Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

Workshop - Anti social/dangerous driving in winter conditions

7th June 2018

Princetown Community Centre

Objective: to understand the impact of this anti-social behaviour and explore with partner organisations potential solutions & strategies to significantly reduce this behaviour.
Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Confirm Issue & Objective of Workshop
3. Confirm Desired Outcomes from Parish Council & community perspective
4. Current Neighbourhood Policing Situation
5. Hotspots – frequent locations of ASB driving
6. Understand impact of this behaviour
7. Review potential solutions
8. Agree next steps
1. Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome & Housekeeping
- Confirmed Attendees:
  - Cllrs. Gregg Manning, Mark Renders, Suzanne Davies, Wendy Stones, Julian Greatrex – Dartmoor Forest Parish Council
  - Cllr. Annabel Roberts – West Devon Borough Council
  - Richard Martin – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
  - PC Graham Callender – Tavistock Police Station, Devon & Cornwall Police
  - Mike Jones – Senior Traffic Officer, Traffic Orders Policy & Programme, Devon County Council
  - Chris Cranston – Operations and Communications Manager, Devon County Council
  - Steve Cox – Parish Clerk, Dartmoor Forest Parish Council
2. Confirm Issue & Objective of Workshop

• Issue: during snowy & icy conditions the parish of Dartmoor Forest, and in particular the villages of Princetown and Postbridge, are visited at night, by car drivers who use the conditions to race their cars, perform stunts and drive significantly in excess of safe, legal speeds. This anti-social behaviour endangers the people, property and peaceful existence of the parish.

• Objective: to understand the impact of this anti-social behaviour and explore with partner organisations what potential solutions & strategies there could be to significantly reduce this behaviour.
3. Desired Outcomes from Parish Council & community perspective

1. There is a wider awareness of the scale and impact of the issue.
2. Potential solutions have started to be explored with partner organisations (recognising there are no ‘easy’ solutions to this issue).
3. There are clear next steps and deliverables to enable these solutions are fully and realistically evaluated.
4. Potential short term plans are established before Winter 2018/19 (recognising that other potential solutions may take longer to implement).
5. Local community start to gain confidence that this issue is being given the appropriate level of attention and will be addressed.
4. Current Neighbourhood Policing Situation

• Nearly half of officers lost from Devon and Cornwall Police in the past five years according to latest Home Office figures:
  
  • New figures have revealed that Devon and Cornwall Police has shed nearly half of its neighbourhood officers in the past five years. The data from Home Office records shows that the number of officers dedicated to community policing has fallen by 41% between 2012 and 2017. (source: Cornwall Live 31st January 2018).

• Devon & Cornwall Police have faced year on year reductions in funding. Crime figures are increasing both locally and nationally. Due to the changing nature of crime, police forces are being driven to focus more limited resources on strategic threats such as terrorism, child sexual exploitation and modern slavery; threats which are often unseen by the public. Communities highly value the work of their PCSOs and Neighbourhood Police Officers, but report that they are less present than ever. Police front desks have been closed across the County and there is an expected reduction in PCSOs from 340 to 150 across the Peninsula, which adds to the perceived vulnerability of the public. (source: Devon County Council, Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee, Impact of Changes to Local Policing. Spotlight Review. November 2017).
5. Hotspots - Princetown
5. Hotspots - Postbridge
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• How long have you been affected by anti-social & dangerous driving?

  - 2 years
  - Too long
  - Every winter since we moved here
  - 5 yrs when I moved in to Princetown village
  - The last 2-3 years has been bad in the snowy conditions
  - 3 years
  - On occasions as long as have lived here
  - We were affected on the very first cold snap we had on moving to the village, by reckless driving and noise.
  - 5 years
  - 5 years
  - 15 years
  - Past couple of years
  - Just expect it part of living here
  - Has got worse over last few years
  - 12 years during the snow season
  - Last 12 months
  - About the last 10 years
  - Only during the winter, so far
  - It happens every year we have snow
  - 2.5 years
  - The village has had incidents across the year.
  - 2 years
  - When ever it snows
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• Can you recall how many days/ nights over the past few months this has happened and for how long has it gone on for?

