

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 9th November 2016 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. 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 29 residents.

1/11 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Rob Ballantyne, Val Howells, who were on holiday; Oliver Margison due to his business commitments and District Cllr John Cotton who was attending another meeting.

2/11 Public Participation

A large number of residents were present because of the recent fencing works on Bishops Court Farm and the Chairman said that the normal 15 minute time limit for Public Participation would be suspended.

Cllr Hill welcomed County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale to the meeting. Together with members of the Parish Council she had made a site visit to Bishops Court Farm on 8th November. There had been meetings with both Luke Winham, acting for Andrew Reid the new owner of Bishops Court, and also Arthur McEwan-James with James Blockley of the County's Countryside Access Team.

Cllr Keith Russell summarised these meetings and explained the legal framework within which the County Council administers Rights of Way and the Definitive Map. As the Highways Authority it is the County Council that has on-going responsibility for maintaining the surfaces of the paths and bridleways. Mr Reid had consulted with the County Council. In principle he was fully entitled to enclose the paths in accordance with the routes shown on the Definitive Map provided that the regulations regarding minimum widths were observed.

Keith explained that across one of the fields between Day's Lock and 'Blue Bridge' across the River Thame the width of the path was greater than the norm by several metres due to an agreement made between the County Council and the previous landowner, Miss Bowditch.

Malcolm Airs commented that planning permission is not required for fencing but that as the Farm includes an area which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Historic England are involved in approving whatever is proposed for the Dyke Hills.

Although one or two residents were sympathetic to the idea of having more fences because this would result in dogs being prevented from roaming 'out of control', there were many residents who pointed out that these fences would also prevent people from accessing land that had been in use for leisure and recreation activities by village residents for generations. There is also at least one path that, although not shown on the Definitive Map, has become such a regular and well-used route that it can be seen in aerial photographs.

There are processes by which 'traditional rights of access' to such areas as these can become registered. Although in Oxfordshire there is a long delay in dealing with applications for Modifications to the Definitive Map, several residents expressed their interest in preparing the applications and forming an ad hoc group to do so.

Other residents expressed an interest in finding out whether the new landowner would be interested in making similar arrangements to those made between Miss Bowditch and the County Council which would result in an increase in the width of the rights of way. If this was no longer something that the County Council would consider there were private individuals who would be prepared to make a contribution.

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that the County Council officers are sympathetic to the needs of footpath users; a new walkway will be provided across the

dip in the bank by the River Thame. She said that she would write to Mr Reid to pass on the concerns that were being expressed by residents at this meeting. The Parish Council was asked to keep all residents up to date with further developments and to consider whether there should be a section of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, currently a work in progress, which included references to Parish Footpaths both as an amenity for residents and also as an important attraction that brings tourist business to the Village.

3/11 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None

4/11 Minutes of the Meeting held 12th October 2016

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

5/11 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- i. The Council noted that the meeting with John Howell M.P. had been rescheduled for 10th November.
- ii The Clerk said that he was still trying to contact the area inspector Mark Pearce in order to see if there is any way in which the surface of the footway to Meadside could be improved.
- iii. Bike Rack; although a reminder has been sent, the signed agreement has not yet been returned by the Co-Op.

6/11 County Councillor's Report

The Monthly Report has been received and distributed via email, the Village website, and Dorchester News. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale said that it could be Autumn next year before the Minerals and Waste Allocation is modified.

7/11 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton has sent his apologies for absence.

8/11 Fencing of footpaths on Bishops Court Farm

Although more than a month had passed since the Parish Council had been contacted by Scott Ruck on behalf of the new owner, there had still been no meeting with Andrew Reid. Following the discussion under Public Participation the Chairman will draft a letter to Mr Reid which explains the Council's concerns.

The Council recognised the importance of keeping residents informed and agreed that a loose insertion for Dorchester News would give a more current report than one which had been prepared more than a week before publication. The Clerk will establish an email group of residents who would like to be kept up to date on matters about rights of way generally. This can be used to spread information at any time as required

9/11 Planning:

a. Applications:

P16/S3432/FUL 64 Watling Lane, Proposed new dwelling.

The Council agreed to recommend this Application for refusal.

The proposed new dwelling would be built in the garden of 64 Watling Lane, a garden which at present provides a buffer between 64 Watling Lane and the neighbours in both Watling Lane and Haven Close.

As such, the proposal represents 'infill' and would be unneighbourly. Having regard to this location, the proposed building would be overdevelopment, does not satisfy the criteria for infill development and would destroy the character of this quiet area of the Village.

P16/S3460/HH 13 Tenpenny, Two storey side extension
The Council agreed that it had no strong views about this application and accepted that it would be determined by SODC's planning department.

P16/S3364/HH 15 Page Furlong
Single-storey front extension (porch) and changes to rear windows
The Council agreed to recommend this application for approval.

b. Report on future of Belcher Court

The Chairman has received a reply from SOHA but this contained no new information. A copy of SOHA's letter will be circulated.

c. Progress of Neighbourhood Development Plan

The text of the final draft version is ready but some maps and images are awaited. A new planning officer from SODC has just been appointed to help. Following the discussion earlier in this evening's meeting the Group will discuss whether it should add a section on the topic of village footpaths.

