

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council



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3rd December 2024

Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting on 26th November 2024 in Princetown Community Centre

Present:

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward:	Princetown Ward:	* Chair	** Vice Chair
Postbridge Ward:	Cllr Gary Easton		Cllr Hazel Williams
Cllr Julian Greatrex			Cllr Mark Williams*
Cllr Wendy Watson	Cllr Gregg Manning		

Abbreviations used: **DFPC:** Dartmoor Forest Parish Council, **DCC:** Devon County Council,
DNPA: Dartmoor National Park Authority, **DoC:** Duchy of Cornwall,
PCSO: Police Community Support Officer,
PCMF: Princetown Churchyard Maintenance Fund **WDBC:** West Devon Borough Council

Members of the public in attendance: 4, including Cllr Philip Sanders (DCC) and Cllr Mark Renders (WDBC)

1. **Apologies** - Cllr Geen & Cllr Byrom
2. **Declarations of interest** -
3. **Acceptance of minutes** - As previously circulated for meeting on 26th October 2024. Council approved the minutes which will be signed by Cllr Mark Williams at the December meeting.
4. **Urgent decisions since last meeting** – none
5. **Co-option of Councillors to fill the two vacancies in the Princetown Ward.**
 - a) One application received from Mr Martin Grover, circulated to Council prior to the meeting. Mr Grover left the meeting while Council briefly discussed and agreed to co-opt him to Council. Proposed by Cllr Hazel Williams, seconded by Cllr Easton and agreed by all. Mr Grover then returned to the meeting, signed the Acceptance of Office and took his place at Council for the rest of the meeting. Action: Clerk to send Notification of Interests form and Induction information to Cllr Grover. Clerk to re-advertise vacancy in the New Year.
6. **Governance Review** – see [Briefing Notes Appendix 1](#) for revised schedule
 - i. Princetown CCTV Policy– CCTV working group- see draft Policy circulated by e-mail
Council was unable to sign off the document, due to a few questions being raised following a recent request for access to footage. CCTV working group will meet prior to the December meeting to agree on final wording. Action: Clerk to convene meeting asap.

17th December 2024

Signature of Chair



7. **DNPA Visitor Centre** – Cllr Mark Williams circulated, prior to the meeting, his thoughts regarding the possible closure of the DNPA Visitor Centre and asked Council to consider what it should do to try to ensure that the Visitor Centre remains open. A full discussion was had with several questions raised regarding how the Centre had been previously funded, the terms of the lease, how the £440,000 Defra grant to DNPA in 2023 had been spent, and concerns raised about the impact any closure would have on the village, residents and to local businesses. Council agreed it would be devastating to the local and wider community if the Centre were to close and agreed to lobby DNPA, Duchy, Prince William, and MP Geoffrey Cox, as a start. All Councillors were in agreement that every effort should be made to retain the Centre within the village and in the current site, as it is such an iconic building in the centre of the village. **Action:** Cllrs Mark and Hazel Williams offered to draft statements/letters for the Clerk to circulate to Council and once agreed, send to DNPA, Duchy, Prince William, MP Geoffrey Cox.
8. **Play Park – Inspections, Action Plan and Funding Application.** Cllr Mark Williams to report on inspections in November and update on action plan. See [Briefing Notes Appendix 2](#). Council expressed thanks to Cllr Sanders (DCC) for the DCC Localities Funding of £4000 received to replace the universal joint on the Single Point Swing, which is now on order.
Cllr Hazel Williams updated on the funding application to replace and renew equipment.
- Funding consultation proposal has been submitted to Emma Byrom and Ross Wheeler, explaining that the funding application will seek to add accessible picnic benches, an interactive communications board, and ‘Talk Tubes’ to make the Play Park more ‘inclusive’. In consulting with the schoolchildren, youth club members and parents, the main users of the Play Park, Council will demonstrate that we have sought and considered their opinions.
 - Awaiting response from Emma and Ross.
9. **1st PUBLIC SESSION –**
Cllr Philip Sanders updated on several issues, including
- a) The bump in the road at Runnage - which seems to have improved since his last visit.
 - b) Confirmed the proposal for additional Double Yellow Lines in Princetown has been approved by DCC–HATOC and will be put out to public consultation next year.
 - c) With regard to the CCTV policy review, he suggested Council might consider only accepting ‘urgent’ requests from Police from ‘Inspector’ rank or above.
- Mark Renders, as a local business owner, spoke passionately against the closure of the Visitor Centre. He welcomed Council’s decision to write to DNPA and the Duchy to ask each to consider all available options to retain the Centre and keep it open.
10. **Parking Issues** – no issues raised at time of publishing the agenda
11. **Residents’ issues or concerns** – no issues raised at time of publishing the agenda
12. **Planning** – none at time of publishing agenda
13. **Financial management** - see [Financial Report](#) for details
- a) Payments approved by Council, to be authorised by Cllr Easton and Cllr Manning
 - b) Clerk reported a payment had been missed of the financial report - to East Devon Tree Care for the recent tree risk assessment/survey at Postbridge Cemetery, subsequently included as shown below.

