

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th October commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill presided; present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Maurice Day, Oliver Margison, Viviane Quirke, Mike Rimmer and Mark Williams with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Cllr John Cotton and four members of the public

1/10 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Keith Russell who was on holiday.

2/10 Public Participation

Phil Greenaway asked the Parish Council to press the Land Registry for a response to the Application which had been submitted in June concerning the open space off Bridge End known as 'Waterloo'. He said that several residents are dissatisfied by the length of time that this matter is taking to resolve. He urged the Council to keep residents informed.

Two residents attended to raise concerns about the Council taking part in the Thames Valley Police SpeedWatch scheme. They were not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that traffic speeds are a problem. This matter will be fully discussed by the Council later in the meeting as Agenda Item 16.

3/10 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

4/10 Minutes of the Meeting held 13th September 2017

It was proposed by Cllr Mike Rimmer and seconded by Cllr Rob Ballantyne that the minutes as circulated should be approved. This was agreed and the Chairman signed the Minute Book.

5/10 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. The meeting with John Howell MP had taken place on Monday 25th September. The recently completed Dorchester Neighbourhood Development Plan had been presented. Councillors expressed their concern about the loss of Belcher Court; John Howell commented that he is planning to start an enquiry about the way in which Housing Associations operate. The proposals for a new road passing through South Oxfordshire to link the A34 with the route of the Oxford/Cambridge Expressway were raised as a major concern for residents, especially since the indicative routes map showed one option passing between Dorchester and Shillingford. John Howell said that it is his impression that the County Council prefers a route south of Oxford but ultimately it would be up to the National Infrastructure Commission to make its recommendation to the Department of Transport. He said that he would like to be kept informed of the Expressway Action Group's campaign.

b. Susan Bowditch had explained that her proposed planting scheme has been postponed due to the need to find a new contractor. She hopes this delay will be short.

c. Disabled parking places; it was agreed that the two spaces in the High Street should be retained. The Clerk said the County Council had agreed to remove the reserved space from Tenpenny following the death of the resident for whom it was created.

6/10 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's monthly report had been received and circulated. It would appear on the Village website and in Dorchester News.

She distributed some information about the re-organisation of County Highways Operations and confirmed that she had held a meeting with the Highways Inspector earlier in the day at which the Parish requests for several discretionary projects had been raised. These included repairs to granite setts, improvements to the access from Drayton Road to the by-pass bus stops, enlargement of the waiting space by the bus stop opposite Meadside, and improvements to visibility at the junction of Henley Road with the A4074. It was hoped that the latter, as a matter of road safety, would not have to be paid for from the County Councillor's discretionary budget.

7/10 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton attended the latter part of the meeting having come from the official launch of the District Council's Local Plan. He said that he would send his monthly report in time for inclusion in the next Dorchester News. Cllr Cotton said that he has a budget for discretionary expenditure and is looking for projects where a grant of £500 would make a significant difference. The Clerk will advise the Allotments Society and the Cricket Club about this source of possible funding. Cllr Cotton asked The Council to explain to residents that weekly food waste collections are now made by special vehicles. Green/black wheelie bins are emptied by different crews on the same day as food waste but not always at the same time.

8/10 Report on contact with Bishops Court Farm/FODLWOS

The Clerk said that he would be attending the meeting of the FODLWOS Steering Group on 15th October. He had been informed by Richard Anderson that he has purchased that part of the Bishops Court Farm Estate known as 'Lot 7'. It was agreed that Richard should be told that the Parish Council is interested in using at least some of this land as an extension to the Parish Cemetery.

9/10 Proposals for Affordable Housing at 'Allens Pit', Abingdon Road

The Chairman and Cllr Rob Ballantyne will be discussing this matter with Helen Novelle of SODC on 12th October.

10/10 Belcher Court Planning Decision; future actions

Cllr Margison said that when he had attended the meeting of the Planning Committee at which the Belcher Court application had been approved, he had been told of similar SOHA schemes in other parts of the District. Several Planning Committee members were sympathetic to the Parish Council's case but there were no 'planning reasons' to vote against approving the SOHA scheme.

A draft report to residents had been prepared by Cllr Rimmer incorporating suggestions from several councillors and this was approved for publication in Dorchester News. This report explained the background to the redevelopment of Belcher Court and what the Parish Council had done in order to try to secure the best outcome for Dorchester-on-Thames. The Council agreed that SOHA should be approached with a request to contribute funds towards a Parish project and the Chairman will draft such a letter for approval.

11/10 Oxford-Cambridge Expressway; campaign report

The Chairman and Cllr Mike Rimmer had attended an Action Group meeting on 10th October. The Group has not asked for any funding contributions as yet. It is concentrating on helping members to lobby against the southern link roads between the A34 and the Expressway by drafting letters and press releases etc. As Strategic Director for Communities, Mr Bev Hindle is the County Council officer whose responsibility this is, along with Owen Jenkins, Director for Infrastructure Delivery. The Parish Council agreed that it would support the Group lobbying activity and, via all available communication tools, encourage residents to join in.

