

A meeting of Dorstone Parish Council was held in the Old School Hall Dorstone on **Wednesday December 9th 2009 at 7-30 pm.**

Present: Councillor P Rye (Chairman), Councillor S Gaze, Councillor M Hession, Councillor D James, Councillor P Smith, Councillor E Lane, Councillor C Thomas & Mr C Hendy Parish Clerk.

Also in Attendance: Councillor P Price Herefordshire Councillor Ward Member

Declaration of interest: Planning application Dorstone Front Room, The clerk had sought advice regarding Parish Councillors who had shares in the Shop Association, the advice received was Councillors should seriously consider declaring a prejudicial interest. Councillor Hession, Councillor James, Councillor Lane reported they were shareholders in Village Shop Association, Councillor Thomas was a director of Dorstone Front Room, they all declared a prejudicial interest. It was agreed this application would be dealt with at the end of the meeting, Councillors would leave the room. Whilst not legally required the Clerk also declared an interest as a shareholder in Village Shop Association.

Councillors were available for the public to discuss any matter not on the agenda.

Minutes The minutes of meeting November 4th & November 11th, which had been circulated, were confirmed & signed.

Spoon Lane Discussions are taking place between Herefordshire Council & Sustrans, when further information is available the Parish Council will be informed.

Rubbish Collection The new refuse vehicles do not have lifting equipment to lift wheeled bins containing black refuse bags, Parishioners can still use wheeled bins for black refuse bags provided a crate or box is placed in the bin for the bag to sit on, if possible inform the refuse contractors if this system is in use. The refuse is still required to be placed available for collection by 6-30am on the day.

Dog Control Orders The Playing Field committee considered the issue is dog fouling rather than inappropriate behaviour, if owners were requested to keep dogs on a lead then anybody could ask them to do so. Therefore Control Order A should apply to the playing field, play area & bowls area, Control order B should apply to the playing field, Control order D should apply to the play area and bowls area. The clerk had forwarded this to Herefordshire Council

Dore View Street Lights Councillor Gaze reported the night cells had been fitted to Dore View lights. A draft article regarding this for publication by Amey was discussed & amended.

Village Hall Street Light Councillor Gaze had calculated if the Light was on 4-30pm, off 7-30am using the cost per unit supplied by the Hall committee the Total electricity cost for the light 2009/2010 was £29.35. After discussion Councillor Gaze proposed to fully reimburse the Hall Committee £30 should be paid, seconded by Councillor Smith & carried unanimously. The clerk was requested to write to the Hall Chairman.

Planning Herefordshire Council have indicated a proposed Cattle Building at Brynspear Farm will require prior approval. The siting of the agricultural building would not be readily assimilated into the landscape or take advantage of the natural land form because of its skyline location. The proposal is not well related to the existing agricultural buildings and is unduly harmful within its wider surroundings contrary to various policies.

The clerk had been contacted by Herefordshire Council to receive planning decisions electronically, the clerk had agreed to this, he had also requested if observations on Planning Applications could be made electronically. Herefordshire Council will consider.

Fire Benevolent Fund A letter of thanks for the donation to the Fire Fighters Charity for the work on Brooklands Bridge had been received

Water Testing Quotation had been received from Herefordshire Council, this was for £80, whilst higher than the quotation from the Environment Agency they would collect samples. The clerk was awaiting information regarding the possible pollutants to be tested. Any sampling would be carried out in the summer months.

Lengthsmen scheme An account for £491.33 had been received, this was for work carried out, mowing green, clearing blocked drains. Councillor Smith proposed a cheque for £491.33 was drawn seconded by Councillor Hession & carried unanimously.

Highways Permission granted for the daffodil bulbs to be planted at least 1 metre from the edge of the highway & not in visibility areas. Councillor Rye is in discussion with the Youth club regarding sites.

The salt bin at Bell Corner will be re-sited.

Footpaths Councillors were asked by the next meeting to check if any remedial work was required on the footpaths.

Amey Information received following problems with equipment the traffic surveys had not taken place, it was hoped to carry these out in January.

