

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council



Parish Clerk: Mr S J Cox,

Middle Woodley, Sydenham Damerel, Tavistock, PL19 8QU

Telephone: 018217292 258549, 07775 561855

Email: clerk@dartmoorforestpc.net

Website: www.dartmoorforestpc.net

24 July 2019

Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting at 1930 on 23 July 2019 in Princetown Community Centre

Present:

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward:	Princetown Ward:	
Cllr. Alison Geen*	Cllr. David Worth**	Cllr. Nigel Tigwell
Postbridge Ward:	Cllr. Mark Renders	Cllr. Wendy Stones
Cllr. Julian Greatrex	Cllr. John Druett	Cllr.
	* Chair, **Vice-Chair	

12 members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies.** Cllrs Wendy Watson and Ian Bishop, and the Clerk. In the Clerk's absence, Cllr Tigwell took the minutes.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** None.
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting.** The minutes of the last meeting were not available in hard copy. This item was deferred to the next meeting.
4. **Postbridge Bridleway Work.** Although this agenda item was to address the bridleway work, Simon Lee, the DNPA Rangers Team Manager, also covered other matters affecting the Parish.
 - a. **Postbridge Bridleway Work.** Simon reported on the project to refurbish the bridleway between Lydgate House and Pizwell Farm in Postbridge Ward. Work will focus on the wet centre section where a new track will be laid capable of taking agricultural traffic, which will also act as a French drain to the stream. Around 1000 tonnes of crushed granite will be required, which will be shipped in on 16 tonne lorries and stored on Forestry Commission land before being moved on site by dumper trucks. Total cost is subject to competitive tendering but is expected to be £40-50,000. Grant money has been obtained through Moor Than Meets the Eye, with contributory grants from the Duchy and DNPA. Work will commence once the tendering process is complete, probably in early September, and should not overlap with the main tourist season. In response to a question by a member of the public, Simon said he would consider out of hours working if necessary to minimise any congestion.
 - b. **Illegal Raves.** Simon Lee spoke about the work being done to combat illegal raves on Dartmoor. This is a key focus of the new Dartmoor Rural Crime Partnership. The main aim of the partnership is to prevent large groups of people congregating

27 August 2019

Signature of Chair



as, after a certain size is reached, the Police have to maintain rather than break-up the event. Physical barriers have been erected to make illegal access to the forests more difficult. Analysis of past raves indicates the preferred sites are Bellever and Fernworthy Forests and key dates are targeted, including Boxing Day and late Spring Bank Holiday. A joint Police and Ranger operation in May targeted inappropriate camping and illegal open fires in Fernworthy and established a road block, turning away potential ravers. The Police also conducted vehicle checks and impounded several vehicles. In consequence, the planned illegal rave did not take place. A similar joint operation is planned later in the year.

c. **Two Bridges to Beardown Footpath.** Simon explained an emergency closure of the footpath from Two Bridges to Beardown has been made owing to the precarious nature of a fallen beech tree. This should be cleared on Friday 26 July after which the footpath will re-open.

5. **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Consultation.** The consultation document puts forward 8 options for consideration. There are proposals within these options to close Ashburton station and reduce the night cover at Tavistock. Although Princetown station is not directly affected, the co-responder role in support of NHS paramedics is not adequately addressed in the document, leading to concerns that this essential role for rural communities has not been properly considered. The comment sheet circulated by the Fire Brigade Union also appears present alternative facts. The consultation end date is 20 Sep 19.

After a short discussion it was agreed the key concerns for DFPC was the possible closure of Ashburton, which serves Hexworthy, and the co-responder role for Princetown. Cllr Stones agreed to prepare and circulate a draft response letter for consideration at the August meeting.

Action: Cllr Stones to prepare a draft response to the Fire Service consultation for discussion at the August meeting.

6. **Parish Council Meeting Night.** Cllr Geen reported she had had no response from Cllr Sanders about which evenings he could attend. Cllr Stones reported a solution had been found to deconflict the current DFPC and the Neighbourhood Watch meetings. The Clerk's availability limits DFPC to a Tuesday or Thursday evening. It was agreed Cllr Geen would contact Cllr Sanders one more time and a final decision made at the August meeting.

Action: Cllr Geen to contact Cllr Sanders to determine which evenings he could attend.

