

Hazelbury Bryan Bytes

Parish Council Newsletter – Issue 34 - September 2018

Chairman's introduction

Little room left for me by the editor in this action packed edition. Happy reading!

Steve Murcer, Chairman, Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council

New councillors

Since the last edition of Bytes, John Grayson has resigned as a parish councillor. John has given great service to the village over many years for which our thanks are given. With Alun Read having left earlier in the year we were left with two vacancies and I am delighted to report that we have found two willing volunteers to be co-opted as councillors. Val Rubie lives in Partway Lane and has done sterling service as co-chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. Sarah Meeks joined at the parish council in September. She lives in Back Lane, Kingston and has already been involved helping to resolve issues with Hunts Food Services. We hope they will enjoy serving the community and, in these days of diversity, it makes the council less “male, pale and stale”! There is an updated contacts list on the final page.

Neighbourhood Plan and housing development

At the time of writing, North Dorset District Council's formal 6 week consultation on our Plan is due to end on 21st September. The process of appointing an Examiner to assess the Plan has begun so we are hopeful that there will be a village referendum on the Plan before the end of the year. It can't really come quick enough. NDDC's well-publicised shortage of a 5 year deliverable housing supply has brought forward a spate of applications across the region – those of you who read the Blackmore Vale magazine will have seen articles and correspondence. NDDC is currently assessing a number of applications in HB for sites not in the Neighbourhood Plan and will probably find it difficult to oppose some of these until the Plan is passed at the referendum. If these developments do take place then we are in discussions with NDDC about contributions from developers towards community infrastructure needs – the school, traffic control, play facilities etc. These should be forthcoming, but most likely in months or years rather than weeks

Traffic

Concerns over traffic – speed of vehicles, narrow roads, crumbling carriageways, volumes of traffic, size of HGVs and agricultural vehicles etc – are a constant topic. Most people have some concerns, some are justified whilst others are perhaps somewhat overstated. In creating the Neighbourhood Plan the team took account of the views expressed and have incorporated them into a Project in the Plan. However, we mustn't be under any illusion that we can just do or have anything we want. Work on the highways is very tightly controlled by DCC Highways. They also provide the funding for any improvement or traffic calming schemes. As I'm sure we all know by now, their resources are very limited. Quite often they might be sympathetic to a local scheme but can only help if the community pays.

Looking at speeding the parish council has looked at two possible approaches – the carrot and the stick. The latter might involve the creation of a Speedwatch team to monitor traffic speeds at pre-determined sites. Some of you may recall the team in Holwell, indeed some of you may have been caught! This approach needs a decent size team (maybe 12 people) of committed volunteers who are prepared to undergo Police training and go out regularly, and not just for a couple of months. Previous calls for volunteers have not met with an enthusiastic response and we know other local groups that have fallen by the wayside after the initial enthusiasm has worn-off. The PC is therefore looking at the "carrot". We're in discussions with DCC Highways about buying a mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) which tells you your speed as you go past. This can be deployed in 3 dedicated sites where the speed of traffic has been shown to be significantly above the legal limit. Speed tests were set up in Woodrow Common, Back Lane, Kingston and Partway Lane and these locations do by and large meet the criteria. The total cost of the surveys, the equipment, installation and training is the best part of £5,000 and the parish council will be considering whether to make this investment this autumn. What the SID won't help is places like Park Gate where the speed limit of 60 mph is not being broken, but the limit is felt to be too high for the road conditions. DCC Highways are looking at options, but if the speed limit is to be reduced a formal Road Traffic Order has to be made (so the new limit can be enforced). We gather the cost of this alone is in the region of £3,000 and again the parish council would have to pay. (cont)

(cont) Since Hunts Food Services took over the Judd family business there have inevitably been some changes to operations. Some complaints have been made at parish council meetings about working methods, timings and speed. These have largely been undocumented and without evidence of which vehicle was involved and what exactly it was doing. Richard Hunt has reiterated to us his desire to work with the community and certainly the parish council supports local businesses without which the village will atrophy. We understand that by the end November he expects the entire Hunts fleet of vehicles will be fitted with sophisticated driver monitoring devices. If you witness something untoward then send the details – time, date and vehicle registration number to Richard Hunt and he will look at the driver data and take action if appropriate.

Hedges and Trees

Landowners are responsible for trees and hedges on their land. This has two key impacts and it's worth being very aware of these. First, with regard to trees and hedges adjacent to the footway and carriage way, a minimum overhead clearance of 2.2mtr for the whole width of the footway is required; for trees overhanging the carriageway an overhead clearance of 5.2mtr is required. It is the landowner or occupier's responsibility to maintain these and if it is not done so, DCC Highways has the right to instruct contractors to do the work and recover the cost from the landowner. Second, landowners are responsible for the safety of trees on their land. Regular inspections by a qualified individual are necessary, and are likely to be a condition of your public liability insurance. There are many examples of case law where owners have been held responsible for injury or death caused by falling branches etc. So if you own or occupy land with trees make sure they are safe. There are some very informative guides to risk management of trees – go to www.forestry.gov.uk and search for “hazards from trees”.

Bonfires – myths and legalities

Bonfires can be a problem, but there are many urban (rural?) myths. It is commonly thought that there are byelaws banning bonfires or restricting the days or times when they are allowed – this is not the case in North Dorset. Bonfires are only illegal if they cause a statutory nuisance to others. The only “illegalities” regarding bonfires are that it is illegal to bring waste from another site and burn it; and if smoke causes a hazard to road users the police have the power to take action. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 can be used by North Dorset DC to deal with neighbours and other people who act unreasonably and cause a statutory nuisance. However it is hard to prove a statutory nuisance. You'll need to keep a log of every time you are affected by the smoke etc, not just the times when your neighbour has a bonfire. NDDC will then assess the evidence and take action if they feel the frequency would represent a statutory nuisance to the “average” person. Full information can be found on www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/bonfires.

Web site – new one: Our web site provider retires at the end of September so we are in the process of having a new site built, which hopefully will be coming on stream by the time you read this. It's not wildly different but over time we plan to add more content and try and make it more informative and user-friendly. The site address remains unchanged – see below.

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