



# Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

---

11<sup>th</sup> December November 2024

**Councillor Briefing Notes for Council Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
**7.30 pm in Princetown Community Centre**

## Parish Council Meeting Agenda

1. **Apologies –**
2. **Declarations of interest -**
3. **Acceptance of minutes -** As previously circulated for meeting 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
4. **Urgent decisions since last meeting – none**
5. **Governance Review –**
  - Princetown CCTV Policy – CCTV working group – Council asked to approve latest draft as circulated prior to meeting.
  - Council to agree revised schedule for review of remaining documents. Need volunteers to review documents.  
January – CCTV Data Protection Impact Assessment, Play Park Inspections Procedure & Community Engagement Policy  
February – Lengthsman and Grounds Maintenance Procedures & Risk Assessment  
See Appendix 1 for revised schedule.
6. **DNPA Visitor Centre –** Update on the current situation, and actions taken. Council to discuss and agree any further actions to be taken ensure Visitor Centre is retained within Princetown.  
Action taken to date:
  - Statement issued to Tavi times see Appendix 2
  - Letters sent to: DNPA, Duchy of Cornwall, Geoffrey Cox MP, Prince William
  - DNPA meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> January – DFPC can send one representative to speak on behalf of Council (3 mins) – need to register intent to send representative.
7. **Parking Issues –** no issues raised at time of publishing the agenda
8. **Residents' issues or concerns**
  - a) Issue of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue, Princetown not having a 4x4 vehicle. Council to discuss and consider what actions may be taken. See e-mail circulated 15/12/24 with background information.
  - b) Concern raised over the location and brightness of the lights on the Two Bridges Hotel sign, particularly when coming from Postbridge and turning right towards Princetown.
9. **1<sup>st</sup> PUBLIC SESSION -** Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration.
10. **Planning –** none at time of publishing agenda
11. **Financial management -** see Financial Report for details
  - a) Payments to be approved
12. **Budget 2025/6 and Precept –** Council asked to approve 2025/26 budget v6 as proposed and circulated by Clerk, which would result in a 5% increase in the Precept amount, and agreed at the November meeting. Budget 2025/6v6 circulated by e-mail 15/12/24.

**13. Councillor Code of Conduct Training** – brief summary of recent training attended, to be given by Cllr Hazel Williams.

**14. Updates on correspondence/ actions from previous**

- a) Adoption of BT phone box – Princetown, awaiting issue of licence from Duchy
- b) DoE Groups – awaiting response, Clerk to chase.
- c) Proposed Housing Development – Princetown - Alex Rehaag has sent Clerk copy of presentation given on 26<sup>th</sup> November and has said the survey responses will also be made available. Clerk to post these on DFPC website and publicise on DFPC FB page.

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

- a) Play Park Inspections and Action Plan and funding – Cllr Mark Williams
  - Action Plan - The playpark is in hand, Dave has a number of tasks to complete by the end of January This is to be in readiness for the ROSPA Annual inspection in March 2025. Universal joint for single point swing delivery due early Jan, to be fitted by contractor. See Appendix 3 for Action Plan
  - Funding- Emma Byrom has agreed to distribute consultation questions to school children and parents. Awaiting results
- b) LOVE (Love Our Village Enthusiasts) Project – Cllr Hazel Williams -nothing to report
- c) Tidy Princetown Sessions – Cllr Mark Williams
  - Tidy Princetown didn't happen this month due to high winds.
  - January 4th is the next one, we are away so we need a volunteer to lead please
- d) The Plot - Community Garden - Cllr Hazel Williams
  - 5 apple trees from Woodland Trust arriving in January.
  - £250 funding received from Princetown Charity Shop.
  - Christmas drinks at The Prince of Wales held on 12<sup>th</sup> December, to encourage community engagement.
- e) CCTV System Check & any requests – CCTV Working Group - no requests
- f) Speedwatch - Cllr Gregg Manning -
- g) Defibs – Cllrs Geen and Greatrex -
- h) Primary School and PTA – Cllr Byrom -
- i) Youth Club – Cllr Byrom –
- j) Postbridge Cemetery – following storm Darragh, Lengthsman reported no apparent damage to trees, fallen branches etc.
- k) Gardening the Grounds – Princetown Churchyard
  - Hazel re-elected as chair for 2025 at AGM.
  - Community Payback team are on pause due to long-term sickness.

