

Diptford Parish Council News

April 2021

The Annual Parish meeting took place at 6.30pm on 13th April 2021.

2 members of the public were in attendance and Natalie Johnson from SHDC was present to do a brief presentation on the new recycling service

1. Cllr Foster (Chair of Diptford Parish Council) addressed the assembly:
 - It has been a strange and exceptional year – all the council meetings have been held virtually via Zoom.
 - Thanks to all the Councillors for their attendance
 - Thanks to the clerk for making the arrangements for the meetings
 - We have come out the other end of a difficult year stronger than before

2. Presentation from Natalie Johnson (SHDC) regarding the new waste and recycling service
 - The presentation can be viewed on DPC website – Annual meeting reports:

<https://www.diptfordparishcouncil.org/meetings.php>

The scheme was introduced to DPC about 6 months ago and now it has started a staged roll-out. Diptford residences will start receiving their new containers from 19th April 2021 onwards. Collections will start week commencing 26th April 2021.

Additional information on the new service: www.southhams.gov.uk/newservice

To report a missed collection: www.southhams.gov.uk/missedcollection

For general enquiries on the waste and recycling collection service: www.southhams.gov.uk/wastequestion

3. Cllr Hosking (Devon County Councillor) report
See Annual Meeting Reports on DPC website
<https://www.diptfordparishcouncil.org/meetings.php>

4. South Hams District Councillor updates (Cllr Panell and Smerdon)
See Annual Meeting Reports on DPC website
<https://www.diptfordparishcouncil.org/meetings.php>

5. Presentations from representatives of Diptford societies and organisations:

a) Jodie Churchward – Acting Head Diptford School

The school started the year providing home learning support during the first lock-down. Sept. was spent preparing for the 2nd lock-down and so better prepared with live stream lessons and pre-recorded lessons. This has resulted in the pupils returning on 8th March with less educational time lost.

Pupils are enjoying the new playground equipment

Focus for the school coming out of lock-down is to improve links with the community

b) Roger Knight (Friends Of Diptford School)

FODS is a separate organisation from the school and working very closely with it.

Teachers have done an incredible job – not just teaching but supporting families

Strange year with many activities curtailed by COVID

Very successful fund-raising year enabling installation of play equipment and outdoor stage – lots of local donations and support in kind.

Thanks to Louise Lethbridge for tireless fund-raising activity and negotiations with equipment providers.

Thanks to SHDC and DCC councillors for their donations

Focus this year is to support younger learners by providing outdoor covered learning areas and to link in with the wider community.

Hope to run the duck race this year.

c) Report from Diptford WI (Read by Cllr Franklin)

As with most groups there is very little to report for the last year. Needless to say, we have not been able to meet since March 2020.

However we have all kept in close contact with each other either on our chatlist, WhatsApp or on Zoom. We did have a slight respite last summer when we met in differing groups of 6 in a garden.

During the year we have given all the members Christmas cards and Easter cards both with chocolates to cheer everyone up. We did have a happy time with one of our members having her 100th birthday and equally some sad times when members have passed away.

During last year we had collected over £1000 for our charity, Devon Freewheelers, we were due to give this at our AGM in May but with Covid they were desperate so we passed this on straight away.

At Christmas and again at Easter we collected items for Totnes Food Bank and took two boot-fulls both times for which they were very grateful. We are hoping to repeat this in July.

On the 22nd April we are doing a socially distanced litter pick around the village. Weather permitting!

Although we haven't had our usual times together we have not been totally isolated and like everyone else are really looking forward to being normal again.

Pat Sampford,

President Diptford W.I.

d) Report from Focus Tennis (Read by the clerk)

Tennis court is safe to play on when dry. So probably for the Spring/Summer use only at the moment.

2- children's coaching on Tuesday mornings

3- beginners adult coaching could potentially start on Tuesday mornings as well

4- individual and shared lessons can be booked on demand

See you on court!

The meeting closed at 7.30pm and Council moved into the April ordinary meeting.

Primrose Trail

There have been numerous objections which the clerk has forwarded to the Primrose Trail Group. Cllr Franklin reported that no local landowners have been consulted and that the feasibility study is inaccurate in many respects. Cllr Hosking stated that he would support the project only if the local electorate want it to happen.

