

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th January 2010 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs. Maurice Day, Stuart Gibbons, Chris Hill, Jenny Nudds, Mark Stevenson and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting was County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale.

1 Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman recorded the Parish Council's delight at the award of MBE to Mrs Mary Tame in the recent New Year Honours List for services to Heritage and to the community of Dorchester-on-Thames. The Clerk was asked to write to Mary with the Council's congratulations and to place a notice in Dorchester News which recorded the Council's pleasure at the award.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Margot Metcalfe who is at another engagement.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gibbons declared a personal interest in P09/W1172 7 Meadside as he is a near neighbour of this property and knows the applicants.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held 9th December 2009

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

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr de Berger and explain that, although the Parish Council would try to facilitate the work using its contacts with the District and County Councils, there is no possibility of making a financial contribution toward the cost of installing posts on the bank by St Birinus RC Church.
- b. Cllr Hill said that he has arranged meetings about planning for a Flu Pandemic and other emergencies on 21st January; one in the afternoon another in the evening.
- c. The official Council photograph has been postponed until Wednesday March 10th. All Councillors said that they expect to be present on that date.
- d. Following a report from the Chairman about a site visit that he made to Drayton Road since the last meeting it was agreed to ask the County Council to proceed with the plan for a new street light in Drayton Road.

6. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend the meeting.

7 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale reported on the process of consultation that was being followed on the extraction sites for more supplies of sand and gravel. The County's allocation has been increased and several potential sites have now been identified. This phase of allocation is for the period up to 2026. Those sites which are not selected this time may well be selected post 2026.

The possible sites include the field across the road from Meadside and Overy; between the by-pass and Warborough; between Warborough and Benson; fields in the area of Drayton St Leonard, Newington and Stadhampton; fields between Clifton Hampden and Culham.

The first meeting of PAGE will take place on 19th January and Dorchester Parsh Council is invited to send a representative (this was later confirmed as Cllr Margot Metcalfe). PAGE will set up a website. Major archaeological evidence of the importance of some of the proposed sites has already been found and more areas will be surveyed.

Cllr Lindsay-Gale agreed with the Parish Council's view that it would like to send more than one representative to the County's Minerals Spatial Strategy Workshops which take place in Benson Village Hall on 17th March.

On other matters Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that Viridor, the applicants for building an efw incinerator at Ardley, has announced that it will appeal against the refusal of planning permission and the County Council is supporting them. The intentions of the applicant at Sutton Courtney are not known.

Cllr Mark Stevenson asked Cllr Lindsay-Gale for her assistance in progressing the cycle route to Oxford. The Parish Council is in favour of this proposal and so is Marsh Baldon Parish Council who are lobbying their County Councillor, David Turner.

8 Finance:

NatWest Current account at 31 st December	£9,354.84
Nat West Reserve Account at 31 st October	£27,741.59
The following cheques were approved for payment:	
BDO – annual audit fee	£483.00
Thames Water (Sportsground, pavilion and allotments)	£87.43
Gilbert Hobbs (groundworks Abbey View Meadow)	£230.00
Berinsfield Community Business (hedge planting)	£391.00
Berinsfield Community Business (footpath & fence)	£316.25
Downend & Benning Partnership (brackets for signs)	£27.60
GGD Russell – Clerk's salary	£657.21
Geoff Willis Handyman – 4 weeks (Dec £221.85)	£221.85
Oxford Association for the Blind (donation)	£75.00

Clerk's Salary: annual settlement between National Association of Local Councils and Society of Local Council Clerks. The Council agreed to continue paying the Clerk in line with this national agreement. The new monthly rate would be £470.82. This is with effect from April 2009 so this month there is some back-pay due as well.

The Council had received an appeal from Oxford Association for the Blind who help 8 residents of the village. It was agreed that £75 should be donated.

The Council noted that the Village Hall Management Committee has repaid £6,000 of the loan made towards the cost of installing central-heating.

The Council unanimously agreed that there should be no change to the Precept in 2010/11 and this will remain at £37,750.

Audit Report:

The Council noted the Report from the auditors BDO. A sample Financial Risk Assessment has been received and will be circulated. A version of this will be produced that fits the Parish Council's needs. It will be completed and then reviewed annually.

The Council considered the Auditor's suggestion that it should increase its Fidelity Guarantee. The Council's insurers, Allianz, advise that the cost of increasing it to cover Council's highest likely bank balance would be £165. The Council decided that it did not wish to incur this extra expense and the Guarantee would remain as it is.

The Audit had also suggested that the Council considers obtaining current valuations of all its assets but in practice the recreation ground, allotments, and burial ground are very hard to value and the Council will not take this up.

The Council will review its insurance cover very carefully before it is renewed this year. The Clerk has been approached by another firm of specialist insurers who have requested an opportunity to quote for the Council's business in 2010/11.

9 Correspondence and Other Business:

i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Wicksteed say no maintenance is required because all bearings were greased last time. The inspector says that we should keep an eye on the safety grass and the webbing on the pendulum swing. Cllr Gibbons said accessing greasing points on the equipment is difficult. The Clerk will check what keys he has to open the mechanisms.

