

Annual Diptford Parish Meeting Diptford Village Hall, Tuesday 11th May 2010 at 7.30pm

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Franklin(Vice Chairman), Hill & Sutherland; District Cllr Steer; PC Jacqui Hopper; Diane Lethbridge, South Devon AONB Communications Officer; 9 members of the public

10AP1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Baggott & Foster, Simon Walton, Amelia Eyston, Mary Smart, Val Haddy & Jeni Parr

10AP2 The Chairman's Annual Report was presented by Cllr Franklin Last year had been a quiet one for the Parish Council, in which new Councillors were welcomed onto the Council; the Housing Needs Survey had been completed, identifying the need for 9 affordable homes in the village; and grant funding for new signage at Christone Cross and Shorter Cross would hopefully result in less traffic through the village. Cllr Foster expressed his sadness at the tragic death of Cllr Chappell and his thoughts went out to her family. Thanks were extended to the Councillors and Clerk for their hard work and commitment over the last year.

10AP3. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 28th April 2009, as previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Vice Chairman

10AP4 Diane Lethbridge, Communications Officer, South Devon AONB – South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Celebrating 50 years as a protected landscape

The South Devon AONB was set up in August 1960, as part of a family of 47 AONBs in the UK (5 in Devon). It is run by the South Devon AONB Staff Unit, with funding from the lottery, and comprises stunning coastline, estuaries and rivers, open plateaux and rolling hills, with 86% of the area being farmed.

The AONB Unit seeks to influence strategic documents, development plans and legislation; raise awareness and involve communities through events, publications, activities and walks; and promote projects, such as knotweed control, light pollution and beach cleans.

During the 50th Anniversary year, projects include: 'Then & Now', assembling a photo archive, for which photos from the 1960s are requested to record the change in the landscape and way of life; 'Let's Celebrate', with local shows, exhibitions and fun family days; and 'Our Beautiful Place' photo competition, in which parishioners can vote for their favourite photo online.

The longterm aim of the AONB Unit is to safeguard local distinctiveness; foster community vitality and pride; undertake conservation projects; support local supply chains; provide traditional skills training and enable a publicly accessible resource through the website. Currently, the unit was seeking people with specific traditional skills for their training programme.

10AP5 Police Report No crimes had been reported in the Parish over the previous month, although the Police had followed up reports of vehicles in suspicious circumstances, and parishioners were encouraged to report suspicious activity by phoning the South Brent or Totnes Police Stations, attending the fortnightly Street Surgery, through the website or, if urgent, by calling 999.

PC Jacqui Hopper introduced the Community Messaging service, in which parishioners can apply to receive police appeals for information by phone or email as an effective weapon in the fight against crime. The service is free and applications are available from the Police Station or online. Included in the scheme are Horse Watch, Farm Watch and Local Alerts.

Additional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators were always needed. Parishioners suggested that it would be more helpful if crimes reported in Diptford were made more specific to a locality

10AP6 Report from District Councillor Steer The planning service should be faster and more efficient following its Vanguard Review. The main planning issue during the year was at Larcombe, which was hopefully resolved to the satisfaction of the residents. A new Chief Executive would be required at South Hams District Council following the retirement of David Incoll.

Cllr Steer introduced the South Hams Local Development Framework Site Allocation Development Plan Document (Publication Stage) and requested feedback on the proposals.

10.AP7 Reports from local groups

Tree Warden, Beverley Sugden – Five households in the Parish obtained trees under the SHDC Tree Planting Year free tree scheme, ranging from hedging to individual specimens, and trees to soften field boundaries.

Diptford Horse Show Committee – The 2009 Horse Show was held at Avonwick, with thanks to Bob and Francis Steer, Marigold Seager-Berry and all the Parishioners who helped run the show. The Show was a huge success and £2000 was given to charity. The 2010 show would take place on Sunday 30 May.

Diptford Parish Hall Committee – The Parish Hall had been used by a wide range of organisations and individuals, with the main user being Diptford School. The after-school Kurling Club, run by the WI, had been set up for the school children, forging new links in the village.

Storage and cleaning of chairs sometimes causes problems, and a part-time cleaner has been appointed, with running repairs being reported through the comments book.

Through the Villages in Action Scheme, the Parish Hall hosted ‘The Magical Christmas Tree’, ‘Theatre of Widdershins Arabian Nights’ and ‘The London Philharmonic Skiffle Orchestra’, and it was hoped to bring more professional performers to the Parish Hall over the next year. The Committee AGM would be held on the 20th May.

Short Mat Bowls Club – Membership remained buoyant at about 20 and results at local tournaments had been good, although the Club did end in the third division of the South Hams League. Sessions are held from 6.30-10.00pm on Wednesdays, and guests are welcome to try the sport.

Bloom in Diptford - Ham Sampford reported that the Parish Council funding had resulted in floral displays at the ‘Square’ and other locations. Four tubs had been sponsored and the other tubs and ‘Circle’ would need planting now for a summer display.

Diptford Gardening Club – The Club meets at various houses on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 2.30pm from February to October and, now in its second year, enthusiasm was growing.

Diptford & District Show – The weather held off until the end of the show and headteacher Tony Callcut kindly performed the opening ceremony. Attendance was good and overall the entries were up on the previous year, particularly in the children’s classes. Activities included sheep shearing, hawk display, vintage machinery, dog show and various stalls and activities. Plans were progressing for the 2010 show, including a new Memorial Cup donated by the WI for Stella Redfern.

