

Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on 7th June 2021, at 20.00 in the Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker, Mrs D. Rogers Harrison, Mrs J. Le Page, Mr G. Smith, Mr P. Arnell, Mr M. Capon, Mr A. Smith, Mr D. Potter, Mrs K. Pond, Mrs C. Niyazi (Clerk), Mr R. Blake (RFO/Clerk), Mrs C. Tremain (deputy Clerk); Brentwood Borough Councillors Ms. C. Gelderbloem, Mr C. Poppy, and Essex County Councillor Lesley Wagland.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Mrs T. Brooks; Brentwood Borough Councillor Mr K. Parker
2. **Resolved:** Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on the 17th May 2021 were approved and signed.
3. **Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda.** None
4. **Information: Clerks report for May-June 2021:** Carly Niyazi had tendered her resignation after 3 weeks.
 - a) Firstly, I would like to start by saying, a huge thank-you to you all for welcoming me into your Parish Council. You have all been extremely accommodating and helpful especially Ann-Marie, Roger, Debbie and Clarrie! I have learnt so much over this past month! It's incredible how much time, dedication, planning and thought goes into your Parish and your residents are extremely lucky to have you all on board. It's with great sadness that unfortunately as this present time in my life I cannot give this role the full time and dedication it needs and deserves whilst running a busy young family of 5 at home. I do wish you all the very best, and I'm sure I will see you around the village in the future.
 - b) May 2021 saw the departure of our wonderful Clerk Ann-Marie, she has worked extremely hard over these last 3 years especially the few months, with the Election process, recruitment of myself, FC, GP, and F&R meetings back-to-back. She has worked tirelessly and was a credit to our council. So, on behalf of us all, I would like to say a massive thank you to Ann-Marie for her amazing work, and wish her every success in the future and with her move to the beautiful Lake District.
 - c) All staff have continued to work from home following Government guidelines.
 - d) 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, observing full social distancing.
 - e) Parish Office/Room. The F&R meeting took place in the Parish room on Thursday 20th 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.
 - f) 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.
 - g) 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.
 - h) 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 bi-monthly inspections and the first one was completed on 13th 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 8th March and the second regarding poor surface maintenance around the zipwire received on 8th April have both been discussed with DPC Insurers and the latter one is under further investigation.
 - i) We have a Co-Option to the Parish Council Vacancy and the advertisement is to be placed on the notice boards, and website.
 - j) Burials – very quiet at the moment. No new burials.
 - k) Allotments – Allotment renewals are complete and we are holding a small waiting list.
 - l) Annual Tree survey. The Tree work was completed in March.
 - m) 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.
 - n) Peartree pond area. Gail Farrow is happy to continue as the Tree warden for our village and is stepping down from footpaths. The contractor has now finished the refurbishment of the Ehren family memorial bench. Nicola from the Ehren family has emailed in saying she's very pleased with the refurbishment. As a gratitude the family has kindly donated £200 to the council. It was suggested at our last GP meeting that the donation from the Ehren family could be put towards two trees being planted around Peartree pond area. Also, it was agreed by the GP committee that a budget of up to £200 will be given for the two trees to be planted as a sign of hope during this pandemic. These trees will be planted in winter. Gail and Allen have kindly agreed to complete this for us around November time. The trees can be pre ordered now or they can buy at a later date.
 - o) 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.
 - p) A letter is in the process of being sent to the Mr Clare with regards to the Solar Light fixing on the side of the building on Church Lane. We await his response.
 - q) Football contract negotiations have resumed since play restarted recently.
 - r) Freedom of Information Request on Litter and Fly Tipping has been completed.
 - s) Bus Trips are being planned for the future easing of restrictions.

5. 🖐️ **Resolved:** It was agreed to appoint Mr Roger Blake as the Clerk and RFO to the Council with immediate effect until a replacement Clerk and RFO is appointed and inducted to the role.

6. **Information:** Schedule of correspondence received up to 27th May 2021- Noted

7. Financial Reports and Minutes and Feedback from Committees

(a) **Information:** Noted Financial Reports for May 2021 including RFO report

(b) 🖐️ **Resolution** to approve the Schedule of Payments for May 2021. Approved and signed.

(c) **Information and 🖐️ Resolution:** Planning Applications for May 2021

21 Peartree Lane was identified as an issue as the proper planning procedure seems to have failed in that the Parish Council was not notified by the planning case office of his decision to approve the application. If the Parish Council had been told this fact, at the time it should have been notified, Parish Councillors would have called the application in for a full review with Brentwood Borough Council Planning Committee. The Parish Council expressed its dis-appointment that the process had failed and that Brentwood Planning were being reluctant to recognise the problem.

(d) **Information:** Finance and Resource Committee of the 20th May 2021. Minutes noted

(e) **Information:** Feedback from Members relating to Committees attended since last meeting. None attended.

8. **Information:** The 2020/21 Audit. 🖐️ **Resolution** To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2021. **Approved and signed off.**

9. 🖐️ **Resolution:** To approve and sign the Accounting Statements for the Annual Return year ended 31st March 2021. **Approved and signed off.**

10. 🖐️ **Resolution:** To approve Doddinghurst Parish Council's Annual Report for 2020/21. Approved for issue.

11. **Information:** Co-option process to fill a Parish Councillor vacancy. The vacancy is to be advertised and the matter will be determined at the next full council meeting in July 2021 subject to candidate vetting by Brentwood Borough Council.

12. 🖐️ **Information and Resolution:** To determine if and when the Parish Council premises can return to normal working arrangements. The Council decided to wait until the government position is clearer as the Delta variant of the virus is causing concern and the target date of the 21st June may have to be revised.

13. 🖐️ **Information and Resolution:** To approve an annual Chairman's Allowance. Approved an annual allowance of £500 for 2021/22.

14. 🖐️ **Information and Resolution:** To agree the role of the Parish Council Village Correspondent.

Approved: A proposal to set up a working party with the Chairman of the Parish Council as its chair was approved as was a new Communications Strategy 2021/22 (with an amendment to Page 4 item 8 where "These will include" was changed to "These may include"), and a Social Media policy as Appendix A. The details of the objectives of the Working Party were agreed as defined in the Communications Implementation Plan as Appendix B. The membership of the working party was approved as: Councillors Michael Capon, Gerry Smith, Katie Pond and Deborah Dicker. The group is to determine a date for their inaugural meeting. Councillor Smith asked that the Clerk also be invited to attend the meeting.

15. **Other urgent information** (No council actions/letters/undertakings permissible on this item).

Comments from Borough Councillors and members of the public.

Cllr Leslie Wagland reported her new responsibilities with Essex County Council and that the Locality fund of £10,000 had been agreed. Cllr Cliff Poppy reported on the work being done by Brentwood Borough Council in the purchase of Becket Place, new play park provision, new pavilion with cafe and soft play area, and the Brentwood Centre Main Hall in use as a vaccination centre. In a discussion on the poor state of pavements and carriageways in the Village Councillor Wagland stated that it was imperative for defects to be reported on ECC highways defects website and that it was possible to report a "cluster" of faults, for example where a series of potholes had developed along a stretch of road.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Minutes signed:

Date: 5th July 2021