

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th February 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, presided; present were Cllrs. Ken Bryan, Maurice Day, Sue Graney, Chris Hill (Vice-Chairman), Mike Hill and Mark Stevenson (part-time) with G Russell in attendance. Also present were two residents and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale. Apologies for absence were received from District Cllr Marc Hiles.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Mark Stevenson was attending a Green Belt Community Assessment Event along with other NDP members and sent apologies for missing the first part of the meeting.

2. Parish Council Vacancy

The co-optation of Val Howells of 89, Abingdon Road was proposed by Cllr Ken Bryan and seconded by Cllr Chris Hill. The Council was unanimous in its support and Val Howells was declared a member of the Parish Council. She signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk. Cllr Howells has expressed a particular interest in the Village School and the Clerk will contact Mike Kitson, the present Parish Council representative on the School's governing body, asking him to recommend Val Howells as his successor.

3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None, but both Cllr Mike Hill and Cllr Val Howells said that Mr Robert Booth, the applicant in P15/S0010/FUL 60 Watling Lane, is known to them and they would not take part in the discussion about this application.

4. Public Participation

Mr Robert Booth attended the meeting to talk about his application P15/S0010/FUL 60 Watling Lane; Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of 2x2 bedroom semi-detached dwellings. Mr Booth has owned the property since 2007. He described the building as being of poor quality with bad foundations and also damp. The new building will be constructed using good quality materials that are sympathetic to the surrounding properties. The new build will be 400mm higher than the present building, partly in order to provide some flood protection and partly to allow the rooms to have greater height than those in the present property. A soakaway is included in the scheme; off-road parking spaces will be provided on the western side.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held 14th January 2014

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

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Sue Ryder Hospice, Nettlebed; the Clerk has asked them to agree to a visit by representatives from the Parish Council.

b. The Clerk has contacted SODC about the poor state of the public lavatories in Bridge End. SODC has no plans to upgrade them this year, but might consider doing something in 2016/17. However, should the Parish wish to apply for town and village grant funding to improve the toilets, SODC would be happy to negotiate with the Parish Council to take them over. The Council is not keen to do this but asked the Clerk to find out what would be involved.

- c. At the moment Mary Tame is unable to take part in the ceremony to install the plaque near the tree that has been planted on The Green in her honour.
- d. Cllr Chris Hill said that several residents of Bridge End have told him that they would like the Council to get its contractor to control the moles on The Green. It was agreed that Total Pest Control UK would be instructed to use traps to do this.
- e. Model Standing Orders/ FoI Policy; it was agreed that the documents circulated on 3rd December should be in force pending review by the newly-elected Council as soon as possible after 7th May.

7. County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's Report has been circulated and also published on the website. She confirmed that she no longer has any access to sources of discretionary funding like the 'stewardship' funds of previous years. The County Council will make a decision about rural bus subsidies on 19th March. There is to be a PAGE meeting towards the end of February. The County Council will meet to decide about future levels of gravel extraction on 23rd March.

8. Finance: Bank balances & payments

Natwest Reserve Account 30th January	£47,824.29
Natwest Current Account 30th January	£42,118.56

The Clerk confirmed that the final instalment of the MUGA grant had been received in January, amounting to £809.00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr Ken Bryan and seconded by Cllr Mike Hill, the following cheques were approved for payment.

Southern Electric (Sports Pavilion)	£86.37
Data Systems Management (website)	£42.00
Society of Local Council Clerks (annual sub)	£118.00
Dorchester –on-Thames WI (refreshments for NDP)	£30.00
Chris Hill (refreshments for NDP)	£37.34
Geoff Willis (4 weeks)	£360.00
G Russell (salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	<u>£1,212.53</u>

An appeal for funding received from Home Start on Didcot Broadway, will be circulated for consideration at the March Council meeting.

Grass-cutting contract; quotations from two alternatives to BCB have been received. A third contractor visited the village but has not submitted a quote.

BCB have reduced their prices for 2015 by 6.8% and offered a three-year fixed price deal. The appointment of BCB was proposed by Cllr Chris Hill and seconded by Cllr Sue Graney. This was unanimously approved.

9. Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

- i. The report about the Pavilion roof from Mark Bristow will be circulated to all councillors along with copies of further correspondence that may follow in the coming weeks.

- ii. A copy of the latest Sports Club email regarding a possible extension will be sent to Cllrs Day, Graney and Howells.

- iii. Tennis Club Hitting Wall; details of the Tennis Club's proposal are awaited.

b. Footpaths;

BCB has undertaken some clearance of the footpath route along Watling Lane and has been asked for a quote to clear the area off Drayton Road by the orientation board and also at Waterloo.

There is an unusually large amount of litter along Henley Road and Geoff Willis has been asked to clear it as soon as possible.

Geoff Willis has been cleaning the bus shelters at the by-pass bus stops.

