

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th October 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, Mark Stevenson and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Cllr John Cotton and five residents.

### 1 Apologies for absence

None; all Councillors were present

### 2 Public Participation

Cllr Mark Stevenson joined the members of the public as he presented details of his applications for 28 High Street. He said that there were three elements to the proposals; the change of use, the fact that the building is listed and the planned development itself.

He described the proposal as an enhancement of the property, with the shop targeted at local residents so that no extra traffic and demand for car parking would be created. Drawings submitted with an amendment to the applications illustrated the height of the building above the existing fence. The extension to the kitchen is for domestic use, not part of the proposed café. The applications have been prepared with the support of the owner of the premises, Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds. Produce sold through the proposed shop will be either home grown or locally sourced so the traffic impact would be minimal.

Next-door neighbours Stuart Mucklow and Lisa Walker of 30 High Street told the Council of their objections to the proposals. They were opposed to the change of use, the proposed alterations and the scale of the extension. They suggested that the new business use would have an impact upon their property, particularly in relation to noise and smells. They described the plans as inaccurate and not giving a correct impression of the scale of the proposed extension. They drew attention to the date stone on the rear wall of the property which they said should not be obscured and said that the concept of the 'green roof' was not explained clearly or with any information about how it would be maintained. In their view the proposed extension was 'unneighbourly'.

### 3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr M Stevenson, as the applicant, declared a prejudicial interest in P09/W0758 & P09/W0759/LB 28 High Street as did Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds as the property's owner. Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe declared a personal interest in the same applications since she had helped the applicant with the business plan for the proposed café.

Cllr Chris Hill declared a personal interest in P09/W0958/RET Spindle Trees, 1a Oxford Road because the next door neighbour, who is objecting, is a friend.

### 4 Minutes of the Meeting held 9th September 2009

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

### 5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Cllr Hill said that he would take the papers from Chinnor Parish Council and adapt them into a Flu Pandemic Plan for Dorchester-on-Thames.

- b. Posts on bank by St Birinus RC Church; The County Area Engineer's insistence that the work should only be carried by an approved County contractor had greatly increased the price of the job. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that she would speak to Peter Ronald and see if there is any way of cutting the cost back.
- c. Allens Pit complaints about noise; The neighbour who complained about the noise from motorbikes on the field has been given a diary to record the details of any further problems. The Chairman said that he had himself called SODC's emergency 'out of hours' number and reported that he found the service completely ineffective as a means of getting immediate action. His call had simply been logged for attention when the offices open on Monday morning. District Cllr John Cotton said that there had recently been cuts in the budget of the out of hours service.
- d. The Council noted a letter from The Dorchester on Thames Society which thanked the Parish Council and the Abbey PCC for sponsoring the very successful Newcomers Evening on 24th September.
- e. Abbey View Meadow; the Chairman has agreed that members of Dorchester Angling Club may use the Meadow to park on their match days, which occur 8 times in the current year. The dates of these matches will be given to Cllrs Mrs Jenny Nudds and Chris Hill.

#### 6. District Councillor's Report

Cllr John Cotton said that the Head of SODC Planning, Adrian Duffield, has apologised to Sarah Pickford about the way in which Planning Application P09/W0679 for development at 4 Monks Close had been determined. There had been a major administrative error but that would not alter the District Council's decision to approve the application. Only a Judicial Review could do that.

The introduction of wheelie bins during the summer has had a significant impact upon the recycling rate which across the District has reached at least 70%.

The Council has begun considering 2010/11 spending and a zero increase in Council Tax is still a realistic target. There have been significant savings from the introduction of joint management teams, joint contracts and new operations management of the District's leisure centres.

#### 7. County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that a new Gravel Extraction Strategy Document has put Dorchester-on-Thames and district back in the frame for consideration as a possible site for future gravel extraction. She has called a public meeting to be held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November, commencing at 10.30 a.m. in The Greet Hall, Warborough to discuss measures which include reviving PAGE (Parishes against Gravel Extraction). Consultation papers should be issued early in November.

