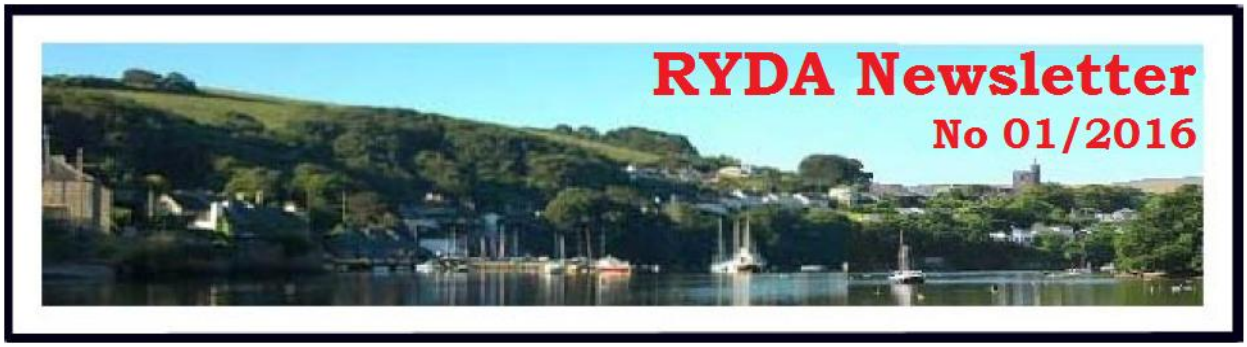



## Welcome to 2016

Our first Newsletter of the year is a relatively short one but, as you may note, it is not dominated by planning issues, as some tend to have been in the past. We have made a conscious decision to try and diversify the information that we bring you. To this end we hope that you will continue to find it to be useful and informative. We would greatly welcome suggestions from members for the inclusion of items in future editions. There must be a wealth of things going on both in and around the community which we miss. Please just let us know about them and we will put them in. If you are sufficiently convinced of the value of the Newsletter – or maybe you think things could be done to improve it – we are also looking for a new editor. Your current scribe has been undertaking the task for over 3 years now and would be the first to agree that new blood might be a very good thing.

In a similar vein your Committee is currently looking for new Committee members. Why not consider coming along and joining us? We meet every 2 months, drink a lot of wine and try to put the world to rights. Other than that, the duties can hardly be described as onerous. The RYDA will only continue to thrive with the active support of its members. So if you care about our community, why not offer to donate one hour a month for the wider benefit? Just speak to any Committee member or email this address to learn more about what might be involved.

## Superfast Broadband (SFBB) for Newton & Noss

After a very long wait, the Government's commitment to roll out Superfast Broadband is getting close to being delivered locally. Robin Hogg has been doing a lot of chivvying and we are grateful to him for the following update which he drafted for the Parish Council:

**Introduction.** BT/Open Reach has now reached the stage where they are planning to deliver superfast broadband (24 Mpbs) to this community from the end of February 2016. The technology that BT have adopted is to deliver SFBB by fibre-optic cable to the "NF3 Green Cabinet" outside the Telephone Exchange in Newton Ferrers, and from there, to distribute it over the existing copper wire network to individual premises. You can get a rough idea as to whether you will receive this SFBB by going to www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk and inserting your POST CODE. This is a very rough estimation and much will depend on how far each individual house or business is from the Green Cabinet in Newton Ferrers.

**How will it affect you?** BT has agreed that ALL Internet Service Providers (ISPs) will be allowed to make use of this SFBB service. It will, however, be up to each individual customer to apply to his/her individual ISP for this SFBB service. Each ISP should then be able to access and make use of the NF3 Green Cabinet in Newton Ferrers to deliver SFBB to their customers. Should you not wish to receive SFBB then you will remain on the currently available Upload and Download speeds. Those choosing to make the most of this upgrade will need to negotiate a new contract for their internet service through their ISP. They should initiate this process soon after St Valentine's Day (February 14th).

This important service has been a long time coming, and the Government has invested almost £100bn in making it all happen.

