



# DORNEY

## PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES of**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
Dorney School

### **Present**

Cllr. Jill Dax (Chair), Cllr. Anna Palmer, Cllr. Euan MacLennan, Cllr. Martyn Westcott-Wreford, Cllr. Stephen Baker, Ms Ruth Senior (Parish Clerk), Peter Bowman (Dorney Parish News), John Barker, Christine and Roger Marrett, PCSO Angela O'Connell, Virginia Sylvester, Judith Barnard (Dorney School) and William Emmett (West Town Farm).

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Cllr. Robert Stopford and Cllr. William Voaden, County Cllr. George Sandy, County Cllr. Paul Kelly and Nick Cooper (M4 Project) and Lyndsey Oliver (Playground).

### **2 Report from Parish Council**

#### **Cllr. Jill Dax - Chairman**

Good evening and welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting - the first one to be held since the Pandemic hit in 2020.

Just by way of explanation the Annual Parish Meeting, with the exception of the past two pandemic years, is held in May and is, in legal terms, a quite separate body from the Council, but it is invariably the Council that arranges it. Its decisions are not binding on the Council. This meeting has its own minutes, which should be kept separately from the Council minutes, and these minutes can only be approved by the next Annual Parish Meeting which will, of course, not be held until the following year.

Since the May 2021 elections your Parish Councillors are Martyn Westcott-Wreford, Euan MacLennan, Anna Palmer, Robert Stopford (who sends his apologies), Stephen Baker and our latest welcome recruit William Voaden and myself. We are very ably assisted by our Clerk Ruth Senior and I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their time, enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment over the challenges of the past year.

Our newly designed website is regularly updated with all Parish information and projects underway, current (and past) Minutes and Dorney Parish News. A wealth of information!

Financially we are in secure position given our current plans and we also managed to make some savings on administrative and maintenance matters for the current year.

#### **Cllr. Euan MacLennan - Finance**

Cllr. MacLennan confirmed the message from Cllr. Dax that the finances are in a good, secure position. The major changes over the past year have been savings on administration with the changeover of the Parish Clerk and also the retirement of John Farrell and savings from changing to a fixed contract for grounds maintenance.

With these savings in mind, the Parish Council was very pleased to be able to keep this year's precept the same, meaning no increase for Dorney residents.

### 3 Community Updates

#### **PCSO Angela O'Connell - Thames Valley Neighbourhood Police's Report**

Firstly I would like to welcome Sgt Hedley Gabriel who has now joined us as the Neighbourhood Sargent for the area replacing Sgt Rachel Dale who has now moved away to Oxford. Sgt Gabriel joined us from Slough having served with Thames Valley Police for the last 12 years. PC Trevor Walker has also now retired from Thames Valley Police after having served 16 years as the Neighbourhood Officer for Dorney.

Crime statistics cover Burnham/Farnham's/Taplow and the rolling 12-month figures from April 2021 – 2022 shows the following.

**Burglaries** continue to be a major problem and is still the forces no 1 priority.

Over the past 12 months there has been a reduction in reported incidents from 47 to 26, this equates to a 45% decrease.

Burglary remains TVP's top priority and as in previous years we will be teaming up with our Neighbouring forces including the Met Pol, Hampshire and Surrey. These operations are targeted, intelligence led high visibility proactive patrols to detect and deter those responsible

**Theft from motor Vehicles**, there's been an increase in theft from vehicles from 99-124 which equates to a 25% increase. To combat this NH teams are regularly patrolling our scenic car parks and raising awareness via clear car campaigns.

**Theft of motor Vehicles**, there has been a slight decrease in reports incidents from 38 to 39, this equates to an increase of 3%. These stats also include the rise in keyless thefts which were previously recorded in the Burglary figures. Has a response to any potential rise in these types of crimes the NHPT hope to continue with their joint awareness campaign called "Clear car" and working alongside Bucks County Council. Also, crime awareness signage being placed in locations being targeted by offenders.

The NHPT are preparing to take part in a number of Police led operations designed at tackling the core issues such as Burglaries, Vehicle crime as well as speeding and anti-social behaviour. This operation will continue to run throughout the rest of this year and into 2023.

**Antisocial Behaviour**, we have seen an increase in Antisocial Behaviour around the tow paths, Dorney Common and Amerden Lane with regards to scrambler bikes which we are working closely with the Environment Agency to resolve.

