

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Val Howells, Oliver Margison, Mike Rimmer, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Present for part of the time were District Cllr John Cotton and 5 residents.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Sue Graney and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale,

### 2. Parish Council Vacancy: Acceptance of Office

Oliver Margison signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk. Cllr Margison will complete a form for the registration of interests by the time of the next Council meeting.

### 3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

There were no pecuniary interests but Cllr Val Howells knows Mr Robert Booth, the applicant for the plans at 60, Watling Lane, and so she will take no part in the discussion of this item.

### 4. Public Participation

Mr Robert Booth attended the meeting to explain the background to the application P15/S0010/FUL for a variation of condition 2 of the approved plans. Essentially, the planning officer had not wanted the new build to be any taller than the existing cottage but Mr Booth wished to have a slightly higher ground floor to reduce the likelihood of flooding. The ridge height of the new dwellings will be within 200mm of the ridge height of the existing cottage, which Mr Booth and his architect consider to be an insignificant difference.

Kim Langton told the Council that the application to vary Condition 2 of planning permission P14/S1635/FUL for 25 Bridge End had been made because there had been a complaint to the planning enforcement team that one of the new windows overlooks a neighbouring property. She explained that because this window is more than 2 metres above the floor level it is impossible for someone inside the room to look out of it. The window is there to give light and ventilation only. The planning officer thinks that the best way of dealing with the complaint is to amend the original planning consent so that this window is specifically mentioned and approved.

Sheila Hill told the Council that the new owner of 9 Bridge End has started some building work without first applying for planning permission although the property is in the Conservation Area. Mrs Hill said that some of the work is being carried out very close to the boundary with her own property at 7 Bridge End. District Cllr John Cotton commented that the best way of dealing with these concerns is to raise the matter with the District Council's planning team.

Malcolm Corry said that he had attended the County Council's recent meeting in Didcot which was part of the consultation process that would very probably conclude with the village losing its existing bus services from the beginning of April 2016. He said that it is essential for residents to take part in the consultation and that there would be an article in Dorchester News which will encourage them to do so before the deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> September. He will make enquiries about services provided by other parish councils in this part of the County to see if there are any opportunities to share.

District Cllr John Cotton said that the District Council may reconsider providing local transport subsidies but in principle the District is reluctant to step in when the County makes a cut in its services in case this serves to encourage the County to make even more cuts. Mr Corry said that there are three or four residents who wish to take part in monitoring traffic speeds through the village using hand-held devices. This would be in addition to the surveys that the County Council has already agreed to carry out. These volunteer surveys would demonstrate to the authorities that the Parish has strong feelings on this matter and is keen that action is taken before an accident occurs.

#### 5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed.

#### 6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by the agenda.

#### 7. District Councillor's Reports

District Cllr John Cotton said that the District has initiated a review of the Green Belt in South Oxfordshire. He said that this may result in an area within the Parish of Dorchester-on-Thames being recommended for removal from protection.

Cllr Cotton said the opportunity for Parish Councils to request that planning applications are referred to the District Council's Planning Committee is strictly only during the period of 28 days after the application has been registered. This period could conceivably expire before the application had even been discussed by the Parish Council so it is particularly important to be aware of what new applications have been made. The Clerk confirmed that he receives a list every week.

Cllr Cotton said that when a Parish Council is making comments about its recommendations for the determination of a new planning application there is no limit to the number of points that can be made. This means that the Parish's submission can cover far more detail than would be possible in a verbal submission to the Planning Committee when the time limit of 5 minutes is strictly enforced.

Cllr Cotton urged the Parish Council to take part in the County Council's new consultation concerning a reduction in the number of waste recycling centres. The Clerk said that this will be covered in Dorchester News so that residents will also be made aware of the consultation which concludes on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

#### 8 Finance:

Bank balances

NatWest Current Account 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015 £47,838.84

NatWest Reserve Account 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 £47,834.19

The Council noted that the fireworks deposit cheque amounting to £1,350 had been paid on 27<sup>th</sup> July to secure the booking with The UK Firework Company.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

The Theatre Chipping Norton Ltd (donation) £125.00

(replacement for cheque 2851 paid to 'Good Night Out')

ERS Environmental Services (PROfile) (pest control) £334.80

Lister Wilder (trimmer parts) £43.19

South Oxfordshire District Council (uncontested election fee) £100.00

Berinsfield Community Business (July grass) £910.50

Dorchester –on-Thames Village Hall (room hire) £52.00

Southern electric (sports pavilion) £76.52

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Allan Smith (Cemetery water tap repairs)                    | £19.96         |
| Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (training course) | £148.00        |
| Playsafety Limited (inspections)                            | £208.80        |
| JRB Enterprises Ltd (Litter bins and waste bag dispensers)  | £781.20        |
| Neil Willis (strimming)                                     | £78.75         |
| Geoff Willis (Village handyman 5 weeks)                     | £393.75        |
| G Russell (Clerk salary)                                    | <u>£538.82</u> |
|   | £3,811.29      |

The Clerk reported that the annual audit is taking place. The only query from BDO was to ask for a detailed breakdown of insurance and other valuations which he has now supplied. The changes to the Council's Bank Mandate are in progress with Cllrs Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell being added to the list of authorised signatories.

