

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th February 2009 commencing at 7.30 pm

The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs. Mrs M Metcalfe (Vice-Chairman), M Day, S Gibbons, Mrs J Nudds, M Stevenson and M Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting was one resident and Lorraine Lindsay-Gale representing County Cllr John Howell MP.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Chris Hill due to his home being in danger of imminent flooding. The SODC Emergency team has been contacted and they will organise a supply of sandbags to Bridge End. They are in direct contact with Chris. District Cllr John Cotton had said that he would try to attend the meeting later.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mark Williams declared an interest in P09/W0085 20 Abingdon Road as he is one of the applicants and in the Grass-cutting contract 2009/10 as he is a director of one of potential contractors.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held 14th January 2009

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

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. The Clerk confirmed that the Tetrapak recycling bin will be delivered next to the Bottle Bank on Oxford Road on Wednesday 18th Feb.
- b. There has been an exchange of correspondence with Mr Debecker concerning posts to discourage parking on the bank by St Birinus RC Church wall. The Conservation officer is sympathetic. Some estimates for the cost of the work are needed.
- c. The County is willing to pay for the installation of a bike rack near each bus shelter on the by-pass. The Council thought that one bike rack set well back from the by-pass would be sufficient.
- d. The Clerk reported no response from County Highways concerning the repairs to the Meadside/village footpath and Drayton Road.
- e. The Co-op had not yet been contacted about the electrical supply for a Christmas tree in 2009. The matter will be carried forward as will discussion about contracts of employment.
- f. The Clerk said that the SODC website is a good model for information about the Freedom of Information Act and he is modifying the District Council's copy to make it appropriate to the Parish Council's needs.
- g. Details of the 'Good Neighbour Scheme' have been passed to Gill Haworth. Grant applications have to be in by mid March but in fact many of the elements of what is suggested as a good neighbours scheme are already in place, such as the 'pill run' and hospital visiting.
- h. The first set of composite bus time tables are now posted on the village notice boards and personal copies are available from the Post Office. Time tables for travel to and from Abingdon are being prepared.

6 County Councillor's Report

On behalf of County Cllr John Howell MP, Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that she had noted the problem of getting a response from County Highways and would try to follow this up. She will also ask about bringing the cycle path through Dorchester. This is a road safety and travel to school policy matter.

7 Finance

Balance on NatWest Current Account at 30th January £9,556.68

Balance on NatWest Reserve Account at 30th January £39,712.98

The amount of interest received on 31st December was £137.18

The following accounts were approved for payment:

Waste Recycling Group (for Hurst Trust) £1,000.00

Oxford Green Belt Network (sub) £15.00

Super Clean South Ltd (bus shelter graffiti) £97.75

Shaw & Sons Limited (Minute book) £132.19

SODC (dog bin emptying Oct. - Dec.) £199.61

GGD Russell – Clerk's salary £450.11

Easily Ltd (Virtual Data Transfer) £14.72

GGD Russell (admin Nov – Feb) £167.10

Geoff Willis Handyman – 4weeks - (Jan. £235) £225.00

An Appeal was received from South Oxfordshire Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers suggesting a £50 donation. This was declined, since there is no evidence that people from Dorchester on Thames are directly benefiting from its activities.

8 Correspondence and Other Business

i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

It was agreed to order the standard RoSPA Play Safety inspection in 2009. This will take place in July.

Cllr Gibbons said that SODC's grant towards the new climbing frame was £3,250 – half what had been hoped for. It was now necessary to apply to other bodies such as TOE. The Clerk gave Cllr Gibbons details of a scheme from the County Council which gives some grants for Playgrounds. Cllr Gibbons said that the matter is getting urgent due to concerns about the safety of the existing equipment.

ii). Footpaths;

The new light has been installed on the footpath near the old cemetery buildings and has been generally welcomed. Councillors asked that the handyman spread wood chippings along as many paths as possible as the recent wet weather has made them muddy. The Council had received a letter from Mrs Bridgman of 3 Herringcote asking that Parish Council should lock shut the access gate to the footpath by the cemetery. She said that leaving the gate open made it possible for unauthorised vehicles to use the path, describing this as 'an open invitation ...to cause more public disorder.'

Mrs Bridgeman was present at the Council meeting and also stated her case in person. The Chairman and other councillors responded that the gate has been locked open for several months – the Parish Council had made the decision to open the gate at its meeting in September 2008 – and there has been no evidence that any unauthorised vehicles have used the path during this period. The policy of the Council was that its gates should remain open whenever possible. Therefore the opening of the gate had nothing to do with easing the workload of Council staff. The padlock in question has a combination lock rather than a key and so it can be opened to allow access by an undertaker without any member of the Council or its staff being present.

