

Ugborough Annual Parish Meeting

Bittaford Community Hall 14th April 2010 at 7.30pm

Unapproved Minutes

Present: Cllrs Holway (Chairman), Beable, Daniels, Johns, Lloyd, Taylor, D Wakeham & L Wakeham; SHDC Cllr Fielden; DCC Cllr Mumford

Guests: Phil Markham, PC Jacqui Hopper, PCSO Chris Pooley **Public:** 20

10AP.01 Apologies for absence were accepted from: Cllr Bremridge, SHDC Cllr Lawrence & Mr V Howard

10AP.02 Introduction & Annual Report by Chairman Cllr Tom Holway The main focus over the last year had been the preparation of the Ugborough Parish Plan, the community use and levelling of the Moorhaven Playing Field, and the Local Development Plan Site Allocation DPD. Over the next year, it was hoped to complete the levelling of the Moorhaven Playing Field and the renovation of the conduit in Ugborough Square. Cllr Holway thanked the Parish Councillors and Clerk for their hard work and support over the year.

10AP.03 The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 22nd April 2009 were confirmed a true and correct record and were signed by the Chairman

10AP.04 Phil Markham, DNPA Head of Forward Planning & Community - The work of the Dartmoor National Park Authority and how its planning policies affect the Parish

Part of Ugborough Parish, including the whole of Bittaford, lies within the Dartmoor National Park, and its administration is shared with South Hams District Council. The Park Authority was established in 1974, with the purposes to: conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the park; and foster the economic and social well-being of local communities. Of the 22 Park Members, four are Parish Council representatives – and Bill Hitchins represents Ugborough Parish.

The role of the DNPA is as Planning Authority, including minerals and waste management; to promote and fund sustainable development; providing ranger services, which support to farmers and maintain rights of way; conservation works; supporting communities, for example the Bittaford Community Hall; providing 3 visitor centres and a new mobile outreach service; enriching the heritage; and managing the effects of climate change.

Annually, the DNPA produces a 3 year Business Plan with a focus on resourcing development management, supporting farmers with sustainable development and reducing the carbon footprint. The DNPA Management Plan is central to the development of policy and is influenced by Government policy through National Park Circulars and Planning Policy Statements. The Regional Spatial Strategy, which is replacing the Structure Plan, forms the basis of local planning documents.

The DNPA Local Development Framework replaces the former Local Plans. The key document is the Core Strategy 2008, followed by the Development Management Policy Document, the Minerals Plan and the Design Guide. Bittaford is identified in the Core Strategy as a ‘Rural Settlement’, where small scale development serving identified needs may be acceptable. This would include small scale housing development to meet identifiable needs, employment development to sustain local enterprises or facilitate business growth, or development to provide or safeguard local services.

The Development Management Policy consultation draft should be available in the Autumn, and the Ugborough Parish Plan will provide an important evidence base for its policies. However, it is unlikely to identify any development sites in Bittaford. The Design Guide should be available at the end of 2010.

Questions from Parishioners

1. Is the DNPA was undemocratic? Phil Markham responded that representatives on the DNPA included elected District and County Councillors and the Parish Council representatives. In setting up the DNPA, Central Government deemed that decision-making would not be improved by direct elections.
2. What is the DNPA response to renewal energy initiatives, such as wind turbines and solar Panels? Phil Markham responded that the DNPA tried to support small scale renewable energy projects, such as the hydro scheme at Widecombe. Planning permission may not be needed for solar panels, although the DNPA would seek to influence their provision through the Design Guide.
3. The provision of affordable housing in ‘Rural Settlements’, such as Bittaford. Phil Markham explained that most affordable housing would be provided by a regulated social housing provider, although since 2004 that provision had been widened to the development of private housing to meet affordable need. In order to ensure affordability, the DPD restricted the floor area to 80m² and 75% market value.

10AP.05 Police Report – PC Jacqui Hopper, Neighbourhood Beat Officer

PC Jacqui Hopper promoted the Community Messaging service, providing email, fax or telephone alerts. The service linked into volunteers and promoted Neighbourhood Watch by targeting particular problems, such as

Community Speedwatch. The Police were regularly checking speeding in Bittaford and offending drivers were likely to be questioned by local school children.

10AP.06 Report from County & District Councillors

District Cllr Fielden outlined schemes receiving SHDC funding under the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, such as the Safe Place Scheme for adults with learning difficulties; the Learn to Live Scheme, which targeted youths with the aim of reducing speeding accidents; and mobile CCTV. The aim of these schemes was to promote public confidence and reassurance.

