

# NEWTON & NOSS PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006 in the School Hall

**PRESENT:** Ten Parish Councillors and approximately one hundred parishioners  
County Councillor William Mumford  
District Councillor Roger Hallett  
P.C. Dave Cook, Neighbourhood Beat Manager  
Guest speaker: Martin Dyer, Exeter Archaeology

**APOLOGIES:** Sue Hallett  
Colin Richards  
Jeremy and Sally Spooner  
Tom Taylor  
Chris and Liz Woodd-Walker

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### 1. PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2005 were confirmed and signed.

### 2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr Brown had completed his second year as Chairman and he thanked his fellow councillors and the Clerk for their hard work and loyal support. Over the past year, the Council had met on 11 occasions to deal with routine business. Additionally, Members had attended many meetings to represent the views of the Parish; these had included Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, the Community Council of Devon, Devon Conservation Forum, Ivybridge & District Association of Parish Councils, Devon Association of Parish Councils, and the Ivybridge & District Community Transport Association.

Councillors had been particularly active on the steering groups for the new sheltered housing and Consulting Room at Bishops Court, as Governors of the School and taking an active part in fundraising for the Village Hall. Extensive lobbying had also taken place with the District Council, the Regional Assembly and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to secure some more affordable housing for the Parish. The Council was also represented on a number of local organisations including the River Yealm Harbour Authority, the Newton & Noss Village Hall Committee and the W.I. Community Hall. The local Parish Cluster Group met to share ideas and tackle issues common to the neighbouring Parishes.

Some of the other key issues were summarised, with particular reference to the many road signs and parking restrictions which had been poorly maintained. In June, a report had been sent to the Police and the County Council; the Police had been unable to undertake effective enforcement in many places because the County Council had not maintained the yellow lines or enforcement notices. Complaints had been made to the County Council and improvements had been promised. Many road surfaces continued to deteriorate; the Parish Council would continue to lobby for resurfacing. Unfortunately, some District Council Departments seemed to have adopted the same lack of responsiveness and much time was spent chasing answers and action.

The parking problems around Noss Green continued to worsen. Lack of routine Police attendance was a cause for serious concern as was the lack of parking capacity provided by The National Trust. The Council was considering whether parking restrictions in Noss should be requested and a meeting had been arranged with The National Trust to discuss the coastal car parks. Speeding remained a cause for concern and repeated requests for enforcement action were required. A formal complaint to the Police Authority over the lack of resources devoted to traffic issues in this and neighbouring Parishes was being considered. Also, complaints had been received from residents in Newton & Noss and nearby Parishes about the standard of driving by some of the Ivybridge school buses.

The Chairman welcomed the new residents of Bishops Court and thanked Sarah Roe, Mary Wilcox and the Yealm Medical Centre for their excellent work in developing the new part-time Consulting Room which was being funded by the Parish Council and the Doctors themselves.

The five red public telephone kiosks had been retained, two of which had been under threat of closure. They had all been repainted and a "listing" application has been submitted for the kiosks outside The Swan and Newton Ferrers Post Office.

Referring to the Parish Plan, the Chairman outlined progress as follows:-

**Affordable Housing** This remained the Council's prime long-term objective. The District Council had almost doubled (from 25 to 45) the allocation for new homes in Newton & Noss to be built over the coming decade but this figure was well below the 100 to 120 estimated requirement. Outline plans for some sites had been submitted to the District Council and a further detailed response had been made to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation, copies of which were available both at the Meeting and on the Parish Council's website.

**Commercial & Business Development, Employment and Tourism** The Council continued to support a successful retail and commercial base which was vital to the sustainability of the Parish. As part of the affordable housing suggestions to the District Council, Members were keen to support the development of some small workshops at Collaton to aid the expansion of successful local businesses. The Parish Council's website had been launched in February and was updated regularly; development would continue. Unfortunately, the publication of the Village Design Statement has been delayed. Tourism was an important source of revenue to help support local businesses during the quiet winter months. Whilst traffic congestion and parking difficulties often resulted, visitors were vital to the local economy.

