

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th May 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The retiring Chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe, presided at the start of the meeting; also present were Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, Chris Hill (Vice-Chairman), Mike Rimmer and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the time were fourteen residents and District Councillor John Cotton.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Val Howells and Keith Russell and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale.

2. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, Chris Hill, Mike Rimmer and Mark Williams all signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office which were witnessed by the Clerk.

3. Election of Parish Council Chairman 2015-16

Cllr Chris Hill was proposed by Cllr Mark Williams and seconded by Cllr Sue Graney. There were no other candidates and Cllr Hill was declared duly elected. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk, and took the chair which was vacated by Mrs Metcalfe.

4. Election of Parish Council Vice-Chairman 2015-16

Cllr Mark Williams was proposed by Cllr Sue Graney and seconded by Cllr. Mike Rimmer. There were no other candidates and Cllr Williams was declared duly elected. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk.

5 Registration of Interests

The Clerk said that Councillors now have 28 days in which to complete the standard form of registration of interests. These would be sent to the Monitoring Officer at the District Council.

6 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

None

7. Public Participation

Nigel and Susan Oddy, the owners of The White Hart Hotel, introduced Sean Harris, hotel manager, and Tony Herring, architect, to talk about and answer questions about the Applications P15/S1303/FUL & P15/S1304/LB. Mr Oddy said that the provision of hotel bedrooms in the area is planned to increase by around 600 units and therefore he believes that the business model of The White Hart needs to change. He thinks that in future the hotel should offer fewer bedrooms but of higher quality, while retaining the existing restaurant and bar provision. The future business would require less space so a large proportion of the existing property could be redeveloped.

Tony Herring described how reducing the total number of bedrooms from 28 to 11 would free up space which could be converted to three dwellings. The scaled-down business would require less off-road car parking and so some of the existing car park area could be replaced by three new dwellings on the side nearest to the Village Hall. He had designed all six dwellings to have two car parking spaces – the standard requirement of the County Council – while he had allowed one parking space per hotel bedroom. Mr Herring said that he believes

the proposals would not make the existing village car parking problems any worse and that the proposed developments are appropriate and sympathetic to the surrounding area. The development of the proposed six dwellings would fund the structural improvements that are required within that part of the property that is being retained as the hotel.

Several residents expressed reservations about the proposals. Although the conversion of part of the existing hotel into three dwellings was generally approved, the scale of the new build in what is presently part of the hotel car park was generally opposed. It was felt that the proposed new dwellings are too large. They would therefore require more car parking spaces than have been allocated and they would also detract from the location and setting of the Village Hall. Although it had been suggested that there would be no net loss of car parking spaces if this development was allowed, in fact there would be three existing informal parking spaces on Queen Street that would be lost. During term-time there is great demand for day-time parking on Queen Street and the surrounding area especially at the beginning and end of normal school opening time.

Another concern is the possibility that residents of the proposed dwellings near the Village Hall would be disturbed by late night functions and might in time attempt to curtail such activities, which would lead to the Hall losing important income.

The planning notices have only just been placed on the site and so many residents are not yet aware of these proposals. The Clerk will ask the planning officer if the period of consultation can be extended so that the Council can make its recommendation at the June meeting, taking into account all comments submitted on-line along with any responses that may be forthcoming from the applicants and their architect.

8. Minutes of the Meetings held 8th and 21st April 2015

Some changes to the versions circulated in advance of the meeting have been suggested by Margot Metcalfe and Mike Hill. Three typing errors were found by Cllr Sue Graney. After these had been corrected and initialled by the Clerk, the Minutes were approved and signed.

9. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- i. Arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting 19th May; The Chairman confirmed that he would be presenting the Council's Annual Report after consultation with Mrs Metcalfe.
- ii. Bradley House, 8 Malthouse Lane; it was understood that an amended plan was lodged with SODC after the Parish Council had recommended refusal. The planning officer would be requested to supply details of these amendments. The Council noted that there are several resident responses on the SODC website, including a petition from neighbours which opposes the proposal.
- iii. Parish Records/Safeguarding Open Green Spaces; Cllr Metcalfe's report of her research through old minute books has been circulated and Cllr Ken Bryan has shown Cllrs Sue Graney and Val Howells the areas that are referred to in the report. The Clerk said that if the Council now wishes to take this project further Simon Escreet is available to assist. The Clerk was asked to get a written proposal and some cost estimates from Mr Escreet as quickly as possible. It was not known if the Watsons have been in contact with either the Land Registry or Father John about their interest in the land between their garden at 13 Bridge End and the River Thame.
- iv. Recreation Ground boundary ditch; the Clerk confirmed that he had asked BCB to carry out vegetation clearance prior to asking Gilbert Hobbs to do the necessary excavation.
- v. Cllr Sue Graney confirmed that the defibrillators have now been fitted at both The White Hart and the Sports Pavilion. She is registering the devices with the Ambulance Service and will soon be advertising details of training courses.

vi. Parish Councillor Training; The Council has reserved four places on the OALC training course on 29th July. The Clerk will circulate the programme.

