

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th January 2012 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, presided; present were Cllrs. Ken Bryan, Maurice Day, Stuart Gibbons, Sally Greenaway, Chris Hill and Mark Stevenson with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting was District Cllr Marc Hiles.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mike Kitson and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3 Minutes of the Meeting held 14th December 2011

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

4 County Councillor's Report

In a written report, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that she has had to agree to a delay in the Minerals & Waste Framework being presented to Cabinet. This was originally scheduled for 17th January but, due to the amount of work that needs to be done in response to the consultation on the proposals, the County officers would not be ready in time. One new issue that now has to be considered is the change that has been made by the Inspector to SODC's Local Development Framework.

Housing that was planned for the west of Wallingford is now going to Winterbrook to the south, and this is close to the proposed extraction site at Cholsey.

The 'CAGE' campaign is now arguing that the whole consultation process for selecting the extraction site needs to be done again.

There is a meeting of PAGE on 8th March. The Chairman is unable to attend and Cllr Chris Hill will attend in her place.

5 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr Marc Hiles said that the villages, including Berinsfield, are all very aware that the PAGE campaign, once thought to have been successfully concluded, is far from over. How the sand/gravel is transported from where it has been taken to where it is needed is a critical consideration. CAGE is arguing that the Wallingford by-pass is not a suitable route but in the PAGE area the road system is even less adequate.

The Berinsfield Development Group is scheduled to meet on 16th January. Stuart Scott-Ely has attended a Berinsfield Parish Council meeting and it is suggested that he should be invited to attend Dorchester Parish Council. He has plans for development and it would be useful to learn about these plans first-hand.

The Chairman told Cllr Hiles about the ongoing exchange of correspondence concerning the planning consultation process with reference to one of the applications on the former Hallidays site. Cllr Hiles said that he was aware of other parishes that had had difficulties with the process. The Clerk said that when the on-line consultation started all replies were given a reference number. This has not been the case for some time. Dorchester Parish Council is no longer using the on-line system.

6 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cllr Hill confirmed that the Council's salt supply has been delivered and is now stored around the village. The salt spreader has been delivered and assembled and two snow shovels purchased. The County has replaced the two vandalised salt bins by the bridge

over the by-pass and filled them with salt. Unfortunately, the contents of one bin were stolen within 24 hours of delivery. It is not known if the County will replace the salt.

7. Finance: Bank balances & payments

NatWest Current account at 30 th December	£42,248.69
Nat West Reserve Account at 30 th December	£27,772.81

Clerk Salary

The Council agreed to increase the Clerk's salary so that it was in line with the annual increases that had been agreed between the NALC and SLCC. This had not been done since 1st April 2009 and so a back payment is due up to this month amounting to £501.39. It was agreed that in future years this should not be allowed to accumulate and that the Clerk's pay should be reviewed each year.

The monthly payment for the rest of this financial year is £505.81 and this will increase on 1st April 2012 to £523.00.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Berinsfield Community Business (Hedge and bagging of salt)	£141.00
Thames Water (Allotments £208.92 Rec £133.27)	£342.19
Village Hall (room hire)	£32.00
Benhamlaw (land searching)	£380.00
Total Pest Control (Abbey View)	£66.00
BDO Audit Fee	£342.00
Chris Hill (snow shovels)	£15.98
Geoff Willis 4 weeks (Nov 451.35)	£267.75
Neil Willis	£30.60
GGD Russell – Clerk's salary	£505.81
GGD Russell – Back pay since 1/4/10	£501.39

Geoff Willis – Village Handyman

Geoff Willis has not had a pay review since 1st April 2009. In order to bring Geoff Willis's pay into line with the percentage increases in the Clerk's agreement his hourly rate with effect from 1 April should be £8.50 per hour. This was approved.

Audit

The Council noted the contents of the Audit Report. The restatement of the Council's assets in line with the new valuation policy has already been done and the required Financial Risk Assessment was approved at the Council's December meeting.

Matters concerning the Clerk's contract and registration with HMRC are on-going with the need that they should be resolved before the end of March.

Concerning the auditor's suggestion that the level of Fidelity Guarantee cover should be increased, the Council confirmed the decision made in previous years to the effect that the extra cost of the premium was not justified.