The Clerk reported on the recent presentation he had attended with other Clerks on the new contract with Amey. Any problems that were covered by the Amey contract would be directed to a central email address for clerks, Councillors & parishioners

could still use the streetscene e mail address or phone number. The clerk had raised monitoring of repairs requested, it was hoped to introduce software to enable viewing of defects & progress reports, as an interim measure Amey would send the clerk a monthly list for the parish similar to that sent to the Ward Councillor. An offer by Amey to carry out a parish inspection of highway matters had been taken up. It was hoped in future to create a better communication with the lengthsman. Information leaflets were given to councillors with surplus sent to DFR. It was important if any unsatisfactory work was observed that this was reported.

Councillor Rye reported she had spent the morning with Amey representative, they had toured the parish, maintenance items were discussed & recorded for future action.

Environmental Herefordshire Council has signed up to an ambitious target to reduce carbon emitted per person across the county by 13.1% over 3 years in response to climate change. They are looking for 3 parishes to pilot a carbon/energy reduction plan for their area between January & March next year. Councillors considered the information, due to the tight deadline there was insufficient time to arrange participation.

Precept

Council have received a request for the precept for 2010/2011 to be made by 31st December.

Election Charges following an amendment in legislation election costs incurred on behalf of parish councils can be recharged by Herefordshire Council.

For a casual vacancy with up to 500 electorate the estimated cost is £1000, uncontested election £35. The costs do not include the cost of printing/posting poll cards for a contested election, these are only issued at the request of the parish council & cost 35p card. At a combined election some of the costs will be shared & only a proportion of the costs would be recharged, e.g. 50% of the cost of the polling station & staff fees.

The clerk reported the **Balance at 30/09/2009** was Reserve Account £2222.49, Current Account £6865.65. A Refund for lengthsman scheme £1520.75 (to claim end Dec 09) would bring the Total= £8386.40 (Current Account)

Note in CA ; bursary for clerks training £150, capital to replace street light, election expenses, parish paths partnership approx £500. The reserve account was money for Brooklands ground improvement which has been discontinued.

Lengthsman scheme 09/10 = £3240 Spend to date £1520.75, **Balance to spend £1719.25- £320= £1399.25.**

Payments to year end March 31st 10; clerk salary =£748 + expenses, computer facilities £100, Hall Rental £120, Electricity for street light £30, Training Courses
Total approx £1100.

2010-2011

Insurance £320, Web site £100, Refuse Bags £20, Audit £200, Hire of Hall/electricity for heating £150, computer facilities £100, Parish Plan, Computer web site £100, Councillor Training/travel, Clerks salary + expenses, HALC subscription, Water sampling. Capital programmes had been recommended, consider Refuse vehicle £380.

Parish Plan, commitment of four meetings + feedback as required.

The clerk answered questions on the budget.

Councillor Thomas suggested expenditure may arise from the Parish Plan, ie spending from the investigatory work on speeding, improvements in road maintenance at the 7 worst blackspots, provision of a bus shelter, extend use of solar/energy efficient street lights, cost of water sampling, support for cycling/walking paths, continued development of web site, possible financial support to parish organisations who are committed to various improvements of their facilities.

Councillors discussed the budget & points raised, with the current economic situation in the country, the healthy state of the accounts, no items for capital expenditure Councillor James proposed the precept for 2010/11 was £1700, seconded by Councillor Thomas & carried unanimously. This would result in a decrease in Parishioners Council Tax for the Parish Rate element.

Parish Plan, an account for £33.60 had been received from Mr J Platts for mileage during the parish plan. Supplementary paper work indicated the costs were incurred by Colin Thomas. Councillor Thomas declared an interest & retired whilst this was discussed. Councillor Smith proposed a cheque for £33.60 was drawn, seconded by Councillor Hession & carried unanimously.

Police Report Whilst no reports of crime in Dorstone, the theft of heating oil, vehicles & scrap metal are a problem in the Golden Valley.