**Unauthorised Encampments**, this is a regular issue in this area and now that the pandemic restrictions have eased, we will no doubt see the number of unauthorised encampments increase. The NH teams have been making contact with local landowners to ensure they are making their land as secure as possible. A Land Watch WhatsApp group has also been set up for local landowners which is being managed by Beaconsfield Council, Tabish Wazir, if you are interested in joining, please contact him on [Projectsupport@beaconsfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Projectsupport@beaconsfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk)

#### **William Emmett – West Town Farm**

My family has been farmers and growers in this part of the Thames valley since the early 1900s. I own the business that occupies the land at West Town Farm and also rent the land around Dorney owned by the Palmer family, in total adding up approximately 400 acres.

The land at West Town Farm was formerly owned by two gravel companies, until its sale to the merchant ventures of Bristol in 2014.

West Town Farm was farmed by the Barker family between 1958, incidentally the year before the pre M4 road was started and 1985.

During that period the Barkers grew a wide range of horticultural crops predominantly for the wholesale markets in London, which mainly served the retail greengrocers before the days of the mega supermarkets.

My late brother John and I took on the tenancy in the 1990s and our main focus until 2005 was growing a range of salads and vegetables including iceberg lettuce, all types of coloured lettuce,

spinach, leeks, salad onions, parsnips, cabbage and kale for companies such as Waitrose, Tesco and Sainsburys, growing, harvesting, packing and delivering throughout the country.

Being expected to deliver every day except Christmas Day.

A further change of cropping style came in 2005 when John and I sold our horticultural business to the management who relocated it to Spalding in Lincolnshire.

My brother then saw an opportunity to start a business producing herbs, in particular for the discerning ethnic market which has rapidly expanded, growing coriander, fenugreek, dill, parsley, thyme, tarragon, spinach, chillies, tender stem broccoli and many more.

Following his untimely death at the young age of 71, I have continued growing those crops alongside potatoes for Walkers crisps and milling wheat in a crop rotation.

The land around here is good, free draining land overlying gravel making it suitable for growing a variety of crops as mentioned, the water coming from shallow artesian bore holes across the land. Growing fresh produce has always been very demanding, both on quality and volume and requiring a large labour force as most crops are hand harvested.

In as much as the crops produced have varied over the generations but so has the workforce required to plant and harvest the crops.

In the years before our EU accession, it was local labour. As we went into Europe Italians and Spanish came to the UK. Following those countries prosperity, the Asian community became the major part of the workforce.

Then as Eastern Europe came into the EU many Polish, Lithuanian and other eastern countries filled the job opportunities.

Following our withdrawal from the EU, young people are coming in via Government supported schemes but numbers nationally are well short of what is required.

The last few years have proved very challenging dealing with the smart motorway improvements which show no sign of handing back land south of junction 7 but I hope we have not caused too much inconvenience with our farming operations as we are trying hard to produce your daily fresh foods for you.

### **Nick Cooper – M4 Smart Motorway**

We are making good progress and are on track to complete main construction in the next few weeks. Opening the motorway to traffic i.e. normal operation will take place in stages over the summer. Further details will follow in June.

The key focus will be on ensuring that the new technology is installed, tested and operating as expected before we move to the national speed limit and the removal of all traffic management.

We have one more weekend closure between Junctions 6 and 8/9 scheduled this weekend, 20-23 May. There are no weekend closures currently planned in June due to the summer events season starting, but there will be some overnight closures.

The work at Lake End Road is already completed ahead of schedule and the closure has now switched to traffic lights which should be removed earlier than planned.

Footpath work around Marsh Lane is continuing and should be completed soon.

### **4 Report from County Council**

#### **County Cllr. George Sandy**

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Parish Council for undertaking to read this short report to Dorney Parishioners. It comprises a few words about County activity over the last 12 months and a little about the Council's aspirations.

The situation in Ukraine is dire and refugees are arriving in Britain. Close on 400 have found refuge in Buckinghamshire and there have been many generous offers to provide shelter from residents. If you, or anyone you know has spare capacity in their homes and willing to provide temporary accommodation please check out the Helping Hand for Ukraine pages on the Buckinghamshire Council website. We are currently aware circa 1000 refugees have applied for visas with the destination being Bucks.

The Government's target to combat climate change is to be carbon neutral by 2050. County is to achieve this by 2030 which means all premises and vehicles under county control will be converted or replaced. The Council's fleet of refuse collection vehicles are to be renovated using a £578,000 grant from DEFRA. By converting to electric vehicles 10 tonnes of greenhouse gases will have been saved from polluting our air.

There is a target to plant 543000 trees so suitable sites must be found and you should suggest any you believe to be viable.

