

NEWTON & NOSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ELECTORS
Held on 24th March 2009

PRESENT: 9 Parish Councillors
35 Parishioners
District Councillor Suzie Cooper
County Councillor William Mumford
Devon & Cornwall Constabulary;
Police Community Support Officer Sid Lawrence
Guest Speaker; Alison Murray Magistrate
Newton & Noss Network: Colin Smith

1. APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors: George Buckland, Sue Hinchliffe and Rodney Carter.
Also: PC Nolan, Mary Wilcox, Colin Drew, Felicity Garth, Les and Maggie Steele.

2. DEVON & CORNWALL CONSTABULARY

The full written report presented by PCSO Lawrence is appended to the Minutes (file copy only).

The main items to note were as follows:-

i) Contact details.

If anyone needed to make contact with PCSO Sid Lawrence or Neighbourhood Beat Manager PC John Nolan;

E Mail: john.nolan@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

sid.lawrence@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Mobile telephone: PC Nolan: 0845 656 6809

PCSO Lawrence: 0845 656 7987

If they were off duty, there was an answer machine facility.

Main police switchboard number to be used to report an incident: 08452 777 444

ii) There was a new web site: www.devon-cornwall.police.uk. Newton Ferrers was covered by the "Ivybridge Rural South" area. The site, amongst other matters, contained all the latest crime statistics for the Ivybridge Rural South Area. There was a possibility that it could identify more specific areas later.

iii) There was an intention to have Police Surgeries in and around Newton and Noss.

iv) There were a total of 43 crimes reported between 1st March 2008 and 23rd March 2009, the numbers of reported crimes having dropped from 49 last year. PCSO Lawrence explained how crimes were recorded and how the detection rate was calculated.

v) Thefts from cars and drink driving offences had tended to increase in the summer months. Drink driving in particular was to be targeted this year

vi) PCSO Lawrence would work with the Boat Watch organisation to monitor marine crime.

3. SOUTH DEVON MAGISTRATES' COURTS

Mrs Alison Murray gave an interesting talk on the Magistracy.

From 1979, anyone aged 18-70 could apply to become a Magistrate. All Magistrates were unpaid volunteers, with no legal training (receiving legal advice from the Magistrates' Clerk). They received ongoing training and appraisals and were expected to sit for a minimum of 26.5 days per annum. South Devon Magistrates Courts had approximately 140 Magistrates who covered a wide area from Wembury to Torbay and up to Dartmoor – with 3 Court houses at Totnes, Newton Abbot and Torquay.

Mrs Murray discussed the public right to view court proceedings apart from those conducted in the Youth Court and some Family Proceedings. All Criminal Prosecutions started in the Magistrates Court and 95 % were dealt with by the Magistrates, the remaining 5% being sent up to the Crown Court. Mrs Murray looked at sentencing and the considerations taken into account.

There were questions concerning:

- The deterrent value of Community Service and Fines. Mrs Murray replied that there were repercussions if the orders were not complied with. The defendant could be brought back before the court to be re sentenced.
- Knowledge of previous convictions when dealing with a defendant prior to sentence. Mrs Murray said that this did not used to be the case, but now the Prosecution could bring this issue before the court at a separate hearing.
- The cost to the tax payer of a half day court sitting. Mrs Murray had no figures to hand, but Magistrates were unpaid and had been directed to reduce the number of unnecessary adjournments of hearings.
- The challenging nature of the Magistrates' role. Mrs Murray agreed that it could be challenging particularly when the unexpected happened.
- Whether there was now too much legislation, or whether life had improved as a result. Mrs Murray suggested that proceeding had become very regimented and there was little leeway for discretion.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th March 2008 were confirmed and signed.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The full written Report presented by the Chairman is appended to the Minutes (file copy only).

