaller heathland sites remain vulnerable.

Overgrazing by overstocking heathland vegetation with livestock causes a gradual transition to poor acid grassland and the loss of heather and other dwarf shrubs. Whilst overgrazing on Whitchurch Down was a concern in the past, the Whitchurch Down Commoners Association take a considered approach to the management of grazing on the Down.

The grazing and stocking rates on Whitchurch Down are monitored and set by DEFRA and Natural England.

Conversely many of the smaller heaths across Devon have suffered from too little rather than too much grazing, often because they do not offer a viable source of grazing and are not in keeping with the rest of larger farms units, yet have not been economic to convert to grass. Such sites become degraded, or have been lost altogether due to scrubbing up and succession to woodland. This serves to underline the importance of the Commoners on Whitchurch Down without whom long term sustainable grazing management would not be possible. The main land management challenge is gorse encroachment – a major problem for both conservation and access. The aim for the next five years should therefore be to clear gorse and scrub from paths, tracks, viewing areas. Roadside verges and archaeological features on a rotational basis to form a mosaic of different ages of gorse and scrub. This has the additional benefit of improving access and the locating and / or moving of livestock. It also helps to create gaps in the vegetation that can act as a fire break. The preferred method of management is to establish a 5 year management rotation of target areas identified using aerial imagery and survey information.

Conventional control methods for the management of gorse can have a detrimental impact the precious ecosystems that reside in that area and more often than not are only partially effective.

The gorse on Whitchurch is the European gorse variety *Ulex europaeus*, pictured, commonly known as Gorse, Common gorse, Furze or Whin, and is a species of flowering plant native to Western Europe. This evergreen shrub is abundant throughout the UK, with an insurgence over the last 60 years its density and vigour has greatly increased.

Whilst the bright yellow flowers and dense thickets are a familiar and much loved feature of Whitchurch Down, due to its invasive nature it does need to be controlled in order to manage a balanced equilibrium between ecosystems.



The dense shrubs create the perfect habitat for birds and insects to shelter, hibernate and nest. This includes the rare Dartford warbler bird which we know is a resident of Whitchurch Down.

In addition, the yellow flowers and young growth are an excellent source of food for insects and are integral to the local food chain, with bees and butterflies enjoying the nectar from the flowers.

One of the primary reasons Whitchurch Down has an abundance of wildlife is due to the established Gorse bushes and the benefits these shrubs provide for their survival. Where there is an abundance of insects there is food for birds, bats and other small mammals. Whilst seemingly prickly, the gorse branches are also a source of food for the livestock and passing deer.

However, the negative impacts of gorse if not management do outweigh the positive and one of the primary aims of the Whitchurch Down Management Plan is to establish a balanced approach to its role in the local ecosystem. Due to the fast growing nature of gorse, and the optimum growing conditions on Whitchurch Down (vast open space, with little tree canopy allowing full sun) it spreads rapidly, taking over large areas of the heath and grasslands which has a negative impact on the natural environment. Gorse competes aggressively and so other species of plants and insects suffer due to loss of light, and water as the impenetrable thickets block access. Additionally, once the shrub reaches maturity, the delicate balance of soil nutrients can be disturbed from the rotting vegetation which decays. Aging plants also pose a serious fire risk, due to their high flammability and large amounts of dry dead growth beneath their canopies.

The risk of wildfires is a further complication and challenge for the management Whitchurch Down and one that with climate change will need further consideration and action. Climate change is leading to warmer, drier weather conditions in spring and summer, and more frequent, prolonged droughts, which increases the risk of wildfires starting and spreading.

Manual treatment is the Town Council's preferred method of gorse management. However, it is recognized due to the expanse of the areas that require management and indeed budget resistant's the use of machinery is inevitable. In the areas identified where machinery is required, specialist contractors with experience will undertake the work and follow a strict program. The gorse management undertaken in house by the Town Council's Work Department will be on a relatively smaller scale. Past practice was for the gorse to be cut by hand and then burnt on site however more recently the brash arising from the cut gorse has been chipped and graded into the land. The Commoners manage the gorse clearance from Furzy Lane to Pennycomequick by controlled burning of the vegetation. In order to minimise disturbance to wildlife, especially nesting birds, controlled burning takes place from November until the end of March.

