

# Dorney Parish Council

Mrs. Hilda Holder  
Locum Clerk



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## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DORNEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 AT 8 P.M. AT DORNEY SCHOOL.**

### **Present**

Cllr. Jill Dax (Chair)                      Cllr. Steven Baker  
Cllr. Euan MacLennan                      Cllr. Anna Palmer  
Cllr. Robert Stopford                      Cllr. Martyn Westcott-Wreford  
Mrs. Holder (the Locum Clerk) and 16 members of the public (13 of which were via zoom).

### **Open Forum**

Sgt. Rachel Dale and PCSO Angela O'Connell introduced themselves and confirmed that their contact details could be placed on the Council's website but should not be used for reporting crimes.

Alice Foxley asked for sight of the expert witness's advice on the website and queried why she had not been approached to help upload documents which she could have easily done. The Chair responded that there had been some difficulty getting onto the existing website but they had now managed it and noted the breakdown in communication. The Chair added that the report would be put up on the new website which should become active shortly, hopefully by the end of the week. Alice added that she was keen to brief the Council about the debifrillators and Cllr. Baker agreed to liaise after the meeting on this.

### **PC/01/21 Apologies for absence.**

County Councillor Paul Kelly.

### **PC/02/21 To confirm the minutes of the Meeting held on 11th May 2021**

These were **approved** with no amendments required and signed by the Chairman.  
There were no matters arising.

### **PC/03/21 Co-option of councillor**

No candidates had come forward. The Locum Clerk confirmed that no co-option notices needed to be put up following vacancies after elections.

### **PC/04/21 Items of business carried forward**

#### **4.1 Dents Corner Roundabout – Update/decisions**

4.1.1 The Chair confirmed a letter had been sent to the Community Board and a response received which would be put up on the new website. They appear to have taken the Council's concerns on board regarding the types of vehicles that would need to use the proposed roundabout and said the final decision on what happens at that site depended on the Parish Council. As the issue had proved controversial, she proposed a consultation survey take place to all the Dorney electorate asking simply if they want a roundabout or the return to the T junction. This would be hand delivered on an A5

sheet showing the design of the roundabout and conducted through survey monkey with a closing date in July.

4.1.2 Following debate it was noted that Bucks Council had not confirmed that they would restore the T junction. Concerns were raised that if Bucks Council pursued the cheapest option the road layout could be left as it was. It was noted that Eton College had not been consulted. It was also noted that lamppost LP04 seemed to be growing out of the roots of an old tree and would need dealing with. The Chair commented that the proposal had been an 'arm-chair' exercise by Bucks Council and many issues with the proposed lighting would need resolving. **It was agreed** to proceed with the consultation noting that A4 size paper would make it easier to view the plans.

4.1.3 Alice Foxley asked if Bucks Council agreed the design was unsafe. The Chair confirmed the question had been asked but the response had been that the implementation of the roundabout was not about safety and they hadn't commented. Their response would be placed on the website shortly. James Palmer noted that if the T junction were reinstated then Balfour Beatties' expression of interest to offer to help fund the roundabout would need revisiting to see if they would help fund another project. Cllr. MacLennan also queried what would happen to Eton College's £5,000 funding. The Chair believed that Eton College's funding had already been committed and used in the design and audit process with a view to going towards the heritage lighting which was unfortunate.

#### **4.2 Dorney Area Parking Review – Update/decisions**

The Chair reported that Bucks Council had been written to asking that all Dorney roads be removed from the scheme as there would be catastrophic consequences for the community. They had responded that they were still waiting to collate the response from residents to the recent public consultation. County Cllr. George Sandy noted that Burnham/ Lent Rise residents had shown a great willingness to create residents' parking but urged everyone to be guarded about any steps that could lead to the urbanisation of the area. Cllr. Westcott-Wreford asked what other avenues existed to give feedback and Cllr. Sandy said there would be opportunity when any proposals were drawn up.

#### **4.3 Roundmoor Ditch/treated and untreated sewage outfall from Slough**

Cllr. Stopford reported that he had met with Thames Water on site who had agreed to escalate the issue of clearing out their section of the ditch but he wasn't overly optimistic anything would happen. He also noted that the Slough Waste and Water Treatment Plant were encountering problems with complying with government regulations concerning ammonia levels and the releasing of water. They would be putting forward three options for consultation in the Autumn – that water (95% of which is treated discharge from the sewage works; however if there is too much rain the discharge would be untreated) be discharged into either the Jubilee River, the Thames or the ditch at Eton. Problems would only get worse with the increasing catchment population. He further noted that the groundwater collecting on the Common had arisen from an incorrect level of added gravel and a Hydrology Survey was being undertaken.

