

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Organisation name: **Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust**

Project title: **Saving the Spirit of Dartmoor...**

Project Update.

The 6-month status report covers a project update on the following aspects.

- How our project is progressing overall
- How we are achieving your 'approved purposes' as agreed with NHLF
- Any changes to your project timeline

Summary - project's progress overall

The project 'Saving the Spirit of Dartmoor' has seen several positive developments.

The Message House workshop, held on 29 April 2025, was a key milestone and was widely regarded as a success. It brought together a diverse range of stakeholders and resulted in a clearly defined mission statement:

"The charity works to halt the decline of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies on Dartmoor, by supporting breeders and keepers and by raising awareness of the ponies' value to Dartmoor's landscape, culture and future."

Supporting pillars were also agreed,

- o Sustainable Funding and Strategic Partnership
- o Conservation of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies
- o Culture, Heritage and Preservation

A Terms of Reference has been established for the Focus Group, and efforts are underway to finalise a diverse membership of 6–8 individuals with strong ties to DPHT and a shared understanding of the charity's mission.

Quantitative metrics have been identified, with baseline data is being collected on a monthly basis, while qualitative insights have been developed through the Message House process, with potential one-to-one interviews if needed. There will also be a stakeholder check-in through the focus group.

Great progress has also been made in the Education workstream. Two workshops have been held: one in March 2025 with teachers, moorland guides, and the DPHT team; and a follow-up in June 2025 with teachers to review draft materials and curriculum alignment. These sessions laid the foundation for integrating the Dartmoor Heritage Pony learning into school programmes. A first draft of the education content is expected by September, with the final version due in December to allow for rollout in the Spring Term. Classroom learning will be followed by field trips in March / April 2026, to avoid adverse weather conditions on the Moor. The education and field trips are aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils and are designed to reinforce classroom learning through experiential outdoor education.

Some aspects of the project are taking a little longer than originally anticipated. In particular, the development of the fundraising strategy is ongoing, as the team continues to gather data to inform decisions around future income streams and grant opportunities. The Fundraising Consultant is waiting for a complete picture from the Message House and supporting baseline data to ensure the strategy is both realistic and aligned with DPHT's long-term goals. Additional services, offered by DPHT, are under review to assess their financial viability, ensuring that all activities contribute meaningfully and sustainably to the charity's mission.

There have been no significant changes to overall project costs or the delivery timetable. The only major organisational change has been the departure of the CEO. While this is a notable shift, internal structures and leadership have adapted to ensure that the delivery of the project remains unaffected. In addition, the organisation is currently interviewing for additional trustees to strengthen governance and support long-term strategic planning.

Our approved purposes

Approved purpose	Update
Set up DPHT Members' Focus Group - recruit members, agree Terms of Reference.	Terms of Reference has been created for the Focus Group and we are in the process of finalising its members. There has been some discussion with our Community & Comms specialist, as we want a diverse group of about 6-8 people linked to the DPHT who understand the charity and its purpose.
Develop a draft fundraising strategy to build income streams.	A third-party consultant presented a fundraising workshop to us on 10 th March 2025. The ideas from this didn't seem to assist DPHT. Through this project the DPHT has their own Fundraising Consultant, who wanted the output of the message House first before completing the fundraising strategy and target other sources of income / grants.
Arrange 3 x community engagement and consultation events within local communities to ascertain what people value about DPHT and how they would like to be involved.	Our Community Outreach expert will arrange three community events; this will combine with our fundraising events. Planning for these events are underway, as some might even be online community events. We won't be holding anymore consultation type events.
Review activities and services in DPHT Business Plan to identify potential sources of income that could be achieved through delivery of services.	<p>The business plan is yet to be reviewed in full, but some of the other potential sources of income that can be achieved is conservation grazing, partnering with such organisations as wildlife trusts.</p> <p>Some of the services we do currently provide e.g. handling and castration need to be reviewed and assessed to confirm its financially viable, along with any other potential sources of income.</p>
Develop campaign strategy and 'Calls to Action' to secure future of the Heritage Dartmoor Pony, building in responses to consultation events and including new website page, plus other media releases.	Not yet started.
Develop and produce legacy promotion materials (online and print).	Not yet started, though legacy promotions will be included in the Fundraising Strategy.

