

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th January 2017 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Val Howells, Oliver Margison, Viviane Quirke, Mike Rimmer, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and 5 residents.

1/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from District Cllr John Cotton who was attending another meeting.

2/1 Public Participation

Vlasta Fordova spoke about the concerns that she has about P16/S4102/HH for Kings Cottage 25 Bridge End which is next door to her own family's property. She said that she does not object to the application in principle but pointed out that there would be a serious risk of fire if the proposed wood-burning stove was not correctly installed. The Application, in her view, did not give sufficient information about these arrangements and she asked the Council to recommend refusal until more details had been received.

3/1 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

4/1 Minutes of the Meeting held 14th December 2016

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

5/1 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman said that he had so far received no reply to his letter emailed to Mr Luke Winham on 19th December.

6/1 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's written report had been circulated and submitted for publication to Dorchester News.

Lorraine said that there is an urgent need for more volunteers to join the Home Library Scheme. She commented that the County's search for more gravel extraction sites is proceeding but in a direction that may not be good news for this Parish.

7/1 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to be present but his written report had been circulated and submitted to Dorchester News

8/1 Fencing of footpaths on Bishops Court Farm

Becky Waller attended this Council meeting in order to report about the public meeting that had taken place in the Village Hall on the evening before (10th January), organised by an ad hoc group provisionally known as 'FODALWOS' (Friends of Dorchester and Little Wittenham Open Spaces).

The meeting was called to consider a village response to the lodging of a landowner's statement with Oxfordshire County Council on 1st November 2016 and the group had attracted interest and support from several different local communities as well as Dorchester on Thames.

Becky Waller said that at least 180 people had attended the meeting with 30 others unable to attend but asking to be kept informed. There has recently been a case of criminal damage to the new fencing near the bridge where the Rivers Thame and Thames meet and, in line with requests that had been made by both the local Police Community Support Team and Dorchester Parish Council, Becky reminded everyone that such action is completely unacceptable and not a good way to pursue this matter. The meeting was then addressed by Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary of The Open Spaces Society, who explained the process of registering areas as 'Village Greens'. Becky Waller said that the Group has agreed to concentrate its efforts upon making applications to apply for Village Green status for part of the area known as 'Dyke Hills' and whole of the field adjacent to Day's Lock. Many of those in attendance at the meeting had brought photographs and other evidence to support the claim that these areas had been extensively and regularly enjoyed as open spaces with unrestricted public access over the past 20 years and more. It is anticipated that many others will also wish to join the campaign in the near future and the Group will prepare applications for submission to the County Council within the next few weeks. Although many believe that there should also be some applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders, especially for paths crossing the field between the Dyke Hills and the River Thames, it was agreed that the Village Green applications should be given priority by the FODALWAS members. If others wish to pursue the DMMO idea they are welcome to do so. It is known to be a much lengthier process but this should not be seen as a reason for not making the effort.

It was not known if there would be a report about this meeting in Dorchester News – the copy deadline is fast approaching – but Cllr Keith Russell will raise this matter with the editor and, in the Clerk's absence during the second half of January, organise another leaflet for insertion on 27th January, if this is thought to be necessary. The Clerk told the Council he had that day accompanied a ROSPA appointed consultant on a site visit to Day's Lock and the Thame-side paths. The Parish Council has commissioned this survey because of its concern about safety issues that have been voiced by many following the recent fencing works.

It has been easy for the Council to understand what many people have said on this subject but Councillors have agreed that it is important to obtain the professional opinion of a qualified and independent third-party who can make observations and, if necessary, unbiased recommendations that are based upon wide-ranging knowledge and experience of similar situations.

The Council asked the Clerk to request that the ROSPA inspector includes some comments about any matters which are relevant to access by disabled users.

Some Councillors commented that barbed wire fencing is by no means the only way of managing the movement of sheep. It is not used on Wittenham Clumps, for example, an area of open space shared by walkers and animals, and, along its length, the Thames Path runs across many fields by the River Thames where there is no fencing between grazing animals and the water's edge.