#### **4.4 Consultation Policy and Procedures**

The Chair asked for feedback on the draft policy document she had circulated. Cllr. Baker expressed concern that Points 1 -4 did not seem to make it clear that members of the public could raise issues. Cllr. Westcott- Wreford confirmed that his reading of it was that they could but the Council must have the final discretion. He proposed acceptance of the Policy and this was seconded by Cllr. Stopford. **This was agreed** by a majority vote.

#### **4.5 Orchard Herbs Site (liaison with Burnham PC)**

Cllr. Stopford reported three issues. The Certificate of Lawfulness, the planning permission for a hotel and park and the enforcement issue. On enforcement he noted that Bucks Council were half-way through an effort to clear vehicles from the site. What was unclear was whether the site would be returned to its former state. County Cllr. Sandy noted that a complicating factor might be if Bucks Council's Strategic Sites Committee took an interest in the site.

#### 4.6 Update on M4 Smart motorway

No response had been received to the invitation to attend this meeting. It was noted that a resident had raised concerns about the vulnerability of the Trumps Field Site to unwanted incursions as the gate had been removed and the ditch flattened. The Locum Clerk was asked to write requesting that security for the field be reinstated. In response to a query from Andrew Purdie for an update on the issue of sound barriers, it was noted that work on the retaining wall had been delayed for a month.

#### 4.7 To approve Dorney Parish Council new website, logo and typeface

Cllr. Wescott-Wreford had circulated a link to the draft new website which Councillors felt was excellent and Bill Dax was thanked for his hard work. It was noted that the main administrator would be the Clerk but Cllr. Wescott-Wreford would also post on the website. The new website **was approved**. The Chair thanked Cllr. Wescott-Wreford for his work on the website.

### PC/05/21 Emergency Plan

#### 5.1 Community volunteers

The Chair noted that two residents had come forward to volunteer to put together a report on this. This was **agreed**.

#### 5.2 Procedure for traveller incursions

The Chair noted the procedure depended on whether the land was public or private but what was important was good communications. PCSO O'Connell would circulate her contact details and there existed a 'what's app' group which the Council would find out more about.

### DPC/06/21 Planning

The Chair noted that the Locum Clerk had circulated a list of current planning applications and recent decisions. She asked whether any Councillor would be willing to take on responsibility for advising on planning. Cllr. Stopford volunteered for this but wished to have more training. It was noted that a training course was upcoming via BALC and Cllrs. Stopford and Baker **were authorised** to attend at the discounted members rate. The Locum Clerk to book. Planning information should also go up on the website. **It was agreed** that there would be no comments made on the current planning applications given the limited experience of the Councillors on these issues at this time.

### PC/07/21 Finance

7.1 Cllr. MacLennan thanked the Locum Clerk for work undertaken on preparing a new spreadsheet cashbook. Expenditure in the cashbook circulated to Councillors before the meeting **was approved except in respect of the insurance invoice**. The Locum Clerk was asked to clarify why the premium had been increased. It was also noted that the Council was covering the Play Area's public liability insurance which should be investigated. Louise Whaley noted that she believed the Village Hall paid the public liability insurance for anyone using the grounds but it was noted the Play Area was not within the Village Hall grounds. It was **further agreed** that given the shortage of time to ensure insurance cover was in place the Locum Clerk would investigate and refer the matter to the Finance Committee members for them to make a decision under delegated authority in this case only.

7.2 Cllr. MacLennan had circulated the accounts, governance statements and Annual Return (AGAR) for 2020/21 and went through them in detail. The Locum Clerk noted she would not sign off as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for these but was happy to be Locum RFO for the current year. Cllr. MacLennan **was authorised** to sign as the RFO for the AGAR. He noted that he was not sure how accurate the Fixed Assets List was that he had inherited but he would do more work on this going forward.

7.3 **It was agreed** that it was impractical to pursue new signatories on the mandate for the existing Bank of Ireland account as the process was lengthy and arduous and the hope was to move to a new account shortly.

7.4 Two out of any of Cllrs. MacLennan, Dax, Baker and Wescott-Wreford **were authorised** to be the signatories for the new proposed online community account with Barclays Bank.

**PC/08/21 To consider any complaints/comments received from residents**

A resident had complained about a metal object embedded in a footway which had been sent on to Bucks Council's rights of way department.

