

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, Val Howells and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the time were County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Councillor John Cotton and four residents.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell

### 2. Public Participation

Oliver Margison was present to tell the Council about his application P15/S1954/HH 12 Meadside. After answering questions from some members, Mr Margison went on to express an interest in the Parish Council vacancy. He said that he would like to stay on for the whole meeting to gain some knowledge about the workings of the Council.

Robin Marriott of 30 Oxford Road told the Council that he has noted the proposed development around Queenford Lake that is part of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which appears to be nearing its final draft. He asked about the consultation process with Dorchester Parish Council which, to date, seemed to have been non-existent. The Chairman commented that, on behalf of Dorchester, Mark Stevenson, as Chairman of the Dorchester NDP Group, had in the past attended several NDP meetings in Berinsfield but, since Mark is no longer a member of Dorchester Parish Council, the latest status of any consultation is not known. Cllr Mark Williams said that he would attend the next meeting of Berinsfield NDP.

Chairman of Dorchester Sports Club, Mike Stimpson, confirmed that the Club is moving swiftly to progress development of the Pavilion now that planning permission for the extension has been granted. The first step would be to satisfy the condition about archaeology; next would be gaining Building Regulations approval. This would be followed by fundraising. Mike Stimpson said that several skilled trades are represented within the Sports Club and that self-building is a possibility.

Andrew Powell of 2, Crown Lane followed up the complaint about aircraft noise that he had first raised at the Annual Parish Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May. He said that the helicopters from RAF Benson seem to be over-flying the village more and more often, which is bad enough, but in recent months the most disturbance has been caused by the light fixed-wing aircraft, also from RAF Benson, which are used to train cadets. Although these aircraft usually fly at 1,000 feet or more, they are noisy and frequently spend several minutes repeatedly flying over the village. Mr Powell said that the Environmental Health officers at South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) have told him that they have no power over RAF Benson which comes under the control of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Mr Powell has corresponded with RAF Benson direct but without having his complaints dealt with. He suggested that the Parish Council should bring together all sides to discuss this problem.

### 3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held 10<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June were approved and signed as a true record after the word 'on' was added to the penultimate sentence in Minute Number 9.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July were approved as circulated and signed as a true record.

### 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

It is understood that the Application for Overy Court will be approved by the officers and that the Parish Council's request that it should be referred to a meeting of the Planning Committee has been turned down.

#### 5. County & District Councillors' Reports

County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that today's Budget had not given the County Council any further guidance about future cuts. This would now have to wait until the Chancellor's Autumn statement. OCC's Chief Executive will leave the Council in the Autumn and is not being replaced. Senior Managers will report direct to the Council's Cabinet. The County has achieved an underspend but further cuts amounting to £60m. are expected. This will affect both adult and children's services, although the County needs more carers and foster parents. Supported transport services are also at risk with about half the budget expected to be cut in order to save £6m. The bus routes through Dorchester are at risk; whether they continue or not will depend upon how much they are used. The only good news is that the Chancellor has announced that the money raised by Road Tax will be directed at infrastructure.

Asset 'rationalisation' could result in the County sharing premises with other Councils so that some buildings can be vacated and sold off.

District Councillor John Cotton explained that he had not called in the Application for change of use at Overy Court (P15/S1496/FUL ) because the officer's advice had been that the application would have to be approved and to attempt to have it refused would simply cost time and money. Although Cllr Cotton said he thought it was unlikely that the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan would be approved in its present form, he said that there was no harm in Dorchester Parish Council expressing its concerns and those of its residents.

