

# Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

Clerk to the Council: Mr Geoffrey Russell

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The Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Ken Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs Mrs M Metcalfe (Vice-Chairman), M Day, C Hill, Mrs J Nudds, M Stevenson and M Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present were County Cllr John Howell and nineteen residents.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Stuart Gibbons, District Cllr John Cotton, Joan Blackwell, Denise Boaden & Gillian Johnson,

## 2. Minutes of the Meeting dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007

These Minutes, which had been circulated before the meeting, were taken as read, approved and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

## 3. Chairman's Report

Cllr Bryan thanked the members of the Council for their support and hard work over the past year and those residents of the village who have been supportive. He thanked both

County Cllr John Howell and District Cllr John Cotton for all their help and Geoff Russell, Parish Clerk, for his work and support also.

Following the grant of planning permission security shutters have been fitted over the doors and windows of the pavilion. Cllr Bryan encouraged support for the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and also asked residents to use the non-emergency Police contact phone number to report any incidents.

The Village bus services are out to tender and it is inevitable that there will be some changes when the new contracts start in June. The Parish Council will help to distribute information about the services which are available.

On planning the Parish Council has had mixed fortunes over the past year. Plans for The Chequers site had been opposed but the application has been successful on appeal. On the other hand, the Kruzcko site is still awaiting the result of an appeal to the planning inspectorate. The Parish Council supported the appeal of an Abingdon Road resident whose plans had been turned down and this was eventually successful.

The refurbishment of Bridge End car park is almost complete. All that remains is the marking out of the bays. Parking on the streets of the village is still a problem. There are no official parking restrictions and any scheme is dependent upon the goodwill of both residents and visitors if it is to succeed. Usually this is forthcoming but on occasions there are obstructions. In such cases the police do have powers to impose heavy fines but the lack of a regular police presence in the village makes this unlikely.

The 'Hidden Britain' project has been completed and Cllr Bryan thanked Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe for the work done by her and the committee over the past few years.

Some more plaques have been added to the memorial wall of the old cemetery gatehouse and the two benches that have been privately donated for the south facing walls of the gatehouse have made this a pleasant place to sit.

#### 4. Draft Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

The Clerk presented the draft Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. The Council had spent £2,100 more than it had received, the largest single item of expenditure being £33,726 on the new equipment for the Play Area although much of this has been recovered from grants by third parties and the fund raising activities of the committee.

The Council had increased the Parish Precept in order to create a satisfactory reserve fund but it was not expected that there would be any need for further significant increases in the coming years.

## 5. Presentations:

### County Council

County Cllr John Howell said that the County engineers are planning to divert the surface water drainage from Queen Street into the River Thames via High Street. He hoped that the scheme could be achieved in the coming 12 months.

Surface dressing had recently been carried out in Bridge End and High Street for road safety reasons but it had not been possible to obtain any funding from the County Council to pay for repairs to the surface in Watling Lane.

There had been changes to the design of the Bridge End/High Street junction but plans to alter the Queen Street/High Street junction had been dropped.

Cllr Howell said that he could not anticipate the results of the bus service review. Buses in this part of the County already receive 5% of the County's total budget for bus subsidies.

Cllr Howell said that he is still trying to get improved access across the Hurst into Overy Lane.

The County's £25m budget for improvements to libraries, day centres and fire stations had brought local benefit in that Wallingford Fire Station and Berinsfield Youth Centre had been in receipt of funds.

### District Council

District Cllr John Cotton submitted a written report and a copy is annexed to these minutes.

### Mark Stevenson – Village Carbon Group

Cllr Mark Stevenson presented a report entitled 'Living Lightly in Dorchester' and a copy is annexed to these minutes.

## 6. Any Other Business

a. Phil Greenaway complained about the state of the recently excavated part of the Recreation Ground. It has not been properly made good and the fence that has been placed around the area is both unsecure and dangerous. The Chairman said that the Council's contractor will be re-doing this work in the near future at the expense of the archaeological project and not of the Council.

b. Several residents complained that the area outside the Co-Op store is untidy. The litterbin had been removed and should be brought back.

c. There are still concerns about occasional congestion in the village caused by irresponsible parking and one resident asked if it would be possible for traffic in Queen Street to be limited to 20 mph when the school is in session.

d. Residents continue to want Watling Lane to be repaired. Mrs Irene Osborn-King asked what the legal position would be if someone was to fall and be injured as a result of this bad surface.

Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.