

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council



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5th September 2023

Minutes for the Council Meeting on 22nd August 2023 in Postbridge Village Hall

Present:

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward:	Princetown Ward:	
Cllr Alison Geen		Cllr Gregg Manning *
Postbridge Ward:	Cllr Stephen Butterworth	Cllr Mark Williams**
Cllr Julian Greatrex	Cllr Charmaine Clarke-Major	Cllr Hannah Wood
Cllr Wendy Watson	Cllr Gary Easton	* Chair ** Vice Chair

Abbreviations used: **DFPC**: Dartmoor Forest Parish Council, **DCC**: Devon County Council,
DNPA: Dartmoor National Park Authority, **DoC**: Duchy of Cornwall,
PCSO: Police Community Support Officer, **PCC**: Parochial Church Council
PCMF: Princetown Churchyard Maintenance Fund **WDBC**: West Devon Borough Council

Cllr Williams chaired the meeting

There were 3 members of the public present, including Cllr Mark Renders WDBC.

- Apologies** – Cllr Byrom
- Declarations of interest** – none
- Acceptance of minutes** - As previously circulated, for meeting on 25th July 2023 Council resolved to approve the minutes which were signed by Cllr Manning.
- Urgent decisions since last meeting** – none
- Sir Geoffrey Cox MP Drop-In Surgery** – Cllrs. Manning, Williams, Butterworth, Greatrex, Geen and Clarke-Major confirmed they would be attending the drop-in session on 25th Aug, from 1530 – 1700. It was agreed they would each raise with him, a matter of concern covering the following; potential closure of Princetown Visitor Centre, Natural England plans to reduce grazing stock on the commons, banks closing in Tavistock, lack of affordable housing for young local people, lack of public transport at key times during the day, dilapidated buildings.
Councillors had been and were continuing to deliver the leaflets advertising the session.
Cllr Wood agreed to contact the WI to ask if they would be willing to provide teas and coffees on the day.
- Additional Dog Waste Bins** – Council agreed that an additional dog waste bin would ideally be situated near St Michaels Churchyard to cover the top end of the village, as there has been a significant increase in dog waste being left there. Cllr Easton proposed,

26th September 2023

Signature of Chair



seconded by Cllr Wood and agreed by Council to purchase one additional metal bin at a cost of £260.67 ex vat, with WDBC emptying cost at £3.06 ex vat per fortnight. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with WDBC regarding the siting of the bin, to ensure it is accessible to empty, and to purchase additional bin in green. See [Briefing Notes Appendix 1](#) for more detail.