## Work on the A379 to start in April?

The following has been copied from the BBC website on 28 January. We suggest that no one holds their breath quite yet.

"Thousands of drivers face more traffic headaches on a Devon main road because repairs planned to end in March will not start until April. Traffic lights were placed on the A379 near Yealmpton in March 2015 after the road started subsiding.
Repairs were due to be finished by 31 March this year, said Devon County Council. The authority has admitted the problems mean a delay for about 6,000 drivers on the road every day.
The A379 was turned into a single carriageway for about 200m with traffic lights last year after highways chiefs were alerted to subsidence.
Yealmpton Parish Council clerk Mike Stickland said: "We are fed up with it being closed for so long, it's a major tourist road and the local area's businesses rely on it."
South Hams district councillor Richard Hosking asked the County Council to classify the roadworks as an emergency but his request was rejected.
"I've been assured it is being treated as a priority," he said.
A County Council spokesman said: "Public safety is our prime concern, and one lane of this section of the road is closed, with temporary lights, because the road is subsiding and is not safe. It doesn't normally take this long to design a structural repair scheme but the investigation work was seriously hampered by the location of a gas main under the road. A further complication arose following preparatory vegetation clearance which identified the need for a risk assessment to determine if a safety barrier was now required. That assessment took place last week and the outcome is a significant length of barrier is required to safeguard the highway user from what is a significant drop. The re-design of the strengthening works and the safety barrier will delay starting on site until April."

Sweepstake on a start date, anyone?

## Newton Downs Farm Solar Energy

The following article has been provided by our local environment group.

A renewable energy company, *Good Energy,* has been granted planning permission for a solar farm on land at Newton Downs Farm. The site is shown in blue on the map below. The site will be capable of generating enough electricity for 1,300 average homes. The application was supported by Newton and Noss Parish Council and by numerous local residents.

Planning permission was granted on condition that *Good Energy* offers the completed solar farm for sale to Yealm Community Energy (YCE)[1], a local community benefit society. The project will provide funds for tackling fuel poverty, and reducing energy bills in the local area and for funding environmental projects as well as delivering a return for local investors. The solar array will be built during 2016. We do not yet know the exact revenue from the project once it is owned by the community, but it will certainly be in excess of £10,000 per year.

The solar development will help sustain a local family farming business by providing a stable income while allowing the existing agricultural practice (eg livestock grazing) to continue on the site. The site will deliver significant enhancements to wildlife habitats and improved biodiversity (grass seed and wild flower mixes for pollinators).

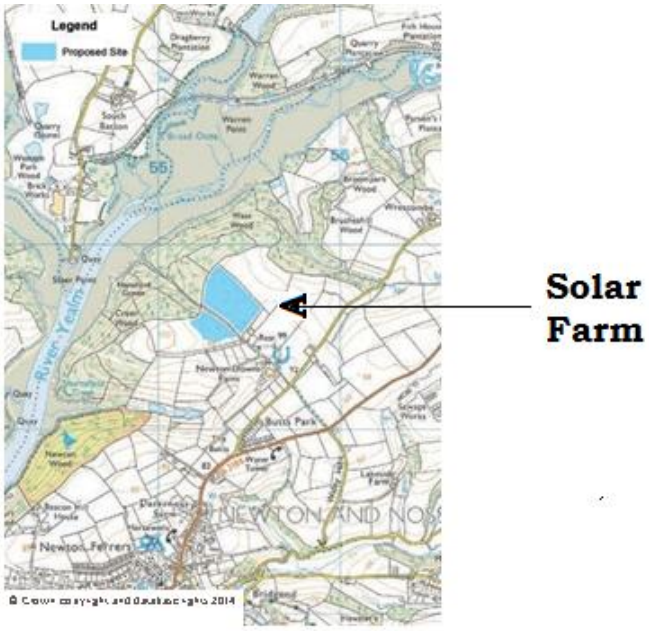
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[1] Yealm Community Energy is a Community Benefit Society set up in order to provide improved energy services to the residents of the Parishes bordering the Yealm. The current Chairman of YCE is Peter Brown. Further detail at www.yealmcommunityenergy.org.

