

Datchet Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF DATCHET HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, THE GREEN ON MONDAY 12TH MAY 2008 AT 8.00PM.

Present: Cllr D. Cannon (Chairman), H. Clasper, P. Dickson, Mrs S. Drummond, Mrs V. Gregorowski, E. Larcombe, D. Lyons-Davis, A. J. Needham, Mrs L. O'Flynn, T. A. J. O'Flynn, Mrs E. F. Wren
Mr Graham J Leaver – Clerk

Apologies: Cllr D. Loveridge, P. Simmons
Borough Councillors J. Grey, G. Muir

There was 1 member of the public present.

APM/1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23RD APRIL 2007

The minutes having been circulated, were proposed, seconded and agreed that they be accepted as a true record.

Comments were made and noted that consideration should be given to the minutes of this meeting being reported to the Parish Council at its first meeting following the Annual Statutory Meeting each year. This proposal being on the basis that to wait 12 months to consider the minutes was considered too long a period.

APM/2 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND REPORT

The Chairman, Mr David Cannon, reported that the last 12 months had been a period of consolidation in so far as the administrative functions of the Parish Council were concerned. Considerable effort had been put in to updating office procedures and improving records and information, which had resulted in a considerable improvement in dealing with the recognized previous backlog of work.

He was pleased to report that with effect from the 1st April 2008 the Locum Clerk had agreed to a contract of employment with the Parish Council.

Cllr Mrs V. Gregorowski asked members to record a vote of thanks to the Parish Clerk for his and the efforts of all involved in the recent administrative improvements.

APM/3 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR FINANCE *

Cllr Paul Dickson, in his role as Lead Member for Finance, had produced a comprehensive report together with an income and expenditure account as at 31st March 2008 in which he referred specifically to his expected out turn for 2007/2008, together with budget and planning information in respect of 2008/2009.

APM/4 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR GROUNDS *

Cllr Don Lyons-Davis referred to his report in which he noted that 2007/2008 had been a particularly difficult year following the enforced absence, due to ill health, of the groundsman (Mr D. Barron).

He made particular reference to the assistance given by Dean Smith and David Stickland who had, at short notice, stepped in to undertake grounds maintenance works throughout the village.

Much work had been undertaken to improve grounds maintenance activities with particular attention being given to the Recreation Ground and the Village Greens, together with work to improve the surrounds of the play areas. Planting of new trees had taken place adjacent to the Village Hall.

The provision of football facilities on the Recreation Ground had been well used and he noted that during the 07/08 season there had been a ladies football team as well as the usual local men's teams.

He drew attention to the ongoing local concerns relating to the Willowfields and the land at Mill Place, and indicated that this would need to be an item to be dealt with in the coming months.

APM/5 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR PLANNING *

Cllr Mrs Linda O'Flynn reported that in the past year the Parish Council had commented on over 100 planning applications, a similar workload as to the previous year. Only 7 of the Parish Councils recommendations had been dealt with in a different manner to that made by members, by the Borough Council.

A major issue which continued to give concerns was the approach to enforcement of unauthorised developments which was an extremely slow process and did not appear to be high on the agenda of the Borough Council.

Cllr Mrs O'Flynn noted changes which were taking place in relation to national planning procedures and in particular at the Borough Planning department were no longer able to offer free pre-application advice to householders, it was now the case that a fee of at least £50 would be charged for this service.

Datchet Parish Council would continue to be vigilant about the effect of new developments within the Village, and would as always welcome members of the public to speak on planning applications on Council meetings.

APM/6 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND GENERAL PURPOSES

Cllr Adrian Needham, in commenting that his brief covered many aspects and unrelated matters of interest to Parishioners.

He referred specifically to parking, parish paths (rights of way), the Heathrow Third Runway Consultation and educational matters relating to Churchmead and Datchet St Mary's Schools.

APM/7 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR PROPERTIES *

Cllr Patrick Simmons reported that the exterior of 24 The Green (The Bridge) had been decorated and minor routine repairs and maintenance carried out as necessary on the Councils other properties throughout the Village.

He regretted that little progress had been made on the Parish Yard project. The initial proposal submitted to the planning department of the Royal Borough had not been well received and it had therefore been decided to resubmit a revised application based on advice received from the Planning Officer.

Consequent upon this delay it had not been possible to make much progress in regard to the future use of the Cemetery Chapel although it was still the intention of the Parish Council to refurbish this building for alternative future uses.

APM/8 REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR FLOODING *

Cllr Ewan Larcombe had provided details of events relating to flooding which had taken place during the last 12 months, which referred to such matters as local concerns specifically within Datchet and the wider implications of the Environment Agency proposals relating to the River Thames.

He had made reference to the two Government Enquiries into flooding, the PITT Review and an investigation to be carried out by a Committee of the House of Commons.

It was clear that more detail consideration and action needed to be taken locally in regard to the maintenance of water courses, whether these be maintained by the Environment Agency, the Borough Council, the Parish Council or local land owners.

Cllr Harry Clasper, in his role relating to local flooding issues, generally supported the comments made by Cllr Larcombe. He went on to refer to the Datchet Parish Council Flood Working Group, thanked Cllr Mrs Gregorowski for her initial work in this regard and noted that the Datchet Plan, when agreed with Borough Council Officers, would become the template for use by other Parish Councils within the Royal Borough.

Careful but steady progress had been made in this regard, but delays had occurred due to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead emergency plan having to take priority over other local actions. He also wished to record his thanks for the contribution made by a parishioner, Mr Ian Thompson, in this regard.

APM/9 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

In the absence of the Borough Councillors the Chairman referred to notes prepared by Cllr Grey on behalf of himself and Cllr Muir, which indicated their roles as members taking part in the management and administration of the Borough Council.

He also had listed many of the specific actions they had been involved in and the way in which their activities related to matters of interest in Datchet.

APM/10 THE CHARITY KNOWN AS 'THE RECREATION GROUND'

The Clerk referred to the Charities known as the 'Recreation Ground (land comprising those areas known as the Village Greens and The Cut, which is the green open space between Horton Road and the public car park) and noted that this particular charity together with another known as 'The Nellie Elizabeth Dovey Request' were to all intent and purposes defunct. There were no specific financial implications and it was therefore his view that action should be taken in conjunction with the Charity Commission to seek their removal from the Charity Commissions lists.

It was agreed that this matter should be looked into and appropriate action to be taken.

APM/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The Meeting Closed at 9.25pm