#### 9. Correspondence and Other Business:

##### a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Reports from the Safety Inspector have been received following her visit on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Both the Play Area and MUGA received satisfactory ratings with no immediate action required. The Clerk and the Village Handyman had met the Inspector during her visit. The Clerk will visit the Play Area with Cllr Howells and pass on the inspector's comments. A new sign saying 'No Dogs' has been ordered for the play area gate.

##### b. Footpaths;

i. The two dog waste bag dispensers and three combined dog waste/litter bins have been delivered to BCB. Priority will be given to replacing the missing bin at the end of Wittenham Lane. It has been suggested that one of the new dog waste/litter bins goes on Drayton Road at the start of the footpath to The Hurst while the waste bag dispensers will go by the Sports Pavilion and at the Queen Street end of Cheyney Lane. The location of the third combined bin is to be decided. The Clerk will place another notice in Dorchester News asking all dog owners/walkers to always pick up.

ii. The Clerk will contact County Highways about placing signs along the Abingdon Road footpath making it clear that cyclists may use the path.

iii. The Council agreed that the Clerk should write to Chapman Inns expressing the Parish Council's concern that the stage-coach outside The George is unsafe and in urgent need of repair. Cllr Keith Russell said that he often sees visitors to the village posing for pictures by, and sometimes on the stage-coach, even though the vehicle is now looking scruffy and something of an 'eye-sore'.

iv. The Clerk said that he had been told that the quickest route for Meadside residents to catch the X39 and X40 bus service is via the stop at Shillingford. There was a request that the footpath opposite Meadside be cleared in the direction of the by-pass. Several years ago the County Engineer, Brian Short, had said that the County would only accept responsibility for maintaining the footpath between Meadside and the bridge. Cllr Williams said that BCB would examine the condition of the surface and look at what would be required to carry out the improvement requested. It would be two months, however, before any work could be done.

##### c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

Cllr Keith Russell reported on his recent meeting with Tim Cook, one of the Church Wardens. The question of the safety of the graves and headstones had been discussed, particularly because of the obvious presence of moles in the churchyard. The Council's grass-cutting contractors might be at risk as well as visitors to the churchyard and the Parish Council is responsible for maintaining this area.

Tim Cook had also raised the possibility of the Council being responsible for repairs to the lych-gate. For guidance on these matters the Clerk will obtain the latest legal topic notes from the National Association of Local Councils and circulate to all councillors before the next meeting.

d. Allotments;

Cllr Mike Rimmer has been trying to make contact with Edward Metcalfe of the Allotment Society.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. A letter from the County Council explains that the County is intending to carry out essential scour repairs to Dorchester Bridge. These works will involve repairing the bridge invert/bed damaged due to the action of water/scour. The work is scheduled for late Summer/Autumn and will be done from the river bank with no impact to the traffic network. This email was given to the Chairman.

ii. The Council has been told that there is still money available in the Resilient Communities Fund. The next deadline for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> September with decisions due the following month. Councillors were asked for suggestions.

The Chairman said that the Council's original Emergency Plan needs to be reviewed with some contact names requiring an update. He will circulate the existing plan for discussion at the next Council meeting.

iii. Consultation about reducing the number of waste recycling centres; the Clerk will draft a statement for approval at the September meeting but councillors are free to participate in the consultation process as individuals as well. The deadline for comment is 5<sup>th</sup> October.

iv. Cancelled 'Have Your Say' Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> August

The Chairman, Clerk and several residents had gathered outside the Co-Op at the appointed time but the police officer had been called to an incident elsewhere and the meeting did not take place. There has been no news as yet about this meeting being re-arranged.

v. Parking in Monks Close

The Council noted a request for the introduction of parking controls in Monks Close but no action will be taken.

vi. The Parish Council's meeting with John Howell M.P. has now been confirmed for 2.30 p.m. on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September in the back room of the Village Hall. It was agreed that this meeting should be private.

