

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 8th February 2017 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Val Howells, Oliver Margison, 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 4 residents.

1/2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs. Viviane Quirke and Mike Rimmer, who were on holiday, and from District Cllr John Cotton who was at another meeting.

2/2 Public Participation

Becky Waller said that the steering committee of Friends of Dorchester & Little Wittenham Open Spaces (FODLWOS) had held a meeting on 5th February. The group plans to send a report about its activities for publication in the March edition of Dorchester News.

Becky said that the trigger for the formation of FODLWOS and its subsequent activities was the posting of the 'Landowner Notice' at the beginning of November 2016. Had the previous landowner, Miss Bowditch, posted such a notice at any time during her ownership of the property, Becky said that she was of the opinion that there would have been a similar reaction from local residents. Becky said that over 400 completed questionnaires in support of registering both The Dyke Hills and Day's Lock Meadow as village greens had been lodged with Oxfordshire County Council. In addition, FODLWOS is campaigning for the widths of paths across Bishops Court Farm to be as evidenced by the usage marks that are clearly shown by Google Maps with aerial images taken in 2016. Becky reported that a local filmmaker is preparing a set of current images across the whole area taken from a drone. She also said that it is her understanding that work being carried out on the Ancient Monument has not received the appropriate consent and that this has been reported to Historic England. Jackie and Jenny Trinder said that the recent coppicing and, in some cases, removal of hedges and trees on the Farm has resulted in a significant loss of habitat including nesting sites used by red kites.

Becky Waller said that she may suggest to Russell Leigh, the Village School Headteacher, that the school children could volunteer to assist any replanting programme. They have carried out similar project work for The Hurst Trust.

3/2 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None

4/2 Minutes of the Meeting held 11th January 2017

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed.

5/2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. The Clerk said that he had been informed by Becky Waller that the Council's Minutes of its Meeting held 14th December 2016 have been quoted in correspondence from solicitors. A quotation attributed to her in the fourth paragraph of Minute 2/12 Public Participation has been quoted out of context.

Although these Minutes have been approved and signed as being a true record of the meeting, the Clerk has been advised by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils that where the original meaning of the minutes has been clearly misunderstood, it is entirely appropriate that this meaning can be clarified at a later

meeting. Becky Waller said that she thought that this would be achieved if the words 'even if' replaced the word 'although' and this was agreed.

The sentence now reads, 'She said that even if 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.'

b. It was agreed that the Parish Council would offer to provide the Co-Op with sufficient funds to ensure that the litter bin outside the High Street branch is replaced by a unit that is more appropriate for this important location in the centre of the Dorchester Conservation Area. A sum in the region of £500 should be sufficient. The Clerk will discuss this matter with the store manager.

6/2 County Councillor's Report

The written report from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale had been received and circulated to all Councillors. It will also appear in Dorchester News. County Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that she would be writing some additional paragraphs for Dorchester News to give further clarity to the County Council's role in the recent erection of fencing on Bishops Court Farm

Copies of the 'One Oxfordshire' document have also been received. The Chairman said that he would attend the meeting on this topic that has been arranged in Didcot on 13th February. With the re-organisation of the County's local government expected to take place in the near future, it was uncertain whether the County Council elections in May would go ahead.

7/2 District Councillor's Report

The written report from District Cllr John Cotton had been received and circulated to all Councillors. It will also appear in Dorchester News.

8/2 Fencing of footpaths on Bishops Court Farm

The Meeting had already heard about the recent activities of FODLWOS. Cllr Keith Russell said that the Parish Council's immediate priority is to lobby for action to make the paths safer to use using the recommendations contained in the latest draft of the RoSPA report.

In due course the final report would be made available to all, including people living outside the Parish, any interested media etc. but for the time being the emphasis is upon communication directly with the County Council, the Environment Agency and the landowner, Vision Residences II, since these are the organisations and the people with the power to take notice of RoSPA's findings and put the recommendations into action.

Since the Parish Council is aware of the British Heart Foundation's London/Oxford Trek on 13/14 May the Clerk was asked to make contact with the organisers and make them aware of the changes that have occurred along the route.

Several residents have questioned whether a new gate which creates an access to the Farm through what was once a hedge opposite 9 Watling Lane requires official permission from either the County Council, as the Highways Authority, or the District Council, as the Planning Authority. The Clerk has been asked to make enquiries.

The Parish Council has taken part in the consultation about fencing on The Dyke Hills that is being conducted by Historic England. Two applications have been made for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent on the Dyke Hills SAM, one of which relates to replacing existing fencing and the other which involves a section of new fence.

The Council had no objection to the replacement of existing fencing, assuming that any additional damage to the site will be minimal.