The South East Plan has been adopted but the element for development south of Grenoble Road has been dropped in the face of five legal challenges.

The meeting held with the motorcyclists who gather at H Café on Monday nights had gone very well. Cllr Lindsay-Gale had just come from a meeting with the committee of the club who were now committed to tracing and bringing into line that relatively small group of people who bring them into disrepute. Hopefully this heralds a new era of co-existence.

Cllr Lindsay-Gale will be a member of the County Council's planning committee on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October that will be deciding the future of the applications for incinerators at Ardley and Sutton Courtenay.

#### 8. Finance:

NatWest Current account at 30th September	£27,654.29
Nat West Reserve Account at 30th September	£27,741.59

The following accounts were approved for payment:

Berinsfield Community Business (grass cutting September)	£704.21
Jenks Oxford Ltd (scheduled work Cemetery & Rec)	£1,357.00
Jenks Oxford Ltd (Abbey Closed Churchyard)	£885.50
Thames Water Utilities (Sportsground)	£97.59
Thames Water Utilities (Allotments)	£318.26
Easily Limited (village website virtual server)	£45.94
Dorchester on Thames Society (Newcomers wine))	£30.35
Margot Metcalfe (Newcomers food)	£27.65
GGD Russell – Clerk’s salary	£450.11
GGD Russell (Admin September/October + gifts)	£106.86
Geoff Willis Handyman – 5 weeks (Sept. £252.45)	£283.05
Dorchester Village Hall (contribution to appeal)	£1,000.00
Dorchester Village Hall (loan)	£12,000.00
Tim Fisher (further repairs to Watling Lane)	£760.42
	<u>£18,066.94</u>

## 9 Correspondence and Other Business:

### i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

All grant monies have been received. The payment from TOE (£4,000) has come via the Playground Appeal Committee.

Peter Keable has agreed that he will cut the perimeter hedge in the next two weeks.

### ii). Footpaths;

Cllr Mark Stevenson reported that the planned meeting between David Gauden (Meadside resident) and Mrs Butcher to discuss using the Overy Mill path as a ‘walk-to-school’ route had not taken place and an alternative arrangement is now needed. The Clerk will contact Brian Purcell-Smith about having work done to clear the vegetation from the path on Henley Road opposite to Meadside.

### iii). Allotments;

Allotment holders have been very good about paying rents on time but, in view of the unsatisfied demand for allotments, the Parish Council agreed that unless allotments are cultivated according to the rules the allotments might have to be given up.

### iv). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk.

a. Thames Valley Police have notified the Council of their long-running campaign against anti-social behaviour which starts with posters about ‘Trick or Treat’. It was agreed to obtain a supply of these posters for distribution through Gill Haworth.

b. It was agreed to hold over the appointment of a councillor as Hurst Water Meadow Trustee until the next meeting.

c. The Council has been contacted by ‘Local Works’ about the Sustainable Communities Act. Cllr Stevenson said that this Act can only have an impact if South Oxfordshire District Council signs up to its provisions. New legislation, however, may enable groups of local councils to take action if principal councils do not. It was agreed that the Clerk should write about this to John Howell MP along the lines recommended by Local Works.

## 10 Planning

### a. Applications

(Cllr C Hill had declared a personal interest in this application and took no part in the discussion).  
P09/W0958/RET Spindle Trees, 1a Oxford Road

New detached garage with storage over (amendment to previous approved garage under planning reference P08/W1065)

The Council had received a letter from Ian Thompson, 4 Abingdon Road, objecting to this application for retrospective permission. The applicants had been given permission to construct a garage but had done so in a different location to the one for which permission was already granted.

The Council decided that the decision should be left to the Planning Officers.

P09/W09502/RLB George Hotel, High Street

Provision of bathrooms to 6 no. hotel bedrooms

The Council was surprised at being asked about an application for 'Retrospective Listed Building' consent since such a thing had not been heard of before. It was agreed that until this matter was clarified the Council would not make a decision.

(Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds and Mark Stevenson had declared prejudicial interests in the following applications and left the room while the matters were discussed. Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe had declared a personal interest and took no part in the decision process.)

P09/W0758 & P09/W0759/LB 28 High Street

Proposed alterations and extension to existing building to include new shop front and change of use of ground floor showroom (A1 use) to food store and coffee shop (A3 use)

The Council had received several comments about this application both during Public Participation earlier in the meeting and by email. After much discussion the Council agreed to recommend that both Applications be refused.

Although Dorchester-on-Thames may well need another café the Council is not convinced that this is the right location for it. A successful 'food store and coffee shop', as the business is described, would have a major impact upon the neighbouring properties, including those opposite. Although the applicant assures the Council that there will be few, if any, extra vehicles making deliveries, during opening hours there would certainly be an increase in noise, cooking odours and traffic along with an increased demand for parking in an area of the village which is already busy most of the time.

The proposed area for 'food store and coffee shop' use does not seem to have adequate space for food preparation and is lacking in toilet facilities. There seems to be no clear division between what is retail space and what is reserved for domestic/private use.

Although the proposals for changing the appearance of the front of the building have been generally welcomed, the extension to the rear is a great cause for concern. The Council does not approve of the proposed flat roof extension. Both its design and the specification of materials to be used are considered inappropriate for a Listed Building in a Conservation Area.

Finally, the scale of the proposed extension is considered to be 'unneighbourly'.

#### b. Other Planning matters

(i) 6 Bridge End, PO9/W0910/LD

Conservatory built to rear of property

Request for Lawful Development. Does the Council have any representations to make concerning the history of the land for the last 10 years?

The Council decided that it wished to make no representation on this matter.

(ii) Statement of Community Involvement Review

Councillors may, if they wish, make comments on this matter. The Clerk will re-send the details of the review. Comments have been requested by 28 October 2009.

#### 11 Report on meeting with Footpaths Officer on 7th October

The letter received earlier by the Clerk from Mark Sumner had been circulated. A letter from Mark Sumner's manager, Hugh Potter, sent to Mr Jerry Nudds was shown to the Council. In this letter Mr Potter had repeated the allegation that the barrier on the footpath linking Bridge End with Wittenham Lane had been wrongly erected by the Parish Council without seeking the County Council's approval. The fact that this erroneous allegation was still being made seemed to indicate that matters thought to have been clarified at the meeting with the Footpaths Officer on 7<sup>th</sup> October had not been passed on.

The Chairman said that he wanted to receive a letter from the County Council which absolutely absolved the Parish Council from any responsibility should the removal of the barrier, against the wishes of the Parish Council, result in an accident. A replacement barrier, possibly a kissing gate, would be acceptable. This would improve access in line with the Disability Discrimination Act while not allowing cycles to be ridden down the path. The removal of the barrier and the erection of 'No cycling' signs at either end of the path did not satisfy the Parish Council's requirements. It was understood that no further action would be taken until the advice of officers from County Highways had been received.

Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe, as the Councillor with responsibility for Parish footpaths, said that she was willing to take part in these ongoing discussions

*After discussion of this item the Council, noting that the time was now 10.40 p.m., agreed to adjourn the meeting until Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, to start at 7.00 p.m. Cllr Mrs Jenny Nudds said that she would be unable to attend.*

#### ***The Parish Council reconvened at 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009***

#### 12 Ownership of Bridge End Car Park – liability for rates.

On behalf of SODC, Capita Local Government Services is attempting to hold the Parish Council liable for paying Business Rates upon the Bridge End car park. The Parish Council believes that the land was owned and administered by Bullingdon Rural District Council, the predecessor to SODC. It is probable, therefore, that SODC now owns not only the Public Conveniences but also the car park.

