

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 8th September 2004 commencing at 7.30 pm.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Mrs J Nudds presided; present were Cllrs K Bryan, M Day, C Hill, Mrs M Metcalfe and C Sleigh with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr John Howell and Mr Ralph Green, OCC.

1. Apologies for absence

Councillors Mike Smith and Mark Williams and District Councillor John Cotton.

2. Declarations of Interest

As a close neighbour of the property Cllr Mrs J Nudds declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application reference PO4/W0964/LB 23 Bridge End

3. Traffic Calming

Mr Ralph Green, Assistant Engineer - Transport Projects Implementation in the Environment & Economy Department of Oxfordshire County Council - was in attendance to discuss recommendations of measures to reduce traffic speeds in Abingdon and Henley Roads. He explained that there were two options, both of which would cost the County Council approximately £30,000 to implement, which involved using road markings to make drivers go more slowly along these roads. There were no plans at the moment to vary the speed limit from the present 30 mph.

Many councillors expressed the view that these proposals represented unnecessary expenditure and that there are more urgent priorities, such as the junction of Henley Road with the by-pass and doing something about the flooding in Queen Street. There was also the view that a significant increase in road markings would be visually out of keeping in a village setting within a rural location.

Mr Green said that the Parish Council should inform the County of all road safety matters about which it is concerned and his department would investigate them. He also stated that the traffic calming proposals for Abingdon Road had been developed because local residents had made strong representations to the County Council.

It was agreed that all councillors who wished to make additional comments should send these to the Clerk by 11th September.

It was noted that, officially, cyclists should not ride on the Abingdon Road pavements because this is not part of an official cycle way.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held 11th August 2004

The Minutes of this meeting were approved and signed as a true record. The Council thanked Cllr Mrs Metcalfe who had written these minutes in the absence of the Clerk.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a). The Clerk explained that Mrs Osborne King's request for the replacement by the District Council of various street name signs had been on her own initiative. Many councillors dislike the design and composition of the replacement signs and the Clerk was asked to contact the District Council to ask if refurbishment of the existing signs is an acceptable option.

b). It was agreed that the special 'Dorchester Celebration Service' in the Abbey on 5th September had been very successful. A large congregation had attended and it was

particularly appreciated that Cllr Mike Smith had been able to come out of hospital for the day and make the Village's presentation to Canon John Crowe, who will retire as Team Rector at the end of September. Villagers had donated well over £2,200 and money is still being received.

c). The appointment of two councillors to represent the Parish Council on the Hurst Water Meadow Trust was discussed. It was agreed that Cllr Chris Hill should be nominated and Cllr Mrs Nudds said that she would be willing to continue for the time being if there was no other candidate.

6. County Councillor's Report

County Cllr John Howell said that county business had been fairly quiet during the summer holiday period. The County Chief Executive, Richard Shaw, has left the Council to take up a similar position in Surrey - his home county.

Cllr Howell said that he would be taking over as chairman of the Thirteen Parishes Group for the coming year.

Taking up some of the comments and concerns raised during the discussion about traffic calming earlier in the meeting, Cllr Howell asked Mr Green to nominate another site where a similar system of road markings had been tested so that Dorchester residents could have an opportunity to see how such a scheme might look. He said that although some village residents were in favour of increasing the speed limit on Abingdon Road, some residents, in particular those who actually live on Abingdon Road are strongly of the opposite view.

He said that work on the new cycle path from Berinsfield to Culham is due to commence on 1st October and he asked the Parish Council to make some progress in formulating what it would like to do to improve the car parking facilities in Bridge End. He asked what view the Parish Council would take if it were asked to contribute towards the costs of a bus shelter near the Berinsfield roundabout. This would be used partly by residents of Dorchester and the Parish Council agreed that in principle it would be supportive. Cllr Mrs Metcalfe mentioned the on-going work of the Parish Plan public transport working group.

7. Correspondence and Other Business

i). Sports Club & Playground;

Quotations from DJ Welsh Property Maintenance and Berinsfield Community Business (BCB) for pavilion repair works have been received and circulated. The quotation from BCB, at just under £1,000, was significantly less expensive and it was agreed that the Clerk should instruct BCB to carry out the work.

The Clerk reported that Sue Graney has volunteered to help with fund raising for the new play area.

The safety report on the Play Area has been received from the RoSPA inspector and it was agreed to ask David Joseph and Alan Smith to carry out the suggested surface improvements.

With Graham Howard's ill-health continuing to prevent him from culling the rabbit population on and around the Recreation Ground, Cllr Chris Hill supplied the Clerk with contact details of Mr Peter Ilbery, another possible contractor.

ii). Footpaths;

The Clerk reported that Mrs Butcher has still not responded to the letter from County Countryside Services.