The proposal protects the land's current and future agricultural and ecological value by:

- Allowing existing agricultural practice to continue through the grazing of the farmer's flock of sheep in and around the wide avenues between the rows of solar panels, as endorsed by the National Farmers Union
- Protecting and enhancing existing trees and hedgerows which provide nesting and roosting habitat for a variety of species such as birds, dormice and bats
- Creating new wildflower meadow and diverse grassland throughout site to support a wide-variety of species including ground-nesting birds and pollinating insects
- Ensuring that, as a temporary development, the panels are removed and the land returned to its current use at the end of the solar farm's 30-year lifetime, leaving a legacy of enhanced levels of biodiversity for years to come.

YCE is holding its first Annual General Meeting at 10:30 on Saturday 6 February at Newton Ferrers WI Hall. Anyone interested in the project is welcome to attend.




## Harbour Clean Up

The annual clean up of the River is on Saturday 9th April. It is being organised again by Andrew Beveridge who is always looking for more volunteers to help with this major effort. If you are able to help, please ring Andrew on 873351.

## Planning Matters

In the past we may not have been entirely scrupulous about giving you follow-up news concerning planning applications that we had previously reported upon. So we have made a New Year resolution to try and do better in 2016. Accordingly let us start with Newsletters 05/2015 and 06/2015 when we reported, amongst other things, on the proliferation of planning applications for buildings outside the village development boundaries. Two such applications were for a house on land to the east of Bridgend Hill at Barnicott and another close to Junket Corner on land opposite Thorndean. We can now report that both of these applications has been considered by South Hams and each has been rejected.

Members may be interested to know that they were rejected for substantially the same reasons. The rejection notice for Barnicott reads as follows:

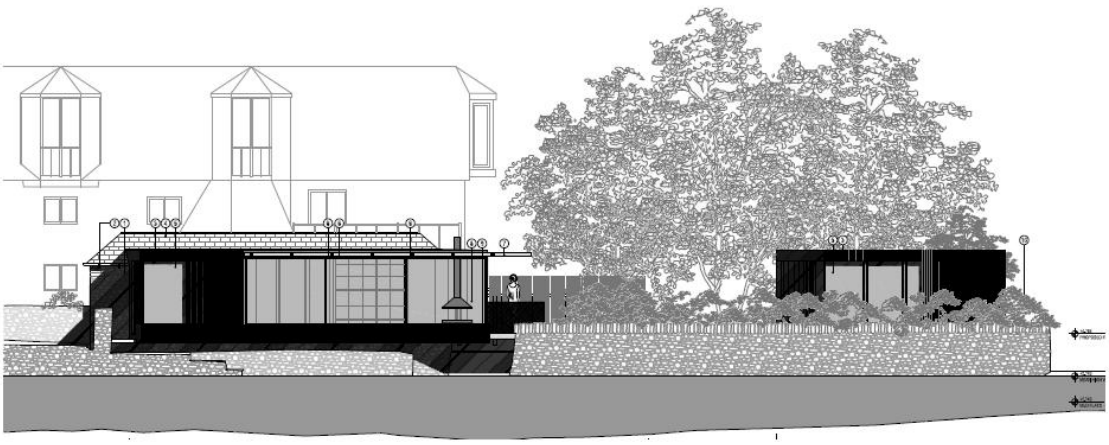
> "The proposed development represents the erosion of rural character, the visually harmful incursion of the built environment into the countryside and the coalescence of two distinct and separate urban environments within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The new access would be damaging to the character and appearance of Bridgend Hill." (Street scene in the case of the other application)

There has been a host of new applications over the Christmas holiday period. However we are of the view that only one of these is particularly contentious

