

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 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 was County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and two residents.

### 1. Apologies for absence

All Councillors present. District Cllr John Cotton hoped to attend but was delayed.

### 2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Chairman lives next door to 9 Bridge End, the property which is the subject of Planning Application P15/S2818/HH. Cllr Hill said that he therefore has a Pecuniary Interest and will leave the room while the Council determines this matter. Cllr Sue Graney knows the Applicant and will take no part in the Council's decision.

### 3. Public Participation

Anne Morrow and Malcolm Corry said that they hoped the traffic speed checks would take place in the near future and confirmed their willingness to assist if required. The Clerk said the County checks will take place during the coming month. The Police checks are expected during the same period.

### 4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015

After the word 'all' was changed to 'are' in the second line of Minute 19, the Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a correct record.

### 5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. County Highways has asked the Council to recommend the locations for their speed checks. Because it is important that cars do not park in front of the sensors, which have to be mounted on posts approximately 2 metres from the edge of the road, it was agreed that the sites would be in Henley and Abingdon Roads.
- b. Risk Assessment; the clerk provided Cllr Graney with a copy of the risk assessment that was prepared for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012.

### 6. County Councillor's Reports

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that the County is working on its budgets for 2016 but it has been told that the government grant figure will not be known until much later in the year. Children's services are likely to be badly affected and so the County will try to concentrate its resources on those with most need. The County is committed to welcome an allocation of new refugees; care is already being given to around 500 children of asylum seekers. The County wants to save money on waste centres by reducing the number of sites where these services are offered.

County Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that she was not aware of any archaeological study that has been carried out on the 'demesne field'.

### 7. Finance

NatWest Current Account 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2015	£44,838.84
NatWest Reserve Account 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2015	£47,838.05

The Clerk confirmed that the second half Precept payment of £21,140 was received on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

South Oxfordshire District Council (Scott memorial planning fee) (replacement for cheque 2794 which is now out of date)	£97.50
Land Registry Fee (4 areas @ £30 each)	£120.00
Berinsfield Community Business (two months grass)	£1,821.00
Total Pest Control (quarterly fees)	£300.00
Data Systems Management (website annual service/maintenance)	£515.94
Bryans Lock Services Ltd (litter bin fitting)	£120.00
Thomas Quirke (hedgcutting)	£40.00
Neil Willis (strimming)	£78.75
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£332.50
G Russell (Admin July - September)	£221.30
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£4,185.81

An appeal for a grant to South & Vale Carers will be circulated for a decision next month. The Parish Council has supported this charity in the past, most recently with a payment of £100 in October 2014.

The Council approved a change of Bank Mandate to confirm the removal of retired councillors Margot Metcalfe, Maurice Day and Ken Bryan.

#### 8 Correspondence and Other Business:

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

The Sports Club is to establish a small working group to progress the Pavilion Extension. Cllr Claire Andersson has agreed to represent the Parish Council on this group and will report at the Council meeting in October.

The Sports Club has complained about damage caused by rabbits. The Clerk has sent them a copy of the most recent report from the Council's contractor.

Cllr Howells said that the sack holder for litter in the play area is frequently damaged by birds; she suggested a different type of litter depository should be used.

##### b. Footpaths;

A resident has asked if the gate to the footpath alongside the Cemetery can be closed at night in order to discourage use by motor scooters etc. The Clerk will visit and take advice about possible alternative barriers.

##### c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

Cllr Keith Russell has carried out safety checks upon the graves, headstones and other memorials. None has been found to be requiring work. It was agreed that a record of such checks should be maintained. The Clerk will see if he can find any recommendations on the format etc.

Cllr Russell reported that Tim Cook, one of the Abbey churchwardens, has said that the costs of maintaining the Lych-gate is part of the Parish Council's overall responsibility for maintaining the 'closed churchyard'. The Parish Council, however, is not sure that this is the case; the Clerk will make enquiries.

It is clear that there is a lot of mole activity in the churchyard and Cllr Russell has invited a potential contractor to visit the area. Before the Council initiates any activity to control the moles, however, it will need to ascertain the possible hazards and side-effects to people visiting graves and to the Council's grass-cutting contractors.

##### d. Allotments;

The Allotments Society Annual Meeting will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Cllr Rimmer has spoken to Edward Metcalfe from the Society who has told him that there are no particular issues at the moment. The Allotments are currently 90% occupied.

