

## **Annual Diptford Parish Meeting Diptford Village Hall, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at 7.30pm**

### **UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Foster (Chairman), Baggott, Chapell, Franklin, Savery & Stow; Cllr John Tucker, Leader SHDC; District Cllr Steer; County Cllr Date; 15 members of the public

**09AP1 Apologies for absence** were accepted from Cllr Hill, Rev Ough, K Birkin & P Day

**09AP2 Annual Report by the Chairman, Cllr John Foster**

The previous year had been overwhelmed by planning issues, both new and retrospective, without which the Meetings would be considerably shorter. New Councillors had joined the Parish Council, with newer ones to join soon. New issues included housing needs, the Local Government Review, Sustainable Communities and shared services. Thanks were extended to all the Councillors for their hard work in the community and the continued hard and efficient work of the Clerk.

**09AP3. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008**, as previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman

**09AP4 Cllr John Tucker, South Hams District Council Leader - The future of Diptford within the South Hams District**

Although service delivery has remained acceptable, the ability of the District Council to relate to its residents has not always been effective and efforts have been made over the last two years to improve this relationship.

Government policy for 'Double Devolution' aims to devolve more powers to District Councils who, in turn will devolve powers to Parish Councils. In reality, few extra powers have been devolved to District Councils, although SHDC is piloting a scheme of devolving services to Stokenham and the adjacent parishes. If successful, the scheme will be rolled out more widely, although it does depend on the Clerk wishing to take on more responsibilities and employment implications of operatives. The street scene, grass cutting and toilet cleaning are the type of services to be devolved and funding would be provided.

The Sustainable Communities Act has resulted in Locality Funds of £1000 being made available locally and SHDC was one of the first Local Authorities to adopt the provisions and set up a Community Forum.

Housing in Diptford was seen as a priority in 2002. The 400 houses to be distributed throughout rural SHDC will only be allocated to villages with a school and shop, which excludes Diptford. However, Departure Sites or Exception Sites may still be possible. Cllr Foster added that a Housing Needs Survey would be conducted in Diptford over the next few months. The Princes Foundation would be carrying out a 'Community Engagement' brainstorming session, starting with the main towns and moving to the hinterland, which should add credibility to the process.

Over the last year, SHDC had frozen its Council Tax levy and received only 9% of the total Council Tax bill, despite taking over street enforcement and anti-social behaviour responsibilities. Car parking charges had been frozen and concessionary parking was available from 4pm to 10am on payment of a £10 fee, which was bringing custom to businesses at the shoulder of the day.

Four years ago, funding for street cleaning was reduced. Now a new vehicle was being brought in to brush the roads every 6 weeks, with operatives to brush corners and litter pick.

**09AP5 Police Report - None**

**09AP6 Reports from District and County Councillors**

**County Cllr Date** reported that Devon CC had been declared an 'excellent council' by the Audit Commission. The budget had increased by only 2.9%, the County had achieved 50% recycling and school exam results were improving. He commented that 74% of children over 15 in Devon carried out voluntary work and that this was unreported in the news.

**District Cllr Steer** noted the number of meetings held at SHDC on planning matters and estimated that 90% of the planning issues in his Ward related to Diptford. The outcome of many planning issues was still awaited and he commented on the slow response rate of the Planning Department.

**09.AP7 Reports from local groups**

**Parish Hall Committee** – The Hall continues as a hub for local activities and groups, and the computer suite has proved an asset to the community. External storage has been provided for school gym equipment and the floor is to be professionally cleaned and polished over the summer. Options to extend the hall to provide storage facilities and

facilitate extra length for ‘short mat bowls’ will be evaluated. It was essential that those using the hall clear up after themselves. The Parish Hall Committee AGM would be held at 7.30pm on the 21<sup>st</sup> May and everyone was welcome.

**Diptford Car Scheme** – The Scheme was originally started by Vic Holloway, who had recently been nominated for an award. The future of the scheme lay in the balance, with reduced demand, compliance with the Criminal Records Board requirements, and the cost of public and employment liability insurance. An appeal was made for an organiser and treasurer, and a public meeting would be held at 7.30pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the proposal to wind up the scheme from the 31.12.09.

**Diptford Pre-school** – Now in its third year, the Pre-school had seen an increase in attendance to 12 children on both days. The Toddler Group was a little quieter, with about 6 families. The problem of finding maternity cover had dominated the year and further staff reorganisation would be needed when Michelle returned. Andy, the assistant, will continue until the end of the year and it is hoped to raise funds so that elements of the Forest School can continue, maintaining a link with Andy.

Over the year, the Preschool has had to accommodate the Government’s Early Years Foundation Stage, the restructuring of the Ofsted registration system and the new introduction of new funding strategies. Relations with the school are developing well and the playgroup is working around the return of school lunches, which calls for a brisk tidy up at the end of the session.

Highlights over the year have included the Barnardo’s Big Toddle (for which they raised £174), the Pennywell Farm Nativity, a lambing trip to Lincombe Farm, Bear Hunt in local woodland, a bring & share lunch and Easter Egg Hunt.

Thanks were extended to Diptford Parish Council, County Cllr Date, the Horse Show and Diptford School for their donations. The Parish Council funding would purchase a camera and CD player.

**Short Mat Bowls** – Membership currently stood at 24, and the Diptford Team had achieved the Second Division of the South Hams League for the 2009/10 season, with some members playing in the Devon Trials at Exeter. The Club enjoys a relaxed social atmosphere, with a lively Wednesday evening club night.

