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**Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on**

**3rd March 2022, at 19.30 in the Parish Room (adj. Village Hall), Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.**

**Present: Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker (Chairman), Mrs J. LePage, Mr D. Potter, Mr M Capon, Mr G. Smith, Mr A. Smith, Mrs D. Rogers-Harrison, , Mr R. McCheyne and Mrs T. Brooks**

**In attendance:**

**Brentwood Borough Councillors: Ms C. Gelderbloem and Mr K. Parker County Councillor: Mrs L.Wagland.**

**Clerk: Mrs C. Fuller**

**Deputy Clerk: Mrs C. Tremain**

**Project Officer: Mr R. Blake**

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs. Mrs K. Pond and P. Arnell. Borough Cllrs K. Parker and C. Gelderbloem.

1.  **Resolved:** Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 27th January 2022 were approved and signed.

1. **Declaration of interests from members of any items on this agenda:** Cllrs. Dicker, A.Smith and LePage declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 13 as they are Trustees of Doddinghurst Village Hall.

1. **Public Participation:** Members of the public were invited to speak. None.

1. **Clerks report for January & February 2022:**

The reported was noted, including financial reports for the period.

# a) FUNDS HELD AT END OF FEBRUARY 2022

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barclays Bank | £143,437.94 |
| Santander | £18,188.65 |
| Sub total | £161,626.59 |
| Less unpresented payments | £1,161.50 |
| Total | £160,465.09 |

# b) BANK SIGNATORIES – SANTANDER

Ex-Cllrs Farrow and Bateson along with Roger Blake have been removed from the Santander signature mandate and the Clerk/RFO has been added. Next step is to add Cllrs Capon and LePage. This is in hand.

# c) BURIAL GROUND UPDATE

Since the last council meeting there have been no interments.

Exclusive Rights of Burial are sold for 30 years and our oldest plots are now 30 years old. As the time approaches, the Deputy Clerk has been writing to each owner asking whether they wish to renew.

If families do wish to renew, we are seeking advice on how to do this legally (hence our recommendation to join the ICCM for access to this advice) and on the Scribe system. A small administration fee is charged for this.

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If families do not wish to renew, the ownership of the plot reverts to the Parish Council.

# d) ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

Since the last council meeting one person has left resulting in one half-plot being available.

# e) TREES

Two trees were lost in Storm Eunice. One (recreation ground) has been cut down to ground level and removed. The other (land beyond recreation ground) has been cut back to clear the path.

# f) SMALL CAR PARK

One quote for re-surfacing is still awaited.

1.  **Resolved** to approve the Schedule of Payments for January & February 2022.

1. **Schedule of Correspondence** received up to the end of February 2022 was noted. It was further noted that most correspondence comes to the Parish Council via email and the Schedule of Correspondence only includes correspondence received via the post and therefore this schedule was not truly representative. It was not practical to list all correspondence for members (email and post) and therefore in future there would be no Schedule of Correspondence produced, but the Clerk would bring any items requiring Council decision or action to future meetings.

1. **Planning Applications:** Planning applications for January & February were noted and approved.

1. **Phase 2 Refurbishment Work Update:**

The Project Officer reported that the Working Party had met twice since the last Council meeting and he tabled his latest report. Points to note:

* + For practicality the work will be approached in a step by step way and split into: work to upgrade the Parish Room, new electrics including power saving and ‘smart’ technology, thermal insulation upgrade, and refurbishment of the rest of the building including removing the showers and upgrading the Parish Office, gents toilet and corridor.
  + The refurbishment of the rest of the building being the most expensive part of the project would be advertised on the Government’s Contract Finder website for which we have now been registered (required for posting notices of tenders over £25,000 inc VAT).
  + Work to the Parish Room can be a stand-alone project, although some suppliers have yet to submit quotes.
  + An area of concern is the possible lack of resources to carry out the larger part of the project due to steeply rising costs and availability of materials and labour. This would also have implications on the timing of the work and could potentially push it into the autumn which would affect the hirers.

It was agreed to proceed with the Parish Room refurbishment and obtain quotes for the rest of the projects. The Working Party will report back with the quotes in order to get best value. The Project Officer asked the Working Party to choose from carpet samples for the Parish Room.

There followed a discussion on the long-term future of the Village Hall/Parish Council building and whether it could be re-purposed to include homes for older people or those **Page 19c - 2022**

with special needs or extra care. These suggestions could be built in to the Doddinghurst Neighbourhood Plan.

