

DIGGLE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

"To promote a thriving Diggle Village Community"

www.digglevillage.org.uk

Open Meeting Minutes

Thursday 15 September 2016 at 8 pm Diggle Band Club

Chair: Mark Brooks;

Secretary: Nick Cox;

Treasurer: Glenise Eason;

Committee: Duncan Rhodes; Jo Taylor; Charlotte Coleman; Stuart Coleman; Ken McWatt; Julie Johnson; Barbara Barnes

1. Present

Royce Franklin, Alison Coates, Gordon Coates, Margaret Gregory, Margaret Payne, Dawn Boulton, Marlene Maclean, Stuart Maclean, Stuart Coulson, Peter Carter, Val Carter, E. Broadbent, Duncan Rhodes, Kathleen Lambert, Julie Johnson, Ken McWatt, Carolyn Wilson, Gill Reave, Barbara Barnes, Pat and Brian Cliffe, Herbie Davies, Diane Davies.

2. Apologies for absence

Jo Taylor, Keith Lucas, John Stocker, Lesley Brown, Glenise Eason, Lorna Gartside, Charlotte and Stuart Coleman, Duncan Anderson, Rosalind Gartside, Margaret Hardy, Dilys and John Redfearn.

3. Minutes from previous DCA Open Meeting

Accepted as a fair and accurate record. The Chair thanked Charlotte Coleman for providing minutes for the last Open Meeting in the absence of the Secretary.

4. Police update

Police were unable to attend due to work-load, apologies received from Monica. For incidence of crime see attached police report. The police had requested that the public remain vigilant as there appears to be a (minor) increase in burglary in the district.

Stuart Coulson made a request for details of Home Watch activities to made available to the public. Royce Franklin indicated that this would be forwarded to anyone who wished to be on the mailing list.

5. Diggle Diggers & Diggle Community Gardeners - progress and update

There are now two groups active within the village concerned with enhancing the attractiveness of the village and encouraging greater wildlife diversity through gardening and landscape initiatives. Diggle Community Gardeners is a group of DCA members who have been involved in carrying out work to improve the visual appeal of the village by establishing new planters and planting schemes at various locations in the village. This work is closely

linked to the DCA projects funded by ROCA, the District Partnership and Cllr. Nikki Kirkham. Projects completed by the group include putting in place, designing a planting scheme and planting up the new planter at the bottom of Sugar Lane near the turning into Diggle; commissioning and installing stone signs at the entrance to Diggle and on The Tip; work with the Canal and River Trust to maintain and enhance the setting of the canal. Future projects to include planters opposite Post Office; planting 1,500 crocus bulbs on the grass bank where the Christmas tree is now located. A future project is to install planters at the canal tunnel entrance which will include flowers alongside fruit and vegetables. There has been a very positive response to the request for donations of bulbs and donations can be left in a box located at the side of The Gate public house.

Diggle Diggers is the other group which is active in the village. It is concerned with increasing the biodiversity of the village and enhancing wildlife habitats as well as enhancing the natural environment for the community. Its projects will involve Diggle Primary School and volunteers from Saddleworth School. The group will be undertaking the projects proposed in the successful Green Dividend application, although this would not progress under the auspices of the DCA but through a new funding arrangement (as indicated in an email message from Keith Lucas to the Chair). So far this group had undertaken planting of native trees, the establishment of a bog garden near the Diggle Brook and wildflower planting. Future projects include the establishment of a community orchard and involvement in a community garden to be set up at Diggle School.

The Chairman noted that there was a lot of activity now taking place to enhance the floral appeal and green value of the village. The groups had distinct areas they were focused on but their work should be seen as complementary.

6. DCA working with the Canal & River Trust - progress & update

The DCA has been working closely with CRT for nearly 6 months now. So far have removed litter, painted CRT cabin and plans to develop a roof-garden, ideas to plant the tunnel entrance. Next project to restore the tow path on far side of the canal. CRT provide funds and equipment. Next meeting 1 or 8th October. Notice to go up in notice board to announce this.

7. Public Transport in Diggle - Greater Manchester Transport Strategy

Royce Franklin explained that cuts to the bus service in the district have had a serious impact on the community. In order for public concerns in Diggle to be raised members of the public would need to respond to the Executive Summary of the GM Transport Strategy by **Monday 26 September** and were urged to do so. Access the survey online: www.tfgm.com/2040, email: 2040@tfgm.com, tel 0161 244 1000 or write to 2040 Strategy, TFGM, 2 Piccadilly Place, Manchester M1 3BG.

RF feels that TGM is not fit for purpose. Transport in Diggle and in Saddleworth more generally is currently not a single integrated system but several which are not effectively interconnected and several tickets often have to be purchased to complete a journey. TGM do not provide information boards informing travellers when the bus is due. Saddleworth and Lees Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee would be making a case for

improvements to integration, ticketing and information for the travelling public.

