



Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

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28th February 2022

Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting at 1930 on 22nd February 2022 in Princetown Community Centre

Present:

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward: Cllr Alison Geen*	Princetown Ward: Cllr Henson Cllr Wendy Stones Cllr David Worth**	* Chair ** Vice Chair
Postbridge Ward: Cllr Julian Greatrex		

Cllr Geen chaired the meeting.

There were 4 members of the public present.

1. **Apologies** Cllrs Tigwell, Byrom, Williams, Watson, Manning

Cllr Tigwell has requested a leave of absence from the Council due to ongoing health issues. Council agreed to grant him the leave of absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest** None declared

At December meeting all Councillors were asked to complete a Register of Interest Form. Forms are still required from Cllrs. Greatrex and Byron **Action:** Clerk to follow-up.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. **Housing Needs Survey** – Clerk sent [Council feedback](#) regarding the proposed Housing Needs Survey to Alex Rehaag West Devon BC on 31st January. The main concern being that the survey needs to cover the Parish, not focussed on Princetown alone. In an email on 2/2/22, Alex thanked Council for the feedback, especially about the catchment area being the whole parish and will inform Clerk of the 'go-live' date for the survey.

Action: None until survey goes live

5. **VZSW Partnership** grant distribution

Cllr. Tigwell is unable to continue to lead on this project due to ongoing ill health and has emailed stakeholders to update them of the situation (20/2/22). He has written a comprehensive [project plan](#) to assist the new project lead. Cllr Geen invited the Councillors present to take on the project. None came forward at the meeting, and it was agreed that this request be held over until the next meeting when more Councillors would be present. However, Cllr Williams (absent from the meeting) has subsequently offered, by email, to take the project on.



Cllr Worth put forward the suggestion that representatives from organisations dealing with Dartmoor ponies should be invited to contribute their expertise to the project. i.e Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust, Dartmoor Hill Pony Association and the Dartmoor Pony Society.

Cllr Worth also suggested that local children be involved, to encourage their parents to drive more considerately/slowly. Cllr Geen acknowledged that some years ago children from Widecombe School were involved in creating posters to discourage the feeding of ponies on the moor, which were well received.

Action: Cllr Williams to take over a lead on the project. Cllr Byroms to be consulted regarding getting Princetown School children involved in the project.

6. Play Park

- a. **ZipWire** – Cllr Henson reported that the replacement seat cannot be used as it poses a risk with fingers getting trapped between the seat and the chain. Any modifications made would invalidate warranty and our insurance. Cllr Henson has sourced a complete unit to replace both the chain and seat which meets the required standard. EN1176 Council approved the purchase of the new unit. **Action:** Clerk to order the complete unit. Cllr Henson to return the unsuitable seat if possible.
- b. **Lighting** – Cllr Worth raised an enquiry with DCC on 24/1/22, asking if lighting can be taken off the streetlighting to illuminate areas of the playpark. Expected time for the response to the enquiry is given as 14/2/22, but nothing has been received as yet. **Action:** Cllr Worth to await response from DCC and report back to Council.
- c. **Inspection Reports** – Muddy Entrance - Cllr Stones highlighted that this has been mentioned on several recent inspection reports. It was also raised on a previous Annual Inspection, which is due to take place again in March. Various possible solutions were discussed. Council agreed in principle that rubber grass matting might be a suitable solution, subject to the Lengthsman visiting the site. **Action:** Cllr Stones and Lengthsman will visit the site to review the issue, measure the affected area and report to Clerk who will then source rubber matting, or alternative solution, to be placed in entrance/gateway. Lengthsman will install them and then re-seed with grass at an appropriate time. The public will be asked to use an alternative entrance (the large gate) whilst the grass seed establishes.

7. **Parking issues** (Princetown) – This is a standing item on the agenda for Councillors to update on any ongoing issues, visits from CEO or new areas of concern etc. None reported by Councillors. Member of the public requested to speak on this matter and raised the issue of two vans which have been parked in Princetown for some months, one of which appears to have no MOT/Tax. Cllr Geen suggested that as a member of the public they can report abandoned vehicles to WDBC if they have the registration number; which they agreed to do. **Action:** none other than to monitor the situation

8. **Fundraising for St Michael's Churchyard** – Cllr Worth has investigated using a QR code to accept donations from the public. Creation of a QR code is not problematic, but how the payments are then received by the Council requires further investigation. Cllr Worth has looked at various options, most of which charge a fee, either monthly or a % of the donation. Creating a Paypal Pay Button appears to be the best solution found so far, if we can comply with their terms and conditions. Cllr Worth also pointed out that the Council does not currently have a policy/procedure for receiving donations from the public. **Actions:** Clerk to seek guidance/best practice from DALC and other Parish Councils to draft a policy/procedure. Cllr Geen will put up the posters to allow donations to be made via the post office in the interim.