**PC/09/21 To review any matters relating to Groundsman/Maintenance**

There were no issues. The groundsman was thanked for his hard work.

**PC/10/21 Any other business/ agenda items for the next meeting on 13th July at 8pm**

10.1 The Chair noted that the Locum Clerk was not free on 13<sup>th</sup> July and **it was agreed** to meet on 20<sup>th</sup> July instead and to bring forward the time of Council meetings to 7.30pm.

10.2 Alice Foxley reported that vegetation was obstructing the visibility splay for pedestrians at a spot near the rowing lake. James Palmer, as the land owner, commented that any cut back would have to respect the restrictions relating to birds nesting and he would take a proportionate view of the best time to make any cut backs.

**PC/11/21 S.1 (2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

It was **agreed** that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under the item below that the public be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw.

**PC/12/21 To consider next steps in connection with the claim by Dorney Village Hall for the return of £5,000.**

12.1 Cllr. Wescott-Wreford noted declarations of interest from Cllr. Jill Dax, owing to her husband being a Trustee of the Village Hall and from Cllr. Euan MacLennan who was also a Trustee of the Village Hall. He asked Cllr. MacLennan to make his representations but made it clear that neither Councillor could take part in the debate or any voting on the issue.

12.2 Cllr. MacLennan stated the facts as he knew them, namely that –

12.2.1 the Parish Council started charging the Village Hall £1,250 (in half yearly instalments) for grounds maintenance in 2015/16 and charges continued to be made for 5 years.

12.2.2 he became the Treasurer of the Village Hall in April 2018 and queried whether the charges were proportionate given the value of the services received. He took the issue up in early 2019 with Graham Easton who had been a Councillor and Trustee of the Village Hall in 2014 when the arrangement was made but sadly Mr. Easton became very ill shortly afterwards and subsequently died.

12.2.3 Cllr. MacLennan then met with Cllr. Richard Ormond – the Council's Finance Committee Chair - and demanded that the Council agree to accept £250 rather than £1,250 per annum for grounds maintenance and given that budgets were already in place for 2019/20 that the invoice for that year only be altered to say the balance of £1,000 be a financial contribution.. However no invoice was received by the Village Hall for the year 2020/21.

12.2.4 owing to membership by the Village Hall of an organisation called Community Impact Bucks he was able to approach a pro bono solicitor who advised that any payments made of an excessive nature or not in keeping with the Charities objects as set out in its Founding documents would be a breach of Trust and Trustees had a responsibility to retrieve the situation. Accordingly he had sent an invoice in March for what he regarded as the excessive overpayment over the 5 years – namely £5,000.

12.2.5 he added it was his view that the arrangement was agreed in 2014 by Councillors and Trustees of the Village Hall who were wearing two hats with the intention of helping the Parish Council to balance its funds.

12.3 Cllr. Wescott-Wreford referred to papers circulated by the Locum Clerk including the solicitor's letter and statement from the Village Hall. He said that if a way forward could not be agreed at this meeting then perhaps a working group could be set up to look into the issues.

12.4 Following robust debate a majority of Councillors (Cllrs. Dax and MacLennan not voting or taking part in the debate) noted that although the grounds maintenance payments may have been set at a high rate over the years, nevertheless Council Minutes were very clear at the time with no suggestion of the monies being to subsidise the Council in any way, that any subsequent statements to the contrary years later may be unreliable, that it appeared to be a freely entered into arrangement and handing back the monies was not a step councillors would feel comfortable doing at this stage. It was also noted that no-one wished for any animosity to continue, for a fair way forward to be found going forward and that any likely fees that could be incurred in defending the claim should also be borne in mind.

12.5 The Locum Clerk was asked to comment if legal advice should be sought. Her view was that it was something to consider but, based on the written evidence she had seen to date, there was insufficient reason to incur such costs at this stage given that there had clearly been a documented agreement which the Village Hall now wished to completely overturn. Certainly, any arrangement could be renegotiated going forward but the Village Hall were demanding to set aside the whole arrangement on the grounds of the alleged breaches of its own Trust documents and the Locum Clerk felt there was insufficient forthcoming evidence from the Village Hall at this time to seek legal advice on.

12.6 **It was unanimously agreed** (Cllrs. Dax and MacLennan not voting) that the Locum Clerk should write to the solicitors for the Village Hall putting them to proof of any written documents – perhaps Village Hall minutes - that could substantiate their claims whilst also noting the good intentions of the Council to try and find a fair way to resolve the issue.

**Meeting ended 10.55 pm.**

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