

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th August 2014 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, presided; present were Cllrs. Ken Bryan, Maurice Day, Sue Graney, Chris Hill, Mike Hill, Mike Kitson and Mark Stevenson, with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were 8 members of the public.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale.

2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of Pecuniary Interests but Cllr Chris Hill told the meeting that as a resident of Bridge End he had sent the planning office a personal comment about application P14/S1635/FUL 25 Bridge End as amended.

3. Public Participation

The Chairman described the Public Participation section of the July meeting as being difficult and outside her previous experience. She said that she was grateful to all those residents who had spoken and written to her since 9th July; their support and encouragement was much appreciated. The Chairman and Clerk have visited the offices of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils and received advice from the officers about how 'public participation' should be conducted in the future.

Cllr Metcalfe said that after the July meeting she had realised that some members of the public might not have seen the summary of councillor responsibilities that was published on page 14 of the June edition of Dorchester News. She had therefore brought a copy to this evening's meeting.

The Chairman continued by pointing out that the Council has only just received the paper copy of the application P14/S2393/FUL Land South of 55 Abingdon Road and had not yet received the latest amendments for P14/S1635/FUL 25 Bridge End. The Council would meet on another date to decide upon its response to these applications.. With reference to the Abingdon Road application, Simon Madden, who lives close to the proposed development site, told the Council that over a period of many years the area of land, which stretches from Abingdon Road to the bank of the River Thames and is known locally as 'Allen's Pit', has been a dumping ground for material from many different sources. Some of this material may be contaminated and Mr Madden said that he thought that clearance of the whole site would be more difficult than the owners realised.

The land has been owned by the same family for many years and there have been past planning applications for development, all of which have been refused. Simon Madden said that he personally would not oppose a development of five homes near the Abingdon Road end of the site but he felt that, if this goes ahead, further applications would follow to develop the rest of the land, currently being offered as an amenity to the prospective owners of the new homes but only on a short-term basis. Rear-Admiral Myers, another resident of Abingdon Road, said that he believed that the rubbish dumped on the site included the former runway from the airfield at Mount

Farm. Angela Bartlett, also a resident, highlighted the environmental impact of developing the site, which is home to rare butterflies, nesting red kites, woodpeckers, deer and badgers. She said that she was not against development in principle but that 5 houses is too many.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held 9th July 2014

After the correction of some errors of punctuation, the minutes as circulated were approved and signed.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Commemorative plaque for tree planted in honour of Mary Tame; wording was suggested along the lines of “In celebration of the 100th birthday of Mary Tame MBE on 12th February 2014” Cllr Chris Hill will ask Mary about this at the next available opportunity.

6 District Councillor’s Report

No report received.

7 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale had sent her apologies for absence from the meeting. Her monthly report had been sent electronically to each councillor and a paper copy placed in the folder for circulation.

8 Finance: Bank balances & payments

Bank balances:

Natwest Reserve Account 30th May	£47,804.31
Natwest Current Account 30th July	£21,200.50

The following payments were approved:

Information Commissioner (annual registration fee)	£35.00
Berinsfield Community Business (July grass)	£860.52
Berinsfield Community Business (ivy clearance)	£130.44
Jenks Oxford Limited (Tree in ditch near Herringcote)	£252.00
SLCC Enterprises Ltd (Book and Guide)	£86.00
Southern Electric (pavilion)	£84.25
Softcat Limited (tablet computer Surface Pro2)	£750.70
South Oxfordshire District Council (Dog bins Jan –September inc)	£339.09
Winning Deals Ltd (tablet for IT classes)	£105.85
Geoff Willis (5 weeks)	£393.75
G Russell (salary)	<u>£528.25</u>
	£3,565.85

9. Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The first quote for replacing the older play area surfaces has been received and is for £7,888 plus VAT. Several additional contractors will be visiting the site and the Clerk will discuss the matter with RoSPA during the imminent annual inspection.

