

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs. Maurice Day, Stuart Gibbons, Chris Hill, Margot Metcalfe, Jenny Nudds and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were six residents.

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mark Stevenson who had another appointment and from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and District Cllr John Cotton who were on holiday.

### 2 Public Participation

Sarah Pickford and Nicholas Keighley, the adjacent neighbours to 4 Monks Close asked that the Council should recommend this application for refusal. Both had concerns about the scale of the proposed development setting a precedent for further large extensions in the Close. Mr Keighley said that the proposed window on the south east elevation will overlook the garden of 5 Monks Close and was concerned about loss of privacy. Sarah Pickford said that the extension, if built as planned, will result in the loss of direct sunlight to a significant part of 3 Monks Close. Both residents have written separately to SODC stating their objections.

Sarah Pickford is also an adjoining neighbour of the proposed oak framed garage to the front of 26 Manor Farm Road. The dimensions of this building are not clear from the plans when viewed on-line and she would object if the building was over-sized for its stated purpose. It was agreed that the Clerk will check the proposed dimensions with the Planning Officer.

Mr and Mrs Symonds of 5 Page Furlong told the Council that the roadside collection of blue bags from the council's litter bins was erratic. This was leading to litter in the streets and the threat of rats. The Clerk will contact the District Council about this immediately.

### 3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Maurice Day expressed a personal interest in both Planning Applications as both the applicants are known to him. Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe declared a personal interest in P09/W0644 26 Manor Farm Road because the applicant is known to her.

### 4 Minutes of the Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a true record.

### 5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. A County Council approved contractor, Enterprise, has been asked to make recommendation for the proposed parking posts at Bridge End and prepare an estimate. This had not yet been received and the Clerk was asked to ask the County to recommend another contractor if Enterprise is unable to submit its figures soon.
- b. The repair of the surface of Drayton Road has again been raised with the County.
- c. Abbey View Meadow; Cllr. Mark Williams has suggested sowing with wild flowers & 'weeds' mix. The ground is now so compacted that it will difficult for the grass seed to grow. The area is now on BCB's monthly cutting schedule.

It was suggested that the bottom of the meadow should be planted with rosa rugosa, whitethorn and blackthorn. This would account for several years of ‘peppercorn rent’.

d. The vegetation in the by-pass central reservation was reported as a road safety matter and it has now been cut.

e. Proposed cycle way to Oxford; Cllr Mark Stevenson has told the Clerk that the Dorchester Carbon Project has taken up this project as one to pursue.

f. The noise nuisance at Allens Pit was reported at the Police Surgery on 27<sup>th</sup> July. SODC says that as long as the land is not used for motor cycling more than 14 days per year it is ok under permitted development but the Parish Council’s view is that the users are not entitled to create a disturbance over a wide area of the Village.

g. Village Flu Pandemic Plan; notes have been received from Chinnor Parish Council and will be circulated.

h. Thames Water has repaired the man-hole cover in Bridge End.

## 6 Finance

Bank balances were confirmed as:

NatWest Current account at 29 <sup>th</sup> July	£999.26
Nat West Reserve Account at 30 <sup>th</sup> July	£39,737.30

The Council approved the transfer of £12,000 from Reserve to Current Account.

The following accounts were approved for payment:

Berinsfield Community Business (grass cutting June)	£857.61
Berinsfield Community Business (grass cutting July)	£943.86
Lexis Nexis (copy of new edition of Arnold Baker)	£59.05
Total Pest Control (two wasp nests behind pavilion)	£86.25
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd (inspection)	£51.75
Playdale Playgrounds Ltd (final account)	£7,211.53
Chris Drewett Signs (parking signs)	£1,481.20
GGD Russell – Clerk’s salary	£450.11
GGD Russell – Admin July/August	£73.48
Geoff Willis Handyman – 5 weeks (July £307.36)	£316.00
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	£11,530.84

The Clerk confirmed that receipts and payments in connection with car parking can be readily identified in the Parish Council’s accounts.

Dorchester Cricket Club has requested help with the purchase of sight screens. In total they would cost £2,116 and they are hoping that the Parish Council would contribute £500. After some discussion the Council agreed that it is basically unwilling to finance the purchase of equipment on a piece by piece basis. It would much prefer to receive a proposal from the Cricket Club and, indeed, the Sports Club setting out a plan for the general improvement of all the sports and amenity facilities both on the field and in the Pavilion.

The Council’s Internal Audit has been completed by Douglas Jupp and is satisfactory. The external auditors have asked for extra information this year and a full set of data will be submitted by the Clerk as soon as possible, hopefully later this week.

## 7 Correspondence and Other Business:

i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Payment of grants for new equipment is now to be requested (£12,250). The Council received £2,633 from the fund-raising committee in July. The equipment has been very popular and Playdale Ltd is to be congratulated on their service. A new twice-weekly inspection schedule has been prepared to include the new equipment.

Wicksteed Leisure has carried out an inspection of the older equipment and made suggestions for minor on-going maintenance. The full RoSPA safety inspector's report is expected by next meeting.

Some residents had attended the Police Surgery on 27<sup>th</sup> July and complained about the bad language used by a small minority of playground users. From the descriptions given the police officers believed they could identify the people involved.

Peter Keable will be asked to cut the perimeter hedge on the Recreation Ground.

ii). Footpaths;

Cllr Mark Stevenson has told the Clerk that a meeting will soon take place between David Gauden (a Meadside resident) and Mrs Butcher concerning use of the path near Overy Mill as a route to school.

The Council noted that the paths adjacent to 14 Watling Lane and between Bridge End and Wittenham Lane have been cleared.

iii). Cemetery/ Abbey Churchyard

There have been complaints about two diseased horse chestnut trees in the Cemetery.

