

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th October 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.

1. Apologies for absence & Chairman's Opening Remarks

All Councillors were present.

The Chairman suggested that the Council should consider a change in the style in which future agenda are presented and minutes recorded. He commended the way in which Cholsey Parish Council present agenda items as 'motions' and minutes are given unique numbers by reference to the meeting date and, where necessary, contain 'action points' for subsequent reporting. Where a motion has been proposed the names of the proposer and seconder are recorded along with the votes. The Minutes also record planning decisions that have been announced by SODC. Examples of these documents are on-line and paper copies will be circulated for further discussion.

It was also suggested that the traditional order in which items appear on the agenda should be reviewed.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

None.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 9th September 2015

It was proposed by Cllr Val Howells and seconded by Cllr Oliver Margison that the Minutes as circulated should be approved and this was unanimously agreed.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Dorchester Bridge works; the Chairman reported that there had been a misunderstanding about the quantity of stone to be used to strengthen the river bed and there was no longer any concern that the work being undertaken would increase the risk of flooding in Bridge End.

b. The Council noted that, following the Clerk's letter to Chapman Inns about the dangerous condition of the stagecoach outside The George Hotel, the structure is now more strongly supported and two of the wheels have been sent away for repair.

c. The proof copy of the recent Parish Council photo was approved after the spelling of Cllr Claire Andersson's name was corrected. Frank Blackwell will now organise the framing of the photo so that it can be displayed in the Village Hall.

d. Dorchester Village Carbon Project; the Clerk has spoken to Laura Bristow, the group's administrator, to ask if the Project is still on-going and in need of PC input. Cllr Oliver Margison said that he would be interested in taking part if required.

e. 'Oxfordshire Together'; The Chairman and Cllr Val Howells had attended the County Council meeting at Kassam Stadium (moved from County Hall by popular demand) on 21st September. A report of the meeting has been sent to Dorchester News. The Chairman suggested that the Council should monitor further developments so that any opportunities for the Parish Council to take over the provision of some services could be identified and discussed. The Clerk commented that the County Council is preparing digital maps to show

the areas in the Parish where the County's contractors currently cut grass, look after trees, road signs etc.

f. Have Your Say Meeting; The Chairman and Clerk have been told there will definitely be one before Christmas. Recent events in the village have brought increased Police attention and a 'pub watch' scheme has been started.

As an example of this, the Council was told of a recent incident where a burglary had been carried out by a housing association tenant gaining access to an adjoining rental property. It was suggested that the Parish Clerk should write to the association expressing Council concern about the tenant's behaviour. This was agreed.

g. Parochial Church Council; the Parish Council would like Cllr Claire Andersson to be its representative on the PCC. The Clerk has discussed this with the Rector. She has suggested that he should send a request that Claire is co-opted by the PCC to facilitate communications between the two bodies. She would be a non-voting member of the PCC. This was agreed. It was noted that PCC meetings may sometimes clash with PC meetings although efforts will be made to avoid this where possible.

6. District Councillor Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend this evening's meeting due to another commitment. The Council has noted the publication on 12th October of the Green Belt Study that had been carried out by consultants acting on behalf of SODC and is very concerned about the impact of the Study's findings on Dorchester and Berinsfield. More information is required. This matter will be discussed by the Neighbourhood Development Planning Group at its meeting tomorrow evening and placed on the agenda of the Parish Council's November meeting.

7. County Councillor Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale was unable to attend the meeting but her written monthly report has been circulated to all Councillors and published on the website.

8 Finance: Bank balances & payments

NatWest Current Account 30 th September 2015	£60,652.74
NatWest Reserve Account 28 th August 2015	£47,840.21
The following cheques were approved for payment:	
UK Firework and Events Company Ltd (balance due)	£1,650.00
BDO LLP (annual audit)	£396.00
Ejh legal (Liz Howlett training)	£230.60
Simon Escreet (registration and search fees)	£360.00
Allan Smith (Cemetery tap)	£16.05
Lister Wilder (sundry parts for strimmer etc)	£31.57
Total Pest Control (UK) Ltd (Meadow View)	£66.00
JRB Enterprise Ltd (extra posts for dog bag dispensers)	£76.20
Thames Water Utilities	£433.18
Neil Willis (strimming)	£70.00
Roger Bzdtr (Handyman duties 2 weeks)	£122.50
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 3 weeks)	£271.25
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£4,262.17

- i. Conclusion of Audit; The Clerk confirmed that the Notice announcing the Conclusion of Audit had been displayed for 10 days from 30th September. There had been no requests from residents to view the accounts.
- ii. Appeal for a grant to South & Vale Carers. The charity has helped three carers and their families in Dorchester and it was agreed to donate £150.
An appeal from Oxfordshire Association for the Blind will be circulated and the Clerk will ask how many Dorchester residents have been assisted.
- iii. The Clerk will circulate the Council's Receipts and Payments Account for the period April – September in advance of the November meeting.
- iv. The Clerk said that at a recent OALC Finance training meeting he had been advised to go for a Parish Council specific accounts package rather than SAGE or similar. Some council accounting software comes with add-ons for asset recording, and cemetery and allotment management. He will research the options and circulate a report for discussion at the November meeting. Some solutions are 'Cloud' based.