District Councillor Report Herefordshire Council have purchased offices at Plough Lane, it will sell 12 older offices with a potential saving of £1.4 million a year. Council

Leader has been appointed to board of Advantage West Midlands. There is a discretionary grant of up to £2000 towards the cost of projects that promote voluntary & community activity in the county. The new waste collection & disposal contract is bringing in 3 times the volumes of re-cyclates, there were a few hiccups, these are being resolved very quickly. Planning constitution has brought the start of the new planning rules to January. From January all applications will be run under the new system. Officers are required to contact local members to discuss applications and identify those which can go straight to delegated powers. The Schools task document has gone through cabinet with a recommendation that "schools by design" needs to be properly defined alongside what are sustainable numbers for primary & secondary schools.

Communications with Parishioners Councillor Thomas had prepared a short paper; a number of steps had been taken over the past twelve months to improve communications from the Parish Council, Agenda, minutes of Council Meetings, Newsletter, available on the website, these have given parishioners a clearer, better view of activities & actions of the council. He considered the work undertaken by the Council is not fully appreciated by parishioners, partly due to a lack of information, with people not having the time to read the council's minutes & certainly not attend meetings.

The publication of the Parish Plan will inevitably raise expectations, particularly as many of the action items rest with the Parish Council. Consideration should be given to publishing a regular update to report progress on both the Parish Plan & other actions taken by the council, at minimum intervals quarterly newsletter available on the website, inserts in parish magazines, edited version in Hereford Times. An additional update could be published if required. Actively providing information should help promote better understanding of the good work undertaken by the Council & informing parishioners about current, future issues & initiatives. Councillor Thomas volunteered to prepare updates for approval by the chairman.

The Clerk informed Councillor Thomas prior to his appointment councillors had been informed about Quality Parish Councils, one criteria the council has to demonstrate is communication with all sectors of the public.

Councillors discussed the paper, Councillor Gaze proposed the council accept Councillor Thomas offer to produce a newsletter which would be approved by the chairman, seconded by Councillor Hession & carried unanimously. This would be available to parishioners electronically, hard copy, with inserts in parish magazines & Hereford Times. Councillor Thomas indicated there would be no cost to the council.

Mobile Post Office/Orange Councillor Hession raised the inconvenience caused by the mobile post office having recently had no phone network support. Councillor Gaze reported there was no Orange signal in the area. The clerk was instructed to raise these matters with the Post Office & Orange.

Clerks Bursary The clerk had received notification that an application for £100 for a bursary towards training had been approved.

Dorstone Front Room, change of use of Shop/Post Office building, request to assist with application/finance for application.

Councillor Rye reported she had been asked by Dorstone Front room if the Parish Council would consider supporting a planning application for change of use of the building from a village shop to a community facility & permission for an exterior sign. DFR had raised with the Planning Office specifics on placing a sign, the notification was a result of enquiries made not of complaints or violation.

Whilst the Head of Planning would not actively pursue the change of use DFR had been informed that various grants require confirmation that appropriate planning is in place. DFR management group reluctantly conceded that they would go forward with advertising & change of use applications, a total cost of £430.

If the parish council submitted the application the fee is reduced by 50%.

DFR request the Parish Council consider submitting the application for change of use & advertisement consent on behalf of Dorstone Front Room.

DFR request the parish council to consider a donation of £167.50 for the change of use.

Whilst difficult financial times, the financial consideration should be considered on the work carried out by DFR as a significant contribution to the parish.

The clerk indicated he was surprised change of use was required, when the building was originally in use computer facilities were available for community use.

Councillors considered the applications, Councillor Gaze proposed the parish council make the applications for change of use & advertising consent on behalf of Dorstone Front Room & contribute £167.50 towards the cost of change of use, seconded by Councillor Smith & carried unanimously.

Councillor Price requested permission to speak, this was granted. Councillor Price indicated having heard the application & discussion he would clarify if permission for change of use was necessary. Councillors agreed to delay making the application until Councillor Price had reported back.

There was no further business, Councillor Rye thanked those who had attended & closed the meeting.

Signed.....
Councillor P Rye

January 2010