

Datchet Parish Council

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ANNUAL PARISH (COMMUNITY) MEETING

NOTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH (COMMUNITY) MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ALLEN WAY, ON MONDAY 28th APRIL 2025 AT 6.30PM

Present: Cllr. D. Buckley (Chairman)
Cllr.S.Young (Deputy for Flooding & Drainage and Chair of Finance Committee)
Cllr. A. Whelan (Deputy for Highways)

Clerk: Sonia Masikito

There were 11 members of the public present

AMP25/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APM25/2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from; Cllr D. Loveridge, Cllr I. Thompson, Cllr S. Glover, Cllr A. Clemens, Cllr C. Wise, Cllr. D. Sanders, Cllr. I. Bacon

AMP25/3 NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 22nd APRIL 2024 FOR INFORMATION ONLY.
These were signed by the Chairman.

APM25/4 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's report Datchet parish councillor annual community meeting 28th April 2025.

To summarise the last year, it has been challenging, interesting and painful at times.

From the increase in our parish precept to the inclusion of a full council of 15 councillors at times.

We have seen local services full away from the local authority RBWM, while datchet continues to see a full supply of services from the parish council.

We can see now we have a strong group of parish councillors supported by a strong and robust administration of officers that are improving support for residents.

More importantly now is that we have established a sustainable financial position to support the financial and strategic plan of the council. This plan will run as a fluid document over a 1-5 year period to support this year and future years precept requests. Residents will be engaged in projects and these projects will be introduced alongside a budget process that the community decide.

This strategic document has been a long time in coming but will create a forward plan of the parish-controlled assets and support in maintaining the village. From maintaining the well-kept playground, the recreational ground to cemetery, riverside and village greens.

We have a new position being created on the parish council that will be responsible for all communications to the community as we set out the strategic plan and continue with projects but also to engage with the community to create a journey together.

We now have for the first time in some time new motivated councillors who are residents and are striving to improve our village life.

As we know we need new people joining the council to keep improving it at all times and we have a few vacancies to fill during the rest of 2025/2026, so please tell people about this opportunity to support our community to join the parish council.

Cllr David Buckley

**APM25/5 UPDATES FROM LEAD MEMBERS ON:
CEMETERY/EVENTS/FLOODING &
DRAINAGE/GROUNDS/HIGHWAYS/PLANNING/PROPERTIES**

Lead Member for the Cemetery was not able to attend the meeting, however did prepare a report – See Appendix 1

Lead Member of Properties was not able to attend the meeting, however did prepare a report – See Appendix 2

Deputy for Flooding – Update:

- The Clerk and Cllr Young recently attended a training session with RBWM on Community Emergency Planning. Together, they will be reviewing and updating the Parish Council's current Emergency Plan.
- Cllr Thompson attended a meeting at the Crown Estate with relevant stakeholders he shared his report with councillors.
- The Environment Agency (EA) will have an information stall at the Datchet Village Fete on 5th July 2025.

- As Chair of the Finance Committee, Cllr Young also confirmed that the Council will be reviewing the earmarked reserves within the current budget.

Deputy for Highways – Update:

- Cllr Whelan reported receiving a poor response from RBWM regarding highways issues in the village.
- She advised that there is currently no specific budget for highways within the DPC's own budget and is working to encourage RBWM to take further action, as it was noted that RBWM holds a significant transport budget.
- Geoff Hill has been invited to visit Datchet and review local transport and infrastructure concerns. We are still awaiting a response.
- Cllr Whelan is also leading on a proposal to appoint a Communications Lead for the Parish Council. She emphasised the importance of this role to strengthen community engagement and to better communicate the Council's work to residents.

AMP25/6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Cllr Whelan was thanked by members of the public for her ongoing efforts and support.

Local Resident (Village Centre):

- Raised concerns about persistent speeding outside his property and the inadequate response from RBWM despite repeated complaints.
- Highlighted the presence of a bus stop directly outside his house, contributing to safety and traffic issues.
- Expressed frustration with the general increase in speeding throughout the village, the decline of the High Street, and the lack of visible police presence.

Local Resident:

- Thanked the councillors who attended the meeting but expressed disappointment at the low turnout of elected members.
- Asked for an update on the Conservation Area Working Group and whether it can be restarted?

Local Resident:

- Urged the Council not to overlook other areas of the village, noting that most focus tends to be on the center, leaving outer areas feeling neglected.
- Raised issues about:
 - The Manor Hotel and its ongoing impact on the village.
 - Opposition to additional takeaway outlets ("no more kebab shops").
 - Continued fly-tipping with little or no enforcement or clean-up. Residents were advised to contact Richard Coe at RBWM to report incidents via the "report it function" on RBWM website.

Local resident

- A resident expressed the view that the Council does not work closely enough with the community, noting that there often appear to be barriers that restrict or discourage wider community participation.

Cllr Larcombe:

- Requested a copy of the football club lease for the clubhouse.
- The Chair advised that there is currently no new lease, but a copy of the previous lease is available from the Parish Office upon request.
- Asked Cllr Young what the balance of the DRCCT bank account was?

Local Residents:

- Asked for clarification on who has control of the DRCCT bank account.
- It was confirmed that the interim management committee will provide a report at the May Council Meeting.

The Meeting Closed at 8.35pm

----- CHAIRMAN

DATCHET PARISH COUNCIL

1. Annual Report to residents
2. Subject: Cemetery
3. Report Prepared By: Cllr Caroline Wise

Dated: 23 /4/25

Cemetery report

In my first year as lead member for the cemetery, it has been a full one with lots of improvements made and work either completed or in the pipeline to be completed. Unfortunately, I will be away in Exmoor for the residents meeting so a report will have to set out what we have been able to do over the last year.

