Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, at 20.00 in the Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.

Present: Clirs. Mrs D. Dicker, Mrs D Rogers Harrison, Mrs. J Le Page, Mr G Smith, Mr. P Arnell, Ms K Pond, Mr A. Smith, Mr

D. Potter

- 1. \*\* Election of Chairman and completion of declaration of acceptance. Clr D Dicker was nominated by Cllr A. Smith, seconded by Cllr G. Smith and elected as Chairman. Clr Dicker read and signed the acceptance of office declaration. All Cllrs have now signed the Declaration of Office.
- Apologies for Absence: Apologies received from Cllr T. Brooks, Cllr. M. Capon; Brentwood Borough Councillors Ms. C. Gelderbloem, Mr K. Parker, Mr C. Poppy and Essex County Councillor Lesley Wagland
- 3. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda. None
- **4.** Proposals and Resolution for the appointment of a Vice Chairman. Cllr. G. Smith was nominated by Cllr A. Smith, seconded by Cllr J. Le Plage and elected as Vice Chairman.

The committee membership was established as follows:

- → GP Committee: Cllrs G Smith, Mrs J Le Page, Mrs. D Rogers-Harrison, P. Arnell, D. Potter, Mrs K. Pond and Mrs T. Brooks
- → Planning Committee: Cllrs Mrs. Dicker, M Capon, A. Smith and D. Potter
- → Finance & Resource Committee: Cllrs Mrs. D Dicker, G Smith, J Le Page, M Capon, A Smith.
- → Allotment Committee: Clrs Mrs. D Dicker, P. Arnell, Mrs. J Le Page (plus three allotments holders).
- 6. Resolved: Approved Appointment of Key Council Representatives.
  - → BBPCA Cllr Mrs D. Dicker
  - → Village Hall Committee Cllr P. Arnell
  - ▲ BBC Parish Liaison Committee Cllr Mrs. D Dicker
  - Village Correspondent to be decided at future meeting
  - Village Bus Club Chairman- Mr D. Schuster
  - Bus & Transport Cllr M. Capon and Cllr D. Dicker
  - ◆ Youth Cllr G Smith
  - .

- → Health Matters Cllr J. Le
- → Plage
- Police Matters Cllr D. Dicker
- Dagwood Trust Cllr D Potter
- Tree Warden Mrs Gail
- ★ Farrow(tbc)
- ✦ Highways –Cllr G. Smith Footpaths tbc
- 7. Resolved: Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 4th March 2021 were approved.
- 8. Information:

Clerks report for March and April 2021:

- Recruitment for a new Clerk and RFO took place at beginning of May and I am pleased to introduce Carly Niyazi as your new Clerk and RFO who started last week on May 11<sup>th</sup> 2021. Carly has started her Induction.
- 2. All staff have continued to work from home following Government guidelines.
- 3. Remote Meeting legislation introduced last year by the Government has not been renewed and so all Council meetings have now reverted to Face to Face from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 hence holding this meeting in the Village Hall later than usual, observing full social distancing.
- 4. Parish Office/Room. The creche returned on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and the F&R meeting will take place in the Parish room on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, again observing social distancing. Maintenance has recently been carried out on the cupboard door locks, the letterbox, Parish Office lock and a broken downpipe. The builder has now completed the refurbishment of the

- Ladies toilet which took longer than planned because of supplier delays with the door and drying plasterwork. The creche are very pleased with it.
- 5. Risk assessments were all completed except the Parish Office risk assessment which was delayed because of lockdown and the building works so this will now be completed in readiness for re-opening the Office.
- 6. Scribe. The Accounts package is now being used and the Clerk, deputy clerk and RFO have completed the initial training on the Scribe Cemetery package which is now being purchased.
- 7. Children's Play Area DPC Insurers confirmed that weekly Parish Council and an annual ROSPA inspection is required. Notice was given to Brentwood on the 6 weekly PI inspections and Broadmead Leisure are carrying out bimonthly inspections and the first one was completed on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and maintenance has been agreed. The play area remains open and is still being cleaned on a weekly basis. DPC have received 2 complaints since the last meeting. The first regarding the cross trainer received on 8<sup>th</sup> March and the second regarding poor surface maintenance around the zipwire received on 8<sup>th</sup> April have both been discussed with DPC Insurers and the latter one is under further investigation.
- 8. Burials very quiet at the moment. No new burials.
- 9. Allotments Allotment renewals are complete and we are holding a small waiting list. The allotments were broken into

