



RYDA Newsletter

No 06/2015



Happy Christmas to all our Readers

As another year draws rapidly to a conclusion we wonder what has happened to the time. In previous years we have managed to turn out Newsletters at the rate of about one a month. However this year we have struggled to produce just six. It hasn't been for the want of material; in fact quite the reverse. Each letter seems to have been longer than its predecessor and material has come in from a number of different sources. So we would like to start by thanking all those who have eased the editor's burden by putting hand to keyboard; we would encourage you all to keep the stuff coming during 2016.

The truth is that against expectations we have been otherwise engaged with the Neighbourhood Plan. Having got N3P off the ground over a year ago now it had been our intention to hand the task over to others. Both the Parish Council, who are sponsoring the Plan, and ourselves agreed that the RYDA, and in particular the RYDA Committee, were not the people to do it. Notwithstanding it has proved a daunting task to get others to come forward and assist with this vital work. However the N3P Steering Group has now been formed and is doing good work in formulating a consultation document that will go to every household in the Parish next year. Two of the Working Groups are also making good headway. However there is a desperate need to find people who are prepared to give a little of their time, and particularly thought, to assist with the Housing Working Group.

This is, of course, absolutely central to what the Neighbourhood Plan is all about. If you are not convinced, we should point out that this Newsletter draws attention to eight planning applications currently either under consideration by SHDC or just recently approved by them. Every single one of these applications is for development outside the village development boundaries on green field sites. This is due to a combination of facts: the villages are bursting at the seams and there is very little space to build anything else, combined with the fact that there is a gap in planning law that is not going to be fully filled until both the SHDC Local Plan and our Neighbourhood Plan have been approved. So if you think it important that this rash of unplanned development is stopped as soon as possible, and replaced by development that is managed in a better way on sites approved by our community, then do please come forward and discuss what you might do to help.

In addition we have a few other non-planning items for this Newsletter and we will start with them....

Local Crime and Neighbourhood Watch

It has been reported to us that there has been a band of itinerant travellers causing problems locally: attempted theft of dogs; offering second-hand chain saws, generators etc; marking properties with a white mark if there is a dog present; Land Rover stolen from a resident near Puslinch etc etc. We alert you to what has apparently been going on but also ask if you would be prepared to volunteer for a revitalised Neighbourhood Watch. Roy Fenner is a NW Coordinator and is always on the look-out for more participants. Perhaps, now's the time? You never know, you might save yourself from becoming another crime statistic. With the scale of cuts to the Police, every community is having to be much more self-reliant than we have been used to.

Congratulations to our Primary School

In case you have not already heard, Newton & Noss Primary School was placed second in the whole of Devon in the 'Top Primary Schools League Table'. We congratulate all the staff, the children and those of you who give of your time on such a fantastic achievement.

RYDA Website

It has been suggested to us that the RYDA should run its own website. Our internet presence at the minute is somewhat 'underwhelming'. We are currently tucked away on www.newtonnoss.co.uk and we suspect that many are not even aware that we are there. However our own site would not only make us much easier to find but, we hope, might provide the community with a very useful 'go to' public noticeboard. We would hope to keep a calendar of events that was up to date and thus meaningful, a section for calling notices, agendas, etc., an historic library for such publications as this Newsletter and a platform for other organisations and clubs to publicise their events, publications and reports if they should so wish.

We have taken the relatively modest step of registering a suitable website address but the key to success clearly lies with finding someone who might be interested in designing, building and maintaining such a website. This may be of interest to someone who relishes the challenge of learning something new. (At least one of your Committee members has taught himself how to design and build a website recently and, as others will readily attest, "he ain't no spring chicken"). Or maybe you might have a youngster at home who is in need of some gainful employment such as an 'A' Level project. Whatever your motive, we would be interested to hear from you.

Village Woodlands

We are very pleased to inform you that negotiations are at an advanced stage in the acquisition of another wood for the villages which will be a most valued addition to Brookings Down Wood in Noss. It is envisaged that this new acquisition will be managed in much the same manner as the present one – in other words by a largely autonomous team that operates under the umbrella of the RYDA. There cannot be many who do not know what pleasure BDW brings to the community through the hard work of those involved. However the new wood is currently in 'a bit of a state' and it will be some little while before it too is in a condition that makes it worthy of appearing on national television. We will therefore be encouraging you all to turn out and work off some of those Christmas excesses in the New Year. Just as soon as the deal is finalised we will reveal all, including where it is!

Planning Matters

As described above, there has recently been a very significant increase in the number of applications to build outside the villages. This needs to be put in the context of what is happening around us in the wider area.