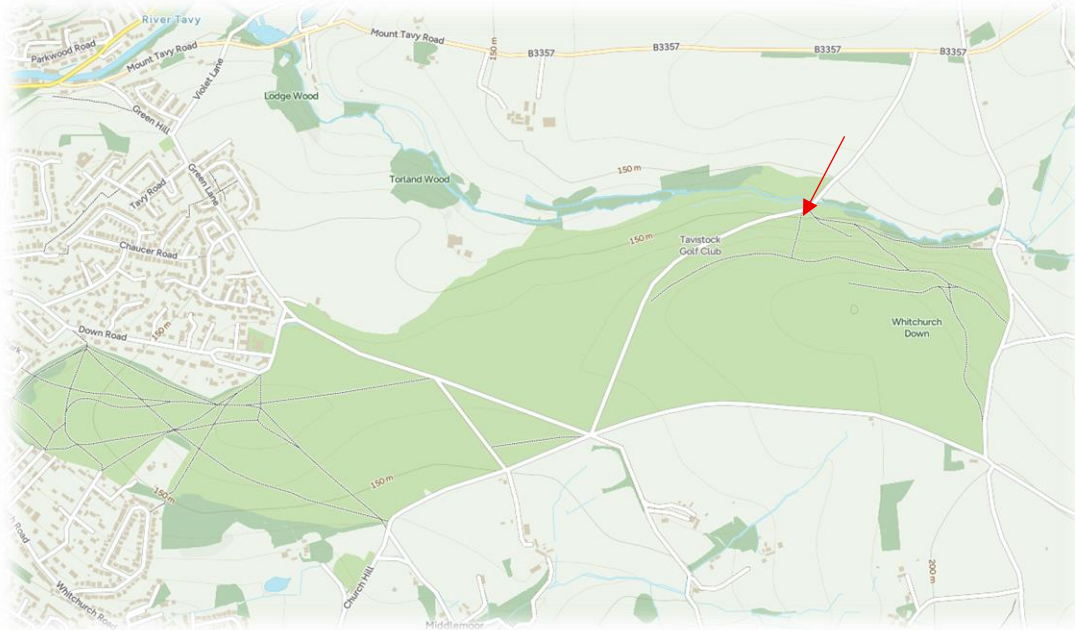
Tavistock Golf Club also plays its part in gorse management given it leases nearly half of the Down. The Club tries to create a balance between old and new growth on the golf course whilst still maintaining the necessary hazards for the game or for safety reasons. The temporary fenced area between the 1st and 18th fairways is a good example, where there is a mixed managed plantation of trees and gorse, preventing animal damage.

Bracken is regularly cut by the Commoners under their rights "in-venville" as well as by the Town Council in certain areas to maintain PROW and tracks. It is recommended that bracken should not be cut when the ground is wet to avoid damage to the Down.

An ecological survey is required on Whitchurch Down to better understand the impact of extensive scrub encroachment on degrading habitats and public access.

Rivers

Taviton Brook runs along the West to East boundary of Whitchurch Down, through an area known as Taviton Bottom. At approximately 150m below sea level, water, primarily rainfall infiltrates from higher elevations of Dartmoor through the subsoils and bedrock feeding the brook and River Tavy.



Taviton Brook highlighted by red arrow

Whitchurch Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the land notified as an SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). An area of Whitchurch Down on the northern boundary was designated a SSSI in August 1987, notably for its biological interest.

The site, as detailed by the blue shade on the map below, is located in an area known as Taviton Bottom and measures 3.7 hectares.



Taviton Brook which runs through the SSSI supports the features which make the Whitchurch Down SSSI such a significant place for wildlife and natural heritage.

The SSSI comprises of herb rich valley mire together with a variety of invertebrates, including some rare species. Valley Mires are areas of water-logged deep peat in valley bottoms, which create diverse environments for rare and endangered species to thrive in.

Mires on Dartmoor are linked with the rich history of tin streaming works (tin mining, including stream working, was a vital industry on Dartmoor for centuries, dating back to at least the 12th century and continuing through to the 20th century).

Many of the habitats and ecosystems formed in valley mires are rarely found in other areas, with very little evidence suggesting the plant community is present in Europe which further signifies the importance of SSSI sites on an international level and their protection for supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.

