**Dorchester Parish Council**

The postponed Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Back Room of the Village Hall on Tuesday 27th September 2022 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Rob Ballantyne, presided with Cllrs Mike Corran, Maurice Day, Chris Hill and Mike Rimmer present and with G Russell (Council Clerk) in attendance. Also present were County and District Councillor Robin Bennett and one resident.

1/9. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for health reasons were accepted from Cllrs Mark Williams, John Edwards and Keith Russell.

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2/9. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

As the Applicant Cllr Mike Corran declared an interest in Planning Application P22/S3154HH Willoughby Grange 77 High Street

3/9. Public Participation

None

4/9. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th August 2022

Cllr Mike Rimmer proposed that the minutes should be approved and signed as a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Chris Hill and unanimously approved. The Vice-Chairman signed the Minute Book to confirm this.

5/9. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Cllr Mike Corran will contact the County Council to confirm the status of the Parish Council’s application for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit in the centre of the Village. It is known that Dorchester-on-Thames is not going to be among the first places in Oxfordshire where this will happen but it is hoped to be included in the second phase.

b. Gigaclear has confirmed to the Clerk that a design to connect all of Watling Lane has been completed and is now being costed. It was not known whether any Dorchester locations have been connected yet. The Clerk will request a progress report from the Company.

6/9. County and District Council Reports

The written reports from Cllr Bennett have been received and circulated and will appear in Dorchester News and the website.

The District Council report includes a mention of water quality in the River Thame as it passes through the Parish. Cllr Hill has attended recent testing and reported that the quality of water by the road bridge is much better than water quality by ‘blue bridge’ where the Thame joins the River Thames. Once into the Thames the water quality is much improved due to the faster flow.

The District Councll’s installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in its Wallingford car parks was discussed. It was suggested that the Clerk should ask the Local Council Association for information about what other Oxfordshire Parish Councils have done and also make contact with the County Council’s EV Charging Project team.

7/9. Planning

a. Application: P22/S3154/HH Willoughby Grange 77 High Street, Installation of solar panels

The Council noted that the Oxford Preservation Trust has objected to this Application. The Applicant told the Council that the scheme has been prepared after receiving advice which had taken into account that the property is located within the Dorchester Conservation Area. The District Council’s Conservation Officer has raised no objection.

After discussion the Council agreed that in considering the proposal it was necessary to balance the visual impact of the proposed panels on the conservation area with the need to increase the use of renewable energy in the current climate crisis. Willoughby Grange is not a listed building and while the Council did not wish to object to the Application, it wishes to put on record that this decision is specific to this building in its particular location. It is not a precedent for solar panels in other locations in the conservation area, which are unlikely to be acceptable or in accordance with local policy DoT 1.

b. Bishops Court Farm

It is understood that the ‘Lakeside pods’ will be applied for soon. The Council has noted that the pre-application planning advice recommended against this development. The Snug Café has received its licence but the application for an extension to permitted opening hours has been referred to SODC’s Planning Committee and is going to be discussed at the meeting on 12th October.

The Parish Council has written to the Planning Officer with the request that the various applications for developments at the Farm should be considered together as part of the ‘master-plan’ that has been presented to the village and is due to be updated on 29th September. This request has been referred to the officer’s team leader and her response is awaited.

c. Allens Pit

It has been reported that the project will be discussed by the directors of Sovereign Housing at their meeting on 22nd October.

d. Housing Needs Survey

The questionnaire was distributed in September’s edition of Dorchester News. The responses will be analysed by Community First Oxfrrdshire

8/9. Finance: Bank Balances and Payments

NatWest Reserve Account 27th September 2022 £48,080.85

NatWest Current Account 27th September 2022 £26,754.26

£74,835.11

Unity trust bank balance £464.00

Total £75,299.11

Receipts since the last Council meeting included second half payment of Parish Precept £22,900 received 7th September and a refund of £1,005.52 received from Castle Water due to overestimated water bills on the Allotments over 2021/22

The Council noted that the following September invoices were paid on 15th September. Cllr Mike Coran proposed that they should be confirmed. This was seconded by Cllr Mike Rimmer and unanimously agreed.

