



Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

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1st November 2022

Minutes for the Council Meeting at 1930 on 25th October 2022 in Postbridge Village Hall

Present:

Hexworthy/Huccaby Ward:	Princetown Ward:	
	Cllr Stephen Butterworth	1 Vacancy
	Cllr Phil Henson	
Postbridge Ward:	Cllr Mark Williams	* Chair
Cllr Wendy Watson	Cllr Andy Steele	** Vice Chair
Cllr Julian Greatrex	Cllr Gregg Manning *	

Abbreviations used: **DFPC**: Dartmoor Forest Parish Council, **DCC**: Devon County Council, **WDBC**: West Devon Borough Council, **DNPA**: Dartmoor National Park Authority, **DoC**: Duchy of Cornwall, **PCSO**: Police Community Support Officer, **PCC**: Parochial Church Council

Cllr Manning chaired the meeting.

There were 3 members of the public present.

- 1. Apologies** – Cllr Byrom, Cllr Geen, Cllr Philip Saunders (DCC)
- 2. Declarations of Interest** - None declared
- 3. Acceptance of Minutes meeting 27th September 2022** - Council resolved to approve the minutes, which were then signed by Cllr. Manning.
- 4. Urgent decisions since last meeting** – none
- 5. Councillor vacancies** – Council received one application from Mr Andy Steele, who submitted a short introduction to Council prior to the meeting.

'I have lived and worked in the Princetown community for over 35 years and in that time, I was a crew commander for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and I am also the Head of Estates for the Ministry of Justice, HMP Dartmoor.

I have a keen interest in the heritage and conservation of the local community as well as vast array of knowledge in the local community. I have a good working relationship with the Duchy of Cornwall, Dartmoor National Park Authority and other key stakeholders.'

Mr Steele left the room while Council discussed his application and voted. Council resolved to Co-opt him to Council. Cllr Steele then signed the 'Acceptance of Offer' form and joined Council for the remainder of the meeting. **Action:** Clerk to inform WDBC, and organise induction/training as necessary though DALC. Cllr Steele to complete the Register of Interest form and return to Clerk.



6. **Communicating with residents** – Clerk reported that a ‘survey monkey’ questionnaire has been created to collect email addresses for residents who wish to be put on an e-mail distribution list to be kept informed of Council business. This is free to use, but will only collect 40 responses, although survey can be re-issued numerous times. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SD8F2BX>. Clerk has also put information in various publications ‘Parish Link’, ‘Around and About’, and ‘In the Cloud’ about the email distribution list and inviting residents to e-mail Clerk to request they are added to it. At the time of the meeting 4 people had been added to the list. **Action:** Clerk to post this on website and FB page and put poster on notice board. Councillors to let residents know about the list and how to get themselves added to it, by sharing the FB post etc.

7. **St Michael’s Churchyard** – Continuation of the discussion regarding the ongoing maintenance of the Churchyard.

Clerk has been in contact with the Churches Conservation Trust who have explained that they are ‘vested’ churches by the Church of England, the CCT themselves have no authority to take on churches or churchyards, and do not make donations outside of the churches they are responsible for.

Cllr Manning re-iterated the need to find a solution and again proposed that a group ‘Friends of the Churchyard – working title’ is set up which is separate and distinct from the Council to raise funds to cover the cost of cutting the grass and maintaining the grounds of the churchyard. The walls and gates will remain the responsibility of Walkhampton Parochial Church Council. Cllr Williams supported the proposal given the strength of feeling within the village about the current unkempt state, and that the group needed clear leadership and to be run ‘legitimately’. Brief discussion about volunteers coming to help initially, using their own equipment, but the lack of insurance, particularly public liability insurance would prevent this. The intention would be that the group would raise funds and then contract the Council Lengthsman to do the work. Cllr Henson raised the question about how much of the churchyard it would be possible to cut, with some areas being left as wild flower meadow. To a large extent the area covered would be determined by the amount of funding raised. It was agreed that a group of 5 or 6 residents should be identified to take this forward, outside of the Council, but reporting monthly as a special project. Cllr Williams is keen that the group start initially by making an effort to tidy the grave area and put forward Cllr Butterworth to take the lead. Cllrs Manning, Butterworth, Williams, Steele agreed to be part of the group. Action: Clerk to contact Revd Andrew Thomas to inform him of the plan to set up a fund-raising group to cover the ongoing costs of cutting the grass. Cllr Manning to progress the group and invite local residents to join.

