



# Doddinghurst Parish Council



Website: [www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk](http://www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

Welcome to the October issue of the Parish Council Newsletter. This edition covers events of summer 2015 and activities pending in 2016.

### Children's Play Area

Following a number of requests from residents new seating was installed in the Play Area at the end of July. The Parish Council is planning further work in late 2016 to replace the wooden play chips with improved play surfacing. We will seek grant funding for the work, which is expected to cost over £70,000.

### Village Flower Tubs

Dotted around the village are a number of flower tubs that are managed by the Parish Council. The flowers are grown and planted by our Councillors but they wouldn't survive if it wasn't for the volunteers who water them, so many thanks to those of you who do this work free of charge.

## 2016 Parish Council Elections

It is now just a few short months to the full council elections that will take place in May 2016. Doddinghurst has eleven Councillors and, as many of the current members have served many years, it is likely that a number of vacancies will arise. If eleven eligible people stand in May they will automatically become Councillors without the need for a ballot. Doddinghurst has not had a contested election in over 20 years meaning that there has been no public ballot in all that time. If you would like to help the Parish Council by volunteering to stand as a Councillor please contact the office and we can give you a full briefing on what the work involves and the duties and powers the Council hold. The Parish Council is not connected to any church but is the first tier of Local Government and raises its funds mainly through Council Tax precept.

## **Christmas Buffet**

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 the Parish Council will be hosting a Christmas Buffet in St Margaret's Hall. The event is open to all residents and will be an ideal opportunity for anyone thinking about becoming a Parish Councillor to come and meet the current councillors in an informal setting. The evening starts at 8.00pm with wine, soft drinks and a food buffet so please come along and meet the team.

## **Entrance Height Restrictors**

At the entrance to the Playing and Recreational fields, where we have experienced incursions of Travellers over the past 6 months, we have installed height restrictors to prevent caravans gaining relatively easy access to the fields. As the Hatton Garden security deposit theft in London demonstrated nothing can be totally secure but with security posts and height restrictors in place entry will more difficult. We still have to enable access for tall vehicles for maintenance so the restrictor arm can be rotated and locked in an open position. We would request that residents are vigilant and report any damage or suspicious behaviour concerning these entrances to the Parish Office.

## **A Thank You**

One of the themes in this Newsletter is the need for Volunteers so a great big Thank You to Tom Kent of *Total Landscapes and Groundworks Ltd* who took on the challenge of installing the field entrance height restrictors this summer and in weather that broke all records for rain in August - and free of charge for his firm's labour. Tom is based in the village and comes highly commended. Thank You Tom.

## **Local Development Plan (LDP)**

The Local Development Plan sets out what housing (and business) land is available and therefore where growth of the Borough can take place. By the time this Newsletter is released the Borough Council should be unveiling its draft plan for the development of land in the Borough. The plan is now overdue and without it there are few controls the Borough Council can put on development. The Borough Council has to undertake a consultation on the draft and it is important that people are aware of it and comment on the contents fully as numerous plots of land around the village have been "volunteered" for development by land owners as a significant profit

is to be made by the designation of greenbelt meadows, woods and brownfield areas as residential building land. The Borough Council has a no-options directive from the government to build several thousand additional homes in the Borough over the next 15 years. Development has to be sustainable so a Sustainability Plan that goes with the Development Plan is equally important. An options document was circulated in December 2014 and January 2015 as a precursor to the LDP, which detailed the possible ways the Borough could tackle the growth challenge it has been set and all residents were invited to comment. This is not a trivial document and does require some time to understand it fully.

### **Footpaths and Volunteers**

Old soldiers would tell you to never volunteer for anything but Cllr Alan Farrow did and got stuck in to trim the village footpaths this year of nettles and brambles, so many thanks to Alan for his dedication and work. Once funded by Essex County Council the village footpaths need regular maintenance to keep them passable so if you feel like some healthy exercise in the great outdoors please ring the office. More than that we are planning to re-use a large amount of wood chip on the Nature Trail from the Play Area in the

Autumn period of 2016 and will need help to spread the wood chips along the Trail that runs around the football pitches, so if you are feeling rakish let us know and we will put your name on our little list.

### **Village Post Office**

Doddinghurst Post Office on the Doddinghurst Road is to close very soon as the Postmistress is retiring, however a site for the new Post Office (Local) has been agreed and will take over the role of the old Post Office when it closes. It will be very sad to see the Convenience Store and Post Office on the Doddinghurst Road shut its doors. It has been there since at least the 1970's. The future of the site is uncertain at the time of writing but the location of the new Post Office will be in Budgens and will give longer opening hours and the same domestic service as at present. One very special point to note is that when this Newsletter is published there will be a Public Consultation in progress in the Village about the change taking place with the Post Office. The opening of the new service will be dependent on a positive outcome of the Consultation but if it's a negative result there is no Plan B for an alternative location!

## Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

2016 heralds the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who, on the 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015, became the longest reigning Monarch in British history. The Parish Council would like to mark the occasion with a Celebration event for all the village at the Village Hall and, weather permitting, on the field behind the Hall. So please pencil in Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016 13.00 to 17.00 to come along and take part.

## Parish Council Meeting Dates

The Parish Council normally meet monthly and welcomes members of the public who wish to attend. The next six meetings for the 2015/6 year will be held on:

- Oct 21<sup>st</sup> 2015 - General Purpose
- Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 - Full Council
- Nov 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 - Finance and Resource
- Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 - St Margaret's Buffet
- Jan 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 - Full Council
- Feb 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 - General Purpose.

For further information contact us in the Parish Office.

## Parish Council Officers

### **Roger Blake**

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

### **Clarrie Tremain**

Deputy Clerk

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For more information about the Council and the

## Doddinghurst Parish Council

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