#### 6. Finance: Bank balances & payments

Natwest Reserve Account 30 <sup>th</sup> June	£47,834.19
Natwest Current Account 30 <sup>th</sup> June	<u>£49,973.99</u>
	£97,808.18

The following cheques were approved:

Thames Water (Allotments)	£447.16
IAC Ltd (Internal Audit)	£222.00
ERS Environmental Services (June, July, August)	£334.80
Sue Ryder –Nettlebed Hospice (donation)	£125.00
Good Night Out (donation)	£125.00
OALC Training Fees	£296.00
Information Commissioner (annual registration fee)	£35.00
Geoff Willis (Handyman 4 weeks)	£315.00
G Russell (salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£2,438.78

#### 7. Correspondence and Other Business:

##### a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The annual inspection of the Play Area and MUGA will take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July starting at 8.00 a.m. The Clerk said that he has arranged to meet the inspector to learn more about how such inspections are conducted. It was hoped that Cllr Val Howells would also be able to attend and Geoff Willis, the Village Handyman who routinely carries out play safety inspections for the Council.

##### b. Footpaths;

Following correspondence with Gillian Johnson representing The Hurst Water Meadow Trust, it was agreed that the Council would purchase two dog waste bag dispensers – one to be placed in the Recreation Ground near the Pavilion, the other near the village centre. These cost around £100 each. It was hoped that this would help to reduce the frequency of dog waste being left in public spaces, especially paths. Three new waste bins have also been ordered. These can be used for dog waste as well as general litter. As soon as these have been installed there will be a poster campaign to encourage more people to clean up after their pets and a similar notice in ‘Dorchester News’.

c. Cemetery / Closed Abbey Churchyard;

Allan Smith has been asked to repair the water tap in the Cemetery and to replace the rotten wooden casing around the pipe.

The two horse chestnut trees complained about by a Page Furlong resident are both on the Jenks tree maintenance programme and Jenks will be asked to bring forward the work that has been scheduled.

d. Allotments;

Archaeology Open Day will be Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July, Car parking facilities will be provided at Abbey View Meadow and signage will indicate the way to the site.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

The County Council has informed the Clerk that the proposal to give official footpath status to the route from High Street to Queen Street through The White Hart Hotel has been turned down (nearly 13 years after it was first applied for).

## 8. Planning Applications Received

(Cllr Val Howells told the Council that she lives next door to this property and would take no part in the discussion of the following application)

P15/S2142/HH 81 Abingdon Road; Connections to 2 single storey side extensions to existing house permitted under NCS. Connect 2 storey rear extension to existing house. Front extension.

The Council agreed to recommend that this application should be approved.

P15/S2014/HH 3 Tenpenny; Two and single storey rear extensions, front entrance porch and dormer window.

The Council agreed to recommend that this application should be approved.

P15/S1954/HH 12 Meadside; Proposed single and two storey extensions.

The Council agreed to recommend that this application should be approved.

P15/S1707/LB The Toll House 6 High Street; Proposed replacement of existing roof and replacement and repointing of bricks.

The Council agreed to recommend that this application should be approved.

## 9. Parish Council Vacancy

Oliver Margison of 12 Meadside has expressed an interest in the vacancy and had attended the meeting to gain an appreciation of the role. As an architect he felt that his professional knowledge would complement the skills of other members. The co-option of Oliver Margison was proposed by Cllr Mark Williams, seconded by Cllr Val Howells and passed unanimously. The Clerk will send Oliver the form for declaring his acceptance of office and, subject to this being signed at the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August, Oliver would become a member of the Council on that date. His declaration of interests should be submitted within 28 days.

## 10. Publication of Parish Councillor Contact Details

Councillors discussed how much of their personal contact details they would be prepared to place on the village website and notice boards. The Clerk explained that there are no firm

rules or conventions about this and a lot of variation in practice as between different town and parish councils. OALC (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils) advises that as councillors hold public office they should be reasonably easy to contact by members of the public

#### 11 Review of Complaints Procedure and Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy

Both documents have been circulated in advance. Approval was proposed by Cllr Mark Williams, seconded by Cllr Claire Andersson and unanimously agreed.

#### 12 Staff Appraisal: The Clerk

The Clerk's letter of appointment (dated February 1998) states hours are 'an average of 8.5 hours per week across the year' and that payment is to be in line with rates agreed between NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks). Many standard employment matters are not covered at all.