**16. 2<sup>nd</sup> PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration

**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

**18. Date of next meeting** - 1930 on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
Princetown Community Centre

## Appendix 1

### Cllr Review of Governance Documents - All documents due for review by end March 2025

Governance Docs	Policy	Procedure	Assessment	Notices
Documents		Suggested Lead Reviewers 2024		Completed
	<a href="#">Risk Register</a>	Clerk, Cllrs Manning, Geen & H Williams		April To be updated over next 12 months
1.	<a href="#">Standing Orders</a>	All		April Completed and published on DFPC website
2.	<a href="#">Financial Regulations</a>	Clerk, Cllrs Geen, Byrom, M Williams		April Completed and published on DFPC website
2.1	<a href="#">Grants and Donations Procedure</a>	Clerk, Cllrs Gee & Greatrex		May Completed
3.	<a href="#">Members' Code of Conduct</a>	All		May Completed
3.1	<a href="#">Complaints Procedure</a>	Cllr Watson and Cllr H Williams		May Completed
4.	<a href="#">Transparency Code</a>	All		May Completed
4.1	<a href="#">Community Engagement Policy</a>	Cllr Easton & Cllr H Williams		Jan ongoing
4.1.1	<a href="#">Publication Scheme</a>	Clerk		Oct Completed
4.1.2	<a href="#">Privacy</a>	Clerk		Oct Completed
4.2	<a href="#">Princetown CCTV Policy</a>	Cllr Manning & Cllr H Williams		Dec ongoing
4.2.1	<a href="#">Princetown CCTV Data Protection Impact Assessment</a>	Cllr Manning & Cllr H Williams		Jan ongoing
5.	<a href="#">Risk Management Strategy</a>	Clerk, Cllrs Manning, Geen & H Williams		April Completed and published on DFPC website
5.1	<a href="#">Play Area Inspections Procedure</a>	Cllrs M Williams, Byrom, Greatrex		Jan
5.2	<a href="#">Lengthsman and Grounds Maintenance Procedure</a>	Clerk & Cllr Williams + vacancy		Feb
5.2.1	<a href="#">Lengthsman and Grounds Maintenance Risk Assessment</a>	Clerk & Cllr Williams + vacancy		Feb
5.3	<a href="#">Snow Warden Procedure</a>	Cllr Easton + Council		March Completed and published on DFPC website
5.3.1	<a href="#">Snow Warden Risk Assessment</a>	Cllr Easton + Council		March
5.4	<a href="#">Memorial Inspections Procedure</a>	Clerk, Cllr Greatrex & Watson		March Memorials Inspected
5.5	<a href="#">Burials Procedure</a>	Cllr Greatrex & Watson + vacancy		Mar
5.6	<a href="#">Public Seating</a>	Cllr Greatrex & Vacancy (x2)		Mar

## Appendix 2:

# PROPOSED CLOSURE OF DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTRE, PRINCETOWN

## Statement from Dartmoor Forest Parish Council 10/12/2024

It appears that a decision by the Dartmoor National Park Association (DNPA) to close Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre, Princetown in early 2025 has been taken.

At its most recent Council meeting, this decision and its implications for the residents, businesses and community within and around Princetown, was discussed at some length. Over the past few weeks, businesses and residents have approached DFPC Councillors to express their extreme dismay and disappointment that DNPA should be even considering this as an option. Not one of the Councillors present at the meeting was in support of this proposal and feelings ran very strongly against such action.

To this end the Council would like to put on record its deep concern, huge disappointment and horror that DNPA are considering closing this Visitor Centre. This historic building lies at the heart of the Princetown community.

Dartmoor National Park Authority was formed in 1995 with the aim to:

*“conserve and enhance Dartmoor National Park’s natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage”*, and to

*“promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities of Dartmoor National Park”*

The DNPA Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2021 – 2026, page 10, clearly states that:

Under the Environment Act 1995, National Parks are legally obliged, and have a duty to, both:

*“seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park”*, and to

*“Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Special Qualities of the National Park by the public”*.

Further to this, the DNPA Dartmoor Partnership Plan, page 46 ‘Better for People’, talks about their Vision of:

*“a warm welcome for all”* and

*“enhances visitor engagement”*.