- The South Hams already has 7,686 houses either being constructed or in the planning system for an estimated 13,000 people.
- Within 20 minutes drive of Newton and Noss there are 7,000 houses for 12,000 people being constructed at Sherford, 107 houses almost completed at Yealmpton, and 65 new homes almost completed at Brixton.
- These planning applications do not comprehend the numerous smaller developments that are in the planning system; for example Wembury already has approval for 74 houses.
- All in all, there are over 7,300 houses in the planning system and under construction on our doorstep. All this development will have the most profound effects on this community, not least because we will be seen as providing some of the best and nearest seaside recreational facilities in the area for at least some of these 24,000 people.

Recent Local Approvals

We recently reported on the following 4 planning applications, all outside the development boundaries. All 4 have been approved by SHDC. They are:-

Collaton: Readers will recall that this application was for 70 homes which included up to 40% affordable. At the eleventh hour the land owner increased his offer to 50% affordable homes and the application was approved by SHDC. At the risk of being accused of undue pessimism/cynicism we would point out that the developers of Sherford promised a mix including 50% affordable homes when they submitted their application. That percentage has now been ‘negotiated’ down to just 17%. We will watch to see what happens at Collaton with interest. However it is not all bad news: we understand that the planning gain associated with the development will go towards saving our bus service and ensuring that the children living in the development can be accommodated in local schools.

Beacon Hill: The application to build what was described as a 2 storey, 4 bay garage with storage accommodation above it at the top of Court Wood and close to the existing houses has been approved. Some garage!

Also at Beacon Hill: The application for a three bedroom house on the left of the road leading up the Hill on a concrete pad that was all that remained of an old chicken farm is approved. Work has now started on the site. Lucky chickens!

Briar Hill Farm: Approval was given for a house on the camp site a year ago on the express condition that the accommodation was for the benefit of, and only to be used by, the camp site manager. An application to remove that condition followed hot on the heels of the earlier one and that has now been approved too. So we may now look forward to yet one more randomly located house outside the development boundary. It must be said that the existing farm buildings that will be replaced are no thing of beauty. However the ‘ex-managers’ house will be joined to 2 holiday homes – also outside the boundary – to produce a sizeable complex of buildings.

We do have some sympathy with the under-staffed group of individuals in Follaton House who are constantly under pressure from marauding developers and arbitrary central government housing targets. However to call this a “planning” department must surely qualify it for Misnomer of the Year at present. We can only hope that things improve with the arrival of the Local Plan and N3P.

And here are 3 more

Westerly

Members may recall the attempts that have been made in the last few years to get planning permission to demolish and replace the old sailing school on Yealm Road. An application was lodged in 2008 and another in 2012. Both were dismissed, the latter one going to appeal.

The latest attempt is for not one but 2 replacement houses sited one in front of the other on the plot. The artist's impression is the proposed view from Noss. We think that the picture, although not very good quality, says it all!



As usual we would appreciate your views. We believe that the conclusions that the Planning Inspector stated in 2013 are still very much current. He objected to the demolition of the old house that had been described by English Heritage as “*a handsome building of strong local interest.*” SHDC described it as “*an impressive example of Victorian architecture, one of the few remaining in the village that projects its late 19th / early 20th century development.*” They also considered it to be important in the setting of the Conservation Area, and concluded it to be a heritage asset. It is worth repeating the Inspector’s words verbatim:

“The building retains much of its original character and appearance, with windows and roof appearing to be original. It has a strong, symmetrical form with well-defined bays and gables. Sitting centrally but to the northern edge of its plot, the large garden is an important element of the character and appearance of the area.”

The Inspector objected to the proposed house on the grounds that its bulk was too great. A seven bedroom house was proposed and the Inspector stated that that this was “*unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.*”

It is our view that the currently proposed buildings would be even more unsympathetic. This is by virtue of their combined bulk¹ leading to the loss of green space when viewed from across the river together with the architectural style which is entirely out of context with period residences surrounding it on all sides. We also believe that damage would be caused both to the AONB and to the nearby Conservation Area.

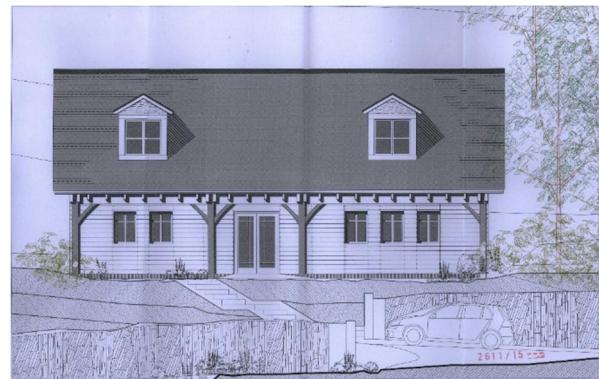
You may find full details of the application at:

<http://www.southhams.gov.uk/planningdetails?RefType=APPPlanCase&KeyText=150122>

and if you wish to object to the application you may do so by also going to the above link. No date for doing this has been given.

