



EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

NEWS FROM EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Thursday 21st May 2020

OUR MESSAGE TO ALL WHO LOVE EXMOOR THIS BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Following a busier weekend last week and as we approach our first bank holiday since the easing of Government restrictions*, this is our message to all who love Exmoor:

Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive of Exmoor National Park, said: “In these troubling times, it’s understandable that people want to spend time in beautiful places. The biggest problem we are likely to face this weekend is overcrowding. It’s because we love these places so dearly that everyone must be prepared to make personal sacrifices to ensure those visits can happen responsibly, without potentially serious consequences for those who live and work here.

“We are still learning about this virus, but we know that by staying apart we can control it. We ask everyone to follow the rules by keeping at least two metres from others and washing hands regularly. Visiting outside of peak times, avoiding popular sites and continuing to use green spaces closer to home are simple steps many of us can take to help make space for everyone.

“During these difficult times, farmers are working hard to provide food and care for the countryside, so it’s vital we keep their wellbeing in mind. Show your support by following the countryside code, keeping dogs under control and picking up any mess, which can be a health hazard to farm animals as well as people. Thoughtless behaviour such as lighting BBQs, illicit overnight stays and unnecessary risk-taking add to the pressure on our local services. With the recent warm and dry weather, we now face significant increased risk of wildfires, with local fire crews already having dealt with one near miss this past week.

“Finally, remember that we are in this together, for the long haul. It was in the wake of World War II that the UK saw its first National Parks designated - alongside our great National Health Service - their combined healing power needed to help the nation recover after the turmoil of war. While we wait for a breakthrough that will free us from this virus, it’s up to all of us to do what we can to make the world a safer and happier place.”

Throughout the bank holiday, the National Park ranger service will continue to support local police to help keep everyone safe.

Devon & Cornwall Police Inspector Paul Searle, said: “Over this Bank Holiday Weekend, when not responding to calls for service we will be deploying our staff to the high foot fall areas including the beaches, beauty spots and Exmoor. Although we will mainly concentrate on gatherings we will also be engaging with people who have travelled to our area and clearly explaining the legal position. Where this is not heeded and there is a clear breach we will move to enforcement.

“As always we will be working closely with Exmoor National Park and their Rangers to ensure visitors and locals alike have a safe place to visit.”

Most Authority-run car parks and toilets have now reopened to enable visitors to park safely without blocking highways and help people follow Government advice to wash hands more often. For more information see: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/covid-19-exmoor.