## 10 Planning

a. Applications Received

P15/S2556/FUL 25 Bridge End

Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission P14/S1635/FUL, to amend the approved plan numbers. Demolition of existing garage/workshop and car port. Erection of new detached dwelling with extension and restoration of existing cottage and creation of new parking areas. P14/S1635/FUL Conditions(s) 2

In addition to the comments received during public participation, the Council had received letters emailed by Vlasta Fordova, the objector, and Tim Fisher, the applicant. The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval. The position of the window means that there will be no over-looking.

P15/S2445/PDO Overy Court Overy

Change of use from Office to Residential.

The Council has been told that its views are not being sought. Only immediate neighbours have been invited to comment; it is believed that they will be in favour.

P15/S2418/HH Thames Way 1 Wittenham Lane

Front and rear roof extensions, increased ridge and eaves height and replacement porch

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

P15/S2391/HH 16 Abingdon Road Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7JY

Single storey front extensions and covered entrance to form balcony above

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

P15/S2318/LB and P15/S2317/HH Lavender Cottage 13 Malthouse Lane

Removal of existing rear conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

(Cllr Val Howells took no part in the discussion about the following application)

P15/S2149/FUL Amendment 60 Watling Lane,

Removal of condition 5 (Code for Sustainable Homes) of planning permission

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

(Cllr Val Howells took no part in the discussion about the following application)

P15/S0010/FUL. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans condition) to allow lowering of the finished floor level by 200mm as described by the Agent's letter and illustrated on Dwg no. 1112-P01 D received on 04 August 2015. Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of 2x2 bedroom semi-detached dwellings.

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

c. Neighbourhood planning – Dorchester & Berinsfield

The Council noted that at the District Council's Planning Conference in early September Mark Stevenson has nominated himself and Chris Smith to attend.

Cllr Mark Williams confirmed that Berinsfield is continuing to progress its Neighbourhood Development Plan. As the director of a business that is based in Berinsfield he is kept informed of the NDP Committee's meetings.

It was agreed that The Chairman and Cllr Williams should try to meet with the Dorchester NDP committee in the near future.

#### 11. County Council Review of Subsidised Bus Services

Already covered under Public Participation earlier in this meeting. The matter will be discussed again at the September meeting.

#### 12 Speed Checks

The County has confirmed that they will carry out four speed checks after the schools have returned from holiday. The cost will be £400 – money that the Parish Council has already received in the form of a grant arranged by County Cllr. Lorraine Lindsay-Gale. The Parish Council has been invited to nominate the locations for these checks. The radars are fitted to a lamp column / telegraph pole etc. approx. 2m from the road. This needs to be a place where cars cannot park in front of it so there are several areas in the High Street where it will be difficult to find a suitable position.

Councillors will be asked for their suggestions at the September meeting.

#### 13 IT Training for Seniors

The Clerk reported that Margot Metcalfe has recently held a planning meeting and a notice will appear in Dorchester News advertising 'drop-in' meetings in the back room of the Village Hall on three Thursdays: 24<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 26<sup>th</sup> November. Out of the

grant money received from the County Council for this initiative approximately £750 remains unspent. Once the courses have started it will be possible to identify what further equipment is needed.

14. Training: Liz Howlett Freedom Of Information Overview

It was agreed that the most popular date for Liz Howlett's visit is Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September and the start time will be 2.30 p.m.

15. November 5<sup>th</sup> Fireworks Display

Through the Clerk Cllr Sue Graney reports that the deposit cheque has been sent and the next committee meeting will be in early September. Sue is still waiting to hear the Sports Club's views about a bonfire (although pallets have been sourced). The event may nominate Footsteps as the charity to support.

16. Land Registration

The Chairman has circulated a new list of sites to be considered for registration by the Parish Council. The Clerk is dealing with the applications for registration of four sites, including the Village Hall.

17. Village Communications / Additional Notice boards

In the absence of Cllr Sue Graney it was agreed to hold over discussion of this matter until the September Council meeting.

18. Annual review of Standing Orders & Financial Regulations and:

The Chairman said that he would like to arrange a meeting when the documents as circulated could be discussed by a small sub-committee consisting of himself, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, and the Clerk.

19. Review of Council's Risks Insurance

The Chairman has asked Cllr Mike Rimmer to assist in this matter. Cllr Rimmer said that the first stage is to gain an understanding of all the 'risks' that are involved both to the council as a whole and also to the councillors and clerk as individuals. The matter would be carried forward to the next Council meeting.

20. Any Other Business

- a. Cllr Claire Andersson will be representing the Parish Council at a conference about Child Protection on 13<sup>th</sup> August and will report back at the September meeting.
- b. Cllr Val Howells reported that she understood that there had been a robbery at the Orchid Lakes Fishery on Abingdon Road.

Meeting closed at 10.40 p.m.