Central Government contribution to SHDC was down to £69,000, compared with £1.2m for similar authorities, and SHDC achieved £820,000 of savings in 2009/10. It had invested in play area facilities during 2009/10 and Parish Councils would be asked to contribute £100 towards their maintenance, insurance and inspection.

Cllrs Fielden and Lawrence had £1,000 each Locality Funding and, as no applications had been received from Ugborough over the past year, it was hoped to receive funding applications in 2010/11.

Devon Homechoice had been introduced for the allocation of social housing, in which vacant properties were advertised each week. Applications would be invited for the property, the successful applicant having the highest priority.

The Parish would be consulted over the Site Allocation DPD proposals, and further sites may be submitted for consideration by the Planning Inspector. Parishioners complained that the proposed site in Ugborough would deprive a number of homes of their rural outlook; the access and parking provision would be inadequate; the affordable housing was unlikely to be allocated to local people; not all parties affected had been consulted; and residential development on land allocated for industrial use in Wrangaton would be more acceptable. The Parish Council would facilitate a meeting to discuss the Site Allocation DPD.

County Cllr Mumford warned of spending cuts in DCC services. Over the previous financial year, DCC trimmed budgets through freezing posts, although front-line staff were protected; however, with anticipated 15-20% cuts in central government support, further cuts may be needed.

The proposed Exeter Unitary Authority would result in increased Council Tax within Exeter and throughout the remaining rural Devon. However, the Boundary Review may not be introduced, depending on the outcome of the Judicial Review and General Election.

The icy weather had resulted in twice the amount of grit being spread on the highways and damage to the highways, with 46,000 potholes being filled since the beginning of February. This caused a strain on budgets.

Cllr Mumford objected to the proposed incinerator at Lee Mill as the access through Lee Mill was inadequate for the anticipated 400 lorry movements per day; inadequate consultation of local farmers; loss of visual amenity on the edge of Dartmoor; the scale of the plant was excessive and a smaller plant would be feasible if Plymouth and Torbay recycled more effectively; and the effect of dioxin emissions over a wide area had not been adequately assessed. He recommended objectors visit the website www.southhams-hell.co.uk.

The cycle lane and gateway to Bittaford had formalised speeds through the village, which was a major issue. Road repairs were being undertaken on the A3121 between the Kitterford and Haredon Crosses to alleviate flooding near the garage, and Cllr Mumford noted complaints from Parishioners about inadequate diversion signs.

10AP.07 Reports from local groups

1. Bittaford Community Hall – George White The hall had bookings every day. Over the past 18 months, £30,000 had been spent on the hall to provide a store, porch, smoking shelter, new furniture, a PA system and new signs. Ugborough Parish Council was thanked for the £2,000 grant towards the works, and for the Christmas tree and lighting.

2. Ugborough Primary School – Ian McClure Following the resignation of the head teacher, the Governors were investigating the possibility of federating with other schools. Community Cohesion was being promoted, in which schools were encouraged to be involved with life in the wider community at all levels. For example, Ugborough Primary School had made links with an urban school in the north of England and a Ugandan school. Links were also maintained through the Community Choir, sport and music. As communication should be 2 way, the community was encouraged to communicate with the school.

3. Ugborough and Bittaford Preschool – Charlotte Rogers Following a number of planning meetings, a planning application had been submitted. All the required funding of £180,000 had been raised. However, the Rural Development Programme for England grant of £70,000 was subject to planning permission being obtained and would only be available until the end of August 2010, so timing was tight.

4. Ugborough History Group – Alan Yates The Group currently had 70 members, with a membership fee of £5pa and meetings on the last Wednesday of the month. Speakers had included Adam Hart-Davis, local authors, lighthouse keepers and retired police officers. The History Group had been involved in the Heritage Appraisal in 2005/6, which was now being extended to include the Dartmoor National Park. The draft appraisal would be

available on www.ugborough.com, and feedback and inputs would be invited. A book about the Parish of Ugborough was being prepared and old photos were requested.

10.AP.08 Questions and issues raised by Parishioners

1. Cllr Mumford would take up complaints with the Highways Team about speeding in Bittaford, and in particular the hazard to children catching the school bus. Most speeding was committed by local residents and solutions, such as police speed guns, lollipop ladies, and a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph were discussed.

2. Resolved that South Hams District Council reconsider all the sites originally identified in the Site Allocation DPD, taking into account local views and whether the sites were available, and having particular regard to the provision of community facilities, especially play areas and car parking. Parishioners are concerned about the allocation of affordable housing to people with no local connection and that affected local landowners had not been consulted, contrary to SHDC advice.

(For 18, Abstentions 1, Against 0)

Meeting ended 10.17pm