• At least 10 times always at night when I’m trying to sleep but can’t because of people racing around the village
• Speeding over the moors has always been an issue and snow always brings the town people up to play.
• Every night when we have snow. Sometimes they are in the village for 2-3 hours.
• EVERY snow or frost night (Princetown has its own frosty micro climate in winter)
• It has probably happened at least 12 nights in the past 12 months, and always goes on past midnight. It’s very loud, and my guests (I have a B & B) have made negative feedback because of it.
• Every time we’ve had snow.

• After moving to the village, the first cold weather we had (about 1-2 months after moving) brought about our first encounter with the delinquents who come up onto the Moors to race and drift. This was happening long before we moved here and was happening all over the last winter.
• Every time it snows. EVERYTIME. The snow encourages boy racers to come from far and wide to race and spin on the snow and ice, not just in the village of Princetown, but all around it.
• Every night we have bad weather with a chance of frost we have dangerous driving. The incidents start when it gets dark around 9pm and go on for hours.
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• Can you please describe the impact to you and your household (1)?

• Sleepless nights, frightened of damage to our cars and to our guests cars. Unable to walk the dogs alone be the road for fear of being injured. Have slipped in ice caused by cars deliberately skidding and ‘donuting’ on both roads and pavements.
• Loss of sleep before work sometimes as late as 2am before they stop.
• I do not allow my children in our front room on these night's for fear of them eventually crashing through. I have considered moving out of the village. I have lived elsewhere on Dartmoor my entire life but have never experienced this blatant disrespect for safety and community law enforcement.
• When nights were freezing, we'd be feeling apprehensive of nuisance behaviour, or kept awake by the noise of it and the worry of potential damage caused to our vehicles.
• Keeps my 1 year old daughter awake at night and sends our dog crazy, which then wakes the baby again.
• When the cars come up at night in the winter, the noise is dreadful. I grew up just behind the car park in Princetown and would be kept awake most of the night with people doing doughnuts non stop. Now I have a family of my own the noise keeps the children awake from the main road even though we don’t live directly on it. We get cars coming down our road as well where they try to skid round the sharp corner we have.
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• Can you please describe the impact to you and your household (2)?

• It keeps us awake and I avoid walking near the main road for fear of being hit. Also living down a side street I like to leave my car on main road in bad conditions as my road not gritted but have stopped as fear it will get crashed into.
• My wife works nightshifts and has to leave at 10pm. I am concerned that she will end up being hit by one of these lunatics. My daughter also spends time walking in the village which could put her at risk.
• Noise nuisance in evening/night time. Danger to residents, animals and parked cars. They do not just keep to main road but have also raced up and down side roads without care for anyone or anything.
• Noise, disturbed sleep, concern that someone may be injured, or that property will be damaged, concern that police are disinterested or powerless to deal with the problem.
• Lots of very loud (large bore exhaust) cars, excessive speed both in the village and on the entry roads (Plymouth Hill especially). Shouting and cars wheel spinning in main car park.
• Disturbed sleep for my young children, the worry of our vehicles being damaged
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• Have you reported any incidents to the Police and what was the outcome?

  • Yes...for the first couple of years I was phoning a lot. Nothing much is ever done. So I realised it was pointless. I would guarantee that is why there is a lack of calls. Fed up with not being heard.

  • YES! We were treated as if we were stupid, we used the 101 service only to be told nothing can be done.

  • Didn’t bother because other residents have and its well known that nothing gets done. We will likely have to resort to taking village action ourselves which could break the law. The safety of our families must come first so the risk of prosecution is worth it if the law can’t help.

  • Yes, we always have. Every time the nuisance noise and reckless driving starts, we report it. Our community Facebook page will always have posts from residents who have reported it, with relevant log numbers listed to reference. A police car may or may not on each occasion make a trip out to the village, but these people aren't stupid and know that they need only stay away while a patrol car pays a quick visit before they can come back again.

