

Diptford Parish Council
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Through your Councillors, members of the public had raised concerns about goings-on at Larcombe Quarry. More vehicles are accumulating in the former scrap yard and the level of activity has increased. In addition, banger racing raises health and safety issues as the track is adjacent to the highway and protection for spectators is minimal. The Clerk will investigate these complaints and also check whether planning permission is needed for the earthworks at the former Diptford Downs farmhouse.

Of concern in the police report was the spate of burglaries during daylight hours when occupants were away from home in very isolated areas. PC Jacqui Hopper suggested that large sums of cash should be removed from premises and any high value items marked with a tracer pen. Please be alert and vigilant and report anything unusual to the police – any vehicles that appear out of place, take down registration numbers, the make and model. Please also take note of anyone in the area that appears to be out of place and record descriptions of them and their clothing. Contact numbers are 08452 777444 or anonymously 0800 555111 - quote JS/08/894 if calling about the burglaries.

Measures to reduce speeding through Diptford were suggested, including extending the 20mph restriction to Diptford Court and the far side of the playing field. Traffic heading to Avonwick could be diverted away from the village by directing it from Christone Cross via Shorter Cross. The Clerk has put forward these proposals to the highway authorities and police.

Only one planning application was received, the proposed extension and alterations at Gara Lodge, to which the majority raised no objection. Planning applications, including decisions, can be tracked on the South Hams District Council website, southhams.gov.uk.

The new Tree Warden for Diptford has been appointed, Beverley Sugden. Tree Wardens are volunteers who promote the planting, care, protection and appreciation of trees, including the assessment of Tree Preservation Order applications. Beverley is already involved in grounds maintenance, so is well qualified to take on this important role.

A grant application from South Hams CAB elicited strong support from the Parish Council, who recognised its value in the community, particularly its debt counselling service in this period of recession, and supported its work with a grant of £100. The CAB operates out of The Cottage at Follaton House, Totnes, with outreach services in Dartmouth, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge. Call 01803 862392 for advice or an appointment, or email bureau@southhamscab.cabnet.org.uk. They also have two websites: www.southhamscab.org.uk and www.adviceguide.org.uk.

Finally, South Hams CVS has written to me about the Count Me In! project to log all volunteers who have been volunteering since March 2005 for a minimum of two hours per week. Everyone who participates could win £50 in their prize draw and the form is available at www.volunteerdevon.net/count-me-in.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7.30 on Tuesday 16th December, when next year's budget will be agreed, together with the precept – the element of your Council Tax paid to the Parish Council. You are welcome to attend. In the meantime, on behalf of Diptford Parish Council, may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas!