

Dorchester Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Back Room of the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th December 2022 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, presided with Cllrs Rob Ballantyne, Chris Hill, Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell present. For medical reasons Cllr Maurice Day and the Clerk, G Russell, were in attendance via ZOOM.

1/12. Apologies for absence

Apologies due to illness were accepted from Cllrs Mike Corran and John Edwards and County and District Cllr Robin Bennett.

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 9th November 2022

After some typographical errors pointed out by Cllrs Chris Hill and Mike Rimmer were corrected, Cllr Rimmer proposed that the Minutes should be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Rob Ballantyne and passed.

5/12. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. It is thought that a local firm of estate agents is interested in taking up the sponsorship opportunity offered by the new Orientation Boards and the Clerk will contact them at the end of January when other sponsorship possibilities have been followed up.
- b. Gigaclear progress; the company reports that just over 60 Dorchester residents have been connected so far.
- c. New Code of Conduct; it was agreed that adopting the new Code should go on to the Agenda for the January meeting
- d. EV Charging – Oxfordshire County Council has asked if the Village Hall could be used as a charging location. The Council agreed that the Village Hall's car park is too small for this to be practical.

6/12. County and District Council Reports

Written reports from County and District Cllr Bennett have been received and circulated. Several Councillors have reservations about the new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) which have been introduced in Oxford and would like to express their concerns to Cllr Bennett at the next Council meeting.

7/12. Planning

- a. There were no new planning applications for consideration.

b. Other Planning Matters:

i. Bishops Court Farm; it is expected that the Application for the new Farm access from Abingdon Road will be discussed by the District Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on 11th January. This is the same evening as the January meeting of Dorchester Parish Council. It was agreed that it is essential that the Parish Council, as a principal objector to the Application, should be represented. The Chairman will make the necessary arrangements nearer the time.

ii. Allens Pit Progress Report; Cllr Ballantyne has been told by Sovereign that the chosen builder can no longer honour his quoted price while Sovereign say that they are unable to increase the selling price. The dialogue continues with the landowner's view on his investment return critical to the scheme making further progress. The specialist officers at SODC believe that the deadlock would continue even with a change of contractors. It was agreed that the Chairman should bring this matter to the attention of John Howell MP.

8/12. Finance:

NatWest Reserve Account 14 th December 2022	£48,132.90
NatWest Current Account 14 th December 2022	<u>£21,523.38</u>
	£69,656.28
Unity trust bank balance	<u>£428.00</u>
	Total £70,084.28

Cash receipts in last month £310 (Cemetery)

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

Citizens Advice: donation agreed last month	300.00
Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental)	92.76
The Landscape Group Oxford (November grass cutting)	1,692.00
Denis Froud Pest Control	875.00
Jenks Oxford Ltd tree maintenance programme	1,296.00
SODC Business Rates 2022/23 Cemetery	284.43
Castle Water Allotments	606.24
Shield Maintenance Ltd (dog waste collection November)	108.79
Shield Maintenance Ltd (traffic cones for parking management)	189.60
Going Forward Buses (Dorchester Flyer November)	50.00
OALC (Councillor Training Fee – Planning)	66.00
Moore – External Auditors Fee	360.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	100.00
Geoff Willis (Village Handyman)	365.75
G Russell (salary)	<u>851.72</u>
Total	£7,238.29

Audit Report for Year Ended 31st March 2020 (much delayed by COVID)

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been posted on Village Notice Boards today. Residents have the right to ask Clerk for an appointment to inspect the accounts and to have a paper copy if they wish.

The Annual Returns for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will now be progressed as soon as possible dependent upon the availability of the Internal Auditor Kevin Rose.

The Annual Precept for 2023/24 must be agreed at the January meeting. For 2022/23 the Council 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.

9/12. Chairman and/or Clerk Correspondence

There had been no correspondence not already covered in the agenda.

10/12. Playground Improvements

Cllr Rob Ballantyne confirmed that applications for Capital Grants have been sent to South Oxfordshire District Council and FCC Community Action Fund (formerly known as WREN). The results from these applications are not expected until late February/early March. Cllr Ballantyne said that he intended to hold more meetings with the interested groups of parents etc in the New Year.