The official Notice of Conclusion of Audit will now be displayed on the Village notice board until the end of January.

Precept 2012/13

The Clerk prepared a forecast of the Council's financial position at the end of the current year. After allowing for some new maintenance and Jubilee related expenditure to be incurred before the end of March 2012 the total receipts and total expenditure figures were in balance.

In 2012/13, in addition to its normal maintenance tasks, the Council is providing for a possible extension at the tractor shed and work on developing community and neighbourhood plans. This is forecast to result in a reduction of resources. It was proposed that the Precept should increase from £38,900 to £39,900 (2.6%). This was agreed.

8 Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The Clerk reported that two quotes have been received for electrical work at the Pavilion. The Council agreed to accept the quotation from Agey Bosse in the sum of £685 for additional power sockets in the kitchen area, new sockets outside the main door and heating near the showers, supplied with a frost-stat, to prevent frozen pipes. It was agreed to confirm with RoSPA that their annual inspection of the play area is required again this year.

Cllr Gibbons reported trip hazards in the play area especially by the seats and the pendulum swing. More soil is needed in these places and the Clerk will ask Geoff Willis to take care of this.

b. Footpaths;

The stile at Overy Mill has been repaired.

Cllr Sally Greenaway reported damage to the mesh fence near Blue Bridge - - this is the responsibility of the National Trails Office and the Clerk will contact them. The path alongside the burial ground needs more gravel; the Clerk will obtain a price from BCB. The Chairman said that there is some ivy alongside the path from Manor Farm Road to the Hurst which needs to be cleared up.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

The Council has been asked by Gill Haworth if it would agree to a burial request for her cousin. This lady, diagnosed with incurable cancer, is a non-UK resident who has been a regular visitor to Dorchester on Thames. Because of her close relationship to Gill she would be very happy if she knew that when the time came she could be buried here. Gill knows that double fees would be charged as they are to all non-residents. The Council is mindful of the need to give priority to retaining burial places primarily for Dorchester residents but, in view of Gill Haworth's outstanding service to the community, on this occasion the Council regarded the circumstances as exceptional and it agreed to allow this request.

Abbey Stone and Marble has quoted £960 + VAT for the restoration and repair of the Yorkstone cross. The Council will accept this quotation but would first like to know whether this sort of project can receive a grant. The Clerk will enquire.

Cllr Day said that before the work on the cross is completed the yew trees on either side are in need of attention. The Clerk will ask Paul Jenks to add this to the list of tasks set out in his recent survey.

The Council noted that Cemetery fees have not increased since 2006. It was agreed that with effect from 1st April the price of a standard burial plot should increase from £150 to £200 and the fee for burial from £80 to £105. In future, these fees should be reviewed every year. Notice of the new fees will appear in Dorchester News.

d. Allotments;

The Council noted that the Allotment Society has recently changed its insurer. The new policy includes public liability cover of £5 million.

e. Abbey View Meadow

The provision of a 'Turning area' is a condition of the planning permission that has now been granted for use on up to 100 days a year. The Clerk will contact the Planning officer for clarification of what is meant by this. Neither the Parish Council nor the landowner is keen to carry out changes to the surface of the field and it was thought that the Planning Officer herself was against this, since it would change the character of the field.

Councillors asked for a meeting to be arranged with the Rector and the Parish Administrator to discuss the details of future parking arrangements, to include the provision of parking wardens/marshalls, advance publicity of parking arrangements, the provision of park 'n ride services and so on. The Clerk will try to arrange this in

February; in the meantime he is in close contact with the organisers of the concert that is to be held on 28th January.

f.. Other letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. BBC Radio Oxford; The Editor of BBC Radio Oxford had written to thank the Council for the parking arrangements for the Carol Service in December.

ii. The PCSOs have told the Clerk that they will be measuring traffic speeds on Abingdon Road. There have been several complaints about speeding motorists, many of them Dorchester residents, and it was agreed that the Clerk should use Dorchester News to tell residents about this police action in advance.

ii. The Council noted that the location of the fortnightly mobile library service will now be next to the war memorial rather than outside the village hall.