Design and launch new DPHT website.	The website has been designed and successfully launched and is being updated regularly with new content.
Complete project evaluation.	<p>Quantitative metrics for analysis have been identified and baseline data is being collected on a monthly basis.</p> <p>As for the qualitative data, this was taken from the message house with a view to complete some 1-1 interviews with individuals, if needed. There will also be a stakeholder check-in using the Focus Group as the platform for that to confirm the DPHT is on the right course and what works / what can be done better etc.</p>
Develop a more detailed Business Plan, indicating sources of income and budgets associated with services provision.	Not yet started
Work with 2 local primary schools to create online education materials to be made available on the new DPHT website.	<p>Schools have been identified and a workshop was held on 18 March between, Education Consultant, Moorland Guides, Teachers and DPHT. It was a great initial session, with a lot to consider.</p> <p>A further follow up session happened on 19th June, with our PM, Education Consultant and the Teachers to go over their year plan, review the 1st draft, materials and check in with schools to align with their needs e.g. agree layout and how to fit in this piece about Dartmoor and its Heritage into the curriculum and which subject to attach it to.</p> <p>The plan is to get a first draft out by September, as schools are closed July / August. It's expected to have a few iterations following that with a final draft available by December. This will then feed into classroom learning for the Spring Term with a field trip planned towards the end of that term circa March / April 2026.</p>
Tender professional recruitment agency to employ a Project Manager and the following 4 consultants to lead in the areas of: Fundraising; PR & Communications; Community Outreach; Education.	All relevant parties recruited: a PM, Fundraising consultant; PR & Communications consultant; Community Outreach consultant and Education consultant.

2 x site visits to DPHT conservation site at Bellever on Dartmoor for partner schools.	Field trips for school kids (KS2) need to be planned, as to avoid any adverse weather on Dartmoor. It has been suggested they do the classroom work first before they do the field trip. Field trips will be planned for March / April at the end of the Spring term.
Recruit a Website Designer, ELMS expert, and Evaluation Consultant.	A Project Evaluation consultant, ELMS expert and Website designer have all been appointed.
Undertake a mapping workshop to identify key stakeholders and strategic partners.	<p>A list of stakeholders (approx. 20) which was scaled back from a much wider list of attendees, and this was used for the message house.</p> <p>We have also created a list of stakeholders / partners on Dartmoor which have been entered into a stakeholder matrix based on interest and influence. This is a live document and will continually be reviewed and amended. This highlights those organisations (with high interest and higher influence) that we can reach out to / partner with to show how a help and support each other</p>
Deliver a workshop to develop and agree a 'Message House' diagram to ensure clear and consistent messaging in all charity communications and identify key audiences.	<p>Message House was scheduled and completed on Tuesday 29 April. The Message House was a great success; it had a very diverse group of attendees which showed agreement towards our message.</p> <p>The Message House output was agreed and shared with all attendees. The new message / mission statement is:</p> <p><i>“The charity works to halt the decline of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies on Dartmoor, by supporting breeders and keepers and by raising awareness of the ponies' value to Dartmoor's landscape, culture and future.”</i></p> <p>The pillars, which supports our core message, was also discussed and agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sustainable Funding and Strategic Partnership o Conservation of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies o Culture, Heritage and Preservation

Evaluation

The evaluation of the project is being overseen internally by the Project Manager, with support from our Evaluation Consultant. This will allow for the evaluation to be embedded across all workstreams and aligned with Project objectives. A final evaluation report will be developed towards the end of the project and will draw on both quantitative and qualitative data to assess impact.

Data Being Collected:

Quantitative data includes baseline metrics such as number of members, number of volunteers, funding raised through donors and membership and number of followers and engagement figures on our social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). We have already begun collecting baseline quantitative data, which is updated on a monthly basis.

Qualitative data includes feedback gathered from the Message House workshop, future focus group sessions, and stakeholder conversations. This will provide insight into how well the project's core messages are understood, the perceived value of the activities, and areas for improvement. The Message House has already completed, which generated rich qualitative data on perceptions, priorities, and alignment with DPHT's mission.

Future Focus Groups will serve as a platform for periodic stakeholder check-ins and qualitative reflection. The final evaluation report will be compiled once all key activities are completed, with an aim to share it publicly through our website and with all relevant stakeholders.

Your project timetable or timeline

The *Saving the Spirit of Dartmoor* project is on track to be completed by the revised end date of 28 February 2026, following a delayed start to the project. Although the original grant timeline anticipated an earlier commencement, project activity began in earnest in March 2025 with the appointment of the Project Manager. We are confident that all approved purposes will be delivered within the current timeframe.

Delivery of approved purposes: key activities, including the Message House process, stakeholder engagement, fundraising strategy development, and education programme design, are well underway and aligned to the revised timeline.

While the planned school field trips are scheduled for March/April 2026 to align with better weather and school terms, all preparatory work—including the educational content, school liaison, and trip planning—will be completed by the project's end.

Evaluation and final report: Evaluation is embedded throughout the project. Quantitative and qualitative data are being collected monthly, and a final evaluation report will be submitted by the project end date.

We will continue to keep our Investment Manager informed of any developments. At this stage, no further changes to the timeline are expected.