The main points of the Report concerned:

- i) The plan for a small development of affordable housing near Butts Park which was in the process of being discussed with South Hams District Council.
- ii) Further public consultation undertaken by the Boundary Review Committee. The two proposals to be discussed by the Parish Council at the Parish Council meeting on 8 April 2009 were:
 - a) A Devon Unitary Authority comprising the existing County of Devon with no changes to Plymouth and Torbay, or
 - b) An Exeter and Exmouth Unitary authority and a unitary authority covering the remainder of the County, with no changes to Plymouth and Torbay.
- iii) The Planning application made at Bridgend which was granted on Appeal despite 60 objections from parishioners and the Parish Council. The support of Gary Streeter M.P. had been enlisted.
- iv) The state of repair of the Village Halls and other buildings. The Parish Council had made grants for repairs to the Tilly Institute's roof, to the Playgroup flooring, the Reading Room, Pope's Quay and to the Sports Pavilion. The WIC Hall had had its heating system overhauled, the inside had been decorated and repairs effected to the flooring. The roof would need replacing. The Village Hall was in a good state of repair having won lottery funding. An extension and improvements were planned for the Sports Pavilion. An asset inspection was to be undertaken and inspection of the footpaths.
- v) A new logo had been designed for the Parish Council which would be incorporated in to the stationery.
- vi) The Chairman introduced a set of targets which included; application to become a Quality Parish, improving local employment opportunities, shopping (working with the Co-op and Post Office), housing, Parish Property(register and inspection), Butts Park Crossing, Collaton Butts Park Link, Butts Park (the play area and a youth area), Sports Pavilion , donkey path and the Parish Plan update.
- vii) A work schedule had been agreed for various areas including Yealm Steps, Leas Path, Tidal Waters Path, Noss Voss and steps, Axworthy Steps, Kilpatrick Steps, the Milestone and adjacent area at Bridgend.
- viii) The Parish Clerk Mrs Jacki Eschbaecher was to retire in 2010 and would be replaced by Mrs Shona McDonough
- ix) The Precept would remain the same as 2008 at £39,245

Further issues were discussed with the Parishioners present.

- The possibility of an Annual Village Clean up was raised and would be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting.
- Mr. Roy Fenner had had requests from members of the Yealm Gardening Society and Newton and Noss Network for allotments. Mr Fenner agreed to coordinate the requests.
- Concerns were raised over the Swan Licensing application, and in particular the possibility of outside music. The Landlord and Landlady were present who stated that they would not be having music on the Quay and that the application had been made for a "blanket" licence. They were hoping to open in 6 weeks.
- Concerns were raised about the plans for a new school building, its necessity and perceived threats to the playgroup and the village halls.
- A talk was planned for the Digital Switchover.

6. UPDATES

i) COUNCILLOR SUZIE COOPER (South Hams District Councillor and Parish Councillor)

The survey on housing needs had identified an immediate need for 15 houses for local people. The Highways officer appeared to be prepared to approve the scheme planned.

The Co op plans had been before the Design Panel last week, the Architects being told that they would need to be amended. The plans appeared to have been well thought out for what was a difficult location. The plans had been altered from those which had been on public display - now 5 flats and 2 town houses had been provided for. It had been suggested to the Co op that they provided fewer flats but more generous in size. SHDC were content for the Co op to be temporarily re sited on the Green area opposite Dillons whilst redevelopment took place.

Concerns had been raised about the "democracy" surrounding the Appeals Procedure on a recent planning application. Cllr Cooper was working with a District Councillor from Salcombe on this subject.

Concerns were raised by Parishioners about parking outside the Co op. It was agreed that it was vital to keep the Co op in the Village, but there were difficulties with parking. There was no land currently available to provide additional parking.

ii) COUNCILLOR WILLIAM MUMFORD (Devon County Council)

It was agreed to postpone Cllr Mumford's report as he had not arrived.

