

## **Dorchester Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Back Room of the Village Hall on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, presided with Cllrs Maurice Day, Mike Corran, Chris Hill and Mike Rimmer present and the Clerk, Geoff Russell, in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting was County and District Cllr Robin Bennett.

### 1/1. Apologies for absence

Apologies due to illness were accepted from Cllrs Rob Ballantyne, John Edwards and Keith Russell.

### 2/1. 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. Cllr Chris Hill said that he was a near neighbour of the Applicant concerning the Manor House Flats [Agenda item 7/1 (a)]

### 3/1. Public Participation

None. No members of the Public were present.

### 4/1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Some corrections from Cllrs Chris Hill and Mike Rimmer have been made to the circulated draft. It was proposed by Cllr Mike Rimmer that the corrected version should be approved as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Chris Hill and unanimously approved. The Chairman signed the Minute Book.

### 5/1. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters that were not included in this evening's agenda.

### 6/1. County and District Council Reports

Written reports had been received and circulated and, with Cllr Robin Bennett in the meeting, there was a wide-ranging discussion about both County and District Council business. This included the proposed Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Oxford; the £2 fare cap on all local bus services, which has had an excellent take-up; the present shortage of bus drivers which is affecting services such as the X40 and X39; delays to the project for the new bridge at Culham; problems with the quality of river water; and information about the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust and its plans to acquire and manage land for affordable housing.

Cllr Bennett reminded members that at the May Elections voters would for the first time be asked to provide photo ID and he asked the Council to assist in publicising this requirement.

### 7/1. Planning

a. Applications:

## P22/S4584/FUL & P22/S4585/LB Manor House Flats

Deconversion of three flats with ground, first and second floor extensions to provide a single dwelling.

The Council agreed that it would not object to this Application but there was regret that the result of this development is a further reduction in the availability of smaller, more affordable dwellings in Dorchester. It was agreed that the Planning Officer should be asked to take into account the housing mix in the village, which is disproportionately large dwellings, and also the Council's NDP objective to facilitate smaller dwellings.

### b. Bishops Court Farm Footpaths

The Council had no comment to make about the proposed footpaths but Cllr Mike Corran was asked to contact the landowner about the plans for funding the intended improvements

### c. Other Planning Matters:

The Council was very disappointed to note that there is still no sign of any progress in the development at Allens Pit. It was hoped that the District Council might be able to get Sovereign Housing to get work started soon.

## 8/1. Finance: Bank Balances and Payments

NatWest Reserve Account 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	£48,164.55
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NatWest Current Account 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	<u>£20,199.94</u>
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	£68,364.49
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Unity trust bank balance	<u>£428.00</u>
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Total	£67,792.49
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Cash receipts in last month £5,672 (Cemetery £765; SODC Grant £2,487; Event Parking £1,700; Support for Maintenance Project £700)

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

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental)	116.76
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The Landscape Group Oxford (Abingdon Rd weeds; and wire)	624.00
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Dorchester on Thames Village Hall Rental	60.00
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Dorchester on Thames Village Hall Phone and broadband	892.20
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JRB Enterprise Dog waste bags	255.84
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Shield Maintenance (Dog bin services)	108.79
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Dorchester on Thames Cricket Club grass-cutting 2022	1,100.00
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Face North Forestry (Henley Road Hedge project)	840.00
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Going Forward Buses (Dorchester Flyer December)	50.00
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Earth Trust Village Christmas Tree	200.00
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Starboard Systems Limited (Scribe Accounts software 2023)	561.60
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Geoff Willis (Village Handyman)	299.25
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Chandlers(Farm Equipment) Ltd Handyman work gloves	19.44
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G Russell (salary)	<u>851.72</u>
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Total	£5,979.60
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The Chairman said that the Village Hall retention of a landline as part of the Council's Approved Emergency Plan should be reviewed following the latest technical developments including the arrival of the services provided by Gigaclear. The Clerk will contact the County Council emergency planning team.

It was agreed that another attempt would be made to contact NatWest about the bank's payment approval process. When the Clerk had attended a meeting of the Oxfordshire branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) almost a year ago, he had been told that this was under discussion. He will contact the officer at SLCC to see if there have been any further developments.