There is a proposal from Saddleworth Parish Council to put on small buses connecting villages together. Buses in Saddleworth are currently run by a private company First Bus, their primary concern is the interests of their share-holders. First Bus has stopped the second 184 bus service in Diggle. Service cut due to lack of patronage but the figures for this seriously under-represent use because drivers simply waive passengers onto the bus without recording their use of the service. Request for uses to report when this happens. RF had an agreement with the manager of First Bus that changes would be notified – this agreement had been honoured until recently but as well as the cuts to the second service an early morning bus had been cut. There is an on-going dispute over the turning circle in Diggle.

A meeting with TGM had led to the reinstatement of some services, notably school bus serving Bluecoat school but this is not available to the general travelling public.

Local authorities have little control over the way in which a deregulated bus service operates.

Members should look at TGM's report and respond by 26 September.

The Cost of train travel to Manchester has increased and bus tickets are expensive – does this encourage use of public transport?

RF's view is that TGM produce good reports but do not always deliver the undertakings made in these documents.

Stuart Coulson suggested people refuse to be waived on by drivers. Also suggested smaller buses are more appropriate for village areas than double-deckers.

RF indicated that he had suggested a bus from Diggle to Oldham. First Bus indicated that the Manchester – Leese part of the journey, which is more heavily patronised, subsidises the latter part.

MB asked if the local link was under threat. RF indicated that a survey was being undertaken by Jonathan Hughes about use of bus services.

RF is chair of the Saddleworth Parish Council transport committee, Keith Lucas is also a member of this committee – members should contact either of them with any concerns about transport and these would be taken forward.

MB thanked RF for his contribution to the meeting.

8. Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation currently being undertaken. SPC had submitted an application for a Neighbourhood area and draft plan. Information available at library. Comment needs to be submitted by **31 September** so it was **urgent** that members consider making their views known.

NC noted that it was very important that members contributed to the consultation over the Neighbourhood Plan because this was an important opportunity to seek to influence the way in which planning policy in Saddleworth would develop in the future. The Local Plan contains a number of potential problems for Saddleworth, as discussed in previous meetings, not least the proposal to impose large house-building targets and potential loss of green-belt and erosion of the identity of villages.

MB suggested that members consider how the plan could incorporate the following points:

- Ensuring that the identity and character of Saddleworth villages is maintained and enhanced by ensuring that development only takes place which makes a contribution to these;
- Conducting proper appraisals of Conservation areas and ensuring that their specific features and characteristics are properly recorded and that planning decisions make reference to these (this was begun about 5 years ago but went nowhere);
- Protecting the Greenbelt;
- Encouraging employment opportunities and SME development within Saddleworth (especially high-tech and green businesses) – Warth Mill provides a good model for this;
- Promote the use of existing buildings and brown-field sites for new development before permitting green-field development;
- Protecting the distinctive landscape of Saddleworth;
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity by identifying, appraising and protecting habitat types and mosaics in Saddleworth.

Stuart Coulson indicated that Saddleworth Parish Council was apparently ineffective in protecting the identity and character of villages and cited the loss of the village green. NC responded by saying that SPC only had an advisory role in planning decisions and had recommended refusal of the application from FCHO to build on the village green. A strong Neighbourhood Plan might give the Parish Council more influence in the planning process if this is adopted by OMBC and it was best to seek to use this to reflect the interests and concerns of Saddleworth residents.

9. Diggle Christmas tree lights and switch on event 2016

MB noted that last Christmas had been very successful as a first celebration at the new site for the tree but some lessons had been learned and would inform planning for this year's event. Stuart Coleman had agreed that the Christmas tree, lights and power will all to be available this year. Diggle school involvement had been particularly well-received. MB suggested some help would be needed with planning and preparing the event. The meeting agreed that 1. The Band Club is the best venue; 2. There would be procession to the tree; 3. Diggle School and Choir would be involved again.

Pat Cliffe suggested that some careful thought needed to be given to ensuring that safety considerations were taken into account and stewarding of the event was more robust than had been the case last time. There was general agreement with this point and it was noted.

Suggested date 4 December.

10. What's on?

DiggFest 24 September - several bands playing and the event is in aid of The Alzheimer's society.

30 Sept Macmillan Coffee morning at 10 am

8th October near the Post Office a cake stall to raise funds for Diggle Community Gargeners

2nd October at 10 am allotment service. Diggle B Band, Uniformed organisations, Diggle school and any other groups in Diggle have been invited.

Following Sunday Harvest Festival at Kiln Green.

Harvest Howdown 8th October at 7 pm £5 adults 2.50 children in Uppermill.

11. Any other business

Diggle School Library

NC reported that the new school library had been installed over the summer with new shelving, carpets and books and would be in use from the beginning of term. He thanked members of the DCA who had helped with fund raising at the Fete and other events.

Involvement of The Gate

Stuart Coulson suggested Gate Inn could be invited to attend meetings.

Parking Issues

A resident raised concerns about parking and congestion relating to Diggle Day Nursery - cars turning round in road when dropping off, cars parked on pavement on Dorset Ave by staff from Nursery. Request for double yellow lines at bottom of Dorset Ave. This is a difficult issue but it was suggested that when infringements and offences are committed the police should be informed.

12. Date of next meeting

10 November 2016