**Dorchester Parish Council**

Due to the prevailing Government Regulations, the Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 10th June 2020 was held remotely via Zoom in accordance with the guidance published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on Friday 3rd April and circulated to councillors on that date. The Meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

The Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, presided with Cllrs. Rob Ballantyne (Vice-Chairman), Mike Corran, Maurice Day, Chris Hill, Viviane Quirke, Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell, all of whom had both audio and visual access, together with G Russell (Clerk to the Council) who had audio access only, in attendance. They were joined on-line for part of the meeting by District Cllr Robin Bennett.

1/6 Apologies for Absence

None; all councillors were present.

2/6 Public Participation

None.

3/6 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr. Mark Williams concerning village maintenance work that is carried out by any company with whom he works, principally grass-cutting and grounds maintenance.

4/6 Minutes of the Meeting held on13th May 2020

It was proposed by Cllr Rob Ballantyne that the minutes as circulated should be approved as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Mike Rimmer and approved unanimously.

5/6 Matters Arising from the Minutes

It was not known whether the light above the steps leading down to the bus-stop upon the southbound carriageway had been repaired. The Clerk will check and report

6/6 . Care for residents during the present coronavirus crisis

Cllr Mike Corran said that the scheme is running very smoothly. Radio Oxford had recently carried a report on the work being carried out by the Dorchester volunteers.

7/6 Planning

a. Applications:

P20/S1754/LB Bridge End House 2 High Street

Proposed extension and alterations to include re-cladding of existing dwelling.

The Council agreed that it has No Objections to this application.

P20/S1748/HH and P20/S1750/LB 91 High Street

Proposed removal of former 'additions' and erection of two storey rear extension. Internal alterations. The Council agreed that it has No Objections to this application.

b. South Oxfordshire Local Plan Examination

District Cllr Robin Bennett explained that the District Council has been instructed by the Secretary of State to go to Inspection with the Plan that had been drafted by the previous administration. The new administration is trying to make changes. The Parish Council decided that it did not wish to make any formal comments. Cllr Chris Hill said that he might take part in this process, but it would be in a personal capacity.

c. Bishops Court Farm

Developments are proceeding. Keith Ives is hoping to attend the Council meeting on 8th July.

d. Allens Pit

Councillors expressed their concern that the planning application has still not been approved and that the project has incurred some unexpected costs that threaten its viability. District Cllr Bennett said that there might be some third-party assistance to ensure that it goes ahead.

8/6. County Councillor’s Report

A written report has been received and circulated.

9/6. District Councillor’s Report

A written report has been received and circulated. District Cllr Bennett drew the Council’s attention to the importance of informing him very promptly should the Council wish any new planning application to be ‘called-in’ for special determination. He said that as a result of many Council staff working from home during the present COVID-19 crisis the Council will be reviewing its future long-term requirement for permanent office space.

Cllr Bennett drew the Council’s attention to a section in his monthly report headed ‘Adapting our roads to accommodate safe cycling and walking’ and to [www.widenmypath.com](http://www.widenmypath.com) where you can submit a suggestion for improvements to be made to an existing pavement or cycle path. This is monitored by Oxfordshire County Council.

10/6. Council’s Four-Year Vision

The refurbishment of the exterior of the public lavatories building in Bridge End has been completed. Discussion of additional village improvements was carried forward to July.

11/6. Finance:

i Bank Balances & Payments

NatWest Current Account balance at 29/5 £48,309.05

NatWest Reserve Account balance at 5/6 £48,052.33

£96,361.38

It was proposed by Cllr Keith Russell that the following payments should be approved: This was seconded by Cllr Chris Hill and passed unanimously.

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental) 92.76

The Landscape Group Oxford (May grass) 1,114.20

The Landscape Group Oxford (Bridge End toilets redecoration) 1,461.00

Bryans Lock Services Ltd (padlock and chain for play area) 37.18

Castle Water Limired (Annual Cemetery Rate) 110.70

Geoff Willis (Village Handyman) 378.75

G Russell (salary, including back pay to 1/4/19 of £512.20) 1,288.18

G Russell (Reimbursement\* for Allotments skip 288.80

£4,771.57

\*Paid by GR to M&M Allotments Skip Hire £288.80 x 1

ii. On-line Banking Application

All councillors who are authorised signatories have been contacted by email and electronically signed the Application. The Clerk said that he been informed that the process should be completed within another 10 working days.

iii Asset Register software;

The Council gave its approval to purchase the Asset Inventory software supplied by RIALTAS as recommended by the Council’s internal auditor last year. The Clerk said that he knew of several local parishes who use it and it has been strongly recommended.

The cost in year one is £484 including training and support with £119 being the ongoing expense for single user.

iv Tennis Courts and MUGA Repainting Project;

The Council approved the suggestion from Chris Smith of the Tennis Club that the project is put through the Parish Council so that the VAT can be reclaimed. Chris has confirmed that the Club has definitely raised the £5,000 required and that no Council financing is required.

