

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th January 2016 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. 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 were County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Cllr John Cotton and 7 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence & Chairman's Opening Remarks

All Councillors were present. The Chairman said that the recent OFSTED Report had given a higher mark to the Village School. He congratulated the Staff and Governors and thanked Cllr Val Howells for helping to achieve this outcome in her role as the Parish Councillor serving as a school governor.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for this meeting

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests but Cllr Keith Russell said that as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee he would not vote on the decision about the planning application that has been received from The White Hart.

3. Public Participation

Trevor Greenaway produced documents and solicitors' letters which confirmed that the land behind 13 Bridge End, recently enclosed by the present owners, is not registered. Several other residents who were present at the meeting said that this land ought to continue to be open for public access. The Parish Council has previously been told that the land belongs to the Roman Catholic St Birinus Church and that documents confirming this ownership are held in the Diocesan office in Birmingham. It is not known whether the Church is aware that the land has been enclosed and this needs to be ascertained.

Mrs Sue Symonds said that, following the recent wet weather, access to the by-pass bus stops is very difficult and that there has been fly-tipping in the area. The Clerk will contact County Highways and SODC.

Vlasta Fordova asked for clarification of what changes will result if planning application P15/S3967/FUL 25 Bridge End is approved. The Council has received some information from the architect on this point and a representative of the applicant was present at the meeting to provide this information.

Linda Kent said that she is very concerned about the proposals for The White Hart. The proposed three new dwellings represent over-development and parking provision in the area will be inadequate. The access to and from Queen Street will be over-busy. Mrs Kent said that she understands the Village School is also worried about this.

The Chairman said that everyone who is concerned about these proposals should send their comments to the planning officer at SODC.

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

After the date of the next meeting was corrected to read 17th February rather than 14th February the Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Parish Chest; the Museum wishes the Parish Chest and its contents to be removed, except for a few items such as maps etc. which will be retained for display in the Museum.

The County Records Office has expressed a willingness to archive the Parish records; they would be held at Temple Cowley but would be accessible for research. The Chest itself is large and very heavy and, once the records that it contains have been removed, there is no immediately apparent alternative use for it.

The Council agreed that a valuation of the Chest should be obtained to see if it would be worth sending for auction. It was also agreed that the list of documents should be carefully reviewed to see what, if any, Parish Records should be retained in the village so that they would be more easily accessible.

b. Resilient Communities grant; Cllrs Val Howells and Oliver Margison agreed to assist the Chairman with the procurement of the items covered by the grant.

c. Traffic Speed Survey follow-up article in Dorchester News; the Parish Council approved the version prepared by Ian Brace from Graham Shaw's original. A copy will be sent to County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale.

6. Parish Council Vacancy

The Council noted that the period for electors to call for an election expires on 14th January, after which it will be known if the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

7. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that the County will publish a one-year budget which will have Council Tax increasing by 1.99% with an additional 2.0% increase that will be ring-fenced for specific projects.

Detailed news of what benefits might follow from the 'devolution deal' is awaited. The idea is to combine all the district councils and the county council into one authority. This would then receive £1 billion to spend on certain infrastructure projects. Further information should be available in March.

An inspector – Mr Brian Cook – has been appointed for the County's Minerals and Waste Plan and the public enquiry is expected to begin in April or May.

Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that the recent County Council consultation about the possible closure of some waste-recycling centres had shown huge local support for the site at Oakley Wood. No action will be taken for at least two years.

Lorraine's written report for the month has been sent circulated electronically. A copy will also go in the file for circulation.

8. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton said that no increase in SODC's share of Council Tax is expected. He told councillors about a new out-sourcing arrangement that has been brokered with other district councils that will save £10 million over 10 years. This involves centralising most 'back-office' functions with one contractor and is expected to provide improvements in the service quality as well.

Cllr Cotton said that there is to be a change in the distribution of the Council Tax Reduction Grant. This money will be re-directed to those parish councils with Neighbourhood Development Plans and to some capital projects. Another incentive for parish councils to have NDPs is that they will receive a higher amount of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), even those with relative low build figures.

9. Finance:

a. Bank balances & payments for approval	
NatWest Current Account 30 th December 2015	£48,492.57
NatWest Reserve Account 30 th November 2015	£47,844.21

The following cheques were approved and signed:	
The Helpful Book Company Limited (IT Training)	£60.88
Jenks Oxford Ltd (Tree in Cemetery)	£264.00
Communicorp 'Clerks & Councils Direct' (annual sub)	£100.00
CPRE (annual sub)	£36.00
Berinsfield Community Business (grass cutting November)	£759.36
Berinsfield Community Business (repair of bonfire grass)	£155.04
Total Pest Control (quarterly charge Abbey View)	£66.00
Thames Water (Allotments & Sports Pavilion; meters read)	£448.54
Society of Local Council Clerks (sub)	£118.00
Bryans Lock Services (padlock for recreation ground gate)	£26.69
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 5 weeks)	£428.75
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£3,002.08

b. Parish Precept 2016/17

In the current year the Parish Precept is £42,280, an increase of 2.5% on the previous year. It was agreed that the Parish Council has sufficient incoming funds to meet its anticipated commitments and the Precept will remain at the present level.

10. Correspondence, Reports and Other Business:

a. Sports Club, Recreation Ground & Playground;

A decision on the application for the Sports Pavilion roof repair grant is expected within four weeks. The next Sports Club Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th January and Cllr Chris Hill will attend as the Parish Council representative.

