

# Dorney Parish Council



*Sue Moffat*  
Parish Clerk

Tel: 07443 588361  
Email: clerk@dorney.org.uk

Dorney Parish Council  
20 Benchmanor Crescent  
Chalfont St Peter  
Bucks  
SL9 9HL

## Minutes of the Dorney Parish VIRTUAL Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 8 pm

**Present:** - Councillors K Harris (Chairman), A Purdie, A Foxley, P Smith, J Dax and R Ormond.

**In Attendance:** - Buckinghamshire Council Cllrs Dev Dhillon, D Pepler and G Sandy,  
Mr Bowman (Dorney Village Pump), 14 Members of the Public and Sue Moffat (Clerk).

### 184 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**Cllr Harris reported on Updates on the new Roundabout at Lake End Road** – Cllr Purdie and himself had a meeting with the Head of Highways Officer regards the lighting. There is a 12 week's waiting time from placing the order for heritage lighting. Also, the original quote last November 2020 was £40k then Cllr Dev Dhillon had another quote of £20k originally for 6 lights but the plans now show 9 lights at approx. £1600 per light and approx. £8k connection charges. Due to the confusion of pricing and the delay Joy Morrissey MP has become involved. The design and safety audit are now in place and Highways England are ready to start. In order to overcome the delay, it was proposed to write to the Highways Officer to proceed with the plans using heritage posts immediately and the lamps changed from ordinary to heritage at a later date when they have been delivered. Cllr Harris asked for guarantees from Cllrs Dev Dhillon and Sandy for the heritage lighting to be installed. Cllr Ormond added that it was the £5k from Dorney PC to pay for the difference between ordinary and heritage lighting.

**Cllr Dev Dhillon reported:** - (i) This is officially his last meeting at Dorney as Bucks Councillor representing this parish council. He has been representing Dorney for a long time, nearly 2 decades, since the time of the late Cllr Richmond who was chairman before Cllr Harris. He will sincerely miss working with Dorney Parish Council to which he has great respect and wished everyone best wishes for the future.

**Cllr Pepler reported:** - (i) He will not be standing at the next Buckinghamshire Council's elections so this will be his last meeting at Dorney. He has been attending Dorney Parish Council's meetings for 6 years and appreciates all the hard work the parish councillors have done. He was disappointed that only 3 people have stood for the elections of Dorney Parish Council bearing in mind the large amount of criticism made by residents. If people want change, they should stand to become a Parish Councillor.

**Cllr G Sandy reported:-** He is only a recent attendee at Dorney Parish Council but if he is re-elected he is looking forward to working with Dorney PC.

**James Palmer** had commissioned a consultant to report his own findings on the new Roundabout at Lake End Road which had circulate to councillors. The Chairman, Cllr Harris, inquired as to Mr Palmer's actual objection to the roundabout but he did not receive a response.

**Martyn Westcott** thanked the Chairman, Cllr Harris, and all other and previous councillors, including Sue Moffat, the Clerk, for all their work during the last term of office.

**185 Apologies-** Apologies were received from Cllr Stoughton.

**186 Disclosure of interests** – Cllr Foxley declared an interest in the Village Hall being on the Village Hall Management Committee.

