

SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

Sadberge Parish Council Chair's Report to the Sadberge Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2008

1. Parish Council procedures and partnerships

- 1.1 Sadberge Parish Council has adopted a revised Code of Conduct in line with best practice.
- 1.2 A Risk Assessment of council procedures and arrangements has been carried out.
- 1.3 The Parish Council has published its first newsletter with a view to further editions to go out approximately quarterly.
- 1.4 Sadberge Parish Council appreciates the partnership with other Parish Councils and Parish Meetings available through the Darlington Association of Parish Councils, especially in the following matters:-
 - Support for objection to the proposal by Darlington Borough Council to cut Parish Council grants. As a result of the opposition to this, the Borough Council has reinstated the amount allocated in grants, but continues to consider its distribution.
 - Support for the bus service campaign.
 - Support for Parish Plans and their recognition by Darlington Borough Council.
- 1.5 Consultation with Darlington Borough Council and residents has taken place at open meetings on the following:-
 - Darlington's Sustainable Communities Strategy
 - Mayoral Referendum
 - Various aspects of the Parish Plan

2. Buildings and Land

- 2.1 The Parish Council conducted its annual inspection of land and property last summer. Following the inspection, repairs were made to posts, some tree pruning was carried out, and arrangements were made to refurbish the Sadberge plaque on the village green.
- 2.2 Efforts are being made to find out who owns the land at the bottom of Hillside Terrace. Information has been sought from the Borough Council and the Land Registry, but establishing the land's ownership is proving difficult. Clarifying the land ownership should establish who is responsible for the remaining sycamore tree, which a local resident believes is causing damage to his property.
- 2.3 **St. Andrew's Park**

After consultation with village residents with regard to the development, Riever Homes began building 16 dwellings on the site of the former Sadberge school.

Concerns were expressed about the inadequate number of parking spaces available on the site, which were subsequently increased. Concerns remain regarding parking in Norton Crescent opposite the entrance to St. Andrew's Park.

Darlington Borough Council rejected a suggestion that traffic should use a one-way system round Norton Crescent at least during the construction period.

Riever Homes asked residents to suggest a name for the new site. St. Andrew's Park was the preferred name, and the two winning residents were invited to celebrate the opening of the show house and were awarded £100 gift voucher.

£30,000 has been paid by Riever Homes to Darlington Borough Council to support an effective bus service for Sadberge.

3. Repairs

- 3.1 Repairs to the road and kerb at Spring Garth have been negotiated with Darlington Borough Council and are currently being undertaken.
- 3.2 The Borough Council has repaired the kerb and installed additional bollards on the verge opposite the entrance to Goodwood Close.

4. Signs

Additional road signs have been erected for Church Lane, Church View, West Row and Abbey Road leading to Dale Road.

5. Environment

- 5.1 The issue of grass cuttings which were left causing an unsightly mess, and slippery in wet weather, was passed on to Darlington Borough Council's Street Scene Team. This remains a problem.
- 5.2 The public footpaths were reported to be impassable as they had not been cut or well maintained. The Borough Council explained that their contractor had not worked satisfactorily and they did not intend to use this contractor again. They hoped that this would prevent problems in the future.
- 5.3 Darlington Borough Council is currently trying to negotiate with local landowners in order to build a bridleway connecting Sadberge to the existing footpath / bridleway between Middleton St. George and the Eastern Transport Corridor.
- 5.4 The Parish Council once again put up a Christmas tree on the village green for the festive season. St. Andrew's Christingle Service of carols took place at the lighting up ceremony.
- 5.5 The National Animal Sanctuary Support League (NASSL) has been asked to deal with the problem of stray cats in the Dale Road area. The work continues.
- 5.6 Sadberge Parish Council supports an Action Group campaigning against the possible siting of wind turbines at East and West Newbiggin. This action is lead by Bishopton Parish Council.

6. Tree Planting and Gardens

- 6.1 An ailing cherry tree on the village green has been replaced.
- 6.2 As part of the implementation of the Parish Plan, a village garden has been established by local residents on the edge of the village green near Pleasant View.
- 6.3 A second village garden is also planned to replace shrubbery opposite the Buck Inn.

7. Planning

The Council has considered a number of planning applications. For a second year key issues have arisen around two in particular, which are familiar to us all.