#### 13 Anti-social behaviour – car parking implications

The Council was told that a car belonging to someone attending an event in Dorchester Abbey had been moved several yards from where it had been legitimately parked on the Recreation Ground, which had been opened for that purpose, and then set on fire. Two residents of Oxford Road had called the police and fire brigade. The registration number of the vehicle had been recorded before the fire finally consumed the car. The owner, from Great Tew, had made arrangements with her insurance company for the car to be removed and the Police were making efforts to find who was responsible. BCB will make good the damaged area of turf.

The Parish Council's insurers say that the Council is only liable if it has acted negligently. In this context 'negligence' might occur if the Council failed to warn other users of the Council's parking facility on the Recreation Ground that they did so at their own risk. The Clerk will take advice on what might be an appropriate form of notice to be posted at the entrance to the Recreation Ground. The Abbey bookings

office has been asked to advise concert promoters booking the Recreation Ground that neither the Abbey PCC nor the Parish Council will be liable - it is at the user's own risk – and the local area police group will be given notice of all forthcoming major events when the Recreation Ground is being used for parking. The local Neighbourhood Watch group has already been informed.

#### 14 Consultation on speed limit changes Burcot & Shillingford

The Parish Council agreed to support the proposal to extend the restricted speed area from the existing 30 mph area at Shillingford by extending a 40 mph area up to and including the junction of the Dorchester by-pass and Henley Road.

The Council also agreed that the area between Burcot and Clifton Hampden should have the speed limit increased from 30 mph to 50 mph.

These changes will not come into force until well into 2010.

#### 15 Thirteen Parishes Group

District Cllr John Cotton had earlier told the meeting that plans for Didcot's new house-building programme will be announced within the next few weeks and that expansion towards the north of Ladygrove was again a possibility. There will be another round of consultation in early 2010.

It was agreed that although the Parish Council would no longer have one councillor holding a specific brief to represent Dorchester at meetings of the Thirteen Parishes Group, the Clerk would ask the Group to retain him on the distribution list for minutes and agenda of future meetings.

#### 16 BT Kiosk Bridge End

The Parish Council has been offered the opportunity to 'adopt' the BT kiosk in Bridge End in return for a nominal payment of £1. This would mean that the telephone service will be removed and the future maintenance cost of the Kiosk would become the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Bridge End Kiosk is Grade II listed (one of nine in the SODC area) and has been used 31 times in the last 12 months. Listed kiosks are not being put up for removal at this stage even if Parish Councils fail to adopt them, nor will the telephone service be removed immediately.

Much as the Bridge End BT Kiosk is liked, the Parish Council could see no benefit in taking on the responsibility for its maintenance at this stage and will decline the offer.

#### 17 Midsomer Murders Tourist Trail

The Clerk has been told that the District Council will be organising a meeting of all interested parties.

#### 18 Any Other Urgent Business

a. Cllr Mark Stevenson has suggested that Anna Kennedy, the ORCC Rural Housing Enabler, should again visit the Parish Council.

b. Cllr Mark Stevenson said that the launch of the Carbon Group's campaign in conjunction with the Energy Savings Trust would take place towards the end of November. The Group is also publishing a calendar of events for 2010. He commented that the County Council's rejection of both planning applications for incinerators was by no means the end of the campaign. There could be appeals from both applicants.

c. The Council agreed that Dorchester News should explain that while residents are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings and to speak on any subject at the start

of each meeting, individual speeches should be limited to 5 minutes and the whole of Public Participation would normally not extend beyond 15 minutes.

Residents would be told, however, that they could contact members of the Council in writing and the Clerk would circulate any documents that were submitted to him by email.

d. Sample standing orders had been circulated for discussion and further consideration. Most Councillors, however, felt that very few rules need to be laid down, limited perhaps to the figure of contingency expenditure that the Chairman is permitted to approve between meetings without reference to the full Council (currently this is £300 and is probably about right) and the value of a contract that must be put out to tenders from at least three contractors (currently this is £1,000 and should probably be increased).

The adjourned meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.