Cllr Val Howells said that she is doing some research into the cost of adult fitness equipment.

b. Footpaths;

Following a recent fly-tipping incident at the top of Oxford Road it was agreed that notices warning of the penalties for fly-tipping should be placed in the most at risk locations. The Clerk will contact SODC.

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

i. Mole control; a meeting between Jodie Everett of Total Pest Control UK, Cllr Keith Russell and the Clerk, took place on Monday 11th January, following which TPC said that they would take immediate action in the Cemetery and Recreation Ground (which they are already contracted to do) and will quote for treating the Abbey Churchyard. The PCC have been asked to send the Parish Council a letter of support for the mole-control action being taken.

ii. Chestnut Tree in Abbey Closed Churchyard; Jenks of Oxford has quoted for the routine work needed to maintain the safety of the very large horse chestnut tree near the boundary wall opposite the Fleur de Lys. They have also quoted for maintenance work required to a tree in the Cloister Gardens, which is not the Parish Council's responsibility. The Clerk will pass the quote to Bill Maish of the PCC.

d. Allotments;

There is nothing further to report about the rights of way matter; the main access gate was chained and locked over the Christmas period.

e. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

i. Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme; The Chairman is to attend the briefing meeting on 20th January in Abingdon. All are welcome since it is open to the public.

- ii. Memorial to Ethel Higgins. Nearly £1,000 was collected via donations received at the Co-Op over recent weeks. The family has made up the difference, so that the full round figure is available, and has asked the Parish Council for suggestions as to what would be appropriate. Cllr Keith Russell has suggested that a new notice board should be purchased for the wall outside the Co-Op with a sign showing that this has been done in honour of Ethel. This was agreed and the Clerk will contact the family to seek their approval of the idea.
- iii. Liaison with bus companies re continuing some sort of service: Malcolm Corry will go to a meeting with Thames Travel on 19th January (this was later altered and Sue Symonds agreed to attend and report back).
- iv. Midsomer Murder Tour Guides – see <http://www.vistmidsomer.com>
The Rector is helping with the script writing and Dorchester News will be used to recruit volunteer guides
- v. SODC's Village Clean-up working party has asked for priory projects for the annual visit which will take place in early March. Councillors are asked to email any suggestions to the Clerk.
- vi. Keith Ives has written, asking about a grant for having to get broadband via Gigaclear (along with five other Abingdon Road properties). It will be explained that none of the funding for bringing high-speed broadband to Dorchester came from the Parish Council. It was a County Council project with District Council support.

11. Planning Applications Received:

P15/S3967/FUL 25 Bridge End

Variation of condition 2 application P14/S1635/FUL to include roof-light and front door position to be altered Demolition of existing garage/workshop and car port. Erection of new detached dwelling together with extension and restoration of existing cottage and creation of new parking areas.

The planning documents were supplemented by a message from the architect, Richard Anderson, which had been circulated on 12th January.

It was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Sue Graney that this should be recommended for approval and this was agreed by all.

P15/S4230/FUL & P15/S4232/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 annex and provide 2x hotel bedrooms. Re-surfacing of car park and stone new stone paving to kitchen court.

The Council noted that the new application contained insufficient changes to the one submitted earlier in the year. In particular the arrangements for parking and vehicle movement were seen as being virtually the same, while the proposed new dwellings had been reduced in height and moved away from the Village Hall by an insignificant amount. It was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Mark Williams that the application should be recommended for refusal. This was agreed by all councillors with the exception of Cllr Keith Russell, who did not vote.

P15/S4157/HH & P15/S4158/LB Overy Farmhouse, Overy

Proposed single storey extension to Farmhouse and single storey detached stable building
It was proposed by Cllr Keith Russell and seconded by Cllr Oliver Margison that the application be recommended for approval and this was agreed by all.

P15/S4141/HH 6 Martins Lane

Demolition of existing attached garage. Single storey front extension and new detached replacement single garage

It was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Sue Graney that the application should be recommended for approval and this was agreed by all.

Applications Approved

The Council noted that the Applications P15/S3727/HH & P15/S3728/LB for a single storey extension at 2 Queen Street have been approved

12. Neighbourhood Planning

The Parish Council agreed that it did not wish to comment about the draft submitted by Berinsfield Parish Council or the scoping document submitted by Brightwell-cum Sotwell Parish Council.

13. Arrangements for public meeting about future of the 'Demesne Field'

The Council noted that Cllr John Cotton has agreed to speak at this meeting. There has been extensive publicity for the meeting, which takes place in the Village Hall on Thursday 14th January, and a large turn-out is hoped for.

14. To consider whether some Parish Council business should be delegated to committees

Some lengthy briefing notes have been received from Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils and these have been circulated for further study. On the whole, however, councillors indicated that they would like to continue to meet as a full Council just once a month so the main aim will be to achieve better time management.

15. Village celebrations to mark the 90th Birthday of H.M. The Queen

The Rector is keen that the Parish Council and the Abbey should work together on this project and the Parish Council concurs. Claire Andersson will be asked if she would be willing to join the Rector's planning group and the Clerk will also assist.

16. To consider action to protect the green verge adjacent to the listed boundary wall at St Birinus

The letter from Father John has been scanned and circulated to all councillors. It was agreed that the Parish Council should support this project and the Clerk will contact Father John before the Council's February meeting.

17. Any Other Business

i. The damaged Dorchester on Thames road sign on Henley Road has been reported to County Highways and repairs are in hand.

ii. In response to a question from Cllr Oliver Margison, Cllr Keith Russell confirmed that making good the rotten timber brace on the Queen Street side of the Village Hall is being progressed.

Meeting closed at 10.26 p.m.