

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 10th June 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, Val Howells, Mike Rimmer, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the time were eight residents.

1. Apologies for absence & Chairman's Opening Remarks

Apologies were received from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale. The Chairman welcomed all councillors to the meeting. Since this was the first meeting after the May Election at which every member of the Council was present, the Chairman asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Chris Hill has been a councillor for 12 years, for much of that time with special responsibilities for liaison with The Hurst Trust and the Sports Club. The registration of some areas of open green space has been one of his recent priorities along with emergency planning, drains and ditches and, with others, village parking issues. His overall objective is to make the Council run efficiently.

Claire Andersson has lived in the village for six years. She is chairman of Dorchester Tennis Club and has a particular interest in facilities for families and recreation in general. She has experience in project and event management.

Val Howells has lived in the village for 22 years and has an interest in sport. She is a scientist who also has provided catering services. She was co-opted to the Parish Council in February this year and is the Council's representative on the governing body of the Village School which is hard work but very rewarding

Mark Williams has lived in Dorchester for 15 years. He was co-opted to the Parish Council in October 2002 and served until May 2011. He runs Berinsfield Community Business and assists Jenks Oxford. He is chairman of Dorchester Amateur Dramatic Society and treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee. He is keen to ensure that Parish Council business is conducted efficiently.

Mike Rimmer has lived here for 20 years. He is a chartered secretary, now employed by Unipart on a part-time basis. He likes the village and wants to retain its great character, while being very aware of the need for change and improvement. He wants the Parish Council to exert as much influence as possible on the local planners.

Keith Russell has lived in the village for 40 years, has been a parent governor of the school and is currently an active member of the Amateur Dramatic Society and Dorchester Golf Society. He is chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee. A former marketing director of Unipart, he ran a creative agency for many years and is still involved writing and producing video output. He wants to be involved in village life rather than be someone who leaves things to others and then complains when everything is not to their satisfaction

Sue Graney has lived in Dorchester for 17 years and was co-opted to the Parish Council in December 2013. She is a former primary-school teacher with a lot of committee experience who is now keen to put something back into the quality of life in the village. She likes to be proactive, rather than reactive, and has already played a leading part in launching the new Village website. She was instrumental in bringing back the village Christmas Tree in 2014 and is currently working on plans to bring back the village firework display this November. The Chairman thanked all the councillors for their contributions and said that it was good to see such passion and to hear so many good ideas.

2. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllrs Val Howells and Keith Russell signed their Acceptance of Office forms and their signatures were witnessed by the Clerk.

3. Registration of Interests

Cllrs Val Howells and Keith Russell gave their Registration forms to the Clerk. All councillors have completed these forms which will be sent to the Monitoring Officer.

4. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

None.

5. Public Participation

Malcolm Corry and Graham Shaw attended the meeting in order to confirm their interest in volunteering to take part in traffic speed surveys using 'SID' equipment, which can be borrowed from the Police. The Chairman and Cllr Val Howells said that they would like to take part too. Malcolm Corry said that controlling traffic speeds through the village had been identified as an important issue during the consultation that had taken place prior to the Neighbourhood and Community planning initiatives.

Speeds in Abingdon Road, Henley Road and the High Street were the main concern and this is where the surveys would take place. Cllr Mike Rimmer said that he does not agree with some of the current speed restrictions in the Parish. In some places they are too low and in other places they are too high. It was agreed that the main objective of the exercise was data collection rather than an attempt to 'catch' people breaking the law. This data will be helpful in assessing the extent to which there are problems with vehicles speeding in the village and to establish benchmark data against which the impact of any subsequent speed reduction campaign can be measured. This would be explained in 'Dorchester News' where there will also be an attempt to find more volunteers. The Clerk will find out from the County Council whether they still carry out speed surveys using cabling stretched across the roadway.

Colin and Kate Watson from 13 Bridge End told the Council what had followed their attendance at the Parish Council meeting on 8th April when they had enquired about the status of the land between the end of their garden and the River Thames.

Father John Osman was present and he confirmed that when, as had been suggested by the Parish Council, the Watsons had approached him regarding the land, he had explained that, although nothing was recorded at the Land Registry, it was owned by the Catholic Church and that the records of this ownership were in the Birmingham Diocesan office. He said that other Bridge End residents, such as Mary Tame at number 9, had purchased their river frontages from the Church many years ago and that, some 15 years ago, the previous owners of 13 Bridge End, Mr and Mrs Baker, had been negotiating about buying the land between the end of their garden and the river but there had been no agreement on terms.

Since 8th April the Watsons have made an official written agreement with the Church that, in return for them taking on the responsibility for tree maintenance and the general management of the area, the Church would grant them an exclusive right to treat the land as an extension to their own garden. A fence has been erected which marks the boundary between the land behind 13 Bridge End and the area known as 'Waterloo'. This area has long been maintained by the Parish Council and is a public access to the river which has been in use for more than a century.

Mark Stevenson, a member of the Parish Council at the time of the April meeting, said that, as far as he is concerned, now that the Catholic Church has confirmed that deeds of ownership are held in the Diocesan office, it is in order for this new fence to be erected.

