

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th January 2009 commencing at 7.30 pm

The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs. Mrs M Metcalfe (Vice-Chairman) M Day, S Gibbons, C Hill, 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

None; all parish councillors were present but District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

2 Public Participation

Tim Walsha of Malthouse Lane told the Council that vehicle access in and out of Malthouse Lane is frequently blocked by either delivery vehicles with business at the Co-Op or the cars of people shopping. He wondered if there is any action that the Parish Council can take to prevent this from happening. While this is not something within the Parish Council's direct powers it was agreed that the Clerk would talk to the Co-op management and report back.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds declared an interest in PO8/W1319 The Old Chapel, 17 Bridge End, since she lives next door to this property, and Cllr Chris Hill said he also has an interest as a near neighbour.

As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Hurst Water Meadow, Cllr Chris Hill declared an interest in the grant application by the Trust.

4 Minutes of the Meetings held 10th and 30th December 2008

The Minutes of both meetings were approved and signed as true records. The Council recorded its thanks to Cllr Mrs Metcalfe who had taken the minutes of the meeting on 10th December when the Clerk was away.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. It was agreed that the Council should re-open conversations with the CoOp's property management team to see if the special low voltage electrical supply for the Parish Christmas tree could be in place for Christmas 2010. As part of the same agreement the Co-Op had agreed to instal more barriers to prevent cars being driven onto the York stone paving. This would also be raised again.
- b. Cllr Stevenson said that the invitation to Cynth Napper of the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum to attend the Council meeting on 11th March had been accepted.

6 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

7 County Councillor's Report

Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, representing County Cllr John Howell MP, said that the County Council is trying to assist business in the County by employing local contractors as much as possible.

She suggested that the Parish Council should keep in contact with County Highways by repeating its requests for action at regular and frequent intervals.

8 Finance

Balance on NatWest Current Account at 31 st December	£12,113.25
Balance on NatWest Reserve Account at 31 st December	£39,712.98
The following accounts were approved for payment:	
Tim Fisher – repairs to Watling Lane	£6,320.00
Chris Drewett Signs (repair to vandalised sign)	£105.80
Thames Water (Sept – November)	£105.64
Village Hall – room hire	£108.00
GGD Russell – Clerk’s salary	£474.79
Easily Ltd (domain name extension)	£10.34
Geoff Willis Handyman – 4weeks - (Dec. £235)	£235.00

As a member of the Board of Trustees, Cllr Chris Hill declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion.

Appeal from Hurst Water Meadow Trust

On behalf of the Trust Dr Peter Pritchard said that he was seeking a donation from the Parish Council of £2,160 towards the purchase of the land known as ‘Old Bridge Meadow’. This would satisfy the requirement for third party funding, which needs to be paid to the Waste Recycling Group.

Dr Pritchard agreed that the Trust should hold a public meeting to present to village residents its plans for the meadow. This would be held independently of the Parish Council.

The Council raised with Dr Pritchard the question of the number of members of the Parish Council who were invited to join the Hurst’s Board of Trustees. For many years there have been two councillors on the board but since Chris Sleight moved abroad this had been reduced to one councillor only, namely Cllr Hill. Dr Pritchard agreed that the Trust would consider inviting a member of the Parish Council to join the Board next time a vacancy occurs.

The Council agreed to contribute £1,000 towards the appeal. It would consider the matter again when finalising the 2009/10 budget.

Setting of Precept 2009/10

The Council reviewed the Clerk’s latest estimate of the Council’s income and expenditure in the current financial year.

This produced a forecast that the Council’s reserves as at 31st March would be the equivalent of one year’s precept – which was the target that the Council had set for itself. Cllr Williams advised the Council that even though there is a plan to bring the field adjacent to ‘Old Bridge Meadow’ into a condition where it could provide a facility for event car parking the cost of doing this need only be around £2,500.

The Council unanimously agreed that the Precept for 2009/10 should remain unchanged at £37,750.

9 Correspondence and Other Business:

i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The painting of the exterior woodwork will be done when the weather improves.

ii). Footpaths;

Recent deliveries of wood chippings have been used to spread across footpaths, especially from Drayton Road to The Hurst. The area leading under the bridge out of

the Bridge End car park gets very muddy and the handyman will be asked to spread chippings there. Dr Pritchard has offered his help with transport.

iii). Cemetery;

The repairs to the tiles have not yet been done. If IJP cannot do this work Tim Fisher will be asked to do so.

iv). Allotments

Nothing to report. The Clerk will ask if the Society wishes to have a skip this year.

v). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. Details of the 'Good Neighbour Scheme' and grants available via Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) will be passed to Gill Howarth. Many of the activities suggested by OCVA are already taking place but there may be others where the support of an outside agency would be helpful (www.ocva.org.uk)

ii. The Council noted there will be a Police 'surgery' on Wednesday 18th February from 5.30 – 6.30 p.m. Councillors commented about the recent burglaries and other incidents within the village. There is concern about whether the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme is fully functioning. The Clerk will put a notice in Dorchester News asking residents to talk to the area police team on 18th February about any concerns that they have about law and order issues.

iii. The Council has been notified of the closure of Queen Street for drainage works, to be followed by work in High Street, with effect from 2nd February. This work is designed to remove the problem of flooding in Queen Street by diverting the water into the River Thames near Dorchester Bridge.

iv. The Chairman has been approached by Denis De Berger on behalf of St Birinus RC Church. The Church is concerned about cars being parked upon the grass bank by the boundary wall. The Council agreed that it would support the Church in its effort to deter this parking, which is thought to be damaging the foundations of the wall, and to contact the District Council's Conservation team to see what scheme they will accept.

10 Planning:

a. Applications

PO8/W1312/LB 31 High Street.

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

Retain existing door.

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

Cllrs Mrs Jenny Nudds and Chris Hill declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion.

PO8/W1319 The Old Chapel, 17 Bridge End

Erection of single story extensions to side and rear

The Council agreed that it had no strong views about this application but the Clerk was asked to comment in his reply that the dormer window which is described in the planning application as being 'existing' is in fact newly installed.

b. Other Planning matters

PO8/W1218/LB, 90 High Street (Cranmer Cottage),

The Council noted that Listed Building consent has been granted. Mr Philip Collings has written to the Council acknowledging with thanks the Council's support.

11 Repairs to Watling Lane

The repairs have now been completed and have been generally welcomed. Extra material and hours were required to finish the job, however. Tim Fisher has not charged any extra for the labour but has passed on the cost of the additional material so that the account totals £6,320 instead of £5,500.

Residents of Watling Lane have been asked if they would contribute towards this extra cost and, so far, one has done so. The Council noted that it may be required to fund £600 of this additional cost.

A burst water main has subsequently damaged some of the repairs and Thames Water have been asked for an assurance that they will make good the area concerned.

12 Car parking provision near Dorchester Bridge

The Lease has been returned to Franklins for sending off to the Land Registry. The Chairman has agreed that the Parish Council will pay its own legal fees.

It was agreed that the Council's working-party on parking should be re-convened.

This would involve the Chairman, Councillors Gibbons and Hill and additional representation invited from Dorchester Abbey PCC, St Birinus RC Church, Dorchester St Birinus Church of England School, the Village Hall Management Committee, the Village Carbon Project and the Dorchester Festival Committee.

It was suggested that there should be a census of village car ownership and a recording of the routine, daily car-parking requirements of local residents

It was agreed that the Council needed to purchase more traffic cones so that areas of Queen Street and Bridge End could be provided with some parking controls.

Additional information signs would also be required. An estimate is required of what these purchases would cost.

13 Village bus services

The first of two composite bus timetables has been completed and will be copied for distribution via the Post Office. Combining all the information from the different services providers in one publication make bus travel planning much easier to do.

The Council thanked Cllr Stevenson for compiling these documents.

14 Freedom of Information Act

The Clerk has obtained the template for the scheme that should be followed. Most of the information required can be accessed on-line, especially through the Village website. If there are any cases when the Clerk has to provide paper copies of documents the Council agreed that the charge would be 10p per A4 sheet plus postage at cost (if applicable).

15 Contracts of employment

An 11 page 'model' contract & job specification for the Clerk has been received from OALC and it was agreed that initially this should be reviewed by the Chairman and Clerk to see what is relevant and what, if anything, is not required. A simplified version could then be prepared for the Village Handyman.

It was accepted that both Clerk and Handyman should have contracts of employment.

16 Any Other Urgent Business

i. It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should take place on Wednesday 13th May. This would be followed by a short meeting of the Parish Council. A guest speaker will be invited nearer the time.

ii. Cllr Stevenson said that he will include a reference to the underpass at Bridge End in the school travel plan. Cllr Williams said that if BCB has any surplus wood chippings he would arrange for them to be delivered for spreading in that area. The Clerk will enquire whether the Footpaths officer will arrange for official signage to indicate the path starting by the bus stop.

- iii. The by-pass bus stops have been defaced by graffiti. The maintenance of these shelters is the Parish Council's responsibility so a price for cleaning is required.
- iv. Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds asked if it would be possible to obtain any bike racks for installation near the by-pass bus stops.
- v. Cllr Stevenson said that the service which offers recycling of 'tetrapacks' has been so much in demand that a special collection point is now required. The Council confirmed that it has no objection if this is located by the bottle bank at the top of Oxford Road.

The Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.