

## Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Chris Hill presided; present were Cllrs Val Howells, Sue Graney and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the time were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Cllr John Cotton and 35 residents

### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Claire Andersson, Mike Rimmer, and Keith Russell

### 2 Minutes of the Meeting dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014

It was agreed that these minutes be taken as read. They were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

### 3 Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill, thanked the retiring Chairman, Margot Metcalfe, for her years of service. He also thanked the councillors who had stood down at the recent council elections: past Parish Council chairmen, Ken Bryan and Maurice Day; Mike Hill, who had been an excellent project manager for the recent Multi-Use Games Area facility; and Mark Stevenson who had been a particularly valuable councillor because of his considerable expertise in planning matters, most recently acting as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Development Planning project.

Maurice Day's service as a member of the Parish Council goes back to 1982 and includes four years as chairman. He has a wealth of experience and a store of anecdotes. Ken Bryan's service had contributed special skills and professional expertise in security matters.

The Chairman presented Margot Metcalfe with flowers and champagne to mark her retirement while Margot presented the Chairman with a wooden gavel which she hoped he would not have to use too frequently.

Cllr Hill said the newly elected Parish Councillors are Claire Andersson, Sue Graney, Val Howells, Mike Rimmer, Keith Russell and Mark Williams. There is one vacancy which the Council intends to fill by co-option.

Richard Winslet asked for an update on the status of the village post office. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has been told by the Post Office's Field Change Advisor that they have been unable to find a sub-postmaster who would be interested in working in the village even if suitable premises could be found.

A copy of the full report will be annexed to the minutes

### 4 Draft Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

Geoff Russell, Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer presented the Council's draft Receipts and Payments for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. This will be subject to audit on 9<sup>th</sup> June. Copies of the draft accounts were distributed to the meeting and will be annexed to the minutes. There were no questions.

### 5. Presentations:

**County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale** had submitted her annual report in advance. Several copies of her annual report have been distributed and it will be published in Dorchester News as well as annexed to these minutes. Howard Exton-Smith commented about the 'culture' within the County Council that had allowed the recent child exploitation scandal to occur. He said that, although there had been an official apology, in his opinion there had been insufficient 'contrition'.

**District Councillor John Cotton** spoke about the housing targets which have been set for South Oxfordshire and the lack of agreement concerning what these targets should be. SODC will continue to support parishes which wish to draw up their own Neighbourhood Development Plans. The District Council has shown that money can be saved by outsourcing and has set a target saving of £500k per year.

Following the fire in the District Council's premises on 15<sup>th</sup> January the Council had moved in with the Vale District Council in Abingdon as a temporary measure. Now both Councils would operate out of shared premises at Milton Park and this would continue for three years at least. It is too soon to know what will happen to the offices at Crowmarsh Gifford.

Mark Stevenson asked about the new housing targets. The SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) figures are too high. John Cotton agreed saying the report has been influenced by outside pressures talking up economic growth forecasts which predict an increased population requirement which have an impact on infrastructure such as roads and water supplies. Malcolm Airs said that the need to protect heritage and maintain conservation policies are also constraints.

Margot Metcalfe presented the plan from **PAGE (Parishes against Gravel Extraction)** for an 'Area of Search'. The Parish Council's annual contributions to PAGE go towards the costs of paying the fees of consultants and Margot said that it is essential that this funding continues. Following the recent Parish Council elections, Chris Hill will become a member of the PAGE committee in place of Margot.

Mark Stevenson said the **Neighbourhood Development Plan** Group is mindful of the possibility of changes to the Green Belt and the on-going development of South Oxfordshire District Council's core strategy, while progressing with the preparation of a full consultation document which will lead to a formal NDP submission, the appointment of an inspector and, ultimately, a village referendum.

As the area co-ordinator of **Neighbourhood Watch** Richard Winslet looks after 25 individual street warden schemes covering around 60% of the Village. He said that he would be pleased to hear from anyone who wished to get involved with scheme. He explained that any resident can go on-line and join the Thames Valley Alert Scheme. On behalf of the **Hurst Water Meadow Trust**, Gillian Johnson commended residents to use Dorchester News and the Trust's website [www.hurst-water-meadow.org.uk](http://www.hurst-water-meadow.org.uk) to keep in touch with Trust activities. Most recently the Trust has purchased a new piece of land which will be known as Overy Mead Piece. The Trust now owns three water meadows along the banks of the River Thame. A grant from BIFFA was essential in achieving the recent purchase.

## 6 Any Other Business

a. Andrew Powell raised the issue of noise pollution from light aircraft flying over the village for periods of up to two hours. The planes are on training flights from various civilian flying clubs based at RAF Benson and Andrew asked other residents at the meeting whether they agreed that there should be better control of these activities so that the nuisance could be reduced. Several did and so the Chairman advised them to contact the Environmental Disturbance Unit at SODC. Cllr Hill said that the matter would be discussed by the Parish Council and with John Howell MP. Mark Stevenson suggested that residents who wished to pursue this matter should keep records of the dates, times and durations when this noise occurs.

b. Some residents raised concerns about the proposed developments at The White Hart, which include three new homes being built in what is currently the Hotel car park. The Chairman commented that since this is a current planning application residents can make their views known by communicating with the Planning Department of SODC and also with the Parish Council who would be making its decision about the planning application at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.