The Chairman assured Mrs Bridgeman, however, that should there be any evidence that unauthorised vehicles are using the path the Council will reconsider the matter.

iii). Cemetery;

The Clerk has been told by IJP Building Conservation that they will replace the missing tiles on the old Cemetery gatehouse.

iv). Allotments

An application for a shed of standard dimensions has been received and was approved. The Society will want a skip for a general tidy up in the next few weeks.

v). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk

a. Lady Lynch-Blosse has again complained about the height of the hump in the pavement behind the bus shelter on High Street. The County's Highways inspector last looked at this matter in February 2007. He will be asked to revisit the site and assess whether the tree root heave has got significantly worse. The Parish Council would prefer that the tree be retained and that a way is found of solving the safety problem which does not involve removal of the tree.

b. There have been a number of complaints about the state of the surface of the footpath from High St. alongside the Village Hall. It needs resurfacing. The Council noted that there is discharge from the Village Hall drain pipes straight on to the path. The Village Hall Management Committee will be asked if the water can be channelled elsewhere.

c. Cllr Mark Stevenson with the Clerk will attend the SODC presentation about the new waste collection service on 4th March.

d. Five members of the Council and the Clerk said that they would like to accept the invitation from UKAEA to an evening talk and tour at Culham Science Centre on Wednesday 22nd April commencing at 18.30.

e. The Council has received details of the consultation process for the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy. These will be circulated.

9 Planning

a. Applications

Upper Farm, Warborough OCC Ref MW.0068/09

Install an anaerobic digestion biogas plant

The Council noted that this application has been strongly supported by Warborough Parish Council and confirmed its approval of the scheme.

P09/W0064 North End House, 92 High Street

Two-storey rear extension and internal alterations with a new dormer and 2 replacement dormer windows and 3 velux roof lights.

The Council agreed to take no strong view about this application.

P08/W1351 Peppers Plot, 71 Watling Lane

Erection of a conservatory

The Council agreed to take no strong view about this application.

(Cllr Williams left the room while the following matter was discussed)

P09/W0085 20 Abingdon Road

Detached garage with glass house

This application had only recently been received and the consultation period does not end until 3rd March. It was agreed that the details would be circulated and returned to the Clerk with comments by the end of February.

b. Other Planning matters

Sutton Courtney Incinerator.

An Application for an Environmental Permit has been made and the details will be sent to the Parish Council for comment in due course. The campaign group SCAI has organised a public meeting to be held in Dorchester Village Hall towards the end of February. SCAI has asked if the Parish Council will make a financial contribution towards the cost of leafleting the village but this was not felt to be appropriate.

The Council noted the following decisions:

PO8/W1312/LB 31 High Street.

Insert small area of single glazing into redundant (sealed up) second front door.

Retain existing door.

Listed building consent granted 2nd February

PO8/W1319 The Old Chapel, 17 Bridge End

Erection of single story extensions to side and rear

Planning permission granted 9th February with several conditions which will be circulated

10 Repairs to Watling Lane

The Clerk reported further receipts from residents amounting to £360 and a new promise of support for £300. Outstanding pledges amount to a further £400.

Thames Water has repaired the damage for which it is accountable but there are other places which Tim Fisher, the contractor, will need to re-do. The Council agreed that the weather at this time of year is not favourable and that the residents should be told by letter that the work will be done in a few months.

11 Grass-cutting contract 2009/10

(Cllr Williams left the room while this matter was discussed)

BCB, the existing contractor, wishes to increase prices in general by 4% although one price (the Recreation Ground) has decreased and two (the War Memorial and Bridge End) have remained the same.

The Council noted that another contractor has put in a speculative bid and has offered prices which are more expensive than BCB. It was agreed that in view of its more competitive prices BCB should be awarded the contract for another year but should be told that in the past year there had been occasional concerns about the quality of the work that they had done.

Cllr Williams rejoined the meeting. He said that BCB has recently acquired a new mowing machine which is much better in wet weather than the old one. It also has a 'cut & collect' facility. Because this slows down the rate at which the grass is cut it is a more expensive option but one which could occasionally be considered if the conditions demand it.

BCB has also submitted a schedule of prices for sundry other maintenance tasks: hedge cutting, weed spraying, scrub clearance etc. A copy was given to Cllr Day.

12 Car parking provision near Dorchester Bridge

The Council noted that the Lease has now been registered with the Land Registry. The chairman said that he had discussed with Gilbert Hobbs how the site could be made suitable for use as a temporary car park. The Chairman will also take advice on this from Cllrs Gibbons, Hill and Williams.

Cllr Mrs Metcalfe has prepared a discussion paper to assist in the forwarding planning of how the new facility should best be used and explained to residents. It was agreed that the Council's working-party on parking should be re-convened. This would include Cllrs Mrs Metcalfe and Mrs Nudds as well as the four councillors mentioned above.

13 Queen Street/High Street drainage work

The correspondence between the Morrisons and the County engineers was noted. The Clerk has been assured by Gordon Hunt that the Morrisons have been met on site and are now content with the scheme. For his part Don Morrison has confirmed to the Clerk that they have accepted that the technicalities of the plan seem reasonable and hope that the scheme will work in practice as intended.

14 Any Other Urgent Business

- a. It was suggested that someone from SODC should be invited as guest speaker for the Annual Parish Meeting so that the new scheme could be explained.
- b. Village maintenance issues that were reported included fly-tipping in Drayton Road, glass around the bottle bank and an increase in dog fouling. The Clerk will report all these problems to Public Amenities at SODC as well as the damaged street sign for Drayton Road.

Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.