

Champion Schools Newsletter



Hello and Welcome!

Welcome to the first ever DDL Champion Schools newsletter!

If you are reading this, then you are likely connected to a DDL Champion School, as a student, family member, or member of staff. But what is DDL and what is a Champion School, you may ask? Read on to find out!

We've already delivered 5 assemblies at Champion Schools, and loved meeting students and staff from The Erme, Okehampton Primary, St James' C of E Okehampton, Stowford Primary and South Dartmoor Community College. There was so much excitement about Dartmoor and its wildlife – we couldn't have asked for a warmer welcome. We look forward to meeting more of you over the coming months as we get out and about to all the Champion Schools, delivering assemblies, workshops and running events for you. In the meantime, we hope this newsletter gives you a flavour of DDL and entices you to get involved in one of our competitions or public events.

DDL is short for Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes, which is a programme bringing together a group of organisations working to help people better understand, conserve and connect with Dartmoor and its communities. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the programme comprises 15 different projects with a geographical focus on

Ivybridge and the rivers Erme and Yealm; Princetown and the River Dart; and Okehampton and the Okement rivers. In this newsletter, you will see the names and logos of the organisations you're most likely to come across as a Champion School. You can find out more about DDL and its organisations by visiting <http://dartmoordynamic.org>.

Being a Champion School means being part of something special. For a start, not all schools are in a National Park! But yours is, and through your school and this termly newsletter you will hear about opportunities to get involved in DDL activities and learn about Dartmoor's varied and special landscape. There will be plenty of occasions to get outside and experience Dartmoor too. On this page, you can see some of what's happened already. If the photos inspire you, turn to pages 2 and 4 to sign up for events happening soon.

By spending time on Dartmoor, whether that's on the wild open moorland, along a river valley, in a woodland, or in farmed fields, we hope you will feel more connected to Dartmoor and its rich history and rare wildlife. We can't wait to welcome you to this unique and special place that is right on your doorstep!



Dartmoor's
Dynamic Landscapes



Made possible with

Heritage
Fund

Above:
Combestone Tor, Dartmoor
Right:

1. The Erme Primary School enjoyed their welcome assembly in March.
2. Champion Schools are presented with a certificate at their welcome assembly.
3. Girls Do Dartmoor - a safe and nurturing space for female students from years 8 and 9 to experience the special qualities of Dartmoor National Park.
4. Creative workshops to produce carnival accessories like these Curlew headdresses, to be worn in the Rivers & Moorland Festival parade.
5. Students watched conservation in action with the Woodland Trust as shire horses worked ancient woodland sites near Champion Schools.

What's been happening?



A note from... Shallowford Farm



Hello from Shallowford Farm!

If you don't know us, we are a working hill farm that, like many that span our National Park, has been part of the landscape for centuries. This year we are celebrating turning 50: for the past five decades, alongside the sheep and pigs, we have had thousands of children from across the nation to stay to experience a slice of rural life.

We began in 1976, as a "lung for the city" for young people from inner London to connect with nature. In 50 years, we have grown to be a place of discovery for our nation's youth, where young people can explore firsthand new horizons within our world and within themselves. Not to undermine where they are from, but to make them stronger within it.

We are thrilled to be part of Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes and to connect with you all. Boy, do we have an exciting year ahead! To celebrate turning 50 we have:

- 50 stories being told, capturing memories and moments from the farm's first 50 years. Available to read on our website every Thursday.



The joy of puddle jumping at Shallowford Farm.

- Our summer Birthday Party on 18th July. You are all invited to help us celebrate in style!
- A cycle fundraiser turning pedal power into support for the farm's programme and facilities. 50 riders (10 a day) will cycle 250 miles over 5 days, visiting as many schools as possible. The routes will cover much of Dartmoor and therefore most of the DDL Champion Schools will be on one. We would love for you to be involved – give us a cheer as we cycle by, sponsor one of our riders, or run your own sponsored event alongside our ride.
- 50 trees being planted, inviting you all to join in cultivating a living marker of the farm's growth.

Find out more [here](#) or scan the QR code.

We hope to see you all soon!

Bye for now,

The Shallowford Team



Time to celebrate!



