

# SADBERGE PARISH PLAN



## NOTES OF THE OPEN MEETING HELD IN SADBERGE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2006

1. This Open Meeting addressed the issue of Planning & Development.
2. There were 57 names on the attendance sheet.

As well as local residents, the following people were present:-

- Brian Jones      Ward Councillor for Sadberge & Whessoe
- Graham Farr     Principal Planning Officer in Darlington Borough Council
- Paul Medcalf     Bellway Homes

3. Millie Scaife, the Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Group, welcomed those present and gave an introduction to the topic for discussion.
4. Alastair Mackenzie presented four scenarios that had been drawn up by the Parish Plan Steering Group to illustrate possible futures for Sadberge.

The four scenarios were:

1. Minimum Development
2. Moderate Expansion based on Executive Housing
3. Moderate Expansion based on Mixed Housing
4. Larger Expansion

It was emphasised that these scenarios were not "options under consideration". They were being presented to help to structure the debate about the preferred future for Sadberge.

### Discussion

5. The following points were made during the discussion:-
  - Scenario 1 would be nice, but it does not enable Sadberge to attract services.
  - We could lose the Post Office, the village hall and one of the pubs.
  - Would an extra 70 residents make much difference to Sadberge's ability to attract services?
  - An extra 80 - 85 houses would not make the bus service commercially viable. These days most families have two cars.
  - Even the bigger villages have been struggling to retain their services.
  - The village school is never going to re-open.
  - The average number of occupants per house has been going down. If this trend continues then building more houses might not result in any significant increase in the total population of Sadberge.
  - There is space for 35 semi-executive houses on the old reservoir site. With mixed housing it would be possible to build up to 50 houses on the site.
  - There has been some debate about whether the reservoir site should be classified as greenfield or brownfield. The Darlington Local Plan identifies it as one of the sites requiring environmental improvement.
  - Luxury houses would not make a difference to the viability of services in Sadberge. What is needed is smaller houses that will bring families in.
  - Funding via Section 106 planning obligations is not a "pot of gold". In particular, it gives a one-off injection of money, not a permanent subsidy.
  - Sadberge will never have the same sort of facilities as a town like Darlington.

- Lack of services will not prevent everybody from wanting to come and live in Sadberge.
- Pensioners without cars are isolated in a village without a good bus service. What happens when you get too old to drive?
- It is very expensive to run a community bus service. A minibus service running between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. costs about £100,000 per year.
- We need more children in Sadberge to sustain the village community. Sadberge is in danger of becoming a "middle aged and elderly" village.
- In the longer term driving will become more expensive and there will need to be more reliance on public transport.
- At present, the children's play area is on the edge of the village. It might be sensible to move it to a more central location.
- The current children's play area is secure. Playing ball games near the busy roads in the centre of the village would be dangerous.
- At present, the majority of the children in the village live near the existing play area.

### Votes

6. A vote was taken on the question "Should the old reservoir site be opened up for development?"
  - Yes 8
  - No 32
7. A vote was taken on the question "Should the children's play area be moved to Town Farm field in the centre of the village?"
  - Yes 14
  - No 22
8. The majority of those present indicated that they would like Town Farm field to be retained as an open space.

### Conclusions

9. There is concern about the continuing loss of services in Sadberge. However, building houses on the old reservoir site would not be an effective way of enabling Sadberge to retain its services.
10. The old reservoir site should remain outside the village development limits.
11. Affordable housing – with adequate off-road parking – should be built on the footprint of the school. The adjacent playing field is outside the village development limits.
12. It would be preferable to retain Town Farm field as an open space for recreation.
13. The children's play area should be kept in its current location.
14. We need to find a way of minimising the impact of the loss of facilities and services in Sadberge. This will be addressed in a future Open Meeting.

**Alastair Mackenzie**