Copy of email sent to Primrose Trail Group on 19th March 2021

To: info@primrosetrail.org Cc: Cllr Richard Hosking, Cllr Guy Pannell, Cllr Peter Smerdon, Anthony Mangnall MP, South Brent Parish Council, North Huish Parish Clerk, Woodleigh Parish Council, Loddiswell Parish Clerk, Churchstow Parish Clerk, Kingsbridge Town Clerk

Fri, 19 Mar at 15:12

To The Primrose Trail Group

I am writing to inform you that The Primrose Trail Feasibility Study/ Proposal Outline was discussed at the Diptford Parish Council Meeting on 9th March 2021. The council has significant concerns about the environmental impact of creating a trail along the River Avon. Whilst an in-principle agreement was given in 2018, there was no mention then of the anticipated usage numbers or of green travel routes and, in the light of the Feasibility Study, the Parish Council now withdraws its previously indicated support.

The disturbance caused by building the trail and the subsequent increase in cyclists, dog walkers and groups of ramblers, together with the necessary infrastructure to support the trail, will inevitably be a detriment to the delicate riverside ecology. Its natural beauty and low level of human interference serve to attract and protect its special wildlife, which will be lost if the trail is developed.

Other local cycle trails, such as the River Exe, Camel and Tarka trails are essentially located within large flat river estuaries whereas the River Avon sits in a narrow, deep-sided valley. The Avon valley, however, has narrow lanes and bridges that simply cannot accommodate more traffic and the proposal to encourage walking groups, cyclists, and runners to use stretches of busy country lanes is potentially hazardous.

There is a fragmented network of public footpaths, unsurfaced County Roads and a very small section of Bridleway in the Parish of Diptford and, whilst some of our parishioners would welcome some extension of this network, the Parish Council feels that there is no need to develop a trail of this magnitude in the sensitive Avon Valley, with the anticipated usage numbers quoted in the Feasibility Study. Furthermore, any diversions on to local roads where the proposed trail cannot be agreed with landowners would result in an unacceptable increase in risk to all users of the narrow and steep lanes in the area.

For these reasons, the Diptford Parish Council asks the Group to note that we no longer support this proposal. DPC has also, to date, received 10 objections to this proposal which I will forward on to you for reference.

Copy to:

South Brent, North Huish, Woodleigh, Loddiswell and Churchstow Parish Councils

Kingsbridge Town Council Anthony Mangnall MP DCC fao Cllr Richard Hoskings

SHDC fao Cllrs Peter Smeardon and Guy Pannell

Gara Bridge

Council considered the temporary bollards in place. Agreed they were unsightly but that they did do the job of protecting the listed bridge from years of damage. The permanent solution will be softer and more in keeping with the surroundings.

A local land-owner has complained to Cllr Hosking (not DPC) that access to his camping field is restricted as a result of the installation. This was considered and it was agreed that possible solutions would be widening the

gate to the field or directing traffic on towards Moreleigh to turn the vehicle to access from the opposite direction.

There has already been damage to the marker cones (it was suggested that the CCTV camera footage be scrutinised to identify perpetrators). Cost of prosecution process was noted.

Most of the damage seems to be from traffic approaching the bridge from California Cross.

RH recorded a conflict of interest as the land-owner is a client of his. Cllr Gilbert will lead if required in the future.

The temporary structure is in place for 1 month.

It was agreed to hold a site meeting with DCC Highways, DCC Councillor and DPC councillors prior to the work on the permanent solution commencing

Update on The Playing Field

- It has been a quiet year
- The tennis courts have lasted well but it is likely they will not see another winter out. A decision needs to be made this year about future work and use) Clerk to seek quotes for resurfacing costs to inform fund-raising options
- The bamboo that has spread from a neighbouring garden is threatening further **damage (SH reported that he had requested this be sprayed. It was agreed that future prevention might involve digging a ditch and filling with concrete)**
- There has been maintenance work done on the swings and work is in hand to replace the climbing frame slide panel identified in the annual safety check.

Future meetings

As it is still unclear whether there will be changes in legislation regarding virtual meetings it was agreed to hold the virtual Annual Parish Council meeting (AGM) on **Wednesday 5th May** followed by an ordinary meeting where this matter would be considered again.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.