10 District Councillor Report

District Cllr John Cotton said that the District Council has taken a four year lease on premises at 135 Milton Park and all staff would soon be accommodated there. Meetings of the Planning Committee would be taking place at Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford because this is more convenient for residents of SODC. The future of the fire-damaged premises has still to be decided.

Cllr Cotton said that a new planning process would probably start in the autumn and this will be looking at the demand for extra housing, possibly affected by a shortfall in housing provided within the City of Oxford.

11 Finance: Bank balances & payments

Natwest Reserve Account 30 th April	£47,830.19
Natwest Current Account 30 th April	<u>£60,176.91</u>
(includes first half precept payment of £22,203.00)	£108,007.10
The following cheques were approved for payment:	
P.C Keable (Rec Hedge cutting)	£168.00
Total Pest Control (Moles/rabbits in Abbey View)	£66.00
Thames Water (Allotments)	£8.87
Berinsfield Community Business (March grass)	£706.26
Berinsfield Community Business (April grass)	£1061.64
Winterbourne Services (fitting defibrillator cabinets)	£35.00
Dorchester on Thames Village Hall (room hire)	£101.00
NALC (annual magazine subscription)	£17.00
SSE (Pavilion Electricity)	£84.25
Geoff Willis (Handyman 4 weeks)	£373.12
Neil Willis (strimming)	£70.00
G Russell (salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£3,229.96

The Council noted that the Internal Audit for 2014/15 will take place on Tuesday 9th June (the day before the next Council meeting). The Clerk will present a draft receipts and payments account to the Annual Parish Meeting on 19th May.

So far only Cllr Hill has been added to the Council's Bank Mandate. As he is a NatWest customer already the process has been relatively straightforward. Two additional signatories are required.

Appeals for funding from Sue Ryder Hospice and 'Good Night Out' Touring Theatre will be circulated for consideration when the 2015/16 Budgets are agreed.

The Clerk confirmed that he has been contacted by Ken Bryan's supplier regarding the purchase of new accounting software and he will progress this in due course.

12 Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The Pavilion extension planning application is now out for consultation and it will come before the Council at its June meeting. Richard Anderson has supplied the Clerk with the names of three roofing contractors. They will be invited by the Clerk to provide quotes to repair the flat roof to the rear but the work could be carried out at the same time as the extension if this is approved and can be funded.

Tennis Club Hitting Wall; Cllr Claire Andersson said that a proposal is being developed but it might be July before this is ready.

Use of Recreation Ground by Footsteps Foundation on Sunday 5th July; Cllr Andersson said that this event has been postponed.

The Parish Council has been invited to attend the Sports Club AGM on Tuesday 19th May. It starts at 7.00 p.m. but no-one is available. The Annual Parish Meeting takes place on the same evening commencing at 7.30 p.m.

b. Footpaths;

The portion of Watling Lane that was cleared by the Community Payback team has been trimmed by the village handyman and will be added to the list of paths which are trimmed by him as required during the growing season.

The Clerk will again write to Mark Sumner, County Footpaths Officer, asking about the signage in Watling Lane and if any long-term maintenance cover can be provided.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

Nothing to report.

d. Allotments;

The Clerk will ask if Margot Metcalfe received replies about the cultivation of trees and also about the University's plans for future archaeological excavations.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. The Invitation for the Chairman to attend RAF Benson's Annual Reception on 21st May was given to Cllr Hill. The Clerk has also been invited but is unable to attend.

ii. Play Area Inspection Training; details of RoSPA courses, which are available at Swindon, will be circulated. Training in Routine Visual Inspections costs £227 (plus VAT) while an Operational Inspection Course costs £403 (plus VAT).

13 Planning

a. Applications

P15/S1334/HH Bramley Cottage, 2 Crown Lane; Replacement of casement window on the first floor level, by French doors opening onto existing flat roof.

It was agreed that the Council would recommend approval.

