

# SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

---

## **Sadberge Parish Council Chair's Report to the Sadberge Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

### **1. Parish Council procedures and partnerships**

- 1.1 Sadberge Parish Council has adopted a Publications Policy and a Code of Conduct in line with best practice and Government guidelines.
- 1.2 The Risk Assessment and Risk Management procedures adopted by Sadberge Parish Council are deemed to be appropriate and satisfactory and within new guidelines.
- 1.3 Consultation with Darlington Borough Council and residents has taken place on the following:-
  - Darlington's Local Development Framework, in which the Parish Council supported limiting 'development in villages according to their need', 'providing access to facilities' and 'maintaining, expanding and enhancing networks for public transport'.
  - Darlington Borough Council's Core Strategy.
  - Talking Together events including issues on bus services, wind farms, Street Scene and traffic.
  - The addendum to the Sadberge Parish Plan on Wind Farms Near Sadberge, including proposals on policy and planning conditions.
- 1.4 Sadberge has supported action by the Darlington Association of Parish Councils to persuade the Borough Council to continue awarding parish grants in the present format, and resist applying a distribution formula. This discussion highlighted the valuable work done by parish councils.
- 1.5 Sadberge Parish Council was pleased to welcome Phil Wilson MP to a meeting to discuss village affairs. These included traffic speed through the village, school admissions, transport and wind farms.

### **2. Property and Land**

- 2.1 The Parish Council conducted its annual inspection of land and property last summer. Phil Haynes, Darlington Borough Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer, joined councillors to advise on the condition of some trees and also to advise the Parish Council as to what kind of trees might be purchased with £5,000 provided by Riever Homes by way of compensation for felling some trees at the St. Andrew's Park site, and where these might be planted.
- 2.2 The tree planting scheme is underway, but three pear trees, planted on the north end of the village green have caused concern from local residents. The concerns include the root growth from proximity of one tree to houses, and possibly obscuring the visibility of parked cars – subsequently reducing security of same. The situation is being monitored over the year when it will then be reviewed.
- 2.3 Three trees are to be felled on the village green outside Tythe House. (The trunks of these may be used for 'chainsaw sculptures'.)
- 2.4 Following the inspection, the recommended tree pruning and tree stump grinding is being carried out.

- 2.5 Following the inspection, tenders will be sought to maintain / treat the benches. Other minor repairs were carried out.
- 2.6 Railings in three locations around the village have been repaired and painted by Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.7 Footpaths in the village and between the village and Beacon Hill have been cleared.
- 2.8 Darlington Borough Council is in discussion with the owner of the land adjacent to the children's playground with regard to solving the problem of frequent flooding and providing better access for grass cutting machinery.
- 2.9 Concern over excessive use of weed killer has been registered with Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.10 The Parish Council once again put up a Christmas tree on the village green for the festive season. All agreed it looked fantastic.
- 2.11 Kerbing has been installed along the Spring Garth roadway.

### **3. Issues**

- 3.1 The National Animal Sanctuary Support League (NASSL) and a Middlesbrough cat orphanage dealt with the problem of feral cats in the Dale Road area. The problem has been much alleviated.
- 3.2 Mr. Walker-Coates finally moved the caravan North of Lea Close, Middleton Road and left the village.
- 3.3 Despite every effort of Sadberge Village Hall Association and the Parish Council, attempts to arrange to have a post office facility at the village hall have proved too difficult.

### **4. Traffic, Travel and Parking**

- 4.1 The ever-increasing demand for parking is a problem, and the council is seeking ways to expand the number of places in the Orchard, at Hampass and in the centre of the village near the old bus shelter.
- 4.2 Concerns remain regarding the flow and speed of traffic through the village. The 40mph buffer zone on Middleton Road is deemed to be effective in observation of the 30mph through the village on this approach. A request for a similar buffer zone on Hillhouse Lane has been turned down by Highways Department who refer to Government guidelines.
- 4.3 Sadberge Parish Council has recently been informed that, following consultation with the relevant borough councils and police forces, the Darlington Borough Council Highways Department has rejected the request for a 7.5 tonne weight restriction for Sadberge.
- 4.4 The subsidised bus services on routes 17 and 18 have been maintained and are now provided by the Scarlet Band Motor Company. New routes and timetables for these were agreed with Darlington Borough Council and other parishes whose residents were affected. Initial problems have generally been addressed. Day tickets are recommended as a cheaper alternative to paying for individual journeys.

### **5. Wind Farms**

- 5.1 Several developers are proposing to construct wind farms in the area near Sadberge.
  - E-ON (north of Great Stainton)

- Banks Developments (Moor House)
  - Pure Renewable Energy (at East and West Newbiggin)
- 5.2 At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008, the Parish Council decided to consult Sadberge residents on the subject of wind farms in the proximity of the village, and asked the Parish Plan Steering Group to arrange the discussions.
- 5.3 The Parish Plan Steering Group produced a Wind Farms Background Document which was recognised by Darlington Borough Council and others as a very helpful, informative piece of impartial research.
- 5.4 At an Open Meeting – organised within the framework of the Parish Plan – there were presentations by speakers from Banks, Pure Renewable Energy, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and SPAG, followed by an open discussion. A vote at the end of the meeting showed that those present were overwhelming opposed to wind farms near Sadberge.
- 5.5 A questionnaire delivered to Sadberge residents aged 18 or over achieved a response rate of 263 out of 610. 75.7% of those who responded were opposed to wind farms near Sadberge.
- 5.6 The Parish Council also undertook the following actions –
- registered concerns about wind farms at a Darlington Borough Council 'Talking Together' event at Sadberge in August;
  - arranged for SPAG flyers to be delivered to Sadberge homes;
  - participated in Banks' Developments consultation on the Moor House proposal for consultation;
  - accepted an invitation from Banks Developments for a small group of Councillors and local residents to visit the West Durham wind farm.
- 5.7 At its meeting in December 2008, the Parish Council formally adopted the 'Wind Farms Addendum' to the Sadberge Parish Plan.

