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6 February 2015

Councillor Notes for the Parish Council Meeting at 1930 on 9 February 2015
in Princetown Community Centre.

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward:	Princetown Ward:	
Cllr Alison Geen	Cllr Stephen King	Cllr Wendy Stones
Postbridge Ward:	Cllr Gregg Manning	Cllr Paul Turnbull*
Cllr Wendy Watson	Cllr Cliff Palmer	Cllr David Worth
Cllr Val Greatrex	Cllr Mark Renders	

David will chair the meeting

1. Apologies.

I have apologies from Cliff Palmer; from Stephen King; and a standing apology for Mondays from Paul Turnbull.

2. Declarations of Interest

No amendments have been reported to date.

3. Minutes of the last meeting.

No amendments have been reported to date.

4. Planning applications

With the Parish Council		Nil
Recent DNPA decisions (all conditional approval)	0619/14	Convert telephone exchange to bunkhouse - Postbridge Telephone Exchange
With DNPA	0719/14	Single & 2 story side extensions, rear terrace and extension of outbuilding to form car port – amended Dartlands Hexworthy - supported
	0713/14 & 0714/14	Barn conversion Dunnabridge Pound Farm - supported
	0684/14	Demolition of existing dwelling and building new Tor View Bungalow, Postbridge – no objection
Awaiting enforcement action	0164/07	Beardown Farm un-authorized chalet. Clerk has written to Stephen Belli and Tom Stratton and is awaiting a reply.

Widcombe Parish Council has received a letter of complaint from the applicant for Blackdown Piper Farm dated 4 January 2015 about its objection to the recent planning application that was refused by DNPA committee. Widcombe intends to defend its position. Dartmoor Forest also objected to this application, but we have not received a complaint.

5. Irresponsible drivers

Possible measures to reduce irresponsible drivers visiting Princetown. Since snow and ice have appeared there have been problems with blocked access through poor car parking; drivers performing ‘doughnuts’ in car parks, road junctions and on the main roads; animals killed on the road; and in Princetown a young girl was hurt when a racing car mounted the pavement. The police have been involved (see correspondence 17). The national park has announced closure of the Haytor car park during hours of darkness for similar reasons. Possible ways to prevent or discourage this irresponsible behaviour include: closing car parks; gritting car parks; monitoring hotspots and taking the car registration numbers and videos of irresponsible behaviour; installing permanent CCTV monitoring of hotspots.

The parish Council needs to decide how to respond constructively to this trend.

It is recommended the council:

Requests the national park closes Princetown car park during hours of darkness (can be done with a padlocked chain either set by Rangers or by local volunteers such as Doug Jenner).

That smooth surfaced car parks on the Moor are gritted to render them unsuitable as a skid pan.

Encourages residents to take registration numbers of irresponsible drivers and independent evidence such as photographs or camcordings.

Councillors may wish to propose additional measures.

6. Pre-salting and Gritting Policy

Complaints have been received about the state of the pavements in Princetown, which have not been pre-salted or gritted and residents were unclear who was responsible. The grit bin at Bellever Close had been emptied and residents had been unclear who was responsible for replenishing it. Residents had contacted the county council, the borough council and the parish council and received different guidance from each.

Having researched the subject, I found the county council brief on the snow warden scheme dated August 2011, which is in the briefing documents on the website. This states that the county council will provide the parish Council with 5 tonnes of salt without charge and a further 5 tonnes at a cost of £100 per tonne when requested. Orders are expected to be before winter sets in. It is then up to the snow warden (parish Council) to decide the priorities on how when and where this salt is used. The county council expects the snow warden (parish Council) to replenish grit bins from the five tonne supply. It also does not guarantee to replenish grit bins once winter has started for areas where there is no snow warden. The salt may be used on the public highway, including footways and footpaths, but not areas treated as part of the defined salting network and not for private driveways etc. The parish council's insurance policy has restrictions on using volunteers to salt on roads (as discussed at the last meeting).

The parish council did not order salt this year and I am uncertain to the level of stock we hold (David may be able to help) or where we would store 5 tonnes. However, the fact that we have a snow warden scheme is why the county council has been reluctant to replenish the grit bins. On the basis of the information sheet, we may have only partially implemented the snow warden scheme which has led to confusion.