11/12. Traffic Speeds and Parking

Cllr Mike Corran reported by email on the status of the County Council's progress with the creation of more 20 m.p.h. areas in Oxfordshire villages. The County officers have confirmed that Dorchester-on-Thames remains listed in phase 2 but delivery of that phase will be sometime during the second half of 2023 or, possibly, the beginning of 2024.

It was agreed that the question of whether the rental of off-street parking facilities for commercial events is allowed should be discussed at the January Council meeting. It is thought to be against the Recreation Ground Byelaws which the Clerk will circulate for the next meeting.

The Clerk reported that he had received some letters of complaint about 'irresponsible parking' by event visitors causing congestion in the High Street. The Dorchester Parking Map is given to all event organisers who are asked to advise their audiences to leave some time to walk to the Abbey after they have parked in the allocated areas. The Parish Council, however, has no power to enforce the use of these areas or to prevent parking elsewhere in the village where no general restrictions apply. Pavement parking – the on-going problem - has been reported to the police but no action has been taken. 20 new traffic cones were purchased last week. The 2/3 weeks before Christmas is the busiest period for Abbey parking in the whole year.

Oxfordshire County Council has held on -line presentations re future traffic management schemes which have been attended by Cllrs Rob Ballantyne and Chris Hill and the Clerk. The topics covered so far are: Traffic into Oxford from the direction of Didcot and the A 4074 corridor.

There is a possibility of a new 'Traffic Hub' between Nuneham Courtenay and Berinsfield.

Wallingford Area traffic movements are to be discussed at a future date. The meetings include presentations by county officers and consultants and recordings are made available to attendees after the meetings. These could be forwarded by the Clerk to all interested councillors.

12/12 Village Maintenance

The Master Plan development is in progress along with the creation of a new village map upon which maintained areas can be clearly identified. Andrew Clements has proposed that the maintenance and presentation of Thames Water's Henley Road boundary hedge should be designated as a new Volunteer Project. The Council agreed that this should be included subject to discussion with the neighbouring landowner and Thames Water. Andrew said that a new 2/3-year tree maintenance programme would be needed. He is confident that third party funding can be obtained, and it will not be an expense for the Parish Council.

13/12. Christmas Arrangements

This year's tree outside the Co-Op has been much admired. Cllr Chris Hill said that he would like someone else to take over this project next year and he hoped to be able to confirm who that would be at the Council's January meeting.

14/12. Defibrillators and Training

The new Area Manager from WEL Medical has agreed to come to the village to carry out some in-person training. There are also several on-line training opportunities. These will be researched and the details of recommended sites will be circulated.

15/12. Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion, Recreation Ground & Playground; The Clerk has been told that the proposed memorial to Richard Douglas is likely to be in the form of a new sight screen rather than a bench.

Repairs to the Tractor shed have been completed by a club member. Quotations are being obtained for repairs to the Pavilion Electrics. The circuit probably needs updating before a Certificate can be issued. Feedback on the offer of an outdoor table tennis table will be obtained in the New Year.

b. Footpaths; Lighting above the path to the by-pass bus stop and alongside the Cemetery is due for attention in the next few days. The Chairman reported that a team from The Landscape Group Oxford is dealing with the dangerous nuisance caused by the barbed wire along parts of the boundary with the Demesne Field.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

A site visit is proposed to prepare a list of signs for Commonwealth War Graves. This will include Cllrs Chris Hill and Keith Russell and the Clerk.

Recent tree maintenance work has been carried out by Jenks Oxford in the Abbey closed churchyard.

The Madden family has planted a new memorial tree, donated by members of the local branch of the Royal British Legion.

The planting of a new tree by Hayley Poole and her student will take place in the next few weeks.

d. Allotments.

Nothing to report

16/12. Any Other Urgent Matters

The Clerk said that he would like the Council to discuss the Council's website address and to consider placing Parish Council business on a site ending .org.uk or even .gov.uk to be more in line with other councils. The ending .co.uk would be retained for general village use.

This would not be expensive in cash terms, but it would be administratively complicated to achieve the change in emails.

It was agreed to discuss this at a future Council meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.