County Cllr. Wagland reported that Essex Housing builds homes for those in need, including those with learning disabilities. They are looking to build ‘up’ eg on top of libraries or other buildings and offered to ask them their views on building on Village Halls.

1. **Minutes and Feedback from Committees** 
   1. **General Purposes Committee** meeting held on 16th February. Minutes were noted and decisions accepted. Cllr. McCheyne reported that the pond in Warren Lane has not been registered and the Parish Council needs to investigate who owns it. He reported that the footpath alongside Bentley Golf Club is being closed off and this also requires investigation.
   2. **Communications Working Party** meeting held on 10th February.Minutes were noted and decisions accepted. Cllrs. Capon and Pond met with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk subsequently to consider the feasibility of what would be possible in-house with existing software. They considered other Council’s websites and will report back to the next meeting of the Working Party.
   3. **Planning Committee** meeting held on 24th February. Minutes were tabled, noted and decisions accepted. The Clerk confirmed that the letter of objection to planning application 22/00208/FUL (Two bungalows on land between Brooklands and 21 Rectory Chase) had been send to the planning authority. The Clerk had sent a copy of the letter to the residents who attended the meeting. It was agreed that monthly Planning Committee meetings should take place and that the remit of the Committee should be widened to include footpaths and transport.
   4. **Gigaclear** Cllr. G. Smith and the Clerk met the Gigaclear Community Engagement Manager and received information on the forthcoming works to lay cables in the village. The Parish Council and Gigaclear will publicise the timetable of works but members agreed not to host a public meeting.
   5. **Footpaths** Cllr. Capon reported that he and the Clerk had a productive meeting with the owner of Kingfisher Farm in Dagwood Lane who is happy to allow limited access onto his land and is willing to explore the creation of some sort of Public Right of Way to formalise this. Landowners can enter into agreements to create a new public path. These agreements can be with the Parish Council (Highway Act 1980 s.30), or with the County Council (s.25). If the agreement is with the County Council the path would become maintainable by them.

The unmade section of Peartree Lane is designated as ‘unmaintained highway’ – a right of way marked as a private road.

ECC believes, but there is no evidence, that when Brook Lane was created in the 1920’s it included an order giving rights of thoroughfare. The current status is being checked by ECC.

Cllr. Capon continues his research with ECC and will keep the Planning Committee informed.

1. **Reports from Borough & County Councillors** Cllr. Wagland:
   * Asked for potholes to be reported.
   * The Locality Fund (£10,000) is back and each Councillor will have £5,000 each to distribute locally. A further £5,000 will be pooled with four Councillors to achieve more locally.
   * Essex Community Foundation can be applied for using match-funding if wished.

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1. **Security Patrols**

Members considered the additional information provided on the services of S-Type Security, including testimonials from other Councils and  **Resolved** to invite S-Type Security to give a presentation as soon as possible to members on their services. Neighbouring Parish Councils Stondon Massey and Kelvedon Hatch to be invited, along with representatives from the local shops.

1. **Village Hall**

Cllrs. Dicker, LePage and A. Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item and did not vote. Cllr. G. Smith chaired this item.

The Village Hall has requested a grant to assist with upkeep and utility bills but had not asked for a specific sum. Each member was asked to comment. It was noted that the Parish Council pays for its share of electricity. This is tracked by way of a dedicated electricity meter situated in the Village Hall.

 **Resolution**: To agree in principle to give an annual grant to assist with running the Village Hall, but to ask the Village Hall to suggest a specific sum for consideration.

1. **Bus Network Reviews**

It was noted that Essex County Council is carrying out a countywide review on how the local bus network could be improved. Online public survey closes 25th March. This to be publicised to residents.

1. **Platinum Jubilee**

Cllr. LePage updated members on plans for the Platinum Jubilee Event to be held on 5th June. So far the following has been booked: food stall, marquee, band, bouncy castle, magician, stilt walker, cream teas, and two school choirs.

1. **Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management**  **Resolved** to subscribe for one year. Cost £95.00.

1. **Other urgent information** (No council actions/letters/undertakings permissible on this item).
   * There are large potholes in the car park in front of the local shops. Land ownership is being investigated.
   * The Waterwork Springs exhibition went well. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council needs to be fully involved in the Transport Plan, environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance. Cllr. Russell will be setting up a meeting in due course.

**The meeting closed at 21.37**

**Minutes signed: Date: 12th May 2022**