- 9. Jubilee Celebrations** – Cllr Stones reported that the next meeting of the Jubilee committee is not due to take place until March. Clerk reported that letters requesting donations had been emailed on 10/2/22 to Duchy, DCC, WDBC, DNPA and Princetown Charity Shop. Cllr Henson stated that he was aware the Charity Shop was planning to make a donation towards the cost of the souvenir mugs.
- 10. Sitka Spruce Plantation (Princetown)** - Cllr Geen apologised for the lack of progress on this matter, due to ill health and issues with the internet connection following recent storms. Cllr Geen proposed that due to possible numbers attending, the meeting should take place in the large hall of the Community Centre. **Action:** Cllr Geen will contact the Duchy to identify possible dates for the public meeting to take place, and book the hall.
- 11. Blackabrook Avenue** – Cllr Stones presented a [report](#) from a resident who raised concerns over abandoned vehicles and building waste on ground near garages at the back of Burrator Ave and of motor-cycles being ridden up and down Blackabrook Close. Cllr Stones has reported the issues to the Police, who have said they will increase patrols in the area regarding the motorcycles and fire setting/general vandalism of abandoned vehicles. As Blackabrook Ave is a private road it was felt it unlikely that DCC/WDBC/Highways will take any action, as it is the Landowners responsibility to remove rubbish. Cllr Stones has been unable to ascertain who owns the land where the garages are. Council decided that the issue should be reported to the Environment Agency on behalf of the residents, in the hope that they will take action to remove contaminants/vehicles etc. It was acknowledged that if the land is privately owned there is very little else that the Council can do. **Action:** Cllr Geen will contact Environment Agency to see if they will take action, but asked that someone with local knowledge then takes the lead. Cllr Geen also said that she would discuss the matter with Tom Stratton (Duchy), to find out if he knows who owns the land, as she had to contact him on a number of other matters.
- 12. Climate Change declaration** – Council was asked to propose future action/s to undertake. Examples of actions that other councils have taken was circulated 9/2/22 by the Clerk for inspiration. Cllr Geen asked of there were any proposed actions – none were put forward. Clerk has received an email from NACO asking for support with the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative which involves planting a tree on the 11th March, with a Jubilee plaque being added in June. This was considered a suitable action by Council.
- a. Various sites for trees in Princetown and Postbridge were discussed. Council agreed that on the bank outside the front of Community Centre in Princetown would be the best option (Duchy land).
 - b. Council discussed the most suitable type of tree for the area and where to source it. Beech, Sycamore and Birch were all considered suitable.
- Action:** Cllr Geen to contact Duchy to seek permission to plant two trees on the bank outside the Community Centre. Clerk to contact ‘Moor Trees’ to see if they could provide a suitable tree/trees.
- 13. Purchase of memorial bench** - Cllr. Tigwell drafted a [Public Seating Procedure](#) for discussion at this meeting. Clerk has drafted an application form to sit alongside it. Cllr Worth mentioned that there are in fact three benches on the green, but only two mentioned in the procedure (and on the asset register) With this amendment Council resolved to approved the procedure.

Clerk has received a request by email 9/2/22 to place a memorial bench on the Green (Princetown). This is in addition to the request received via Mark Renders late in 2021 for a bench in the Square.

Cllr. Worth has suggested that the most recent request could be offered one of the existing three benches on the Green with them paying for it to be refurbished and a memorial plaque mounted, rather than having to find a suitable site for an additional bench on the green. Council agreed this is a good compromise given that there is insufficient space on the Green for an additional bench.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Mark Renders and the latest family requesting the memorial bench, offering them the refurbishment of existing bench and a memorial plaque. Clerk to add third bench on Princetown Green to the asset register, and the procedure document.

14.Planning (None)

15.Public Session - no comments made

Three members of the public left the meeting at this point.

16.Financial Management – payments approved, bank reconciliations, FOO

a) Council approved the following cheques

Ref	Chq No	Date	Payee & Details	Amount
1491	1723	22/02/22	Josh Cook - Litter Picker fee	£ 40.00
1492	1724	22/02/22	David Cole - Pay	£ 686.40
1493	1725	22/02/22	Jackie Bennetts - Pay	£ 322.95
1494	1726	22/02/22	HMRC - Tax for JB	£ 80.80
1495	1727	22/02/22	SLCC Membership fee for JB	£ 106.00
1496	1728	22/02/22	CCTV - camera, UPS, installation and maintenance	£ 1,248.84
1497	1729	22/02/22	DALC - Good Councillor 1 training	£ 18.00
1498	1730	22/02/22	Jubilee Souvenir mugs x216	£ 1,421.76

- b) Bank reconciliation was correct - Statement date 31/1/2022
- c) Clerk provided a brief report on the Council's finances, identifying a possible overspend, which could be balanced out if donations for the Jubilee mugs are forthcoming.
- d) Cllr Worth has received a query from a Parishioner regarding the minutes on agenda Item No 22 of the December meeting and Item No 21 of the January meeting where the Budget and Precept for 2022/23 was discussed.
- For clarification: At the December meeting a draft budget for 2022/23 was presented by Cllr Tigwell as RFO (in the absence of a Parish Clerk). A copy of which can be seen on the website [Financial Briefing Notes Dec 2021](#)
- At the December meeting, Council resolved to approve the budget for 2022/23. Also, at that meeting Cllr Tigwell presented the Precept request for 2022/23. Council resolved to approve the Precept of £17,995 for 2022/23, which is unchanged from 2021/22.

