

Annual Diptford Parish Meeting

Diptford Parish Hall, Monday 19th May 2008 at 7.00pm

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Foster (Chairman), Franklin, Hill, Savery, Preston-Day & Stow; District Cllr Steer; 3 members of the public

AP1. Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Walton, County Cllr Date, C Sumner, K Burkin, F Jenkins, M Hewett & Tony Callcut. Councillors were keen to meet head teacher Tony Callcut and the Clerk would ask him to attend a Parish Council Meeting.

AP2. Annual Report by the Chairman, Cllr John Foster

The previous year had been dominated by issues relating to vehicles and planning, in particular retrospective planning. Last May's elections showed how difficult it was to persuade parishioners to stand as Parish Councillors – and one vacancy was currently available. Thanks were extended to the hard work and dedication of Cllr Haddy and clerk Sue Lucas, who both stood down during the year, and a welcome was extended to the new clerk, Sarah Woodman. The Parish Councillors were thanked for their hard work and support over the last 12 months – and were reminded that the new schedule of meetings would be held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

AP3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2007 – it was confirmed that the Minutes were approved on the 4.6.07

AP4. Police Report - None

AP5. Reports from District and County Councillors

During his first year as District Councillor, Cllr Steer identified planning applications as the most contentious items, particularly retrospective applications. However the new Enforcement Officer, Helen Smart was proving effective. Other issues included roads, in particular, potholes and Post Office closures, although it was noted that the Post Office at Diptford had not been identified for closure. Cllr Steer reported that BT were intending to remove unviable payphones and recalled the successful fight to keep the Gara Bridge phone about two years ago. Mobile phones often received no signal locally and therefore payphones were still needed.

A report was received from County Cllr Date detailing Scrutiny Meetings he attended on the Dartington College of Arts and the Children (Education & Social Services).

AP6. Reports from local groups

Women's Institute – Joy Jones reported that their membership of 26 came mostly from the Parish and new members were joining every year. Attendance at Meetings was high, with two members on the Executive Committee of the Devon Federation and Joy Jones being the Link Delegate at the 2008 WI AGM in Liverpool. Gwyneth Welford, past president and one of the longest serving members, died last Christmas and was greatly missed. Activities included a wide variety of speakers; providing teas at the Diptford Show and the judges tent at the Totnes Show; fundraising for the Dame Hannah Rogers School; and outings to Saltram House, Exeter Races & Longleat. Currently, the WI was planning to arrange activities with Diptford Primary School.

Neighbourhood Watch - Caroline Sumner emphasised the role of the Neighbourhood Policing Team, in partnership with parishioners, the Parish Council and Police, in keeping Diptford a very safe place.

School Governors – Kathy Birkin reported that an excellent OFSTED Report started the year, with SATS results proving satisfactory and on target. Activities had included a residential visit by Class 3; a visit to Sharpham Farm; an outing to the aquarium; several 'eco' workshops and a 'maths in motion' workshop.

The school was sad to lose head teacher Lynda Rutkowska, but new head teacher Tony Callcut was settling in well. PEDPASS and PE 'Active Mark' awards recognised the school's commitment to PE and sport, together with the Kingsbridge Rotary Club award for the Swimathon. With the aim of becoming an Eco School, pupils had carried out an environmental review of the school, and produced an action plan and Eco-code. Objectives of providing wildlife areas, a plastic bag free zone and a school/community allotment had won the school a Bronze award.

Regular meetings were held between the school, governors and parents, and links were being strengthened with the church and community. FODS provided excellent support through fund raising and practical assistance.

A new website had provided a learning platform, supporting children's learning and homework submission and improving ICT skills.

Diptford Parish Hall Committee – Marian Hewett reported that the Hall continued to be well used, with the Primary School being the main user. The hall and committee room had been partially redecorated and the basement converted for use as a computer club and meeting room. Cllr Steve & Nancy Hill and Peter & Jane Gillett were thanked for their hard work and the Parish and District Councils for their generous funding.

Dog fouling on the grass verge had been a problem, particularly as school children used the area, but, thanks to the persistence of Cllr Franklin, the provision of another bin had brought about an immediate improvement.

An indoor curling set was now available to hire and the Trustees planned to increase storage facilities, accommodate a standard mat for the Bowls Club and provide a level parking area. , Rod Sugden was thanked for progressing these projects.

The Trustees were appointed annually and the involvement of newer residents, or long term residents with more time to spare, would be welcome.

P3 – Cllr Franklin reported that a Devon County grant of £235 had been received in 2007 and the County Council annual inspection had assessed all the paths as 'Easy to Use'. Planings had been added to the footpath from the Parish Hall to Moorcott; walkers were reminded to keep to the diverted path between Holsome Lane to Holsome Farm Lane; complaints had been received that the gate at Murtwell Lane had been tied with baler twine, although the latch was in good order, and the landowner had been advised; the path across the top field and the area from the road gate from Greyhills Cottage to Crabdon Lane now required regular cutting as the land was no longer stocked; the corn crop on the Moreleigh Rd to Curtisknowle Rd path had not been clearly marked and the path reinstated, and the landowner had been advised; and the bridleway from Broadley Farm to Gara Bridge has been badly damaged by the tree clearing operation, although Fountain Forestry had undertaken to reinstate the highway and any signage.

Diptford & District Show (Cllr Preston-Day, Secretary) – The show was held on the 21st July 2007, and was well attended, with over 500 entries, many dogs in the dog show and many children in the sports races. Judges commented on the high standard and quantity of the children's classes, although the vegetable classes were disappointing due to the poor weather. A profit of over £200 was given to local parish organisations. The 2008 show would be held on Saturday 19th July and anyone wishing to help or any organisation wanting a stall was invited to contact a committee member.

Diptford Car Scheme – Roger Burton reported that more volunteer drivers had come forward, although the death of Gwyneth Welford was a sad loss – she was awarded the Devon Car Service Volunteer 2007 for her long service as driver and organiser. Usage of the service had declined over the last year and residents were reminded that it was available for transport to and from medical and dental appointments and for travel to stations and airports within a 30 mile radius. The cost was 40p/mile and transport was available to parishioners with or without a car. Devon County funding may be withdrawn if the service was not well used and parishioners were encouraged to use the scheme.

Diptford Parish Lands Eleemosynary Charity – Cllr Phyllis Preston-Day explained that the charity had been left money many years ago and income from those investments was granted to students. The charity had links to the church, with three trustees nominated by the Parish Council, one trustee from the PCC and two co-opted trustees. Meetings were held twice a year and were not open to the public.

PreSchool and Playgroup – The second year of activity had nearly been completed and Angela Wild compared progress to annual reports of the previous playgroup over many years. Two sessions per week were held of 2 hours each, with up to 8 children at playgroup and up to 7 toddlers. The Parish Council was thanked for its donation towards the mats, which were well used. New children were welcome and a shared open day with the school in June should improve publicity.

Diptford Horse Show Committee – Cllr Franklin reported that the 2007 show was a huge success, with £1600 being donated to local charities, and thanks were extended to all those who helped by stewarding and arranging jumps. The 2008 show would take place on Sunday 1 June at Avonwick.

AP7. Questions and issues raised by Parishioners – None

Meeting ended 7.55pm

Please note that these are draft minutes and may be subject to amendment at the next Annual Parish Meeting.
