

Councillor Briefing Notes for 25th July 2023

1. **Apologies** – Cllr Manning, Cllr Geen, Cllr Easton
2. **Declarations of interest** -
3. **Acceptance of minutes** - As previously circulated for meeting on 27th June 2023.
4. **Urgent decisions since last meeting** – none
5. **Governance Documents and Policy Review** – Review of progress to date. See Appendix 1. Suggestion from Clerk going forwards would be to review one to two documents each meeting, rather than do them all at the same time. That would spread the workload across the year. Council to consider and agree action.
6. **20's Plenty** – Council to consider, discuss and agree on action to be taken to support this campaign. See Appendix 2 for report from Cllr Clarke-Major who attended the recent webinar and separate [Briefing note](#) for more details. Council to consider adopting a motion to help to:
 - 1) Achieve a 20mph speed limit on roads in your community where people and motor vehicles mix.
 - 2) Demonstrate to your Highway Authority the desire for 20mph county-wide, making it both cheaper and easier to implement.Suggested motion to be approved:
Dartmoor Forest Parish Council
 - Supports the *20's Plenty for Devon* campaign;
 - Calls on Devon County Council to implement 20mph in Princetown, Postbridge, Hexworthy, and Bellever; and
 - Will write to Devon County Council to request 20mph speed limits on streets throughout [Devon] where people live, work, shop, play or learn, with 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit.
7. **Dartmeet Cattlegrid Fencing Repairs** - Council has been approached to write a letter asking DCC Highways to make necessary repairs to the fencing to prevent livestock getting onto the road. See Appendix 3
8. **Parking issues (Princetown)**- Standing item to cover issues arising since the last meeting - none
9. **Residents' issues or concerns** –
 - a) **Claremont House** - Building is in a state of disrepair, looks unsightly and front window is cracked and therefore unsafe. Council to consider what action could be taken to get property owner to make necessary improvements. See Appendix 4
10. **1st PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration.

11. **Planning** – [Search for an application | Dartmoor 0235/23](#) at The Forest Inn, The Forest Inn, Hexworthy, PL20 6SD has been withdrawn
Council to discuss the following applications and agree on response to DNPA.
[0280/23](#) Consultation Request Letter - Application at The Bearas, Hexworthy, PL20 6SD
(See email from Cllr Geen – 23/7/23)
[0288/23](#) Consultation Request Letter - Application at Ring Of Bells, Hexworthy, PL20 6SD
[23/0045](#) Tree Conservation Consultation Letter - Application at Jubilee Field, PL20 6XQ
[23/0048](#) Tree Conservation Consultation Letter - Application at 1 Plymouth Hill, PL20 6QG
12. **Financial management** - see Financial Report for details
 - a) Payments to be approved;
 - b) Ideally we need another Councillor as a bank signatory and able to access online banking to approve BACS payments each month.
13. **Natural England Proposed Stock Reduction on Dartmoor**- Held over from last meeting to allow Cllr Geen to update on the review process and for Council to consider and agree on any action to be taken.
14. **Garage No's 13 & 18 Bellever Close** – Council to consider and agree to sign the new Tenancy at Will, issued by the DoC. See e-mail from Clerk 23/7/23
15. **Updates on correspondence/ actions from previous meetings** - See 'Briefing Notes' for updates regarding matters listed below, and ongoing matters being dealt with.
 - a) Noticeboards – Hexworthy and Postbridge – work is ongoing to raise funds for Hexworthy replacement and discussions ongoing regarding the placement of it on the wall of the Forest Inn.
 - b) Hexworthy Telephone box refurbishment – is now complete and there is a press release drafted giving some of the history of the telephone box and the work done to refurbish it.
 - c) Princetown Benches – Clerk to give verbal update
16. **Reports from Committees, Sub Groups and Special Interests:**
 - a) Play Park Inspections and Action Plan –
 - b) Tidy Princetown Session -
 - c) Princetown 'Pots & Plants' -
 - d) Princetown Churchyard Maintenance Fund –
17. **2nd PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration
18. **Exchange of information** -
Round table discussion for any matters to be shared for information or to request they are put on agenda for next meeting
19. **Date of next 'Tidy Princetown'** - 10am until 11am - Sunday 6th August 2023.
Meet outside Post Office.
20. **Date of next meeting** - 1930 on 22nd August 2023
Princetown Community Centre

