

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th November 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, 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 County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Cllr John Cotton and four residents.

1. Apologies for absence & Chairman's Opening Remarks

All Councillors were present. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting He said that the Council's discussion about the future of the Oxford Green Belt in this area is of great importance to the future of the Village.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

None

3. Public Participation

Malcolm Corry told the Council of his plans to hold a meeting of the 'speed watch' volunteers which would agree on proposals to be discussed by the Parish Council in December. He has arranged for a notice to appear in Dorchester News which announces the overall results of the County Council's survey and asks residents for their comments.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 14th October 2015

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a correct record. A new Minute Book is required. It was agreed to continue the loose-leaf format.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Presentation of Agenda and Recording of Minutes

The Clerk said that with effect from January 2016 he would adopt a new system so that every Minute entry had a unique reference, based upon the date upon which the matter had been discussed. With immediate effect he will also include a list of published planning decisions. Councillors suggested that items for decision should be brought forward for discussion early in the meeting and whenever possible reports to the Council should be circulated in advance.

b. Village Display Signs for Visitors

The Clerk is investigating the possibility of grant aid from SODC.

c. Belcher Court Developments

The Chairman and Cllr Keith Russell, at the invitation of one of the residents, had tried to attend a meeting at Belcher Court at which SOHA were explaining plans for the future development of the building, but they had been asked to leave.

d. Abingdon Road footpath/ potholes near Herringcote and in Manor Farm Road.

The Clerk has been in contact with County Highways about these matters and work is being progressed. A full village inspection is due this month.

e. Barrier across path by cemetery to stop use by motor cycles

The Chairman wishes to discuss this matter with the PCSOs

6. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton reported upon the recently-published Green Belt Study that has been carried out by consultants appointed by SODC. The consultants have recommended that some sites within the District are removed from Green Belt status. Cllr Cotton said that next

year's SODC Local Plan must guard against the District Council being accused of not having a 5 year land supply. The Council may ask parishes to increase their planned number of houses but will not dictate specific numbers – it is more likely to be a guide expressed in percentage terms. He said that the key defence for parishes wishing to avoid having housing projects imposed upon them is to produce their own initiatives for new dwellings through having a positive Neighbourhood Development Plan. If NDPs identify a few development opportunities, each of three or four houses, this will give the villages the protection that they seek.

Cllr Cotton said that he is aware that all of Meadside and parts of Abingdon Road are not yet receiving the high-speed broadband service that is now being enjoyed by the rest of the village. He said that he believes that all areas will benefit before the present roll-out programme is due to be completed by the end of 2017.

Cllr Cotton said that the District Council has decided to withdraw the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant from 2016. The money that this will save will be re-allocated to parish councils with neighbourhood planning activity.

7 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's written monthly report has been circulated and will appear in both Dorchester News and on the website

Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that the County Council is reviewing the future of all 800 of its properties. The Council is waiting for the Chancellor's 'Autumn statement' before finalising its budget for 2016/17 but it appears certain that many rural bus services will cease next April. The County has decided to delay for two years a decision on closing some waste recycling sites.

8 Finance:

Bank balances:

NatWest Current Account 30 th October 2015	£55,894.85
NatWest Reserve Account 30 th October 2015	£47,842.18

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Michael Lynes Jeweller Ltd (chairman's chain)	£70.00
Dorchester on Thames Village Hall (room hire)	£101.00
Dorchester on Thames Sports Club (grass-cutting 2015)	£750.00
SSE (Southern Electric, pavilion)	£388.24
Jenks Oxford Ltd (Cemetery trees)	£360.00
Town and Country Memorials Ltd (plaque)	£117.60
ERS Environmental Services (PROfile) (rabbit control)	£334.80
South Oxfordshire District Council (dog bin emptying 6 months)	£226.04
Berinsfield Community Business (grass cutting September)	£910.50
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£402.50
Chris Drewett Signs Ltd (new parking signs)	£393.60
Parker Merchanting (cones – paid by G Russell)	£92.16
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£4,685.26

The Clerk has circulated a review of the Council's receipts and payments to 30th September. It was agreed to make a donation of £100 to the Dorchester branch of the Royal British Legion being a payment for a wreath and a donation. There has also been a request for funding from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind. On the basis that OAB has helped seven Dorchester residents in the past year it was suggested that the donation should be £350. The decision will be made at the December Council meeting.

The Council will be asked to decide upon the 2016/17 Precept at the January meeting. The Chairman said that all Councillors who would like to suggest projects for funding in the coming year should supply details to the Clerk.

The Council noted that new legislation means that it must follow the requirement for auto-enrolment for staff pensions whether any employees are in a scheme or not. The Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils has issued a briefing note on this topic which will be circulated with the monthly folder. The Council must record in its minutes that this matter has been discussed following which the Clerk has been asked to register.

9 Planning

a. Applications Received:

P15/S3620/LB The Thatched Cottage 12 Wittenham Lane

Increase the height of the chimney from approximately 1m above the thatched roof to 1.8m.