7. **Princetown CCTV Project.** This project is to deter anti-social driving in the village but may also aid subsequent prosecution of offenders. Ideally, it will complete before winter. The Clerk, Cllr Manning and Cllr Renders had provided status reports on the project. In summary: one quote has been obtained for £7,415.60 installation and £391pa maintenance; potentially a £1000 grant may be available from the Dartmoor Rural Crime Partnership; further grants will be needed; informal indications are that planning consent would not be required; no formal consultation of villagers has taken place; and the Clerk is concerned DFPC does not have the manpower to effectively progress this project in parallel with the stake park.

It was agreed that the Clerk could not be expected to do all the work.

Action: Cllr Manning will:

Seek a minimum of two additional quotes once he receives the tender specification from the Clerk.

Investigate additional grant opportunities, but requested the Clerk's list to provide a starting point.

Contact the Police and Crime Commissioner's office for statistics to support grant applications.

Ensure DNPA and the Duchy are content to mount a camera on the Visitors' Centre.

Action: Cllr Renders will:

Determine what level of community consultation is (a) needed and (b) has been undertaken elsewhere for similar systems.

Seek clarification from Chris Hart, Head of Planning, whether planning permission is required.

8. **Corporate Governance.** This area is now overdue for review. The Clerk has recommended formally adopting the model NALC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and that DFPC consider applying for Foundation Status of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme. In discussion, some Councillors expressed reservations about specific requirements of the NALC Standing Orders. It was agreed to establish a Working Group to address standing orders and financial regulations and make recommendations to the full Council at the September meeting, comprising Cllrs Geen, Worth and Tigwell.

Action: Cllr Geen to arrange the Working Group meeting(s).

9. **Planning.** The council determined the following application:

Ref.	Address	Description	Received	Reply Due	Meeting Targeted	DFPC View
0305/19	Bachelors Hall, Princetown	Placing of three camping pods	13/7/19	30/7/19	23/7/19	Supported on condition the siting of the pods was time limited to three years.

Cllr Tigwell will inform DNPA of the decision in the Clerk's absence.

FIRST PUBLIC SESSION

A number of members of the public expressed concern about the aesthetics of Princetown, in particular Hessary Terrace and Burrator Avenue. They stated that this discourages tourists and detracts from quality of life in the village. Some felt property owners and tenants should be pressured to smarten up their houses, gardens and adjacent public spaces. Council grass cutting was acknowledged and recent voluntary litter picking events were considered by many to have been successful, but some thought this was not enough and greater community involvement should be encouraged and led by the Council.

The Council was told LiveWest Housing Association was planning to clean buildings and paint the railings of properties where tenants have taken care of their homes, but not the

others. While this could be seen as rewarding model tenants, some felt the neglected properties would, by contrast, become a greater eyesore.

Keith Radmore was thanked for repainting the bus shelter.

In drawing the first Public Session to a close, Cllr Geen agreed that, if the member of the public provided the details to Cllr Renders, DFPC would write to LiveWest seeking an explanation for the partial refurbishment of Hessary Terrace.

10. **Financial Management.** In the Clerk's (and chequebook's) absence no cheques were signed. Cllr Geen will ask the Clerk's wife to post the chequebook to Cllr Renders who will arrange signatures and payments. Cllr Stones will inform recipients of the late payment.

Action: Cllrs Geen, Renders and Stone to manage the late payment of cheques.

a. Cheques authorised this month were:

Ref	Chq No	Date	Payee & Details	Amount
1248	1507	23/07/19	Steve Cox (Clerk's Pay)	£ 406.15
1249	1508	23/07/19	David Cole (Lengthsman's Pay)	£ 559.60
1250	1509	23/07/19	Harry Hooper-Noulton (Litter picker fee)	£ 66.73
1251	1510	23/07/19	DALC (Good Councillor Guide publications)	£ 6.98

b. Bank Mandates. The new bank mandates could not be signed as the paperwork was not available.

c. The Monthly Report of Accounts was considered. The apparent £14,448.22 forecast overspend was noted but assumed to be a spreadsheet error to be addressed when the Clerk is able to return to work.

11. Project Progress Reports

a. Princetown Skate Park.

The project to provide a skate park for the village youth on the site of the old tennis courts has been in the concept stage for several years. Pragmatically, it will not complete in this financial year, but the Council agreed it needs to be progressed. Cllr Druett agreed to join Cllrs Manning, Renders and Stone on the Sub-Committee to help progress the project. The possibility of co-opting non-councillors to assist at a suitable point was noted.

