

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 9th December 2009 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs. Maurice Day (from 8.25 p.m.), Stuart Gibbons, Chris Hill, Jenny Nudds and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and two residents.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Margot Metcalfe who is on holiday and District Cllr John Cotton who has another appointment. Cllrs Mark Stevenson and Maurice Day may also be unable to attend – they are attending the SODC Planning Committee.

2 Public Participation

Mike Atkinson of 58 Watling Lane asked the Council to recommend refusal of Planning Application P09/W1146 which is for a new dwelling with new vehicular access at 60 Watling Lane.

He said that while it was true that the proposed development would result in the loss of a cherished view and a reduction in the value of his own property there are additional planning grounds for opposing the scheme. The proposal amounts to overdevelopment of a very small plot. Watling Lane is within the Dorchester Conservation Area and official reports have praised the existing street scene; this would be altered significantly if a new dwelling is built by the roadside.

Mr Atkinson said that the scale of the proposed dwelling would be inappropriate to its surroundings as well as to the plot on which it would stand.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Stuart Gibbons, as a near neighbour, declared a personal interest in Planning Application P09/W1172 at 7 Meadside.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held 11th November 2009

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed after the words 'has prepared' in the first line of paragraph 11 were amended to 'is preparing'.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Posts on grass bank by St Birinus RC Church; in the current economic climate the Parish Council decided that it is unable to make any contribution towards the cost of the Church's scheme to prevent people from parking their vehicles on the grass by the boundary wall. It will try, however, to facilitate the scheme, using its contacts with both County and District Councils, but that is to be the limit of its support. The Clerk was asked to make it clear that, should the work proceed, St Birinus RC Church would have to make sure that adequate public liability insurance is in place.

b. Flu Pandemic Planning; Cllr Hill is trying to arrange a meeting of the village's Neighbourhood Watch street wardens but has been told that he cannot be directly given their names and contact details.

c. The Clerk confirmed that Frank Blackwell has been booked to take the official Parish Council photographs before the January meeting, starting at 7.00 p.m.

6. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton had sent his apologies.

7 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale reported on the meeting held at Warborough on 28th November. The County Council has identified new strategic options for sand and gravel abstraction; areas in and around the Parish of Dorchester feature in some of those options. The meeting had agreed to revive the PAGE campaign. A steering committee has been formed and Richard Douglas has been invited to become chairman. The new campaign will need some funds but many of the documents prepared for the last campaign can be used again and expenses will not be as high. Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that the County Council will be making big cuts in expenditure in 2010/11 in an effort to save £100 million. Many services will be affected, including highways maintenance. Street lights may be turned off during part of the night so she advised the Council to plan what cuts it would accept while it still had this option and to press for all outstanding highways maintenance to be done as soon as possible.

8 Finance:

Bank balances & payments

NatWest Current account at 30th November £9,806.75

Nat West Reserve Account at 30th November £27,741.59

The following accounts were approved for payment:

Berinsfield Community Business (hedge cutting) £598.00

Open Spaces Society (subscription) £40.00

Cathy Pepper (War memorial plants) £18.00

Total Pest Control (moles – quarterly charge) £172.50

GGD Russell – Clerk's salary £450.11

GGD Russell (Admin Nov/Dec) £82.45

Geoff Willis Handyman – 4 weeks (Nov £214.20) £221.85

£1,582.91

The Chairman said that he would investigate the need for an extra street light in Drayton Road. There is £3,000 in the budget if it is decided to order one.

Cllr Williams said that the Village Hall Management Committee has received some of the grant monies due and this would be used to reduce the Village Hall's debt with the Parish Council

There was a preliminary discussion about the 2010/11 Precept, which needs to be set at the January meeting. Councillors agreed that, ideally, budgets should be maintained at their present level.

9 Correspondence and Other Business:

i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Mrs Sheila Puri has written to the Clerk suggesting that the bench on the north side of the Recreation Ground should be replaced. The Council agreed that this was a good idea but it will wait to see if anyone wishes to make a donation to fund it.

The Wicksteed mechanic has been asked to visit the Play Area and attend to maintenance issues with the see-saw, the roundabout and the baby swing. He would be asked to meet on site with the Chairman and Cllr Gibbons so that they can see how these maintenance routines are carried out.

ii). Footpaths;

The path alongside Cemetery is in need of repair. Some places are worse than others. BCB has quoted between £400-500 for filling in the holes and spreading a full length

covering of gravel and a maximum of £150-175 for repairing just the holes. It was agreed that only the holes would be repaired.

