

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

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Maurice Day, Oliver Margison, Viviane Quirke, Keith Russell and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Cllr Maurice Day signed the Form of Acceptance of Office and his signature was witnessed by the Clerk. Also present for part of the meeting was Malcolm Corry, a resident.

### 1/7. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mike Rimmer, who was on holiday, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and District Cllr John Cotton who were also unable to attend. Cllr Maurice Day signed his Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk. The Clerk gave each member of the Council a full set of Council contact details for their personal use and asked them to consider which parts of this information could be published on the village notice boards and website.

### 2/7 Public Participation

Malcolm Corry said that he believed that over the past two years traffic speeds through the village have increased so he had been disappointed to learn that the Police will no longer carry out speed checks. These have been completely delegated to parish councillors and volunteers, who will be supplied with the necessary equipment and training by the local community support officers. Malcolm said that he would be interested in volunteering and knew others who would do so too. He will draft a notice for 'Dorchester News' in order to get together a group that would start work in September/October. He hoped that some parish councillors would wish to join in. The Council agreed to discuss this matter later in the meeting.

### 3/7 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

The Chairman and Cllr Oliver Margison said that they are both involved with the group known as 'Friends of The Fleur'. The proposed sale of The Fleur, an Asset of Community Value, will be discussed later in the meeting as Agenda Item 9c.

### 4/7 Minutes of the Meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Cllr Rob Ballantyne proposed the Minutes as circulated should be confirmed as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Keith Russell and unanimously approved.

### 5/7 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cllr Rob Ballantyne suggested that, following the legal advice received from Freeths, the Parish Council should write to the District Council urging that SODC exercise its right to object to SOHA's proposal to develop the land at Belcher Court for non-social housing. He said that he would be willing to draft this letter on the Council's behalf. Cllr Oliver Margison proposed that the Council should adopt this suggestion. The motion was seconded by Cllr Ballantyne and unanimously agreed.

### 6/7 County Councillor's Report

The monthly report from County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale had been circulated.

### 7 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton was unable to attend.

### 8/7 Report on contacts with Bishops Court Farm and Friends of Dorchester and Little Wittenham Open Spaces (FODLWOS)

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for the comprehensive briefing notes that he had circulated in advance of the FODLWOS Steering Group meeting which had taken place on 9<sup>th</sup> July. This meeting had been attended by Cllr Keith Russell who had

confirmed to the Group that the Parish Council's position remains, as it always has been, to facilitate amicable resolutions on important issues that affect residents and visitors to the village. He had made it clear that the efforts and attention being made by councillors on finding workable long-term solutions to current difficulties are intense, so there can be no doubts about the Council's willingness to stay closely involved even though the Council has no structural authority to demand action. It can only act as a 'prod' to those who do have this option.

John Taylor and Becky Waller briefed the Meeting on the recent meeting FODLWOS had with Mr Andrew Reid and his advisors.

FODLWOS had proposed making an offer to purchase the freehold of the contested areas. This amounts to an approximately 20-acre package spread across various sites. If this offer is accepted FODLWOS in return will not attempt to register unlisted footpaths, such as the 'cross field cutting' near Blue Bridge.

Mr Reid had seemed interested in this proposal and a formal response is awaited.

Cllr Russell said that the Group had questioned whether the County Council's interpretation of the rules it was working to on footpath maintenance is correct.

Apparently, if a landowner encloses a footpath with fixed fencing on two sides (thus creating a corridor) the responsibility for maintenance becomes the landowner's and not OCC's. The Clerk said that he would check this matter with the County Council. The Police Community Support Officers have arranged a meeting with the Clerk on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July. This is mainly to discuss the recent acts of vandalism on Bishops Court Farm but Speedwatch will also be discussed. The Clerk was asked to find out when the next 'Have Your Say' meeting will take place.