Page 2 of 2Page 1 of 3

Page 7b-2021

- over the weekend of 10<sup>th</sup> April and again on 14<sup>th</sup> April to gain access to storage containers on the farm. The gate has now been repaired to make it extra secure at a cost of £360 plus VAT.
- 10. Annual Tree survey. The Tree work was completed in March.
- 11. Pear Tree Field. An email has now been received from our insurers regarding help with carrying out a risk assessment re the digging out a trench at the rear of Pear tree field which was discussed at the last meeting. Cllr Gerry Smith and the Clerk have yet to research local solutions to this problem.
- 12. Pear tree pond area. The replacement tree that a resident kindly offered to buy to replace the one cut down last year was planted on 9<sup>th</sup> March thanks to the help of Cllr Farrow and Gail Farrow. We are also in dialogue with the Ehren family about refurbishing the bench and replacing the plaque in memory of Eileen, a former DP Councillor, who passed away before Christmas. The contractor has now started the refurbishment.
- 13. Highways. Limited news on logged highway issues including the Budgens issue. It has been confirmed that the pavements in The Gardens will be repaired in 2022/23 highways budget. We have a new complaint regarding the 30+ pothole issues in Rectory Chase which I have forwarded to Cllr Wagland. Rubbish clearance of the Z bends on Doddinghurst Road was completed by a resident without our knowledge.
- 14. Football contract negotiations have resumed since play restarted recently.
- 15. The Brentwood Community Connect Hub (Trailer) visited Doddinghurst Friday 16th April 2021.
- 16. Freedom of Information Request on Litter and Fly Tipping has been completed.
- 17. Invites have gone out for the Annual Parish Meeting which takes place on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May in the Village Hall at 7.30pm
- 18. Bus Trips are being planned for the future easing of restrictions.
- 9. Information: Noted. Schedule of correspondence received for March and April 2021.
- 10. Information: Noted. Dates and times of future council meetings see Calendar of meetings for 2021. In line with recent Government legislation that prohibits online Council meetings from 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 meeting dates had to be changed to allow them to take place in the Covid secure village hall. Dates from September need to be reviewed according to the latest Government Covid advice.
- 11. Financial Reports and Minutes and Feedback from Committees attended by Councillors.
  - (a) Information: Noted Financial Reports for March and April 2021including RFO report:
    - a) Barclays Bank account funds on 3<sup>rd</sup>May 2021 stood at £160,383.18p. In addition, there was £18,188.65 held in the Santander Bank and £35.16 held as petty cash making £178,606.99 in total (this excludes

any accrued VAT refund and pending transactions of -£12,953.79). Overall, the funds are up by £27,904.37 from the £150,702.62 held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. The rise in income is mainly due to the receipt of the half year precept in April 2021