9. Planning

a. Applications:

P11/W1940, 34 Watling Lane

Single storey side extension. Material change to conservatory roof and internally to dwelling.

The Council agreed to recommend refusal on the grounds that the property has already been greatly enlarged.

P11/W1891 Dorchester Abbey

Installation of solar panels on roof of Dorchester Abbey

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

b. Decisions

The details of the decision to grant approval for the development of the land between High Street and Crown Lane will be circulated for information.

c The Council considered the letter from Dawn Dudley dated 2nd January 2012 together with enclosures which complained about the Planning Consultation process in respect of P10/W0985/RET.

The Chairman has carried out a thorough review of the paperwork and has discussed the matter with the Clerk in great detail. She has concluded:

1. The Parish Council has no record of receiving or discussing the RET application
2. Neither the PC nor any residents replied to the RET application – the PC only replied to the P04/W1173/LB application. Did any residents receive either, and did they respond? There is no record on the web site.
3. The Parish Clerk responded only to the LB application. It is possible that this was interpreted at SODC to apply to both applications.
4. We have already stopped using electronic means to send responses
5. There have been many instances of error in SODC handling of applications, but none at our end.

The Council supported the Chairman's comments and asked the Clerk to convey that decision to Mrs Dudley.

10 Bus Services Area Review

Cllr Mark Stevenson submitted the Council's report and has already received a response from John Wood, which indicates that the Council's comments have been given proper consideration.

In the matter of the County's review of the role played by ORCC in the consultation process for public transport provision Cllr Stevenson said that ORCC provides useful support as well as co-ordination between the various parishes affected in a review. In the past Dorchester has used the services of the Community Transport Advisor and would definitely wish to have the opportunity of doing so again. The independent perspective offered by the staff of ORCC is very valuable.

11 Diamond Jubilee Weekend – progress report

The next meeting of the full planning group will take place on 17th January. The agenda for that meeting will be issued tomorrow. The Parish Council would like to include some expenditure in the year ended 31st March by purchasing things in advance as much as possible.

13 Village website

Cllr Mike Kitson had sent his apologies for absence from this meeting. This matter will be discussed at the February meeting.

14 Affordable Housing – Housing Needs Survey

ORCC would like to proceed with a new survey now SODC has expressed new interest in two of the sites that were proposed back in 2005. Cllr Marc Hiles was asked to find out what information the District Council holds about local people expressing an interest in living in Dorchester. Since an up to date Housing Needs Survey is an essential part of the Neighbourhood planning process it was agreed in principle that the Survey should be carried out. The Clerk will liaise with ORCC when Cllr Hiles has supplied the information and will ask which two sites are the ones in which SODC has expressed the interest.

15. The Green and Waterloo, Bridge End

Research conducted with the Land Registry and examination of the Tithe Award of 1846 have shown that the land outside 2 and 4 High Street is part of the Moor Common (which includes the field running parallel to the bridge running down to the Thames) and that the land at Bridge End was part of Bridge End Common. Thus both areas were common land without ownership.

There is no reference for the land now occupied by the car park next to the bridge, which was part of the roadway. Professor Airs, who carried out the Tithe Map research, concludes that it must, therefore, be included in the 43 acres noted as 'Roads, Waste & Water belonging to the parish'.

The County records of common land are held in an office in Eynsham. They are available for inspection and Cllrs Bryan and Hill expressed an interest in going to view them. The Clerk will try to arrange this visit during February.

16 Newcomers' Evening 2012

It was agreed that this should be held on Tuesday 20th March. Notice of this will be placed in the next Dorchester News. Using the electoral registers the Clerk will try to identify most of the people who should be invited. All village organisations will be asked to attend and publicise their activities. The Co-Op will also be asked if they would like to be present.

17 Any Other Urgent Business

- i. The Council noted that the Village School has just been inspected by OFSTED. The School Governors expect to receive the Inspector's report at their meeting in early February.
- ii. Cllr Sally Greenaway has spoken to Richard Douglas about the path around the lake and he has told her that it was never a registered footpath.
- iii. The Council noted its disappointment that there seems to be no more information about the status of the investigation into the assault that took place on The Hurst during last Summer.

The meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.