

## DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

#### Draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of Dittisham Parish in Dittisham Village Hall, on Wednesday 4 April 2012 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr J Walker (Chair), Cllr D Harris-Evans, Cllr C Fraenkel, Cllr P Unitt, Cllr A Stevens, Cllr M Faulkner, Cllr K Wotton

7 members of the public were present.

#### 1 Welcome by Chair

The Chair welcomed all present, and explained the format of the meeting.

#### 2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Tucker and Cllr Stothart.

#### 3 Approval of Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6 April 2011

These were **approved** (proposed Cllr Harris-Evans; seconded Cllr Stevens).

#### 4 Reports from Councillors 2010-11

##### 4.1 Chairman's Report: *Cllr Walker*

- Helen Watson resigned from her position as Councillor in January. Carol Fraenkel has been co-opted to fill the resulting vacancy.
- Linda Cookson also departed in January, from her role as Parish Clerk after four years of dedication to providing the Parish with an excellent service. Annette Thom has been appointed as her replacement and was grateful to receive a very well organised set of files and accounts, and for her time provided in providing an exemplary and seamless 'handover'.
- 'Localism' is the major challenge which will be addressed by the Council in the forthcoming year.

##### 4.2 DHNA Non-Beneficiary Stakeholders' Group: *Cllr Harris-Evans*

- There is a proposal for a new Public Slipway to replace the existing one next to the Higher Ferry in Dartmouth.
- A new pontoon is being constructed at Stoke Gabriel. It is a replacement for the existing one and will be safer, more stable and less slippery. It does not offer more dinghy berths.
- A marine plan is being developed for Dartmouth. It is linked with the Dart Estuary Management Plan.
- The review of the Dart Estuary Management Plan is in consultation phase and questionnaires have been distributed.
- A request has been made that the Dart Safety Management system be on the agenda.
- There is a proposal to dispose of toxic ash in a quarry near Totnes and the Dart.

##### 4.3 Dog Warden: *Cllr Stevens*

- No formal complaints have been received during the last year.
- Dog fouling on The Ham has been a problem. It is not currently an issue.
- SHDC has given notice that it is considering the introduction of Dog Control Orders.

##### 4.4 Finance Clerk

- In the 2011-12 financial year the Council achieved a carry-forward of £19,188.

- The increase on the previous year's carry forward of £6,313 is due to:
  - Increase an increase in the precept (from £7,000 to £10,000 in 2011/12) and in car park rates
  - £1,500 received for Ham Events
  - revenue received from SWW for inconvenience and car parking with a further nearly 2000 pounds to be received in next financial year making a total of approximately £9,500 from SWW
- The budget for 2012/13 anticipates a reduction in the carry forward by approximately £4,000 because anticipated income is less than expenditure in 2011/12:
  - mainly due to budgeting for anticipated one-off expenditure to develop a Neighbourhood Plan (£6,000)
  - funds have been allocated (£1,000) in the budget to the Level Car Park to allow for initial costs which might be associated with accepting transfer of this asset
  - a Ham Car park contingency fund (£1,000 annually) has been established to reserve funds for anticipated maintenance
- A non-domestic retrospective rates bill for the commercial use of The Ham Car Park over the period 2005-10 was a large expense in the 2011/12 year, however small business rates relief has resulted in no rates being due in the forthcoming year.
- £4,000 has been budgeted for purchase of play equipment on The Ham. It is recognised that this sum is insufficient to purchase any one item of equipment, however it is considered it may be useful for matched funding in grant applications. Items (log bridge, wooden play unit and cradle swings) have an anticipated life span ending in March 2013.