7.1 Caravan North of Lea Close, Middleton Road

Mr. Walker-Coates has agreed to move off the land by 26th June 2008. The installation of a new driveway and preparations to erect a fence have apparently been carried out by the new owner, who proposes to keep ponies there.

7.2 Proposed Vocational Training Centre at Beacon Hill

Activity on this site continued to be in contravention of Planning Regulations. Following the possibility of an Enforcement Order, the owner agreed to submit a completely revised Business Plan. The new project is to farm chickens, cows and pigs. Sadberge Parish Council opposed this application. After some amendments, permission was granted with conditions, which include the removal of the trees planted along the hedge adjoining the gardens of residents at Beacon Hill.

8. Traffic, Travel and Parking

8.1 Concerns remain regarding the flow and speed of traffic through the village. Our Ward Councillor has asked Darlington Borough Council to monitor the speed of traffic on Hillhouse Lane. This monitoring has yet to be undertaken.

8.2 Suggestions for a 7.5 tonne weight restriction through Sadberge have been submitted to Darlington Borough Council, giving alternative routes for heavy goods vehicles. We still await a response.

8.3 Lorries associated with the construction of the grade separated junction on the A66 at Long Newton road improvement works were coming through Sadberge to turn east towards Middlesbrough, causing noise and vibrations to households in Middleton Road. The Parish Council managed to lessen the number through contact with the site manager. The new junction at Long Newton is now open.

8.4 Darlington Borough Council has been asked to consider the possibility of creating more parking places in The Orchard, using the central green space there.

8.5 Parking on Norton Road continues to cause concern for road safety.

8.6 A robust campaign led by Sadberge Parish Council, strongly supported by Councillor Brian Jones and residents, led to a turnaround in the decision by Darlington Borough Council to cut the subsidy on both the bus services for Sadberge. Significant data identified in the Parish Plan, gave substance to the arguments that a lack of bus service would effectively change the profile of the village population and its vibrant community spirit. Consideration was given to a Community Transport scheme but was rejected. Final consultation at a recent open meeting has ended with a single service which hopefully serves the needs of Sadberge and the surrounding villages.

9. Post Office Closure

9.1 Following the retirement of Arthur Sanders, our postmaster of the last 21 years, the Parish Council facilitated a meeting with Sadberge Village Hall Association and interested parties to explore the possibility of offering Post Office services in the village hall. Options are still under consideration.

9.2 The Parish Council and the Sadberge Village Hall Association organised a party for Meg and

Arthur Sanders in recognition of their excellent service given to the village. The party was attended by approximately 200 people and presentations were made to Meg and Arthur.

10. Achievements

10.1 Adoption of the Sadberge Parish Plan

Sadberge residents responded very positively to the work involved in compiling the Parish Plan by completing questionnaires, attending open meetings, and giving serious consideration to issues which affect not only the present, but the future of Sadberge. The Parish Council acknowledges the stalwart work of the Steering Group in this and especially recognises Alastair Mackenzie's contribution to the final publication of the plan.

The Plan has been highly commended by individual members of Darlington Borough Council and others. It has been an extremely valuable reference document for council business, but it is as a working document where its true value to the community lies, and the Steering Group continue to work on its implementation.

10.2 Sadberge Midsummer Morris Festival

The 2007 festival was memorable for the deluge of rain which threatened to ruin it all, but dancers and participants rallied to continue with the celebrations regardless, and despite the weather, villagers and friends enjoyed the day. Preparations are well underway for this year's festival on 21st June 2008.

10.3 Calor Village of the Year competition

Sadberge was awarded winner of Tees Valley Village of the Year in the Calor Village of the Year competition, and received £500. We continue to be a contender in this competition, and will welcome two judges for a two hour presentation on Monday 7th July 2008. Our entry for the 2008 Tees Valley competition will be submitted in June.

11. Acknowledgements

11.1 The council has had to respond, sometimes at very short notice, to significant changes in our village life, and our agendas seem longer than ever. I therefore thank all councillors for their time and commitment to its business, the care and thoughtful consideration with which they treat all the issues that come before us and the actions we undertake.

11.2 I wish to note the excellent support Alastair Mackenzie, our clerk, gives the council. And thank him for his time and diligence in the way he carries out his job. Also for the skills he brings as our Webmaster.

11.3 Finally, I thank Councillor Brian Jones for his support, his unending fight for our cause and representation at Darlington Borough Council.

Millie Scaife
Chair of Sadberge Parish Council