The Council was very pleased and grateful to learn that Mrs Sheila Puri has offered to fund the purchase of a new bench for the Recreation Ground. The Clerk will write and thank her. The bench is to be purchased when the weather improves.

ii). Footpaths;

There have been complaints about the state of the path which runs alongside the Village Hall and links High Street with Queen Street. The surface at the High Street end was repaired by County Highways quite recently but there are signs that the surface is being damaged by tree root growth. Other parts of the path are damaged by water run-off from the Village Hall roof which has no gulley to take it towards the drain in Queen Street. The Clerk will report these matters to Highways.

iii). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk.

a. Information about the needs of vulnerable adults in the current weather will be passed to Cllr Hill for inclusion in his group's discussions about emergency planning.

b. Street Name Plates at High Street/Oxford Road and Drayton Road junction; some recommendations from Sally-Ann Worsley of SODC had been circulated. It was agreed that these recommendations should be accepted except for the suggestion that a road sign on the western side of Oxford Road is no longer required. It was thought that this sign is useful to visitors who have travelled to the village by bus.

c. Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill; the Clerk was asked to contact John Howell MP and ask if he would support this bill through Parliament.

d. Graham Beland has made a request for a dog waste bin at Meadside lay-by. Cllr Stuart Gibbons was asked if he would assess the need for this and report back.

e. Laura Bristow has written to the Clerk asking for information about the Parish Council's view on switching off some street lights for part of the night. The Chairman said that he and the Clerk would do a survey of the village before the next meeting.

f. ORCC has sent the Council a copy of the Parish Transport Representative Handbook. This will be circulated.

10 Planning

a. Applications

(Cllr Stuart Gibbons had declared a personal interest in this application and took no part in the following discussion)

P09/W1172 7 Meadside as amended

Proposed side and rear extensions and removal of existing single storey garden room

The Parish Council had no strong views about this application or the amendment.

P09/W1207/RET 1 Forge Cottages Malthouse Lane

Demolition of flat roof shed and erection of new pitched roof storage building.

The Council noted letters from neighbours and their opposition to this application based upon concerns about access and the use of an adjoining wall that was owned by a third party. The Council thought that the application should be refused,

P09/W1253 20 Oxford Road (just received 13/1/10)

Demolition of existing rear kitchen/conservatory extension and construction of new pitched roof single storey kitchen/utility extension, new side entrance porch, and flue for wood burning stove.

The Parish Council had no strong views about this application

b. Other Planning matters

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) to food store and coffee shop (A3)

Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent given 9th December

P09/W0958/RET Spindle Trees, 1a Oxford Road

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

Planning Permission granted 9th December

P09/W0991/LB The Nook 37 High Street

To replace the existing glazing in the modern (c. 1977) extension at the rear of the property with new energy efficient sealed double glazed units.

Planning Permission granted 10th December

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

Certificate of Lawful Development granted 14th December

P09/W1049 33 Abingdon Road

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

Planning Permission granted 15th December

P09/W1057 1 Chequers Court Bridge End

New side extension consisting of car port and garden store. New roof lights in bathrooms (2 no).

Planning Permission granted 11th December

11 Abbey View Meadow car park

Drainage is a matter of concern as is the establishment of a firm and level grass sward across the area that will be used for parking.

12 Parishes Against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

The Council has received an invitation to send one representative to a briefing meeting at Benson Village Hall on 17th March from 7.30 – 9.30 p.m. The Clerk will write and ask for an allocation of more places.

13 Affordable Housing

A report from Jenny Berrill, Housing Needs Officer of SODC, said that on the Housing Register there are six applicants from Dorchester-on-Thames. Four of them need one bed roomed accommodation, one needs two bedrooms and one needs three. Out of 457 names on the general Register, 7 have made Dorchester-on-Thames their first choice, 34 their second choice and 20 their third choice.

Jenny Berrill had commented that these figures do not demonstrate a high level of need from people actually residing in the village but pointed out that, within the greater number of people who do not reside in the village, but have expressed an

interest in living in Dorchester, there may be people who do have a connection to Dorchester through family etc and who would like to return to the village. This may be to receive or give support to a family member. There is, however, no quantitative information on this point.

After some discussion the Council decided to take no further action for the time being.

14 Dual carriageway noise reduction

On 6th January the Clerk had circulated a proposal received from Shammy Puri of Drayton Road to study the feasibility of erecting an embankment along the Dorchester by-pass to shield the village from traffic and jet ski noise. It was agreed that discussion of this item should be held over until February.

15 Midsomer Murders Tourist Trail

A recent meeting at SODC had promoted the idea that those parts of the District with strong links to the making of Midsomer Murders could do more to promote visitors by publicising this connection to the many millions of fans that the programme has all round the world. The Buckinghamshire tourism officers have already created a website for their locations.

The Clerk has spoken to James Turner from 'Hidden Britain' who seems interested in helping, not just with Dorchester but also the whole area and he will also investigate the possibility of funding.

The Clerk will use Dorchester News to see if anyone has local photographs which could be used within the Dorchester Parish website.

16 Date of Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday 5th May in the Village Hall. This would be followed by a short Parish Council meeting to discuss any urgent business.

Suggestions for a guest speaker at the APM would be welcome.

17 Any Other Urgent Business

The Clerk has received the schedule of prices for grass cutting and the other scheduled maintenance activities carried out by BCB on a regular basis throughout the year. Confirmation that the Council has accepted these prices will be given at the February Council meeting.

Meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.