7. **Allotments** – Clerk briefed Council on the process for considering a request for the provision of Allotments. Council agreed to support the residents who want allotments and to encourage them to set up their own management committee to run allotments as a community scheme. See [Briefing Notes Appendix 2](#) for information from DALC on managing allotments. Action: Cllr Clarke-Major offered to liaise with the residents. Clerk to send her the contact and information regarding the Walkhampton Community Allotment Scheme which has recently been set up.
8. **Defib located at Venville House** – Council discussed that this Defib was one the first to be gifted to the Parish, and has been hosted at Venville House. Over subsequent years this has been kindly maintained by the owner of Venville, at her cost. Cllr Geen proposed, seconded by Cllr Greatrex, that Council take back responsibility for maintenance and weekly checks, recognising that due to its location this Defib may get more use than those located at Hexworthy or Postbridge. This might therefore incur additional costs to replace pads as necessary. Council then voted in agreement. Action: Clerk to order replacement batteries, adult and paediatric pads. Cllr Clarke-Major agreed to take on the weekly checks.
9. **Historic damage to verge/ditch opposite St Gabriels Church, Postbridge** – Council discussed the collapsed ditch wall opposite the Church. Cones have been in place for over 12 months and no action has been taken by Devon CC Highways to repair the damage as reported by DFPC and adjacent property owner. Council discussed what further action could be taken. Action: Clerk to report it again online to Devon Highways and e-mail them directly.
10. **Effect of Bank Closures in Tavistock** – Council discussed the impact of another Bank (NatWest) closing in Tavistock. Councillors suggested that there may be plans to set up a banking 'hub' in Tavistock Library, similar to that proposed in Ashburton, but that it might still be difficult for residents to access banking services. The Post Office in Princetown is able to offer some banking services such as depositing cash/cheques. As this matter is on the list to discuss with Sir Geoffrey Cox on 25th it was agreed that this matter to be put forward to the September meeting. Action: Clerk to add to September agenda.
11. **1st PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration.
 - a) Member of public, a resident of Postbridge, raised the issue of poor mobile phone signal and poor land line connectivity. A recent incident required him to leave his sick relative to drive to find mobile signal as his land line was not working for three weeks. He questioned why the upgrade of landlines doesn't seem to be reaching as far as Postbridge, with it stopping at Powdermills and Runnage. Action: Clerk to write to BT to explain the difficulties and ask for clarification regarding the upgrade, and why it doesn't appear to reach to Postbridge.
 - b) Member of public raised the issue of potholes on the road at Jurston (on the route to Chagford) Action: Cllr Greatrex offered to look at the location of potholes and report to DCC Highways as necessary.
 - c) Cllr Mark Renders reported that he had recently spent time with Sir Geoffrey and raised a number of issues with him. He encouraged Councillors to make good use of the drop-in session on the 25th to raise issues of concern.

12. **New Premises License** - [Plume of Feathers, Plymouth Road Princetown](#) – Council considered the application for a new premises licence and agreed that it was beneficial for the village and as there were no objections raised, no response from Council was necessary.
13. **Parking issues (Princetown)**- Standing item to cover issues arising since the last meeting - none reported prior to the meeting.
14. **Residents' issues or concerns –**
- a) **Claremont House** – Carried forward from July meeting in which Cllr Manning raised concerns about the building which is in a state of disrepair, looks unsightly and front window is cracked and therefore unsafe. See [Briefing Notes Appendix 4](#). The concerns were first raised in 2015 with the owner, who then attended a Council meeting to explain his plans for the property and concerns were raised again in 2022. Council considered what action to take. Cllr Easton expressed concern about singling out the one property, when there are others in the village also in need of repair, he was also concerned that some of the statements made might not be factually correct. Cllr Manning proposed, given the property is in the centre of the village and on a main pedestrian thoroughfare, that Council write to the owner raising safety concerns regarding the broken window and mortar falling from the chimney stack onto the pavement. Action: Council agreed for Clerk to write to owner, requesting him to respond before the next meeting.
15. **Planning** – [Search for an application | Dartmoor 0337/23](#) at The Forest Inn, PL20 6SD extension granted until 25th Aug
[0338/23](#) at The Forest Inn, PL20 6SD extension granted until 25th Aug
- Cllr Geen was able, having spoken to local residents, to confirm that to the best of her knowledge the premises concerned had been lived in for the past four years. Council agreed to write to DNPA Planning to confirm this. Action: Clerk to contact DNPA.
16. **Financial management** - see [Financial Report](#) for details
- a) Payments approved by Cllrs Manning and Geen, to be authorised online by the 29th;

Ref	Chq No	Payee & Details	Amount	BACS amount
1669	BACS	Jackie Bennetts - Clerk Pay	£ 453.95	£ 538.89
1670	BACS	Jackie Bennetts - Clerks Expenses Magnolia Paint for bus shelter & storage boxes	£ 84.94	
1671	BACS	David Cole - Lengthsman Pay	£ 528.00	£ 588.00
1672	BACS	David Cole - Expenses - fuel	£ 60.00	
1673	BACS	Jake Cook - Litter Picker fee	£ 44.00	

- b) Clerk reminded Council that there is still a cheque for £15, issued on 28th Feb, which has not been presented for the hire of Postbridge Village Hall. Cllr Geen offered to contact the Treasurer to remind them to cash the cheque asap as it will cease to be valid after 6 months.
- c) Clerk to chase Lloyds progress on adding Cllr Easton and Cllr Byrom to the mandate and online banking authorisation.