  • No point in reporting it

  • I haven't as I've heard they do not do anything about it.
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

- If you did not report any incidents to the Police can you please explain the reasons why?

  - Other people already had and it seems a waste of time when they don’t come up any way.
  - By the time the police got up to Princetown they would be long gone.
  - Gave up reporting incidents because police do nothing but you can be sure if we did something ourselves to sort this out they would be up here like a shot.
  - Gave up trying after the first few, what’s the point when the police can’t be bothered
  - Nothing is done and if they did come it would be too late
  - Police are unresponsive and take no action whatsoever.

- We haven’t reported every incident for a few reasons, 1, whenever we’ve phoned before we’ve been made to feel stupid 2, it’s non stop on winters nights and you’d never be off the phone if you were ringing every time someone tore through the village and skidded around 3, it’s hard to read the number plates and we were told nothing can be done without then. I could go on but I won’t.

- No point reporting, they’ve never any police officers available.
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

• What would you like done to address this issue, recognising that it may not be possible for the Police to attend at the time. Can you think of any other practical ways this could be addressed (1)?

• Cameras erected to record anti social behaviour and dangerous driving. Or police to act on recordings made by residents. Banning orders to be place in those individuals.
• We need gates at all entrances to the moors during the snow. Education about being aware of things that can jump out at you while driving over the unfenced roads on the moors.
• Publicity/ signs along the lines of it's not a racetrack just because it's the countryside. Respect the peaceful nature of the National Park that is appreciated by residents and visitors.

• Road closures....cameras. police presence. It is a guaranteed offence that will take place....Every time it snows...arrest a few ....let them know it is not ok. The police turn up announcing their arrival. The offenders slow down and leave the village. The police leave and they come back.. knowing full well they have a while before the police arrived again ( if at all) Get covert policing on the go. Catch them...fine them...make some examples of them. We have damage to cars...one ladies push chair was damaged...this is not a joke..this is dangerous!
6. Understanding Impact – DFPC Survey

- What would you like done to address this issue, recognising that it may not be possible for the Police to attend at the time. Can you think of any other practical ways this could be addressed (2)?

- The police is the only way, but the road down to the village shops needs to be slowed down somehow maybe some bollards would do the trick.
- Speed traps and traffic calming is pointless and very expensive to be of use. CCTV with number plate recognition, and action against anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving.
- Speed camera’s and speed bumps in Princetown. The erection of signs coming into the village from Two Bridges with a warning that children may be in the road to get to New London.
- Chicanes on village entry points and along Tavistock Road
- It’s not rocket science. When we have snow, boy racers will turn upon the moor. The police should forward plan to prepare for this - have officers on the moor and in the village. Check these people out when they turn up: PNC and intell checks, check to see if they are taxed and insured, generally hassle them to make them feel unwelcome, seize vehicles where there are traffic and Construction and Use offences committed.
- FINES! These people need to be fined. Camera need to be fitted to read number plates of those racing up and down and skidding around. Not just on the main road through the village but also just as you leave the village past the cattle grid where they doughnut non stop through the summer and winter!
7. Discussion: Potential Solutions & Strategies

The below list are ideas from the local community survey and Parish Council and is not intended to be exhaustive. It should be noted we are a civic, voluntary organisation with no professed expertise in crime prevention and traffic management. However, these have been proposed as a starting point for discussion:

1. Increased Police Presence
2. Traffic calming measures – bollards, chicanes etc.
3. Snow gates
4. CCTV – number plate recognition systems
5. Public Spaces Protection Orders – how have they worked addressing this type of issue elsewhere?
6. Community Wardens
7. Enact ‘Community Trigger’ if members of community believe reports of ASB have not been properly investigated
8. Continued engagement with elected representatives
8. Summary & Close

1. Priorities
2. Owners
3. Timeframes
4. Closing Comments from Chair