

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 9th July 2014 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, presided; present were Cllrs. Ken Bryan, Maurice Day, Sue Graney, Mike Hill, Mike Kitson and Mark Stevenson, with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were seventeen members of the public and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale

1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Chris Hill and District Cllr Marc Hiles.

2 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

3 Public Participation

There has been considerable public interest in Planning Application P14/S1635/FUL 25 Bridge End which involves the demolition of an existing garage/workshop and car port, the erection of a new detached dwelling, the extension and restoration of the existing cottage and the creation of new parking areas.

The proposal to create two parking spaces on part of the land that forms the front garden to 25 Bridge End received a lot of adverse comment. The existing hedge and banking which surround the property are considered to be critical to the character and ecology of the area.

The proposed new house on the cleared ground between the existing property and Wittenham Lane was criticised as being too large both in terms of its roof height and its footprint. The roof lights were also, on the whole, disliked. The Lane is used by many visitors to the village and it is felt that the proposed development will spoil the character of this area.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held 11th June 2014

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

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Following the recent decision by the Planning Committee of SODC to give planning permission for the development at Tall Trees, Manor Farm Road, the Chairman has drafted a letter to the Head of Planning and the Planning Committee Chairman. It was agreed that, at least for the time being, this letter would not be sent.

b. The June edition of 'Dorchester News' had carried a letter from Miss Bowditch of Bishops Court Farm in which she had reminded readers about issues relating to the Countryside Code. The Chairman has drafted a letter offering the Parish Council's support and suggesting ways in which additional signs might be obtained if required. This letter was approved and will be sent.

c. Drains / ditch at 28 Abingdon Road; the Clerk said that he had been told by Dave Baldwin of Monsons, the District Council's drainage advisers, that this is still an ongoing enquiry.

d. It was not known whether a new volunteer to care for the war memorial had been found. The Clerk has asked BCB to ensure that the grass is cut just before 4th August, although the Council noted that the main commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of World War One will take place in Dorchester Abbey.

6 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr Marc Hiles was not present at the meeting.

7 County Councillor's Report

A written report has been received from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and had been circulated electronically. A paper copy will be placed in the folder. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale urged councillors to attend one of the forthcoming 'Connecting Oxfordshire' meetings, the nearest being those at Didcot on 15th July and Oxford on 23rd July. Malcolm Corry from the Bus Users Group will also be invited.

8 Finance:

Natwest Reserve Account 30th June £47,810.27

Natwest Current Account 30th May £32,506.35

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Berinsfield Community Business (May grass) £530.64

Berinsfield Community Business (June grass) £1,034.16

Northcourt Press (reprint of walking guides) £1,000.00

Total Pest Control (Abbey View) £66.00

Lister Wilder (strimmer cord) £11.62

IAC Ltd (internal audit) £222.00

Thames Water £91.54

E Wilkinson Plumbing & Heating Contracts Ltd £1,136.40

Geoff Willis (4 weeks) £322.50

G Russell (Admin M/J/J) £148.64

G Russell salary £528.25

£5,091.75

9. Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The Clerk said that one company has so far quoted for repairs to the worn out safety surfaces in the play area. Two more companies have been asked to view the site.

Energy Efficiency Audit; an application is being sent to TOE for funding to pay for a survey of the Pavilion.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact some local independent arboriculturalists to ask them to quote for advising the Parish Council about its on-going tree-care and maintenance programmes.

b. Footpaths;

