ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 18th June 2025, 09:30am
Online via Zoom

Directors present:
Robin Barker - Chair (RB), Emma Thomasson - CEO (ET), Hayley Sampson - Vice Chair (HS)
Non-executive Directors:
Mike Dicks (MD), Max Lawrence (ML), Wayne Moore (WM)
Team:
Verity Vigars (VV)
Committee:
Julie Colman – ENPA (JC), Laura Williams – ENPA (LW)
Other attendees:
Visit Exmoor members

1. **Welcome on behalf of Visit Exmoor**
RB welcomed attendees to the Annual General Meeting.

2. **Apologies**
Kate Godden – National Trust, Dan James – ENPA, David Smith, Helen Smith.

3. **To receive and approve the Minutes of the previous AGM held on 19th June 2024**
It was unanimously agreed to approve the 2024 AGM minutes.

4. **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.

5. **Chairman's Intro** – *Robin Barker*
RB gave a brief report acknowledging that tourism has faced another challenging and unpredictable year, with external factors such as economic pressures, taxation changes, global conflicts, tariffs, and weather continuing to influence visitor behaviour. Key trends include later bookings, shorter stays, and reduced visitor spending on accommodation, food, drink, and activities. Despite these challenges, the long-term success of the tourism sector continues to depend on investment in quality, skills, and innovation, areas that we remain committed to supporting.

Visit Exmoor has continued to operate effectively with a small team and limited resources. A particular success has been the resilience of its membership base, enabling the organisation to maintain the marketing and business support benefits that members value. The organisation has also secured Shared Prosperity Funding from Somerset Council, providing important support and future opportunities. In addition, it has strengthened its regional influence through involvement in both the Devon and Partners Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and the newly established Somerset and Exmoor LVEP, where it is a lead partner. These developments create exciting opportunities for the future.

6. **Directors** – *Robin Barker*
RB then introduced and welcomed Mike Dicks as the new Director who is now overseeing finances. The Board's thanks were then recorded to retiring Directors Catherine Daniels and Hugh Rees for their significant contributions to Visit Exmoor and best wishes were extended to both for the future.

As part of succession planning, the Board welcomed the appointments of David Smith and Helen Smith (no relation) as new Directors. David brings extensive experience in local government, community development, funding applications, and strategic planning, with a strong track record in securing investment and supporting community organisations. Helen joins the Board following a 27-year career in tourism, including leadership roles at major visitor attractions and consultancy work across the South West. She brings significant expertise in visitor economy development, stakeholder engagement, project management, training, and service excellence. Acknowledging that both new Directors bring valuable skills, experience, and enthusiasm that will strengthen the Board and support Visit Exmoor's future development, the appointments of David Smith and Helen Smith as Directors were proposed and seconded, unanimously agreed and duly approved.

7. Visit Exmoor Achievements 2024/25 and Priorities 2025/26 - *Emma Thomasson, CEO*
ET shared her presentation showcasing a strong programme of delivery despite ongoing challenges around inconsistent funding. Following a cautious start to the year, Visit Exmoor secured UKSPF investment, enabling the organisation to expand marketing activity, develop new promotional assets, strengthen business support programmes, and enhance visitor economy data and insights. Key achievements included increased website traffic and social media engagement, successful local, regional and national destination marketing campaigns, the launch of the sixth edition of Eat Exmoor, the creation of new photography and video assets, and the continued growth of the Business Support Hub and Centre of Excellence for Hospitality. Investment in data and research strengthened the understanding of visitor trends and reinforced the significant contribution of tourism to the local economy, estimated at approximately £650 million annually across the wider Exmoor area. ET further highlighted the approval of the Somerset and Exmoor LVEP, alongside Visit Exmoor's continued involvement in the Devon and Partners LVEP, strengthening regional collaboration and representation for the visitor economy. Finally, thanks were extended to everyone for their support and contribution to another successful year.

8. **Finance Report** – *Mike Dicks, Finance Committee*
MD provided a brief general review of the organisation's finances, noting that while Visit Exmoor had benefited significantly from UKSPF funding during the year, long-term consistent funding remains a key challenge. Membership income has remained stable, and the organisation ended the year in a stronger cash position than the previous year. Looking ahead, priorities include securing sustainable income through grants, sponsorship and membership growth, while continuing to review operational efficiencies and financial processes to support the organisation's future development.

9. **Questions and Answers and AOB** – *Robin Barker*
No questions were pre-submitted.

With no further business, RB thanked everyone for contributing and closed the meeting at 10:20am.