Claire Andersson has prepared the final WREN Grant Application form. The one for SODC can be done on-line.

Conversations with SportsCourts UK Ltd over the maintenance contract are on-going. Cllr Day said that to aid the Parish Council's budgeting process the Sports Club should be asked to try to forecast the future need for repairs etc.

b. Footpaths

BCB has repaired the damage to the pavement in High Street opposite Dorchester Fireplaces. This was caused by an oil leak from a mowing machine. The County Highways Inspector examined the repair during her recent visit and will contact the Clerk about whether it is acceptable.

The ivy from the Pre-School wall along Manor Farm Road has now been cleared away and weeds have been removed from the Thame bridge. The Handyman is clearing the weeds from alongside the Village School wall in Queen Street. Part of this wall is in need of repair. It is understood that the School has the matter in hand. Broxap, the supplier of the litter bins preferred by SODC, has named two local contractors who can carry out the removal of the Council's unwanted bins and their replacement together with installing the new bins. The Clerk will contact these contractors to obtain a quote.

Diane Major, Placement Manager from the Community Payback team has confirmed to the Clerk that her group can take on all of the jobs seen during her recent site visit but cannot confirm their start date yet. It was noted that the area of vegetation to be cut back alongside Watling Lane is on the opposite side to the Townsend farm.

The Clerk said that Angela Bartlett has recently complained about the paths to the by-pass bus stop. The vegetation on both sides needs cutting back. The paths are dangerous and a bit 'scary', even in summer months.

Cllr Hill said that the hedge belonging to 25 Bridge End is encroaching upon the path that leads from Bridge End to Wittenham Lane and he asked that this should be cut back by the new owners.

The area between 20 Meadside and the lay-by needs tidying.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

The Council has received a thank you letter from Ken Spindler who had asked the Council to remove a tree from the cemetery ditch close to his home in Herringcote. The Clerk said that BCB has again inspected the gate from Drayton Road into the Cemetery and said that no action is required. Cllr Day said that next year's budget should include provision for the gate's replacement.

It was agreed that the area in front of the boundary fence on the Page Furlong side should be cleared. This could provide additional space for future graves.

d. Allotments;

The Parish Council has been asked by Helen Anderson and Sandy Hall, executors of the late Joan Harrison, to approve the idea of a wooden bench in memory of Joan and her brother 'Gammy' Greenaway. This was agreed, subject to the exact site being approved by the Allotments Society.

Norman Blissett has recently spoken to the Chairman about the produce stall that hangs from the Allotments perimeter fence. It was alleged that the sale of produce from this stall is contrary to the Allotment Regulations. The Clerk will approach Mark

Townson and Edward Metcalfe of the Allotments Society and ask their advice as to how best to deal with Mr Blissett's complaint.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

The Council noted the report from Mandy Bell, OCC Local Highways Representative following her recent visit to the village. A large quantity of potholes in Watling Lane has been repaired by the County Council's new 'jet patcher' and it is expected that repairs to the whole Lane will be completed within the next few days

Care of War Memorial; it was understood that Phil Greenaway has offered to help looking after the garden around the war memorial. It was suggested that the Corrys might also be willing to help with this.

The Chairman said that she hoped to attend ORCC's Annual Conference and AGM at Yarnton Village Hall on 18 September commencing 2.00 p.m.

The Council has been invited to attend the ceremonial opening of the new footbridge across the River Thames at Drayton St Leonard. This will take place between 11.30 - 12.30 on Saturday 16th August. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale will be cutting the ribbon at 12.00 noon. The Chairman said that she would definitely attend and other councillors said that they also hoped to be present.

Have Your Say meetings for Dorchester on Thames; Cllr Chris Hill said that he is in contact with Thames Valley Police about arrangements for the next meeting in Dorchester. PCSO 6596 Jennie Cox is the new Community Support Officer for Dorchester-on-Thames and councillors said that they looked forward to meeting her. The Council noted the SODC Briefing document concerning new Leisure Facilities Assessment and Strategy.