The Clerk and Cllr Manning had provided status reports on the project. In summary: the Duchy have committed to provide the land at nominal rent, but the precise plot boundary is unclear; tree-felling and landscaping work by the Duchy is a prerequisite to development and has not been done; a basic design has been produced; the outline cost estimate is £70,000; planning permission is not required; and the Clerk is concerned DFPC does not have the manpower to effectively progress this project in parallel with the CCTV.

It was agreed that the Clerk could not be expected to do all the work.

Action: Cllr Manning will:

Seek an update from the Duchy regarding the tree-felling and landscaping work that had been due for completion last December.

Compile a list potential sources of suitable grant funding (preferably with annuality requirements), but requested a copy of the Clerk's list to provide a starting point.

Action: Cllr Stones will:

Organise the young people to write letters to local charities that generally support youth activities, seeking financial commitments toward the cost.

Action: Cllr Renders will:

Complete a consultation of the occupiers of properties that back onto the proposed site.

Clarify with the Duchy the precise boundaries of the site offered.

12. Committees, Sub-Groups & Special Interests:

a. **Neighbourhood Watch.** The monthly Neighbourhood Watch meeting was being held in parallel with the DFPC meeting so no report was available. Cllr Manning reported the Police have launched Operation SNAP to enable members of the public to upload dashcam footage of dangerous driving (not speeding). Link to site is: www.dc.police.uk/opsnap.

b. **Princetown Youth Club.** Mrs Vikie Parker is the new Youth Project Development Worker and Miss Natalie Knight is the Youth Support Worker. The senior youth session has reopened and there will be an extra night opening, although it has not been decided which day this will be. The Youth Club will be closed from 18 Jul 19 until 6 Aug 19 as the Youth Leader is on holiday.

c. **Princetown Primary School.** The Council recorded its congratulations for the recent Ofsted assessment of Princetown Primary School as 'Good'. School holidays have now started. The children will return on 5 Sep 19, when the new headmistress will be in place. The summer fair made a profit of £315.68.

13. Reports from Other Meetings:

a. **Southern Parish Link Committee.** Cllr Manning reported Cllr Tub Aves was re-elected as chair.

Inspector Mark Sloman presented the latest crime statistics and focussed on measures to combat County Lines drug dealing. West Devon remains the 4th safest area in the country. All officers now wear body cameras and are required by law to switch them on before attending an incident.

Simon Kitchen, Head of Communities for Devon County Council, spoke about future funding against a backdrop where the average age in Devon is roughly 10-15 years older than the national average and 75% of DCC funding gets spent on 3% of the population. There are three new funding streams:

1. **Crowdfunding.** This was set up with £200k and hopes to encourage more money to be put in. Parish Councils can then apply for a part of this funding. It has roughly an 8% overhead charge to manage this money.
2. **Making the Connection.** This is a small fund of £100k where up to £300 can be applied for to help kick start a project.
3. **Major Projects.** This is a fund of £300k for bids between £5k and £25k, but will require match funding.

The road warden scheme has now collapsed. The misuse of surplus tar was also raised. John Fewings has been invited to the next meeting to discuss these and other Highway issues.

Waste Management improvements are planned with new white bags being issued to households for plastics that currently cannot be taken. This will reduce the amount of black bag waste and allow the council to do three-weekly collections, but many councillors expressed concerns. Pilot schemes will be run with road shows to educate households about what is expected of them.

WDBC are also looking at replacing many of their vehicles over time with electric to help reduce the carbon footprint.

Richard Easthorpe talked about the problem of fly tipping. He has four teams who deal with this matter and investigate the tipping to see if they can identify the owner. If they can they are either issued with a warning letter or a fixed penalty notice. The maximum fine without taking them to court is £400.

- b. **Visitor Centre Car Park.** Cllr Worth reported an informal meeting to consider possible alterations and improvements to the car park access in response a complaint to DNPA following an incident involving a coach.
- c. **Princetown Noticeboard.** Cllr Worth met with Tor Royal Joinery to discuss the refurbishment of the Princetown Noticeboard and anticipates a quotation in due course.

14. **Other issues requiring decisions.** None.

15. **Urgent decision since last meeting.** None.