The Clerk has received a copy of a report from the Environment Agency about Little Wittenham Bridge following an inspection earlier this day (11th January). It was recognised that the retaining wall is failing but this has been the case for some time and in the immediate short term it is likely that the retained earth will have settled behind the wall to a more stable angle. Meanwhile walkers are protected by a fence from falling or tripping in the gaps created by the movement of the wall. That has led the Inspector (Magnus Williams) to conclude that it is not in need of emergency works but should be added to the Environment Agency's (EA) ongoing list of repairs. It is hoped that the repair could be achieved this summer but the work will have to be prioritised against other bridges that may be in a worse condition. The EA has approximately 100 bridges to maintain on the upper Thames (upstream of

Whitchurch) and prioritise the limited budget according to which are most likely to fail first.

9/1 Planning:

a. Applications:

P16/S4290/LDP 55 Abingdon Road; Proposed pool building and garage.

The Council noted that no comment was required.

P16/S4260/HH 13 Page Furlong; Single storey rear extension, changes to fenestration and front canopy roof.

The Parish Council agreed that it had no strong views on this matter and that the District Council should be left to determine the matter as it sees fit.

P16/S4102/HH Kings Cottage 25 Bridge End; Small lean-to ground floor extension of 7sq m and installation of wood burning flue.

The Council agreed to recommend that this Application should be refused; there was insufficient information about the installation of the wood burning flue. Cllr. Oliver Margison would draft the Council's response.

P16/S4080/FUL Bishops Court Farm 91 High Street; Proposed demolition of agricultural buildings and the erection of a new farmhouse with detached garage, home office/gym and stabling at Bishops Court Farm.

The Council noted the recent amendment and the provision of additional information about the archaeology of the site and surrounding area. The Council also noted the large number of critical comments that have already been posted on the District Council's website. A recommendation to refuse the Application was proposed by Cllr Oliver Margison and seconded by Cllr Rob Ballantyne and unanimously passed. Cllr. Oliver Margison will draft the wording of the Council's response.

P16/S4178/FUL Wychmere 86 High Street; Proposed one and a half storey replacement dwelling.

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/S4169/LB & P16/S4168/HH 57 High Street

Proposed enlargement of rear addition to existing dwelling.

The Parish Council agreed that it had no strong views on this matter and that the District Council should be left to determine the matter with advice from the Conservation Officer.

P16/S3962/LB 65 High Street

Strip pitched roof. laying aside existing tiles that can be reused, repair as necessary roof timbers, [provide new roofing to comply with current regulations and lay tiles (using existing) as far as possible on front slope and provide flashing to chimney stack and recover small parapet gutter to rear slope.

The Parish Council agreed that it had no strong views on this matter and that the District Council should be left to determine the matter with advice from the Conservation Officer. While the work is in progress, the Council has been requested to use its best endeavours to facilitate the traffic movement in this narrow part of the High Street.

P16/S4165/T28 PCP004 Abingdon Road S/O 103 Abingdon Road

The proposal incorporates the installation of 1x DSLAM equipment cabinet olive green, the dimensions of which are: Height 1300mm x Length 1430mm x Depth 450mm. The Parish Council noted that comments on this Application are not required.

b. Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Plan is being prepared for publication. The Chairman will write a brief update for Dorchester News.

c. SODC's draft statement of Community Involvement in the Planning process was noted and will be circulated in the monthly folder. A discussion about whether

the Parish Council wishes to respond as a group or as individuals will take place at the February Council meeting.

d. The Council noted that planning approval had been granted for P16/S3774/HH at 17 Page Furlong; demolition of existing garage and conservatory to rear of building to facilitate single storey extension and remodelling of the property.