Specific to the Whitchurch Down SSSI, species which have been recorded include:

FLORA

Sphagnum Mosses
Devils Bit Scabious
Common Yellow Sedge
Carnation Sedge
Mat -grass & Purple Moor Grass
Round leaved sundew
Pal Butterwort
Bog Asphodel
Bog Pimpernel
Bog Pondweed
Lesser Spearwort
Round leave Crowfoot
Lesser Skullcap
Ove Leaved Bellflower
Marsh St John's Wort
Marsh Violet
Lousewort
Cornish Moneywort

FAUNA

Southern Hawker Dragonfly
Beautiful Demoiselle
Golden ringed Dragonfly
White legged damselfly
Scare high brown fritillary

ACCESS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM

The principal public interest in Whitchurch Down is for recreation. Locals appreciate the area as a place where they can escape the hustle and bustle of the local town and enjoy some peace and tranquillity amongst nature. Whitchurch Down is popular with dog walkers who wish to explore the open moorland with its natural beauty, scenery and wildlife.

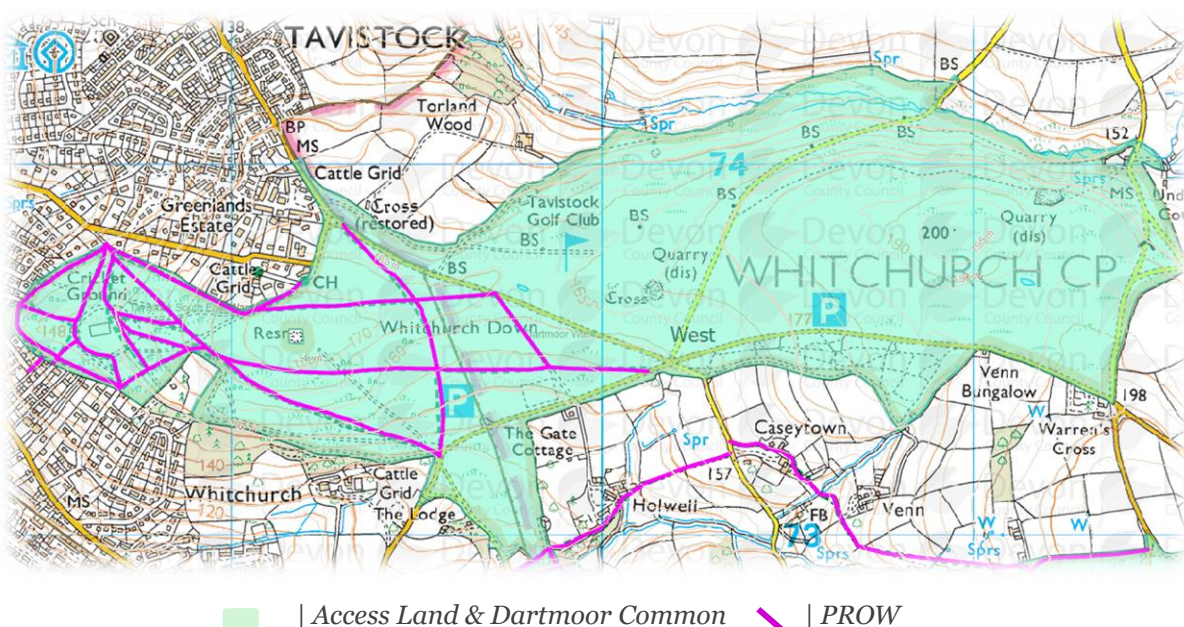
There are a number of benches on Whitchurch Down which provide visitors with a place to rest a while whilst submerged in the natural environment. The majority of the benches are positioned around the cricket ground and historically are varnished timber slats on metal frames. A number of the benches have been adopted as part of the Town Council's memorial bench program where individuals are able to commemorate loved ones. Tavistock Town Council are responsible for all the benches on Whitchurch Down (which includes the memorial bench's) and undertake regular condition surveys.

In recognition Whitchurch Down is a unique area of open moorland and not a parkland there are no plans to increase the number of benches on the Down.

Due to the areas popularity with dog walkers, and in response to public opinion, the Town Council installed six dog waste bins during 2015/2016 around the main access points (south west area) of Whitchurch Down. Whilst the bins are owned by the Town Council, a contractor is let to WDBC for the waste collection.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

Whitchurch Down has numerous public rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways, and byways, which allow the visiting public to traverse the land for their quiet enjoyment. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which some may refer to as the "Right to Roam" came into force in 2000 in order to improve public access to the open countryside and registered common land while ensuring the interests of those who own and manage the land concerned are met. The Act works to support a balance for the benefit of all involved.