It's recommended the parish Council clarifies to residents the boundary of its responsibilities and the arrangements under the snow warden scheme.

It is recommended that:

The parish Council agrees a policy that local residents or snow warden volunteers may use council grit to clear frequently used pavements only but not private or business property access. (For example the path from the car park to Tavistock Road may be salted but the path and steps into the old police cafe may not.) These residents and volunteers would also replenish grit bins as necessary.

As the volume of salt necessary to clear roads is much greater, it's recommended this should only happen with specific authority from the parish Council if the overall salt holding is below a certain level: either the Emergency Committee or the Clerk.

The parish Council determines a minimum level of salt holding for use in extreme winter weather (has we had two and three years ago); as a suggestion this might be 50% of the annual allocation (i.e. 2.5 t).

The parish council should undertake a stock take of salt holdings and if these are below 2½ tonnes attempt to order a free salt delivery from the county council.

Clarification should be sought from the county council that the snow warden scheme covers Princetown only and not the whole of Dartmoor Forest. This would enable Postbridge and Hexworthy to seek grit bin replenishment from the county council (although it is acknowledged these are not guaranteed).

The arrangements agreed by the parish council should be well publicised in Princetown.

7. Review of Procedures

Play Area Maintenance Procedure. This procedure has not been developed further since the last meeting.

Snow Warden Risk Assessment & Fitness to Participate. Following discussions at the last meeting these two documents have been developed based on examples used in other councils. Copies of both are in the briefing documents on the website. It is recommended the council adopts these documents.

Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. This is a mandatory new code for councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 per annum. Thus in a year when we do not receive grants, for example for the play park, Dartmoor Forest would not need to submit to external audit (saving £200) but would need to meet specific disclosure rules on the website, which would require only minor modification of our current information practices. A copy of the code is in the briefing documents on the website. It is recommended the council formally adopts the code. See also correspondence item 2.

8. Implications of Elections 2015

I attended a training course in January and became aware of some key rules, including changes since the last election, that councillors should be aware of:

The nomination process is expected to start on 31 March and must complete at 1600 9 April.

Prospective candidates will receive an application pack when they apply. The Clerk may issue reminders about the election process and has a duty to post statutory notices at the appropriate times but must not become involved with any potential candidate applications.

Candidate's papers must be delivered by hand to Kilworthy Park by either the prospective candidate or a trusted individual who is in a position to clarify information about the candidate. This may be time consuming as the application must be checked by official in the presence of the candidate or the trusted individual and queues are likely.

Candidate papers are identical whether seeing re-election or election.

The practice of publicising candidate lists 24 hours before they are finalised has ceased. Consequently there is no longer the opportunity to apply for multiple wards and select an easy election at the last minute; nor to persuade an individual not to stand to avoid the costs of a contested election (these opportunities have been abused elsewhere in the country).

Candidate lists will be published on Friday 10 April.

The Annual Parish Meeting on 15 April must not be used for any activities that might be deemed political or election related.

Current councillors remain in post until 2359 Sunday 10 May. New councillors (including those re-elected) take post 0001 Monday 11 May. However...

North Devon DC has announced it will not begin counting Parish Council votes until Monday 11 May. Other councils including West Devon are expected to follow suit. Consequently, if we have a contested election we may not know the result until Tuesday 12 May. As the council cannot be convened without the Clerk giving 3 clear days' notice, we cannot hold the annual Parish Council Meeting on 12 May as planned if we have a contested election in any ward, but legally must hold it before 25 May.

New acceptance of office forms must be signed before or at but not after the Annual Parish Council Meeting. Once signed, all councillors are deemed elected rather than co-opted.

Decisions made by the 'old council' are binding on the 'new council' the same as if there had been no change of councillors, subject to normal rules and protocols.

A Declaration of Candidate Expenses must be made by 11 June, even if no expenses have been incurred.

See also correspondence items 1, 4 and 13.

It is recommended:

Councillors note the comments above and ensure they understand their personal responsibilities in seeking re-election.

The May meeting is moved to 19 May to ensure no complications in the event of a contested election.

