

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 17th February 2016 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Sue Graney, Oliver Margison, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Present for part of the time were County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and 9 members of the public

1/2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Val Howells and Mike Rimmer, who were both on holiday, and District Cllr John Cotton who had another meeting.

2/2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None but Cllr Keith Russell said that as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee he would not vote on the decision about The White Hart planning application.

3/2. Public Participation

Several residents expressed strong feelings about the enclosure of land between the garden of 13 Bridge End and the riverbank. This is an area to which there has been public access for generations and there are several photographs of people using the land for fishing, boating, swimming etc. The Parish Council was asked to take action to ensure that this access is restored. The Council agreed that it would seek further information about the ownership of this land.

Mrs Jenny Nudds asked the Parish Council to request that the hedge alongside the path by The Manor House is cut back to allow walkers more space.

Mrs Sue Symonds reported fly-tipping near the southbound by-pass bus stop and said that area has been very muddy during wet weather. She asked if this area could be repaired. The Chairman thanked Mrs Symonds for attending the recent service review meeting with Thames Travel and for writing about it to brief councillors and residents through 'Dorchester News'.

Mrs Symonds also drew the Council's attention to the poor state of the verge along Drayton Road, particularly alongside the boundary with the Cemetery where there are ruts that fill with water. Cllr Williams said that it might be possible to re-establish and stabilise the verge.

Mrs Symonds said that she is very upset about the damage that moles are doing around graves and memorials in the Cemetery.

Claire Andersson told the Council about a meeting that she had recently attended at an Abingdon charity called St Ethelwold's House as part of an initiative to help refugees. St Ethelwold's has set up 'Host Abingdon' with links to 'Host Oxford' who are part of Oxford City of Sanctuary. Claire said that she was exploring ways in which Dorchester residents might be able to take part in the scheme and would use Dorchester News to explain the idea. She said that she is not seeking any formal assistance from the Parish Council but wants to keep them informed.

4/2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 13th January 2016

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

5/2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- i. Memorial to Ethel Higgins; Alex has welcomed the idea of a new notice board outside the Co-Op in Ethel's memory. The Clerk is obtaining some catalogues to illustrate what is available. It was agreed that a new location should be found for the existing notice board – the bus shelter in the High Street was suggested.
- ii. Village Clean – up working party; additional sites for attention when they visit in March were suggested: the pavement opposite Plough House and the area around the bus stop opposite Meadside will be included.
- iii. The Clerk will draft a letter to St Birinus RC Church about the grass verge along the listed boundary wall.
- iv. The Dorchester-on-Thames entry sign near Meadside has been repaired.

v. The Chairman had attended the exhibition about the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme which had been held in Abingdon in January. He learned that a similar scheme is being considered for Abingdon. All downstream parishes are monitoring these ideas in the hope that they will not cause problems lower down the river.

6/2. Parish Council Vacancy

There were no calls for an election so the Parish Council is free to co-opt a replacement. The vacancy has been advertised. Two potential candidates have asked for further information and this has been provided. It is intended to proceed with the co-option at the March meeting.

7/2. County and District Councillors' Report

Written reports from both County Cllr. Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and District Cllr John Cotton have been received and circulated by e-mail.

County Cllr. Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that some extra government money has been awarded but £4.5m will not go far. Most of it will be spent on children's services including day centres but £1m has been placed in a 'pump-priming fund'. The Council may be able to raise more funds by imposing charges on those whose employment within Oxford currently comes with free car parking. There are also thoughts about introducing a 'congestion charge'. The size of the 'Cabinet' will be reviewed. The County's budget has been agreed across all the parties except by The Green Party representatives. The County is also working upon plans for a unitary authority. This is different to a re-organisation under the 'Devolution Bill' which requires the presence of an elected 'mayor'. This idea has not proved popular among existing councillors.

8/2. Finance:

Bank balances

NatWest Current Account 29 th January 2016	£48,344.60
NatWest Reserve Account 29 th January 2016	<u>£47,848.14</u>
	£96,192.74

The following cheques were approved for payment:

UK Fireworks And Events Company Ltd (45% Deposit)	£1,350.00
Thames Water Utilities Ltd (Cemetery 12 months)	£108.06
ERS Environmental Services (PROfile) D/J/F fee	£334.80
Village Hall (phone and broadband 12 months)	£650.33
Southern Electric (Pavilion)	£83.33
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 5 weeks)	£403.75
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£3,469.09

The contract with the fireworks company was approved and signed and will be returned with the deposit cheque

9/2 Correspondence, Reports and Other Business:

a. Sports Club, Recreation Ground & Playground;

The Council is reviewing plans for the proposed extension and refurbishment of the pavilion. Two quotations for the flat roof repair and Mark Bristow's condition report have been circulated. The District Council has indicated that a grant of £1,875 will be made towards the cost of the flat roof repairs.

It was agreed that an on-site meeting with the Sports Club Chairman, Mike Stimpson, should take place as soon as possible, following which Cllrs Mark Williams and Oliver Margison would take the lead in preparing a fully-costed master-plan taking into account all the desired new facilities and improvements and the need for more storage.