The Clerk was asked to find out whether there is any possibility that the Allotment land could be used for housing.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. Invitation to OCC Meeting, 'working with communities' on 21<sup>st</sup> September; this will be attended by the Chairman and Cllr Val Howells. The Clerk said that an indication of the scale of the likely cut-backs had been presented to the Oxfordshire branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks on 8<sup>th</sup> September.

ii. Invitation to attend ORCC AGM at Kirtlington Village Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> October, when a proposal to change the name to 'Community First Oxfordshire' will be discussed; no-one is able to attend.

iii. Invitation to SODC Town and Parish Forum on 4<sup>th</sup> November at Didcot Civic Hall from 18.00 to 21.00; the Chairman and Cllr Oliver Margison will attend.

iv. High-speed broadband service for some residents of Abingdon Road; the Clerk said that he has received a further complaint. Some residents have decided to sign up with Gigaclear rather than wait for BT to resolve the connection problems.

v. The County Council has asked if the Parish wishes to order a supply of Winter Salt. It was agreed that there is sufficient stock from last year.

vi. Cllr Rimmer said that the Earth Trust aims to attract more visitors to its facility in Little Wittenham by improving the access and enlarging the car parking area. He will try to obtain some information for publication in Dorchester News.

## 9. Planning

(The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill left the meeting while the following matter was discussed and the chair was taken by Cllr Mark Williams, Vice-Chairman)

a. Application

P15/S2818/HH 9 Bridge End; Widen drive access. Replace roof covering. Provide external wall cladding/render.

The Council agreed to leave the District Council to determine this application.

b. Neighbourhood planning

It is understood that the Berinsfield group is waiting for the Green Belt study and review to be completed and there is nothing further to report.

There will be a meeting of the Dorchester NDP Group on 10<sup>th</sup> September. The future structure of the Group is unclear because it is thought that Mark Stevenson wishes to retire which would create a vacancy as Chairman. The Parish Council will now be represented by Cllrs Chris Hill, Oliver Margison, Mike Rimmer and Mark Williams.

c. PAGE; as the Parish Council's representative to the PAGE Steering Committee, the Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill, will find out what is required to participate in the Core Strategy Consultation that concludes on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

## 10. County Council Review of Waste Recycling Centres

As individuals, Councillors are free to respond to the Consultation, which is being carried out until 5<sup>th</sup> October via an on-line questionnaire. The Clerk will send a response on behalf of the Parish Council as a whole reflecting the Council's wish that, although reductions in opening hours may be acceptable, there should be no complete closures of any centres at all.

## 11. County Council Review of Subsidised Bus Services

Dorchester residents were invited to contact the Clerk with their views about the likely cuts to services which are forecast for next April but none has done so.

#### 12. Review of Councillor Responsibilities and Special Interests

The Clerk circulated a list of the previously agreed responsibilities. This was agreed, with Cllrs Margison and Rimmer being added to the Neighbourhood Planning Group.

The Clerk will make contact with the Village Carbon Group to see if it still active and in need of a Council representative.

#### 13. Dorchester Bridge works

Work to fill holes in the river bed close to Dorchester Bridge commenced this week. The Clerk will send County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale a copy of the letter which explains the need for this work. The Chairman said that he and others, especially members of the Hurst Water Meadow Trust, have great concerns that the result of this work will be an increased risk of flooding

#### 14. Resilient Communities Fund/ Emergency Planning

The Chairman will progress this matter and report in October.

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

Cllr Sue Graney reported that there had been a meeting of the organising group and responsibilities had been allocated to her team. A decision as to whether a bonfire would be included in the evening's celebration had not yet been made. The difficulty is one of finding a space where the fire will not damage a sports pitch. It is hoped that this can be resolved by the Sports Club committee in the next 24 hours. The event will start at 5.30 p.m.. The firework display is scheduled to last 15 minutes.

#### 16. Land Registration – new list of sites for registration

Discussion on this matter was postponed until the October meeting.

#### 17. Village Communications / Additional Notice boards

Discussion on this matter was postponed until the October meeting at which the Clerk will report on the requirements of the new "Transparency Code"

#### 18. Children's Early Intervention Services

Cllr Claire Andersson reported on a meeting that she had attended in East Oxford on 13<sup>th</sup> August which had been organised to discuss the future of the County's Children's Social Care and Early Intervention service.

Cllr Andersson said that it was clear that many open access services will be lost. She asked if the Parish Council would consider making funds available to groups wanting to meet in the Village Hall, including, for example, toddlers groups, lunch clubs, youth clubs, scouts, guides etc. Cllr Andersson said that she will write a paper which will give more information about how a youth club could be created.

#### 19. Village Display Signs for Visitors

In March 2007 the Parish Council purchased five 'orientation boards' which are strategically located around the Parish to provide valuable information to visitors. The displays were purchased as part of The 'Hidden Britain' project which was funded by South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA). Inevitably, eight years on the frames are looking a

little worn but perhaps the most important thing is that some of the information contained on these boards is now incorrect.

The Clerk has contacted the company that supplied these signs and one of their representatives is in the process of preparing a quotation.

#### 20. Any Other Business

The Council is disappointed that the 'Have Your Say' Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> August which was called off at short notice has not so far been re-scheduled. Both the Chairman and the Clerk are following this up.

The next Council Meeting will take place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Prior to that date are the informal meetings with Liz Howlett about data protection, freedom of information, environmental information and transparency on 16<sup>th</sup> September and with John Howell MP on 28<sup>th</sup> September

The Meeting closed at 10.45