The following payments were approved:

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| Oxfordshire Association Local Councils training` | 84.00 |
| Dorchester Abbey PCC (Abbey Guest House hire) | 16.00 |
| Dorchester Village Hall Room Hire | 28.00 |
| Dennis Froud (rabbit control quarterly charge) | 290.00 |
| SODC (dog bin emptying)` | 113.03 |
| Castle Water Limited (Sportsground etc) | 242.09 |
| Castle Water Limited (Allotments) | 206.86 |
| Castle Water Limited (Cemetery) | 107.83 |
| Geoff Willis Village Handyman (4 weeks) | 393.75 |
| G Russell (salary) | <u>538.82</u> |
| | 2020.38 |

It was agreed that the Parish should set aside £1,000 as a donation to PAGE in 2018/19. A decision about whether to make a donation to 'Be Free YC', the new name for South and Vale Carers, will be made at the November Council meeting. This is a cause which the Parish Council has supported in previous years.

14/10 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

Jason Popham has telephoned the Clerk asking for the Parish Council to intervene in a disagreement between neighbours in Beechcroft and Malthouse Lane over access for the delivery of central heating oil. The Council agreed that this is not a matter in which the Parish Council has any authority. The Clerk was asked to explain to Jason Popham that the Council would not get involved.

The Clerk reported that through Val Howells the School had expressed its thanks to the Parish Council for financing the purchase of the 'forest school' equipment.

15/10 Fireworks Night

Val Howells has confirmed that all arrangements are in place for the display on 5th November in aid of Footsteps Foundation.

16/10 Village SpeedWatch Campaign Progress

The Clerk reported that he had received three more letters in favour of action and one against. It was suggested that the Parish Council should sign up for a SpeedWatch campaign that would run for a period of 6 months before being reviewed and which would concentrate upon traffic in Henley Road and the High Street to the exclusion of the traffic using Abingdon Road. It was emphasised that there must be a process for giving back information to the Village not so much about who had been caught speeding but how many. The Council would obtain all the SpeedWatch signage to which it would now be entitled. The Clerk should contact the Police and arrange for training during the winter months so that the Campaign could start in earnest next Spring. This was proposed by Cllr Mark Williams and seconded by Cllr Viviane Quirke. It was approved by four votes in favour and two against with one abstention.

17/10 Emergency equipment storage

The Chairman is in contact with Cllr Keith Russell to progress this matter.

18/10 Village Bus Services Review

Cllr Ballantyne said that the 138 Service would in future run on Tuesdays and Thursdays. At the moment it is not known whether this service has had any impact upon demand for the 'Dorchester Flyer'.

19/10 Request from Hurst Water Meadow Trust for storage in Abbey View.

This might take the form of a request to place a container on Abbey View Meadow, which would certainly be unpopular with some people. Storage opportunities in other places would be investigated e.g, Bells Motors / behind the Pavilion etc

20/10 Setting up of Village Facebook Group

A Meeting with the Village webmaster, Dan Duke, has been planned for 19th October. This will be attended by the Chairman, Rob Ballantyne and the Clerk. It was suggested that the Facebook group should be used for campaigning on behalf of the Expressway Action Group.

21/10 Routine Reports:

a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

It was agreed to give three months' notice of the Council's intention to terminate the contracts with Total Pest Control. From January these contracts will be awarded to Dennis Froud. In the meantime, Dennis has started action to try and control the rabbit population on the Recreation Ground and in the Cemetery.

The Sports Club continues to be without a Chairman. New arrangements for managing sports in Dorchester will be discussed at the November Council meeting.

b Footpaths;

The BCB estimate for the cost of clearance work from Drayton Rd to the Hurst Water Meadow totals approximately £1,500. It was agreed that this work should proceed.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

The change from Total Pest Control to Dennis Froud will take affect in the Cemetery as well.

The digital tree maps from Jenks Oxford are still awaited.

d. Allotments

There are new officers in place and the Parish Council has received requests about new signs for marking the footpath, a replacement mower, and rat control.

The Chairman has agreed to complete the review of Allotment Rules that was started some years ago but never formally concluded. It was agreed that the Parish Council's representative on the Allotment Committee (currently Cllr Mike Rimmer) should always be invited to attend Society committee meetings.

22/10 Any Other Urgent Matters

Cllr Margison said that he was extremely concerned over the poor condition of the school boundary wall. Near the main school gate is an area where the wall could easily collapse. The Clerk was asked to contact Val Howells, as the Parish Council's nominated School Governor, and request urgent remedial work.

The Meeting closed at 10.30

- i.
- ii. Speedwatch; The Clerk said that he had heard from only two residents on this topic and so he would put a notice in Dorchester News setting 10th October as the deadline by which all comments should be received. The Parish Council could therefore make a decision about any further action at its meeting on 11th October.
- iii. Tree mapping; the maps from Jenks are still awaited. The Council agreed that in general the mapping of all parish council assets would be very useful e.g. bus shelters, street lights, litter bins, benches and so on. Cllr Mark Williams commented that as a result of the work that has gone into the Neighbourhood Development Planning some expertise on mapping has been developed and this could now be utilised in these other areas.
- iv. Survey of opinions of visitors to the village; Cllr Viviane Quirke will have an opportunity to discuss this at a future meeting.
- v. Cllr Keith Russell said that there has been a lot of comment about the draft plans for the enlargement of the village hall and that these had been sent to Oliver Margison for his response. Among the comments was the suggestion that the new facilities should include a post office and the suggestion that it would be an advantage if the Village Hall could become a Listed Building rather than a 'building of local note'.

