

SADBERGE PARISH PLAN



NOTES OF THE OPEN MEETING HELD IN SADBERGE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2006

1. This Open Meeting addressed the issues of Services and Village Environment.
2. There were 42 names on the attendance sheet.

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

- Brian Jones Ward Councillor for Sadberge & Whesoe
- Carol Carter Street Scene Team Leader, Darlington Borough Council
- John Herdman Senior Environmental Enforcement Officer, Darlington Borough Council
- Dr. Patrick Holmes Felix House Surgery, Middleton St. George

3. Millie Scaife, the Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Group, welcomed those present and gave an introduction to the topics for discussion.

Village Environment

4. Alastair Mackenzie gave an introductory presentation on the issue of village environment. A copy of the presentation is available on the Sadberge web site at www.sadberge.org.uk.

He gave an overview of Darlington Borough Council's Street Scene initiative, which involves multi-skilled teams providing services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, maintenance of street signs, etc.

From the Parish Plan questionnaires:-

- The vast majority of respondents said that at refuse collection is done sufficiently frequently and at the right time.
- There is a division on opinion about how refuse should be collected. 45% of respondents favour the use of black bags, and 40% favour the use of wheelie bins.
- Most respondents said that kerb-side recycling collection is done sufficiently frequently and at the right time.
- About 60% of respondents would like kerb-side recycling to be extended to include cardboard, plastic packaging, milk cartons, coloured plastic bottles and green waste.
- At present, recycling collection does not include the outlying properties around Sadberge village.
- Most respondents said that grass cutting is done sufficiently frequently, but less than half regard the standard as good or very good.
- Only about half of respondents said that hedge and verge cutting is done sufficiently frequently, and only about one in five regard the standard as good or very good.
- Only 40% of respondents said that street cleaning is done sufficiently frequently, and only about a quarter of respondents regard the standard as good or very good.
- Over 70% respondents said that repairs to roads and pavements are not done sufficiently frequently, and more than a quarter of respondents described the condition of the roads and pavements as poor or very poor.

Other issues include dog fouling, untidy land and the lack of floral displays in the village.

5. The following points were made during the discussion:-

Dog Fouling

- Why did the letter about dog fouling just go out to residents of Norton Road and Norton Crescent?

Answer: There was known to be a problem in those areas. A similar letter will be sent to the residents of other parts of Sadberge.

- There is a need for additional dog dirt bins on Stockton Road and Middleton Road.
ACTION: Carol Carter
- The Environmental Wardens need information about who is failing to clean up after their dogs. Information can be given in confidence. The Environmental Wardens' phone number will be put on the Sadberge web site.
ACTION: Alastair Mackenzie
- If witnesses are prepared to come forward then offenders can be taken to court.
- John Herdman said that he was willing to target Sadberge until some offenders have been caught.
ACTION: John Herdman
- Dog fouling often happens early in the morning and late at night. Problem areas include Stockton Road near the Three Tuns, Norton Road and Church Lane.

Recycling

- Kerb-side recycling collection is done by a contractor. The current 5-year contract expires in 2008. Tenders for a new contract will go out shortly.
- Cardboard is not collected because it is difficult to tip out of the panniers on the recycling wagon.
- Garden waste is difficult to collect because of its weight. Buying a "purple sack" for £6.50 entitles you to a collection of up to 10 bags of garden waste.
- The majority of those present were in favour of setting up recycling containers in the lay-by near Beacon Hill. There should be containers for cardboard, HDPE, coloured plastics and, if possible, garden waste.
- There was, however, some concern that the presence of recycling containers might encourage fly tipping, which is already a problem.
- The question of recycling collection from outlying properties will be taken up with Phillipa Scafton, Darlington Borough Council's Waste Minimisation & Recycling Officer.
ACTION: Alastair Mackenzie

Refuse Collection

- The issue of black bags versus wheelie bins will be considered when the new refuse collection contract is set up. It was requested that Sadberge residents should be consulted before a decision is made. Carol Carter will pass the request to the relevant Assistant Director of Darlington Borough Council.
ACTION: Alastair Mackenzie

Grass Cutting, etc.