Father John said that the proper dredging and clearing of the River Thames has been ignored for many years. Some riparian owners still act responsibly but those in authority seem to ignore 'the old wisdom' and so more flooding occurs.

6. Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held 13th May 2015

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

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There is no interest in attending the Play Area Inspection Training Courses. Instead the Clerk will send Cllr Val Howells a copy of the Inspector's report from 2014 and will arrange for her to meet the Inspector during the annual visit in July. He will also attend and together they will be able to ask the Inspector for advice about on-going inspection routines.

Cllr Howells said that the presence of mole hills in the play area is a significant hazard and the Clerk will ask Total Pest Control (UK) Ltd about the treatment that they are applying.

8. District & County Councillors' Reports

The monthly report from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale has been circulated and posted on the Village website.

9 Finance: Bank balances & payments

Natwest Reserve Account 30 th May	£47,832.09
Natwest Current Account 30 th May	<u>£55,536.62</u>
	103,368.71

(VAT Refund to be claimed for 2014/15 £5,727.63)

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Cheques for approval	
Zurich Municipal	£1,765.53
Total Pest Control (Moles/rabbits)	£234.00
Thames Water (Allotments)	£8.87
Berinsfield Community Business (May grass)	£910.50
Berinsfield Community Business (ditch clearance)	£186.00
Anderson Orr (Pavilion extension planning)	£1,177.00
Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (subscription)	£40.00
Phil Greenway (War Memorial plants)	£16.17
Geoff Willis (Handyman 3 weeks)	£245.00
Neil Willis (strimming)	£52.50
Roger Bzdyr (holiday cover for Geoff Willis)	£61.25
G Russell (admin expenses April – June)	£192.94
G Russell (salary)	£538.82
PAGE campaign donation	<u>£1,000.00</u>
	£6,428.58

The Clerk reported that Kevin Rose, the internal auditor, had completed his review of the books and records for 2014/15 on the previous day and had signed his report. He had agreed the Bank Reconciliation Statement with the Clerk and this was now signed by the Chairman. A copy was provided for all councillors. Mr Rose has advised the Council to revalue its assets based upon the latest insured values plus the cost of the MUGA in 2013/14. This would be dealt with by the Clerk who would send the Annual Return to the Auditors, BDO, along with a statement explaining significant variances between receipts and payments in the two previous years.

The Internal Auditor had commented upon the size of the Council's bank balance and suggested that the Council should identify some projects for which funds could be regarded

as 'earmarked'. The Clerk will circulate the audited receipts and payments as a starting point for discussion about setting budgets for this and subsequent years.

It was agreed to add Cllrs Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell to the list of authorised signatories. The Clerk will prepare the applications.

The Council had received funding appeals from Sue Ryder Hospice and the 'Good Night Out' Touring Theatre. Cllr Williams proposed that each should receive a donation of £125.

Cllr Graney seconded the proposal which was passed unanimously.

The Chairman has asked Cllr Rimmer to carry out a review of the Council's Risks Insurance and this matter will be put on the agenda of a meeting in the near future.

The Clerk said that the internal auditor has offered his assistance with setting up new accounting procedures if required.

10 Correspondence and Other Business

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Cllr Claire Andersson said that she would be interested to investigate the provision of fitness equipment for adults.

The Tennis Club is working on plans for installing a 'hitting wall' and these will be presented to the Council in the near future.

b. Footpaths;

There has been an increase in the number of complaints about dogs being allowed by their owners to foul the footpaths. The Clerk said that he would put something about this into 'Dorchester News'. He was asked to investigate the possibility of providing dog waste bags.

The Hurst Water Meadow Trust has started to do this.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

The Clerk has been telephoned by a resident from Page Furlong complaining about her garden being in the shadows cast by two horse chestnut trees in the cemetery. These trees will be listed in the maintenance programme prepared by Jenks. The Parish Council agreed that it wished to act as 'a good neighbour' should and the matter will be investigated.

There is a lot of mole damage in the Abbey Churchyard. This is not an area where the Council has attempted any mole control measures in the past and it was agreed this should be considered.

d. Allotments;

Oxford Archaeology will be on site from the weekend of 27/28 June. As in previous years, the students will be using the Pavilion showers and, indeed, the University has already paid the Council £300 for this service. It is understood that the project is likely to run for at least two more years.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. Enclosure of land adjacent to 13, Bridge End; in the light of the information received during Public Participation earlier in the meeting it was agreed that the Council needs to take no further action.

ii. OALC AGM, Didcot 6th July. The Clerk will attend on behalf of the Council.

iii. The Returning Officer, David Buckle, has written to the Council asking that it should fill the vacant position of councillor as soon as possible. *[Cllr Claire Andersson had to leave the meeting at this point]*

11 Planning Applications Received

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.

The Council agreed to recommend refusal, the main concerns being the increased requirement for car parking in an area of the village which is already busy and sometimes congested and the impact of the proposed new dwellings upon the character of the area and the setting of the village hall. The Chairman will draft the response for comment and approval by all councillors.

