

Datchet Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ON MONDAY 13th June 2022 AT 19:02

Present: Cllr. D. Buckley (Chairman) Cllr. Mrs. L. O’Flynn, Cllr. I. Bacon, Cllr. P. Bicknell, Cllr. E. Larcombe, Cllr. I. Thompson, Cllr. A. Verma and Cllr. Mrs. M. Fitzgerald.
Borough Councillor. D. Cannon.
Clerk Mrs. K. J. Jones

Apologies: Cllr. Mrs. M. Davies, Cllr. A. Clemens (might be along later)

Public: There were 2 members of the public present.

22.012 Announcements – Members were advised that Cllr. Mrs. M. Davies had tested positive for covid. The Clerk announced her retirement, her last working day will be the 10th August.

22.013 Public Questions – None

22.014 Declaration of Interest – None. The Chairman asked all members to check their Declarations of Interest and make sure these were up to date. The Clerk said that she had received an email from the Borough Monitoring Officer asking the same, and that she had written to those members where the M. O. had queries and asked them for confirmation.

22.015 Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on the 9th of May
Were **AGREED** by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

22.016 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 9th of May
Were **AGREED** by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

22.017 Notes of the Part two Meeting held on the 11th of April
Cllr. Mrs. L. O’Flynn advised members that this were not available yet and as such this item was deferred until the July meeting.

22.018 Matters arising from the above meetings – None

22.019 General

i. Chairmans Report

- Following a busy period of celebrations with the two village events for the Queens Platinum Jubilee. The Beacon lighting on 2nd June & the Picnic on the Rec on 4th June Can I ask all the Council to thank the working Group and the Lead Member for making such great events happen. In particular I am sure the Lead member would agree that particular thanks should go to Cllr Davies and the Clerk for their extra effort.
- We are looking to continue the 3–5-year financial plan (including projects, income and expenditure) of the Council. We will be looking to continue the working group shortly to get this started again to be ready for the end of year, when we look at our financial position and the level of precept. It is a particularly difficult time for all residents in Datchet as the cost-of-living crisis bites and we need to look at the impacts to the Council’s finances in line with increasing costs to its ongoing services and projects. We will be looking to make savings where we can, increase income and manage projects within the constraints of a never seen before inflationary pressure, outside of our control. I cannot stress heavily enough how the inflation impact is affecting projects and Parish and all public finances in 2022.
- As you have just heard we are at a stage where the Clerk, after over 10 years of service has reached a lovely position in life where she can retire and as such has sent in her notice of retirement that will finish on 10th August 2022 and we would like to thank Katy for her service to date and ongoing until she retires in August. Obviously, the Council will need to review its needs and requirements quickly and start advertising for new roles within the Council to start a new period for Datchet Parish Council and this will be an ongoing requirement for all lead members in the next few weeks to establish the needs and fill the posts that are needed. Obviously, this has occurred at a time when our Assistant Clerk resigned to start a new role locally after starting training to replace our Clerk full time, which was disappointing to say the least.
- There is a growing request from other local Parish Councils to join resources on common issues. From Highways to flooding we will continue to make headway on joining up Parish Councillors and Borough councillors to support the needs of village residents to add weight

on important issues that commonly affect us all.

- The Lead member for events will also touch on how different groups are looking to work with the Parish Council to make the very best events and projects for the village and we welcome all groups to take this initiative and contact the Parish Council so we can combine resources to create a stronger community spirit that can grow together.

ii. Clerks Report including correspondence

- The Clerk advised that the Council had received a Letter before Action from the previous tenants of 24A The Green, in respect of a claim that their deposit was not protected as required by government legislation. She advised that B.S. Bennett Estate Agents were handling the matter as the Council's appointed property agent and they had admitted that this was their mistake, not the Councils. Cllr. Thompson asked if the previous tenants had suffered any loss due to this and the clerk confirmed, none that she was aware of. Cllr Verma stated there were strict time limits in which to reply, and felt that the council should seek legal advice to protect the council's interest. The Chairmen felt further guidance should be sought and would look at this tomorrow.
- The Clerk advised that Fitz Solicitors had now sent a Letter Before Action to C. A. Telecom regarding the original illegal incursion on Memorial Green in the village and the recent construction of an illegal inspection chamber. Cllr. Bicknell asked what the council hoped to achieve from this. Was it financial gain, or because of their impertinence? Cllr. Thompson explained that the chamber could have been built in the footway and that the council were not trying to make money, they just wanted compensating for the cost incurred for re-levelling and seeding the area first damaged by the company, and for them to come back and remove the chamber and re-instate the Memorial Green. Cllr. Verma suggested that the Council seek the opinion of a Barrister who specialises in these matters to advise on the prospect of success before the matter is taken further.

22.020 Finance and Administration

There was no report from the Lead Member because of family illness.