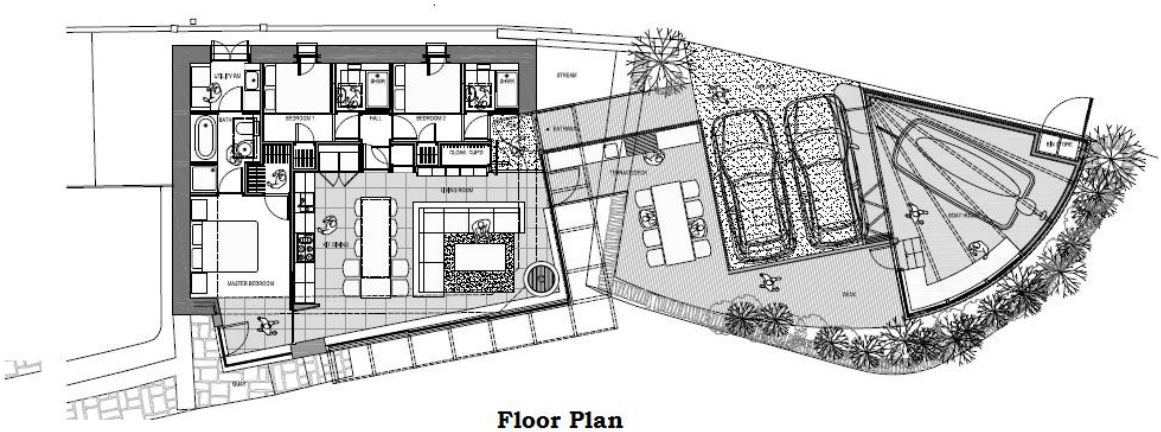
**The Malthouse, Bridgend**

This is an application to modernise and extend slightly the existing detached dwelling standing at the western end of the Malthouse development. It is also proposed to add a further building to the south west that is intended to be a boat store. The extension will be a cantilevered construction jutting out over Newton Creek. The front of this extension will be almost entirely made of glass and it will have a flat roof. The design, which we believe can be accurately described as ultra-modern, is shown in the elevation below. We also show a plan view of the two proposed buildings.

**The Malthouse**



**West Elevation**



**Floor Plan**

We have three concerns about this proposal. We believe that it will not sit well in its surroundings, for all the buildings in that area, and the quay, have some historic significance. They are all built out of stone, have pitched roofs and modest sized windows. Accordingly we think that these two proposed buildings, being totally out of context, will damage both the river scene and the public view from the Newton side of the Creek.

Secondly, we think that the large area of fenestration is a bad mistake. A prime example of this which we all suffer whenever the sun is shining is the glaring reflections from the north facing glass in the recently constructed modern building right opposite the Brook. One only has to stand at the Brook on a sunny day to see that all the windows on Point View appear to have been painted brilliant white. One, in fact, is actually looking at the white fronts of all the cottages along Riverside Road West and for as long as the sun is shining on them (which is most of the day) Point View remains all 'lit up'. Similarly, the northern of these two proposed buildings will show up in a blaze of light whenever the sun shines. The architect in his proposal has planned to place horizontal shutters above the glass but what he clearly does not understand is that the problem is not one caused by directly reflected sunlight, but rather the reflection of other sunlight objects in the vicinity – such as the water.

Our third difficulty with this proposal is that we believe this to be another case of over development. It will be seen from the plan just how small the site is and members will be aware that it is very close to the other residences in the development. We take the view that yet one more building on the site will have an unreasonable impact on the neighbours, their privacy and their right to continue to enjoy the environment in which they have invested.

As ever we are most anxious to hear what you have to say and what you think about the proposal. Only by giving us your views will we be able to accurately reflect the feelings of the community in any submission that we may make to SHDC on your behalf. Should you wish to see further details of the application or make representations on your own behalf, which we would encourage, then you should go to:

http://www.southhams.gov.uk/planningdetails?RefType=APPPlanCase&KeyText=154428

A final point before leaving this application. Our eye was caught by the following which appeared in the Design and Access Statement.

> "Although vibrant, the local resident population is considered to be an ageing community with many residents over the age of 60, and retired…. Once extended and re-developed….the intention is that the property will be available for much greater year round use by the applicants family and friends. This will also introduce new and younger generations to the community."

So there we have it. Thank goodness for second home owners! How would we survive without them?

**And finally**

Don't forget the harbour clean up on 9th April …….

And the Yealm Community Energy AGM, which takes place **tomorrow**!