A sample parish clerk job specification has been obtained from SLCC and a system of on-line time-keeping called "Klok" has been used by the Clerk since 1<sup>st</sup> July in an effort to get a more accurate measurement of the hours actually involved.

#### 13 Neighbourhood Development Planning

It was agreed that Cllrs Chris Hill and Mark Williams, Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, would look at ways in which the Parish Council could be better informed about the proposals that are under discussion by the Neighbourhood Development Planning groups in both Dorchester and Berinsfield.

Cllr Williams said that, as the director of a business based in Berinsfield, he is able to attend some meetings of Berinsfield NDP

#### 14. Training – OALC Courses / Liz Howlett FOI Overview

Cllrs Sue Graney and Val Howells together with the Clerk are attending the Roles and Responsibilities Training Course on 29<sup>th</sup> July. It was thought that they would be joined by Cllr Mike Rimmer. This course is to be repeated on 8<sup>th</sup> September and places will be booked for Cllrs Claire Andersson, Oliver Margison and Mark Williams. The Council noted that the Clerk is also attending a training course on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

In addition the Council has already reserved two places for Chairmanship training on 2<sup>nd</sup> September (Cllrs C Hill and M Williams) and Finance training on 30<sup>th</sup> September (the Clerk). The dates upon which Liz Howlett has offered to come to Dorchester for an overview about matters covered by Freedom of Information will be circulated.

Cllr Sue Graney has organised training for the defibrillators on 23<sup>rd</sup> July; all welcome.

#### 15. Land Registration

The Clerk confirmed that Simon Escreet and Alison, his assistant, have returned all documents involved with the Council's immediate registration requirements. The Clerk will look at them in the next couple of days and pass to the Chairman for final approval. Honor Juniper has agreed to provide oath-taking services when required and will make no charge for doing so.

The Chairman will prepare a list of additional sites for possible registration and this will be discussed by the Council in due course.

#### 16. County Council Review of Subsidised Bus Services

The Chairman had attended the County Council's Consultation Meeting in Didcot on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr Hill confirmed that he would take on the up-to-now vacant parish councillor

responsibility for 'public transport'. If Dorchester's supported bus services are cut there may be opportunities to work with other parishes on pooling resources and sharing services. The Chairman of Cholsey Parish Council, Cllr Mark Gray, who also serves as the County and District Councillor, seems to be well-advanced in planning shared transport services.

#### 17. November 5<sup>th</sup> Fireworks Display

Mike Stimpson says that the Sports Pavilion is available on 5<sup>th</sup> November and Cllr Sue Graney confirms that the plan is to start the event at 17.30 with the proposed bonfire lighting scheduled for 18.15.

The Sports Club will be closely involved with fixing the exact location for the bonfire, which will be built on the same day in order to avoid the dumping of unwanted material.

The approximate cost of the Fireworks display is £3,000. Cllr Graney will draw up a Receipts and Payments budget to show how the event will be financed.

The Clerk has received some event planning advice from Zurich Insurance, the Council's insurers, and this has been passed to Cllr Graney.

#### 18. Notice board and bike rack outside Co-Op

The draft licence agreement has been received from the Co-Op and circulated to members. It was agreed that it should be signed and returned so that the project could progress.

#### 19. Speed Checks

The Clerk confirmed that the County Council will carry out checks in four locations at £100 each. This would be funded using grant money that has already been received from County Cllr Lindsay-Gale.

#### 20. Complaints about Aircraft Noise

The Clerk said that he had received no further complaints since the Annual Parish Meeting in May. Following Andrew Powell's comments earlier this evening it was agreed that the Clerk would make direct contact with RAF Benson.

#### 21. Any Other Business

a. Cllr Graney confirmed that she will take over the files on tourism that have been collected by the former chairman, Cllr Margot Metcalfe

b. The Clerk has taken the Chairman's chain to Brooker and Breeze to arrange for the making of the bar recording Margot Metcalfe's years of office.

c. The Clerk said that he would like to arrange the official photograph of the new Parish Council at the September meeting. Hopefully all Councillors will be present on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

The Meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.