



# Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

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18 January 2015

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 1930 on 13 January 2015 in Princetown Community Centre.

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

Cllr Alison Geen chaired the meeting

There were no members of the public in attendance.

### 1. Apologies.

Cllr Cliff Palmer apologised in advance of the meeting following the death of his wife Shirley. The council recorded its deep sympathy for Cliff and his family at this sad time. Councillors' thoughts would be with him.

Cllr Stephen King submitted apologies for the February meeting.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

No amendments were reported.

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Police Matters.

Further damage had been caused at the Community Centre by youths illicitly using a fire exit door and leaving it open, which was then caught by the wind causing £275 damage. The police have advised this would be recorded as accidental damage rather than vandalism.

Police have approached Councillors for background information after an offensive item was posted through the letterbox of a house in Tavistock Road.

### 5. Meeting time efficiency measures.

Proposals developed by the Co-Chairs and the Clerk were discussed. It was agreed:

Monthly council meetings will be guillotined at 10pm and any unfinished business will be carried over to an extraordinary meeting 7 days after the programmed meeting.

To focus debate, Councillor Notes will include a clear statement of why the item is on the agenda and what decisions/actions are required of the council.

Routine items on the agenda will be reduced to focus debate on council business rather than the exchange of information. 'Police Matters' and 'Repairs, Maintenance & Highways' would



only be included if specifically requested by a Councillor. 'Questions about previously circulated reports from Committees, Sub-Groups and Special Interests' will have the list removed to avoid the temptation to repeat reports.

Delegating business to committees would be a last resort as it regularises an additional call on Councillors' and the Clerk's time and would increase overhead costs.

## **6. Repairs, Maintenance & Highways**

Parishioners have raised road and drainage defects with individual Councillors. The system no longer works through Parish Councils providing consolidated lists; instead individuals need to register defects on the DCC highways website. Currently there are no highways defects formally recorded in the Parish.

The Clerk will issue an invitation to tender for cemetery improvements.

### **First Public Session**

Nothing was raised.

## **7. Review of Procedures - Play Area Maintenance Procedure.**

The Clerk has developed a maintenance schedule for the playground area based on manufacturers' recommendations. However, additional weekly inspections are required by the insurance company, for which Councillors Stephen King, Mark Renders and David Worth volunteered to join Cllr Cliff Palmer to complete this on rotation. The council will adopt a more formalised approach and record inspections against the schedule that will be incorporated in a new procedure.

## **8. Precept**

The council agreed to set the precept by keeping household contribution at the same level as last year at £44.10 to minimise any cost of living increase on parishioners (by 6 votes to 3). This will result in a slightly smaller budget as the cut in central government Council Tax Support Grant has to be absorbed. The council will continue to look at ways to deliver its services more economically.

## **9. Parish Emergency Plan - Meeting insurance company requirements and recommendations**

A general letter from the council's insurers has indicated some areas where the council needs to improve its arrangements to maintain compliance with its insurance policy. Primarily, the council needs to develop more robust risk assessments, inspection regimes, asset registers and procedures. With regards to the Snow Wardens in Princetown, it has become apparent that DCC Highways insurance only covers the volunteers for third party risks. The council's insurance will cover them for clearing pavements but not roads. Consequently, the Snow Wardens' activities this winter will not include any clearance of roads unless insurance cover has been increased. The Clerk will seek a quotation for any increase in cover.

## **10. People's Health Trust Active Community Grants**

The People's Health Trust is offering grants of between £5000 and £25,000 per year for projects lasting between 9 months and 2 years aimed at local people and groups wanting to create a fairer places to grow, live, work and age. Dartmoor Forest is one of only two rural parishes in Devon that are considered to have health inequalities and is eligible to apply for funding. The Devon Community Foundation is willing to assist local groups in the County to apply for this funding.

The council agreed to develop an application to fund a Horticultural Society in Princetown that will: redevelop the single derelict village allotment, seek an additional 8 allotments, provide expertise and equipment to support parishioners improving private gardens and provide an avenue through the village shop to sell fresh village grown produce. Possible partnerships would also be explored with

the Duchy of Cornwall (land owner), local businesses (produce sale) and the Princetown Youth Club (subject to CRB requirements etc). Applications must be submitted before 4 February 2015. Cllr David Worth and Cllr Wendy Stones will lead the project.

