

Chairman's Annual Report: April 2025 – March 2026

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report (2025-26): The "State of the Moor" Speech

"Good evening, everyone. If you managed to navigate the Princetown mist tonight without being recruited by a local sheep or tripping over a granite block, I consider that our first community win of the evening!

Looking back on the last twelve months—from April 2025 to March 2026—it's been quite a ride. Being a Parish Councillor in Dartmoor Forest is a bit like the weather at Hexworthy: if you don't like what's happening, just wait five minutes and it'll change.

The 'Green' Wins First, the big news. We aren't just a Parish Council anymore; we are officially 'Award-Winning.' Our community garden, 'The Plot,' bagged a trophy from the RHS and the One Show. A massive thank you to Cllr Hazel Williams and our The Plot volunteers. You've proven that things *can* actually grow in Princetown soil without being immediately reclaimed by the moor!

Safe Landing We've also been busy with our 'Action Man' hats on. Following our play park inspections, we've been busy fixing seesaws and agility trails. We've radiused the timbers and replaced the bearings, meaning our local children can now play safely—and parents can stop worrying about their kids launching themselves into the next parish.

The Vision We've spent a lot of time this year looking at the 'Vision for Princetown.' With the Visitor Centre under scrutiny, we've been working closely with the Duchy and local businesses. We aren't just sitting back; we're shaping what our village looks like for the next generation. We also finally sorted the CCTV policy—so we can keep an eye on the village, while keeping the data ghouls at bay.

The 'Ouch' Bit (The Finances) Now, for the bit that usually makes people cough into their tea: the Precept. We have agreed on a 5% increase for the coming year. I know, I know—no one likes a price hike. But that extra bit of 'bread' helps us maintain our cemeteries, keep the lights on, and keep the village in good order.

Sensory Garden Having secured a whopping £45k from the National Lottery, our fully-funded (yes, not a penny paid from our Precept) development of the grassed area at the top of Bellever Close into a garden for all to enjoy begins soon.

People Power We said goodbye to Cllrs Greatrex, Manning and Easton and welcomed new faces to the table. We also survived a period without a Clerk (which is a bit like a ship without a rudder) before appointing our new administrative captain earlier this year.

Closing Thoughts From our the 'Tidy Princetown' days to our donating produce to the Food Hub, the spirit of this Parish remains as solid as the prison walls—but much friendlier.

My thanks go to my fellow councillors who do this for the love of the moor, and to you, the residents, for keeping us on our toes. Here's to 2026-27—may the mists be thin, the gardens be green, and the potholes be few!

Cheers!"