Given how lovely the flowers in the centre of the village are, I was surprised that there were no containers of flowers at the cemetery. I raised this with council and got agreement to purchase two new large containers for flowers at the cemetery which were planted in October and are currently showing a lovely display of spring flowers.

We also purchased three new benches for the cemetery using monies left in the CIL budget. Two of these benches are now are in a new seating area created by laying a paved area in the east /south corner which was improvement I also commissioned.

Some tree work was carried out in September and we now have a realistic budget in place to be able to maintain the trees and bushes at the cemetery going forward.

The chapel has had the broken stained-glass panels repaired and the cracked cap stone for the spire has been taken away for repair along with the spire itself. Unfortunately, as the damage was so severe a whole new stone is required which is taking longer than necessary but thankfully this work was commissioned before the winter storms set in as I dread to think what damage the roof would have suffered had it not finally been addressed.

The north wall has now had a new security fence installed so it is more secure and the vegetation cleared and cut back behind the new fence. This is the last bit of work that was needed as part of the preparatory work for the creation of new plots in areas A and D and we have already sold 5 new plots in this area. We can now start working on mapping out all the new plots.

We have purchased a new noticeboard for the cemetery which is just awaiting installation. Once installed we will be able to communicate more easily with visitors as well as display more information and vital health and safety notices.

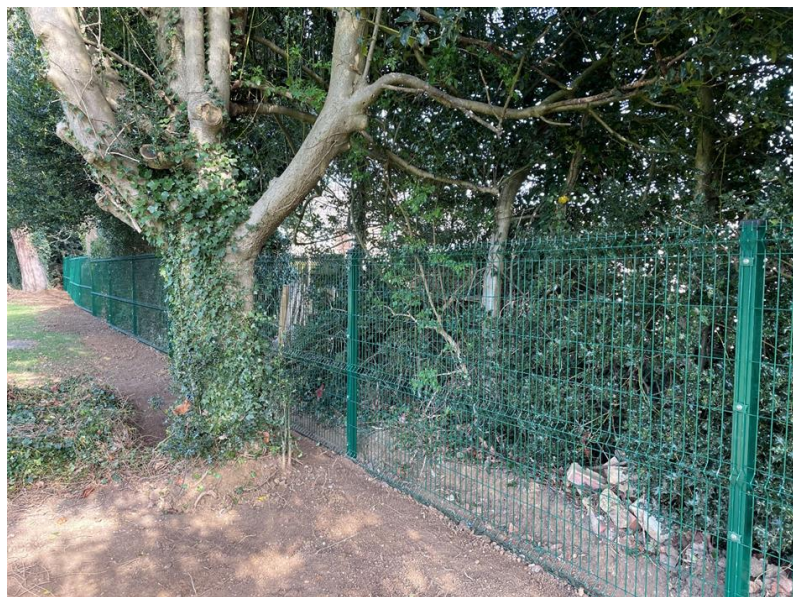
Behind the scenes, a lot of training has taken place which has meant we now understand what measures we need to take to make the cemetery safer as well as compliant legally. We have just passed a memorial maintenance policy and hope to start in June the process of examining the memorials and headstones to deal with any safety issues. This will be a lengthy process but will also allow us to improve our record keeping and store photos of graves and their memorials.

Shadowing interments over the past year we are more aware of what happens before and after funerals so that we now have several staff and myself available to oversee the whole funeral process if Don is not available. After several months of searching, we have also now hired a new cemetery warden who we hope will start work in May. He will be responsible for the maintenance at the cemetery and in due course will oversee the funerals and interment of ashes as well as other aspects of cemetery work.

The clerk has also been busy drafting much needed safety policies and introducing safety measures for when we have contractors on site. We have started placing signs on dangerous benches giving owners two months to remove them from the cemetery which has generally been accepted and respected.

We have placed three bins around the cemetery to help with littering and we have now put up signs to help reduce littering and fly tipping. I have been busy cutting back the overgrown shrubs and brambles from Penn Road side and cleared cemetery rubbish thrown over the fence as well so that area of the cemetery is a lot tidier and will now be easier to maintain going forward.

Cllr Caroline Wise
Lead councillor for the cemetery





APPENDIX 2

COUNCIL MEETING: 28th April 2025
AGENDA ITEM: 6
Report to Council Dated: 27th April 2025
Report Prepared By: Cllr Sanders
Subject: Lead Members Report for Properties

DPC Office –

Electric/Fire Extinguishers tests carried out

Village Hall –

Electric/Gas/Fire Extinguishers tests carried out

Ongoing repairs to Heating Systems

Football Club and Changing rooms –

Electric/Gas tests carried out

Ongoing discussions to update and simplify lease and carry out essential repairs

Ongoing discussions to work with the Football Club to update the changing rooms via grants and look at modernising the plumbing/heating systems

Doctors Surgery –

DPC have agreed to extend the lease term back to 99 years and combine all leases to one under the original terms.

Library –

Electric/Gas tests carried out

Significant project due to start in new FY to improve drainage around the library to reduce, significantly, the damp this is causing. Once this work is complete repairs will be required in the Library to correct what the damp has caused

The Bridge Cafe –

Electric/Gas tests carried out

Ongoing repairs to Plumbing/Heating Systems.

Significant works to review and update the plumbing will be required this FY as well renovating the main door

24a The Green–

Electric/Gas tests carried out

Ongoing repairs to property

Quite likely major room renovation will be required this FY for both this property and the The Bridge Cafe downstairs

Cemetery Lodge

Electric/Gas tests carried out

Cemetery Chapel and Store –

These two properties have now been moved over 'Cemetery' under Lead member Cllr Wise