Appendix 2

Cllr Review of Governance Documents 2023 |

All documents due for review by June 2023

	Governance Docs	Policy	Procedure	Assessment	Notices
		Documents	Reviewers 2023	Completed	
		Risk Register	Clerk, Cllrs Manning & Geen	GM JB - updated comms with Clerk re workload	
1.		Standing Orders	All	25/4/23	
2.		Financial Regulations	Clerk, Cllrs Geen & Byrom	JB_AG	
2.1		Grants and Donations Procedure	Clerk, Cllrs Geen & Byrom	JB_AG	
3.		Members' Code of Conduct	All	JB	
3.1		Complaints Procedure	Cllrs Manning & Watson	GM	
4.		Transparency Code	All	JB	
4.1		Community Engagement Policy	Cllrs Watson, Byrom, Wood	JB 6.9 review	
4.1.1		Publication Scheme	Clerk	JB – needs amending to include costs	
4.1.2		Privacy	Clerk	JB	
4.2		Prinetown CCTV Policy	Clerk, Cllrs Manning, Williams	MW, GM JB	
4.2.1		Prinetown CCTV Data Protection Impact Assessment	Clerk, Cllrs Manning, Williams	MW GM JB	
5.		Risk Management Strategy	Clerk, Cllrs Manning & Geen	GM JB	
5.1		Play Area Inspections Procedure	Cllrs Williams, Byrom, Butterworth & Wood	JB – included google sheet for inspections	
5.2		Lengthsman and Grounds Maintenance Procedure	Clerk & Cllr Williams	MW JB – removed Churchyard	
5.2.1		Lengthsman and Grounds Maintenance Risk Assessment	Clerk & Cllr Williams	MW JB – removed Churchyard	
5.3		Snow Warden Procedure	Cllrs Butterworth & Easton	GE JB- updated Lead Warden	
5.3.1		Snow Warden Risk Assessment	Cllrs Butterworth & Easton	GE JB	
5.4		Memorial Inspections Procedure	Cllr Greatrex & Watson	JG JB – removed Churchyard Annual Inspection – Who/When?	
5.5		Burials Procedure	Cllr Greatrex & Watson	JG JB – needs site plan adding	
5.6		Public Seating	Cllr Greatrex	JG JB	

Appendix 2 – 20's Plenty - summary from Cllr Clarke-Major

There are around 28 million people who already live where 20mph is normal.

In 2020, 105 applications for the scheme were submitted with only 4 being granted. This year there were a further 57 applications made with only 6 being granted.

Key points;

- Better for Local businesses,
- Climate friendly,
- Fewer casualties,
- Less air and noise pollution.
- CO2 is a third higher when travelling at 30mph than 20mph also 20mph is better for fuel economy.
- By travelling only 1mph slower would generate 6% fewer casualties. For example, Edinburgh has noticed at 20mph has cut crashes by a third.
- Over the last two decades 20s Plenty has become more popular by about 70%.

- Scotland has implemented a trial of 20mph in rural areas, as well as Surrey Council. Southampton are doing it in residential areas and Wales are moving from 30mph to 20mph across most of its county by next year.
- Cornwall and Oxfordshire Council have allocated money to implement this scheme over the next 3/4 years.
- It has been suggested that if all parish councils in Devon should submit a joint application, as it will stand a greater chance of being passed by DCC.
- They gave an estimated cost for the whole of Devon who implement this scheme to be around 5/10 million for the whole county.

If we were to go ahead with the proposal for 20s Plenty we would need to,

- Pass a motion within the parish council, supporting and committing to emailing DCC requesting they change the default speed across the village/County.
- Contact the County Councillor to inform them about the campaign and ask for their support. Also informing them that we'll be emailing DCC requesting they change the speed default policy.
- Email DCC and then let the 20s Plenty for Devon campaign know we have done this.
- 20s Plenty is to be discussed at the next full Council meeting at DCC, courtesy of Councillor Hodgson at Exeter County Hall. There is a suggestion to get as many 20s Plenty for Devon supporters present at the County Hall to demonstrate support.
- They said anyone who wishes to attend and support the scheme will meet at the location above on 7th September 2023 between 1/2pm and to let 20s Plenty for Devon know.
- They suggested maybe the local school children could make advisory signs for entrances leading into the village, as people tend to take more notice of these rather than speed signs. To do this we would need to get consent from DCC, County Councillor and the Highways officer.