9. Correspondence and Other Business:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Cllr Claire Andersson has been appointed to the committee that is managing the pavilion extension project. The Parish Council has been asked to approve the expenditure of £1,000 to pay for the preparation of the drawings needed for Building Regs. Approval. It was proposed by Cllr Keith Russell and seconded by Cllr Claire Andersson that the request should be approved. The Council agreed but will not make any further financial commitment at this stage.

The project committee is preparing an application for funding to be ready by the end of November. Dorchester News will be used to present the project and detailed plans.

b. Footpaths;

The pothole in Martins Lane near Herringcote, where there is no pavement, has been rejected for repair as it is less than 40mm deep. Since the area is used by several pedestrians, many of them elderly, on a daily basis, County Highways have been asked to re-inspect and review the need for repair, taking into account their responsibility to pedestrians as well as vehicles. Highways have been told that there may be a claim against them if someone is injured because the repair is not done.

There has been another complaint about a motor scooter being driven along the footpath by the Cemetery in a dangerous manner. Placing barriers across the path is being considered but this would cause difficulty for legitimate users such as those on disability vehicles. The Chairman said he would talk to one of the PCSOs about this as he thinks he may know who is responsible.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

The horse chestnuts that the Arthurs of Page Furlong have complained about have been pollarded. Cllr Keith Russell has re-arranged his meeting with Jenks of Oxford and will report on this at the November meeting.

Keith has completed the 'topple testing' of graves in both the closed churchyard and the cemetery. None has been found to be in a dangerous condition. A formal record of such testing needs to be kept for future reference; a way to do this will be agreed.

An infestation of moles is causing damage in the closed churchyard but the Parish Council cannot authorise any action without the approval of the PCC, whose next meeting is on 11th November.

The water tap on the side of the old cemetery gatehouse building has been repaired.

d. Allotments;

It was agreed that the occupants of 51 Watling Lane are not responsible for maintenance of the hedge on the left of the track that ultimately leads to their property. That is more likely to be the responsibility of the occupants at No. 45.

At the September Council meeting there was concern that one day the Allotment land could be designated as an area for housing. The Clerk has made some enquiries about this.

Professor Malcolm Airs says that the whole area is a scheduled ancient monument which imposes the highest level of protection against development and it is highly unlikely that permission would ever be granted for housing

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. Damage to concrete post in Malthouse Lane; the responsibility for repair lies with the owner of 1, Malthouse Lane. Since the damage was done by a delivery vehicle, it is an insurance matter which does not involve the Parish Council.

ii. RAF Benson; Cllr Keith Russell accepted the invitation to attend a meeting about the arrival of the Chinooks and has written a report for Dorchester News. It is understood that the Merlins are currently in the U.S. doing desert training.

iii. Town and Parish Council Forum 4th November; the Council will be represented by the Chairman and Cllr Oliver Margison.

iv. Code of Conduct Training 10th November; the Chairman and Clerk have accepted the invitation to attend the morning session.

v. The Chairman has contacted The Oxford Angling and Preservation Society about a letter which the Society had sent to the Clerk complaining about otters attacking fish in their lake 'opposite the church'. It turns out that they are referring to their lake opposite the cemetery. The Society is placing a fence all round the lake in order to keep the otters out.

9. Planning

a. Applications Received:

P15/S3242/LB 12 Bridge End; Installation of a boiler and flue, alterations to the rear of the house and alterations to bathroom extractor Vent.

The Council unanimously agreed to recommend this Application for approval.

P15/S3030/LB 9 Martins Lane; Proposed alterations to existing boundary wall. Proposed internal alterations to existing kitchen wall, painting of brick walls to rear elevations (off-white), repairs to existing flat roof rear extension and painting of timber windows (light blue/green).

The Council unanimously agreed that it had no strong views on this application and was content for the Planning Officer to make the decision.

P15/S3029/HH 9 Martins Lane; Proposed alterations to existing parking area and boundary wall.