9. Financial management

a. Cheques to be approved this month:

828	A Jaques - Litter Picking	£56.33
829	Nigel Tigwell – TAP Fund Projector etc costs	£1,937.66
830	Retention for Play Area Upgrade	£392.50
831	DALC – Training Course	£25.00
832	Nigel Tigwell – Admin expenses – Reference Books	100.75

An invoice for the TAP Fund projector etc will be submitted to WDBC shortly, which will reclaim the ex-VAT cost of the equipment £1,739.56 and the remainder will be recouped in the VAT claim at the end of March. This project will be a zero cost to the Parish Council.

b. Bank Reconciliation.

Balance on last statement (31 January)		£26519.40
Outstanding Income		
	Nil	£0.00
Outstanding Cheques		
824	Litter Picking	£56.33
Reconciled total		£ 26463.07

c. **Forecast of Outturn.** This is shown in the tables and graphs attached. I have realised I have made a rod for my own back as it is disproportionately time consuming to update the forecast spreadsheet each month. I will introduce a simpler format for next financial year.

d. The Duchy has replied to the Council's letter with regard rent increases with a counter offer of keeping the rent fixed this year and raising it by £10 next year (see correspondence item 33). It is recommended the council accept this offer on the basis of maintaining cordial relations with the Duchy.

e. The clerk needs to develop a more accurate and comprehensive assets register than the one we currently have. I would be grateful for details of all Council owned items held by councillors or other individuals (for example snow shovels, Christmas tree lights etc).

f. A request by the Pre-School for a donation to support a trip to the miniature pony sanctuary has been received (see correspondence item 31). This will be the first grant application handled using the new procedure adopted at the December meeting. Unfortunately, the request was received too late to be included on the agenda and no specific figures were included, but councillors may discuss the request in principle prior to a decision at the next meeting. The Clerk has forwarded a copy of the new Grant Application Form for completion and a copy of the council's policy to assist the Pre-School to complete the form. No provision for a grant to the Pre-School had been considered in setting the budgets for this or next year, but funds can be made available at the council's discretion.

g. Similarly a request from St Raphael's Church: see correspondence item 34.

10. Committees, Sub-Groups & Special Interests

Questions about previously circulated reports from Committees, Sub-Groups and Special Interests by lead Councillors.

Community Centre	Wendy S	Attended PCC meeting on 29th January. Roof damage. - Police have closed the case as two boys were not seen breaking the tiles ;"only heard from inside building". No update from Bryan Harry re Library. Charity Shop have contacted DCC asking if a room could
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		<p>be rented at Duchy Square -no reply as yet. DCC is in the process of finalising transition of management of Duchy Square to Torbay Development Agency. Tom Stratton is to meet with them early February to discuss proposals for the building.</p> <p>Pre-school - still awaiting documentation from DCC .</p> <p>Pre-school had an OFSTED Inspection 08.12.14 The quality and standards of early years provision came out as grade 4, The previous inspection was grade 2.</p>
Pavilion Youth Club	Wendy S	<p>Attended meeting 19th January. Seven young people have joined the committee; one of which is a student from MarJon. The young people will be the voice for the YC informing on what is good and bad etc. The number of junior members runs between 20-30. Senior numbers have gone down, but still fairly well attended.</p> <p>The YC is halfway through its Peoples Health Trust funding programme. Dartmoor Sustainable Development funding comes to an end in March. Looking into further applications. Discussed community events. The young people would like to repeat last year's music festival with stalls and rides. Will keep you updated.</p> <p>Next meeting end of March.</p> <p>A group of youth members will be attending Postbridge Panto as two of their team are taking part.</p>
Parking Committee	David	<p>It should be noted the Tavistock and Okehampton, which have greater tourist attractions, have introduced a £2 all-day parking fee. The consultation on Princetown parking charges has not yet started.</p> <p>Nothing to report other than to agree with the sentiments noted in the Councillors Notes that continued pressure needs to be brought to bear on DNP to resolve the problems associated with anti-social driving around the village and car parks etc. Could we ask Councillor Sanders to intervene on our behalf with DNP?</p> <p>for the benefit of those who have not seen the article in the herald from the police. They say they are aware of the problem and are collating the information and intelligence regarding these young drivers. The have warned in the paper that any young drivers who are found to be driving to princetown or other areas of the moors with the intention of finding snow and ice and driving in a way as to cause a nuisance will be served a section 59 order which would give the police the legal right to seize and crush the car. This is part of the ASBO process and is a very real option.</p> <p>This should be enough to put them off as they love their cars more than their freedom.</p>
Princetown Primary School	Wendy W	
Emergency Planning Sub-Group	David	<p>For the upcoming period, that is, the remainder of February and up until the end of April, the Met Office sees no clear signal for any type of weather to predominate. Their calculations indicate that the chance of the period being characterised as very cold is 15%, the chance of the period being significantly warmer than average is 30%. In terms of rainfall the next three months</p>