8/9 Report on contact with Bishops Court Farm/FODLWOS

Becky Waller briefed the Council about recent communications between FODLWOS and Mr Reid at Bishops Court Farm. She said that the applications for footpath deviation orders had not yet been submitted to the County Council but she expected that this would happen in the near future.

She asked that the Parish Council should continue its communications with the Farm about protective covering for barbed wire and the introduction of more dog-friendly stiles on the paths near the Farm buildings.

Becky said that access for wheelchairs etc through the gate at the bottom of Wittenham Lane is now possible but that this gate has only been given temporary permission by the County Council pending the repair of the fencing around the fields where sheep and cattle are kept.

9/9 Proposals for 'Allen's Pit', Abingdon Road

The Chairman said that he understood that a recent exchange of emails with Helen Novelle of SODC had given Jason Winterbourne the indication that development at Allens Pit would be possible if several of the properties were 'affordable homes'. The most recent Housing Needs Survey in Dorchester was carried out four years ago and will very soon be out of date. The Chairman and Cllr Ballantyne will try to progress this matter.

11/9 Meeting with John Howell MP

This has been confirmed for the morning of Monday 25th September from 11.00 until 12 noon. Topics to be covered will include Neighbourhood Planning; the proposed redevelopment of Belcher Court and the suggested routes between the A34 and the Expressway that is to link Oxford and Cambridge via Buckingham and Milton Keynes. The most southerly of these suggestions would run somewhere between Dorchester and Benson.

- iv. The Council has received a request to grant permission for a bench in memory of John and Doreen Beveridge to be placed at the end of Wittenham Lane. Since this would be difficult the Village Green at Bridge End may be a suitable alternative. The Chairman will talk to local residents.
- v. OALC is running a Planning Training Course at Witney on 13th December. The Council will reserve two places.

15/9 Fireworks Night

Val Howells reported on the meeting held with Footsteps. The Parish Council is asked to insure the event again this year and this was agreed. Virtually all members of the Parish Council will be able to attend the event on Sunday 5th November and will assist with stewarding. It was suggested that the organisers contact the Golf Society to borrow a large barbecue.

16/9 Campaign re link routes from A34 to Cambridge Expressway

The Clerk confirmed that the Earth Trust knew nothing about this possible new road although it was said that there had been a report in the Oxford Mail back in February. It was agreed that the Parish Council should join the Action Group and attend its meetings. The matter will be raised with John Howell MP on 25th September.

17/9 Village Bus Services

Cllr Rob Ballantyne said that the operator of the 138 service has agreed to look into the possibility of running the service on a Friday should the Council decide that the Dorchester Flyer service is no longer needed.

18/9 Village Maintenance

- i. Several locations in the High Street where the granite setts need replacement have been reported to the County Council.
- ii. Clearance of sides of Dorchester Bridge and roadside gutters in High Street and Oxford Road is being dealt with by the Village Handyman.
- iii. It was agreed that having long grass at the Tenpenny/Watling Lane junction is a road safety issue and next year the Parish Council would cut this area if the County Council failed to do so.
- iv. The Clerk said that he has ordered three more anti dog fouling notices from SODC

19/9 Facebook Group

A meeting will be held with village webmaster Dan Duke when Cllr Rob Ballantyne is back from holiday. In addition to the functions which this Group could perform which have been mentioned in previous discussions, this evening's references to seeking opinions on issues such as village maintenance and Speedwatch should also be included.

20/9 Routine Reports:

- a. Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;
The Clerk will meet with Denis Froud to discuss whether he could take over the task of controlling rabbit activity on the Recreation Ground and the cemetery. Following the introduction of signs advertising the CCTV there has been no further vandalism.
- b. Footpaths;
The Chairman asked BCB to prepare some quotations for carrying out improvements to the width and the surface of the footpath from Drayton Rd to Manor Farm Rd,
- c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

A working party has removed ivy from ten of the trees in the Cemetery and will be reconvened to carry out further work in due course.

There have been complaints about dog fouling in the Cemetery and a notice about this has been put in 'Dorchester News'.

The audit of uncared for graves is still required.

The Chairman has been invited to meet Susan Bowditch on 15th September to discuss her planting schemes. Miss Bowditch wants the schemes to be finished this year.

d. Allotments

Several issues were raised at the Society's committee meeting the previous evening. It was agreed that the Parish Council's Allotments councillor, Mike Rimmer, should be automatically invited to attend Committee Meetings.

It is expected that a new Chairman and a new Treasurer will be elected at the Society AGM on 21st September

Meeting closed at 10.59 p.m.