#### 9/7 Planning:

##### a. Applications:

P17/S1123/HH and P17/S1124/LB

91 High Street Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7HP

Proposed removal of former 'additions' and erection of two storey rear extension and creation of basement. Internal alterations (As amended by drawing numbers:16088-FH-P01A, P02B, P03B, P04C, P05A and P06 received on 20th June 2017)

It was proposed by Cllr Margison that the Council should take no strong views on this Application. This was seconded by Cllr Ballantyne and unanimously agreed.

P17/S2437/FUL 64 Watling Lane; Demolition of existing bungalow and outbuildings and erection of a replacement detached dwelling and associated parking.

It was proposed by Cllr Margison that the Council should recommend this Application for refusal. This was seconded by Cllr Quirke and unanimously agreed.

The information supplied with the application suggests that the volume of the proposed replacement dwelling may well be larger than is permitted within the Greenbelt however, no supporting information regarding volume calculations either way has been supplied with the application. The Parish Council also feels that the scale and mass of the proposal is likely to have a detrimental effect on both the adjacent Conservation Area and on the street scene of this part of Watling Lane which is mainly comprised of smaller dwellings. There is insufficient proposed parking provision for a dwelling of this size, which combined with the lack of any parking provision along Watling Lane may well lead to future issues.

P17/S2146/HH 6 Martins Lane; Erection of a wooden carport.

The Council agreed that it had no strong views about this Application.

P17/S2287/HH 58 Watling Lane

New porch and attic conversion involving box dormers front and rear.

It was proposed by Cllr Margison that the Council should recommend this Application for refusal. This was seconded by Cllr Ballantyne and unanimously agreed. The Parish Council is open to the prospect of development and extension at this location but feels that the proposed designs are unsuitable for this location. The

bulk, scale and size of the proposed dormer windows are overwhelming within the existing roof form. The Council also have concerns regarding the proposed first floor balcony/terrace area and the potential this has for overlooking the neighbouring property. The property sits adjacent to the Conservation Area and the Parish Council feels that this proposal would have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area. P17/S2111/FUL 55 Abingdon Road; Replacement dwelling.

The Council agreed that it had no strong views about this Application but the planning officer would be asked to ensure that the proposed roof terrace does not reduce the privacy of the neighbours by 'overlooking' their properties

P17/S1166/FUL, Dorchester Lake, Drayton Road; Replacement of Boundary Fence  
The Planning Officer has said that unless the Parish Council wishes to withdraw its opposition to the Application the matter will probably have to be determined by the District Council's Planning Committee. The Council agreed that it would not alter its view and that Cllr Margison would attend and speak at the Committee meeting.

#### b. Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Steering Group has reached its final phase of drafting text and finalising maps and has arranged a meeting to give its final approval in week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> July.

#### c. Proposed sale of The Fleur de Lys, an Asset of Community Value

The public meeting in the Village Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> July had been attended by approximately 75 people of whom more than 70 had agreed that the 'Friends of The Fleur' should call upon SODC to declare a moratorium on the sale. A meeting of the steering committee would be hosted by Oliver Margison; the committee at present comprises Jason Coe, Mike Davies, Richard Farrant and John Taylor.

The Clerk confirmed that he has now received a letter from SODC which states that the request for a moratorium has been agreed.

#### 10/7 Finance: Bank balances & payments

Current Account balance at 30/6	£55,028.66
Reserve Account balance at 5/7	<u>£47,869.77</u>
	£102,898.43

The following payments were proposed by Cllr Margison, seconded by Cllr Russell and agreed unanimously:

Oxfordshire County Council (Dorchester Flyer May)	168.00
Berinsfield Community Business (May grass)	1,114.50
Phil Greenaway (War memorial plants)	31.40
RoSPA Enterprises Ltd (final draft of report)	120.00
JRB Enterprise Ltd (dog waste bags)	101.70
IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd (internal audit)	222.00
RES Systems Ltd (Pavilion Fire Extinguishers)	173.40
Neil Willis (strimming of paths)	87.50
Geoff Willis Village Handyman (4 weeks)	323.75
G Russell (salary)	<u>538.82</u>
	£2,881.07

#### Annual Return

The Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill, and the Clerk, Geoffrey Russell. The Accounting statements for 2016/17 were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. These can now be sent to the auditors BDO LLP.

