

Dorstone Parish Council – Update April 2013

30 MPH Speed Limits

After waiting nearly four years 30 mph speed limits have now been introduced on the B4348 between Crossways and the Bell Turn and throughout the Village Area. To recap the background:-

- The introduction of speed limits was the number one request from Parishioners in the Parish Plan agreed in 2010, supported by 80% of residents in a questionnaire completed by 85% of the Parish, in other words it has overwhelming support.
- Following collection of speed data in 2010 which showed vehicles exceeding 30mph limits, Herefordshire Council placed us on a waiting list for the lengthy consultative process required by law before such limits are introduced. Following pressure from the Parish Council and help from Golden Valley Ward Councillors, Philip Price and Graham Powell, we eventually reached the top of the list, hence its introduction in March.
- Notices had been posted around the Village and in the Hereford Times announcing the proposed new limits. Parish Council Updates have also regularly reported progress.
- Concerns have been expressed to members of the Parish Council on the number of speed limit signs, particularly on very minor roads. The placement of such signs is governed by Department of Transport regulations which require signs to be placed on all entry points to the 30mph area. This ensures that drivers are fully aware that they are in a 30mph zone and cannot use an absence of signs as a reason for exceeding the limit.

We trust Parishioners will understand the case for these limits. The main reason for their introduction is to protect, as far as possible, residents, particularly children, from the dangers of speeding vehicles. It is worth noting that an early response to our request from Council Officials was that our case was not a priority as there had been no fatalities or indeed serious injuries. As a Council we are pleased that we have now achieved this Parish Plan objective which will help prevent the occurrence of any serious accident or fatality in our Village.

Neighbourhood Planning

In the January Update we reported that a Steering Group had been established, tasked with preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Dorstone Parish. The Group has now held two meetings and has also formed 3 sub groups. One is looking in detail at consultative arrangement with the Community, a second will examine new housing including settlement boundaries and a third will look at other economic and

environmental matters such as employment, tourism, small business development, infrastructure and renewable energy.

We are pleased that nearly 40 volunteers have joined our Neighbourhood Planning Forum to whom we can circulate discussion papers and progress reports as well as the occasional meetings to discuss ideas and policy options. We will also have dedicated pages to Neighbourhood Planning on the Dorstone Community website.

Our initial objective is to talk to as many people as possible about their ideas for the development of the Parish over the period until 2030. To this end we will have stall at Plant Day as well as arranging to meet all the Village Groups, from Toddlers Group to WI, all the Village Committees, as well as meeting small business owners and farmers. Informal sessions will also be held in Dorstone's Front Room. By gathering everyone's ideas will be able to prepare a questionnaire so that all residents will have an opportunity. in the early autumn. to get their views on all aspects of the future development of Dorstone.

Local Plan

Herefordshire Council has now published the final draft version of their Local Plan for Herefordshire, which can be viewed on the Council's web site. In essence the Council is proposing that Housing provision in the Plan period 2011-2031 in rural areas should be increased from 4300, stated in the previous draft plan, to 5,300. This is then broken down into various rural areas and the Golden Valley would see a growth of just over 300 homes. These are broad targets, not absolutes, and would if development occurred evenly across the Golden Valley would mean around 11/12 new homes for Dorstone. However this figure can be strongly influenced, either up or down by our own Neighbourhood Plan, which has equal status with Herefordshire's Local Plan, providing the Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a majority in a referendum of registered Electors in Dorstone.

Potholes

The Clerk to the Council has been reporting the many potholes on the roads in the Parish to Amey – Herefordshire Council's Highway Maintenance Contractor. Amey is attempting to repair as many as possible as quickly as possible but clearly this is a problem across the County, so priority is being given to A and B Class roads and then C Roads, leaving unclassified roads which forms the majority of roads in Dorstone as a lower priority. We have made representations to the Ward Councillor Philip Price, particularly the state of the road over Dorstone Hill and he is pressing the case for more substantial repairs to be carried out to this "major route" into the Golden Valley. Potholes

can be reported to the Clerk (Phone 550652) or directly to Amey via Streetscene – email address is "streets@herefordshire.gov.uk"

Lengthsman Scheme

The Lengthman's Scheme continues again for the coming financial year. The contract has been awarded again to Mark Price who did such an excellent job for the Parish in his first year, cleaning ditches and drains etc, very often in atrocious weather, as well as maintaining verges and the village green.

New Parish Councillor

David Phillips has been appointed to the Casual Vacancy caused by the resignation of John Platts. We welcome David to the Council.

Colin Thomas - Chairmanj