

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 15th May 2013 commencing at 7.00 p.m. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Mrs M Metcalfe, presided; present were Cllrs K Bryan, M Day, S Greenaway, M. Kitson, and M Stevenson and 25 residents with G Russell in attendance.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Chris Hill and Mike Hill, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Sue and Richard Booyes, Howard Exton-Smith, Richard Douglas and Judy Parker

2. Minutes of the Meeting dated 9th May 2012

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a correct record of the Meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. There had been a suggestion that Allotment rents should be increased since in Dorchester-on-Thames they are very much less than in other villages in the area. The increase has been considered but not so far introduced.
- b. The County Council has recently carried out repairs to some of the potholes in Watling Lane. The work had stopped due to bad weather. The Parish Council hoped that the work would be completed later in the year although several residents said that they thought that the work done so far was unlikely to be a long-term solution because it had been carried out in bad weather.

4. Chairman's Report

Cllr Mrs Margot Metcalfe submitted a written report, a copy of which is annexed to these Minutes.

There were some questions about footpath maintenance including a request for repairs to the surface of the footpath section of Malthouse Lane.

John Taylor was invited to speak on the status of the plans for further gravel extraction in the area near to Dorchester-on-Thames. He explained that the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State had questioned the strategy that the County Council had adopted and that further discussion had been delayed by the County Council elections which had only just taken place. As a result of these elections the Conservatives had lost overall control of the Council and now relied upon the support of three Independent County Councillors, two of whom had taken part in the campaign to stop gravel extraction south of Wallingford (CAGE). This, together with the questions now being raised about how much gravel should actually be extracted, had put the whole matter back into a state of uncertainty.

The County Council's new Cabinet would meet in June to discuss the matter and would report to a full Council meeting in July. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale has been invited to join the Cabinet and has taken on responsibility for Community and Cultural Services.

Lorraine's Annual Report had been circulated and a copy is annexed to these Minutes.

5. Draft Accounts for year ended 31st March 2013

The Clerk presented these accounts which are still subject to audit. Village events to celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee had cost just over £4,000 which was £1,000 less than budget.

A significant item of expenditure had been the new surface for the path alongside the Burial Ground which had cost £3,155. The quality of the new surface had been much appreciated by all who use this route. The Parish Council has purchased the telephone box in Bridge End, paying British Telecom the nominal sum of £1. The telephone itself has been removed and the Council is holding discussions with residents to produce a plan for maintaining and managing this new Parish asset.

Allotment rents had been maintained for another year because expenditure and revenue were once again in balance.

6. Our Village: Our Future; Feedback from the afternoon's Exhibition and Forum

Cllr Mark Stevenson summarised the process which has brought the Dorchester Neighbourhood Plan to its present status. The Plan would be going into great detail about how the District Council's 'core strategy' is applied in Dorchester. The District Council's approval of Dorchester's application to begin the Neighbourhood Planning process is imminent. Once this is given members of the Council's Planning Team will be available to assist the Village with its effort.

Cllr Stevenson emphasised the importance of residents getting involved with the process; the planning group should not just contain members of the parish council. He said that Dorchester News will be used to keep everyone informed about how the process is developing.

7. Any Other Business

A resident asked what planning process should be followed by home-owners wishing to install solar panels. This all depends upon whether the property is listed and in a Conservation Area.

Malcolm Corry proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council and the Clerk and this was unanimously approved.

The Meeting closed at 8.19 p.m.