The Chairman confirmed that she has written to the residents of the new houses numbered 32a – 32d High Street about what this new development should be called. She had explained the Parish Council's reluctance to accept a name that included the word 'Abbey' and the Council's preference for a name that included the word 'Cherrill. A reply is awaited.

Cllr Mrs Metcalfe has also written to Miss Bowditch supporting the plea for walkers using footpaths that cross farmland to show proper consideration to the farmer and the livestock and offering assistance with signage if this is required.

10. Planning

a. Applications

P14/S1635/FUL 25 Bridge End as AMENDED A Second time

Demolition of existing garage/workshop and car port. Erection of new detached dwelling together with extension and restoration of existing cottage and creation of new parking areas. (As amended by drawing no 14027/SK08A showing the planting of new mixed hedgerow along the southern boundary where the Leylandii trees are being removed and 'option B' site plan drawing no 14027/P12 which shows the removal of the car parking to the front of No25 and the relocation of a tandem parking area to the southern end of the plot accessed from Wittenham Lane).

The Council is concerned that several recently amended plans have not yet been made available on the SODC website or on paper. It is understood that a further extension to the consultation period is going to be requested.

With the lack of up to date information the Council agreed that it was unable to reach a decision at this meeting.

P14/S2393/FUL Land South of 55 Abingdon Road

Erection of 5 New houses on rural site.

Plans only just collected from Crowmarsh – planning notice not yet on gate.

With the lack of time available to consider this application, the Council agreed that it was unable to reach a decision at this meeting.

The Council noted that new Change of Use applications for 14 High Street (formerly The Post Office) have just been received and agreed to hold a special Council meeting to discuss and decide upon all the above commencing at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 27th August, using the Village Hall main room to allow for an expected large attendance of interested residents.

b. Neighbourhood/Community Planning Report/Bus Users Group

The Clerk reported that both the NDP Group and the Parish Council had taken part in SODC's New Local Plan consultation process.

11. Investigation by John Howell MP into complaint by constituent

After a detailed discussion about the issues raised in a letter that had been sent to John Howell MP by a local resident, the Council agreed that it would not send a blow-by-blow rebuttal of the various allegations made unless a formal complaint is made either directly to the Parish Council or to the Monitoring Officer at SODC.

12 To consider NALC Legal Topic on Handling Complaints

It was agreed that the Parish Council should adopt a formal complaints procedure based upon the notes contained in the NALC's Legal Topic and the example of Hambledon Parish Council that appears on the internet.

13. To consider Adopting Model Standing Orders

It was agreed to adopt the Model Standing Orders as published in NALC's recent publication 'Local Councils Explained'. There are some paragraphs where local discretion is allowed and the Clerk will prepare a draft in which these paragraphs are highlighted.

14. To consider the formation of a Planning Sub-Committee

The Council decided that it did not wish to establish a Planning sub-committee and so all planning matters will continue to be discussed by the full Council. It was agreed to hold special council meetings if required to fit with the timing of a consultation process although it is usual for planning officers to allow an extension to the period.

15 To consider auditor's comments re Freedom of Information Act

The Clerk reported that the auditor is concerned that Dorchester Parish Council has never formally adopted a publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act, although there is no suggestion that the Council has been acting improperly. For the auditors it is just a box that needs ticking. The Council agreed to accept the model scheme and to review it annually.

16. Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

The Council noted that this is not part of the Neighbourhood Plan process and so if it is desired to follow up the expressions of interest that have been received from some residents this matter has to be pursued as a separate project.

17 Any Other Business

- a. The Chairman had made a presentation to Chris Catt who had recently left the Dorchester branch of the Co-Op where he has been manager for several years. A photograph of the occasion would be appearing in the next 'Dorchester News'.
- b. The Council noted that Ian Brace has now taken over from Susan Jupp as the Editor of 'Dorchester News'

The meeting closed at 10.40 p.m.