

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council May 2022 – May 2023 Summary

Good evening Ladies and Gentleman I would like to welcome you all to tonight's Annual Parish Council Meeting.

For anyone who does not know me my name is Gregg Manning, I have lived in the village for 17 years and the village matters to me a lot.

I shall be presenting to you a summary of things that the Parish Council have been involved in over the last 12 months.

The parish council is made up of 10 councillors which is 7 for Princetown, 1 for Hexworthy, and 2 for Postbridge. During the last 12 months for a variety of reasons we have lost three Princetown Councillors so are looking for 3 people who would like to be on the council.

All councillors are unpaid volunteers but we do as a council employ three people one is our clerk who keeps us all in order and most importantly legal. By this I mean that she ensures that council business is conducted correctly and within the law. She also organises all the paperwork for meetings and deals with letters etc. Without our clerk we could not really function.

I also wanted to thank Jake Cook our litter picker. He keeps the playpark tidy which is most important as our park gets many visitors from outside the village. Jake replaced his brother Josh so thank you to both of them for the work they do and have done.

Another employee is our Lengthsman – He works around the parish and we as residents accept what he does without blinking an eye. So, I wanted to share with you what it is he does.

Lengthsman's Duties:

Grass Cutting throughout the Parish:

- DCC Highways pay us for cutting back roadside verges at junctions
- Duchy pay us for cutting the grass around the Play Park, around PCC, War Memorial
- Postbridge Cemetery (4 days in Feb) 1 day a month from May 2023
- Princetown Football Club pay us for pitch cutting through season

Clearing roadside ditches and culverts to prevent surface water flooding roads (mainly in Jan/Feb)

General Maintenance: - putting up signs such as the 5mph speed signs and no dogs allowed around Play Park.

Play Park – removing faulty elements, repairs to some fencing and cleaning

Tree Guards - for memorial trees

Removing Benches for refurbishment by Prison

Of course, even if he worked 80 hours a week, he could not do everything that is needed which is where the others come in.

Tidy Princetown Session (Monthly from August 22). A small group of villagers who meet every first Sunday of the month. We meet at 10 outside the post office and we spend an hour around the village. It might be removing the weeds along the edge of the pavement or litter picking around the village. We need more to help so all volunteers welcome.

The Parish Council was Instrumental in setting up **Churchyard Maintenance Fund/Group** to look after St Michael's Churchyard. We have some councillors on the group but as individuals not councillors. No longer a Parish Council project but a very important one. We as a group meet up once a month to do some work tidying the Churchyard. Cutting the grass around the stones and with the environment in mind we are setting up Wild Flower gardens on unused ground to enhance the look of the churchyard. If we had not set up this group, the churchyard would have been closed to future burials.

So now the council itself.

Planning Applications Considered and Responded to:

11x applications (including 2 for Works to trees in a Conservation Area) 9 voted In Support, 2 Objections

We do not have the final say on planning but if we object to a planning application then it can no longer be dealt with just by a planning officer but needs the full planning council.

At least two councillors will have visited the site and considered all aspects of the application and whether it fits within the criteria laid down in the planning regulations. They then prepare a report and present to the council where it will be debated.

Vision Zero SW – A Plan and funding bid was put forward and was successful. This allowed for the purchase of Reflective collars for cattle and ponies, A VAS sign to reduce incidents involving animals on B3212. We received a grant of £6300 from VZSW. Working in collaboration with; Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society, DNPA, DCC Highways.

Launch event was held 24 June 2022. Initiative picked up by DALC and used as a case study demonstrating good stakeholder involvement. This again was a Parish Council Initiative.

Pots and Plants – A council initiative which was supported by WDBC Cllr Mark Renders who used his Locality Fund to fund us the £180 needed to enhance look of village. The idea is to get a little colour into the village and brighten it up a bit. You may have already noticed some very large black pots that have appeared around the village all planted up and ready to start to brighten up the village.

Speedwatch Sessions - This was my initiative as a resident but has now been adopted by the council. Nothing has changed but I believe it now sits where it should have sat in the first place. I know this is not a favourite with everyone but just like the collars I mentioned we are just trying to keep the animals safe. I also need more volunteers for this so anyone interested please see me after.

Responsible for Community Assets:

- Postbridge Cemetery – We are the Burial Authority and are responsible for the grounds, burials, memorials and plots. We also commissioned tree works to remove dead trees and reduce shading April 22.
- Defibrillators – We maintain these in Hexworthy and Postbridge.
 - We installed new batteries and cabinet door Postbridge. Feb 22
 - We Re-instated electrical supply to heat pad and light Hexworthy and also replaced signs. Mar 22
- Bus Shelter (Princetown) – new seating and window sills installed, to be re painted when weather permits
- Princetown Play Park – maintenance and repair of all elements. We have a weekly inspection by Councillors. Action plan has to be agreed to respond to issues identified by annual RoSPA inspection in March 22.
- Noticeboards – This was refurbished in Postbridge April 22
- CCTV Princetown- Requires annual maintenance/servicing and monitoring as required (This is for Crime Prevention)
- Provide and decorate Christmas Tree in Princetown Dec 22
- Telephone Box – We ensure this is kept clean and tidy and is a great WW1 Memorial Princetown
- Refurbishment of Hexworthy Telephone Box, lighting and electrical supply to defib heat pad

Events Organised:

- Jubilee Celebrations June 2022 (in collaboration with other local organisations)
- Books of Condolence Princetown/Postbridge upon Queen's Death Sept 2022

- Kings Proclamation – This was read by me on the steps of the Visitor Centre Sept 2022
- Kings Coronation Celebration May 2023 (in collaboration with other local organisations)
- Planting of two memorial trees in Play Park – Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III
- Remembrance Service Nov 2022 (attended and organised collection raising £208 for Royal British Legion)

Lobbying:

- Potential Closure of Princetown Visitor Centre – wrote to DNPA, Duchy, local Councillors, MP's, Secretary of State DEFRA. We ensured we got newspaper coverage and applied as much pressure as we could.
- DCC Highways – to improve notification and signage of proposed road closures and diversions
- Encouraged and supported Housing Needs Assessment – resulting in identification of the need for 16 affordable homes in Princetown.

Responded to a number of issues raised by local residents – including:

Untidy gardens, abandoned vehicles, rebuilding of the Prison wall, litter and dog mess in and around the village, improved signage around play park, repainting yellow lines on road near play park, safer pavements posters, cutting back hedges (Hexworthy), safety issues regarding the fencing around the Old Officers Mess, surface water flooding on roads, BT phone boxes out of order/in need of refurbishment.

Finally, there are some things we have to pay for

- WDBC – for emptying of 4 dog poo bins fortnightly
- WDBC Cemetery Rates – Postbridge Cemetery
- Insurance cover – all activities, Play Park, CCTV, assets, public liability
- Rent – to Duchy for Play Park
- NALC/DALC – subscriptions for training, advice and information – All councillors have to attend training to help them understand what it means to be a councillor. Training is also undertaken by our Clerk which benefits the council in everything we do.