Some residents of Martin's Lane with gardens backing on to the footpath are believed

to be actively getting rid of garden refuse by putting it into the verge alongside the footpath. The Clerk was instructed to write to the residents of the area immediately adjacent to this area requesting their assistance in putting a stop to this practice.

iii). Cemetery/ Abbey Closed Churchyard;

A revised and more detailed quotation has been received from IJP Buildings, which provided an itemised costing for work on the buildings amounting to nearly £10,000. It was agreed that efforts should now be made to see if any grants might be available. A further letter from Herringcote residents states that they would like to have the ivy removed from the boundary fence but that the trees and shrubs are not a problem since they provide a degree of privacy.

The Council noted that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone for Frederick Selwood will be erected shortly and that a brief service of dedication and remembrance will be held on 23rd September.

Cllr Day had received two quotations for bracing the large horse chestnut tree in the Abbey closed churchyard. The quote from Jenks Oxford Ltd was £945 and the one from Complete Tree Services of Chinnor was £800. The Council's preferred contractor based upon work previously done is Jenks Oxford and the Clerk was asked to tell Paul Jenks that although the work was his it would be appreciated if he could make a small reduction to his price.

iv). Allotments;

The Allotment Society had rented a skip, paid for by the Parish Council as in previous years, and a team of volunteers had been organised to clear rubbish from the site.

v). Parish Plan;

Cllr Mrs Metcalfe said that some working groups would need to start work soon in order to make progress with their objectives. In the absence of Cllr Williams it was agreed to hold over further discussion until the next meeting. It was suggested that the agenda for future Parish Council meetings could be structured to monitor the progress of actions indicated in the Parish Plan.

vi). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk

a).. The Clerk reported that he had received a letter that morning from Mrs Sue Popham of 93 Abingdon Road protesting about the suggestion that the speed limit in Abingdon Road should be increased.

b). The Council has been invited to the Wallingford Area Forum on Tuesday 5th October at Crowmarsh, the Thames Waterway Plan Consultation evening on 22nd September at Kennington and the meeting about the County's plans for the Future of Waste Disposal on 16th September at Benson. Various councillors said that they would try to attend.

8. Planning

a) Applications

PO4/W0909 Tudor Cottage, 76 High Street,

Erection of garage with loft space for studio/gym and containing three roof lights

The Council decided that it had no strong views and accepted that the District Council would determine the application as it considered appropriate.

PO4/W0964/LB 23 Bridge End

Cllr Mrs J Nudds left the room for this item.

Reconstruction and refurbishment of fire damaged dwelling.
The Council decided that it had no strong views and accepted that the District Council would determine the application as it considered appropriate.

PO4/W0971 The Mallows, 3 Haven Close
Carport and storage area with extension to first floor
The Council decided that it had no strong views and accepted that the District Council would determine the application as it considered appropriate.

Hallidays development plans
Cllrs Mrs Nudds, Maurice Day and Mrs Metcalfe have been to see the architect's drawings of the proposed conversion of the Hallidays building into private homes. A formal planning application is expected within the next month or two.

Pharmacy Contract in Berinsfield:
Two applications had been received that morning and would be circulated. The Council had been invited to submit any comments by 7th October.

b) Report on planning decisions, amendments etc
PO4/W0811 10 Abingdon Road new pitched timber & tile roof
Planning permission granted 17th August
PO4/W0552 Overy Manor Greenhouse
The Council noted that this application has been withdrawn

9. Finance

a). Bank balances

Nat West Current A/c balance on 27th August was £1,132.30
Nat West Reserve Account balance on 30th July was £36,339.55
The Clerk reported that a contribution of £150 has been received from the George Hotel towards the production costs of the village brochure. It had been agreed subsequent to the last meeting that the new Village notice board at the Co-op was satisfactory and the cheque to Pete Smith had been released. The Clerk said that he would submit the claim for VAT repayment and the Annual Return as circulated.

b). Accounts for Payment:

The following accounts were approved for payment:
Bruce Ferriman - outside light on Village Hall £246.75
Playground Management (Play area inspection) £78.14
Abingdon & Vale Pest Control (wasp nest Bridge End) £35.25
Oxfordshire County Council (Watling Lane street light) £1,351.25
Southern Electric (Pavilion) £30.77
David Joseph (Village maintenance) £217.26
Thames Water (Cemetery half-year rate) £25.00
GGD Russell (salary) £314.15
Geoff Willis (Handyman - 4 weeks to 3/09/04) £179.00
Abbey Service Wine and fruit juice etc (S Jackson) £109.03
M & M Skip Hire (Allotments) £141.00

10. Village Maintenance

Cllr Mrs Nudds said that there had been a lot of adverse comment about the standard of grass cutting in the Abbey closed churchyard. The Clerk will contact BCB.

It was agreed that the insurance status of David Joseph and Alan Smith would be checked by the Clerk.

11. Flooding in Queen Street

Cllr Mrs Metcalfe said that she was able to introduce to the Council a specialist engineer called Keith Jamieson who had agreed to assist the Council in trying to collect information to help the Parish Council persuade the County Council to take action in this matter.

12. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 13th October. Cllr Ken Bryan said that he would be unable to attend.

The Meeting closed at 9.35 pm