These paths and tracks are maintained by the Town Council as part of their responsibilities as the land owner.

Community

Whitchurch Down has long been used as a place for community events, the flat vast open space with far reaching views located near the Pimple lends itself to a meeting place for crowds and whilst events are few and far between there is a history of commemorating important events there.

The first recorded event was in 1885 when local people organized a public celebration of Guy Fawkes Day. After a carnival procession through Tavistock, the crowds ventured up to Whitchurch Down where a bonfire was a blaze and a firework display lit up the night sky. The theme of celebratory bonfires continued when in 1887 a 50ft bonfire is said to have been lit to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

More recently, and in a move away from bonfires, beacons have been lit to commemorate occasions such as the late Queens', Elizabeth II 90th Birthday in 2016 and Platinum Jubilee in 2022. As well as in 2024 to light Tavistock's Beacon of Peace in respect of D Day and to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day in 2025.

In addition to these formal civic community events, Whitchurch Down does also host local sport clubs and school who organise marathons and athletic activities. All requests for an event/activity taking place on Whitchurch Down are managed on a case by case basis by the Town Council, and must follow strict parameters, with safeguarding the biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources and protecting livestock concerns at the forefront of any permissions granted.



In 2000, The Lions Club of Tavistock buried a time capsule to mark the millennium. The time capsule is located (SX497733) on the boundary between the parishes of Tavistock and Whitchurch.

The Human Impact

With Whitchurch Down being an open area of moorland with direct road access to the A386 and B357 comes challenges from human impact.

Unfortunately, Whitchurch Down is prone to fly tipping ranging from single bag items of general waste and tents to larger quantities of rubble and garden waste. The Town Council endeavours to inspect the main route across Whitchurch Down as well as the car parks at least twice a week and as a result any illegal dumped waste is removed relatively quickly. That said over the last two years, the Town Council have reported an increase in abandoned burned out vehicles on the Down of which the removal is a more time consuming and costly process. In such incidences where it is not possible to remove the vehicle straight away the Town Council ensure any hazards which may pose a threat to the local environment and livestock are removed.

Whilst there are numerous car parks on Whitchurch Down, there is an ongoing challenge of motorists parking on the Commons. Dartmoor National Park Byelaws restrict vehicle access on access land (which includes verges) to areas with established rights of way. A particular area of concern is off Furzy Lane where the land has clearly been damaged from erosion. Whilst we are unable to quantify the extent of impact caused, it is highly likely that parking on the open moorland will significantly damage the environment which includes habitat destruction and a disturbance to wildlife. In order to address this concern, it is important the visiting public are clear on where they are permitted to park and that the car parks are kept maintained. The Town Council are committed to a maintenance program which includes the introduction of a natural bank in the main area of concern which will prohibit vehicles from accessing the Down in that area. A further consideration is for appropriate signage sympathetic to the area signposting the car parks.

There are numerous access points from residential areas up onto the Down and a number of properties whereby direct access (be it foot or vehicular) is available from their rear gardens. The Council monitor the trend for establishing informal parking areas and routes adjacent to individual properties which infringe on Council owned land.

A harsh reality of grazing livestock across Dartmoor is the fatalities and injuries caused to livestock from motorists and road traffic accidents. Shockingly in 2023, figures indicated more than 100 moorland sheep, cows and ponies were either killed or injured on Dartmoor. Whilst many road users respect the natural environment of the open moorland, there remains a startling number of casualties who fall victim to vehicles speeding and not taking due care and attention to their surroundings and free roaming animals. In a bid to protect their livestock some farmers have joined a movement whereby Dartmoor ponies and cattle wear reflective neckbands primarily to enhance their visibility to drivers and reduce the risk of road accidents.

