

SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

Sadberge Parish Council Chair's Report to the Sadberge Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 25th May 2010

1. Parish Council procedures and partnerships

- 1.1 The Parish Council's Risk Assessment and Management procedures have been reviewed and now include risk from fraud and from the loss of records. The Clerk has made an electronic copy of key records. Storage of these, and paper documents, is in a metal cabinet in a locked storage facility at Middleton St George. (Shared use of the adapted former Public Conveniences as a storage facility, has now been secured, in partnership with Middleton St. George Parish Council.)
- 1.2 Consultation with Darlington Borough Council and residents has taken place on the following:-
 - Creating new parking spaces in the village
 - Darlington Borough Council's Core Strategy
 - Dog Control Orders
 - Wind Speed data and Aerodynamic Modulation noise
 - Community Speed Watch
 - Access to the playing field at the north of St Andrew's Park
 - Traffic in the village
 - Trees in Sadberge
 - Public footpaths, pedestrian and cycle access to Darlington and Long Newton
 - Darlington Eastern Corridor Sustainable Transport Study
 - The addendum to the Parish Plan on Wind Farm Policy and Conditions
- 1.3 Sadberge Parish Council was pleased to welcome Phil Wilson MP to a meeting to discuss the impact on Sadberge and the Tees Valley area of the proposed wind farms.
- 1.4 With the help of Ward Councillor Jones, a Partners and Communities Together (PACT) group has been set up. In connection with this, Sadberge Parish Councillors met with senior police officers to discuss the problems of traffic and speeding through the village. (More later.)
- 1.5 Tees Valley Rural Community Council invited Sadberge to take part in a commemorative film marking ten years of their work supporting rural communities.
- 1.6 The Parish Council welcomed the work done by Darlington Borough Council on improving the cycle and pedestrian routes connecting Sadberge and Darlington, and has asked for improvements to similar access between Sadberge and Long Newton.

2. Property and Land

- 2.1 At the Annual Inspection of Council land and property, items for repair (the grit bin on Hillhouse Lane), various actions of tree pruning and care, grass cutting and maintenance of the benches were identified for attention, and work is still in hand.

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- 2.2 On a visit to Sadberge in August, Carol Carter, from Darlington Borough's Street Scene, was able to join the Clerk and councillors on a tour of Council land. This was a useful opportunity to gain immediate feedback on issues, in particular with regard to ownership and responsibility of some areas of land.
- 2.3 Three trees are to be planted on the green opposite The Buck to replace the sycamores that have been partially felled.
- 2.4 A site meeting took place at the playing field north of St. Andrew's Park with Darlington Borough Council officers, Reiver Homes, Darlington Disability Forum and Sadberge Parish Council representatives. Appropriate disability access was discussed and plans are being negotiated between the builder and Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.5 Discussions to solve the problem of frequent flooding at the children's playground are continuing. The area cannot be used for much of the time because of this.
- 2.6 Following a site meeting with members of the Youth Council, Ward Councillor Brian Jones and myself as Chair of Sadberge Parish Council, Darlington Borough Council has been asked to carry out maintenance works and improvements at the playground.
- 2.7 The Parish Council once again put up a Christmas tree on the village green for the festive season – with thanks to Les Elders for his sponsorship.
- 2.8 A new sign for Beacon Hill has been installed with the correct postcode.
- 2.9 Sadberge Parish Council mailboxes have been erected at the hall and the village green.

3. Traffic, Travel and Parking

- 3.1 The ever-increasing demand for parking is a problem. The Parish Council has sought ways of creating more places in the Orchard, at Hampass and in the centre of the village near the old bus shelter, but these have been unsuccessful so far. Darlington Borough Council is considering the possibility of extending the lay-by at the phone box.
- 3.2 Following a request for a mirror to be installed to aid the view of on-coming traffic at the junction of Hill House Lane and East Close, the Parish Council was advised that permission would have to be sought from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and would be unlikely to be granted because of safety issues regarding judgment of distances.
- 3.3 Concerns remain regarding the flow and speed of traffic through the village. A Partners and Community Together (PACT) group has been established to prioritise community issues in partnership with Police. As a result of the work with PACT, a Community Speed Watch operation was established. The results confirmed residents' observations about the numbers of vehicles speeding in the village. The Parish Council is currently following up discussions with Durham Constabulary with regard to operating a Speed Watch Sessions using volunteers, which would operate in partnership with the sessions manned by police.
PACT has also enabled discussion on several parking issues.
- 3.4 At a Darlington Borough Council Planning Committee the Parish Council objected to two applications for development along the Eastern Transport Corridor because of the resulting increase in traffic. Although not against development in principle, the Parish Council's position is that it should only go ahead if steps are taken to mitigate the effects of the volume of traffic through Sadberge and other rural villages.
- 3.5 Darlington Borough Highways has been asked to repeat the collection of data on vehicle speeds on Hill House Lane.