Rivers & Moorland FESTIVAL

The Rivers and Moorland Festival is coming to Ivybridge on 5th & 6th June.

The Rivers and Moorland Festivals are a series of community-focused creative events held over four years in the towns of Ivybridge, Okehampton and Princetown. The inaugural festival takes place in Ivybridge this summer. This new series is an exciting opportunity for people of all ages to explore, enjoy and experience Dartmoor, with a varied line-up on offer:

Throughout May and June – a programme of themed walks in and around Ivybridge explores the folklore, history and geography of the area. Presented by DDL in collaboration with Dartmoor Outdoor Festival.

Friday 5th June – a day of talks and creative activities in and around Ivybridge. Co-produced by Sustainable South Hams and DDL.

Includes:

- Rally for Nature – Schools and Youth Action. Free event. If you're a local young person (16 years+) who wants to take action for nature, or if you're a local resident who recognises the vital role of young people in environmental action, this session is for you. Book via www.riversandmoorland.org.
- Free drop-in carnival accessory / mask / costume making workshop suitable for all ages. 11am–6pm, Methodist Church, Fore Street, Ivybridge.

Saturday 6th June – a fantastic day of fun, creativity and community, bringing Ivybridge's annual festival together with the 2026 Rivers & Moorland Festival. Enjoy a day packed with activities, entertainment, interactive art installations, creative workshops, local food and drink, and plenty for all ages to explore, all inspired by the beauty of our local surroundings. Presented by Ivybridge Town Council and DDL.

Includes:

- Carnival Parade from 11am, processing up Fore Street and Erme Road to end in Victoria Park at 12pm. Come dressed to reflect Dartmoor's rivers and moorland!
- Festival in Victoria Park, 12–6pm, with stages, performances, food and lots to do for the whole family.
- Two free interactive art installations to explore: Canopy, by Lorna Rees, in Longtimber Woods; 'Erme' by Close and Remote, on Glanvilles Mill Bridge and online.

Full programme details and booking information at www.riversandmoorland.org



Canopy, by Lorna Rees, will be installed in Longtimber Wood

Puzzles and competitions

Competition Time!

Name our newsletter

Time to get your creative juices flowing! Can you come up with a catchy name for the Champion Schools newsletter?

Send your suggestions to info@dartmoorsdynamic.org and you could see your idea across the top of the next edition! Please include your name, school, year group and age. If you are under 16, please ask a responsible adult to email on your behalf.

Deadline for submissions is 21 July 2026. Competition terms and conditions on the DDL website.



Having fun hugging an ancient tree!

The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hug

Have you got a favourite old tree on Dartmoor?

At the Woodland Trust we love all trees, but we especially love ancient trees because they are so incredibly important for wildlife and as part of our history. We would love to meet your favourites.

The competition is to find a gnarly old tree on Dartmoor (the gnarlier the better), hug it, and send us the photo.

How to enter:

Email a photo of you and your tree to info@dartmoorsdynamic.org (if you can't reach the tree to hug it, a photograph of just the tree is fine, please don't fall off a hedge trying to get a hug).

In the email tell us:

1. Where it is (we really like What3Words).
2. What makes it special to you.
3. The age of the applicant and the school they attend.

Competition closing date:

26 June 2026. Full terms and conditions on the DDL website.

DDL wordsearch

Can you find 15 words to do with DDL and Champion Schools in this wordsearch? 15 is the number of projects that make up DDL. (The words are forwards, backwards and diagonal.)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commons | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cycling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Okehampton |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Princetown | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moorland | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rivers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yealm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farms | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erme |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heritage Fund | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Birds | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Festival |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dart | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Okement |

L A V I T S E F O S C W N C
 B O H D N M A S B N O S T S
 I M K T S R L C W C M E H E
 R R B E A A E O O C M E E I
 D O W I M F T O Y Y O T R T
 S R K K K E V T M C N W I I
 L I P E C E N I F L S A T N
 T V E N H O I T R I R L A U
 S E I B Y A Y T F N O K G M
 C R O A E M M O M G I D E M
 P S W G A E D P S O F E F O
 M I M R L M T A T S O M U C
 N T W I M F E K R O O R N N
 M M O O R L A N D T N E D Y



Ancient Tree at Hall Farm.