- The last grass cut was poor.
- Spraying to kill the grass at the edges of paths, etc. leaves unsightly brown marks.
- Grass cutting in the churchyard had been done with no respect for the graves.
Note: The grass in the churchyard is not cut by Darlington Borough Council.
- Carol Carter apologised for the fact that the grass cutting had "got away from" the Street Scene Team. One factor was that the grass kept growing until November this year.
- The Street Scene Team would prefer to cut the grass once per fortnight.
- Why do the grass cutters not pick up grass cuttings?
Answer: It has not been possible to arrange to collect and dispose of that amount of material.
- The grass cutters are supposed to clear grass cuttings off paths. This does not always happen.
- A better job needs to be made of cleaning leaves out of the bus shelter on Middleton Road.
- When hedges are being cut, is it possible to avoid leaving thorns on the road? Cyclists have been getting punctures due to thorns left on the road.

Roads and Pavements

- On Darlington Road and Stockton Road several of the recently-installed drop kerb paving slabs have broken.

- There are sections of crumbling pavements on Norton Road and Abbey Road. The last time the pavements were repaired the work was done using sprayed slurry. This does not provide a lasting repair.
- Carol Carter informed the meeting that the Highways Inspector carries out an inspection of the roads and pavements every three months.

Litter, etc.

- Litter is picked up weekly, usually on a Wednesday.
- People throw newspapers out of their cars on the stretch of road between Beacon Hill and Sadberge village.
- Darlington Borough Council operates a fly tipping hotline. The number is 01325-388777.
- Litter blows out of the bin on Stockton Road between the village and the A66. Would it be possible to install a different type of bin. **ACTION:** Carol Carter
- The litter bin in the children's play area never seems to get emptied.

Services

6. Alastair Mackenzie gave an introductory presentation on the issue of services. A copy of the presentation is available on the Sadberge web site at www.sadberge.org.uk.

From the Parish Plan questionnaires:-

- 88% of respondents said that loss of the Post Office and shop would have a large or very large impact on the village
- 83% of respondents said that loss of the Village Hall would have a large or very large impact on the village.

The frequency of minor ailments clinics in Sadberge Village Hall has been reduced from two per week to one per week. There is no bus service between Sadberge and the Felix House Surgery in Middleton St. George.

Darlington Borough Council's Libraries & Community Learning Team used to put on adult education classes in Sadberge Village Hall, but these were discontinued in the first half of 2006 due to financial constraints.

Rural Post Offices are under threat.

The physical condition of Sadberge Village Hall has improved over the last few years, and it provides a venue for a variety of activities. However, there is an increasing administrative burden due to regulations, etc. and it is also difficult to find enough volunteers to help out at events.

7. The following points were made during the discussion:-

Access to Health Care

- The frequency of minor ailments clinics in Sadberge Village Hall has been decreased because Dr. Holmes is doing a degree course, which occupies him for one day a week.
- Dr. Holmes explained that there were advantages in patients coming to the Felix House Surgery rather than to minor ailments clinics in Sadberge. These include access to health records and the availability of other medical support staff at the Felix House Surgery.
- In the long run, it will be difficult to continue to hold minor ailments clinics in Sadberge.
- The possibility of providing a shuttle bus service to a dedicated "Sadberge session" at Felix House Surgery is being investigated. **ACTION:** Millie Scaife / Alastair Mackenzie

Post Office

- Arthur Sanders, the Sadberge Postmaster, wishes to retire. The possibility of someone else taking over the Sadberge Post Office is being investigated, but the future of the Post Office is very uncertain.

Church

- Rev. Paul Neville would have liked to attend the meeting, but was unable to because of other commitments. He sent a letter – now available on the Sadberge web site – explaining the pressures on his time and the financial pressures on the church.
- Paul is effectively doing five jobs, including acting as Rector for two parishes, so he is spread more thinly than he would like.
- St. Andrew's Church in Sadberge is only covering its costs by drawing on its reserves. This cannot continue indefinitely, and the future of the church will be under threat unless the wider community comes together and takes some ownership of and responsibility for St Andrew's.

Adult Education

- This subject was not discussed, because the representative from Darlington Borough Council's Libraries & Community Learning Team did not come to the meeting.

Sadberge Village Hall

- The village hall provides an excellent service to the local community.
- Local residents were asked to support the village hall by coming along to events such as the Christmas Dinner dance.
- Would it be possible to provide a loop system to help people with hearing problems?
ACTION: Sadberge Village Hall Association

Alastair Mackenzie