

District Councillor's Report for the Hazelbury Bryan Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday, 1st May, 2012.

1. Thank you and your Chairman Dave for allowing me to make this report on my first year as your District Councillor.
2. As District Councillor I sit on the Accounts and Audit Committee, the Service Scrutiny Committee and the Personnel Committee, Team North Dorset (specifically concerned with the five market towns and their hinterland) and the Shaping the Future Board which is concerned with future service delivery and the structure of the Council to do that). There are also monthly full Council Meetings. I am Finance Spokesperson, supporting the Leader of the Council, and as such attend Cabinet and Management Board Meetings. However, the most important work of a councillor is what happens behind the scenes in the Ward, working with constituents and their problems, and with the Parish Council and Parish Meetings.
3. I hold four "drop in" surgeries each month in Glanvilles Wootton and Pulham Village Halls on the first Saturday morning in the month, and Mappowder and Hazelbury Bryan on the third Saturday morning of the month. In addition I try and catch up with the police at their monthly surgery at the Thyme after Time Cafe at Woodrow. With help from friends, I am currently delivering a short "reporting back" leaflet around the Lydden Vale Ward - along with the current programmes for The Exchange, because we might as well make the best use of all that work by delivering three for the effort of one.
4. I work as closely as I can with the Parish Chairmen in Lydden Vale and we have had two meetings so far to discuss issues of common concern. At our first meeting we received a report on the low crime rates in Lydden Vale from our neighbourhood police officers PC Phil Sugrue and PCSO Greg Downs, and also met our local Highways Manager, Roland Skeats of Dorset County Council. Our second meeting earlier this year was to consider the Localism Bill in particular whether the Lydden Vale parishes needed to pursue a joint Neighbourhood plan. We will be meeting in May to consider this further.
5. Your Parish Council has decided it will explore the possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan which the other parishes may wish to contribute to, as what happens in Hazelbury, as the largest village, has implications for the others. The advantage of a joint Neighbourhood Plan, rather than being "swept over" by the Countryside Policy, would appear to be that it offers greater control to the local area, and the ability to be proactive and include positive outcomes which the parish desires, rather than simply reacting to other people's proposals. If the plan goes ahead, it will require a considerable amount of work from us all, with help from the District Council Planning Policy Officers, and obviously ongoing consultation and discussion with residents is fundamental. If such a plan is eventually drawn up the final act is a referendum in the parishes with 51% of those voting actually agreeing the plan. If the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan is pursued, the whole process is likely to take 18 months at least.
6. I was pleased to get a positive response from Anthony Woodhouse, Managing Director of Woodhouse's Brewery to our request to meet to discuss the land the Brewery own along The Causeway. I hope this will lead to progress in constructing a footpath on that road. The aim is a safe route along The Causeway and a link with a proposed footpath down from Kingston to the shop. I also hope that the village will get a shop back in due course!
7. Roads, both the condition of the roads themselves, the winter maintenance programme, and speeding through them have been an important issue. I thank Mr. Skeats for his prompt

response when problems have been reported. Hazelbury Bryan has been looking into supplementing the County Council's snow clearing programme through donations from local business and has also expressed a wish to work with other parishes. Discussions will be reopened during the summer for next winter's programme.

8. The Travellers and Gypsies Consultation exercise took a great deal of my time, both as District Councillor and Secretary of the Newton Residents Association, the latter because the North Dorset Business Park is within Newton and a transit site was proposed on the County Council's land there. The County have now withdrawn that land. Lydden Vale Ward has nine sites commented on in the plan. In addition to the travellers site at The Triangle, five are existing, settled, permitted sites, owner occupied by gypsies, one is a site which has planning permission at Kings Stag but is yet to be lived on, and two possible sites were on privately owned land at Hazelbury Bryan where the owners are adamant they would not sell directly to gypsies or travellers and have other more advantageous plans. Once the consultants who prepared the report have analysed the responses received, and there were I believe many more than they expected, a further consultation document is likely to be issued, the report revised and then it goes to the District Council and subsequently the Secretary of State with the opportunity for further public input at both of those stages.
9. Two good things in my opinion which came out of the discussions about Travellers sites are the formation of the Kingston Residents Group and the Wonston Community Group. I believe these two organisations can work with the Parish Council to improve the community spirit and communications within the parish. I am pleased to give them any support I can both as District Councillor and also someone who has been involved in several such associations over the years.
10. The Council's planning department "Development Control" is currently considering two planning applications on the edge of the Ward for solar farms. One at Newton and one on the borders between Fifehead St. Quintin and Okeford Fitzpaine. These applications have caused considerable distress and anxiety on the part of local residents and an action group has been formed to contest them. I presume, because of the amount of public interest, they will go to the Development Control Committee the first opportunity being the morning of Wednesday 9th May when members of the public can attend and, with advance notice if possible, can speak. As I see it, the argument is not about the benefits or otherwise of solar energy itself but about the size and location of these farms, and their potential impact on the environment and quality of life locally. Although these are the only two applications so far there may be others as a solar energy company appears to be phoning round local farmers offering to rent land. However this will be less financially attractive after July.
11. I wish you well for your Annual Meeting.

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