- i. Members noted the income and expenditure sheets. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. L. O'Flynn and **SECONDED** by Cllr A. Verma that the payments be approved and the income noted. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- ii. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Flynn and **SECONDED** by Cllr. I. Bacon to note and approve the **Year End Accounts for 2021/2022**, and for the Chairman and RFO to sign these. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- iii. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. I. Bacon and **SECONDED** by Cllr. I. Thompson to note the recommendations made in, and approve the **Internal Auditors Report**. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- iv. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. D. Buckley and **SECONDED** by Cllr. I. Bacon to note and approve **The Annual Governance Statement, Section 1 of the AGAR**, and for the Chairman and Clerk to sign this. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- v. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. E. Larcombe and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Flynn to note and approve **The Accounting Statements, Section 2 of the AGAR**, and for the Chairman to sign this. **ALL IN FAVOUR**
- vi. **Chairmans allowance** – Members were asked to consider setting up a chairman's allowance in the sum of £250.00 per annum. The Chairman stated that because the council does not have the constitutional ability to do this at present it cannot purchase flowers, gifts etc to give as thank you. Cllr. Bicknell stated he was against a 'Chairmans' allowance and felt there must be a way for this to be done. He asked what other councils did. The Clerk advised that if a council had the General Power of Competence, then gifts could be purchased through this power, but where councils did not have the GPC then they used the Chairman's allowance, if they had one. The Chairman advised that he had looked at this with the clerk and at present there was no other way. Following discussions, it was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Buckley and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thompson to set up an annual allowance called the 'DPC Allowance' of £250.00 **ALL IN FAVOUR**.
- vii. **Staffing and Recruitment Working Group** – Members were asked to consider the setting up of this group to review and make recommendations on the staffing requirements of the office. The Chairman said that he had already had an emergency meeting with all Lead Members to start looking at this and **PROPOSED** that it was the Lead Members that form the Working Group with Cllr. Mrs. M. Davies as lead, in her capacity as Lead Member for Finance and Administration and the Clerk to

be involved. **AGREED**

viii. Councillors Questions on Finance and Administration

Cllr. Bacon stated that this was the first month of the new financial year and there was no report, bank statements or balance sheet circulated. The clerk explained that the finance assistant always did these and sent them to the Lead and Deputy Lead Members for Finance to include in their reports. It was **AGREED** that from now on the bank statements and balance sheets be circulated to all members along with the pink and green sheets.

22.021 Borough Councillors Reports (Cllrs Cannon and Larcombe

The Chairman reminded the Borough Councillors' present that any disagreements should be kept at the Borough level and that this was a Parish Council meeting and also that it should be kept non-political.

Cllr Larcombe - in relation to matters relating to DPC. He had been contacted by Inland Homes in regard to site AL39 in the BLP. He had not acknowledged this and felt that they should approach DPC not individual councillors. He felt it important that new developers were aware of past short comings with estates that have been built here so that they do not repeat these.

Cllr Cannon - in relation to matters relating to DPC. A company had been commissioned to do the modelling work on the Flap Valve which was funded by RBWM. The Barrel Arch had been surveyed and work would be carried out this Summer. RBWM will be in touch with DPC where they need access over our land. Inland Homes had also contacted him and Cllr. Larcombe' concerns are valid and DPC should raise these when a planning application goes in.

Questions to Borough Councillor's - Cllr. Buckley stated that everyone should work together to make life better for the community. Cllr. Bicknell said things need to be kept at a local level and DPC needed to be open and transparent, the bottom line being we are here for the benefit of our residents at a local level and we need to concentrate on this.

Cllr. Thompson asked Cllr. Canon to get the team to talk to DPC regarding where the works will be on the Greens. Cllr. Cannon, he advised he would.

22.022 Planning

The Lead Member for Planning asked for any comments on his report and recommendations which had been circulated. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Buckley and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Bicknell that the recommendations made be approved, **ALL IN FAVOUR** (with Cllr Thompson abstaining on application 22/01195, 26 Eton Close)

21/03230 – Annexe at 15 Ditton Road, Datchet – Change of use from annexe to dwelling with 1 no. car park space (retrospective) **Parish Council Recommendation: Objection** as the applicant has not responded or mitigated against the refusal on the previous application 18/03500 refused 2019. Both no flood risk assessment and change of use into additional residential accommodation and parking

22/01195 – Witches End, 26 Eton Close, Datchet – Single storey side/rear extension and first floor side/rear extension. **Parish Council Recommendation: No Objection.**

22/01308 – Orchard Cottage, 61 Horton Road, Datchet – Single storey front extn with accommodation in the roof space etc. **Parish Council Recommendation: Objection.** The Parish Council have been consistent to support the senior conservation officers' reports for previous refusals on the grounds of double ridge and roof height to 6.5m and the adverse impact to a local listed building and historic area. The existing building being a modest single-story bungalow that's single height has no adverse effects to the historical area and buildings. Previous applications recommendations and Conservation Officer comments state that "any new structure should be single storey, or at least one and a half storeys. We would recommend that any application should adhere to this height limit to avoid significant adverse effects to the historic heritage sites as recommended by the Senior Conservation officer. There has been a list of historic refusals for similar if not the same reasons and the Parish Councils comments have been consistent as have the supporting officers' recommendations. This has been tested at appeal and on various occasions in the planning process.