You will have likely heard that the boundaries commission has been working on a restructuring of electoral wards throughout the country and for Buckinghamshire it is proposed there will be 50 wards broadly containing between 5000 & 10000 electors and for every 5000 electors there will be one county councillor. This means that Cliveden Ward comprising Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow which has a population of just over 8000 electors will have two seats instead of three. Across the County the number of seats will be reduced from 147 to 98. As part of the consultation the boundaries commission carried out prior research prior to ascertain how much time councillors spent on council activity and their findings indicate that there is quite a lot of spare capacity. With which I personally agree. In effect fewer Councillors will still be able to represent their voters efficiently and at a lower cost to the tax-payer

The last few months have seen increased engagement with the community boards. They are the local meeting point for residents, schools, and a variety of Businesses, clubs and parish councillors all of whom can propose ideas for projects they believe will enhance their activities, and which might benefit from some financial support.

The CB has special committees dealing with Highways & Infrastructure, and Adult & Youth, Health Well-being.

Tougher measures against the unlawful establishment of Travellers encampments have resulted in a significant reduction of such across the county. From 38 encampments in the year 19/20 to 18 in 20/21, and only 14 in 21/22. Fingers crossed that Dorney parish will also benefit from the general reduction of such incursions.

Buckinghamshire's Conservative County Council is determined to protect the greenbelt. In a recent call to local residents to nominate brownfield sites resulted in 275 sites submitted which are now being assessed for their suitability, availability and achievability for development. The outcome is subject to the final assessment but it was encouraging that the initial estimate of new homes on the sites submitted showed potential for approximately 4900 new homes. A second call for brownfield sites was launched on the 6th of December 2021 which remains open and it will do so as long as possible. An additional 47 sites have already been submitted for assessment. As a consequence, it is hoped that development pressure upon the greenbelt areas around our ward will be correspondingly relieved.

Drafting of The Buckinghamshire Local Plan is still waiting for the government's proposed planning reforms so nothing can be finalised until these are known. Meanwhile an attitude survey was conducted as part of the discovery and exploration phase of the local plan for Buckinghamshire. It closed in February and attracted 3439 responses which is a very healthy response rate at such an early stage of plan preparation and they are currently being analysed.

County is keen to see local areas produce neighbourhood plans and it takes a proactive and positive approach by providing advice and support to those communities that are interested in producing their own; neighbourhood development plans, neighbourhood development orders, or community right to build orders, as part of its duty to support. Each

parish should decide whether it should create its own Neighbourhood Plan.

Gully cleaning and the repair of pot-holes are the subject of frequent complaints. In either case, or if you have any complaint relating to highways and footways, please register them online using the Fix my Street App. 70800 gully's have been cleaned at least once in the last year, but if you see any that need attentions, please do report them.

There really is so much more one could add, but if parishioners wish to ask questions, please address them through the parish clerk and they will be answered.

**5 Questions from the floor on Parish/County issues**

Judith Barnard asked if William Emmett would be happy to do a similar talk for the children at the school which he confirmed he is happy to do.

Judith Barnard asked if it is possible for the school children to be involved in the tree planting as mentioned in County Cllr. George Sandy's report, this question will be forwarded.

Virginia Sylvester asked that the gully cleaning programme be commended as very successful. This comment will be forwarded.

Virginia Sylvester asked for an update on the terrible road surfaces on Village Road and Marsh Lane as we were assured by County Cllr. Dev Dhillion that this would be resolved after the M4 works. These are major cyclist routes and are becoming very dangerous. This question will be forwarded to County level along with the question of criteria for a 'failed road surface'.

**6 Any other business**

William Emmett raised the point of problem dog walkers in the area letting dogs run amongst the growing crops and not clearing up after them, this is an ongoing problem he asks that residents please be more aware and careful.

Virginia Sylvester asked who will be responsible for the maintenance of local footpaths when the M4 project has been completed. Cllr. Dax is forwarding a footpath map to Virginia to mark the footpaths in question. The Clerk will then confirm ownership.

William Emmett questioned the Parish Council view on the closure of Dorney Lake causing parking issues in other areas of the village. Cllr. Dax confirmed that dialogue with Dorney Lake has been reactivated and we are in regular contact with them, so will forward the concerns raised.

John Barker enquired about the possibility of using land around Dorney for solar panel fields to provide cheaper electricity to residents. This will be added to the June Parish Council Meeting Agenda and also forwarded to County for consideration.

The Parish Council thanked everyone for their updates and attendance.

**Meeting ended at 8.55pm**

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