Representatives of the Pre-School have spoken to the Chairman about the trees in Manor Farm Road asking that the Council put in a request that the branches which over-hang the pre-school and the play area should receive attention. The Clerk will take up this matter with County Highways. The Chairman said that the Pre-School should itself be able to deal with moss growing on the play equipment; Jeyes Fluid would probably solve the problem.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

The Clerk said that he has again reminded Dan Haines about the notice boards.

d. Allotments;

The Skip will be there this week. Mark Townson has been reminded that the groundwork in the area that floods should be carried out before the end of March.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk;

Richard Juniper has suggested that a white line alongside the War Memorial in the High Street might stop vehicles being parked where they block the view of drivers coming out of Watling Lane and seeking to turn left towards Abingdon Road.

Councillors commented that a white line outside the entrance to the new houses at 32a, b, c and d High Street would help to prevent this access being blocked while the problem of parent-parking at the entrance to Queen's Close could also be solved with white lines. The Clerk will raise all these points with Mark Francis, the County Highways Officer who deals with this sort of request.

The Council noted correspondence about the new Local Transport Plan for Oxfordshire.

The Council noted that the local Post Office representative has been in touch with the Clerk saying the Post Office wishes to re-open discussion about using the Village Hall as an outreach post office.

The Returning Officer has written to the Clerk setting out details and key dates in the build-up to the Parish Council elections on 7th May, the date upon which Parliamentary and District Council elections will also take place. The Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, said that she would not be standing for re-election in May since she wished to retire. Cllr Mark Stevenson said that he was sure he was speaking on behalf of all the members when he said how much Margot's contribution to the Council in particular and the Village in general would be appreciated. The Council unanimously agreed and requested that these comments should be recorded in the Minutes. Cllrs Ken Bryan and Mark Stevenson also said that they will not be standing in May.

10. Planning

a. Applications

P15/S0010/FUL 60 Watling Lane

Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of 2x2 bedroom semi-detached dwellings.

Cllrs. Val Howells and Mike Hill declared a personal interest in this application and took no part in the discussion. The rest of the Council agreed that the plans should be recommended for approval.

P15/S0119/LDP 61 Abingdon Road Sundry building work

The Council agreed that it had no knowledge of this site that would prevent the granting of a Certificate of Lawful Development.

P15/S0162/HH (Householder) 81 Abingdon Road

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and relocation and re-erection of same 17m further into site. There had been insufficient time to consider this application and it will be held over until March.

b. Neighbourhood Development/Community Planning Report/Bus Users Group

The Consultation period following the open meeting held on 31st January ended today and Richard Winslet will analyse the replies for the next NDP meeting which takes place in two weeks.

Earlier this evening Cllr Mark Stevenson attended a Green Belt Assessment Meeting. SODC has asked the NDP group to analyse the impact that the Green Belt has on the boundary of Dorchester-on-Thames, using criteria that have been supplied by the District Council's consultants. The purpose of the exercise is to assist the District Council in making the case for retaining the Green Belt. Six weeks have been allocated for this purpose.

Cllr Stevenson said that he had discovered that establishing the cycle route from Berinsfield to Oxford is part of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.

c). Result of Appeal against Refusal of Planning at Overy Court

The Chairman said that the Planning Inspector's refusal of the appeal reflected well on the efforts and arguments that had been deployed by the Parish Council in this case. Indeed, in the report the inspector had specifically mentioned the Parish Council.

11. Parish Council Communications including publication of addresses

Individual councillor photos have now been supplied to the webmaster. The Clerk is still trying to get the Co-Op management's approval for the new notice board.

12. Handling Complaint; Panel findings and experience gained

It was agreed that the process should be changed so that eight weeks are allowed for handling any complaint rather than six. After the May elections Councillors should receive training in the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

13. Date of Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk said that he has been told that because this is an election year the Annual parish Meeting must be held between Monday 11 May and Thursday 31 July.

14. Registration of Parish Land

This will be carried forward until the next meeting. The Chairman has been sorting through the Parish Chest in the Abbey Museum and said that councillors will be most welcome to view the books, maps and other records that the Chest contains. These will have to be put back into the Chest in early March.

15. Village Fireworks Proposal

Cllr Sue Graney said that she has had a lot of positive reaction to the suggestion that the Village should have a Fireworks Display in November, possibly on Friday 6th or Saturday 7th. The cost of a 20 minute display would be between £2,500 and £3,000. Sue is working on funding proposals which may include a link with a charity.

16. Defibrillator

The Council's new defibrillator was shown to the meeting. It was agreed that this should be stored in a secure cabinet that would be mounted in the entrance to The White Hart. The Sports Club has said that it would prefer to have a defibrillator that is mounted on the front (pitch side) of the pavilion. The decision upon whether to proceed with this suggestion will be held over until the strength and security of the new cabinet has been assessed.

17 Gilbert Scott Memorial Project

Additional quotes for the telephone box repairs are to be obtained. It is hoped that the necessary applications for planning consent will be submitted before the Council's March meeting but confirmation of the planning fee is still awaited. Cllr Margot Metcalfe said that she would be willing to continue working on this project after leaving the Council in May.

18. Any Other Business

It was suggested that the Useful Contacts list that appears on page 2 of Dorchester News should be reproduced on village notice boards and the website. The Clerk will review the current information and pass this on when this is complete.

The Meeting closed at 10.34