#### **4.5 Footpaths *Cllr Unitt***

- All the Parish footpaths & bridle paths were walked in December/January as part of the annual survey that is carried out and the results submitted to Devon County Council. The survey, done in fairly wet weather, revealed that our paths and signage were by and large in good condition and were passable by anyone wearing proper walking boots.
- In addition to the footpaths all our unmetalled roads and permitted paths were also checked out and here again the access, with one exception, was good. The exception was Lee Lane going from Capton to the Tideford road, but this is scheduled for repair by Devon Highways about now.
- The usual vegetation strim took place in June & August 2011 paid for by DCC.
- Refurbishment of the anti-slip wire netting on the bridge connecting Dittisham footpath 19 with Cornworthy footpath 14 at Capton Mill was carried out last summer.
- The football club refurbished the broken cast iron railings alongside footpath 1 in the village.
- The Parish has had a good deal of investment by Devon in its footpaths, bridleways and unmetalled roads in recent times. Many of the traditional styles have been replaced with easy access, self-closing passenger gates, several of the bridleway gates have openers that can be operated by riders without dismounting, and the unmetalled road from Downton down to Dartmouth Old Mill Creek was extensively refurbished a few years ago with money from the sale of Exeter airport.

- The main problem with our footpath network is the interconnections on the main road into the village. This is a hazardous road for pedestrians and it has to be negotiated by walkers to connect some of the paths on either side: the stretch from the end of footpath 6 (from Capton) to the Sportsman' is a particular case in point.
- A Devon footpath seminar was attended in November.

#### **4.6 Planning Clerk**

- The Parish Council recorded No Objection in respect of 20 planning and/or listed building applications between 6 April 2011 and 7 March 2012.
- Objections were recorded in relation to four planning applications. All of these subsequently received conditional approval from SHDC.
- Three Extraordinary Meetings of the Parish Council were called over this period to deal with applications that could not be responded to within the time-frame of normal monthly meetings of the Parish Council.
- The major challenge in the forthcoming year will be deciding whether to develop a Neighbourhood plan, for discussion in the Parish Council Meeting to follow, and if the Council decides to prepare one, conducting the process. New Government legislation has changed the planning process. Neighbourhood plans, unlike the current community plans, do influence planning decisions.

#### **4.7 The Ham Maintenance Cllr Wotton**

- Drainage of the Ham has been considered:
  - raising the level of the land is considered the easiest solution
  - this work would be done in conjunction with changing the car -park boundary posts to taller wooden posts
- Replacement of the current concrete posts is being assessed because:
  - they are damaged
  - higher posts would be visible to vehicles
  - to provide a more effective barrier to unauthorised vehicles
- There is potential for planting.
- The collapsible lockable post between The Ham and Lod Cottage has been replaced.
- The channel between The Ham and Lod Cottage requires hedge trimming and strimming.
- The play equipment on The Ham is currently of an acceptable condition. Cllr Stevens will attend the next SHDC biannual inspection.

#### **4.8 The Ham Car Park Cllr Falkner (on behalf of Cllr Stothart)**

- Car Park charges were increased at the end of August 2011.
- The Car Park Working Group was formed and has held four minuted meetings and made recommendations to the Council.
- The main change has been the introduction of parking permits for Parish residents and home owners which are different to those issued to Dittisham Sailing Club.
- Overnight parking on The Ham is an ongoing issue.

#### **4.9 Ham Events: Cllr Harris-Evans**

- The Ham Events Working Group has produced a pack of documents for Ham Hire events: Ham Hire Information Sheet, Risk Assessment Guidance, Fee Schedule, Terms and Conditions and Ham Hire Agreement which have been approved by the Council.
- The Outdoor Swimming Society is planning to use the Ham again this year (22 September). Its 2011 event ran extremely well in the main. Some

lessons were learned: in particular parking on the hill leaving Dittisham will be prevented this year.

#### **4.10 Trees: *Cllr Faulkner***

- Four applications considered: all non-contentious and subsequently approved.
- Unauthorised tree removal by the resident of a property adjacent to The Ham (in a conservation area) occurred. The resident was warned about this illegal removal and advised that permission must be obtained prior to such activity.
- One tree adjacent to The Ham Car Park was threatened by high winds and cut down as an emergency measure.
- Three trees have been cut down on the Ham Triangle preliminary to refurbishment of the area: which is an ongoing Jubilee project.

