

DARTMOOR FOREST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL Parish Meeting held on Monday 4 April 2011 in the Community Centre, Princetown

Present

Princetown

Emma Derham
Cliff Palmer
Sarah Ruffles
Paul Turnbull
David Worth

Postbridge

Dave Fisher (Chair)

Hexworthy/Huccaby

Alison Geen

Apologies

Princetown

Gary Easton
Wendy Stones

Postbridge

Wendy Watson

Hexworthy/Huccaby

In Attendance

Martin Rich (Community Council of Devon)
Serena Rouse (DNPA)
Jo Rumble (DNPA)
Councillor Philip Sanders (DCC)

There were 4 members of the public present

A G E N D A

1.	To receive apologies
2.	To accept the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 12 April 2010
3.	Matters arising from the previous meeting and not on the Agenda
4.	Chair's report
5.	To receive the accounts for Dartmoor Forest Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2011
6.	Postbridge Village Hall report and statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011
7.	School report
8.	Play area report
9.	Burial ground report
10.	Producing a Parish Plan
11.	Any other business

1. The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m. The Chair welcomed all present. There were apologies from Gary Easton, Wendy Stones and Wendy Watson

2. Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 12 April 2010 were approved and then signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the Previous Meeting

There were no matters arising

4. Chair's Report

The last twelve months have been a difficult time for most councils, whatever their size, and our experience has been typical of the problems facing all of us. On the negative side, the decision by WDBC to cut funding for the public toilets in Princetown presented us with a dilemma, which we hoped to have solved by raising the precept by a substantial amount. This decision was not taken lightly and did not receive universal approval. It remains to be seen whether the decision was right or wrong.

A problem was also created by High Moorland Community Action (HMCA) ceasing to trade. Fortunately, the Duchy of Cornwall's offer to fill the void temporarily was a big help in ensuring that the Princetown Community Centre continues to function until a new body can be formed. Hopefully, this is now in progress and, with help from all involved, could see a solution to ensuring the success of the Centre.

On the positive side, due to the initiative of the Clerk and other Council members, the children's play area has received financial help to replace some of the ageing equipment. This should make the area a much more enjoyable experience for the younger Princetown residents.

I would also, at this my last Council meeting, like to thank all my fellow Councillors, both past and present, for their dedication and help over the years. I would especially like to thank the three Parish Clerks who have done so much to make all of our tasks easier to understand and to carry out

5. To Receive Statement of Accounts for Dartmoor Forest Parish Council for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

The Audit Commission had carried out a consultation on the proposed change to the Parish Council's auditor. This change required that there to be a consultation period, and this ended on 31 March. The blank Annual Report form cannot be sent out to Parish Councils until the end of the consultation period and, to date, nothing had been received.

The accounts would now need to be signed at the normal Parish Council meeting in May, by the new Chair [**Post-meeting note:** The accounts were signed. Minute 17.3 of the minutes for 9 May 2011 refer]

6. Postbridge Village Hall Report and Statement of Accounts

The annual report and statement of accounts were not available as the AGM was not scheduled to take place until later in the month

Planning applications for improvements to the Village Hall had been approved by DNPA

7. School Report

Nothing to report in Wendy Watson's absence

8. Playground Report

The Parish Council commissioned a risk assessment of the access road to the Community Centre in responses to residents' concerns about the safety of children leaving and entering the play area. Safety has been improved by painting the appropriate lines and a zebra crossing. Signage is now in place to make the Community Centre easier to find.

The new equipment was installed in January and is already well used by the children and young people in the village. The Parish Council formally thanked Chris Jordan for acting as project manager during the installation of the equipment. The official opening will be on 25 June, to coincide with the village Fete.

The Tavistock Road entrance to the play area will shortly be closed off and the Parish Council will then take the necessary steps to enable the area to be managed as a dog-free zone. We hope very much that this will ensure that the grass is safe for the children to use.

We have obtained a quote from the equipment supplier for new swings and more equipment for the toddler area, which we could not afford in the first phase of the work. We hope to be able to find funding for this so that work can be completed before the end of the year

9. Burial Ground Report

The tree works had been completed. A quote had been obtained for repairing the wall damaged by the trees. Work will be carried out when the weather improves

Dave Fisher had agreed to continue to do the annual safety checks on the memorials. He said he would remove one of the benches next winter to refurbish it

10. Producing a Parish Plan

Martin Rich introduced himself. He said he worked for the Community Council of Devon (CCD), which was a charity aimed at providing advice and support for improvement projects carried out by rural communities in Devon.

He said that it was becoming essential for Parish Councils to have a Parish Plan, and the Government's introduction of the Big Society and Localism played to this. Despite budget cuts, CCD was still able to provide advice and support in producing a Plan. This took the form of:

- Assisting with public meetings to find volunteers to form a Steering Group
- Assisting with the set-up of the Steering Group
- Explaining the process manual
- Assisting with the public consultation

Martin said that advice and support was also available from DNPA and WDBC. There was also more involvement with service providers, who would aid production of the Action Plan.

In answer to a question, Martin said that the Parish Council did not have a legal requirement to produce a Parish Plan, however, it did provide an opportunity for the community to define its priorities. Furthermore, an established need, with evidence of appropriate consultation, was known to ease grant seeking. Martin said that two thirds of residents in Devon now lived in communities with Parish Plans and the Parish Council would benefit from being a late starter by having access to expertise and advice from agencies that had been involved in the production of many Plans.

In answer to a question, Martin said that the Localism agenda did not make it clear whether Parish Councils could plan for affordable housing. Jo Rumble pointed out that all Housing matters were the responsibility of WDBC, with DNPA responsible for detailed planning.

In answer to a question, Martin said that, in his experience, the Parish Council's three-ward structure might mean that the Plan needed to be structured to reflect this.

In answer to a question, Martin said that the Steering Group would comprise 10 to 12 members.

Martin said that the Plan needed to be realistic. As a guideline, he said that 50% of the Plan's objectives would be internally delivered, 25% would come from external providers and 25% would be aspirational.

11. Any Other Business

Nothing to report

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.42 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: **2 April 2012**