KEY TO ACTION PLAN TABLES

Table Heading	Abbreviation	Meaning
Timescale	O	Ongoing
	S	Short-term (2025-2026)
	M	Medium-term (2026-2027)
	L	Long-term (2027-2030)
Partners	TTC	Tavistock Town Council
	DNP	Dartmoor National Park
	TCC	Tavistock Cricket Club
	TGC	Tavistock Golf Club
	WDC	Whitchurch Down Commoners

ACTION PLAN

Land Management and Farming

Aim: To protect the historic features of Whitchurch Down whilst supporting traditional farming methods			
Operational Objective	Action Required	Timescale	Partners
Livestock Grazing Maintain & improve the existing habitat by grazing	Maintain appropriate levels of livestock grazing on Whitchurch Down for the purposes of maintaining and improving the existing habitat. Encourage cutting of bracken annually in line with 'venville' rights.	O	WDC
Gorse Management Maintain and improve the condition of existing habitat on Whitchurch Down	Overall reduce area of scrub/gorse by 10% in selected areas over a 5-year period. Working on each year on a rotation basis. Prioritise tracks, paths, viewpoints, road verges and archaeological features i.e. 100% of scrub/gorse cut within selected areas within 10 years. Use aerial imagery on an annual basis to map the gorse and bracken to better understand its growth patterns and inform future management plans Include verge clearance – important management in protecting grazing livestock from motorists / ensuring clear line of site for motorists. Map of Gorse management to form an appendix to the MP	O	TTC WDC (Furzy Lane to Pennycomequick) TGC (Areas of the GC)
Restore and where feasible recreate areas of heathland	In identified areas control the growth of bracken, scrub and gorse to create bare areas for heathland areas to colonise.	L	TTC
Protect Historic Features Introduce careful vegetation management	Boundary stones , medieval crosses and monuments are to be kept clear of vegetation. Remove vegetation from the parish boundary stones, record locations and take photos.	O	TTC TGC
Aerial Imagery Mapping	Take drone imagery and use satellite data annually to map changes of the land over a 5-year period.	O	TTC
Management Timeline	Create a work timeline of the management actions undertaken over the forthcoming 5-year period to document progress.	O	TTC
WD Do's & Don'ts's	Draft a public document which clarifies expectations of visitors to WD, explains what is permitted and what isn't (i.e. flying of drones, use of metal detectors)as well general info	S	TTC

ACTION PLAN

The Natural Environment

Aim: To actively lead in the conservation of biodiversity on Whitchurch Down			
Operational Objective	Action Required	Timescale	Partners
Habitat Baseline Survey	To commission an ecologist to survey the site in order to identify habitats. Once established the survey will provide a reference point against which future changes in biodiversity can be measured.	L	TTC
Aerial Imagery Mapping	Using drone imagery and satellite data to map habitats across Whitchurch Down. By mapping the habitats, we can better understand the diversity of species on Whitchurch Down.	O	TTC
Biodiversity Action Plan	Once the habitat survey has been completed, a BAP should be produced which identifies the most important species and habitats on WD.	L	TTC
Bat Survey	Identify bat sites, install and maintain bat boxes. Ensure that the requirements of bats are incorporated into the managements plan natural environment conservation objectives. Undertake bi annual surveys to monitor bat population (a survey was undertaken in 2023). Encourage public involvement in bat surveys. Seek funding to assist implementation of above strategy. Continue to record locations and bat numbers.	O	TTC
DNP Walkham Valley Landscape Recovery Project	Continue to liaise DNP on the landscape Recovery Project, to share information on the local environment and review any opportunities which may be beneficial to the management of Whitchurch Down.	S	TTC DNP
Maintain SSSI “favorable” condition	Maintain a ‘watching brief’ over the SSSI. Following on from the habitat baseline survey, implement measures to enhance the areas condition.	L	TTC

Aim: To actively lead in the conservation of biodiversity on Whitchurch Down			
Operational Objective	Action Required	Timescale	Partners
Undertake Tree Surveys	Commission tree surveys every 5-years in order to establish the overall health and condition of the current tree stock on WD, to obtain an overall percentage size and value of canopy cover with use of system tools such as iTree, to inform long-term proactive strategic management decisions, and for better long-term monitoring of WD tree canopy. Ensure long-term tree performance and ecosystem services are maintained for the long-term, for future generations to enjoy. Taking stock of age and species diversity In order to better inform future planting management and planting target areas. All historical planting schemes have been approved by the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group. Any future tree planting will also need to be approved by WDCG.	M	TTC
Extend management to Taviton Brook (part of the SSSI)	Ensure the future management of Taviton Brook is represented within the WD Management Plan. Further research and expand knowledge on rivers and streams, in order to inform sustainable planning and management as well as site specific work to establish habitats in and around the riverbed.	L	TTC
Monitor flood prone areas	Undertake survey on areas prone to flooding / excess surface run off to inform a flood resilience program (Church Lane cattle grid, Middlemoor). Continue to regularly monitor the under road drainage located near Middlemoor and the Church Lane cattle grid, as well as the open channel adjacent to the road into Middlemoor (up to the culvert which is owned by DCC). Work With Westcountry Rivers Trust to identify flood management actions Ensure reference is made within the management plan on future challenges pertaining to flood.	O	TTC
Monitor drought	Monitor the change in climate over the following five years on an annual basis and the impact it has on the ecological balance of WD. Warmer temperatures could cause grass species to become more dominant as a result of increased nutrient availability, leading to a shift from heathland to acid grassland.	O	TTC

