



## TITLE: Community Engagement Strategy

### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

This document constitutes **Version 1** of the Community Engagement Strategy adopted on 11 Nov 14.

### Aims and Objectives

The council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

#### Aims:

- Work more closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- Ensure that, by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all groups, local democracy is enhanced;
- Ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

#### Objectives:

This strategy is part of the council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through all channels of engagement.
- More residents understanding the role of Councillors and getting the best effect.
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering.
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the Council.

### Defining the Community

Dartmoor Forest is the only Parish wholly within the Dartmoor National Park. Princetown is an urban village with the concentration of the Parish population but communities of appreciable size are in the hamlets of Hexworthy and Postbridge, with other scattered settlements such as Bellever, Powder Mills, Merrivale (east), Whiteworks, Huccaby and Dartmeet (west). The principal authorities are West Devon Borough Council and Devon County Council. The Parish is divided into 3 wards: Princetown, Postbridge and Hexworthy. There is an electorate of around 920. The community may be defined as consisting of:

- Residents of the Parish;
- Postbridge Village Hall Trustees and its users;
- Princetown Community Centre and its users;
- Head Teacher, teachers and Governors of Princetown Primary School;
- Young people who live and/or go to school in the Parish;
- Retail and other businesses in the Parish;
- Interest groups – clubs and societies eg Football Club, History Society etc;



- Voluntary organisations;
- Church Groups;
- Farming Community;
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups;
- Tourists and other visitors to the Parish;
- Councillors and public service representatives.

## Role of Council Members and Officers

The Parish Council is not party-political and has 10 Councillors: 7 from Princetown Ward, 2 from Postbridge Ward and one from Hexworthy Ward. Councillors and their contact details are on the council website and the 4 Parish Council noticeboards.

There is one officer of the Council: the Parish Clerk, the Proper Officer, the Responsible Financial Officer and Burials Clerk; who covers the entire spectrum of the council work.

## Provision of Information to the Community

The Parish Council website address is widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council and its individuals, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the Council.

The names, addresses and phone numbers of all the Councillors are published on the website and on Parish noticeboards.

Information, such as agendas for and minutes of meetings, is published web site and the Princetown noticeboard.

Key representatives of outside bodies are invited to attend all Parish Council meetings, including: the Police Community Support Officer, the ward County Councillor, the ward Borough Councillor, the local DNPA Member, the public and members of the press.

An Annual Report is prepared and published on the web site.

## Opportunities for Community Involvement

It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Council at different levels, from the odd email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to regular attendance at a Council meeting.

Messages can be left for the Clerk by website contact form, email or telephone at any time.

Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there are two formal public fora during each council meeting.

An Annual Parish Meeting is held in April, giving the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Council to report on the work carried out during the year. It is also an opportunity for the Council to obtain the views of residents on any matter which affects the community.

The Council undertakes consultations by questionnaire and public meetings as appropriate for specific issues.

The Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups.

The Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events.

# Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

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The council has a representative on the following other organisations

- West Devon Southern Parish Link Committee.
- Princetown Community Centre Committee.
- Postbridge Village Hall Committee.
- Princetown Charity Shop Committee.
- High Moorland Women's Institute.
- Princetown Pavilion Youth Club.
- Princetown Play Area.
- Princetown Primary School Governors.
- Princetown Public Library Group.
- Princetown Food Bank Committee.
- Tavistock and District Local Economic Blueprint Stakeholder Forum.