It was agreed that the Council had no strong views on this Application and would be happy for the planning office to determine the application as it sees fit.

(This Application was subsequently withdrawn)

P15/S3298/HH and P15/S3299/LB 1 Forge Cottages Malthouse Lane

Internal alterations mainly to upper floor stud walls. Demolition of part single storey extension to rear and new adjacent single storey extension to form dining room

It was agreed that the Council had no strong views on this Application and would be happy for the planning office to determine the application as it sees fit.

b. Decisions Notified:

The following Applications have all been approved

P15/S3242/LB 12 Bridge End Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7JP

Installation of a boiler, flue and replacement windows, alterations to the rear of the house and alterations to bathroom extractor Vent

P15/S3029/HH and P15/S3030/LB 9 Martins Lane

Proposed alterations to existing boundary wall. Proposed internal alterations to existing kitchen wall, painting of brick walls to rear elevations (off-white), repairs to existing flat roof rear extension and painting of timber windows (light blue/green).

P15/S2818/HH 9 Bridge End

Widen drive access. Replace roof covering. Provide external wall cladding/render

c. Neighbourhood Development Planning

Cllr Oliver Margison has been tasked by the NDP Group to prepare the 'evidence-base' for the Group's final report, having received the files and papers from Mark Stevenson, the previous chairman. Oliver is working through these documents with the aim of having something prepared for the NDP Group meeting which is scheduled for 24th November, although it has already been recognised that this meeting may have to be postponed.

d. Green Belt Review – Future of 'Demesne Field'

Further to the comments made by District Cllr John Cotton earlier in the meeting the Council was told that Richard Douglas and John Metcalfe, who were both present at this evening's meeting, had written a paper arguing that the demesne field should not be removed from the Green Belt. The Clerk gave his copy of this document to Cllr Margison. The Clerk will also look up Mark Stevenson's account of the consultation meeting that he had had earlier this year with the authors of the Green Belt Study and circulate Mark's notes to all involved.

The Chairman said that he has prepared a draft letter to be sent to South Oxfordshire District Council. He felt that Dorchester residents should be informed of this debate and be given a chance to discuss the matter in depth at a special meeting to be held early in 2016. This matter will be discussed again at the Council's December meeting

11. November 5th Fireworks Display Review & Future Events

Cllr Sue Graney reported that approaching 1,000 people attended the event and the comments received afterwards were very complimentary. Sales of food and drink exceeded expectations and donations came to £1,783. Total money earned was £5,637 and the 'profit' was calculated to be

£984.65. Sue thanked all members of the Parish Council for their assistance on the night and also Mike Stimpson and his Sports Club colleagues who built the bonfire. The Council agreed that the event should be repeated in 2016 and expressed the hope that Sue and the same team of organisers would be available to take charge of the project again.

12. Resilient Communities Fund/ Emergency Planning

The Chairman reported that the Council has been awarded a grant of £1,516 by SSE to purchase generating equipment and ancillary materials for use in an emergency. The Council agreed to fund the purchase of these items. The grant will only be made available upon proof of purchase. SSE wish to obtain publicity for their involvement in this scheme and the Council agreed that it would be pleased to co-operate with this objective. It was suggested that the generating equipment should be installed at the Village Hall and a study will be carried out to see exactly what this will involve and if it is possible.

13 Sports Pavilion Extension Project

Mike Stimpson, Chairman of the Sports Club, told the Council that quotes for repairing the flat roof at the rear of the Pavilion have been received from three contractors but there is an option of leaving this work to be undertaken when the new extension is constructed. The Council agreed that it would like work to be carried out on the existing roof without further delay, other than to see if it would be possible to obtain a grant towards the cost of this work. The Council would be able to fund the project even if a grant is not forthcoming and agreed to make £5,000 available for this purpose. Several Councillors expressed concern that, although the proposed extension would provide some extra floor space and introduce new facilities, it would fall short of the Club's main objective which is to attract new activities and achieve greater use by females and families. The Council agreed that the matter requires further discussion.

14 Representation at outside meetings

In recent weeks, the Chairman and Cllr Oliver Margison have attended SODC's Town & Parish Council Forum; Cllrs Val Howells and Mike Rimmer have attended the County Council's budget cuts meeting 'Oxfordshire Together'; Cllr Keith Russell and the Clerk have attended a training meeting about The Code of Conduct; and the Chairman attended a training meeting about planning.

So far there has been no opportunity for the Council to discuss the feedback from these Meetings but some councillors have provided written reports which have been much Appreciated.

15. Village Christmas Tree

As in previous years, this will be ordered by Maurice Day and it will be delivered with the tree for Dorchester Abbey on the morning of Thursday 3rd December. Cllr Sue Graney will arrange a working party to decorate the tree in time for a carol concert by children from the Village School.

16. Village Carbon Project

The Clerk is waiting for Laura Bristow to respond to the Council's enquiry about the status of this project and an assessment of whether further input from the Parish Council is required.

The Meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.