**Dorchester Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Thursday 12th July 2018 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Chris Hill, presided; present were Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne, Maurice Day, Oliver Margison, Keith Russell and Mark Williams (Vice-Chairman) with G Russell in attendance.

1/7. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Viviane Quirke and Mike Rimmer, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, and District Cllr John Cotton.

2/7. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

3/7 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Chairman re land at Waterloo and behind 13 Bridge End, as previously minuted.

4/7 Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13th June 2018

It was proposed by Cllr Keith Russell that the minutes as circulated should be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Mark Williams and unanimously approved.

5/7 Matters Arising from the Minutes

i. The Speedwatch checks are due to re-start in the next week after a brief interlude caused by some participants being on holiday. The results of these checks will be reviewed and perhaps the areas of the village where these checks take place will be changed - to include Abingdon Road, for example.

ii. Village Fireworks Display; the Clerk has had a meeting with Maggie Davies, Footsteps **Foundation Manager, and explained that the Council has no power to increase its financial contribution towards the cost of putting on the display beyond underwriting the costs of the fireworks and extending the Council’s insurance to be used to cover the event. It is understood that there will be more musical entertainment at this year’s show. This may mean that the idea of having a large bonfire as well as the fireworks could be dropped.**

iii. Belcher Court; The Chairman reported that since his communication with Steve Lynch of SOHA, the project’s architects have been in contact. The date upon which demolition will commence has still not been confirmed and the access routes by contractors is not completely clear. These will have to take in account other building work in the village such as the new housing being built near The White Hart. It does appear, however, that SOHA and its contractors are fully aware of the need to keep the cemetery access clear whenever this is required for a funeral procession.

6/7 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale’s report had been circulated to all councillors.

7/7 District Councillor’s Report

None received.

8/7 Planning:

i. Applications:

P18/S1722/LDP Willowfields, 1 Drayton Road;

Proposed siting of a caravan/mobile home

The Council noted this application for Permitted Development.

ii. Housing Needs Survey; it was agreed that posters should be displayed around the village reminding residents that it is important for the survey forms to be returned.

## iii. Dyke Hills Scheduled Monument Consent Public Hearing; five councillors including the Chairman, together with the Clerk had attended the public hearing on Tuesday, 19th July. The Chairman had been one of the speakers asking for the application to allow new fencing to be turned down.

At the end of the meeting Giles Smith, Deputy Director for Heritage in DCMS who had been in the chair, explained that the decisions on the fencing will be made by the Secretary of State and all parties will be notified. A detailed account of the public hearing will also be supplied. No time-table was given.

9/7 Land Registry:

‘Waterloo’ application

Councillors were given a copy of the advice received from Hugh Craddock of Open Spaces Society (OSS). The Clerk has asked Mr Craddock if he would be available to make a site visit in the near future and the costs/fees that would be involved.

Councillors were also shown the email from the Diocesan Office in Birmingham which stated that the old footbridge across the river was thought to have been erected by the Davey family so that they had direct access from Overy to the church. The Clerk said that in fact the bridge was built many decades before the Church.

The Council noted that this has been yet another occasion when the Diocesan Office has failed to produce the evidence of ownership that Father John had described at the Parish Council meeting held on 10th June 2015.

It was agreed that the Clerk should now write to the Watsons direct. The letter would review the events that have taken place since the Watsons attended the Parish Council meeting on 8th April 2015. Because the Diocesan Office has been unable to produce any documents of ownership and because the Tithe Map of 1846 shows that the area behind what is now 13 Bridge to be separate from the Davey family land, the Council believes that the Watsons’ agreement with Father John Osman is based upon a misunderstanding of the facts and therefore has no standing.

The Watsons will be asked to remove the fence and open the land for public access. The Council will offer the Watsons a contribution towards their costs of doing so.

The Council also agreed that in the interests of reinforcing its claim to the land known as ‘Waterloo’ it will have its contractors erect a fence along the edge of the road between 13 and 15 Bridge End. This action is in line with the comments made by the Land Registry in its letter to the Council dated 27th February 2018 when it was said that the Council should reinforce its claim to register the land by demonstrating that land is now in the Council’s exclusive possession and that it intends to control access.

It was suggested that the amended application should be submitted to the Land Registry as soon as the fence and gate have been installed

Village Hall: Application to include the patio

Cllr Margison has drawn up the necessary plans and the Clerk has recovered both the previous application and the deed of conveyance. The new application will now be submitted.

10/7 Finance;

i. Bank balances & payments

Current Account balance at 29/6 £51,520.79

Reserve Account balance at 5/07 £47,886.87

£99,407.66

Payment of the following cheques was proposed by Cllr Keith Russell and seconded by Cllr O Margison. This was unanimously approved.