The Council unanimously agreed that it had no strong views on this application and was content for the Planning Officer to make the decision.

b. Neighbourhood Development Planning

The Chairman proposed and Cllr Mark Williams seconded a proposal that Cllr Oliver Margison should become Chairman of NDP Group in succession to Mark Stevenson. This was unanimously agreed.

The Chairman has written to Chris Smith, NDP Group administrator, suggesting that the Parish Council and NDP Group work together to campaign against the demesne field being taken out of the green belt.

It is understood that the Berinsfield NDP Group plans involve development on green belt land which they have been told the District Council will not accept.

During the Council's recent meeting with John Howell MP, John had confirmed that the process definitely allows neighbouring parishes to comment on each other's plans.

c. PAGE

The Chairman's recent letter in support of the submission to the current planning consultation made by the PAGE chairman John Taylor will be published in Dorchester News along with a link to the PAGE campaign website.

10. November 5th Fireworks Display

Gates open at 17.30 There will be a bonfire and this will be lit at 18.00 with the Firework display commencing at 19.00. Cllr Sue Graney confirmed that a Risk Assessment had been done and that the standard guidelines for public fireworks displays are being followed. The Council's insurers have agreed to provide cover in return for a small extra premium of £72 plus insurance premium tax.

Sue presented a financial statement which estimated outgoings for the event of £4,700. Total income from sales of food and drink and voluntary donations is forecast to be £5,900. Surplus income will be donated to the Footsteps Foundation.

The only parking that will be allowed on Drayton Road is for disabled access near the play area. New parking cones and signage are needed for the pre-Christmas Abbey concerts and the Clerk will obtain these in time for use on 5th November.

Cllr Graney said that she has access to funds from the Village Fete bank account. It was agreed that the Parish Council would provide a float of £1,000 and a cheque for this amount was signed and passed over immediately.

11. Resilient Communities Fund/ Emergency Planning

The Chairman has progressed this matter and submitted an application for £1,500.

12 Land Registration – new list of sites for registration

It was agreed to seek registration of the land outside the Co-Op branch in Dorchester High Street and the triangular parcel of land by the junction of High Street with Drayton Road. Simon Escreet will be asked to prepare the applications.

13 Village Communications / Additional Notice boards

A copy of the 'Transparency Code' was circulated for information. Although the Code does not currently apply to Dorchester, the Clerk has been advised to recommend to the Council that it should take steps to conform as soon as possible.

It is understood that the register of councillors' interests, which appears on the SODC website, should be on the Village website as well. The Clerk will check.

It was agreed that the Council should place two additional notice boards in the village; one should be in the lay-bay near Meadside and the other by the letter-box in Abingdon Road. These boards should include an enclosed area for Parish Council approved notices. The Clerk will obtain some quotes.

14 Village Display Signs for Visitors

The original supplier of the tourist 'orientation boards' that were purchased on behalf of the Parish Council by the 'Hidden Britain' campaign in 2008 has quoted £8,500 to replace them. There will be also be an artwork cost to update the information displayed e.g. to remove the reference to the village having a post office.

Although the funding from Hidden Britain is no longer available, it may be possible to find alternative sources of grant aid. The Clerk will investigate.

16. Speed checks

The results of the Speed Checks carried out at four locations during the period 1st – 7th October using monitoring equipment supplied by County Highways have now been received and have been forwarded electronically for study and analysis both by parish councillors and also the residents action group. A paper copy will be circulated.

The Police have supplied ‘traffic calming’ notices to be displayed at both ends of the village and have said that they will return to carry out another series of ‘SID’ checks soon, probably before the end of November.

17. Liz Howlett Training Session Report

The notes from the training session have been circulated to all councillors whether they actually attended or not. The style/content of the email signature to be used by the Clerk is to be agreed.

18. Meeting with John Howell MP Report

Three Councillors and the Clerk had met with John Howell MP on 28th September, Angie Paterson, John’s case-worker who accompanied him, had been able to get an update from SOHA about their plans for Belcher Court. These involve upgrading the accommodation from ‘bed-sits’ to flats. There is certainly no intention to dispose of the property. SOHA also commented that in terms of any new build in Tenpenny and Meadside they would take into account the view that accommodation for older single people is still required.

19. Any Other Business

- a. The Council noted a report from the Clerk that a Swedish TV crew would be filming in the village next week for a programme about ‘Midsomer Murders’.
- b. Discussion about the Village Christmas tree would be added to the agenda of the November Council meeting.
- c. Cllr Sue Graney asked if the Council could take any action about the overgrown pavement outside 2 and 4 Abingdon Road. The Clerk will raise this matter with County Highways.

The Meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.