

EAST STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

Number 11

Spring 2003

THE HAWKINS TRUST

As usual we are delivering Easter Eggs on behalf of the George Hawkins Trust to those children in the area whose parents have completed the form as sent out in November 2002 with the last newsletter. The hampers and bottles were delivered in December to those senior residents eligible and we hope they enjoyed their gifts.

VACANCY FOR COUNCILLOR

Due to our Councillor Gareth Thomas from Binnegar leaving the area, a vacancy exists on our Parish Council for a member of the Parish to join our friendly constructive meeting held once a month. Ideally we would like a representative from Holmebridge. However, this is not essential and we would be happy to hear from anyone within the Parish who would like to join us. Please contact Sue Barrett, Clerk, Whiteway Farm, Steeple, Wareham BH20 5NX or Tel. 01929 481097.

Councillors serving on the Parish Council are as follows:-

Barry Quinn – Chairman Tel. 462623, Simon Cross – Vice Chairman Tel. 462232, Mrs J. Axon, Tel. 437637, Neill Child Tel. 462770, Adrian Cullinane Tel. 462371, Lady Sara Grayson Tel. 463207.

FOOTPATH LIAISON OFFICERS

Our Footpath Liaison Officers, Mr and Mrs Hanger of Woodlands, Bindon Lane, have now sold their property and left the area. Consequently we are looking for an active person or persons to take over their role. This would entail keeping an eye on all public footpaths and rights of way in our Parish ensuring that these paths were free of obstruction and were being maintained properly. There is a meeting with County Council twice a year which can be attended if desired.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

In December 2002 our Parish Council adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils (Core Classes Only). The Information Commissioner has accepted that this is the correct Scheme for our Parish Council to adopt. This is approved until February 2007. A copy of the Scheme is available from the Clerk. The documents referred to in the Scheme are held by the Clerk and can be inspected at a mutual convenient time and date. Copies of

the documents can be provided for a minimum fee of £10 to cover costs and Clerk's time.

COUNCIL TAX

You will all have received your Council Tax bills and are no doubt not best pleased about the size of the increase. This is primarily attributable to changes in the way central government distributes funding support to local councils. This has channelled more funding to the north of England at the expense of southern counties. It particularly does not take into account the large number of second homes in Purbeck. Although it has brought no positive results, members of the Parish Council have been active in voicing their disapproval of this unfair treatment by writing to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Closer to home we have had to raise the Parish Precept by £300 this year in order to cover our annual liabilities. This represents an increase of less than £1 per elector and I still one of the lowest in Purbeck.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

At our March meeting we were addressed by Mr Andy Lloyd of Dorset Community Action (DCA) on the subject of affordable housing. This term covers rental properties and part ownership as well as starter homes to buy. DCA act as an impartial agent working for the local communities with housing associations and the local councils to identify local needs and ability to provide affordable housing. It is important to state that this initiative is intended to be for local people including those younger members of the community who may have had to move away to obtain housing. In order to try and cope the requirement within East Stoke we will be distributing a survey form in the near future for completion should you wish to register your individual need for this type of housing.

CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

A play and recreational area was established within Middlefield Cottages about 30 years ago and the ground was leased to East Stoke Parish Council by Purbeck District Council (PDC). This facility has fallen into disrepair and all that currently remains is the area for ball games bounded on 3 sides by high level fencing that has been damaged by fallen tree and overgrown vegetation. The grassed area although it is maintained by PDC is also somewhat uneven.

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Middlefield Community Group (MCG) has been established with the aim of re-instating the Play Area with new equipment meeting current safety legislation. The Parish Council supports the group's initiative in this venture and as this is intended to be a facility available to all children within the Parish, the Council has offered to assist in progressing this matter.

In the short term PDC have agreed to repair the existing fencing and clear the vegetation around the side. The goal now is to raise the funding for the play equipment, insurance and annual maintenance. Clearly this will amount to a fairly considerable sum and the Parish Council together with MCG are pursuing various sources for grants to cover the capital expenditure on the equipment. Additionally, MCG are planning a number of fund raising activities with the aim of getting the fund started to cover the annual liabilities. We would urge all members of the Parish to support this worthwhile project. Any offers of help with fundraising would be gratefully received.

RUINS OF OLD ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Dorset County Archaeologists have now visited the site (together with the land-owner) and put in their bid to English Heritage. The idea is now that a team from the DCC Historic Environment Department will come in early August (after birds have finished nesting) to clear the churchyard of dead trees, brambles, etc. and put up temporary barbed wire fencing on the existing posts to keep it stock proof. At that point Bournemouth University Archaeologists will send in their team to do a detailed survey and advise on the best conservation methods. Once this is done, proper fencing (good post-and-rails plus sheep wire) will be put in place and local sheep and goats will be put in every so often to graze it. Meantime students have been continuing to conduct resistivity readings round the church area to see if other buildings were ever nearby.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Delegated and non-delegated applications applicable to our area are sent to us from PDC for consideration each month. Those applications to be discussed will be posted on the notice board before our monthly meeting is held. Anyone who has objections or indeed are in favour of the applications as posted are welcome to attend our meeting and pass their opinions on to us in the Public Participation Time at the beginning of each meeting at 7.00 p.m.

MONKEY WORLD

There have been a series of Planning Applications received in respect of this business. We received a request from our neighbouring Parish, Wool, to set up a monitoring committee which we have done. The committee have been very busy and have made a number of reports and recommendations in respect of the applications but Purbeck District Council have seemed reluctant to form any particular view and have continued to pass all applications submitted. We and the monitoring committee continue to press Purbeck District Council for a more robust approach to future applications. If you would like to find out more please contact the Parish Council and/or keep a watch on further Planning Applications and voice your opinions.