Upcoming public events

Dartmoor Future Skills – a free residential for 16–17-year-olds interested in green careers.

When? 26th–30th October 2026.

Where? Shallowford Farm.

Is it for me? Yes! If you are aged 16–17 years, love spending time outdoors, want to protect or care for the natural world and have considered working in the environmental sector. Champion School students have a higher chance of securing a place!

Visit this website for more details and to apply. Applications open 29 June.



Dartmoor Future Skills 2025

Family events on Dartmoor

What? **FREE River dipping.**

Come and discover the amazing creatures you can find in Dartmoor's streams and rivers. All equipment provided; booking essential.

Where? Postbridge Visitor Centre.

When? Tuesday 26th May, 10:30am–12pm.

Who? Best for accompanied 5–11 year-olds.

Visit this [website](#) for more information and to book.

What? **Dartmoor Explorers – the Brilliant Bronze Age!**

A free afternoon of fun to explore exhibits, make a spear and a fabulous Bronze Age bracelet to take home.

Where? Postbridge Visitor Centre.

When? Wednesday 29th July, 1:30pm–3:30pm.

Who? Accompanied 5–11 year-olds.

Visit this [website](#) to book your free place. Booking essential.

What? **Dartmoor Explorers – Mysterious Pond Creatures.**

A free, family-friendly afternoon of pond dipping and craft – create your own arty creatures to take home.

Organised by DNPA and supported by Okehampton Town Council.

Where? Meet at the Dartmoor National Park Outreach Van in Simmons Park, Okehampton.

When? Wednesday 12th August, 1:30pm–3:30pm. Free! No booking required but please arrive promptly.

Who? Accompanied 5–11 year-olds.

What? **Meldon Wildlife Festival.**

A fun-filled, wild day out for all the family! Meet local experts, explore Dartmoor's wildlife through pond dipping and minibeast hunts, and make fantastic nature crafts to take home.

Where? Meldon Old Quarry, Okehampton.

When? Tuesday 18th August, 10:30am–4pm. Free drop-in activities throughout.

Who? Activities to suit ages 5–11 and their families.



Farm jobs at Shallowford

Shallowford Farm's 50th Anniversary Celebrations

– all details here. Two events of particular interest to children, families and schools are:

A birthday fete on Saturday 18th July. Come along to celebrate the past, support the present, and help grow the future—together. Free but booking essential via the website.

A sponsored cycle ride in September (see *A note from...Shallowford Farm* for details). You could plan your own sponsored activity or cake sale to help raise money for Shallowford, or sponsor one of the riders via the Just Giving page on Shallowford's website.

For enquiries about any of the events listed, please email info@dartmoorsdynamic.org stating the name of the event you are interested in.

Get involved: volunteer for DDL!

Some of our projects are looking for adult volunteers. Could that be you? To find out more, please email info@dartmoorsdynamic.org and say which opportunity you are interested in.

Bike It Moor: The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's project officer, Iain, is looking for adult volunteers to help deliver fun and enriching active travel breakfasts, bike maintenance sessions, bike and scooter skills sessions, led bike rides, walks and scoots in Champion Schools. The project helps young people to be more active and enjoy all that their local area and Dartmoor have to offer. Training is provided, along with comprehensive support from the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust team.

Dartmoor Youth Rangers (supporting adult):

Would you like to facilitate young people to engage safely and fully in the Dartmoor Youth Ranger (DYR) programme? DYR is organised by Dartmoor National Park Authority and provides an opportunity for young people to understand, appreciate, and enjoy Dartmoor through an accessible programme of activities where they can develop environmental skills and knowledge leading to positive behaviour changes.

Shallowford Farm: From garden clubs to supporting educational sessions, event days to helping with farm jobs, there are volunteer roles to suit all at Shallowford Farm. Arrange a tour to learn more. Are you a keen cyclist? Would you like to be one of Shallowford's 50 sponsored riders in September? In return, each rider will experience Shallowford's warm farm welcome with supper, a night under the stars and breakfast.

Contact us

info@dartmoorsdynamic.org

<http://dartmoorsdynamic.org>

