**Dorchester Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Wednesday 8th December 2021 in the back room of the Village Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, presided with Cllrs Mike Corran, Maurice Day, John Edwards, Chris Hill, Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell present and with G Russell (Council Clerk) in attendance. Also present for part of the time was County and District Councillor Robin Bennett.

1/12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Rob Ballantyne who was on holiday.

2/12 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.

3/12 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4/12 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th November 2021

It was proposed by Cllr Chris Hill that the Minutes as circulated should be approved. This was seconded by Cllr John Edwards and approved unanimously.

5/12. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Christmas trees for The Abbey and the High Street are being delivered by Earth Trust on Friday 10th December. Cllr Chris Hill has organised a team of helpers to decorate the Parish Council’s tree which will be outside The Co-Op as usual.

b. Sarah Comer, Sovereign’s recently appointed Development Manager for Allens Pit has moved and the Council’s new contact is Ruth Burton, who is based at Basingstoke. It is hoped that a progress meeting can be held in the near future, possibly involving SODC.

c. The Council noted that Dorchester branch of Royal British Legion had raised £1,907 through its recent Poppy Appeal.

d. The Gigaclear cable installation work has almost finished. In most parts of the village the execution of the work has been good; at the top end of Martins Lane, however, where the road surface is loose, some of the trenching work has been unsatisfactory.

There had been concern about the connections for a few properties in Beechcroft and Watling Lane but the Council has now been informed that these matters have been resolved.

6/12. County Council & District Council Reports

Cllr Robin Bennett’s monthly report mentions the possibility of action to deal with the motor bike noise problem but this is dependent upon the successful development of some new monitoring equipment which is being progressed by Surrey County Council.

Cllr Bennett said that SODC has recently strengthened its Planning Enforcement process.

7/12. Council Appointments: School Governor and Hurst Trust

The Council has received written information about these vacancies from Cllr Robin Bennett as Chairman of the Village School Governors and Richard Farrant, Chair, Hurst Water Meadows Trust. This has been circulated.

Robin Bennett asked councillors to select a community member who is not also a current school parent to do the role. Pending this appointment, he offered to make sure that the Parish Council is kept up to date with school matters.

Richard Farrant explained that following the Trust becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a new governing document, it is no longer necessary for a parish council trustee to be appointed. This continues to be a desirable option, however, because having a sitting parish councillor helps to ensure good liaison and coordination between the Trust and the Council. He said that either he or Chris Smith, the Trust’s Honorary Secretary, would be available to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss this further.

8/12. Planning Applications:

P20/S4467/FUL and P20/S4469/LB Bishop’s Court Farm, (as amended); Conversion of farm buildings to residential use and creation of new vehicular access to site from Abingdon Road.

Councillors who have met informally with the Applicant have been advised that these applications are to be withdrawn. There is, however, no confirmation of this upon the SODC website which is being frequently monitored.

The Applicant has also indicated that in the near future he wishes to hold a village meeting so that all residents have the opportunity of hearing about his master-plan for the Farm as a whole. The Parish Council welcomes this suggestion.

P21/S4958/HH 13 Page Furlong; Raise existing outbuilding flat roof.

The Council agreed that it had no response to this Application.

P21/S4767/LB 91 High Street

Proposed installation of underfloor heating on ground floor.

The Council agreed that it had no response to this Application.

P21/S4687/LB 91 High Street; Change windows on extension and lower the ridge and eaves levels of the dormers.

The Council agreed that it had no response to this Application.

9/12. Finance:

a. Bank Balances & Payments

NatWest Business Reserve Account 8th December 2021 £48,059.58

NatWest Current Account 8th December £13,242.79

 £61,302.37

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

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental) 92.76

Going Forward Buses CIC (November flyer) 50.00

The Landscape Group Oxford (sundry trees and hedge work) 2,742.00

The Gray Square Studio (Village Hall leaflet design) 80.00

Printinco (Village Hall leaflet printing) 99.00

Geoff Willis (Village Handyman 4 weeks) 332.50

G Russell (salary) 810.33

Denis Froud Pest Control (quarterly fees) 805.00

Oxfordshire Neighbour Plans Alliance (subscription) 50.00

 £5,061.59

It was agreed that the Parish Council would make a contribution of £250 towards the catering cost of Rev. Sue Booys Retirement Party in January.

b. New Banking Arrangements

Cllrs Chris Hill and Keith Russell are registered for on-line banking, The on-line registrations for Cllrs Mark Williams and Mike Rimmer are in progress. The Clerk is registered for administration only

c. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Clerk will complete the forms for approval and Chairman’s signature as soon as possible. He apologised to the Council for not completing this task in time for this evening’s meeting.

10/12. Preliminary Discussion on Precept for 2022/23

The Annual Precept for 2021/22 has been £44,500, which was an increase of £1,150 (2.63%) over the previous year.

The Precept for 2022/23 must be set at the Council meeting on 12th January. Draft accounts for the 9 months to 31st December 2021 will be available for discussion at that meeting.

11/12. Community Assets Register

The updated version following the November meeting has been circulated to all Councillors and filed with the Minutes of that meeting. It was agreed that the Register should be reviewed every two years.

12/12. Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

The Council has been approached by Simon Escreet of Land & Property Register (LPR) of Steventon. Some years ago, LPR carried out some work for the Council in relation to its property ownership and Land Registry records, but the project had been halted due to circumstances beyond the Council’s control.

LPR is now offering to carry out a free audit of the Council’s property register and records in order to ensure the Council’s compliance with new regulations. It was agreed that the Clerk should meet with Simon Escreet to discuss this matter further.

13/12. Village Maintenance

The Village Handyman has purchased a snow clearing shovel. The salt-spreading device which was stored at The George has not been found. If further equipment needs to be purchased it was agreed that it should be stored in the Council’s container.

The roadside salt boxes are full and the salt is thought to be still effective.

14/12 Village Traffic Controls

Some research into residents’ views about introducing speeding controls is being conducted in the run up to Christmas. Responses have so far been received from about 80 residents and Cllrs Mike Corran and John Edwards presented the results from the surveys so far completed.

More publicity will be given to this project up to the closing date at Christmas and the final results will be discussed at the Council meeting in January

15/12. Proposal for Scouting Event at Bishop’s Court Farm Summer 2022

The Clerk has been in correspondence with the organiser and these emails have been circulated to all councillors. A forecast of the numbers who would attend the event has been requested and it is hoped that a site meeting can take place in the near future.

16/12. Platinum Jubilee Celebrations including ‘Green Canopy’ plans

The Clerk has raised this with the church wardens but with the Rector’s retirement approaching in January the matter has not yet been discussed by the Abbey team.

17/12. Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion, Recreation Ground & Playground; New activity by moles has been noted and will be reported to Denis Froud, the Council’s contractor.

Play area and Pavilion improvements are to be discussed at the January meeting. The Clerk has been in contact with the Cricket Club and requested a ‘wish list’.

b. Footpaths including measures to reduce dog fouling; in the whole of the Parish there are 12 bins for collecting dog waste and a survey is to be carried out in order to see if these are all well used.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

It was agreed that, in response to the views of many residents, the application by the family of Leslie Radford to plant a replacement cherry tree in the Parish Cemetery would be approved along with a similar request received from Simon Madden and his family. Cllr Chris Hill will assist in the co-ordination of this planting.

d. Allotments.

Nothing to report.

18/12. Any Other Urgent Matters

None

The meeting closed at 9.51 p.m.