

## **Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; also present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, 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.

### 1/3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from District Cllr John Cotton.

### 2/3 Public Participation

Some residents asked if permission had been given for a new vehicle access from Bishops Court Farm into Watling Lane just opposite Number 9. The Clerk explained that this matter has been raised with both the District and County Councils and their replies are awaited.

Sue Graney said that she has been unable to find anyone to take over as head of the Village Fireworks organising committee. Both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November have been provisionally booked with the fireworks provider but no deposit has yet been paid.

### 3/3 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

### 4/3 Minutes of the Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed.

### 5/3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- i. The Clerk reported that the project to replace the litter-bin outside the Co-Op in the High Street is progressing as a joint venture with the Co-Op.
- ii. The Chairman and Cllr Rob Ballantyne have attended a meeting about the initiative by Lions International to encourage all households to join their 'message in a bottle' scheme. This is being introduced to the village with the help of a group of local volunteers. It was agreed that the Parish Council should support the scheme and a donation of £100 was approved.

### 6/3 County Councillor's Report

The monthly report from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale had been received and circulated. County Council elections will take place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May. These are likely to be the last under the present system of local government in Oxfordshire.

### 7/3 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend the meeting but he had confirmed that he had asked the planning team to respond to the Parish Council's enquiry about the new gate into Watling Lane.

### 8/3 Fencing of footpaths on Bishops Court Farm

The Clerk said that, as requested, he had made contact with the organisers of the British Heart Foundation London/Oxford Trek which is taking place on 13/14 May. Many of the participants will be passing along the Thames Path during the night. The Clerk has supplied photographs to illustrate the new fencing arrangements near Days Lock and promised to keep the charity informed of any further developments. The Parish Council has so far received no information from Historic England about the progress of the Farm's applications for fencing on and close to the Dyke Hills

It is understood that several residents have contacted Dominic Lamb at South Oxfordshire District Council expressing concern about the removal of hedgerows. The Chairman suggested that the widths of the footpaths should be monitored regularly. One resident and one councillor reported seeing barbed wire in places where it could easily damage footpath users.

Comments from Mr Reid about the RoSPA report (version 1) have been circulated to all councillors and also to Oxfordshire County Council, the Environment Agency and RoSPA itself. There has been no response as yet from either OCC or EA.

Several people have asked to be sent a copy but it has been explained to them that the document has not been finalised.

The Chairman has produced a suggested list of actions – circulated by email on 25<sup>th</sup> February. Cllr Keith Russell said it should be made clear to the Village that the Parish Council has no direct power over footpaths and that all it can do is urge the appropriate authorities to take action. County Cllr Lindsay-Gale assured the Parish Council that the County's Field Officer, Arthur McEwan-James, is working on this. It was suggested that RoSPA should be asked to remove all references to the 'Village Green' applications from its report. They are not relevant to the current concerns and seem to be having a diversionary effect upon the Parish Council's main objective. Once the revised report is available, the Parish Council should make another attempt to bring all parties together within two weeks.

The Parish Council is aware that the Village Green Applications have been submitted to the County Council but is unsure about how long the process now takes.

### 9/3 Planning:

#### a. Applications:

P17/S0704/HH and P17/S0705/LB 15 Malthouse Lane; Improvements to the property, in order to alleviate long-standing and serious problems of damp. These include replacement of plastic rainwater goods with aluminium equivalents, lowering of ground level around the rear and side elevation to allow wall to dry out and breathe, associated replacement of patio doors to remove rotten timber, allow for lowered ground level and significantly improve the quality of the joinery. In addition, we seek to insert a new partition wall with internal oak door.

Cllr Oliver Margison proposed that this application should be recommended for approval. Cllr Rob Ballantyne seconded this proposal which was agreed by all.

P17/S0657/HH 16 Bridge End; Proposed extension and alterations to improve kitchen and sitting room arrangement.

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

#### b. Neighbourhood Development Plan for Dorchester

The Steering Group will meet on 9<sup>th</sup> March following several detailed sessions with the new SODC senior planning officer, Ricardo Rios, who has examined the new draft document line-by-line. Local landowners affected by the draft proposals will need to be contacted soon although, since the Village is in the green belt, no sites have actually been allocated. It was agreed that SOHA should be contacted urgently about the future of Belcher Court.

The Clerk reported that both Richard Anderson and Andrew Reid have asked to see draft NDP reports. Since the latest draft is nearly ready for general release it was agreed that the whole village would be notified at the same time.

It is now expected that the referendum will take place in the Autumn.

### **Berinsfield Development Proposals**

A meeting at Milton Park has coincided with this evening's Parish Council meeting but a second briefing for neighbouring parishes and other interested parties will probably be held next week. In the meantime a briefing document has been requested.

Approval for P16/S1833 The White Hart; the plans for The White Hart have just been approved. Nigel Oddy, the owner, has told the Clerk that he expects it to be several months before a time-table for the project has been agreed with contractors and staff.