ACTION PLAN

Access, Recreation and Tourism

Aim: To manage access and recreation for the benefit of visitors			
Operational Objective	Action Required	Timescale	Partners
Maintain Access	Continue to monitor on a regular PROWs, tracks, dog bins, the football goal posts car parks and the safety fencing & signage around the Pennycomequick quarry, undertaking necessary repairs to ensure a satisfactory standard. Maintain PROWs and tracks by scrub clearance at appropriate times of year (i.e. not bird nesting season).	O	TTC
Maintain acceptable surface of the car parks	Undertake pothole repairs as required. Continue to keep car park surfaces in good repair.	O	TTC
Bank Furzy Lane Car Park	Undertake ground works to install a bank around the car park on Furzy Lane in order to stop encroachment on the WD.	S	TTC
Manage Fly-tipping & littering	Remove fly-tipped waste as soon as practicable and/or notify WDBC where applicable.	O	TTC
DOG Waste Bins	Review & monitor condition of dog waste bin	O	TTC
Wild Camping	Draft a policy on wild camping following the May 2025 Supreme Court ruling whereby the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 grants the public the right to access the commons for open-air recreation.	M	TTC
Illegal or unauthorised encampment	In consultation with DNP draft a policy which details how to manage unauthorised encampments on Whitchurch Down.	S	TTC
Public Open Day	In order to foster greater public understanding, involvement in conservation and enjoyment of Whitchurch Down TTC propose an open day.	L	TTC

SELECTION OF IMAGES FROM ACROSS WHITCHURCH DOWN



The water trough located near the Pimple for passing livestock



SSSI



The Pimple



The Pimple



SSSI



Wooded area of Whitchurch Down



Aerial imagery detailing PROW



Aerial imagery of the Sacred Pool, Pennycomequick disused Quarry and the 2025 gorse management undertaken by the WDC



Far reaching views of Plasterdown



Whitchurch Down and Middlemoor

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Injured or sick Animals (Livestock Protection Officer) - Tel: 07873 587561

Tavistock Town Council – Tel: 01822 613529

West Devon Borough Council (General Enquiries and issues relating to the collection of the dog waste bins) – Tel: 01822 813600

Dartmoor National Park (General Enquiries) – Tel: Phone: 01626 832093

RESOURCES

Dartmoor Delivery Plan for Pearl-bordered and High Brown Fritillaries

Dartmoor Commons Factsheet, DNPA, June 2006

Dartmoor Delivery Plan for Pearl-bordered and High Brown Fritillaries

Whitchurch Parish, Ken Cook, Tavistock & District Local History Society, 2002

Devon Biodiversity & Geodiversity Action Plan, 2009

Dr Tom Greeves in a 2019 article titled *'Dartmoor's Sacred Pools. Design in the Prehistoric Landscape'*.

Whitchurch Parish, Tavistock & District Local History Society, 2002

Whitchurch Down, edited by Helen Harris, Tavistock & District Local History Society, 2000

Devon Biodiversity & Geodiversity Action Plan, 2009

Naomi Barker, Ecologist, DNPA

Species of Principal Importance in England as identified in the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006

NE SSSI info

Natural England citation

National Trust

Whitchurch Parish, Tavistock & District Local History Society, 2002

English Nature - The importance of livestock grazing for wildlife conservation

Whitchurch Down, edited by Helen Harris, Tavistock & District Local History Society, 2000

<https://www.rspb.org.uk>

www.dartmoorcommonerscouncil.org.uk

<https://dartmoorexplorations.co.uk/>

<https://map.devon.gov.uk/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=71fe583c7004410ca8cdc62e0e9b2577>

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search/?v=2815048&ml=map&z=13.75706094034077&nwLat=50.55198483707508&nwLng=-4.15755271911226&seLat=50.53341203994955&seLng=-4.0751552581745045>

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html>



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