17. **Natural England Proposed Stock Reduction on Dartmoor-** Cllr Geen updated Council on the review process and asked Council to consider writing to the review board expressing concerns about Natural England's proposals. Council agreed to put a submission to the review. Action: Cllr Geen and Clerk to put together representation from Council, to be submitted by 29th September.
18. **Updates on correspondence/ actions from previous meetings -**
- a) Noticeboards– Cllr Geen reported that she had been pledged donations of about £200 from local businesses to replace the noticeboard in Hexworthy. The owner of the Forest Inn has agreed to host the notice board on the outside of the pub. Council agreed to fund the shortfall. Action: Clerk to order noticeboard at a cost of £252 ex vat.
Cllr Watson stated that repairs were 'in hand' on the Postbridge noticeboard, which is currently letting water in. The Clerk is keen to update the notices as they are out of date, but there is little point while the repairs are pending and water is getting into the noticeboard.
 - b) Princetown Benches – Council is pleased that the benches were back in situ and being well used by visitors and locals. Action: Clerk to write letter of thanks to the Prison and suggest an official hand-over photo opportunity might be arranged.
19. **Reports from Committees, Sub Groups and Special Interests:**
- a) Play Park Inspections and Action Plan – No concerns reported by Cllr Byrom in August. Cllr Butterworth is on the rota for Sept inspections.
 - b) Tidy Princetown Session – Cllr Williams suggested that more promotion of the sessions is necessary to encourage more residents to get involved. It has been suggested to him that if Devon Highways are contacted regarding the weeds, they will come out and deal with them. Action: Clerk to contact Devon Highways to request weeds on the main road/pavement are removed.
 - c) Princetown 'Pots & Plants' – Cllr Williams is awaiting news of a funding application submitted by PCMF for enhancing the village.
 - d) Princetown Churchyard Maintenance Fund – sessions are making a difference despite only a small number of people involved. He put out a request for garden machinery (strimmers, brushcutters etc) to be donated so that more people can tackle the overgrowth. He requested that the Council provide a quote for the Lengthsman to cut large areas of the grass. Action: Clerk to liaise with the Lengthsman and provide a quote to PCMF.
20. **2nd PUBLIC SESSION -** Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration
- a) Member of the public raised concerns about brambles growing into the road at Tor View, which have previously been reported to DoC. Action: Clerk to report to DCC Highways.
21. **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
- Cllr Williams reported that the bus company is installing posts with bus timetables by the bus stop in the village centre. He raised the issue that the bus stop at the top of the village needs to be repainted.

He also asked if there had been any progress on replacing the 'Welcome to Princetown' sign. Action: Clerk to follow-up with Devon CC.

Cllr Clarke-Major asked if Cherrybrook needed to apply for change of use, as it is no longer a hotel/b&b. Action: Clerk to put on agenda for September meeting.

Cllr Greatrex has been approached by a Postbridge resident regarding a blocked ditch/road drain nr Bridge Cottage, which is adding to the flooding of the road. Action: Lengthsman agreed to take a look to see if it can be easily cleared.

Cllr Wood suggested that the village could benefit from more picnic benches for visitors to use. Cllr Manning reminded Council that it was on the list should funding become available.

Clerk reported that Exeter University is undertaking a survey about housing. Action: Clerk to circulate the link and asks Councillors to respond.

22. **Date of next 'Tidy Princetown' -** 10am until 11am - Sunday 3rd September 2023.
Meet outside Post Office.
23. **Date of next meeting -** 1930 on 26th September 2023
Princetown Community Centre

Meeting closed 2135.