They do offer banners:

- 20s Plenty banners which are £55.00 each.
- Also one for schools asking drivers to keep to a 20mph speed limit, which are also £55.00 each.
- There is also a download and print 20s Plenty sign for windows.

Cllr Clark- Major

Appendix 3 -Dartmeet Cattle grid fencing – from Cllr Geen

We have been approached by Widecombe Parish Council to ask us to support DNPA ranger, Rob Steemson, who is trying to get Devon County Council Highways to mend the post and rail fencing on the north side of the cattle grid. This was erected by Devon CC when the grid was installed originally just as they have at other moorland cattle grids. The fencing is in Widecombe Parish and they are writing a letter of support for Mr Steemson. However I would ask the Council to also write in support of DNPA in this matter as there have already been bullocks that got through and walked up the road towards Princetown nearly causing an accident. I realise this doesn't immediately affect many of our councillors but many residents travel from Princetown through Dartmeet to get to work and don't want nasty surprises on that stretch of road.

The wording I suggest is below but feel free to change it:-

To: Scott Riddell <scott.riddell@devon.gov.uk> John Fewings <john.fewings@devon.gov.uk>;
Cc: George Gribble <george.gribble@dartmoor.gov.uk>; 'meg.booth@devon.gov.uk' <meg.booth@devon.gov.uk>; <stuart.rogers@teignbridge.gov.uk>; 'Cllr John Nutley' <John.Nutley@Teignbridge.gov.uk>; <huw.cox@teignbridge.gov.uk>; Richard Drysdale <rdrysdale@dartmoor.gov.uk> Philip Saunders DCC, Mark Renders WDBC

Dear Scott and John

The fencing either side of the cattle grid by the entrance to Badgers Holt, Dartmeet is falling apart and now allows animals grazing on Dartmeet hill through into Badger's Holt car park. This is in Widecombe Parish Council's area but this issue has and could in the future affect Dartmoor Forest Parish Council residents. Animals have got through the broken fence, walked through the Dartmeet car park and out onto the B3357 towards Princetown very nearly causing an accident. This will happen again as the grass is always greener in the car park because no animals routinely graze there.

We understand that Rob Steemson, DNPA Ranger, has already been in contact with yourselves and we support his request that you mend this fencing.

Rob Steemson email 25/6/23 to Scott Riddle

As you are aware I have been reporting via the Devon County website since 2020 the broken cattle grid related fence and more recently the washed away/broken gate at the back of Dartmeet car park. Stock can, and have now recently entered the car park on at least three occasions (lots of green grass) and some have freely roamed up the main road past Pixies Holt etc (an accident waiting to happen). Whilst every time you, and others reply that it is not Highways responsibility unless someone can prove evidence otherwise the now potential dangerous situation remains.

The grids, respective recreational access gates and the characteristic post and rail fencing were erected in the early 1980`s along with many other sites across Dartmoor in the same format (Haytor common, Holne common, Pork hill, Peak hill, Shapley common, Roborough common, Yennadon common, Shaugh commons, Widecombe commons, Buckland common etc). In more recent years grid installations surrounding Princetown (particularly Rundlestone), Bellever, Postbridge, Two Bridges area and Chagford etc have been undertaken in the same format. At all of these sites the ongoing repairs of the associated post and rail fencing and access gates have been repaired or replaced by Devon Highways. Why should rural Dartmeet be treated differently?

Focussing specifically back to the Dartmeet grid and repair work done by Highways over the last 40 years. The south running fence and access gates is approx. 75 metres and are presently generally okay. Due to damage both the small and large access gates have been replaced twice by Highways over that time. The fence and gate running to the north is approx. 201 metres and the access gate has been replaced twice. It was originally all post and rail type but due to regularly damage in the winter by vehicles sliding off the steep frozen road (and then stock egress) 103 metres was replaced with stock fencing by Highways and a road drain was installed to minimise surface water and future incidents.