#### Annual Precept for 2023/24

For 2022/23 the Council had agreed an increase of £1,300 (2.9%) which had taken the total Precept to £45,800, an average payment per dwelling of £95 for the year. In view of the even greater cost pressures that the Council faces in 2023/24 it was agreed that the Precept should be increased to £48,000 (+4.8%) which increases the average annual payment per dwelling to £99.56

#### 9/1. Chairman and/or Clerk Correspondence

a. The Licensing of the Abbey's new Rector, Rev Jane Willis, has been arranged for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February and the Parish Council will be well-represented by the Chairman, several councillors and the Clerk.

b. Consultation re Conservation Areas; it is confirmed that consultation on the new Conservation Area Appraisal for Dorchester and Overy will start on 25 January and run for five weeks until 1 March. A paper copy of the document will probably be available in the Abbey. This document will be reviewed at the Council's February meeting.

c. The Chairman reported that he has exchanged correspondence with John Taylor concerning both the provision of Affordable Housing and also the Council's scheduled review of the Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is expected that there will be a meeting when John Taylor returns from holiday at the beginning of February.

#### 10/1. Playground Improvements Grant Application

Cllr Rob Ballantyne reports that he has been invited to speak at the meeting of the District Council Community Grants panel on 9<sup>th</sup> February.

#### 11/1. Off-street Parking for commercial events

The Council Byelaws do allow parking to take place on the Recreation Ground. It was agreed that the Council should carry out a detailed review of the rules and regulations to include such things as available opening hours, types of permitted vehicles etc.

#### 12/1 Village Maintenance Master Plan and Volunteer Projects

The project to improve the hedge alongside the Henley Road boundary of the Thames Water treatment plant project has started. Funding for this

work has been provided by a third-party and the Council gratefully acknowledges this generous act.

Andrew Clements reports that there is a lot of Dutch Elm Disease within the Parish.

Retirement of Village Handyman; after 26 years of service Geoff Willis has stated that he will be retiring in the early part of February.

The Clerk is arranging for some of the Handyman's duties to be taken over by existing contractors but a notice in the February edition of Dorchester News may attract the interest of some potential candidates for the position. So far, however, only one person has expressed an interest.

#### 13/1. Defibrillators and Training

The Clerk reported that on-line training details have been received and in person training will be timed for March so that it can be promoted through Dorchester News.

The Clerk will make direct contact with the Cricket and Football clubs, many of whom do not live in the village, in order to see if some training should be offered at the Sports Pavilion as well as the Village Hall.

Following discussions between the Abbey Warden and the Clerk it has been agreed that the Nihon Kohden defibrillator that was at the Pavilion should be given to the Abbey for emergency use should there be such a need during a service or an event. It is thought that this defibrillator will need some new components before it is in working order and the Clerk is in communication about this with Nihon Kohden's agent in the U.K.

#### 14/1. Orientation Boards

Malcolm and Thom Airs have agreed to supply new images and the Clerk is working on updating the copy. No further sponsors have been identified. The original designer hopes that she will soon be able to make the original artwork available for amendment, this avoiding the need for some work to be repeated.

#### 15/1. Celebrating the Coronation in Dorchester-on-Thames

Cllr Keith Russell drafting a programme for a meeting in the near future.

The Clerk has been in contact with the Abbey, Sports Club and Village Hall and with a range of companies who can supply Coronation Mugs personalised for distribution in the village. Samples, designs and costings will be available for the February Council meeting.

Sources of alternative commemorative memorabilia are being contacted.

#### 16/1. Code of Conduct

The Council unanimously agreed to adopt the New Oxfordshire Approved Model Code of Conduct

#### 17/1. Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion, Recreation Ground & Playground

Tractor shed repairs have been carried out and an invoice for around £250 is expected.

The Pavilion wiring needs refurbishing and then certifying. The Clerk reported that two contractors have quoted. The figures are very close but Agey Bosse is less expensive at £1,125 and it was agreed to select him.

b. Footpaths;

It was confirmed that the dangerous barbed wire has been cleared from the boundary of the public footpath alongside the Demesne Field.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

Nothing to report.

d. Allotments.

Nothing to report.

The Meeting closed at 10.06 p.m.