The Council had recommended that SAMC be refused for the new fencing, for the following reasons:

- a. New fencing and posts where none have previously been have the potential to cause serious harm to buried archaeological remains.
- b. New fencing on the hills introduces an alien element and detracts from the contextual setting of the Dykes. It would significantly detract from the visual amenity of the site.
- c. There is no public benefit to the work proposed, and it does not meet the criteria that *'they are necessary in order to deliver substantial and demonstrable cultural, social, economic or environmental benefits that outweigh the negative impact on its significance'* [DCMS 'Scheduled Monuments' para 32]
- d. An application has been lodged with the County Council to designate the area as a Village Green under the Commons Act 2006, and fencing at this stage would be in danger of pre-empting the results of the application.
- e. There is considerable public concern in the village and locally about the prospect of fencing the Dyke Hills Scheduled Ancient Monument, an important and much valued element in the historical context of Dorchester on Thames. To the Council's knowledge, peaceful enjoyment of the Hills has never previously been restricted.

9/2 Planning:

a. Applications:

P16/S4178/FUL Wychmere 86 High Street; Proposed one and a half storey replacement dwelling. The Parish Council noted that there been an amendment to this application; comments were invited.

P17/S0390/HH Clasemont 20 Martins Lane

Demolition of existing garage and erection of one and a half storey extension to create an additional 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom in the roof space.

The Council agreed that it has no strong views about this application but noted that the proposed extension will reduce the size of the off-street parking and wondered if there had been a comment from County Highways. Cllr Oliver Margison said that he would assist the Clerk by drafting the Council's written response.

P17/S0337/HH and P17/S0296/LB 1 Forge Cottages Malthouse Lane

To demolish part of existing single storey extension, construct new glass structure (for dining area) remove most of flat roof & install pitched roof over kitchen, new dining room, existing bathroom and new utility area.

The Council agreed to recommend that this application should be approved. The concerns about archaeology have been covered in the comments from the County.

P16/S1833/FUL The White Hart Hotel AMENDMENT

The Parish Council noted that the amendment indicated that the ridge heights of the proposed new build will be lower than had previously been shown.

b. Community Involvement in Planning Process;

It was agreed that councillors were free to comment in an individual capacity to the SODC paper that had been circulated on 11th January. The Council as a group would not be taking part.

c. Neighbourhood Development Plan;

It is hoped that the document, including the mapping, will be completed by the end of February and that discussions with the new District Council planning liaison officer will commence in March. The Chairman will put a progress report in the March edition of Dorchester News.

10/2 Finance:

Bank balances

NatWest Current Account at 30 th January	£48,763.29
NatWest Reserve Account at 3 rd February	<u>£47,867.80</u>

£96,631.09

The following payments were approved:

RoSPA Enterprises Ltd	£986.40
Earth Trust (village Christmas tree)	£110.40
SSE (Pavilion electricity)	£136.02
South Oxfordshire District Council (dog bin service)	£113.03
Total Pest Control (Abbey View)	£66.00
Dorchester on Thames Village Hall (Room hire)	£285.00
Dorchester on Thames Village Hall (Telephone & Broadband)	£692.84
Sue Graney (defibrillator repairs)	£24.60
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£332.00
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£3,285.11

11/2 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

- i. The Chairman will attend the briefing meeting about 'One Oxfordshire' which is being held at Didcot on 13th February.
- ii. It was agreed that the charges for providing off-street parking facilities at the time of this year's Dorchester Festival should be the same as they had been in 2015.
- iii. The Chairman and one other Councillor will attend a meeting about the 'medical records in a bottle' scheme that is being organised by Gill Howarth and Judy Parker.
- iv. It was agreed that the Parish Council would not participate in this year's Thames & Chilterns in Bloom project.
- v. The 'Big Clean Up Project' team from the District Council will be visiting the village in March and have asked which areas should receive priority.

12/2 Land Registration Progress

Simon Escreet continues to prepare evidence for submission to the Land Registry and has arranged to meet Jenny Nudds to provide an additional statement.

13/2 Annual Parish Meeting 31st May

As yet no guest speaker has been invited. The available agenda time might be allocated to discussion about the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

14/2 'Wrap-around' child care – possibility of Parish Council assistance

It was agreed to postpone discussion on this topic. Cllr Val Howells has attended several briefing meetings on this matter.

15/2 Routine Reports:

Sports Club Pavilion & Playground; Following complaints from some parents the Football Club is to discuss the behaviour of both players and officials.

Work to repair the area damaged by the November bonfire will be done this month.

Footpaths; The Area Highways Steward Keith Stenning has offered to visit to view the path to Meadside and any other areas of concern. Cllr Oliver Margison and the Clerk will fix a mutually convenient date. A meeting with the Police to discuss safety on the paths to the by-pass bus stops is still to be arranged.

Cemetery/Closed Churchyard; It was agreed that this year the Cemetery grass would be cut every two weeks, the same as the Abbey Closed Churchyard. The Chairman reported that the daffodil bulb planting has been completed. A general working party will be arranged for March.

Allotments; Nothing to report.

There were no other items of business and the Meeting closed at 10.08 p.m.