12/6. Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

i. Cllr Chris Hill has written to the Council to confirm that the Dorchester Branch of The Royal British Legion is to re-start and that he will be taking on the Chairmanship.

ii. A report from School Governor Val Howells has been circulated to members. A new Headteacher has been appointed. There will be a report about the School in Dorchester News.

iii. The Clerk has received a few complaints about the nuisance caused by bonfires. The July/August edition of Dorchester News will be used to remind residents of SODC’s regulations and guidance on domestic bonfires.

iv. The Council has received letters from some residents complaining about traffic driving through the village at dangerous speeds while one resident complained that he thought the village was being used by traffic which should be encouraged to use the by-pass.

The Clerk has been trying to contact the County Council officers in the Traffic Schemes team, but that department is not functioning during the COVID-19 crisis and is not expected to have staff back until the end of July.

v. Cllr Viviane Quirke reported on her correspondence with Anthony Dumper of Abingdon & Oxford Anglers Alliance who own the fishing lake off Drayton Road. There have been some recent changes to the collection of rubbish from their site and after some initial misunderstandings these seem to be working well.

13/6 River of Life II Project: Use of Abbey View Meadow

After further communication between Rebecca Chiazzese and the Clerk a response has come from Earth Trust which Cllr Mike Rimmer believes is satisfactory. Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, it is understood that the Project has been postponed until 2021.

14/6. Village Maintenance including Tree Care and Volunteer Projects

Five local firms of tree surgeons have provided their quotations to carry out the work specified in the report prepared by Sarah Venners in November 2018. These have been circulated to councillors in a spreadsheet summary. It was agreed that Jenks Oxford should be appointed. The Jenks quote was within £140 (2%) of the least expensive quote submitted and the firm is well-known for its very satisfactory work for the Parish Council over many years.

It is hoped that the team from Wallingford Green Gym will visit us again this year. This is not certain, but 23rd June is a possibility.

Andrew Clements continues to take the lead in some grounds care projects with volunteers both in the Cemetery and along the path leading from Drayton Road towards The Hurst.

SODC’s annual Spring Clean and Deep Clean initiatives did not happen because of COVID-19. This is normally when the weeds along Dorchester Bridge are removed but this year they will be left for the village handyman to tackle.

15/6 Land Registration

Following a report from Wellers Hedleys, solicitors, it was agreed that the attempt to register the War Memorial should be dropped. The Council has been advised that the Land Registry will never agree to the application because the land was once part of the Highway. Our solicitors, however, say that the Council can carry on looking after the site without the need for Registration.

Wellers Hedleys further advise that achieving Registration of the area known as ‘Waterloo’ will be difficult and could take many years. Bccky Waller has given advice on the process involved in securing Village Green status. This would give the land the protection that the Parish Council wishes it to have without any ownership issues having to be sorted out first.

The Clerk will contact the County Council to discover more about the process and current waiting times.

16/6 Purchase of Defibrillator for Bridge End

Cllrs Rob Ballantyne and Viviane Quirke are running this and are in contact with potential suppliers to obtain prices and terms of service/maintenance etc. The grant money from South Oxfordshire District Council (£926) has been received.

17/6. Waste Collection from outside Co-Op

SODC has confirmed that provided the ownership of this bin is transferred to them, they will start collections from the existing bin. The transfer process is simple and can be achieved by an email from the Clerk. It was agreed to make this transfer. Dorchester News will be used to tell residents that there are certain things that they should not put into this bin.

The Waste Services officer will visit Bridge End next week and report on whether improvements in the service in that area can be made.

18/6. Future Management of Public Conveniences in Bridge End

After the Parish Council’s demonstration of having an interest in this facility by paying for the re-decorating, the District Council has asked if we wish to take it over as has happened in Watlington. Further details are awaited.

19/6. Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion Recreation Ground & Playground;

It was agreed that the grass in the Play area should be regularly cut even though under Government regulations the facility must be kept closed for the time being.

b. Footpaths;

Strimming of the verges has been done for the first time this year. Hedge cutting is required.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

There are two broken seats in need of repair or replacement and quotations will be obtained.

There have recently been complaints about damage to floral tributes and planting taking place during grass-cutting operations. This has drawn attention to the importance of communicating details of new burials to the contractors and also to the need for the Cemetery Rules and Regulations being made more easily accessible. Having a special area of the village website set aside for displaying Cemetery Notices is one possibility, following a review of the document that was last approved in 2006.

d. Allotments;

A third skip has been hired and fully filled. The Allotment Society will ensure that the Parish Council does not pay the full cost of this one.

Tom Cottrell’s quote for repairs to the boundary fence is £516. Another contractor will be invited to quote.

20/6. Any Other Urgent Matters

The Chairman said recent events have demonstrated that both the Village Website and Facebook site need to have editorial policies agreed by the Parish Council. This will be put on the agenda for the July meeting.

The Meeting closed at 9.34 p.m.