Land Opposite Thorndean

This is an application for a relatively modest, conventional style house on a large plot situated on the hillside above Junket Corner in Noss. The elevation shown below is the view that will be seen from Newton across the Creek.



Under other circumstances we do not believe that we would even draw your attention to this application since the house would be likely to sit well on the site in sympathy with those around it. However the plot is outside the village development boundary and, as a matter of principle, its erection should thus be considered more closely.

However, not only this, but the whole of this hillside is part of a larger area of undeveloped land that is entirely characteristic of the Noss side of the Creek. Much has been lost on the Newton side and to start losing it here too would mark the beginning of the end of our river valley as it has been known for countless generations. We believe it absolutely imperative that a dangerous precedent is not set here, for, in our view, it would then become almost inevitable that the rest of the hillside around it would soon become covered in houses. We can think of no reason why other similar planning applications could then be refused under these circumstances.

You may find full details of the application at:

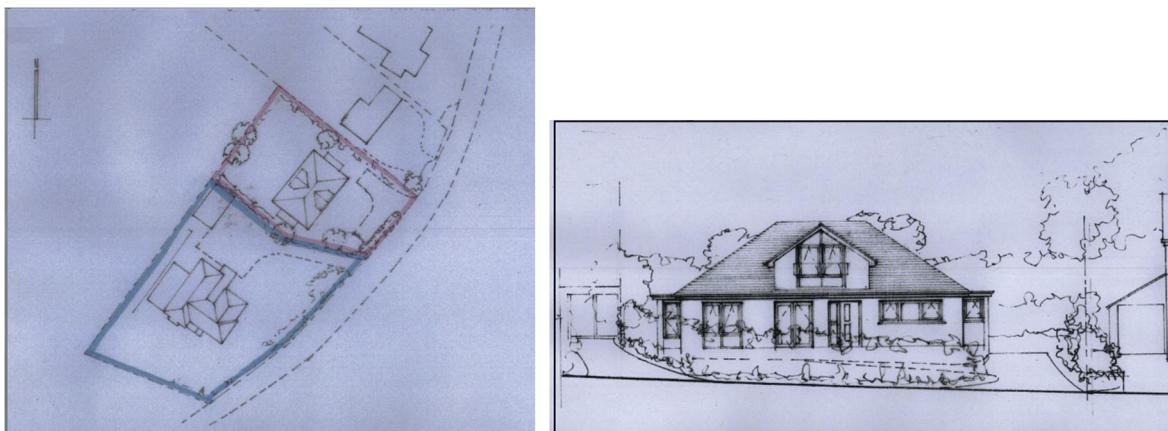
<http://www.southhams.gov.uk/planningdetails?RefType=APPPlanCase&KeyText=150051>

¹ At 6200 sq ft and 4600 sq ft the footprints and surface area of the south elevations of the 2 proposed buildings is over twice those of the building plus the garage in the previous application that was rejected at appeal (2700 sq ft and 2200 sq ft). All figures are approximate.

If you wish to object to the application you may do so by also going to the above link. No date for doing this has been given but we believe you should act as soon as possible.

Hannaford Lane

This application comes under the category of what used to be called garden grabbing. Direction was issued by Gregg Clark MP, the then Planning Minister in 2010 strongly discouraging the activity but this has now long since been forgotten. The application is for a dormer bungalow to be constructed in the garden of Revelstoke Coombe which lies on Hannaford Lane above Noss. In other words on the bridleway leading up or the Warren and well outside the Noss development boundary. The existing house is located within the area marked in blue on the site plan below and the new building would be in the area marked in red.



It is our view that since the site is not within the Newton Creek area and more particularly since the proposed house would actually fill a gap that currently exists in a row of 4 houses there are no strong objections to its approval – other than the one of principle. However you may take a different view. So please let us, as ever, have your thoughts.

You may see the full details and make your comments by going to:

<http://www.southhams.gov.uk/planningdetails?RefType=APPPlanCase&KeyText=150054>

Date of AGM

Looking to the future, we are pleased to inform all that the date of next year's AGM will be Tuesday 19th April and that it will be held in the Village Hall in Noss. After what appeared to be a successful formula this year we are proposing to make the event a social occasion again. So please put us in your diaries and come along.

A very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all members, particularly those who have recently joined the RYDA.