- i. The Clerk reported that the Community Payback Manager has viewed the Watling Lane 'footpath' area; the ditch alongside the Cemetery/Herringcote boundary; paths leading to the by-pass bus stops and the area near the map board on Drayton Road. She confirmed that all are suitable projects for her team and she will tell the Clerk when they could begin work.
- ii. Pavement damage caused by an oil leak will be reported to County Highways.
- iii. Broxap, the District Council's preferred supplier of litter bins, has quoted £2,799.65 +VAT for the supply and fitting of 7 litter bins. This includes removal of three existing bins. A photograph of the proposed bin will be circulated for approval and the Clerk will enquire if there might be a saving if the fitting of the bins was carried out by a local contractor.
- iv. Volunteers have cleared a lot of ivy from the pre-school boundary wall in Manor Farm Road. The Clerk will arrange for this to be removed by BCB.
- c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;
 - i. The quotation from Dan Haines Signs for the supply of two signs for the Cemetery at £285 each was approved. It was agreed that the signs would show the Parish Council's email address rather than a telephone number.
 - ii. Extra tree work requested by a resident of Herringcote was estimated to cost £210 and this was approved.
 - iii. A gate at the entry to the Cemetery from Drayton Road was reported as needing repair or replacement. The Clerk will ask BCB for a quote.
 - iv. It was agreed that the gap in the hedge near the footpath alongside 6 Drayton Road should be filled in with new planting and a temporary fence while the new hedge was established.
- d. Allotments;
 - i. Further details of the costs of repairs to the central parking area have been received; a price for laying a geo-textile surface will be requested.
 - ii. Cllr Metcalfe said that she had now received a schedule and a map showing the occupancy of the whole allotment area.
- e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk
 - i. The Clerk has been given a copy of an anonymous letter addressed to the Junipers of Watling Lane The Council was sorry to learn of this incident and the Clerk will write to the Junipers expressing the Council's regrets.

10. Planning

a. Applications

P14/S1635/FUL 25 Bridge End as AMENDED. 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.

The Parish Council has received a large number of comments about this application, both in writing and in person. Councillors have also reviewed comments posted on the SODC website. The site is located in the Dorchester-on-Thames Conservation Area and on one of the footpath approaches to Dorchester from the River Thames. The draft Neighbourhood Plan for Dorchester specifically mentions that there is a lack of smaller properties within the Parish and in principle the Council welcomes the division of the existing property into two plots with the development of two relative

small properties: a three bedroom house and a two bedroom single storey dwelling. The Council recognises that the development of additional dwellings within the Village helps to secure the future of existing shops and services.

The existing house is in need of modernisation and the Council has no objection to an extension to create a third bedroom, provided that there is little impact upon the adjacent listed building. The Council is willing to be guided on this point by the SODC Conservation Officer (whose response to the Consultation is still awaited) but suggests that such impact as there is would be reduced if the proposed extension conforms with the building line of the extension of the listed building next door.

The proposal to create two parking spaces on part of the land that forms the front garden to 25 Bridge End has received a lot of adverse comment and the Council fully supports these remarks, especially on the basis that the existing hedge and banking which surround the property are critical to the character and ecology of the area.

However the Council desires off-street car parking to be provided wherever possible. In this case, not providing any parking space at all will almost certainly lead to more congestion in Bridge End.

The Council therefore suggests that the Applicant should try to find an alternative location for parking at the rear of the property even though, if both plots are developed, this would increase traffic movements along Wittenham Lane. Creating this alternative parking area should not involve any loss of the hedge that screens the proposed new dwelling from Wittenham Lane – a hedge that many replies to the consultation process have said should be retained.

The Council is pleased to note that the amended plans for the proposed new house allow for not only the retention of the existing hedge on the Wittenham Lane boundary but also for its extension. The small movement of the building's footprint away from the neighbouring footpath and the Lane is also welcomed as is the reduction of the proposed building to a single storey.

The Council has no objection to the removal of the leylandii but would like this to be conditional upon the planting of new trees that will provide a screen for the property. Any tree substituted may not do well due to the 'poisoning' of the land by the leylandii and the choice of substitutes must bear this in mind. If it is felt that new trees will not prosper where the leylandii have grown perhaps the proposal could be amended so that the height and density of the leylandii screening are reduced rather than removed completely.

The roof height is considered to be still too high and the Council suggests that this is lowered even further, along with the removal of the roof-lights.

If the roof is to be covered with clay tiles and it is this that is dictating the pitch of the roof then the area of the footprint should be reduced. This will result in a reduction of the overall height.

The Council notes the presence of what may be a working well outside the stable block/workshop. Expert advice is needed to ensure that no aspect of the proposed development compromises the safety of this well or has any impact upon water supplies outside the boundary of this site.