- 3.6 The existing bus service continues to be subsidised by Darlington Borough Council and is always under threat if underused. The Darlington Association of Parish Councils has organised a consultation event to discuss these issues in detail.

4. Wind Farms

- 4.1 Phil Wilson MP has been involved in talks with local parish councils with regard to the proposed development of Wind farms in the area. These include Moor House, East and West Newbiggin, the A1 Wind Farm, and Foxton. Currently, the Moor House proposal is expected to go to the Planning Committee in July. With the support of residents (71% of those present at an Open Meeting) the Parish Council objected to this proposal. Concerns remain as to the cumulative impact on the Tees Valley of these developments, the proximity of turbines to residential settlements, the impact on the landscape and the impact of noise.
- 4.2 The Parish Council has had a number of meetings with Banks Developments and Darlington Borough Council regarding these concerns. The Clerk has done extensive research on the impact of noise, in particular Excess Amplitude Modulation (EAM). His findings indicate that it is highly unlikely that Sadberge will be affected by EAM noise from Moor House, but Little Stainton and Great Stainton may be affected.
- 4.3 The Parish Council is urging Darlington Borough Council to impose planning conditions to protect residents of villages in the Tees Valley, should permission be granted for any wind farms in this area.
- 4.4 Sadberge Parish Council challenged some of the statements in Darlington's Core Strategy document with regard to renewable energy.

5. Parish Plan Actions

- 5.1 The Parish Plan is used to validate Parish Council support and objections in various aspects of its business. One of the most successful outcomes of the study has been the establishment of community garden areas, thanks to volunteers, including Mally Schott, Burt and Pam Clayton, Roly Glew and The Three Tuns. Our village environment has been improved as a result.
- 5.2 The Climate Change Working Group has raised awareness of related issues and how we can help offset impact in everyday life. The use of Eco-eye monitors and their subsequent disposal to residents; infra-red photographs identifying heat loss from houses and partnership with the Energy Saving Trust has not only benefited residents individually, but also brought region-wide recognition. Presentations to other groups and the Greener Assembly have contributed to the successful nomination by Councillor Jones to the Best of Darlington Awards, for our contribution to the environment. The Parish Council also won a Green Award from the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 5.3 Unfortunately, our application for Sadberge to participate in the Government's Low Carbon Communities Challenge was not successful.

6. Northumbria In Bloom

- 6.1 For the first time, not least encouraged by the efforts of the Community Gardens group, Sadberge has entered the Northumbria in Bloom competition. I am sure we have all been acutely aware of the concern caused by the eyesore of the waste land opposite the Three Tuns in the centre of the village. This is privately owned, and awaiting house development. However, in the meantime, permission has been granted for residents to cultivate it for their own use, and of course, to improve our village environment. It has become a central project in our efforts towards our Northumbria in Bloom entry. Our thanks must go to Paul Teasdale and his crew for the stalwart job they have done so far, and all those who have offered time

and services. It is already much improved.

- 6.2 It is very clear many residents are supporting the entry, and a Working Party has been established. There has been a generous donation from an individual to pay towards costs, plus other donations of materials and help, sponsorship from the Sadberge Older Aged Persons group and efforts from the Youth Council. (Further details will be given in the Youth Council's report to the Parish Meeting.)

7. Achievements

7.1 Sadberge Summer Festival

Last year's Summer Festival was the most successful to date – not least because of the excellent weather. More significant was the increased support the Festival Committee had in their planning and the support on the day to cover a greater range of activities – all of which require manning.

For the first time in five years the event raised more funds than it spent. Our thanks go to Marie Kenny and the Three Tuns customers especially for generous sponsorship, and to all the families and residents who came and spent money! This has prompted a Friends of Sadberge Festival group being set up to raise funds independently to support the Festival.

7.2 Sadberge Youth Council

The Youth Council was established earlier this year with seven members who are interested in supporting village events and finding out more about its community. (Further details will be given in the Youth Council's report.)

8. Acknowledgements

- 8.1 This report represents many hours of work undertaken by this Council on behalf of Sadberge residents. It has been another busy year, and I thank all councillors for their time and commitment to its business.
- 8.2 I thank Ward Councillor Brian Jones for his excellent support and help throughout the year.
- 8.3 Much of our work has been taken up once more with the proposed wind farm developments. The Parish Council benefits greatly from the research skills and knowledge of our Clerk, Alastair. Yet again, his tenacity and enthusiasm in such matters, has enabled us to challenge developers and the Borough Council in all of our best interests. I thank him for his support and time. In nominating Sadberge Parish Council for the Best of Darlington Awards, Ward Councillor Brian Jones said 'Sadberge punches far above its weight'. Alastair's efforts play a key part in that. I also pay tribute to his skills and time as our Webmaster.

Millie Scaife
Chair of Sadberge Parish Council