

Dartington
Open House 02

River Dart Charter at Dartington Workshop

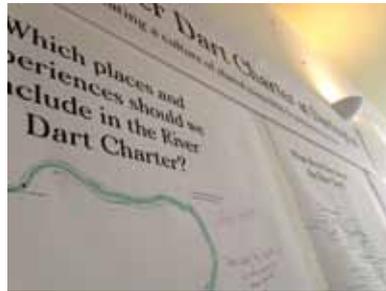
Land Use Review 2

2 Nov 2018, High Cross House

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Do we want the Dart to be drinkable,
swimmable, fishable, paddle-able and
to be there in all its beauty
for future generations?

Harriet Bell from Dartington Hall Trust, Isabel Carlisle and Jane Brady
from the Bioregional Learning Centre and Nick Paling from Westcountry Rivers Trust.



Thanks to everyone who participated.

Creating a culture of shared stewardship by putting the river first.

The River Dart Charter at Dartington is about fresh water on the Dartington Hall Estate, as represented by the iconic stretch of the river that wraps around it.

This pilot project is a first step in trying out ways in which communities along the river could be involved in a joined-up plan of resilience for the River Dart, with guidance from those who already care for it. Underlying the project are two fundamental questions:

Do we want the Dart to be drinkable, swimmable, fishable, paddle-able and to be there in all its beauty for future generations?

How do we identify as a community what are the most important factors to take into consideration when looking at future water management?

The estate places many demands on the river, for example: agriculture, visitors, conservation and water abstraction. The river is also an area where the estate is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which is likely to increase the frequency of both droughts and flooding.

Although the Dart is in better shape than many of the UK's rivers, we know that salmon, eels and sea trout are vanishing year on year; swimmers are getting sick from being in the water; and more house-building means more water extraction. We also know that we probably have more microplastics, pollutants and toxins in the water than we are currently aware of.

The Dart Charter project is an open invitation; an opportunity for those with a love of the river between Staverton Weir and Totnes Weir to:

- agree together a shared vision for the river,
- name significant values, experiences and places (assets), and
- take shared responsibility for preserving those assets into the future.

At the workshop, the top assets proposed for inclusion in the charter were:

- the trees along the river bank
- healthy water
- the river as a wildlife corridor
- respectful access
- water as commons*
- sense of the river's own rights/agency

* The commons is the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society, including natural materials such as air, water, and a habitable earth. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commons>

What do you think?

Thoughts About the River Dart



The geology and geography that created the Dart catchment.
Detail of the South West from Wilson Bentley's 1853 geological map of England, Wales and Scotland. From an exhibition at Tower House.

An imagined Dart Valley 100,000 years ago.
Source: Research Study Centre



Ancient industry: pre-Roman tin mining.
Photo: Series of open-cast workings near the mouth of the Tor in South Devonian, UK. UCL.



We are still seeing the effects of acid rain from long ago.

Garage jug from the 1950s.
Dartmouth Museum



The Thoburns' boiler with a salmon caught in the Dart at Lolly Ditch.
Dartmouth Museum



Cold, clear water up on Dartmoor. Visitor numbers continue to increase and with it the value of tourism. The Dart gets its start on TripAdvisor and Google.



Abou-Bethan Harbour.
Eight Ghazally 8 million tonnes of plastic enters the sea from land every year.



Chemicals, paint, weedkiller going down the drain...



Pioneers of the Bideford Show. Families have been farming here for generations.



Water as commodity: we expect it to flow from the tap.



These types of foam on the river, do you know the cause?