P15/S1373/LB Bull Cottage 59 High Street;

Proposed change to external decoration colour scheme.

It was agreed that the Council would recommend approval.

P15/S1303/FUL & P15/S1304/LB White Hart Hotel, 22 High Street; Part demolition of existing rear outbuilding, removal of flat roof elements and structural repairs. Proposed alterations and conversion of north side of existing hotel to form 3x new dwellings with private rear gardens and associated off-street parking. Erection of 3x new dwellings adj. to north boundary, removal of east boundary Wall and reconstruct to form parking for 6 cars. Alterations to rear of hotel gable to form new internal staircase and ground floor kitchen preparation area. Erection of a single storey addition to link east annexe and provide 2x hotel bedrooms. Re-surfacing of car park and stone new stone paving to kitchen court.

Several residents have asked that the Parish Council should note the responses which they have already sent in. Two Councillors who are also on the Village Hall management committee have asked for advice as to whether they are eligible to take part in the decision or should declare a prejudicial interest. The Clerk has asked OALC for advice on this point. It was agreed that the planning officer would be asked to allow an extension to the consultation period to allow these matters to be resolved.

P15/S1246/HH & P15/S1247/LB Queenford Farm

Single storey conservatory to the rear of the property

It was agreed that the Council would recommend approval.

P15/S1218/HH 21 High Street

Erection of a detached garden room/gym/store.

The Council understands that a neighbour has raised concerns about aspects of her privacy directly with the applicant, The Council itself has no strong views on the application but asks, if the planning officer is minded to approve it, that the neighbour's concerns are taken into account perhaps by way of a condition.

Permitted Development Rights;

The Council noted the following applications made under permitted development rights upon which only owners / occupants of adjoining properties are entitled to comment:

P15/S1054/PDH 81 Abingdon Road

Single storey extension to both sides of detached house. Single storey extension to rear of detached house.

P15/S1098/PDH Blakemead, 61 Abingdon Road

Proposed single storey extension

P15/S1355/PDH Blakemead, 61 Abingdon Road

Erection of a single storey rear extension

b. Neighbourhood Development Planning Report

The Council noted that the District Council has set 5th June as the closing date for comments about modifications to the Community Infrastructure Levy.

14. Parish Council Responsibilities and Representation on other bodies

With two Councillors absent from the meeting it was impossible to allocate every role but, after discussion, the following was agreed:

Responsibility (*new appointment)

Allotments: Mike Rimmer*

Broadband: Chris Hill

Car Parking: Chris Hill, Sue Graney* and A N Other

Cemetery:

Defibrillator Supervisor: Sue Graney

Earth Trust Local Stakeholder Group (new position): Mike Rimmer*

Emergency Planning: Chris Hill

Flooding & Drainage: Chris Hill

Footpaths: Val Howells*

Gilbert Scott Memorial; Keith Russell*

Hurst Water Meadow: Chris Hill

IT for Seniors: Margot Metcalfe

Land Registry and Open Spaces: Chris Hill

Neighbourhood Development Planning: Chris Hill, Mike Rimmer*, Mark Williams* and A N Other

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust/Community Care etc. (new position): Sue Graney*

PAGE: Chris Hill*

PCC: Claire Andersson*

Playground: Val Howells*

River Users Group: Simon Broadbent (no change)

School Governor: Val Howells

Sports Club: Claire Andersson*

Street Lighting: Mark Williams*

Tourism: Sue Graney*

Transport policy including bus services:

Tree Officer: Sue Graney

Village Carbon Project:

Village Hall:

Village Website: Sue Graney

This matter will be discussed again at the June meeting and the list above is subject to change.

15. Parish Council Vacancy

There is one vacancy on the Council and this can be filled by co-option. The matter will be considered again at the June meeting.

16. Broadband Connection Report

It was reported that most of the Village now has access to high speed broadband. The big exception is Abingdon Road from around Number 41 upwards. There are problems with cabling. These will be dealt with within weeks rather than months.

Cllr Mark Williams said that the Village Hall would have the service from tomorrow.

17. Any Other Business

- i. The Chairman asked if the Defibrillator training could be broadened into a general First Aid course. Cllr Sue Graney said that she would ask the Ambulance Service about this.
- ii. Cllr Mark Williams asked if there could be a discussion at the next meeting about the way the Council deals with Planning Applications - circulating the paper copies in advance of the full Council meetings and so on. It was agreed that this item would be placed on the agenda.

The Meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.