**Transport, Travel and Parking** Compared with many villages, Newton & Noss was fortunate to have a regular bus service. However, there were no links to after-school activities at Ivybridge, and visiting Derriford could be difficult. With the development of Sherford and its proposed public transport hubs, the Council would continue to lobby for improvements to the bus service which might ease access to Ivybridge and Derriford. The Ivybridge Ring-and-Ride Bus and Community Car Scheme offered an essential service and was supported by the Council. The proposed footpath link between Collaton and Butts Park had been delayed due to lack of County Council funding but thanks to a landowner's generosity, an informal footpath along the old MOD land adjacent to the B3186 might be possible. The Council worked with the County Council to maintain over 63 rights of way but an additional path across the fields to Newton Wood would be particularly useful. The long-term need for more parking had been recognised and any new plans for housing must have realistic parking provision.

**Children and Young People** Thanks to the work of many leaders in the Parish, the various groups for children continued to thrive. The Youth Club had closed but Newton & Noss youngsters had been invited to attend the Yealmpton Club. The Parish Council's commitment to provide a more exciting play opportunity for older children at Butts Park had been delayed, partly due to a slow response from the District Council and partly because of the Clerk's increasing work commitments.

**Community Services and Facilities** The Village Hall and W.I. Community Hall had received financial assistance from the Parish Council and Liz Woodd-Walker was thanked for leading a successful fund-raising campaign for the Village Hall. It had not been necessary to raise the Precept in April despite ever increasing costs.

In conclusion, the Chairman highlighted the next Election which would be held in May 2007. The Parish Council aimed to achieve "Quality Status" to strengthen its position with regard to the significant Local Government re-organisation which would be completed in three years' time. Quality Status would also entitle the Council to apply for some Central Government grants. The only hurdle was to satisfy the criteria for an electoral mandate. At the 2003 Election there had been insufficient candidates, thereby disqualifying the Parish Council from applying for Q.S.

**3. DEVON & CORNWALL CONSTABULARY** The main items of P.C. Cook's report concerned:-

**Crime figures** In 2005, 71 crimes had been reported compared with 77 in 2004. The breakdown related to burglaries from dwellings 5, other burglaries 6, all thefts 33, damage 12, assaults 7, and harassment 3. Other crimes totalled 5.

**Parking difficulties** All the Ivybridge Officers were aware of parking problems in Noss but could not deal with complaints unless advised at the time of an offence and residents were urged to call 08452 777 444. Without formal parking restrictions, the Police could only issue a parking ticket or remove a vehicle if an obstruction was being caused. The Fire and Ambulance services were aware that a smaller than standard vehicle would be required to answer an emergency call.

**Livestock** Dog owners were reminded of their responsibility to keep pets under close control. Sheep had been killed and compensation had been paid to the farmer.

**Neighbourhood Watch and Boatwatch** Both these very useful initiatives were flourishing and had extended to other areas.

**Children and traffic** P.C. Cook supported any initiatives which encouraged drivers to reduce speed. A specific request for some signing along Riverside Road West would be passed to the Road Safety Officer for consideration. However, it was accepted that too many signs could be ineffective. Similarly, concerns about the size of the Ivybridge school buses in relation to the narrow lanes had also been passed to the R.S.O. and Devon County Council.

The following queries were discussed:-

- a) Yellow Lines in Noss: A formal Traffic Order would be required if yellow lines were to be introduced in Noss; the legal cost was estimated to be £1,000 which Devon County Council would be unable to fund during the current financial year. It was suggested that preventing parking in certain lanes would only exacerbate the problems in other areas of Noss so it was important that the Police were kept informed so action could be taken at the time. It was noted that the A.A. Pub Guide advertised The Ship as having 100 spaces.
- b) Yellow lines at Yealm Steps: They had been reviewed by the County Council and would be renewed shortly.
- c) Policing yellow lines: Parking on a yellow line was an obvious offence – a photograph of an offending vehicle with a date and time was useful evidence. Causing an “obstruction” was more difficult to establish in law.
- d) The Traffic Warden had been seen in Newton once this year. It was hoped her visits would be more regular during the busy season.
- e) P.C. Cook confirmed that attaching sticky tape to cars would be regarded as criminal damage.