10/3 Finance:

NatWest Current Account at 28 <sup>th</sup> February	£46,464.58
NatWest Reserve Account at 3 <sup>rd</sup> February	<u>£47,867.80</u>
	£94,332.38

The following payments were approved:

Jenks Oxford (unsafe tree)	£96.00
Oxfordshire County Council (Comet bus service)	£357.00
Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (annual sub)	£40.00
G. Russell (Administration Jan-March)	£331.95
Keith Russell (printing)	£35.00
Chris Hill	£12.00
Geoff Willis (Village handyman 4 weeks)	£332.50
G Russell (Clerk salary)	<u>£538.82</u>
	£1,743.27

The present cost and scope of the Parish Council's insurance arrangements will be reviewed well before the beginning of June when the policy is due for renewal. Cllr Mike Rimmer has agreed to help with this.

11/3 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

- a. Miss Susan Bowditch has approached the Chairman requesting a meeting to discuss possible locations for a wildlife friendly planting scheme which she would like to fund. It was agreed to have this meeting and report to the Council in April.
- b. Oxfordshire Flood Awareness Scheme; various 'pop-up' exhibitions are being held around the District in the coming weeks. The Chairman and Cllr Keith Russell will both try to attend at least one of them and report back to the April meeting.
- c. The Council agreed to send two representatives to the SODC Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation briefing on 28<sup>th</sup> March at the Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot.
- d. Mr Reid has contacted the Clerk about the letter that the Chairman sent to Historic England as part of the consultation process about new and replacement fencing on the Dyke Hills Scheduled Ancient monument. The Clerk has confirmed to Mr Reid that the Chairman's letter was approved by the whole Parish Council.

12/3 Parish Council Vacancy

A formal letter of resignation has been received from Cllr Val Howells explaining that she wishes to stand down as a parish councillor due to other commitments. The Chairman said that he had written to Val thanking her for all that she had done during her time on the Council and this was endorsed by all present. The Clerk will advise the District Council Elections team that this vacancy has arisen.

13/3 Village Fireworks 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Sue Graney explained that she has been unable to find anyone to take over as leader of the Fireworks organising committee. Although there is an established team of people willing to take on all necessary tasks, the Parish Council agreed that without a leader the Village Fireworks Display should not be held in 2017. There would be an attempt to run the event in 2018 and the date of Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November was agreed.

14/3 Dorchester Village Website and Social Media

It was agreed to carry forward discussion of this matter until the next meeting.

15/3 Meeting with Area Steward: County Highways

Cllr Oliver Margison and the Clerk had met with Keith Stenning on 1<sup>st</sup> March. There had been no progress on repairs for the main path between Meadside and Dorchester

Bridge but there is a possibility of work on the path towards Shillingford. Some idea of traffic demand has been requested. However, it was likely that work could be done to widen the area around the bus stop opposite Meadside and to fix the drain near the water treatment works that frequently puddles. There was also an offer to go 50:50 on the cost of providing a drop kerb near the Rose Walk entrance to the Abbey. County Cllr Lindsay-Gale said that she has recently heard about a scheme in Devon where villages have been enabled to carry out their own pothole repairs. Further information will be obtained.

16/3                    ‘One Oxfordshire’

The project to re-organise local government is now known as ‘Better Oxfordshire’. The concept of running the county via twenty-four area boards reporting to one strategic board should be finalised by the end of March and will be followed by a period of consultation.

17/3                    Land Registration Progress

Some progress has been made. The next meeting with Simon Escreet is tomorrow.

18/3                    Annual Parish Meeting 31<sup>st</sup> May

John Taylor has expressed an interest in talking about PAGE. Formal invitations to attend will be sent to our County and District Councillors.

19/3                    Routine Reports:

Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

- i. The suggested location for the Peter Andrew Memorial Bench was agreed.
- ii. Action has been taken to try to improve standards of the behaviour and language of those playing football but recent experience suggests that the problem is still there.
- iii. Cllr Mark Williams confirmed that repairs to the fire-damaged turf are in progress.
- iv. Cllr Oliver Margison had attended the last Sports Club meeting to discuss the Pavilion extension. He said that he would start sketching some concepts.

Footpaths;

- i. More clearance work is needed along the Footpath from Drayton Road to The Hurst
- ii. Additional locations for dog waste bag dispensers have been suggested including the Watling Lane/Tenpenny embankment which has been suggested by a resident.
- iii. The Chairman has received an emailed letter from Richard Juniper asking about the maintenance programme for the sides of Watling Lane.

Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

- i. The Chairman has organised a working party for Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March.
- ii. The audit of unattended graves is still required.

Allotments

Nothing to report.

20/3                    Any Other Urgent Matters

- i. The Chairman is trying to organise storage of the Village emergency equipment.
- ii. Malcolm Corry said that the Village still has a problem with several drivers passing along the main streets far too quickly and he urged the Parish Council to look again at how this problem could be tackled.

The Meeting closed at 10.19 p.m.