The response from Paul Jenks is that they are being affected by a leaf miner infestation which is discolouring and disfiguring the leaves. This does not require urgent attention. It will be dealt with as part of the on-going maintenance programme.

Cllr Maurice Day has given the SODC trees officer notice of intended tree work in the Abbey grounds. The cost, as yet unknown, will be charged to the Abbey Closed Churchyard budget which was set at £500 in total for the year.

Cllr Maurice Day, with the Clerk, carried out a survey of memorial stone safety in the Abbey Churchyard. The findings were reported to the Abbey PCC but no comments have so far been received.

Abingdon Stone and Marble has written asking permission for a cremation style wedge tablet on the grave of Bill Joseph. The Council declined to approve this application. The wedge will stand proud of the ground but will be so small that it could be a trip hazard. Memorials must be flush with the ground or stand high enough to be seen above the height of the surrounding grass.

iv). Allotments;

The Council has received a letter from Nick Dudley asking for the decision forbidding the keeping of bees on the Allotments to be re-considered. The Council is aware of several people who would be pleased to have bee hives on the Allotments but there are also those who are completely opposed to the idea. The Council therefore declined to change its decision.

## 8 Planning

### a. Applications

(Cllrs Maurice Day and Mrs Margot Metcalfe took no part in reaching the following decision)

P09/W0644 26 Manor Farm Road

Oak framed garage to front of property

There were doubts about the dimensions of the proposed building and the Council felt unable to make a decision upon this application until its dimensions were known. The application had not been accompanied by a design statement and the Clerk, when confirming the dimensions, will ask if such a statement has been prepared.

(Cllr Maurice Day took no part in reaching the following decision)

P09/W0679 4 Monks Close

Two storey side extension

After taking into account the views expressed by neighbours earlier in the meeting, the Council decided that, although it is unwilling to oppose the application outright, it

does urge the Planning Officers to consider whether the scale of the proposed extension is setting a precedent for extensions in Monks Close greater than anything that has been approved before, since overdevelopment of these plots would be undesirable.

The proposed window on the south east elevation will overlook the garden of 5 Monks Close and the Council understands why the occupants are concerned about their possible loss of privacy. Perhaps the plan could be amended to take this factor into account.

The occupant of 3 Monks Close has said that the extension, if built as planned, will result in the loss of direct sunlight to a significant part of her property. The Council is unable to judge accurately to what extent this would happen and therefore asks that the planning department calculates the loss of light that will result from the proposed development and takes this factor into account when determining the application.

#### b. Other Planning matters

17 Watling Lane; both County Highways and the District Council's Conservation Officer are happy about the work done and there is no suggestion that there has been any encroachment upon Watling Lane.

#### 9 Village speed limits

The Police Surgery had received complaints about drivers exceeding the speed limit in Abingdon Road and it is likely that the Police will be carrying out more checks in this area over coming months.

The idea of introducing a 20 mph speed zone in the centre of the Village will be described in the next edition of 'Dorchester News' and residents asked to comment.

#### 10 Amendment to lease of Abbey View Meadow

The amendment to the lease, which covered access into Old Bridge Meadow, was approved and signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

#### 11 Recent car parking problems

Cllr Chris Hill said that he had received a reply from the Head Teacher of Cranford House School which was both apologetic and sympathetic. Following discussion at the recent Police Surgery it had been agreed that the PCSOs would make themselves available to visit the village whenever there is a major event and they will issue on-the-spot parking penalty notices where required. The Clerk will tell residents about this in the 'Dorchester News' notices.

The Council noted the purchase of new parking signs which are stored at the back of the Village Hall. More cones will be required in the autumn and marshals will be used for all major events.

The Council agreed that a special map be produced showing directions to the new car park on Abbey View Meadow. This is to be issued with advance purchase tickets.

#### 12 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople consultation

The Council agreed that it had no further comments on this matter.

#### 13 Part-night street lighting

Dorchester Carbon Project has proposed that all lights are switched off during the night except those leading into the village centre from the by-pass bus stops i.e. Drayton Road, the Cemetery footpath and Queen Street. Other residents had suggested there should be no reduction at all in night-time lighting. 'Dorchester

News' will be used to ask that residents inform the Council of their views before a decision is made.

14 Newcomers Evening 24<sup>th</sup> September

Susan Jupp and the Dorchester on Thames Society are taking an active part in the organisation of the event, including the distribution of invitations and some catering. The Clerk is producing a list showing contact details for all village clubs etc.

15 Any Other Urgent Business

- a. Residents were asked to be extra vigilant after a car was stolen from outside the High Street Co-Op. Cllr Stevenson's sheds in Warborough have also been burgled.
- b. The Clerk reported that, following problems with vandals on two occasions in the last four weeks, the mixed recycling bins at the top of Oxford Road have been removed. This will inconvenience village hall and pavilion users, unless the bins are replaced with a more robust container.
- c. The Bus Strategy document has been circulated. Cllr Mark Stevenson suggests that in order to get feed-back from residents who do use the buses the Parish Council should ask for a few volunteer bus users to make a regular, perhaps monthly, report to the Council and that all bus users should be invited to an annual meeting, similar to those held in the past. The Council noted that there is now an extra Heyfordian run service.
- d. Cllr Mark Williams asked about the cost of the renewed repairs on Watling Lane. The Chairman commented that he had walked the Lane recently with Tim Fisher, who was carrying out the repairs, and it was apparent to him that at least 30 of the holes that Tim was repairing were in fact new. A contribution towards the cost of the extra materials would be appropriate and would be considered as soon as it is known.
- e. Cllr Stuart Gibbons said that he had received complaints about the state of Green Lane and Cllr Williams said that he would investigate.
- f. There have been some problems with the dog waste bin service. The Clerk will contact the District Council.

Meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.