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To Clerks of All Town & Parish Councils
With Dartmoor National Park

Via email

Your ref:

Please quote: KB/AH

Direct line: 01626 831011

11 May 2020

Dear Clerk

Update from Dartmoor National Park Authority COVID19

Further to the briefing that we circulated on 24 April 2020 and the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10 May 2020 please find below a short update on how the Authority is responding to the announcement.

Offices and access to services

I can confirm that our offices at Parke and Princetown remain closed and staff continue to work at home. We are currently reviewing guidance for staff about site visits.

Our Rangers have been patrolling – often with Police support as required.

Visiting Dartmoor

As from Wednesday 13 May the Government is encouraging people to “take more and even unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise” providing you practice social distancing. The Prime Minister's statement is clear “you can drive to other destinations” but you must obey the rules on social distancing (with increased fines for those who do not).

This is not the approach that we (all the National Parks in England) nor organisations like the National Trust, RSPB, Woodland Trust, Forest Enterprise and Natural England were advocating. Since late April we have been in discussions with Defra about the ‘re-opening’ of the countryside and all of the above-named organisations, and others with countryside facilities, have advocated a staged approach with an initial ‘stay local’ message to avoid unnecessary travel and minimise any conflict between visitors and local communities. There was also a request for advance notice so that our partners and ourselves could re-open car parks and toilets – particularly important for those who have furloughed staff.

We are aware that the Government statement will pose some challenges and raise concerns but our top priority is to help people remain safe – those who come to exercise and the people who live and work in the National Park. We await further detail and



guidance from Government on what this means and we are currently reviewing how we can open our car parks and toilets safely whilst supporting social distancing. Until then we are continuing to ask people to stay at home, avoid unnecessary journeys, exercise locally and follow social distancing and hygiene rules. Please find a link to our website [here](#). We will keep this updated with the latest information.

We have no plans to open visitor centres in the immediate future.

Coronavirus Community Support Grant (CCSG) – this scheme provides grants of up to £500 to voluntary and community groups to help tackle the impacts of the outbreak and help those who are most vulnerable is still open. Find out more on our website <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/community>

Business Survey – we are keen to understand the impact of Coronavirus on local businesses and to help us support recovery. The survey is now live on our website. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6RY2P9Z>

We will continue to provide regular updates as the detail of the Prime Minister's announcement become clearer and the promised guidance from Government is published.

If you have any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K' and 'B'.

Dr Kevin Bishop
Chief Executive (National Park Officer)
Email: aharris@dartmoor.gov.uk