

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th December 2016 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Val Howells, Viviane Quirke, Mike Rimmer, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Present for part of the meeting were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and 9 residents.

1/12 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Oliver Margison due to his business commitments and District Cllr John Cotton who was attending another meeting

2/12 Public Participation

Because of the huge public interest in the on-going fencing works on Bishops Court Farm the Chairman said that the normal 15 minute time limit for Public Participation would be suspended and he invited Cllr Keith Russell to report on developments since 23rd November, the date of the Parish Council's Report that had been circulated as a loose insert with Dorchester News.

Keith showed the meeting a map upon which the rights of way across the Farm were marked and explained that, in fencing along these footpaths and bridleways the landowner had met, and sometimes exceeded his obligations concerning minimum widths. Keith said that the landowner did not need permission to erect these fences nor to give advance notice of his intention to do so. The path which linked the Footpath 190/22 with Bridleway 190/15 near the bridge from Little Wittenham had been offered voluntarily by the landowner and provided all users with a significant short-cut.

The Chairman read to the meeting an email that he had received from the owner's surveyor, Mr Luke Winham, on the previous day. This had accused the Parish Council of being 'very duplicitous'. Although Mr Winham's email had been marked as 'strictly private', Cllr Hill said that a communication with him in his capacity as Chairman of the Parish Council could not be accepted on such terms. He had a duty to publicise not only the criticisms and accusations that had been directed at the Council and its members but also to explain why and how these allegations would be denied and corrected.

Becky Waller told the Chairman that he should not take the matter personally or get upset. She said that although the fencing had been correctly positioned, it was unacceptable and indeed contrary to the Highways Act that barbed wire had been used without any protection being provided. She urged the County Council to invoke the Act and get all the barbed wire shielded in an acceptable way as is generally considered to be 'best practice'.

Becky Waller went on to report that the landowner has placed official notices, together with maps showing the whole property, at several points across the Farm. These give notice of a 12 month time limit for third parties to propose Modifications to the Definitive Map. These notices are dated 1st November. Modifications can be applied for on grounds of historic use over a period of 20 years. There is a considerable delay in the County Council's processing of these applications.

Mrs Waller also told the meeting about some legislation which allows for the creation of areas known as 'village greens'. These applications can be prepared at low cost and must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County Council that there is evidence of the land being used for general and frequent recreational and leisure use over the past 20 years by people living in the local area. It is understood that after an application for 'village green' status has been filed the County Council starts a six week consultation

period at the end of which an inspector makes his or her recommendation. In the event of this recommendation being disputed the process can end in the High Court.

Mrs Waller told the Parish Council that there is to be a public meeting in the Village Hall on Tuesday 10th January to which all interested parties are asked to bring their evidence. The two areas which have been provisionally selected as potential village greens, to which public access will be allowed in future, are the area known as The Dyke Hills and the field next to the River Thames just upstream from Days Lock.

John Taylor said that he believed that the Parish Council had dealt with this matter to date in a thorough and satisfactory way. The letter which Mr Winham had sent to the Chairman had placed the Council on the moral 'high ground'.

Andrew Powell urged the Council to continue with its efforts to arrange a meeting with Mr Reid.

3/12 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

4/12 Minutes of the Meeting held 9th November 2016

Some corrections to the circulated draft have been incorporated into the version that has been printed and filed within the Minute Book. These Minutes were approved and signed as a true record

5/12 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no Matters Arising that were not already covered by the Agenda.

6/12 County Councillor's Report

Country Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's written report had been circulated. She drew the Council's attention to the possibility that a new road would be built somewhere between Dorchester and Sandford as part of the proposed link road between the A34, Oxford and Cambridge.

7/12 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend the meeting due to another engagement.

8/12 Fencing of footpaths on Bishops Court Farm

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that she would contact the Footpaths Officer about measures to protect the public from the barbed wire. The Chairman said that he would draft a letter for the County Council to send to Mr Reid about acquiring wider strips of right of way along the paths nearest to the River Thames, along the lines of a similar agreement that the County had made with Miss Bowditch some 10 years ago. The Clerk said that he would talk to Mark Townson to see if any of his colleagues at Savills would be able to value this extra allowance of a right of way.