10/11 Finance:

a. Bank balances & payments

NatWest Current Account at 28 th October	£52,391.70
NatWest Reserve Account at 5 th October	<u>£47,864.20</u>
	£100,255.90

The following payments were approved:

Oxfordshire County Council (Comet Bus 2 weeks)	£84.00
Trevor Greenway pavilion roof repair and bin fixing x 2	£195.00
Broxap Limited (concrete bases for litter bins)	£75.60
JRB Enterprise Ltd (dog waste bags)	£101.40
Interior Design Services (Bridges End Phone Box)	£385.00
Berinsfield Community Business (grass-cutting September)	£910.50
Total Pest Control (UK) Ltd (Abbey View)	£66.00
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£483.75
Neil Willis (sundry maintenance)	£70.00
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£2,910.07

At 10.35 p.m. following approval of these payments the meeting was adjourned.

It was reconvened in the Abbey Guest House on Tuesday 15th November commencing at 7.30 p.m. with Cllr Rob Ballantyne joining the other councillors and one resident present.

Appeal for donation from Oxfordshire Association for the Blind; the Association has 7 clients in Dorchester and the Council agreed to make a donation of £150.

Chairman's Expenses; Cllr Chris Hill has incurred various expenses for maps and miscellaneous materials for the Neighbourhood Development Plan in the total sum of £102.94 and a cheque to reimburse him for these expenses was approved.

b. Recreation Ground Grass-Cutting Costs

The Sports Club has requested a payment increased from £750 per year to £850 per year from 2017 onwards. This was agreed.

c. Review of Cemetery Fees

The Clerk circulated a schedule of the fees currently charged in Berinsfield, Wallingford, Henley and Oxford. It was agreed that from 1st April 2017 the cost of a grave space should increase to £260 and the cost of an ashes plot should rise to £100. This is in line with the fees currently charged in Wallingford.

d. Review of Parish Council's Donations

The Clerk confirmed that current legal limit for discretionary spending is £7.42 per resident which is equal to around £6,000 per year, well above what the Council will

be spending in 2016/17 even after paying for the Community Bus Service, the 'Dorchester Flyer', is taken into account.

Following the presentation given by John Taylor, of the Oxfordshire Community Foundation at the October meeting, the Council considered what support if any it could provide to assist the 'Berin Centre', a project that needs local backing to support its work amongst children and young people. After some discussion it was agreed to make a one-off donation of £750 on the basis that it was clearly explained that this did not imply an ongoing commitment to support the Centre every year. Each application would be considered on its merits and in the light of the Parish Council's other commitments to 'discretionary spending'.

e. Play Area maintenance

The estimate obtained by Cllr Val Howells came to approximately £650 plus VAT. Most of these tasks had been recommended by the Play Area Inspector during her visit in July. The Council agreed to accept the estimate and to have the work carried out as soon as possible.

Cllr Keith Russell said that he had seen that moles are active in the Play Area. He would contact Total Pest Control, who have the contract, and ask what they could do about this problem.

11/11 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

i. Town & Parish Council Forum, Henley 2nd November.

This had been attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Amongst matters discussed was the opportunity for obtaining grants and these details were brought back to be passed on to Cllrs Val Howells.

ii. The Chairman has been approached by Mr Simon Claridge who is considering the purchase of 14 Wittenham Lane. He was seeking advice prior to submitting a planning application for the development of this site. It was agreed that the Council would not comment unless an official planning application had been submitted. The District Council's planning officers can offer pre-application advice.

12/11 PAGE

Cllr Viviane Quirke had attended a recent PAGE meeting and the topic had also been covered in the monthly report from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale. The Council noted the new website address - www.pagecampaign.org.uk - and suggested that this link should be published both on the Village website and in Dorchester News.

13/11 Village Christmas Tree

The ordering of the Christmas tree for the site outside the Co-Op was approved at the cost or around £100. A slightly smaller tree would be ordered this year. The decorations would be organised once again through Sue Graney.

14/11 Dorchester Fireworks Evening, 5th November

The accounts have not yet been finalised but it has been estimated that the event, attended by around 1600 people, has raised in the region of £6,000 for charity.

15/11 Bus service report and by-pass bus stop safety

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council would like to go ahead and share the service but require guarantee that there will always be six places available when the bus stops at Shillingford Hill.. Some outstanding issues need to be sorted out with Comet Bus Service and now that he has returned from holiday Cllr Rob Ballantyne will make contact with the company. The Clerk said that so far he has received two invoices @ £42 per day and these have been settled

16/11 Land Registration Progress

It was agreed to carry this forward until the December meeting by which time a reply about the status of the land behind 13 Bridge end will have been received.

17/11 Routine Reports:

Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The Chairman has received complaints about dogs not being kept under proper control. This is covered in the Bye-Laws relating to the Recreation Ground, a copy of which will be circulated to all councillors

Footpaths;

Arthur McEwan-James will be invited to inspect Watling Lane next time he is in the village.

Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

The audit of uncared for graves is still outstanding.

Allotments

The Clerk has been told that more rental income will be received in the coming few weeks.

19/11 Any Other Urgent Matters

The identity of the purchaser of Bishops Court Farm Estate lot 7 is still unknown.

The Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m. on Tuesday 15th November