22/01398 – 46A Montagu Road, Datchet – New front porch, first floor extn, part single, part 2 storey rear extn etc. **Parish Council Recommendation: No Objection**

22/01453 – Flat 2, Riverbank, 9 Southlea Road – Works to trees in conservation area. **Parish Council Recommendation: No Objection**, subject to all work being under the control of an Arboricultural officer.

i) Councillors' Questions on Planning. - None

22.023 **Grounds**

- i. The Lead Member had circulated his report and asked for any questions. A considerable amount of work had taken place on the Jubilee Events and he thanked all who had an input. He recommended that a letter of thanks be written to the people and organisations involved. He did thank the W.I. at the event but he think they missed it because they were so busy serving teas etc. The Clerk to organise commemorative mugs for the W.I and The Bridge volunteers who worked so hard on the events.
- ii. The clerk updated members on the orders placed for the Play Area works. Four quotations had been received and after discussions with the Lead Member for Grounds, especially concerning start dates, it was AGREED under delegated powers to split the works between two companies. Proludic for the springers and the replacement items for the hamster wheel, and Playdale for the replacement multi-unit in the SPAR which would be a unit accessible for all abilities. Proludic to start late July early August and Playdale to start late September early October.
- iii. **Councillors' Questions on Grounds** – Cllr. Larcombe commented that his great grandchildren had really appreciated the play areas. The Clerk advised that she was waiting for a quote to repair the surfacing under the carousel unit and the Green Gym. Cllr. Thompson advised that he had asked for separate quotes for each of the village greens

22.024 **Properties**

The Lead Member advised that because he is new to the position there was no report for tonight but he was reviewing what had been going on. Along with his deputy Cllr. Verma, he had been looking at the position with the library roof and the communication with Bennetts.

22.025 **Highways**

The new Lead Member had plans to talk to her deputy this week to review the list of highway issues. The Chairman asked if she would have something for the next meeting. She replied yes. Cllr. Larcombe asked if the Council were aware of the proposed radio mast installation on the corner of Lawn Close with Horton Road. He felt I the location was not appropriate. Cllr Buckley said this should go through the Planning.

22.026 **Flooding**

The Lead Member had circulated his report and asked for any questions. Cllr Larcombe advised that the Borough had spent £13,500 a short section of maintenance on the Wraysbury Ditch. He had put in a FOI request for a copy of the inspection report, but had found out there was no report either prior to, or after the works. He stated that this was a riparian water course. Cllr. Thompson stated that in the past developments in Datchet had pushed out and truncated existing water courses causing problems. It was important that future developments gave consideration to where water flows naturally in order not to exacerbate the current flooding situation. The Chairman said we should be working together as partners in regard to how building can affect the parishes.

22.027 **Events**

In his absence the Lead Member's report was read out by the Chairman.

- i. The Jubilee Events were a fantastic success and thanks to everyone involved in the organisation. It shows that DPC can put on a great event and they were really well attended.
- ii. Next up is the Ellis Journey. I spoke to Datchet Border Morris and confirmed that we do want them at the event and propose that DPC cover the cost of hiring them.
- iii. Christmas On the Green. I felt we should aim to do this on the 26th November. Not only does this give us four weeks up-to Christmas, it's also when other lights are being switched on in areas. It would be great to have ours up and running earlier rather than later.
- iv. Summer event for next year. Ideally, we should combine this with the Summer Fete and hold everything on the Recreation ground as a free to enter event.

22.028 Reports from Working groups – None (Note Finance W G to recommence soon)

22.029 Councillors Questions

Cllr. Bicknell asked the following

1. Progress on the Red Telephone Box? – The Clerk replied that this is on order and is to house the defibrillator unit. Cllr. Thompson explained there were issues with the electricity supply and they need to isolate the feed as it is a permanent supply from the B T box on the road.
2. Video recording of Council meetings, it is 6 months since this was voted down and he would like this to be looked into again as he felt residents would like to see and hear what the council do. Cllr. Buckley said that he had been speaking to Cllr's Clemens and Verma regarding a u-tube link to live stream the meetings which the public could then link into. He would report back on this.
3. He would like to see the Greens, and especially the circular seat around the oak tree on South green, brought up to a better standard so that residents can use them more for picnics etc. – Cllr. Buckley agreed that more could be done and Cllr. Thompson said the seat was on the list which he was working around to.
4. The meeting, again, was only just quorate and councillors were missing along with the present vacancies. Cllr Buckley said DPC were looking to engage more but most local councils had lost the confidence of their residents. 3 people had made contact a while back re the vacancies but this had not gone forward. He would put this back on the agenda going forward. The clerk to find the details of those who made contact with a view to writing to them again.

22.030 Public questions – None.

The meeting closed at 20:46

THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THE 11TH JULY 2022

_____ **CHAIRMAN**

Distribution: All Councillors, Datchet Parish Council Website