#### **4.11 Village Guides/Publications: *Cllr Stothart***

- Most of the content for the new Village Guide is now complete: map, Henry Harvey's illustration, history, walks etc. Some photos are still to be sourced or taken.
- Advertising space has been sold and we are on course to receive £400 from this.
- Next steps:
  - provide copy to Martin Walker to draft the layout on his printers' software
  - approve draft
  - send to printers for draft, approval and printing (aiming for mid-May).

#### **4.12 Village Hall *Cllr Walker***

- The village hall is short of funds. It has £1,200 in its current account and £6,000 in a roofing reserve fund.
- A new water heater has been purchased.
- Repairs to door frames have been completed.
- The roof will require repair in the short to medium term.

#### **4.13 West Dart Bus: *Cllr Stothart* (written report presented by Clerk)**

- Continues to be financially sound due in the main to the school bus contract. Some £80k in various accounts.
- Has enough drivers although most are of an age when they may have to look at retiring, so anyone interested would be welcome to get in contact.
- Parking at the bus stop and around the entrance of the Level car park continues to be a problem but there is no wish for anything to be done at this time. Drivers are aware that they can contact the police in cases of extreme difficulty; otherwise the police are not really able to do much.
- The position of Treasurer has recently passed into new hands.
- Annual dinner is to be held in April.
- Usage of the bus could be improved, hence advertising in Parish Magazine.

### **5. Reports from District and County Councils**

#### **5.1 Devon County Council – *Cllr Jonathan Hawkins***

Deferred in Cllr Hawkins absence

#### **5.2 South Hams District Council – *Cllr John Tucker* (written report presented by Clerk)**

- Last May 2011 Council appointed me as Leader of South Hams District Council until 2015

- Government has cut the formula grant by 26% over two years. I believe that cuts will continue for another eight years.
- SHDC received 826K for New homes bonus; this will contribute to the capital programme for Housing, Lower Ferry, Dartmouth, Fish Quay, and Salcombe.
- SHDC increased the Council tax for 2012/2013 by £3.36 or 2.5% for a band D. The increase is to help secure the front services for the next year.
- Master Planning is taking place on a number of sites across the District, with a number of sites started to build. 50% affordable is being achieved.
- West Devon and South Hams have one team of Managers for the two Authorities. Shared services between the two Councils have saved the tax payer 3 million pounds since 2008, with an annual saving for each Council of 600K, and we are looking for new partners in the public and private sector.
- Three Voice initiatives have been set up: for Town & Parish Councils, the Business sector and the Voluntary sector. The idea is for better communications between the different bodies. It seems to be working well.
- Connect Outreach is visiting Towns and Villages. It gives the public a better chance to meet their needs. The Police, Devon County Council, SHDC Benefits and many more attend these sessions.
- The Council is committed Localism. Surveys have been completed by Towns & Parishes. It would appear there's not much enthusiasm for Services to be devolved to Town & Parishes. A number would like to take on Assets as Dittisham would like the Level Car park: I am sure this will happen in due course.
- Residents & Council's will need to get their heads around Neighbourhood Planning, and the National Planning Framework. How these will affect everyone, only time will tell.
- Residents who wish to speak to me on any of the above issues or any other concerns they have please call me on 07711855898 or email [john1945tuckER@me.com](mailto:john1945tuckER@me.com)

## **6 Public Open Forum**

**6.1** Trevor Pollard thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the Village Hall Committee and Dittisham Jubilee Fund for its ongoing and not insubstantial support over time (in his capacity as Treasurer of both).

It was noted that there were Public issues for consideration in the Parish Council meeting due to follow immediately.

*The meeting closed at 7.38 p.m.*