8. **Parking issues (Princetown)** - Standing item to cover issues arising since the last meeting. Cllr Manning reported that there has been a van parked in the village with no Road Tax or MOT. It was removed briefly but has now returned as is now SORN, although it remains on a public highway. Action: None at this time.

9. **1st PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration.

- a) Member of the public expressed interest in joining the Friends of the Churchyard group stating a commitment to maintaining an area of wild flower meadow, to increase diversity and wildlife. Cllr Steele agreed it would be a good opportunity to put some information/education boards around the churchyard explaining who was looking after it, why some areas were left wild, and to invite people to donate to the fund.

10. Planning –

- a) **0572/21** Land at Lakehead Hill (Refused Dec 2021) – Home Office has taken this to appeal. Cllr Greatrex reported on the visit he made when the application was first made in Nov 2021, for the benefit of the new Councillors. At that time the Council resolved to OBJECT to the application at that time, on the grounds that it would have a detrimental effect on the flora and fauna and that there were other potential sites which would be less impacted. Cllr Greatrex suggested that the addition of ‘in that particular site’ to the original comments made by Council would fully and more accurately reflect the views of Council. He also agreed to represent the Council at the Planning Committee stage.
[Search for an application | Dartmoor](#)
- b) Clerk attended recent ‘Responding to Planning Applications’ training provided by DALC and gave a brief summary to Councillors. New Councillors are able to attend the training when available and as funds allow. Action: Clerk to notify when next course is running.
- c) A brief discussion followed regarding when it might be considered appropriate for Councillors to offer ‘no comment’ as a response to planning applications. General agreement that each Councillor has a responsibility to inform themselves about each planning application by reading the information on the planning portal, and that at least two Councillors (one in Ward, and one out of Ward) should undertake a more in-depth review and possibly a site visit before making their report to Council. ‘No comment’ should therefore only be used if genuinely the Councillor has no strong views either way.

11. Residents’ issues or concerns - Standing item to cover issues raised at or since the last meeting.

- a) Resident has reported loose render on the Chimney of Claremont House, Tavistock Road, which is lying on the roof and has fallen to the pavement. Concern has also been raised about the shattered glass on the front window. **Action:** Clerk to raise concerns with WDBC.

12. Financial management - see financial report for details

- a) Payments approved and cheques signed by Cllr Manning and Cllr Henson; see table
- b) Invoices to be issued by Clerk
004/22 to Princetown Football Club– Pitch cutting £ 120.62
005/22 to Devon County Council – Grass Cutting £123.00
- c) Bank reconciliation correct to 21/10/22
- d) Online Banking – still awaiting confirmation that Cllr Byrom has access online.

Ref	Chq No	Date	Payee & Details	Amount
1572	1788	25/10/2022	External Auditor Fee - PKF Littlejohn LLP	£ 240.00
1573	1789	25/10/2022	WesternWeb Ltd - Webspace, content management, email services	£ 138.00
1574	1790	25/10/2022	DALC Councillor Training 1 - Steve Butterworth	£ 18.00
1575	DD	03/10/2022	WDBC Cemetary Rates (July - Dec)	£ 185.00
1576	DD	03/10/2022	West Devon Borough Council - Dog Bin Emptying (6 months) invoice no	£ 190.94
1577	1791	25/10/2022	Clerk Expenses J Bennetts - Paint for phone box Hexworthy	£ 77.96
1578	1792	25/10/2022	Dave Cole expenses (fuel)	£ 80.02
1579	1793	25/10/2022	David Cole Pay	£ 528.00
1580	1794	25/10/2022	Jake Cook - Litter Picker fee	£ 40.00
1581	1795	25/10/2022	Jackie Bennetts - Clerk pay	£ 328.55
1582	1796	25/10/2022	HMRC - Clerk tax	£ 82.00

13. Budget 2023/24 and Precept – Clerk presented draft budget for 2023/24 for Council to consider, based on the assumption that the Precept amount would not increase, remaining at £17,995. See Draft Budget and notes (attached separately) for the details. **Action:** Council to consider the draft budget, identify any additional items of expenditure which have not been included. Also, to consider specifically the budget allocated to the Play Park and Defibrillators. Budget to be finalised by Council at the November meeting, with sign off at December meeting. Clerk to investigate grants available to replace one Defib this year against the cost of repairing/replacing the existing ones.