In closing the Centre, DNPA are contravening their own objectives and legal obligations.

Closure of Visitor Centre would, on a number of levels, fly in the face of the above italicised statements. The Centre, being located in such a notable building, lends itself to numerous visitors appreciating the cultural heritage of the structure, with its literary connections to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, links to Dartmoor Prison, and to the history and heritage of the village itself. Many visitors, both from the UK and abroad, may be unfamiliar with village’s direct links to the Prince of Wales, and to the role of the Prison over the past 200 years. The Princetown Visitor Centre has a key role in educating people not only about Dartmoor itself, but also about the history of the village. It offers priceless insights into the west side of the moor, which would be lost, should the closure go ahead.

Over the years, many thousands of school children have visited the Visitor Centre. There is little doubt this will have inspired many to take more of an interest in the natural world, history, wildlife, ecology, geology, and literature. The Centre provides an invaluable learning resource, at the heart of Dartmoor where young and old can learn more about the uniqueness of Dartmoor, and all it offers.

Princetown has several community groups: the LOVE project, Tidy Princetown, and The Plot community garden all supported by the Parish Council. The Parish Council have been working hard for several years to improve the appearance and welcoming feel of the village, with initiatives including revitalising the bus shelters, keeping the greens closely mown, and maintaining the Play Park in excellent condition. There is also a team of volunteers caring for the grounds of Princetown Churchyard. These initiatives have all served to develop Princetown into an enticing village.

The Centre itself is located in a key building within the village, and its imposing position is one to be celebrated. The Council fear that should it close, it will once more slip into disrepair and become an eyesore in the heart of the community.

The 50,000 - 80,000 visitors to the Centre each year compellingly support businesses within the village and local area. Many businesses are reliant on the footfall literally directed by the Visitor Centre towards them. The Council believe it would be a travesty to lose this attraction. Without the focus of the Centre many of these visitors would not take time to stop in Princetown. With the resulting economic downturn for local businesses; this would be catastrophic.

We are not asking DNPA to support our businesses, just to explore other actions rather than closing the Visitor Centre carte blanche. It is in no one's interest to leave this striking building, built in 1809, in the centre of the village, empty.

Princetown (along with Okehampton and Ivybridge) are designated as 'Gateways to Dartmoor' in the DNPA Dartmoor Dynamic Landscapes project, and a specific aim of the scheme is to focus on Princetown. Therefore, it appears essential that DNPA are adequately represented in the village, and able to promote their projects.

The Council feel that very little notice has been given to Princetown by DNPA of this proposed closure, due early next year. The village has not been afforded sufficient time to respond and defend the Centre.

Whilst the Council appreciates the DNPA financial position, it strongly urges the Authority to reconsider the closure of Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre, Princetown and to engage with relevant parties and agree an alternative long-term solution.

Ends.

**Appendix 3** - RoSPA Play Park Inspection March 2024 – Proposed Action Plan - (Timescales need updating)

When	Element	What	Who	Completed
JULY	P1 - Agility Trail	Replace worn shackles – chain link connectors notched	DC	
AUGUST	P3 – Cableway	Remove chain cover to inspect chain links to seat	SUPPLIER	
AUGUST	P6 – Cycle Course	Repair to edges of ramp section	DC	
SEPT	P9 – Rocking Horse	De-scale back to good base material and coat with lead free paint. Repairs may be necessary where corrosion is severe	DC	
JULY	P11 - Seesaw	Repair – wear to internal mechanism resulting in excessive sideways movement 8/24 Replace seats (ordered)	CARL/ LOCAL CONTRAC TORS	Replaced bearing and seats 26/8/24
JULY	P13 – Rotator – stand on	Replace smashed timber bungs	MW/DC	
OCT	P14 – Mixed Swings	Remove shackle bolt and check bushes and shackle pin wear – replacing as necessary	DC	
OCT	P15	Monitor chain wear	ongoing	
JULY	P15	Shrinkage/separation of the surface – reglue and fill gaps and joints as necessary	DC	Completed
OCT	P16	Adjust swing seat height to give minimum of 350mm clearance for standard seats and 400mm clearance for tyres, baskets and other group seats.	DC	
JULY	P17 – Swing – single point	Replace worn bearings	SUPPLIER /CLERK	Part on order Oct