7. OPEN FORUM

i) Newton & Noss Network: Mr. Colin Smith

Mr. Smith gave an interesting presentation on the formation and development of the Newton and Noss Network. He explained about the opportunities open for those of Pre School age, 10-15 year olds, the University of the 3rd Age (for those no longer in full time employment) and the Network Classes open to all. There would be a new series of classes in the autumn details of which could be obtained from the booklet which had been delivered to local households and were available from the Estate Agents and the Pharmacy. Details had also appeared in the Parish Magazine.

There were 2 new initiatives for young people –

- Sail training with 8 new optimists (7 being purchased by Devon County Council and 1 lottery funded). The Optimists would be available for use by the school and community. There would be a Launch Day at the Yealm Yacht Club on 26 June 2009 at 10am.
- Adventure Club: To be rolled out on Sunday 3 May at 12 noon by an abseil down St Peter's Tower followed by a barbecue.

Praise was given to Mrs. Jacki Eschbaecher for her help and for keeping the accounts.

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Rosemary Smith were thanked by the Chairman for their enormous achievement which had brought the community together.

Questions were raised about Health and Safety and insurance.

ii) **Discussions and questions from Parishioners**

- Mrs. Jacki Eschbaecher was praised by Mr Robin Hogg and her "star performance" as Parish Clerk.
- The Tennis Courts were discussed and the proposed formation of a new tennis club. Cllr Cooper reported that SHDC should be undertaking the refurbishment and it was hoped that the courts would then be leased to the tennis club or the Parish Council. If the Parish Council achieved Quality Status there was a possibility SHDC could be prepared to transfer its land assets in the Parish to the Parish Council
- The Swan Licence was raised. It was accepted that it was a standard Licensing Application but it was hoped that it would not be operated to its limits. The Parish Council would be writing to express its concerns. Cllr Cooper would also be objecting on the grounds of public nuisance and crime and disorder factors. The Landlady stated that they were present to hear the concerns and the intention for the Swan was to be a community focus.

8. COUNCILLOR WILLIAM MUMFORD (Devon County Council)

Unfortunately Councillor Mumford had been delayed. The Chairman read out the main items which Cllr Mumford had intended to report on and which had been E Mailed to him.

There were a number of key issues:

1. The concerns about the proposals for a Unitary Authority. The decision had been initially delayed by 5 months. The Boundary Commission had then announced that they were again looking at the possibility of 2 unitary authorities in Devon with the Greater Exeter/East Devon bid back on the table. Councillor Mumford felt that it was almost impossible to see how the rest of Devon could be managed without having Exeter at its administrative core. He was concerned with the direction this was heading and that the status quo would be better than a divided Devon.

2. Highways. Despite ongoing pressure the recent budget settlement had not improved the core funding to highway maintenance. After the freezing weather at the beginning of the year the state of the roads had been showing a marked deterioration.

3. Schools Funding. Despite a reasonable settlement from Government in most areas for the coming year the Schools budget continued to lag behind. Devon remained the 4th worst funded Local Authority per pupil. The costs of providing small rural schools were considerable and no provision had been made for the considerable cost of issues such as school transport.

4. Health Care. Councillor Mumford had raised concerns last year about the cost of health care provision for the elderly. He felt the use of the private sector, as DCC sought to move from a direct provider to a commissioning authority, was one that needed to be handled carefully.

5. Local issues. There had been huge progress on the creation of a footpath from Collaton Cross linking to Butts Park. The funding had been sorted in conjunction with the Parish Council and he was hopeful that the final obstacles could be cleared shortly. Plans were progressing well to create a safer crossing at Butts Park and to include a degree of traffic calming to reduce speeds of traffic coming into the Village. A number of concerns had or were being addressed regarding localised flooding on the Highways. There were new markings on the roads in Noss in anticipation of surface repairs which were due shortly.

Councillor Mumford was looking forward to seeing the hard work of the school and Colin Smith come to fruition with the launch of the new fleet of Optimist Dinghies funded with help from DCC.

The meeting closed at 9pm

Signed..... John Young, Chairman