The Chairman will reply to Luke Winham's email with a copy to Mr Andrew Reid. This would be circulated to all councillors.

It was agreed that the Council should try to obtain an independent assessment of the risks to safety presented by the paths nearest to Day's Lock.

It was agreed that the Parish Council's next village-wide communication should try to assess how many residents support the introduction of the new fencing or at least have no strong views on the matter

9/12 Planning:

a. Applications:

P16/S3774/HH 17 Page Furlong; Demolition of existing garage and conservatory to rear of building to facilitate single storey extension and remodelling of property.

The Council agreed that it had no strong views on this application.

b. Neighbourhood Development Plan

The final draft of the Plan is now almost complete and will be further progressed at a meeting next Monday. It is hoped that the Village referendum on the Plan could be combined with the County Council elections in May.

10/12 Finance:

a. Bank balances & payments

NatWest Current Account at 30 th November	£55,469.28
NatWest Reserve Account at 5 th December	<u>£47,866.99</u>
	£103,336.27

In the past month the Council has received parking receipts £2,350 and a full repayment from the Fireworks accounts of £3,500

The following payments were approved:

Oxfordshire County Council (Comet Bus 6 weeks)	£252.00
Phil Greenway war memorial plants	£35.48
Berinsfield Community Business (grass-cutting October)	£910.50
Woodcraft UK (Peter Andrew bench, funds already received)	£1,088.64
Dorchester on Thames Sports Club, grass-cutting 2016	£750.00
Southern Electric (Pavilion)	£133.61
Open Spaces Society (annual subscription)	£45.00
Total Pest Control (UK) Ltd	£234.00
Land Registry Application Fee	£35.00
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 5 weeks)	£481.25
SODC dog-bin emptying April – June	£113.03
St John Ambulance (attendance at Fireworks)	£88.32
Sue Graney (Christmas tree lights)	£33.48
Val Howells (Christmas tree decorations)	£58.97
G Russell (expenses for printing and mobile phone)	£113.60
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£4,911.70

The Council has received an appeal from Corn Exchange, Wallingford, which is trying to raise £350,000 for its new roof. The details will be circulated.

b. Parish Precept 2017/18

Councillors held a preliminary general discussion about the Precept which was held at £42,280 for the current year. The decision as to what it should be for 2017/18 must be taken at the Council's meeting in January.

11/12 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

- A poster with details about School entry next September is being displayed.
- Letters from Magdalene College about 'Oxford Science Village' on south side of Grenoble Road and OCC Director Peter Clarke about Local Government reorganisation together with a map showing options for linking A34 to proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway were placed in the folder for circulation.
- The survey about Parish Councillor Allowances has already been circulated. Councillors who wish to take part have only a few days to go.

12/12 Bus service report

A detailed report will be presented in January. The Council noted that £661 ticket sales have been received to date (net of printing costs).

13/12 Village Christmas Tree

The Chairman thanked those who had been involved in putting up and decorating the tree especially Cllr Val Howells and Sue Graney.

14/12 Fireworks Evening final accounts

The only remaining task is to re-turf the area of the bonfire. This is a much bigger job than in 2015 and the Clerk is obtaining three quotations.

15 Land Registration Progress

Simon Escreet has confirmed that there are no pending applications to register the land at Waterloo. He is preparing the declaration that will be sworn by the Clerk and intends to meet with Phil Greenaway in the near future following which he will prepare a declaration for Phil to swear.

16 Routine Reports:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

Nothing to report

b. Footpaths;

There has been an application to SODC for approval to remove a tree near 11 Manor Farm Road. A tree stump along the public footpath known as Albert Place is causing an obstruction and Chris Amott, the adjacent landowner, said that he will remove it.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

The audit of uncared for graves is still to be done.

The Chairman said that he will be planting around 300 daffodil bulbs along the Page Furlong side of the Burial Ground

d. Allotments

The Clerk has received an additional £215 in rents and this will be banked tomorrow.

17 Any Other Urgent Matters

Cllr Rob Ballantyne said that he would put details of the 'Host Abingdon' initiative for helping refugees in the folder for circulation and that he would like the Council to discuss at its January meeting whether it could make a contribution to this project.

The Meeting closed at 10.02 p.m. The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing to what he considered to have been a very good meeting