Although not opposed to the principal of wind power, Sadberge Parish Council opposes the construction of commercial-scale wind farms amongst the settlements on the Tees Plain to the north-east of Darlington.

As a back-up strategy – recognising the pressure that Local Planning Authorities are under from national policy to facilitate renewable energy in the face of climate change issues – the Parish Council has also made proposals relating to Planning Policy on wind power and Planning Conditions that should be imposed on any wind farms that are allowed to go ahead. The Clerk has presented these proposals to the Darlington Association of Parish Councils, Phil Wilson MP and Darlington Borough Council planning officers.

- 5.8 The Parish Council continues to work with the Seven Parishes Against Local Wind Farms Action Group (SPAG) in opposing proposals on the grounds they are too close to residences and as a result will cause too many problems for households.
- 5.9 The erection of a monitoring mast at Barmpton was not opposed by Sadberge Parish Council. No wind farm planning applications have been submitted yet.

## **6. Parish Plan Implementation**

- 6.1 The village garden at the north side of the village green offers an attractive welcome to Sadberge on this approach to the village. It has been maintained to a high standard by local residents.
- 6.2 The bushes opposite the Buck Inn were removed by Darlington Borough Council as

requested, and have been replaced by a very attractive garden area which has been fully planned and cultivated by Councillor Schott. It is an excellent addition to the village green.

6.3 The Sadberge Energy Saving Project was launched at last year's festival and has raised awareness of energy saving in the following ways:-

- In partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, the Climate Change Working Group invited Sadberge households to complete 'home energy check' questionnaires and receive advice on energy saving opportunities.
- Ten Eco-eye electricity use monitors were purchased with funding from a successful application for a grant from the It's Your Community awards sponsored by O2. These monitors have been lent out to Sadberge households to enable them to investigate their patterns of electricity use.
- An O2 representative presented the grant at a celebratory evening which also gave residents an opportunity to find out more information about energy saving opportunities.
- Sadberge householders were referred to grant schemes for loft and cavity wall insulation.
- Bulk purchasing opportunities were negotiated with local companies to enable Sadberge residents to purchase double glazing and central heating boilers at discounted prices.
- Free energy saving light bulbs – provided by EDF – were distributed to qualifying residents.
- A solar heating seminar took place in November 2008.
- During February 2009, the Climate Change Working group took infra-red photographs of participating Sadberge homes to show where heat was escaping.
- Sadberge won a special Eco Award at the Tees Valley Calor Village of the Year Awards.
- The Energy Saving Project was nominated for an Evening Chronicle environmental project award.

## **7. Other Achievements**

7.1 Sadberge Midsummer Morris Festival.

The wet weather at the 2008 festival proved to be an even bigger problem than in 2007. Despite the rain it was well attended although some attractions had to be cancelled. It again provided an opportunity for local charities to raise funds and also was an enjoyable family occasion.

7.2 Arrangements are under way for the Summer Festival 2009 which will take place on 11th July with the theme of Sadberge history – in particular the saxons. St. Andrew's Church will hold a flower festival and Locos In Motion Border Morris and other dance groups will perform.

7.3 Calor Village of the Year Competition

On 21st July 2008 three Calor Village of the Year judges visited Sadberge along with two TV crews. The event organised for this was well attended and supported by local residents, St. Andrew's Church, Sadberge Village Hall Association and The Three Tuns. The visit went well and we were delighted to learn Sadberge had been awarded Village of the Year for the Northern Region. The Clerk (Alastair Mackenzie) and Chair (Councillor Scaife) went to the Guildhall, London to collect the award and were also presented with a 'People' award. Total prize money for these two awards amounted to £2,500.

The Parish Council has set aside £3,000 for a project to celebrate Sadberge's success in the 2008 Calor Village of the Year competition, and residents have been consulted as to how we

should spend the money.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

- 8.1 There is always much that fills our agendas from residents' concerns and planning applications to latest Government guidelines or policies, and subsequently Parish Council business never lessens. It was highlighted in our discussions with Darlington Borough Council just how vital the work of parish councils is for local communities in the rural areas. 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.
- 8.2 I thank Ward Councillor Brian Jones for his excellent support and help throughout the year.
- 8.3 If last year the key issues were bus services and illegally parked caravans, this has been the year of Wind Farms. Throughout our dealings, our Clerk has supported the Council with careful planning, diligent research – which has been widely recognised – and challenging questions for developers and Darlington Borough Council. I wish to note his excellent work on behalf of the Parish Council, and thank him for his time and the thorough way he carries out his job; also for the skills he brings as our Webmaster.

**Millie Scaife**  
**Chair of Sadberge Parish Council**