The item appeared on the January agenda in error, during the handover to the newly appointed Clerk.

- 17. Online Banking** - following a recent issue with a cheque being refused by the bank and that most invoices now request BACs payment rather than cheque, the Council was asked to consider moving to online banking. Clerk has produced a [document](#) outlining the legal position, best practice and examples from other Parish Councils. Council agreed that it should move towards online banking. Cllr Stones stated that she would withdraw from being a 'signatory' for online payments as she was not confident in her IT skills. At least two signatories will be required to authorise payments in the few days following the approval of payments at the monthly meetings – currently Cllrs Henson and Manning. **Action:** Clerk to contact Lloyds to confirm they are able to offer this service on the bank account held and to draft a policy in line with their requirements. To update Council at the next meeting before proceeding.
- 18. Grass Cutting** – Council was asked to vote to move this item to Part 2 due to the commercial sensitivity of the subject. Council resolved to deal with the Agenda Item in Part 2, which took place at the end of the meeting. See end of minutes.
- 19. Nomination of Members to DNPA** – A casual vacancy has arisen for a Parish Member within the West Devon/Mid Devon area of the Dartmoor National Park Authority. The Council has been invited to make a nomination by 7th April should it wish to. Councillors were therefore asked to consider whether they would be willing to stand as a Parish Member. If more than one Councillor comes forward a decision will be taken at the March meeting regarding who the Council will nominate. **Action:** Councillors to notify Clerk if they wish to be considered for the nomination by 15th March. Clerk to email Councillors not in attendance at the meeting.
- 20. Various Consultations** - Council is asked to consider what, if any, the response should be to the following consultations.
- a. Nation Park – Local List Public Consultation (by 10/3/22) **Action:** Councillors were invited to make personal response if they wished to. It was agreed that Council will not make any formal response.
 - b. Opportunity to end use of green lanes by recreational motor vehicles in DNP (by 9/4/22) Council is unaware of this being a particular issue within the Parish and therefore took the decision not to respond. **Action:** none
 - c. Two Bridges – Proposed no waiting zone (by 24/2/22) Council are extremely happy to see this proposal put forward. **Action:** Clerk to respond stating that the Council strongly supports the proposal.
- 21. Reports from Committees, Sub Groups and Special Interests –**
- a. **Youth Club** – Cllr Stones reported that an urgent meeting of the Youth Club committee had been called due to one of the Youth Workers being unable to get to Youth Club sessions on time due to other work commitments, which had resulted in young people waiting outside in the dark. A second Youth Worker has now been recruited, who lives in Princetown, and it is hoped this will avoid the situation occurring again.
- 22. Urgent decisions since last meeting** - None
- 23. Exchange of information** -

- a. Cllr Geen proposed that the new Governor HM Prison Dartmoor is invited to attend the March meeting **Action:** Clerk to invite him.
- b. Project Wingspan – A poster was circulated promoting the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary initiative to tackle rural crime **Action:** none
- c. Cllr Worth reported that he had logged into the CCTV system earlier that day and that all four cameras were working. Following recent storms and power outages it appears that the new UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) is doing its job.
- d. Clerk received email from Duchy (22/2/22) regarding the faulty garage door (No 10) which was reported by the Lengthsman at the January meeting. Duchy have reported that this cannot be repaired easily as the door frame has corroded. Duchy have asked that the garage is not used until their contractors can affect a repair. An asbestos survey has also recently been undertaken, the report will be given to the contractors undertake the repairs. Cllr Worth expressed concern that at some point the Duchy may state that the garage is irreparable and that Council will need to find alternative storage arrangements. **Action:** Clerk to try to ascertain how long it will take to repair as Lengthsman will need access to the equipment stored in the garage when grass cutting begins.
- e. Lengthsmans training SWQR Unit 2 training has been confirmed for the 20th April 2022, and is being paid for by DCC Highways department.

24. PUBLIC SESSION – no comments made

One remaining member of the public left the meeting at this point.

PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

It is recommended that, in accordance with s.100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the following Agenda items are taken in the absence of the Press and Public, on the ground that exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 Paragraph 3 to Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act (as amended) will be discussed, namely:- Information in respect of commercial sensitivity

Agenda Item No 18 – Grass Cutting Council has been invited to quote for grass cutting in Princetown, Postbridge and new areas in Meldon and Brentor. Quotes for each area have been prepared by the Clerk based on previous quotes and some assumptions regarding the time taken to cut the new areas. Council agreed the strategy for the quote to be submitted. **Action:** Clerk to rework the quote in accordance with the discussion and submit before the deadline on 28/2/22.

DCC Highways – Council accepted the contract for grasscutting 2022/23. **Action:** Clerk to sign and return the contract by 28/2/22.

25. Date of next meeting - at 1930 on 22nd March 2022 at Princetown Community Centre

The Chair closed the meeting at 2110.