10/1 Finance:

a. Bank balances

NatWest Current Account at 30 th November	£52,563.02
NatWest Reserve Account at 5 th January	<u>£47,867.38</u>
	£100,430.40

The following payments were approved:

Thames Water Utilities Ltd	£404.40
Oxfordshire County Council (Dorchester Flyer x 4)	£168.00
Dorchester Abbey PCC (room hire x 2)	£32.00
Berin Centre (donation)	£750.00
Communicorp (annual sub for 'Local Councils Update')	£100.00
Association of Local Council Clerks (ALCC was SLCC) sub.	£50.00
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£332.00
G Russell (admin expenses October – January)	£218.50
G Russell (Clerk salary)	£538.82
Berinsfield Community Business	<u>£356.76</u>
	£2,950.48

The Council formally approved expenditure of £822.00 plus VAT on commissioning ROSPA to prepare a report concerning the safety of the newly fenced paths near Day's Lock and the River Thame.

b. To set the Parish Precept 2017/18

The current Parish Precept is £42,280 which is unchanged since 2015/16. Cllr Mark Williams proposed that the Precept should remain the same in 2017/18. This was seconded by Cllr Oliver Margison and unanimously agreed.

11/1 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

- a. It has been suggested that the Parish Council should fund or at least make a significant contribution towards the cost of a new litter bin outside the Co-Op. The Clerk will research the costs and report to the Council in February.
- b. There have been complaints about cigarette butts in the road at the front of The White Hart. The Clerk will discuss this matter with the hotel management.
- c. The Council had approached the Village Hall committee about the possibility of storing its emergency equipment including the generator. The Village Hall has asked for more information and the matter will be discussed further by the two respective Chairmen, Cllrs Chris Hill and Keith Russell.

12/1 Bus service report

Cllr Rob Ballantyne said that total ticket receipts to date were more or less equal to total hire costs to date. The average number of passengers was around 7 or 8 per week. It was thought that the annual budget could be revised down to £1,000.

13/1 Land Registration Progress

Simon Escreet interviewed Phil Greenaway last Friday and is preparing a statutory declaration which will be submitted along with the one from the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council. Mr Escreet is due with the Clerk tomorrow.

14/1 To agree the date of the Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed to fix the Meeting for Wednesday 31st May commencing at 7.30 p.m.

15/1 'Host Abingdon' – to consider participation in this project

Cllr Rob Ballantyne said that the project is most in need of storage space, which is something that is already in short supply within Dorchester. It was agreed to monitor the progress of the project in case there might be an opportunity to provide assistance in the future.

16/1 Routine Reports:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

It was agreed to accept the quote from BCB to repair the damage which the Bonfire had caused to the playing field. The quote from BCB had been the best of the three received. Sundry other work in and around the play area and the perimeter of the Recreation Ground was also approved.

The practice cricket cage is to be ordered for delivery before the start of the new season. A contribution of £500 from the Parish Council was agreed last March.

The Clerk said that there has been some vandalism to the defibrillator on the Sports Pavilion wall. Sue Graney has arranged for the necessary repairs.

It was agreed that Cllr Val Howells would become the Parish Council's second representative on the Sports Club Committee. The Chairman is already a member.

b. Footpaths;

The Council noted that a tree has been removed from Albert Place by the owner of an adjacent property. Some new fencing had been erected on the other side of the path which had led to the tree becoming an obstruction.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by a resident that in the Closed Abbey Churchyard there is evidence that some of the gravestones are being damaged by ivy.

Cllr Keith Russell said he thought that there was new mole activity near the Abbey while the Clerk said that he is trying to trace the whereabouts of the company that carries out rabbit control in the Cemetery and Recreation Ground. A recent payment to this company has been returned 'not known at this address'.

d. Allotments

A pool has been constructed on one of the allotments, contrary to regulations. There has also been some dispute about cars being parked near 49 Watling Lane. The Chairman said that he would discuss these matters with Edward Metcalfe and the Allotments Society.

17/1 Any Other Urgent Matters

Cllr Val Howells said that the Village School is introducing 'wrap-around child care' to assist families with both parents out at work. She would like the Parish Council to consider how it might be able to support this initiative. The Chairman asked her to prepare a short paper on the subject which the Council could discuss in February.

The Meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.