#### **11. Princetown Car Park Charges**

Dartmoor National Park Authority has decided to increase the charges for the High Moorland Visitors Centre car park. Their plan is to keep the £1 charge for up to 3 hours and then charge £2 for any period beyond three hours. The increase will be subject to formal consultation by West Devon Borough Council in February (date to be decided). Financial returns to the National Park from car parking fees have been approximately half that forecast and the Authority is under pressure to find greater revenues away from government grants.

The council was unhappy with the proposals for several reasons:

There has been insufficient time to assess the impact of the new traffic regulation order for Tavistock Road, which is expected to result in more cars using the High Moorland Visitors Centre Car Park, thereby increasing revenue.

The new charges may lead to increased displaced parking in village side streets.

Similarly, parking in Princetown may be discouraged, leading to loss of business to village shops and cafes.

Previous analysis of parking patterns analysed the impact of all day parking charges from 4 hours, so the choice of a 3 hour division was questioned. Also, as the previous analysis of parking patterns only assesses the proportion parking for between 2 and 4 hours (35%) the impact of increasing charges beyond 3 hours has not been assessed.

These points had been put to the National Park by the Clerk previously but had not influenced the Authority's decision. The council will challenge the increased charges in the consultation.

#### **12. Reports from Committees, Sub- Groups and Special Interests.**

Councillors circulate reports before the meeting and answer any questions in committee:

**Community Centre.** Princetown Community Centre committee meeting took place on 16<sup>th</sup> December. Roof repairs following the vandalism were completed at a cost of £2,400. Youths illicitly using a fire door that was then caught by the wind caused £275 damage. CCTV hopefully to be installed before Christmas. The dispute with the Pre-School is still awaiting documentation regarding "time changes" from DCC. The AGM will be on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

**Pavilion Youth Club.** Next meeting will be held on Monday 19 January.

**Parking Committee.** See item 11.

**Princetown Primary School.** No report.

**Emergency Planning Sub-Group.** The Met Office has not issued a three month weather forecast since the 18<sup>th</sup> December, but at that time there was no strong signal for a particularly cold period before March. In the short term however, there is a significant chance of the next week turning considerably colder with the possibility of snow showers every day from Tuesday to Saturday. Also, see item 9.

**Public Library Sub-Group.** The council discussed its lack of involvement in planning Princetown Library's future since Brian Harry took the lead. It was decided not to formally seek a role at this stage, but an update on progress would be sought, either at the next Community Centre Trustees meeting or directly from Brian Harry.

**Parish Plan Sub-Group.** This sub-group will be suspended until it is clear whether a Community Plan would benefit the Parish.

**Play Area Sub-Group.** The Clerk inspected all equipment on 2<sup>nd</sup> January. All was in order but some preservation work will be needed on rocking horse in summer.

**Princetown Toilets Sub-Group.** This sub-group will be suspended until it is necessary to re-negotiate the National Park Authority's contribution in 2016/17.

**Postbridge Village Hall.** The new sign is up and is looking good. The sand from WDBC is in the car park and the sandbags are available for when villagers need to protect against local flooding. The quotes for the bore hole are being progressed and the car park extension is now completed. There are several potential new members of the committee coming to the February meeting including the new Treasurer.

**Fire & Rescue Service.** Princetown is recruiting retained firefighters.

**Cemetery.** The Clerk will issue an invitation to tender for a new access to the cemetery extension. Having attended a one day cemetery management training course the Clerk reported some of the council's procedures and registers needed updating.

**Training.** The Clerk will attend a 2 hour course on preparing for elections on 21 January.

**Christmas Tree.** This new sub-group was established comprising Cllr Wendy Stones, Cllr David Worth and Cllr Paul Turnbull to arrange repairs for the damaged lights, provide appropriate storage containers, and establish long term arrangements now Emma Derham has left the council.

**Emergency Committee.** Nothing to report

### 13. Reports from other meetings

Nothing to report.

### 14. Planning applications

a. The current status is:

With the Parish Council	0719/14 0713/14 & 0714/14 0684/14	Single & 2 story side extensions amendments Dartlands Hexworthy - supported Barn conversion Dunnabridge Pound Farm - supported Demolition of existing dwelling and building new - Tor View Bungalow, Postbridge – detailed response submitted
With DNPA	0619/14	Convert telephone exchange to bunkhouse - Postbridge Telephone Exchange – no objection
Recent DNPA decisions (all conditional approval)	0650/14	Extension and new disabled access - Postbridge Village Hall – conditional approval
Awaiting enforcement action	0164/07	Beardown Farm un-authorized chalet. Clerk is awaiting update from DNPA & Duchy.