It was agreed to carry forward the discussion about providing adult fitness equipment.

b. Footpaths;

It was thought that dog fouling problems may have reduced after the provision of new bins and bag dispensers. Is there a case for purchasing more bag dispensers?

c. Cemetery /Closed Abbey Churchyard;

Total Pest Control has been in touch with Cllr Keith Russell but Keith said that he can see no evidence that moles are being controlled any better following the recent on-site meeting. Indeed, as Mrs Symonds had said earlier in the meeting, the amount of mole damage is very distressing. A different contractor has been asked to take on mole control in the closed Abbey Churchyard and the performance of the two companies will be compared.

The Chairman and Clerk will meet in the Cemetery to review the Chairman's plans for soil removal, planting etc.

c. Allotments;

Nothing to report

d. Letters to Chairman and Clerk

The Clerk has received a letter suggesting that a rubbish bin be installed in the parking area near 51 Abingdon Road. The Council agreed that it would be willing to pay for this provided SODC agreed to provide the collection service.

The Council has received a letter indicating the on-going process for agreeing the County Council's Minerals and Waste Strategy. This will be circulated.

10/2. Planning:

i. New Applications Received

P16/S0372/HH 10 Tenpenny; Proposed single and two storey extensions and alterations to form improved accommodation. Including provision of 2 no on site parking spaces.

There had been insufficient opportunity for councillors to study these plans and documents and so an extension to the consultation period will be requested.

P16/S0266/HH 24 Abingdon Road; Erect two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, new porch, render elevations and replace all fenestration.

It was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Mark Williams that this application should be recommended for approval. This was unanimously agreed.

P16/S0136/HH 4 Monks Close; Single storey side extension

It was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Keith Russell that this application should be recommended for approval. This was unanimously agreed.

P16/S0142/HH & P16/S0143/LB 59 Bull Cottage; Demolition of existing conservatory and replacement with orangery extension to rear.

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

ii. Application in progress

P15/S4230/FUL & P15/S4232/LB White Hart Hotel, 22 High Street

The Council considered new comments, letters and reports which have been submitted by residents and the Applicant's agent but it was agreed that the Council did not wish to change its previously stated recommendation for refusal.

iii. Applications Approved

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

P15/S4141/HH 6 Martins Lane

P15/S3967/FUL 25 Bridge End - Variation of Condition has been granted

P15/S0686/FUL 9 Wittenham Lane (on appeal)

11/2. Neighbourhood Development Planning Group

The Group is now meeting more frequently and has found that Wednesdays suit most members. It was agreed that its status is that of a working group that is separate to the Parish Council and receives direct support from the District Council.

The Group has identified four possible development sites within the Parish and the Clerk has been asked to arrange Land Registry searches to discover the owners.

12/2. Feedback from 14th January meeting about future of the 'Demesne Field'

The Chairman thanked Cllr Keith Russell for producing at very short notice a report about the meeting for Dorchester News.

The Village Hall had been packed for the meeting. It was estimated that 140 people had been present. 91 email addresses had been collected. Since that evening another 8 people have contacted the Clerk asking to be placed on the information distribution list.

13/2. Future of documents stored in the Parish Chest and of the Chest itself

It was agreed that, since no suitable location could be found for the Chest, John Fisher would be asked to move it to his workshop for the time being. Sue and Oliver said that they would be able to assist the Chairman to move the boxes to the Oxfordshire Record Office at Temple Cowley. It was hoped that everything could be removed from the Museum by Friday 26th February.

14/2. Village response to traffic speed article in Dorchester News

The Clerk said that responses received to date have been on both sides of the debate and strongly argued. The Chairman suggested that residents are given until the end of the month to respond and that the Clerk circulates the replies in advance of the Council's March meeting. This was agreed.

15/2. Celebrations to mark the 90th Birthday of H.M. The Queen

Claire Andersson has confirmed that she is available to assist with advance planning even though she cannot be here for the weekend itself.

The Clerk has been in touch with the Rector who supports the idea of a sports day on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 11th June and a party on the Sunday afternoon.

There may be a potential tie-up with the Sports Club for the Saturday. Claire is meeting the Rector in the near future and will report to the next Council meeting. Costs of the celebrations are not yet known but the Council is in principle willing to underwrite the whole venture as was done for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

16/2. Purchase and storage of Emergency equipment not covered by the SSE Grant

A home for the generator is still required and Keith said that he would take the idea to the Village Hall Management Committee Meeting on 2nd March.

17/2. Village website

Sue Graney said that she would like to involve Dan Duke, recently moved to Jemmetts Close. A website professional, Dan is interested in developing the site free-of-charge especially the opportunities for developing social media. This was agreed.

18/2. Actions required following Town & Parish Council Forum

The Chairman and Cllr Oliver Margison had attended the Forum and have now been sent copies of the reports. They advise that no further action is required.

19/2. Future of village bus services

Sue Symonds' report for Dorchester News has been circulated. OALC has confirmed that Parish Councils have the power to subsidise services if required.

20/2. Any Other Business

- i. The Parish Council is delighted by the new-look 'Dorchester News' and wishes to thank Ian Brace, editor, for his hard work.
- ii. The Chairman said that he has been told that SOHA plan to close Belcher Court in the near future.
- iii. Cllr Sue Graney reminded the Clerk about the project to install a bike-rack outside the Co-Op.

Meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.