Denis Froud (Pest Control) 805.00

Sean Garside (ground works) 210.00

Artisan Litho Ltd (reprint of tourism leaflets) 1,411.00

Oxfordshire County Council (Dorchester Flyer June) 210.00

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental) 77.58

BCB grass-cutting (June) 1,168.32

Lister Wilder spares 49.49

Dorchester-on-Thames Village Hall 28.00

RES Systems Ltd (Pavilion fire extinguisher) 49.80

Friends of Benson Library (donation0 100.00

Geoff Willis (Village Handyman) 341.25

G Russell (salary) 549.65

G Russell (admin A/M/J) 282.00

£5,282.09

ii. Internal Audit Report; The Internal Audit had been completed on Wednesday 27th June. Kevin Rose had signed the internal auditor’s report which will now be sent to Moore Stephens, the new external auditors for Oxfordshire.

iii. Annual Return; The Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statement were approved and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk and will now be sent to Moore Stephens.

iv. Review of Financial Regulations etc; The Clerk reported that the internal auditor had said that the Council must set aside some time in the current financial year to review its financial regulations, review the value of its assets register and consider whether the existing financial risk assessment is adequate. The Council minutes should confirm when these reviews have taken place.

This would in future be a routine annual process.

11/7 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

a. The Council noted that the Toll House is being offered for sale but agreed that it had no interest in this property becoming the parish office.

b. The Chairman has been told that the asking price for The Fleur de Lys has been reduced to £595,000. In 2013 The Fleur was listed as an Asset of Community Value. This registration will shortly expire and the Parish Council agreed that it should be renewed. The Chairman will draft the application.

c. The Clerk circulated copies of correspondence that he has been having with a resident who is extremely critical of the Parish Council in general and the Chairman in particular. The resident has stated that he intends to make a formal complaint. The Clerk told the Council that he has been advised by OALC that this matter cannot be discussed any further pending a resolution of the formal complaints procedure. This will be carried out by the District Council’s Monitoring Officer.

d. The Council has been asked by the Chairman of the Hurst Water Meadow Trust if the Trust could be allowed to place a container in the corner of Abbey View Meadow so that it can use the space for storage. The Chairman said that perhaps a second container could be placed there to provide additional storage for the Parish Council. The whole matter, however, is subject to the terms of the lease which was granted to the Parish Council in 2009 by the late Richard Douglas as well as to the willingness of the Parish Council to allow permanent structures in the Meadow. The exact terms of the lease are to be determined and the matter will be discussed again at the Council’s August meeting.

12/7 Highway Maintenance

The Council noted that the potholes in Watling Lane have recently been repaired. With the prevailing weather at the time of the repairs being hot and dry it is hoped that these repairs will be long-lasting.

Oxfordshire County Council has circulated a Consultation Document in which Parish Councils are invited to consider taking over some highways maintenance tasks. The Council agreed that it has no enthusiasm for doing so. It is hard to believe that small councils could carry out this type of work as efficiently as the County Council and its main contractors and there is no certainty that the County would provide the required funding beyond the first year or two of the scheme being in operation. The Parish Council agreed, however, that it should increase its use of the ‘Fix My Street’ service.

13/7 Village Maintenance

The Council noted that it now has an opportunity to use the services of a new local groundworker called Sean Garside. He has recently carried out some hedge cutting for the Council and his work was most satisfactory.

The Council noted that the next visit of the Wallingford ‘Green Gym’ group would take place on 31st July. The Chairman will be managing the work carried out that day.

Cllr Oliver Margison said that he is willing to take on some voluntary work, with his first project being clearance of the footway between the southbound bus stop opposite Meadside and the junction with the by-pass, The Chairman said he would help.

14/7 Commemorating 1918

Plans are being developed by Denise Lines, Margot Metcalfe and the Rector and the Council will learn more of these when Cllr Viviane Quirke reports to the August Council meeting. The Chairman will be offering his assistance as soon as Cllr Quirke returns from holiday.

It was agreed that the War Memorial should be inspected in the near future to see if any maintenance or deep cleaning is required before November. This matter will be discussed with Phil and Sally Greenaway who have been the main carers for the war memorial for several years.

The Chairman asked who is responsible for disposing of old wreaths and tributes.

15/7 PAGE Report

County Cllr Lorrain Lindsay-Gale will be asked to inform the August Council meeting about the matters which are being considered by the County Council.

16/7 Oxford/Cambridge Expressway Action Group Report

There have been no further developments. An announcement is expected soon.

17/7 Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion & Playground; The annual play area inspection has been arranged for July 19th. The Clerk will be away, but the Chairman may be able to meet the inspector during her visit. Cllr Margison said that he would try to discover more details about the cost of the proposed new roundabout.

b. Footpaths; Councillors agreed that the dog fouling problem is getting worse and that the marking of offending sites with spray paint should be re-started since this has had a positive effect in the past.

Following recent work in Albert Place there are some arisings that need removal.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard; Miss Susan Bowditch has arranged for the replacement of the damaged bench by a local contractor: Orchard Street Furniture.

d. Allotments; Oxford Archaeology has arranged for the final excavation ‘Open Day’ to be held on Saturday 14th July.

The Allotments Society is planning to hold a summer party on Sunday 2nd September.

18/7 Any Other Urgent Matters

Parking signage on the posts outside 1a and 1b High Street needs replacement. The Clerk will arrange this.

The Meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.