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental) 92.76

The Landscape Group Oxford (August grass cutting) ,149.66

JRB Enterprise Ltd (dog waste bags) 255.84

Shield Maintenance Ltd (dog waste collection service August) 103.99

Shield Maintenance Ltd (supply of new traffic cones) 113.76

Data Systems Management LLP Annual hosting and maintenance

charges for Dorchester on Thames web site 611.99

Dan Haines Signs (Platinum Jubilee bench) 54.00

Playsafety Limited (annual inspections of play and sports areas 184.80

Jenks Oxford (clearance of tree branches overhanging

Drayton Rd) 90.00

Going Forward Buses (Dorchester Flyer August) 50.00

Geoff Willis (Village Handyman 6 weeks) 441.75

G Russell (salary) 851.72

G Russell (admin July – September) 212.40

Total £4,212.67

9/9. Chairman and/or Clerk Correspondence

a. It was noted that the County Council is providing advice to those struggling with fuel bills. Posters have been provided for display.

b. OCC tree maintenance programme; it was confirmed that the County Council is responsible for trees outside The Priory; between 72 and 76 High Street, next to the bus shelter, by the School boundary wall in Manor Farm Road, and The Limes.

c. Some complaints received from walkers, especially pram pushers, about the hedge along Lychgate Cottage boundary overhanging the High Street pavement and also about plants hanging from flower beds adjacent to 64 – 68 High Street. The Clerk will contact one of the Highways contacts team to discuss what action can and should be taken.

d. Recent bonfires on BCF have been causing nuisance to neighbours. SODC has on-line complaints process for residents who have these problems at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/bonfires-and-nuisance-smoke/>

The Clerk will put a reminder about this in November’s Dorchester News.

10/9. Playground Improvements

Cllr Rob Ballantyne has met some potential suppliers and is now expecting their written proposals. The parents of children presently attending the Pre-School will be included in the consultation.

The deadlines for grant applications to both SODC and the Community Action Fund (formerly WREN) fall soon with SODC closing on 21st October. The grant-awarding bodies need to see a demonstration of the Council’s policies to promote health and fitness with evidence of actions taken and proposed.

11/9. Orientation Boards

The Clerk is in contact with the original designer of these boards, Carrrie- Louise Webb. It was suggested that the cost of providing the updated boards could be off-set if sponsors can be found.

12/9 Village Maintenance

It was agreed to carry forward discussion on this topic until the October meeting. The need to clear weeds from the sides of Abingdon Road was identified as urgent for completion before the arrival of winter storms because by doing so the risk of flooding due to blocked gullies would be reduced.

13/9 Review Code of Conduct

Councillors noted the details about the required reading on this topic and the available training which had been circulated by the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

14/9. Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion, Recreation Ground & Playground

The Play Area safety inspection reports have been received. The findings were satisfactory but the need for some maintenance on the basket swing has been identified.

A new bench has been proposed in memory of Richard Douglas. The exact location is being debated by Niall Douglas and the Cricket/Football sections

The Council noted that some new shower heads are required in the Pavilion. The estimated cost will be £200 - £250. This was approved.

It has been suggested that all the equipment in the Play Area is given a thorough clean as soon as a suitable contractor can be identified. This was approved.

b. Footpaths;

Nothing to report.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

Nothing to report.

d. Allotments.

The AGM of the Allotments Society was held last week. As a Society Committee member Cllr Hill attended. It has been a difficult year for the allotment holders and there are now some plot vacancies. This is attracting applications from neighbouring parishes.

15/9. Any Other Urgent Matters

Cllr Chris Hill said that he had recently been on a visit to the Agrivert organic waste treatment facility near Benson. It had been a very interesting experience which he recommended to other councillors if the opportunity arose.

The Meeting closed at 9.09 p.m.