The Clerk reported that during his visit on 15<sup>th</sup> June, Kevin Rose, internal auditor, had questioned the amount of the Council's reserves. Mr Rose said that in future these should be 'earmarked' for a project or projects.

#### 11/7 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

The Clerk had received a report of fly-tipping near the by-pass bus stop.

12/7 Land Registration Progress

The Land Registry has confirmed to the Clerk that the Council's application to register 'Waterloo' and the land adjacent to it has been received but has warned that it will be several weeks before a response is sent.

13/7 Maintenance of Watling Lane

The County Council has organised the repair of most of the pot holes. The Chairman has arranged for a team from 'Wallingford Green Gym' to clear overhanging branches and unwanted growth from the sides of the Lane on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July,

14/7 Speedwatch Proposals

It was proposed by Cllr Russell that the Council should agree to try and put together a group of volunteers to carry out speed checks using equipment that would be supplied by Thames Valley Police. This motion was seconded by Cllr Margison and unanimously agreed. The details of how the scheme will work will be discussed by the Clerk and the local PCSOs and so more information will be available in August.

15/7 Dorchester Village Website and Social Media

The Chairman commented on the good work being carried out by the webmaster Dan Duke. Cllr Ballantyne said that he would let the Council have details about an email group that had operated successfully in the community where he had once lived.

16/7 Plans for Future Development of the Village Hall

Cllr Russell, as Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee, reported on a meeting that he had recently organised with representatives of the Gilbert Scott memorial group. As well as explaining that there are plans to replace the current single storey extension with a two-storey structure which would house a new kitchen, equipped to professional standards, and an office for the Parish Clerk, he had suggested that, in honour of its architect, the Village Hall should become known in future as the 'Gilbert Scott Hall' and this had all been very well-received. The new name would enhance the marketability of the facility and Cllr Russell said that there is a good chance of obtaining grants to help the financing of this ambitious project. It was confirmed that discussions about using the Village Hall to store the Parish Council's emergency equipment are on-going.

17/7 Surveying Opinions of Village Visitors

Cllr Viviane Quirke said that it would be helpful to get some feedback from visitors to the village which indicate how they rate the experience. She suggested that this could be achieved via a survey on the Village website and she asked for ideas about what questions should be asked. Cllr Russell said that it was important to identify in advance the use to which such information could be put. Cllr Quirke said that she would develop her proposal for further discussion.

18/7 Appeal for Funding the Village School Forest School project

This item will be carried forward for discussion at a future meeting.

19/7 Routine Reports:

**a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;**

Reports that youths have been loitering around the Pavilion will be passed on by the Clerk to the PCSOs. There has been vandalism of the defibrillator case.

Behind Closed Doors, the original supplier, has quoted £340 plus VAT for servicing the roller shutters on the pavilion and tractor shed and this was accepted.

Jenks will soon be carrying out tree surveys on the Recreation Ground, the Cemetery

and the Abbey Churchyard.

The annual Play Area inspection will take place this month.

A new Chairman for the Sports Club is required.

**b. Footpaths;**

The Clerk will obtain quotations for additional dog waste bins to be discussed at the next Council meeting

The grass area around the seat near the High Street bus shelter will be strimmed. The seat itself needs repair.

**c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;**

Clearance of moles has been successfully achieved but rats have now been noted.

The Chairman is arranging a working party to deal with unwanted ivy on many trees.

The audit of graves which have become untidy due to lack of maintenance is still outstanding.

**d. Allotments**

Ed Metcalfe from the Allotments Society has reported an increased take-up of plots.

The Archaeology Open Day will take place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July

20/7 Any Other Urgent Matters

The Chairman said that there would be a committee of PAGE on 25<sup>th</sup> July which he would be unable to attend. He asked for another councillor to represent the Council.

The Meeting closed at 10.23 p.m.