**187 Resolved** to receive and approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

**188 Clerks Report** – None.

**189 Chairman's Report** – None as all included in the agenda.

- 190 Updates on the new Roundabout at Lake End Road** -After the discussion held in the Public Participation it was agreed to write to the Highways Officer to proceed with the plans using ordinary lighting and then to replace with heritage lighting at a later date when they have been delivered.
- 191 M4 Smartmotorway** – Written report from Matt Orchard:- (i) Planting to verges and embankments- The trees being planted are smaller and younger than originally planned. The younger trees have been found to have a faster rate of growth and much better survival prospects in the soils that make up the motorway embankments. (ii) Court Lane/Lake End Road roundabout-Buckinghamshire Council have supplied the required detailed design information and the pricing of the work is underway. There has been a meeting today (Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of April) to discuss the practicalities of building the roundabout and to determine a start date and duration for the works (iii) Marsh Lane should open to traffic in the small hours of the morning of Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. (iv) Lake End Road will be closed immediately after Marsh Lane reopens 26<sup>th</sup> of May to the 4<sup>th</sup> of April and then again at the end of May. (v) The installation of noise barrier has started on the north side of the motorway. He will check with the team when they intend to start the noise barrier installation on the Dorney Reach side of the motorway. At the meeting the height of the sound barriers at Dorney Reach was requested. Also what is happening to the house by the entrance to the Dorney Village Hall?
- 192 Eton Lake car park** – Cllr Harris has a meeting with Eton College tomorrow. The Lake remains closed and the parking situation has improved.
- 193 Update on Roundmoor Ditch from Cllr Dax** - The local resident involved whose property is involved has met up and processes being carried out with Thames Water to alleviate the situation.
- 194 Cllr Foxley to report on Web Support or Outsourcing.** Cllr Foxley has submitted 3 quotes. Cllrs Harris, Purdie, Foxley and Ormond recommended agreeing the lowest quoted from Hugo Fox, being the Gold quote for £400. However, Cllr Dax asked this to be deferred until the next meeting of the new Council. Cllr Foxley did offer her support on IT until July 2021. To note:- Cllr Foxley was very upset about the anonymous report in the Dorney News where she was referred to as ‘a hapless’.
- 195 Dorney Parking Review 2021** – Nothing further to report from Cllr Harris.
- 196 To appoint an Internal Auditor** – Another Internal Auditor is needed to be sought as sadly the newly appointed internal auditor has resigned after the Clerk received the following email from him:-  
*‘On Sunday 14th March I had sight of the 9th February 2021 meeting minutes of Dorney Parish Council, in particular 161 (e). Roderick Euan MacLennan's reported input is petulant, offensive and a slur on my integrity. Both myself and the Taplow Parish Council Clerk consider the content of the minute unnecessary and unacceptable. Unlike MacLennan, I have been in local government finance since 1964 (two City Councils, one County Council, one inner London Borough, District Audit (Audit Commission) and KPMG External Audit. As a consequence of the content of the February meeting minute, I do not believe Dorney is a Parish Council I wish to be associated with and I withdraw my acceptance of the offer of the position of Internal Auditor’.*
- At such a late stage in the procedures, the Clerk did offer to ask another Internal Auditor who has worked for her elsewhere for many occasions as an interim measure. This was agreed.
- 197 To agree to advertise the position of Clerk for Dorney Parish Council** including to agree payment to advertise this position with the Society of Local Council Clerks, BALC and any other sites as requested. N.B. Newly appointed Clerks are recommended to have the CiLCA qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration) or at least agree to work towards this at a cost of £420 plus study allowance. Cllr Harris added that a professional qualified Clerk was required to take over this position. It was agreed to advertise the position in BALC and SLCC.
- 198 Planning**  
 Resolved to note planning issues, decisions and appeals recently notified by South Bucks Planning.  
 Resolved to make comments upon applications – (as circulated).
- 199 To ask Beeches Community board for a grant for another Mobile Vehicular Activated Sign for Marsh Lane** - Deferred until the next meeting.
- 200 Resoled not to have the Dorney Annual meeting of the electorate on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021** - (It is not a legal duty for a Parish Council to hold such a meeting).
- 201 To decide on a venue for the Annual Parish Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2021** – The legislation to have remote meetings ends on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Now need to find a venue where participants to the Council meeting can be socially distanced and remain within Covid guidelines. It was agreed for the Clerk is investigating hiring the hall at Dorney Village School as the side room at the Village Hall would no longer be suitable with the Covid restrictions.
- 202 Finance**  
 (a) **At the request of Cllr Ormond, Finance Chairman, ‘Statement for Repayments to Dorney Village Hall for 2021-22’.**

Cllr Ormond made the following statements:-The following is a statement of fact from the Parish Council (PC) regarding contributions from and to the Village Hall.

In 2014 Dorney PC was advised that from April 2015 the Parish would suffer a significant reduction from £8,000 per annum to £3,262 from the County Council's Devolved Highways Department. This money goes towards the costs incurred on the upkeep of the village. The PC has spent between £11,790 and £14,780 each year on the village's upkeep. This reduction of £4,738 represented 20.8% of our total income.

To help offset this reduction the late Graham Easton representing the Village Hall offered to make a contribution towards these costs of £1,250 per year. The hall had only just finished being refurbished so he made it clear at the time "that if the Village Hall could not afford this on an ongoing basis it would stop".

The PC thanked the village hall and it was agreed that to help it would be paid by two six monthly instalments of £625. The village Hall asked the PC to issue invoices to cover these contributions stating "Ground Maintenance". The village hall went on to prosper and the payments continued for the next five years. The Village Hall has charged the PC £250 a year raising to £275 per year for the monthly parish council meeting held at the hall.

The offer to make contributions towards the PC's costs each year was made under no duress from the PC and both sides were always very clear that this has nothing to do with making any repayments towards the loan taken by the PC for the refurbishment of the village hall and given to them as a "grant".

Under item 3 of our agenda we have "Disclosures of interest in items on the agenda" Under clause 7B, Code of Conduct in our "Standing Orders", Councillors with a prejudicial interest may make representations but would be excluded from voting.

At the beginning of each PC meeting each councillor declares if they have an interest in any item on the agenda, at every meeting the late Graham Easton and Alice Foxley declared an interest in the village hall. So when matters concerning the village hall were discussed any input they provided was as a representative of the Village Hall not as a Parish Councillor.