#### **4. COUNCILLOR HALLETT** [South Hams District Council] The main items of Cllr Hallett’s report concerned:-

**Affordable Housing** – the District Council’s top priority. Although SHDC was one of only four Councils in the country to achieve Beacon Status, permissions for housing were weighted in favour of the urban areas but two thirds of the South Hams population lived in rural villages. The additional Council Tax raised from second homes amounted to only £200,000 but had been allocated to the affordable homes budget.

**Planning matters** Regarding The Shop at the Green, the applicant’s Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate for permission to convert the premises for residential use, had been refused. The recently opened Tea Room was welcomed. In general, applications to infill was not always successful whereas an extension was often more acceptable.

**Council Tax** had been increased by 4.7%. New responsibilities for licensing had produced an income of £1,000 which was set against additional costs of £50,000 to £60,000 – an additional burden on the Council Tax. Free bus passes were now available; again, grant funding was insufficient to cover the additional costs.

**Waste Collection** The new scheme had been successful with the amount of recycling material collected being on target. If the Government’s increasing targets were not achieved, the District Council would be fined (another burden on the Council Tax). The recycling scheme was being introduced in outlying areas later this year.

**Proposed new settlement at Sherford** Building would not start before 2007 at the earliest. The development would be built nearer the A.38 than originally envisaged. The Prince’s Trust designs were encouraging.

**Local Government re-organization** Despite an uncertain future for the structure of local government, an Election was expected in 2007.

The following queries were discussed:-

- a) Although a planning permission had to be activated within five years, there were no time limits on completion.
- b) The new waste collection system aimed to minimise the amount of material being sent to landfill, reduce the amount of waste material in general, and encourage recycling. The contents of the brown bins were processed for re-use on the land (e.g. as mulch). Protein waste should be well wrapped.

## **5. COUNCILLOR MUMFORD** [Devon County Council]

Although Councillor Mumford had taken office only recently, it appeared that the same top five issues were at the forefront of discussions in all the villages he represented. He was particularly concerned about and opposed Devon County Council's decision to retain for the Revenue Budget the additional Council Tax collected from second homes. He invited parishioners to raise issues of concern with him but stressed that factual rather than anecdotal information was important.

## **6. OPEN FORUM**

**Riverside Road West** – A resident had safety concerns about the general speed of vehicles passing the cottages as previously discussed with P.C. Cook (refer to Children and traffic above). Similar problems in other areas were noted and unofficial signs at Membland appeared to have been successful in alerting drivers to the possibility of young children in the vicinity.

## **7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Referring to his earlier comments, the Chairman explained that the Parish Council had been lobbying the District Council for more housing provision locally as the new planning document to 2016 - the Local Development Framework - was at the consultation stage. It was stressed that there were no firm development plans. The average house price locally was twice the national average, the Region's economy was growing faster than predicted and pressure for housing was increasing. A formal Study had been undertaken by the University of Plymouth to assess the housing needs of the Parish and it was estimated that 10 new homes per annum might be required during the plan period to assist those who could not otherwise afford to purchase. Several landowners had offered potential sites for development as illustrated on maps which were on display, but each site would be subject to planning approval.

The discussion included references to the meaning of the term "affordable", the requirement for a clear criteria regarding eligibility to occupy, the possibility of forming a Community Land Trust to maintain local control, the need for rented homes as well as shared ownership, and the use of sustainable materials together with a low land cost to achieve a realistic house price. Overall, the Meeting was not in favour of large developments.

In conclusion, the Chairman summarised the general acceptance of those present that some additional housing was required, in small sensitive developments for either rent or part purchase, managed by a local Community Land Trust, eco-friendly where possible, and phased-in as required. It was hoped that some progress could be made fairly soon.

## **8. PARISH HERITAGE APPRAISAL**

Martin Dyer of Exeter Archaeology explained the purpose of the Appraisal and opportunities for residents to be involved with the research and production of new historical data into a format which would be useful as a local resource. Much information already existed but residents would be invited to a series of events and workshops over the coming months to raise interest and knowledge, learn research skills and visit the Records Offices at Exeter, Plymouth, etc. Some events would take place in conjunction with the three other parishes involved with the Appraisal. After several questions, the importance of involving young people in the Parish was agreed and the Village Hall Gallery might be suitable for a permanent exhibition. Anyone interested in taking part in the events was invited to inform the Clerk.

Signed.....J M Brown, Chairman