

Princetown Skate Park

At a previous meeting it was formally decided that myself, Gregg Manning was going to be the lead councillor on this - I accepted as I believe this is necessary to ensure there is a central point for collating all information and providing a detailed report to the full council as to its progression.

Skate Park Sub Group

Cllr Gregg Manning (Lead – **To be confirmed**)
Cllr Wendy Stones - (Youth Lead – **To be confirmed**)
Cllr Julian Greatrex – Assist
Cllr Stephen King - Assist
Cllr Mark Renders – West Devon Borough Council
(Clerk) (Funding applications – **To be confirmed**)

I think it would be useful to recruit a member of the village who is not on the council to help with this group. I don't want this project to divide the village and this may help with better understanding.

Funding – There will be certain requirements attached to any funding granted and a single point will allow this to be submitted more easily. I believe the Clerk (when appointed) is the natural choice for this task as he will have the experience and information required to complete this piece of work. **Council to agree as extra hours might be needed.**

Site Maintenance – Once the site is complete this should not be extensive but may require a few hours a month. **Council to agree on this as funding will be required.**

What is already agreed

Completed:

- Land – Duchy of Cornwall have committed to provide land at a nominal rent. This land is down where the old Tennis Courts are. I am not sure if we are taking over the Tennis courts or adjacent to it.
- **I would like to be able to mark this piece of land out so we could provide accurate distances to the houses in the adjacent road. This is currently the only piece of land on offer. We know this area is contentious with some villagers but must point out this is not agreed yet. We cannot make any real decisions until we have a detailed plan from the Duchy as you exactly which piece of land is available.**
-
- Design – basic design provided by Gravity Parks, this was to give us a ball park figure.
- Costs – budget of approx. £70k for skate park approved by council
- **Planning – DNPA have confirmed that planning permission is not required if the land is managed by the parish council**

What is outstanding:

- Landscaping – Duchy of Cornwall have confirmed that the work on the trees would be completed before we were ready to develop it. This work has already started. We cannot progress further until this work is complete. The tree felling was not brought about by the wish to develop this land but by the natural life of many trees being reached.
- Funding – this will need to be funded externally from grants and charities.
- Resourcing – the sub group will need to consider how we move this project forward if it remains a realistic priority. Both the Clerk and the Lengthsman will need to be funded. My proposal for this would be that this funding which should not be excessive is added to the project cost. When our Grant applications are submitted this will certainly be one of the questions, so has to be considered. **Council to agree on this.**

Upkeep of Site - The way we see this is that our current lengthsman will look after the basic maintenance, ensuring grass areas are kept tidy etc. He will of course need to be consulted to ensure he is happy to do this.

Consultation

An event was held but few turned up to it. The only ones to attend were the residents living in Belliver Close, the road adjacent to the proposed park. These were against the plans on the basis of it's location, noise, sex and drugs, but mainly the location. They were happy for it to be built anywhere else in the village but not here. The truth of the matter is that this is the only parcel of land we are being offered. If we had to buy some land elsewhere the project would not even get off the ground. We need to decide if we have enough information to allow us to tick the box or do we need to have a more up to date consultation event.

The situation as it currently stands.

We had a consultation with some of the Youth and Parents of the village but this was now some time ago, around 2019. In view of the complaint received and in anticipation of possible further complaints we need to tread carefully.

As it would seem that we can manage the site for a minimal rent and then develop it under 'Permitted Development' in theory we could just go ahead and build it. This may be seen by those complaining as the council taking advantage of a loophole to avoid having to put in a planning application. To try and avoid this I believe we need to do three things.

Number One – We need to hold a proper consultation, properly advertised and attended by the builder so he/she can answer any tricky questions. This will give us the chance to properly chat to anyone who is not happy and hopefully allay their fears. We also need to ensure that the event is not just attended by those against the project but also those in favour.

Number Two – For the reasons I have already mentioned, to ensure transparency I would be in favour of posting a leaflet through every door in the village with a tear off slip where they can vote in favour or against. These could either be put in a box in the community centre or given to any councillor.

Number Three – A simple petition sheet could be put in the post office for people to comment.

All the youth of the village, eight or over, should be considered suitable to have an opinion and therefore be allowed to cast their vote.

In this way it would be hard for anyone to say they were not aware of the project.

Drawback to this approach could be that the opinion of the residents in the village might be against the project and this sort of approach could kill it dead. However if this was the case then we would not want to proceed against the wishes of the village.

Apart from the youth club opening for a few hours a week there really is nothing for the Youth to do in the village. They wander aimlessly around the village and I feel really sorry for them. The ones who are old enough do not even get the opportunity to go into town as there is no transport for them. Since I can remember (2012) they have been talking about a Skatepark. I do not believe, and this is only my view, that a few objections should prevent something that will benefit all the youth of the village.

Next we need to think of a timetable, whilst we may not be able to say exactly when it will be built, it would still be good to have a target. As many funding applications have a timescale of 12 months careful planning with regards to the timing needs to be considered.

All monies would be held by the Council and proper accounts kept as to expenditure.

Conclusion

There are a number of actions on which I feel I need the full Councils approval. May I suggest we discuss and alter any points at the meeting and then vote on the proposal in one vote. This will speed the process up considerably.

Cllr Gregg Manning JP