P3 Rights of Way – P3 Co-ordinator Sue Franklin reported that the 2009 DCC grant was £235, based on the set mileage rate, although the 2010 grant was only £50, reflecting the good condition of rights of way in the Parish. Long standing warden Steve Malec had been moved to another area and the new warden, Alan Pope, would be retiring in July, which currently left the Parish with little support. Regular cutting back of vegetation was needed to ensure that rights of way did not become obstructed on Footpath 5 (Greyhills Cottage to Crabadon Lane) and Bridleway 3(Broadley Farm to Gara Bridge). Walkers were reminded to keep to the diverted path on Footpath 2 (Holsome Lane to Holsome Farm Lane) and to keep dogs under close control, especially when there was stock in the fields.

Diptford Women’s Institute – Membership increased, with 5 new members over the last year. Talks had included Paignton Zoo, hypnotherapy, bees, Dartmoor Rescue, green funerals and the Totnes Rickshaw Man, and activities included folk dancing, dowsing and kinesiology. Diptford WI had sponsored a young homeless person at Centrepoint; adopted a beehive to help save the bee population; and lobbied against the closure of public conveniences.

Various exercise and fitness classes had been run, using Awards for All funding, and a joint triathlon would be completed by the end of September.

Contact with the school had been reinforced through cooker and craftwork, and the weekly Kurling session. The WI also provided teas at the Diptford Show and for the judges at the Totnes Show. A dining club met once a month, and the WI also had a theatre and cinema group. Following the success of the Computre Club, the WI members started an internet chat list.

President Mary Smart concluded with a comment that the Parish Hall carpark was difficult to use, particularly on dark evenings or when the surface was wet.

Diptford Playing Field Group – Over the last year, membership had increased, the bank accounts had been rationalised, and the road safety signs erected.

The main project was the provision of a skate boarding park on the tarmac, and funding of £11000 had been secured from SHDC, DCC and Awards for All. The next step was to obtain quotations and ensure compliance with health and safety requirements. A free ramp had been made available in Dartmouth and volunteers were arranging to transport it to the Playing Field and to renovate it.

Activities included the monthly football match, helping out at the Diptford Horse Show and the Diptford Show; the Family Fun Day (which this year would be held on the 4th July); and the tennis training, which this year would be extended.

Riding for the disabled – Last year celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Erme Valley Group, which incorporated the Diptford Group. The Charity was busy, with riding on three days a week and Thursday evenings. Bidwell Brook and the Dame Hannah Rogers children rode regularly, together with SEN Kevice pupils. A hoist was available for adult riders. Volunteers were needed on Wednesday afternoons, and training was offered. Thanks were extended to Diptford for supporting the Charity. The annual Steeplechase at Wrangaton would be held on the 28th August.

Computer Club – Over the last year, the club had been reactive rather than proactive, although it was intended to fill gaps in the instruction over the next year. Attendance had been lower, although regular, with good feedback good. Improved publicity was needed and the computer room would be hosting a couple of short talks during the Village Show.

Matt Elgar was thanked for his support and he would be helping in a programme of instruction, including virus protection, handling photos, graphics and the storage of data.

Most members were bringing laptops, although the club had a range of equipment, which it was always seeking to update. Members were gaining experience of the latest Microsoft and Apple Mac systems.

Diptford Website – The website had been running for over 5 years, with a total of 12,269 hits, varying from 117 to 334 per month, with the busiest times being the school holidays. Jane and Peter Gillett (mostly Jane) produced the website, which covered most organisations in the village. A number of genealogical enquiries had been received and referred on to appropriate organisations and individuals.

To keep the site up to date, village organisations were asked to send updates direct to the site, perhaps at the same time as they email information to Val for the magazine.

Diptford Primary School – Community Governor Amelia Eyston reported that the school continued to thrive under the headship of Tony Calcutt, with 2 new member of staff, 71 pupils and an expected intake of another 10 in the next academic year.

Improvements in the school included new laptops and interactive whiteboards in each classroom and the redevelopment of the playground, with new climbing equipment. School trips included visits to the Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, Discovery Centre and Wembury Beach.

School clubs and activities included football, netball, kurling with the WI, gospel singing and art club. Fundraising events included cake sales for the Shelter Box Appeal, a sponsored walk for Sport Relief and the Shoe Box Appeal at Christmas. The school children were also involved in community events, such as the Horticultural Show, Diptford Village Fete, Diptford Horse Show, Remembrance Day carol concert and church activities. Special events included the completion of a mosaic representing the school values, which had been mounted on an external wall. More recently, children participated in a school election, in which the Liberal Democrats won by 2 votes. An OFSTED inspection has just been completed and the report was awaited.

10AP8 Questions and issues raised by Parishioners

Concern was expressed that the South Hams Local Development Framework Site Allocation Development Plan Document had been poorly publicised.

The site at Wheat Park was originally identified about 12 years ago, although the current proposal related to a larger area, and the allocation reflected the outcome of the Housing Needs Survey. If the landowner agreed to release the land, then it would be at a reduced price for the development of affordable housing by a Housing Association. Local people would receive priority in the allocation of housing.

Meeting ended 9.30pm