- b) A VAT refund claim for Q4 (Jan, Feb, March 2021) amounting to £1,1047.11 has been claimed from, and reimbursed by, HMRC.
- c) The Parish precept demand for 2021/22 of £76,014 was processed and in the March 2021 Council Tax demand Doddinghurst was shown to have obtained a 1.5% precept increase when a zero increase in the Band D rate had been sought. The error arose as a result of Brentwood Borough Council issuing the wrong Tax Base information to the Parishes of the Borough. The Borough Council have admitted to the error which was to fail to factor into the information supplied their Collection rate of 98.5%. As a result, Doddinghurst Band D rate rose by 1.5% from £62.45 to £63.40 per year and the village residents, as a whole, have "overpaid" by £1140 for 2021/22. Repayment of an average of £0.95p per resident household, to approximately 1200 dwellings, was considered impractical and the F&R committee may consider how else to remedy the matter.
- d) The Doddinghurst PC "Scribe" finance system build, and data entry, has been completed. As it is a cloud-based system access to councillors for read only information is available on request. For this period's reporting, which covers the end of 2020/21 and the beginning of 2021/22, Sage has been used for the financial reports. At the moment Sage and Scribe are running in parallel until the Scribe reporting arrangements have been finalised and the audit for 2020/21 completed on Sage.
- e) The external audit for 2020/21 has commenced and the period for public consultation announced with notices deployed. The Bank Reconciliation, AGAR form and Variance Analysis have been completed. The internal audit is booked for the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 with Michael Raistrick. The F&R committee is to review the Council's governance compliance on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The AGAR form will need to be completed at the full PC meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 as the paperwork has to be submitted to the external auditor before the end of June 2021.

Page 7c - 2021

- (b) ♥ Resolved: Approved. The appointment of Internal auditor, Michael Raistrick (c) ♥ Resolved: Approved. Schedule of Payments for March and April 2021.
- (d) Resolved: Approved Clerks authority to respond to planning applications on behalf of the council, with Cllr David Potter advising during Clerks probationary period.
- **(e)Information /Resolved:** The latest schedules of Planning Applications received and decisions taken up to end of April 2021
- (f) Information. Noted GP Committee Meeting 29th April 2021
- **(g)Information: Other Meetings attended by Councillors, report back to the full council**. Cllr Debbie Dicker gave an update on the last BBPCA meeting
- 12. Public Participation. The meeting was suspended to allow Borough Councillors, County Councillors, and members of the public to speak.
- **13. Information:** Doddinghurst Parish Council Election was held at the beginning of May 2021, having been delayed one year because of the Covid pandemic. It was an uncontested Election with 10 Councillors elected. There is now one vacancy that will be filled by co-option at a future meeting.
- **14.** \*\*Resolved: Approved. The adoption of The General Power of Competence as DPC meets the conditions required to adopt the Power of General Competence (elected councillors>2/3, CiLCA qualified Clerk re. section 8(2) of the Localism Act 2011) for the year 2021/2022
- **15. Resolved:** Approved. The Insurance quote from BHIB for 2021/2022 from renewal date of 1st June 2021 was approved.
- **16. PRESOIVED:** Approved. The purchase of two new solid state laptops one for the new Clerk who started on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and one for the Deputy Clerk, set up of both by external IT consultant and purchase of two MS Office licences £1305 exc. VAT

- 17. \*\*Resolved: Approved the EALC/NALC annual subscription renewal fee £616.83
- 18. \*\*Resolved: Council discussed a 50% contribution towards the cost (quote estimated to be max. £200) of fitting a replacement light to the side of the shops adjacent to the Off Licence. It was proposed by Councillor G. Smith that DPC will fund up to £200 to source and install a non mains powered light and this was seconded by Cllr Alan Smith and approved. It was noted that the Pharmacy has offered to make a contribution to the cost.
- 19. \*\*Resolution: Council discussed the list of potential projects in 2021/22 and the next stage of the Parish Office refurbishment. Cllr G. Smith proposed that the Council agree to the offer by the RFO to scope stage 2 of the refurbishment works for 2021/22. This was seconded by Cllr D. Potter and agreed by all.
- 20. Other Urgent Information (No council actions /letters/undertakings permissible on this item) Business not requiring a resolution/ action. Cllr Dicker updated the Council on her visit to thank previous Councillors Alan Farrow and Adrian Oliver who stood down last year. Roger Blake, RFO was thanked for his work on the Precept discrepancy with Brentwood Borough Council and the outgoing Clerk, Ann-Marie Smith was thanked for her 3 years with the Council.

## The meeting closed at 21.40

S. Didus

Minutes signed: Date: 7th June 2021