		are expected to be statistically average with no extremes of rainfall expected. In the shorter term, the 30 day forecast indicates a quiet period with few or no significant weather events, overnight frosts and calm dry days are indicated to predominate. We currently have a supply of approx 3 1/2 tonnes of salt for discretionary use.
Public Library Sub-Group	Wendy S	See correspondence item 12. I will try to get an update from Brian Harry before the meeting.
Play Area Sub-Group	Cliff	See correspondence item 14.
Postbridge Village Hall	Val	Hall sign erected and looking good. A new outside light will be attached to the new post. A new notice box is being investigated to be attached to the old post. The borehole is being commenced in a week or two to find the best position for it. A member of the committee has been commissioned to purchase some cupboards for the kitchen and a folding door to close off the china store for hygiene purposes. A meeting has been attended with consultants to finalise the bid for funding for the Hall improvements. Letters of support for the improvement project would be appreciated – time runs out soon. Val
TAP Fund	Paul	Any new TAP fund applications must be made by 14 February.
Fire & Rescue service	Paul	
Cemetery	Clerk	Nil
Training	Clerk	Nil
Christmas Tree	Wendy S	
Emergency Committee	Clerk	Nil

11. Reports from other meetings

Nothing to date.

12. Other Issues Requiring Decisions

Attendance of DNPA Parish & Town Council Workshop. See correspondence item 7.

Whether to respond to the public transport consultation on No. 98 bus. See correspondence item 10.

Whether to declare assets of community value. See correspondence item 15.

Whether to follow up any grant opportunities. See correspondence items 18-26.

13. Project progress reports

Postbridge 3G Signal. As you are aware, Vodafone have selected the Visitors Centre, the Village Hall, Higher Lydgate Farm and Forest Cottage to host the rural open sure signal boxes to provide 3G mobile phone coverage in Postbridge and Bellever. The technical team will be visiting the parish on the afternoon of Wednesday 11 February from about 2pm to do the detailed design work for installation based on the outline design from the previous survey. This will require access to the interior of properties.

The owners of the properties are required by Vodafone to sign a simple agreement that defines their responsibilities to owners and owners responsibilities to them. The Parish Council has already agreed to reimburse electrical running costs (although DNPA will absorb the cost at the Visitors Centre). Vodafone are also negotiating with DNPA to try to avoid the need for planning permission.

See also correspondence items 8 and 16.

PHT Grant application for gardening club and equipment. If the application was put together by David and submitted before the deadline. Decisions are expected in around six weeks.

Defibrillators. The clerk is meeting with Ali Bright of DNPA to agree installation arrangements on the afternoon of 11 February. DNPA wish to use their own electrician for installation, I am hoping we will not be billed. As a point of interest North Bovey Parish Council have contacted the clerk seeking the costs of the Hexworthy installation as they are considering a similar project.

Cemetery improvements. The clerk will issue the invitation to tender for Cemetery improvements, but has not yet done so.

Grass cutting options. The clerk has not progressed and detailed costings as yet. However David has arranged for DPA volunteers to make a clearance of the churchyard commencing 14 February. The clerk has discussed proposals with Pam Law and she is fully supportive and will open the church for shelter and provide a kettle for hot drinks.

Risk assessments and procedures. Progress has been reported at agenda item 7 above. There is still a considerable way to go before the Council meets modern standards.

Outline plans for Play Area improvements Phase 3 & a skate park. Both these projects have not been progressed owing to higher priorities.

14. Urgent decisions since last meeting

Nil.

15. Exchange of Information

Limited to the exchange of information & items for next meeting

16. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be at 1930 Tuesday 10 March 2015 at Princetown.