### 15. Correspondence

All correspondence has been uploaded to the website. Papers that required decisions by the Parish Council and were not discussed elsewhere on the agenda were considered:

The council decided to nominate Cllr Paul Turnbull to attend the Queen's Garden Party 2015, with Cllr Val Greatrex as reserve.

The council decided not to seek representation on the Devon Countryside Access Forum as qualifying councillors are already heavily committed.

The council agreed to submit a response to the Dartmoor Classic Sportive cycle event 2015 risk assessment and it appears to walk back from agreements reached last year. Cllr Alison Geen and the Clerk will compile the response.

The council agreed the proposed rule changes for Parish Polls were sensible and decided there was no need to comment on the consultation.

The council decided not to send a representative to the SLCC South West Regional Roadshow on Wednesday 25th February at a cost of £69.

The council decided not to seek accreditation under the NALC Local Council Award Scheme.

## 16. Financial management

### a. Cheques approved this month:

824	A Jaques - Litter Picking	£56.33
825	Nigel Tigwell - Pay	£546.19
826	HMRC - Income Tax	£86.00
827	Mike Druett – Grass cutting	£150.00

### b. Bank Reconciliation.

Balance on last statement (31 December)		£ 27361.59
Outstanding Income		
	Nil	£0.00
Outstanding Cheques		
809	CAB Donation	£60.00
Reconciled total		£ 27301.59

c. **Forecast of Outturn.** The analysis by the Clerk indicates an underspend by the end of the year, largely due to lower than expected expenditure on grass cutting and repairs.

d. **National Joint Council for Local Government Services new pay scales.** The council agreed to implement the national pay scale agreement for local council clerks, which uplifts the Clerk's hourly rate on SC15 from £8.428 to £8.613.

## 17. Progress reports on previous actions, not on the Agenda

**Grass Cutting Options.** The Clerk had been unable to progress this significantly over the seasonal period. Costings remain approximately the same as last reported to the Council. Mike Druett has asked to terminate his contract. A number of approaches have been received by people offering to cut grass, but without the equipment needed for larger spaces. The purchase of equipment option remains viable, but no decision needs to be made before setting the precept as had been originally envisaged. The option of collaborating with another parish for a TAP fund application was discussed and discounted by the council.

**Defibrillators.** The Clerk has approached the National Park about mounting the Postbridge defibrillator on the visitors centre to the right of the gentleman's toilets and has received a positive but holding reply. The Park has recently gone out to tender for architects to design the visitor centre enhancements and it is possible they may seek to delay a final decision until an architect has been appointed. The Clerk has not taken any steps yet to get the defibrillators registered with the South West ambulance trust and the 999 service.

**Postbridge 3G Signal.** Cllr Val Greatrex and the Clerk spend a day escorting the Vodafone engineers around Postbridge Ward. In summary, the project is viable and we can expect detailed design work in January/February and installation in March/April. The surveyors' report will be subject to Vodafone commercial and project management considerations, but their outline plan is to site 3-4 units along the main road (with shortlisted locations at the Visitor Centre, the shop, the Village Hall and Beechwood B&B) and one unit to the south at either Lydgate House Hotel or Higher Lydgate Farm. In Believer there will be a single unit. The ideal location would be 10 Forestry Houses but Carrie Jost has withdrawn as a volunteer and so the currently intended location is Forestry Cottage.

This will provide a good coverage of the villages and tourist areas. The signal is attenuated by granite walls and some properties may find it weak indoors. If this does happen, Vodafone have a unit to boost the signal indoors but this would need to be purchased.

**Outline plans for Play Area improvements Phase 3 & a skate park.** There has been no progress on this since the last meeting.

#### **18. Urgent decisions since the last meeting**

None.

#### **19. Exchange of Information**

The Charity Shop has received notice that its lease will not be renewed in November 2015. Jackie Gee has been searching for alternative premises without success. Any suggestions or assistance would be welcome.

The annual West Devon Mayoral Awards are seeking nominations.

Due to next year's election all final TAP applications need to be submitted by 14<sup>th</sup> February as no decisions can be made by Members on funding during Purdah. WDBC will seek prior approval for the projects from Ward and County Members before the March Link meetings and the projects will then come before the Link meetings for their views. If Member and Link views coincide the funding will be allocated; if not then the application will have to be carried forward to the first Link meeting after the election, assuming funding is still available.

The Clerk circulated copies of the proposed Historic Princetown noticeboard to councillors and requested comments by 20<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **Second Public Session**

Nothing was raised.

#### **20. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be at 1930 on Monday 9 February 2015 at Princetown.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 2130.