P15/S0569/HH Bradley House 8 Malthouse Lane; Erection of a single storey adjoining annex (as amplified by updated site location plan received 23/03/15, and revised plans received 27/05/2015)

The Council agreed to recommend refusal for reasons similar to those given when the application was discussed at the March (2015) meeting. The Chairman will draft the response for comment and approval by all councillors.

P15/S1735/HH Thatched Cottage 4 High Street; 1) Replacing soil washed away by constant flooding. 2) Increasing the level of soil/clay at the garden wall. 3) Increasing the height of the garden wall which was breached on every occasion by floods. 4) Removing a Willow stump at the gable end of the building which already threatens the thatch on the building and to allow for installation of soil/clay.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S1521/HH Tall Trees 6 Manor Farm Road; Erection of a stone front boundary wall.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S1729/HH 61 Abingdon Road; Erection of a single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension. Demolition of existing greenhouse.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S1652/LB and P15/S1650/HH 21 High Street; Garden room.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S1230/HH 2 Oxford Road; Proposed rear extension

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S1496/FUL Overy Court Overy; Removal of condition 3 (use as offices) of planning permission P91/W0698. Change of use of existing buildings from studio offices to B1(a) office use, to include present restricted studio office use.

It was agreed to apply to the Planning Officer for an extension to the consultation period so that the Council could obtain advice upon the planning implications of agreeing to this application.

P15/S1495/FUL Minchin Recreation Ground Drayton Road; Proposed rear extension to create larger kitchen and new toilet facilities.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

P15/S0977/LB Cast Iron Milepost Beside Footpath off A4074 Between Shillingford & Dorchester; Restoration and re-location of milepost previously in roadside ditch.

The Council agreed to recommend approval.

12. Parish Council Responsibilities and Representation on other bodies

Cllr Keith Russell will be the Council's representative on the Village Hall Management Committee (on which he already serves as Chairman) and will take a special interest in the management of the Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard. Cllr Mark Williams will take a special interest in the management of Footpaths (replacing Cllr Val Howells) and Trees (replacing Cllr Sue Graney) in addition to being one of the councillors taking part in Neighbourhood Development Planning.

This leaves vacancies in the special interests for Transport policy including bus services; and the Village Carbon Project; with an additional place still available for Neighbourhood Development Planning.

13. Parish Council Vacancy

No-one has so far expressed an interest. The Parish Council will continue to advertise this vacancy in Dorchester News and on the village notice boards. Councillors were asked to make contact with anyone that they knew who has previously shown interest.

14. Publication of Parish Councillor Contact Details

It was agreed to leave discussion of this matter until the next Council meeting.

15. Parishes against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

It was agreed to make another donation of £1,000 towards campaign costs. The Chairman had represented the Council at a recent PAGE committee meeting. To save time at this meeting he will report to the Council by email.

16. Training – OALC Courses / Liz Howlett FOI Overview

It was agreed that the course about 'Role and Responsibilities' on 29th July would be attended by Cllrs Sue Graney and Val Howells and the Clerk plus either Cllr Claire Andersson or Cllr Mike Rimmer.

The Clerk will check the availability of Liz Howlett to give a short training session to the whole Council about Freedom of Information issues late afternoon/early evening on a weekday.

17. Safeguarding Open Green Spaces /Land Registration

At the start of the meeting the Chairman had explained the Parish Council's wish to achieve a formal registration of some areas of land that the Parish Council is already maintaining: The Green at Bridge End, the area by the River Thame known as 'Waterloo' and the land where the Village War Memorial is located. Following a meeting with Simon Escreet on 8th June it had emerged that the Village Hall is not registered and this will be added to the list. Mr Escreet is now preparing the documents for submission to the Land Registry.

18. November 5th Fireworks Display

The Council has received documents concerning risk assessment and insurance requirements from Cllr Sue Graney, who has been in contact with three specialist companies. The cost of a 15 minute display will be approximately £2,500 plus VAT. Cllr Graney will put together an organising committee to recover this cost via the sale of food and drink, a raffle etc. Use of the Pavilion will be essential and so availability on 5th November must be checked along with the Parish Council's insurance cover.

19. Arrangements for Dealing with Planning Applications in Future

It was agreed to leave discussion of this matter until the next Council meeting.

20. Four-year Priorities and Targets

It was agreed to leave discussion of this matter until the next Council meeting.

21. Village Communications

It was agreed to leave discussion of this matter until the next Council meeting.

22. Speed Checks

See Minute 5. Public Participation (above)

23. Complaints about Aircraft Noise

It was agreed to leave discussion of this matter until the next Council meeting.

24. Any Other Business

Cllr Graney confirmed that training in the use of the new defibrillators will take place in the Village Hall on Thursday 23rd July commencing at 7.30 p.m. The training is free of charge and open to all.

The Clerk said that he would circulate the Council's agreed Complaints procedure, its Standing Orders and its Freedom of Information policy for review and approval.

The Meeting closed at 11.11 p.m.