**Bloom in Diptford** - The spring flowers in the Square, Diptford Court corner and Rectory Corner had received a positive response from passers-by, visitors and locals, and the Parish Council was thanked for its donation. More ideas, volunteers and plants were needed, particularly at Christone Cross and the Diptford village sign by Holsome Lane. Parish Council funding was requested to finance a stone surround to the flower bed around the village sign. The Chairman thanked Ham Sampford for his hard work.

**Playing Field Group** – On the negative side, the tennis tournament in July 2008 was rained off and, in August 2008 a child was hit by a car outside the playing field, the second such incident. Road safety discussions were being held with the school and the Parish Council has asked Devon CC for a 20mph speed limit. SHDC Cllr Tucker suggested the Locality Fund could be used for this purpose.

Events to be held in the Playing field include Family Football on the last Sunday of each month (except May, when it would be held on the 23<sup>rd</sup>); children’s tennis training 20-4 July; and Family Fun Day 4<sup>th</sup> July, including a tennis tournament, sports and BBQ; and helping out at the Diptford Horse Show. A spring clean was planned on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 3pm.

With the aim of providing more facilities for teenagers, the Committee was arranging fund raising activities and had applied for £12,000 funding towards skateboard and BMX facilities. Thanks were extended to the Parish Council for its support.

**Tree Warden** – Beverley Sugden announced the South Hams tree planting year 2009 scheme and requested suggestions for planting schemes from farmers and landowners. The deadline for applications was the 20<sup>th</sup> September.

**WI** – The membership continued at 26 and two members, Pat Baggot and Linda Carew, serve on the Executive Committee of the Devon Federation. Pat was chosen from hundreds of entries for ITV’s Challenge of Your Life and had just completed the London Marathon, raising funds for the Primrose Trust and St Luke’s Hospice.

Speakers over the last year include a film music writer, a wildlife expert, a prison officer, fishmonger and member of the Mission Aviation Fellowship, with outings to Highgrove House and Calendar Girls. A monthly Dining Club has been arranged and WI members benefited from the Wednesday session of the Computer Club.

Funds were raised through a Bring & Buy table and Sales Table at the meeting, and £4070 Awards for All funding had been granted to run a Health & Fitness Programme for the ladies of Diptford. A ‘Driving Safer for Longer’ meeting has been arranged for elderly parishioners on the 10<sup>th</sup> August. Involvement with the school has increased, including cookery, needlework and craft tuition, with a gardening project planned. The WI provides teas at the Diptford and the Totnes Shows and will cater for the visit of the Cathedral Choir.

**Riding for the Disabled Association** – Currently there are 153 riders, with 5722 rides a year, 170 registered helpers and 8 instructors and trainees. Sessions are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during term time, and more helpers are needed on Wednesday afternoons. A Moonlight Steeplechase will be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> August and the RDA holds regular fundraising events, including the Adopt a Horse Scheme.

**P3 Rights of Way** – The DCC inspection considered the Parish's paths 'Easy to Use' and had granted funding of £235 towards their maintenance and improvement. Work to improve the surface and drainage of Bridleway 3 at Gara Bridge was planned and Fountain Forestry had reinstated the damaged surface of the green lane from Diptford Cott. Walkers were reminded to use the signed diverted path and keep dogs under close control on Footpath 2 from Holsome Lane to Holsome Farm Lane.

**School Governors** – There were 75 pupils on the roll and SATS results were satisfactory. The website continues to be popular and children can now submit homework on-line. Hot school lunches will continue for the next academic year, with a good uptake. Activities include a chicken club to monitor and care for chickens, and the school has acquired an incubator; Red Nose Day fund raising; a visit from the community police; well attended after school activities; projects involving the local community, such as the allotment; and weekly assemblies in the church. FODS continue to give practical support and fundraising.

**Diptford & District Show** – The 2008 show was well attended, although entries were generally down, particularly the cookery classes. The hawk display, sheep shearing, dog show and children's sports proved popular, with the proceeds of the day being given to local parish organisations.

The 2009 Show will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July and anyone wishing to help or to have a stall should contact a Committee Member.

**Diptford Parish Lands Eleemosynary Charity** - Income from investments funds students in higher education and its availability is advertised in the Parish Magazine.

**Diptford Horse Show** – The 2008 Horse Show was a success, with proceeds of £2,100 being donated to charity, including local groups. Thanks were extended to Robert and Francis Steer and Marigold Seager Berry for the use of the land. The 2009 Show will be held at Avonwick on Sunday 31 May and will include dog agility. All are welcome.

**St Mary's Diptford and North Huish PCC** – Involvement with younger members of the community has included holding the school assembly in the church on Thursdays and running the Village Fete as a fun day for families. The 2009 Fete will be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June at Diptford Court.

A replacement, high-speed printer is needed at a cost of about £7000, which would be used by local groups and the Parish Magazine, and funding from Diptford Parish Council is requested.

**Computer Club** – Since its inception last April, the computer Club has done well, with about 245 attendances in the Parish of all abilities, and sessions held from 10-12 on Wednesdays and 2-4 on Fridays.

#### **09AP8 Questions and issues raised by Parishioners**

- Tuckers Meadow residents confirmed that their driveway was private and not available for public parking. They intended to erect signs stating this.
- Further Heart Resuscitation training was requested and it was suggested that the Red Cross would run courses.
- Questions were raised about the phone box by the school. It was confirmed that it had been decommissioned and BT would be asked to remove it.
- More direction signs were needed to the Village Hall, possibly on the school wall.

*Meeting ended 9.20pm*