16. **Exchange of Information.** Limited to the exchange of information and items for next meeting:

- a. **Bellever Congestion.** Cllr Greatrex reported he had received several complaints about traffic congestion in the hamlet with the volume of vehicles travelling to the Forestry Commission car park. A further concern was the increasing cases of inappropriate 'wild camping', including the erection of frame tents, and open fires by the river. Simon Lee advised this was a known issue. The attractiveness of the area coupled with adjacent carparking and toilets made it easy to abuse. Extra funding was being sought for targeted evening ranger patrols for education and enforcement. There had also been some initial discussions with the Forestry Commission about restricting overnight car park access. This will be added to the agenda for August for discussion and a decision.

- b. **Postbridge Visitors' Centre Carpark Alterations.** Cllr Greatrex reported that rumours about the intended alterations are causing concerns with local residents. Cllr Renders advised there were detailed plans available to the public behind the desk at the visitors centre and he had checked they were there. Cllr Greatrex will advise residents accordingly.
- c. **Community Energy & Climate Change.** Mike Fitzpatrick has contacted the Clerk to see whether the council is interested in getting involved in issues around community energy & climate change and the potential steps a parish council can take. This will be added to the agenda for August for discussion and a decision.
- b. **Grass Cutting.** The Duchy of Cornwall has requested the land between 25 and 26 Burrator Avenue be added to the grass cutting rota. The Council was content for this to happen subject to a suitable uplift in payment by the Duchy. The Clerk will process this when he returns to work.
- c. **Defibrillator Locations.** In response to an action at the last meeting the Clerk has asked DNPA to investigate the feasibility of putting defibrillator locations on the maps they publish, and is awaiting a response.
- d. **West Devon Town Centres.** The Clerk has received an offer from Tom Jones, Head of Place Making at WDBC, to facilitate meetings to consider potential collaboration across public sector and other organisations to identify and take forward actions and projects to enhance community self-sufficiency and resilience. The agenda would be for DFPC to set. In discussion, it was suggested this may assist in addressing some issues raised in the public session. Also, that it could be an avenue to help the Council and other bodies to address the challenges posed by the eventual closure of the prison. This will be added to the agenda for August for discussion and a decision.
- e. **Web Name.** The Clerk will request a .gov.uk domain name after which work will be required to migrate the existing website across or recreate it. The working group comprises Cllrs Worth and Tigwell.
- f. **Clerk Availability.** When the Clerk returns to work his availability will remain constrained during the school holidays. He is on holiday from 8-24 Aug 19 so the summons for next meeting will be issued early. Owing to child care responsibilities he will have less flexibility to respond quickly to urgent requests.
- g. **Pumping Station.** Vandals have again attacked the old Princetown Pumping Station, pulling down the boarding at the rear windows, smashing glass and breaking into the property. Rob Steemson, DNPA Ranger, has cleared up the worst of the glass to avoid animal injuries. Cllr Tigwell suggested DFPC should engage DNPA for a permanent solution to prevent it developing into an ever-greater eyesore on the moor. This will be added to the agenda for August for discussion and a decision.
- h. **Old Prison Officers' Club.** Emails from the Duchy indicated there was a lack of appreciation of the public hazard cause by slates falling from the roof of the Old Prison Officers' Club outside the fencing. Cllr Geen will email Tom Stratton on the subject and this will be added to the agenda for August for discussion and a decision.

- i. **Play Area Dog Signs.** Cllr Stones suggested the 'no dog fouling' sign on the gate implies dogs were permitted in the play area. It was agreed to ask David Cole to remove this sign, leaving the 'no dogs' sign.
- j. **Princetown Church.** Cllr Stones reported the church was still locked with the congregation using the Community Centre, and asked whether any further information was known. Cllr Renders will endeavour to find out.
- k. **Princetown Food Bank.** Cllr Stones reported the food bank, supplied by the Co-Op, would be based in the Community Centre during school holidays. The normal referral vouchers are not required.

SECOND PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public asked why the lengthsman work to clear the gullies in Tor Royal Lane had not been done, after it had been reported as needing attention at the June meeting. There was some confusion as Fox Tor Lane had been minuted. The Clerk will address this with David Cole on his return to work.

A member of the public stated that the Council had the reputation of being a talking shop that did not achieve anything, and that some Councillors talked down to members of the public when they made suggestions or asked questions.

A member of the public suggested the Council contacted the Duchy about the siting of their new defibrillator. Cllr Worth will take this forward.

17. The next meeting of the Parish Council is 1930 Tuesday 27 August 2019 at Princetown Community Centre.

The Chair closed the meeting at 2136.