Therefore, what I am saying is the fence responsibility is clearly that of Highways and was installed to stop stock going onto the road through Pixies Holt (and beyond) where there were regular accidents through the 1970`s etc. No landowner or Commoners Association would have erected a Highways type characteristic post and rail fence to keep their legally grazing stock off parts of Spitchwick Common! However, it was installed with the landowners permission and full knowledge of the Commoners Association and repairs have been undertaken by Highways (a good relationship) until more recent years. I hope the last two paragraphs provide the evidence you require?

I am well aware of Highways recently challenging that it was not their responsibility to maintain fences and recreational access gates linked to cattle grid schemes on Dartmoor at Roborough downs, Yennadon down, Peak hill, Pork hill, Rundlestone etc. After much consultation with both local Commoners Associations and the Dartmoor Commoners Council all the above sites have been repaired by Highways. Dartmeet is not different and should continue to be addressed the same way.

I am also aware that over the years Highways have tried to fob off some/all related works to Dartmoor National Park Authority. As a DNPA member of staff we have always been instructed to inform the public that cattle grid schemes damage is Highways responsibility and should be reported appropriately.

Within the last two months I have noticed that when I continue to report these specific issues at Dartmeet that when you drop the pin onto the fence line it now says "Invalid location and that the fence line is actually Widecombe footpath 25 and the responsibility of DNPA". This is off putting and incorrect information to the public and requires changing immediately.

Yours sincerely

Rob Steemson
DNPA Sector Ranger

Widecombe Parish Council E-mail to Scott Riddle 12/7/23

Dear Scott

I am writing on behalf of Widecombe Parish Council to raise concerns about the state of the fencing installed by DCC highways adjacent to the cattle grid at Dartmeet.

Concerns have been raised by parishioners on both sides of the bridge about animals, in particular cattle, straying from Spitchwick Common through the now rotten fence into the car park. As you can appreciate this is a busy car park and the mix of cattle, cars, families with children and dogs in a relatively confined area is an accident waiting to happen.

Inevitably, the cattle get pushed over the bridge and follow the road up the hill trying to break in to gardens or gaps until they reach the entrance to Brimpts. This is also an accident waiting to happen as cars are not expecting to see stock and is particularly dangerous by Fisherman's Cottage which is a blind corner as you approach the bridge.

If there were to be an accident, there is no mobile signal at Dartmeet to quickly report it, further compounded by the removal of the public telephone box by BT which was in the car park.

The Parish Council is aware that Highways have recently replaced similar fencing at other cattle grids such as the one at Pork Hill and would be pleased to see similar attention given to the fencing at Dartmeet.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Suzanna Hughes
Clerk, Widecombe Parish Council

Appendix 4 – Claremont House – from Cllr Manning

It was rather remiss of me to ask for this to be put on the agenda and then not be at the meeting to debate the issue.

Many in the village will remember when this building was a library and then when the library moved to the community centre it became the Charity Shop. As the Charity Shop was the brainchild of myself and my wife, we became very familiar with the condition of the downstairs of the property.

It was damp and the woodwork was rotten. To be frank it was dire and although a lot smaller we were delighted when the charity shop could be moved across the road.



During the time the charity shop was using Claremont it was sold to a private couple. They had big plans for the building, but I do not think any of these came to fruition. The property looks terrible from the main road and even worse from the back. I believe it is slowly deteriorating now that it is vacant. The fact the property stands between the chip shop and the pub is even more disturbing as Claremont must be infested with mice or rats. I have seen some evidence of mortar on the pavement on Tavistock Road and believe this might have come from the roof which does not look good.

Not only may this property be a health hazard to the food outlets it may also be a danger to anyone on the pavement outside. Facing the pavement are large shop windows. One is severely shattered and may only need a child to brush against it for the whole thing to collapse on them.

We in Princetown who are actively trying to improve the general look of the village cannot understand why such a property as this standing in the centre of the village for all to see, can be allowed to rot in front of us. I would urge Council to write in the strongest terms to West Devon or Devon County about this property. I feel they should send an expert who should be given the task of checking that the property is at least safe and also a Pest Controller needs to check that the property is free from Rodents. I feel the owner should be required to ensure the property is safe and the outside is at least cleaned up and painted. I do not believe it's fair that the rest of the village who may have paid good money for their houses should have to put up with this for any longer.

I cannot remember how long ago it was sold at auction, but it is several years, and we have seen no improvement. I cannot be there to vote on what action is taken, if any but I think I have clearly stated my views on the matter.

Cllr Gregg Manning (Chair)