


Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 19.30 in the Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker (Chairman), Mr M. Capon, Mr P Arnell, Mr R. McCheyne, Mr A. Smith, Mrs D. Rogers-Harrison and Mr D. Potter.

**Also Present: Mrs C Fuller – Clerk/RFO
Mrs C Tremain – Deputy Clerk
Borough Councillor K. Parker
County Councillor L. Wagland**

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies received from Cllrs. K. Pond, G. Smith, J. LePage & T. Brooks
2. **Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda.**
None.
3.  **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 12th January 2023**
Approved and signed by the Chairman

4. Clerk's Report for February 2023

a) Funds held at end of February 2023

Barclays Bank	£135,057.26
Petty Cash	£80.41
Santander	£18,190.47
Barclaycard	-£123.03
Sub-total	£153,205.11
Less unrepresented payments	£778.51
Total	£152,426.60

- b) Bank Signatories Santander – the application to add Cllrs. Capon and LePage is still ongoing and proving problematic as documents submitted to Santander had been lost.
- c) Bank Signatories Barclays – mandate change must be done online and, as above, is proving extremely problematic.
- d) Burial Ground Update – The Jeffreys bench is being repaired.
- e) Allotments Update – see minutes of meeting held on 8th February.
- f) Office BT & Broadband- rebate for rental for the fault period along with 2 months rental as compensation has now been implemented and our account is in credit.
- g) Parish Council Building – External doors & gents toilet window have been fitted. New smoke alarm system will be installed week commencing 20th March in line with recommendation in the risk assessment. A second quote for refurbishing the gents toilet is being sought.
- h) Risk Assessments – all except Footpaths have been completed and submitted to the Deputy Clerk. Footpaths will be completed in better weather.
- i) Recreation Ground – Cross trainer has been ordered. Replacement zip wire seat has been ordered. Top of 'hump' to be inspected by Broadmead Leisure. Two new notices for the gates are on order.
- j) Bus Service – the meeting to discuss the No.61 bus and other potential future services has been postponed to later in the year. It was noted that the current contract runs until July 2024.

- k) Defibrillator – the replacement battery has been fitted into the machine outside Budgens so it is fully functional. The battery will last for 2 years, but the machine itself is now obsolete and therefore a new one will need to be purchased at that time. Members noted the decision by the GP Committee (15/2/23) not to have a second defibrillator in the village, and did not accept that decision. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes with a view to placing it on the outside of the Parish Office.
- l) Website – the new website hosted by Netwise is now online. Visitors to the old address are redirected automatically to the new one.

5. Financial Reports

Noted and approved

- a) Financial Reports for January & February 2023.
- b) Schedule of Payments and Receipts for January & February 2023.

6. Public Participation

Cllr. Parker reported:

- Brentwood Borough Council has set its budget with a 3% increase.
- The Waterwork Springs development is progressing and planners are going through conditions. The site has been cleared and hoarding fence erected to combat vandalism. More contamination was found via boreholes and, although expensive to clear (nearly £3m) not problematic. All properties will be large, priced up to £1.2m.

Cllr. Potter asked for a meeting with the developers to receive a timetable of works and information on the reinstatement/stewardship of the woodland. Cllr. Parker will arrange this and liaise with the Clerk.

Cllr. Potter suggested a site visit and stated the importance of monitoring planning conditions including improvements to the road, landscaping and the community woodland. The developer should be engaging with the Parish Council and residents.

Cllr. Smith asked why trees were being cut down in Ongar Road (ex-Joy Fook site). Cllr. Parker is not aware of any reason, other than to open up the aspect.

Cllr. Potter raised a concern that new gates were being installed at a property in Wyatts Green Road near the river.

Cllr. Wagland arrived at the meeting and reported:

- Essex County Council has put up its Council Tax but not to the full amount that could have been levied.
- Potholes continue to be fixed. Cllr. Dicker reported that some had re-opened in Doddinghurst Road. Weather conditions play a part, but ECC is looking at various ways of repairing. Smaller ones can be patched but larger ones require a road closure, which currently results in a wait of 9 months.
- The booking of waste site visits by the public is a trial. Kent operates a similar scheme and fly-tipping has decreased as a result. She reported that the trial has been started in response to both user and neighbour complaints, mainly about queues. There will be no cost-saving to ECC as a result of a booking system, but it will ensure those who wish to use the site will get a slot. It is possible to book online and visit on the same day, but one cannot book same day on the phone at weekends. Commercial users have always had to book. Blue badge holders or visitors on foot do not need to book.
- ECC has been criticised for its communications on this issue. Cllr. Wagland asked for suggestions as to how this could be improved.
- Schools admissions data will be out shortly and for the third year around 97% will receive their first choice.

7. Feedback from Committees

- a) Planning Committee – 30th January. Minutes and actions were noted. Members noted the report on applications decided, pending decision, and new applications, which was tabled at the meeting.
Cllr. Dicker stated her extreme disappointment at the appeal inspector allowing a bungalow to be built at 7 Appletree Close. Cllr. Wagland suggested writing to the Planning Inspectorate as contempt is often shown to local objections. She will talk to Planning Portfolio Officers.
Cllr. Potter reported that an application is being made to the Land Registry to register Frog Street Pond as being in the ownership of the Parish Council. A declaration will need to be sworn that the Parish Council believes it to belong to them and that an attempt to register it was made in the past. This matter to be kept on the Planning Committee agenda.
- b) General Purposes Committee – 15th February. Minutes and actions were noted.
- c) Allotment Committee – 8th February. Minutes and actions were noted. A skip for use by allotment holders has been booked for the end of March. The shed is being inspected and may receive a coat of wood preserver. Cllr. McCheyne will turn the water back on.

8. Draft Disability Access Policy Statement

👉 **Resolved** to approve the document and publish it on the website.

9. Review of Burial Ground Fees & Charges

👉 **Resolved** to approve the revised charges which represented an increase of approximately 10% from 1st April 2023. It was noted that no increases had been implemented since 2017.

10. Village Hall Field – Payment for Grass Cutting

It was noted that currently the Parish Council pays the Village Hall for its share of electricity used. The Parish Council's contractors cut the grass on the Village Hall field and £40 is deducted for each cut. +9

👉 **Resolved** to separate the electricity and the grass cutting costs by invoicing the Village Hall for the grass cutting. Cllrs. D.Dicker and A.Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest and did not vote.

11. Security of Parish Office and Village Hall

It was noted that the Village Hall had suffered a spate of damage by vandalism, and had employed a security company to patrol for two evenings a week. The Chairman of the Village Hall has asked the Parish Council to consider jointly installing CCTV.

👉 **Resolved** that the Clerk will engage with the Village Hall on exploring options and report back to the full Council.

12. King's Coronation Event – Sunday 7th May 2023

Cllr. Dicker tabled a list of attractions booked and in hand.

13. Deputy Clerk

It was noted that the Deputy Clerk had tendered her resignation. The post has been advertised and candidates will be interviewed. All expressed their regret at her departure, after 9 years, and wished her well in her new role.

14. Other Urgent Information not requiring actions

- a) Date of ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – Thursday 20th April 2023
- b) Date of ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING – Thursday 11th May 2023.

The meeting closed at 21.20

Minutes signed:

Date: 11th May 2023