Recognising that access to this site is via a narrow lane with a loose gravel surface and dwellings on both sides, the Council regards it as essential that the project is only

approved when a satisfactory traffic management plan for the construction period has been submitted.

The Council further recommends that the developer accepts responsibility for the repair of any damage that is done to the surface of Bridge End and of Wittenham Lane as a result of these development works.

The Council has noted the comprehensive comments from the County Archaeologist. This development site is close to areas of the Village which are known to be rich in archaeological remains and it is quite likely that a detailed survey will reveal that alterations are required to both the footprint of the proposed building and/or the proposed planting.

While there are aspects of this application which the Council likes, there remain many factors about both plots which are still a concern. The Council's conclusion at this time, therefore, is that the Application should be recommended for refusal.

P14/S1469/HH 6 Drayton Road; Erection of a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension.

The Council regretted the absence of a Design & Access Statement but could see no reason to object to the proposed development which is recommended for approval.

b. Neighbourhood/Community Planning Report/Bus Users Group

The next meeting of the Group is due in mid July

11. South Oxfordshire Local Plan Consultation

Cllr Mark Stephenson and the Clerk attended the briefing meeting at Crowmarsh on 30th June. The consultation period goes on until mid July but officers have indicated they will not enforce a strict closure for the process. Cllr Stephenson will first draft the response of the Neighbourhood Planning Group and then suggest a response which could be submitted by the Parish Council. In the meantime the briefing documents from SODC will be circulated. Notices advertising the Consultation have been posted in the Village and a short leaflet is available from the Co-Op. Members of the public attending this evening's meeting have also been supplied with copies of this leaflet and the Clerk has supplied details to all those on his village e-mail list.

12 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Information has been received and circulated for discussion at the August meeting.

13 Rural Grants 2015-2020 LEADER Public Consultation

No-one had been able to attend the recent briefing and the Clerk will try to get more information. It was not known if there were any projects that might qualify.

14 Registration of Parish Land

It was agreed to hold over discussion until the August meeting.

15 World War One Commemoration 4th August

The Chairman has been asked to read a lesson at the Memorial Service in the Abbey.

16 Parish Council Communication

Cllr Sue Graney said that the website handover from Simon Ratliff is proceeding. She will study a proposal from 'e-mango', a firm that specialises in helping parish councils with their websites and electronic communication.

The Clerk has received several catalogues from notice board suppliers. He has asked the Co-Op if the Parish Council notice board could be slightly wider and the manager, Chris Catt, has agreed.

17 Draft Flood Risk Management Strategy

It was agreed to hold over discussion until the August meeting.

18 Parking Survey

It was agreed to hold over discussion until the August meeting.

19 Mary Tame Memorial Tree – wording for plaque

Suggestions for the wording are needed.

20 IT Classes for Residents

The price quoted to the Clerk by Softcat has now been shown to be a little less than a well-advertised special promotion price from PC World and it was agreed that the purchase of a 'Surface' Pro2 tablet computer with type cover could go ahead at £625. The Clerk has also sourced some very low cost Android tablets at £79.95 each and it was agreed that the Council should purchase one as a test. The remaining balance of the County Council's grant after these purchases will be approximately £800.

21 Gilbert Scott Memorial / Bridge End phone box Project

A new quote has been requested for the restoration of the Village Hall gable end.

22. Village 'Spring-Clean'

No progress has been made on selecting an area or areas to be serviced. The County Council's grant money remains unspent.

23 Location for Defibrillator

Suggestions are required.

24. Any Other Business

- a. The Parish Council noted that the Watling Lane sign near the War Memorial has been damaged. This has been reported to SODC.
- b. The Chairman said that a potential site for gravel extraction has been identified near Clifton Hampden and Culham.
- c. There have been complaints about overgrown hedges on the edge of Manor Farm Road. Cllr Day will talk to the residents involved.
- d. Cllr Kitson said that the School is thinking of having a large mural which will be visible from Queen Street. Since this is within the Conservation Area it was suggested that the Headteacher should consult with the SODC Planning Department.
- e. It was agreed that the Handyman be asked to clear grass and weeds growing along the School's perimeter wall and on Dorchester Bridge.

The meeting closed at 10.55 p.m.