

Meeting with Dudley and Adrian Hext, Farmers. Neighbourhood Plan Consultation
with R A Baker , 15th March 2020 at Kimberley.

The Hext family farm is at Holywell Farm, St Ann's Chapel and they farm land in Bigbury and have the most land for farming in the parish of Ringmore. The Hext's have been farming in the parish since 1890.

The Hexts labelled on a map, the fields in the parish which they currently farm either as owners or as permanent tenants. Occasionally they also use other single fields under separate ownership for sheep grazing eg. The Glebe Field, Coach House field and the field next to Ayrmer House.

They are mainly sheep farmers with some beef cattle. They grow crops for winter feed and occasionally as cash crops eg. barley.

They employ, in addition to their two selves and family, one self employed contract worker for 3 days per week. He has been with them sometime, so they have not had the need to recruit in recent years. They also employ specialist farm contractors for specific jobs on a when needed basis but mostly do everything themselves. They work long hours 7 days a week.

They were asked "what could the Neighbourhood Plan do to improve their business". They felt they needed to think about that and may come back with an answer later.

Dudley felt that he had little difficulty with traffic and most cars waited for him to get out of the way !

They do not have a formal policy for wildlife and did not appear to be receiving any grants but they do take care to preserve the countryside by doing everything in moderation and obeying the rules regarding hedge cutting etc.. They have kept pheasants and promoted their shooting rights as a small income earner.

They did not think that climate change would change their way of farming in the foreseeable future and had no plans to install wind generators or solar panels on their land. They also had no plans to plant trees and were very unsure of the economic value of doing so.

They didn't report on any problems with services eg. drainage, electricity, broadband etc and felt that the land was so well drained that flooding was not an issue. Although some farm machinery is equipped with satellite navigation etc they didn't think that they would get much benefit from this but they had found mobile phones helpful and got reception in most areas but not all.

They had no plans to sell any land or to build any farm buildings.

RAB explained the role of a Neighbourhood Plan in the national and local planning process and Dudley admitted that he hadn't realised how important it might be. However in the light of this understanding he didn't think he needed to modify any answers they had given.