

Annual Diptford Parish Meeting Diptford Village Hall, Tuesday 29th April 2014 at 7.30pm

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Foster (Chairman), Franklin, Hill, Peach & Wood; District Cllr Steer; DCC Cllr Vint; DCC Highways Peter Brunt & Tony Matthews; PCSO Russ Broadhurst; 22 members of the public

14AP1 To accept apologies for absence None

14AP2 The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 23rd April 2013, as previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman

14AP3 Proposals to restructure road maintenance – Peter Brunt & Tony Matthews, DCC Highways

A scanner measures the texture, cracking, rutting and longitudinal profile to determine the road condition indicator, from Red (considered for planned maintenance), through Amber to Green. In 2012, Red condition amounted to: less than 4% of the A&B road network; 20% of C roads; and 1/3 unclassified and residential estate roads. At the time, the backlog of maintenance work amounted to £600m, and this sum has subsequently increased.

To maintain the roads in their current state requires £62m capital and revenue funding a year, but DCC only receives £30m pa.

A preventative treatment regime involves surface dressing roads in reasonable condition, which prolongs the life of the road and provides the best value approach. There are four levels of service, from Level 1 for A&B roads, to Service Level 4 for rural roads, with little maintenance and some roads being abandoned. A pilot scheme involving 4-5 parishes will determine which roads are important for the community, and which can be downgraded. Formal requests to reclassify a road should be submitted to the Neighbourhood Office.

Following the 2012 storms, over £5m repair work was required, some of which is still outstanding, and the 2013 storms caused additional damage. Potholes cost £5m pa to repair, but over the last winter, 2000 potholes were reported per week and additional pothole gangs were employed. Of the £7m Government grant, £2m was used to make roads safe, and the remaining £5m would be spent from September in a costed programme. Band D Council Tax amounts to about £1500pa, of which £42 is allocated to highways and would cover the cost of fixing one pothole.

In response to complaints on the standard of repair of potholes, Peter Brunt advised that emergency pothole repairs often failed due to wet ground conditions in the winter, and effective potholes required existing sound material on the lane, which was not found on minor roads.

14AP4 Police Report PCSO Russ Broadhurst reported on the successful 101 phone number, although the emergency 999 number should be used if the offence is happening. Rural crime levels are low, although affected by vehicle offences on the A38. Vehicles over the weight limit on lanes are often the result of Sat Navs, and drivers should use HGV Sat Navs. PCSO Russ Broadhurst can be contacted by email or mobile phone, and details may be published in the magazine and website.

14AP5 Reports from District & County Councillors

- **County Cllr Vint** reported the most recent pothole update, in which 865 complaints had been received, 2104 completed and the backlog had fallen to 786. As a result, the number of pothole gangs had reduced to 34. Cuts were planned to daycare centres, residential care centres, children and youth centres, and library services. However, Totnes library was safeguarded and would become a community hub.
- **District Cllr Steer** thanked Cllr Vint for highlighting changes to highway maintenance. The Locality Fund had helped the preschool and Forest School, and TAP funding had been made available to the Short Mat Bowls group. The Boundary review, which was awaiting assent, would result in Diptford combining in a ward with South Brent and North Huish, although it would have been more appropriate to combine with Morleigh.

Thanks were extended to Cllrs Vint and Steer for their help

14AP6 Reports from local groups

- **Neighbourhood Watch** Geoffrey Hyde reported that there were 9 local co-ordinators, and the revival continues. Following sheep rustling last year, contact numbers have been compiled so that farmers can be alerted. Isolated farmers are at greatest risk, and are encouraged to report crimes in order to build patterns of crime with the police.

- **P3 Footpaths** James Hill reported that the paths were in very good condition, thanks to the previous P3 warden, Sue Franklin. A project at Larcombe was planned. The Parish Walk would be held in 2014.
- **Diptford Short Mat Bowls** Nancy Hill thanked Cllr Steer and the Parish Council for the TAP grant, and the roller had been ordered. Although a very active club, new members of all ages were welcome, with sessions from 7-9.30pm on Wednesdays throughout the year.
- **The Parish Hall Committee** The hall continues to meet the aim of a central affordable community resource, with many regular clubs and users, and the school continuing to use the facilities for lunch and recreation. Costs are increasing, particularly electricity, although the solar panels have helped. A major problem is airborne dampness, and a dehumidifier has been installed until a longterm solution can be found. Repeated requests for improved storage and better parking provision cannot be resolved without acquiring adjoining land. The village quiz and Villages in Action puppet show were poorly attended, but the computer club is proving more popular than ever, with a wide catchment area. Volunteers were invited to join the committee.
- **Playing Field Group** Mike Cox reported that members helped out at the Gymkhana in June, and involved all the community children in running races at the Diptford Fete and Horticultural Show. September saw the return of the Parish Boundary Walk, with thanks to James Hill for arranging and leading the route, and the WI for serving teas and John Ough for the use of the church. Improvements planned for 2014 include replacing the tennis nets, new goal nets and repairs to the shelter. The skate half pipe, which has reached the end of its life, will be removed, although two further ramps would remain.

14AP7 Questions and issues raised by Parishioners

A discussion was held on the cumulative effect of renewable energy developments, with a proposed wind turbine at Charford Farm and a site meeting on the Coombeshead solar farm to be held on the 6th May.

Meeting ended 9.30pm