There was no impropriety by the Parish Council.

Following the appointment in 2020 of new trustees at the Village Hall the contributions have stopped as they have stated that it is against their constitution to make any payments for goods or services not actually received. They have indicated that they might ask for all such previous payments to be repaid.

Our accounts are audited each year by our internal auditor who has always signed them off as being correct. He was also the Treasurer (Trustee) for the Village Hall.

**(b) Cllr Ormond's response to the anonymous article in this month's DPN regarding the precept charges** inviting me to correct the inaccuracies in the article. I'm very happy to do so and give a little more explanation to the Budgeting process.

The financial year starts in April but we have to create a budget for it in the previous November so that we can confirm to County the amount required for the following year by December.

The Budget is our forecast of expected income and expenditure. The only items which are certain at that time are our income from the precept and any devolved highways payment. All other items of income and expenditure are based on a forecast using either the budget number for the current year we are in or a predicted year end figure whichever is the higher.

The increase between income and expenditure without exceptional items like IT support and new PC and software was forecast to be £2,495.90 or 10.7% from 2020/21 precept of £23,222.38.

The PC settled on a precept of £25,000 an increase of £1,777.62 which relates to the 7.6% increase which was reported. County then take this amount and divide it between the number of homes in the parish paying council tax in full, the number with single occupancy receiving a discount and those on income support probably paying nothing. We have no idea how this will affect the increase percentage until council tax bills are issued. Obviously, this year we have more properties in the latter two categories meaning the precept charge on your council tax bill increase to 12.5%.

In 2021-22 the PC expects to spend £14,030 on the upkeep of the village that's 51% of the guaranteed income, we assume that you wanted this to continue. We still have more than 13 years outstanding on the loan you voted for to refurbish the village hall, that's a further 17% of the precept charge. We had to budget a further mandatory £933 which will be a charge by County if they have to hold a contested election for the next Parish Council.

The story that we have overcharged the village hall for ground maintenance has been explained in my "Statement of Fact" we felt that there is no fault on the side of the PC but we have made a prudent provision just in case. It seems the trustees made a genuine mistake, now corrected but they have the option not to ask for a refund. We have asked the Village Hall to provide reasons to the parishioners of Dorney as to why this money should be repaid.

The Village Hall's role does not vex the PC I think you will find it's the other way round, why do they want to put out the ground works around the hall out to tender rather than continue with the PC providing it? Why don't they let the PC have the room hire free of charge?

Exceptional items like IT support and additional PC's and software are just that they may be purchased or other methods of fund raising maybe explored for these items to be purchased but an expected budget is set.

I can confirm that electricity costs for street lighting are budgeted at £1,250 not the £2,500 quoted and are for the 27 village lights. Power for the new roundabout lighting will be paid for by County.

(c) **Resolved** to authorise payment of Accounts for April 2021 (as circulated).

(d) **Received recent bank statements.** Noted.

(e) **External audit** - In light of the newly appointed Internal Auditor resigning at such a late stage in the financial year, for simplicity and ease, to agree the Statement of Accounts will be presented as Receipts and Payments instead of Income and Expenditure for 2020-21 which is legally allowable for those Councils under £200,000 precept . This was unanimously agreed.

e) Cllr Ormond reported that there would be spare capacity in the budget to allow for the web site to be upgraded.

**203 Member's Reports** - Cllr Smith attended the Bucks Council Planning Policy meeting.

**204 Correspondence:** - (i) Members briefing from Cllr Sandy;(ii) BALC's Q&A session on the Elections; (iii) 17<sup>th</sup> February Beeches Community Board Minutes; (iv) Recent discussions about the plans for modifying the B3026; (v) 2021/22 Rates Precept enquiry; (vi) Signpost maintenance on NCN4 at Eton Wick/Dorney boundary DOR/3/1 - DOR/18/1 junctions.

**205 Resolve any complaints/comments received from residents**(i) Installation of Court Lane roundabout; (ii) Parking outside Eton Rowing Lake; (iii) Complaint about Eton Rowing Lake being closed; (iv) ) Complaint about the behaviour of the Members of Public attending Zoom Parish Meeting March 9th 2021

**206 Grounds Maintenance and Highway employee/work.** The groundsman has now has the tractor serviced thanks to Cllr Harris organising this.

**Lastly the Chairman, Cllr Harris, thanked everyone for their support during his 25 years' service on Dorney Parish Council. He was sad leaving the Dorney PC but hoped the new Council does well.**

**Date of next meeting – Annual Parish Council meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, venue to be decided.**

**Meeting ended 9.14 pm.**

**Chairman ..... Date .....**