14. Updates on correspondence/ actions from previous meetings -

- a) Huccaby/Hexworthy overgrown hedges – held for next meeting in absence of Cllr Geen.
- b) Play Park Memorial tree request – Tom Stratton has confirmed the Duchy are happy to support this, subject to the applicant confirming what species they would like to plant. Applicant has subsequently confirmed they would like to plant a Silver Birch. Action: Clerk to inform Tom Stratton.

15. Reports from Committees, Sub Groups and Special Interests:

- a) Youth Club – no report due to the absence of Cllr Byrom
- b) Princetown Primary School PTA - no report due to the absence of Cllr Byrom
- c) Speedwatch – see Appendix 1 for report from Cllr Manning
- d) VZSW – Cllr Williams gave an update regarding the signage which has been ordered from James Anstee Devon Highways – it is in hand but they haven't appeared yet despite frequent chasing. Action: Clerk to issue a press release reminding drivers to reduce speed and drive with care given the clocks are changing. Cllr Williams will apply for more funding should it become available from VZSW to expand the initiative to other roads in the Parish.

- 16. 2nd PUBLIC SESSION** - Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on agenda items, or raise issues for future consideration
- a) Member of the public raised concern about people driving along the footpath from the Community Centre to Bellever Close. Recent work has been done to drainage culverts which will be damaged by vehicles. Action: Clerk to inform Tom Stratton, Duchy.
 - b) Member of the public questioned whether the Football Club needed/have been granted permission for the storage container on their carpark. Action: Clerk to contact Tom Stratton, Duchy.
 - c) Member of the public asked how to access original documents for previous planning applications. Action: Clerk to check that documents are still available with the implementation of the new portal.
 - d) Member of the public queried who to contact to purchase a burial plot in St Michael's Churchyard. Clerk confirmed it is Walkhampton Parochial Church Council.

17. Exchange of information -

Round table for any matters to be shared for information or to request they are put on agenda for next meeting

- a) Fire Service Consultation – responses needed by 30 November. Councillors can comment individually and Council will consider their response at Nov meeting
<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/769bb7ae-a2f9-44ef-a38a-39451587d1f4>
- b) Road Closure Fernworthy – 31st Oct – 4th Nov
- c) Dartmoor Devil road cycle race (200 road bikes) is passing through the Parish on 30th October 2022 from Postbridge to Princetown and then back out to Dartmeet.
- d) Progress on refurbishment of benches – Cllr Steele reported that the work on the benches is underway and hoped to be back in situ for the Remembrance Service. The Prison is waiting on parts for a woodworking machine to be able to complete the job. Cllr Manning requested that a press release is issued when they are put back in situ. Also to be included in local publications/newsletters.
- e) WI have requested permission from Walkhampton PCC to decorate the gates of the church with poppies. Permission granted by Revd Thomas in email 24/10/22
- f) Cllr Henson confirmed that he has the wreath for the Remembrance Service. Clerk clarified the date – Sunday 13th November. Clerk has received an e-mail from Revd Thomas asking if Council can print out 300-400 service sheets and if there is anyone who would be willing to collect donations for the British Legion at the end of the service. Council agreed that we cannot print that many, but could print 50 copies. Cllr Steele suggested that we contact the Prison to see if they can assist. Subsequent to the meeting informed that unfortunately Prison is unable to help out.
- g) Confirmed the date 6th Nov for the next 'Tidy Princetown' meeting at 10am.
- h) Cllr Williams asked about ordering paint for the bus shelter. Action: Clerk to order 5lt Magnolia Masonry paint to be delivered to him.

- 18. Date of next meeting -** 1930 on 22nd November 2022
Princetown Community Centre

Meeting Closed at 2055