Ref	Payee & Details	Amount	BACS amount
1832	IOC annual fee	£ 35.00	DD 22/11/24
1833	Jake Cook - Litter Picker expense - replacement lock for bin £8.99	£ 8.99	
1834	David Cole - Lengthsman Pay plus 15hrs contracting from 2024/25	£ 726.00	
1835	Jackie Bennetts - Clerks pay November	£ 488.95	
1836a	Jackie Bennetts - Clerks Expenses - magnets	£ 5.09	634.94
1836b	Jackie Bennetts - Clerks Expenses - toner cartridges	£ 140.90	
1837	Jake Cook - Litter Picker fee November	£ 46.00	
1838	SLCC Annual Fee	£ 110.00	
1389	East Devon Tree Care Ltd	£ 540.00	
		Total £ 2,065.93	

14. Updates on correspondence/ actions from previous meetings

- a) Replacement of Strimmer/Brush-cutter – received on 25th November 2024.
- b) Adoption of BT phone box – Princetown – awaiting issue of licence from Duchy
- c) Double Yellow lines, Princetown – proposal has been forwarded to HATOC, and has been approved.
- d) Postbridge Cemetery – Tree Assessment – completed, and report circulated – no action necessary at this stage. Professional re inspection recommended within 5 years which will need to be budgeted for. Report suggested that trees should be inspected by a nominated person for damage following storm events. Action: Clerk to investigate insurance implications if Councillors were to undertake this interim inspection.
- e) DoE Groups – awaiting response.

15. Reports and Updates from Committees, Sub Groups and Special Interests:

- a) LOVE (Love Our Village Enthusiasts) Project – Cllr Hazel Williams
 - i. New, simplified marketing flyer to be re-issued in the Spring. See Appendix 3
- b) Tidy Princetown Sessions – Cllr Mark Williams
 - Our last session was attended by 6 persons, including 2 Councillors. We focussed on weeding and cleaning the War Memorial in preparation for Remembrance Day, as well as litter picking.
 - Saturdays appear to be a better day, attracting more attendance. We must continue to promote this.
 - Enhancing pride in the village is imperative.
 - These sessions are now noted within the 'In The Clouds' flyer.
- c) The Plot - Community Garden - Cllr Hazel Williams
 - Planted 60 saplings from the Woodland Trust. 45 donated to the Dartmoor Preservation Association.
 - 5 mixed fruit trees on order.
 - Application submitted to Princetown Charity Shop for £250 funding.



- Garlic, herbs, leeks, cabbages, chard, spinach, strawberries, redcurrants and rhubarb all growing.
- d) CCTV System Check & any requests – CCTV Working Group
- i. Request received 5/11/24, footage uploaded 08/11/24, DCP reviewed 14/11/24
- e) Speedwatch - Cllr Gregg Manning – reported recent incident with cow on road, which was not wearing reflective collar. Cllr Williams asked for reflective collars to be added to Dec agenda, as there some VZSW funding remaining which could be used to purchase additional collars.
- f) Defibs – Cllrs Geen and Greatrex - no reports of defib use or faults received
- g) Primary School and PTA – Cllr Byrom – no report available
- h) Youth Club – Cllr Byrom- no report available
- i) Gardening the Grounds – St Michaels Churchyard
- Planted 30 saplings from the Woodland Trust. Photo sent to Tavistock Times.
 - Planted snowdrops and snakehead fritillary bulbs.
 - AGM on 28.11.2024.

16. 2nd PUBLIC SESSION -

- a) Lengthsman reported that the locks on the snowgates to the Car park were rusted and he was unable to lock the gates during recent snow event. Action: Clerk to clarify responsibility for locking the gates lies with Council, and update Snow Warden policy accordingly. Clerk to contact DNPA/Duchy to see who is responsible for replacing the locks, and to obtain key for Lengthsman.

17. Exchange of information – Around the table discussion for any matters to be shared for information or to request they are put on agenda for next meeting

- a) Clerk reported e-mail received from resident expressing concern about the lack of 4x4 vehicle with Princetown Fire and Rescue Service. Action: Item to be put on agenda for December meeting.
- b) Cllr Watson reported some slates had been fly tipped near Powdermills, but appeared to have been reported to WDBC.
- c) Cllr Watson reported recent flooding of road and garden Postbridge near the bridge during recent heavy rain. Action: Lengthsman to clear drain when next out there.
- d) Cllr Greatrex reported that Postbridge carpark had several cars ‘enjoying’ the snowy conditions in the previous week.

18. Date of next meeting - 1930 on Tuesday 17th December 2024
Princetown Community Centre

19. Proposal to exclude members of the public and press for the rest of the meeting, due to the confidential nature of the following agenda items. Proposed by Cllr Hazel Williams, seconded by Cllr Manning, agreed by all.

Members of the public left the meeting.

Part 2.

20. **Approval of Clerks pay increase** in line with National Pay Award (backdated to April 2024) Proposed by Cllr Easton, seconded by Cllr Manning and agreed by all. Action: Clerk to make back payment in December payroll.
21. **Review of Clerks hours.** Council was asked to considered increasing Clerks hours from 35 to 40 hours per month, with immediate effect, in recognition of increased workload. Proposed by Cllr Manning, seconded by Cllr Hazel Williams, agreed by all. Action: Clerk to draft letter for Chair to sign notifying this is effective from December 2024.
22. **Review of Lengthsmans pay,** with proposal to increase hourly rate by 2.2% from April 2025. Proposed by Cllr Watson, seconded by Cllr Easton, agreed by all. Action: Clerk to draft letter for Chair to sign notifying lengthsmen of increase from April 2025.
23. **Draft Budget 2025/26v5.** Council considered whether to further increase the precept request further to cover unexpected additional costs (Bank Charges, Increase in National Minimum wage and Employer NI contributions) and any agreed changes to hours or pay as agreed in agenda items 20, 21 and 22. Council discussed the need to increase the precept by more than the 2% agreed at the September meeting in order to cover these un-foreseen costs. An increase in the Precept request of 5% would cover these costs, and allow for a balanced budget, without having to use reserves. Proposed by Cllr Easton, seconded by Cllr Hazel Williams and agreed by all. Action: Clerk to redraft budget, for sign off at December meeting with 5% increase in Precept.

Cllr Williams reminded all Councillors to pay close attention to all Council expenditure, as it is public money we are spending, on resident's behalf.

Meeting closed at 2115