River Dart Charter at Dartington

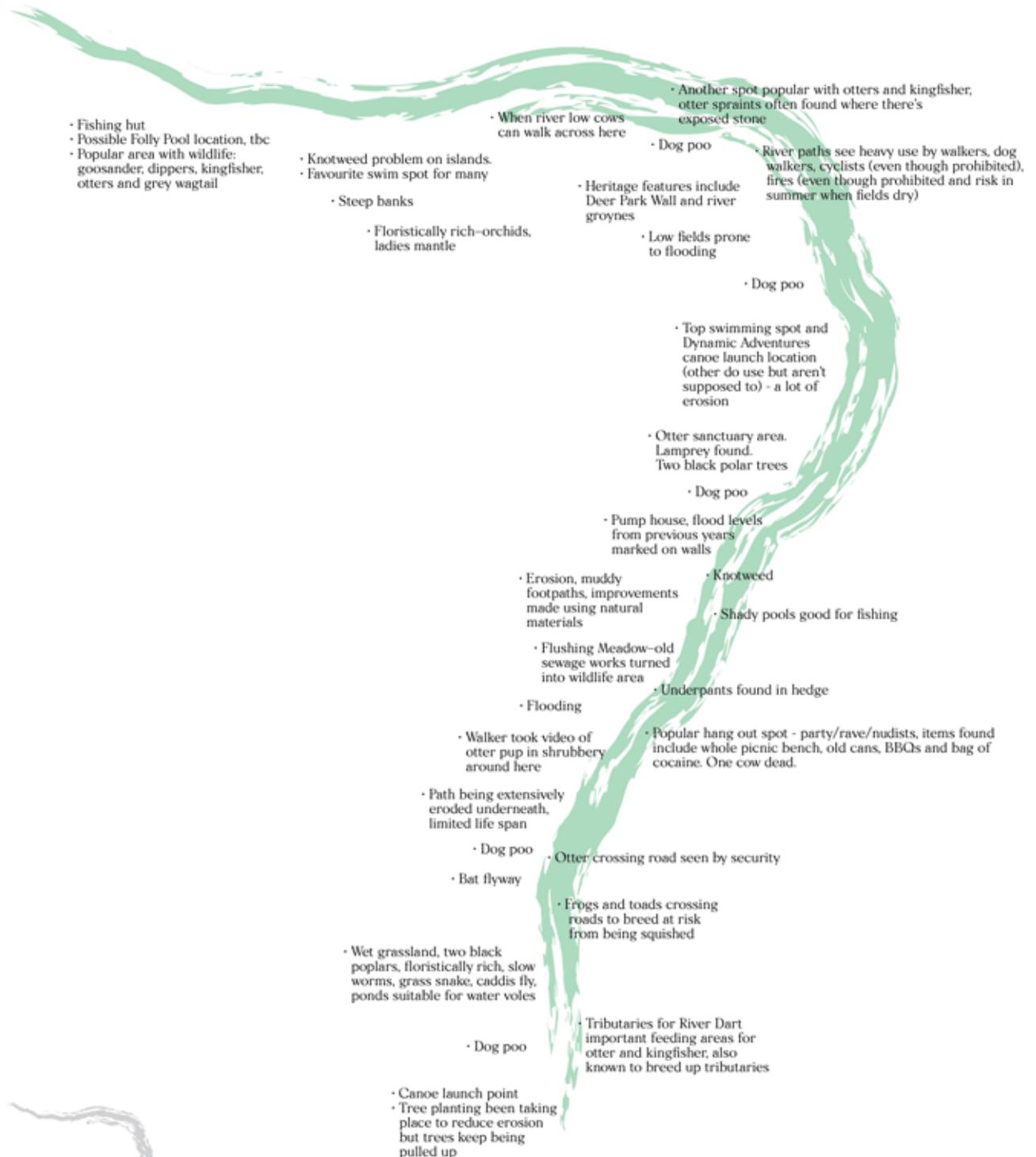
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All the water that will ever be is, right now.

— National Geographic, October 1993

About this particular bend in the river



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What do we love about the River Dart?



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Which places and experiences should we include in the River Dart Charter?

“Trees along the banks”

“Health of water”

“Wildlife corridor”

“Places exclusively for wildlife”

“Respectful access”

“Water as commons”

“Sense of river’s own rights/agency”

“Canoe access retained”

“Natural benches for quiet reflection”

“Retain wild swimming opportunities (secluded) – fosters respect for, and connection with, waterways”

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at Dartington

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As a river steward what would I do?

**“Are we stewards, guardians, advocates
or voices for the water?”**

“Engage community in keeping it clean
(and education based on river water)”

“Prioritise the health of the river and wildlife”

“Respect areas dedicated to wildlife!”

“Beavers?”

“I think you should do water pollution exhibition” - Charlie

“Be a citizen scientist”

“I think you should do a fossil exhibition about dinosaurs” - Charlotte

“Walk it and look at it regularly”

“Education, education, education!”

“Know more about its complexity”

“Talk about the source, the watershed and the mouth”

“Gather plastic as I go”

“Understand how man depends on the river for water supply and as a means of disposing of waste”

“Art exhibition”

“Clear Water Art Trail”

“River Dart footpath running the entire length of the Dart?”

“Join up with others”

“Walking meditations, walking yoga rubbish clearing with mindfulness, with schools, people with mental health issues etc” - Steph

“I work in nature, I'd like to collaborate”

“Create the charter & enact it with others”

“This is not just swimming, it is taking in the atmosphere of the forest/meadow through all the senses – increasing appreciation of our place as part of nature, observation, peace and wellbeing”

**River Dart Charter
at Dartington**

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Next Steps

Please let us know:

What do you love about the River Dart
at Dartington?

Which places and experiences
should we include in the
River Dart Charter?

As a river steward, what would
would you do?



Would you like to volunteer to join the working group which will be steering the project forward over the next six months and designing a series of public engagement activities from which the charter will be made?

You are also invited to put forward suggestions about managing water on the estate.

www.dartington.org/rivercharter

www.bioregion.org.uk