The Clerk said that Highways have been told that the path opposite Meadside is the site of a regular bus stop, indeed there is an official bus timetable on display on the Oxford-bound side of the road.

iii). Cemetery;

The Clerk said that Mrs Lammer has instructed her stonemason to reduce the width of the cross erected in memory of her daughter. It did not match the agreed specification.

iv). Allotments;

BCB has quoted £160 for repairs to the wire fence along the Watling Lane perimeter. This work was approved.

v). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk.

BCB has confirmed the prices for its grass cutting and other village maintenance tasks for 2010. The Council noted that there has been a general price increase of 2.5%

The Chairman has received from Richard Douglas an amended plan of Abbey View Meadow and the neighbouring fields. This shows a newly cross-hatched area to indicate that part of the Meadow across which the Hurst Trust is permitted to pass in order to access the field known as 'Old Bridge Meadow'.

The Council noted that the Wallingford under 12s Rugby squad had recently used the Recreation Group for training. It was agreed that they would be welcome to do so again and, indeed, would be offered use of the facilities of the sports pavilion if required. Although on the occasion it had been Dorchester Sports Club that gave permission, it was noted that in fact the responsibility for deciding who may use the Recreation Ground facilities rests with the Parish Council.

10 Planning

a. Applications

P09/W1049 Amendment 33 Abingdon Road Dorchester-on-Thames

Extension of the roof by increasing the pitch by 10 degrees and addition of 3 dormer windows to the rear of the house.

The Council decided that it had no strong views about this application.

P09/W1029 Amendment

Land between 32 & 36 High Street & The Site of 1 Crown Lane Dorchester on Thames; Demolition of all existing buildings, construction of access road and the erection of five, two storey dwellings with associated car ports and parking

The Council considered the amendment and agreed that there was nothing about the new plans that would alter its previous decision to recommend approval.

P09/W1172 7 Meadside

Proposed side and rear extensions and removal of existing single storey garden room
These plans and supporting documents had only just been received and there had been no time for Councillors to examine the scheme. The Clerk was asked to request the Planning Officer's consent to the consultation period being extended so that the Parish Council could discuss the matter in depth at its January meeting.

P09/W1146 60 Watling Lane

New Dwelling with new vehicular access.

After some discussion the Council agreed to recommend that this application be rejected. There were several concerns: The plot is considered to be too small for the proposed development. The development would have a major adverse impact upon

the Watling Lane street scene. This feature, which lies within the Dorchester Conservation Area, has been singled out as worthy of mention in studies of the area. The proposed development would have a serious impact upon the occupants of 58 Watling Lane, particularly in connection with loss of amenity values.

The Council did not wish to encourage additional vehicular use of Watling Lane and felt that the existing drainage infrastructure, which has been found wanting in the past, is inadequate for the properties already built.

P09/W0999/LD 91 Abingdon Road; Erection of conservatory.

The Council had been asked to comment about the use to which this land has been put over the past 10 years but had no comment to put forward.

b. Other Planning matters

The Council noted:

P09/W1008 North End House 92 High Street; Proposed replacement garaging.

Planning permission was granted on 4th December

11 Abbey View Meadow car park

The metal gate will be replaced by a pair of new gates to be fitted, hopefully, before Christmas. The new hedge planting will also be carried out soon. The whole area may need more top soil and/or a land-drain installed because after recent rain there was standing water at the Henley Road end of the field, which is a low point.

12 Parishes Against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

It was agreed that a budget of £500 should be set for campaign expenditure.

13 Affordable Housing

The Clerk was asked to contact SODC to enquire how many people who presently live in Dorchester on Thames are on the list of housing need and also to ask if there are any on the Register who have specifically requested housing in Dorchester.

14 Hurst Water Meadow Trustee – Parish Council representation

It was agreed that, as the only suitable candidate, Cllr Chris Hill should continue to be the Parish Council's nomination as a member of the Hurst Water Meadow Trust.

15. Any Other Urgent Business

a. The Clerk asked all Councillors who were available to attend the forthcoming Police Surgery on Monday, 14th December from 6.30 – 7.30. The Police Community Support Officers will be present.

b. There have been no further developments concerning the removal of the barrier across the footpath between Bridge End and Wittenham Lane.

c. Councillors asked if anything was known about the Land Rover that is parked in the Bridge End Car Park that has a 'for sale' notice upon it. Nothing is known so it will be mentioned at the meeting with the Police on 14th December as will the curious wording of a notice which has been posted inside the Co-Op store after the recent attempted break-in.

d. The Clerk said that he had asked Edward Reily Collins about the basement excavation beneath the old Hallidays showrooms. He was told that the work has been sanctioned by English Heritage and is an attempt to cure a problem of rising damp.

Meeting closed at 9.24 p.m.