



Bothenhampton & Walditch

Parish Council since 1886

Mr C Loder
Member of Parliament for West Dorset

By email

19th April 2021

Dear Mr Loder

RE: DORSET NATIONAL PARK

In your email of 1st April addressed to our clerk you asked for our views on the proposal for a National Park for Dorset.

We have given this matter careful thought and have studied a number of helpful sources in order to gain a better understanding of the issues. These range from your own website, setting out very clearly the arguments against the proposal, to the Glover Report, which put forward the proposal.

Overall, we would support any proposal which enhances and protects our beautiful heritage, makes it easier for our young people to live here, both in terms of housing and jobs, and helps promote sensible planning decisions.

We have not, however, reached a settled view on the matter. There are strong arguments both for and against. On the positive side, the creation of a National Park for Dorset and East Devon could bring opportunities and benefits for the economy, communities and the environment. Tourism, our major local industry, could benefit greatly. We understand National Parks are different to AONBs and have certain statutory obligations which AONBs do not, which could promote wildlife protection and our cultural heritage, for example. National Park status could attract significantly more money to the region (we note the South Downs NP attracted £50 million in its first five years). It could benefit marine conservation, if it were to extend all along the Jurassic coast and into the sea.

On the other hand, we share your concerns that local democratic control of planning decisions may weaken, over the risk of house prices increasing still further and over possible additional bureaucracy.

We will continue to follow this issue with interest. We may well find that, in doing so, our views will coalesce on one side or the other. We understand that the Minister will issue a statement on this next month and look forward to that.

Yours sincerely

Cllr A J Basker
Chairman
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