

Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 7th September 2023 at 19.30 in the Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker (Chairman), Mr G Smith, Mr A. Smith, Mrs T. Brooks, Mr P. Arnell, Mr R. McCheyne, Mr M. Capon and Mr D Potter

**Also Present: Mrs C Fuller – Clerk/RFO
Mrs A Davies – Deputy Clerk**

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs. J. LePage and D. Rogers-Harrison (and P. Arnell for lateness)

2. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda

None.

3.  Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 6th July 2023

Item 7. At the meeting the Chair permitted Borough Cllr. C. Poppy to respond but his response had not been recorded in the minutes. Members agreed to add a note to the minutes to state that Cllr. Poppy explained why the Borough Councillors could not support the Parish Council's objection to planning application 22/01734/FUL.

When this addition had been made the minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Clerk's Report

- Total funds held as at 31st August 2023 = £151,560.85
- Bank signatory changes for Santander are still pending and have been chased up
- Application to open Current and Savings accounts with Unity Trust Bank are being made
- 2023 risk assessments are almost complete
- New (replacement) notice board has been installed in Doddinghurst Road
- Community bus trips took place on 24th July and 16th Aug and the next one is due 25th Sept
- Parish Councillor vacancy is being advertised
- Solicitor has been instructed to register Cemetery and Play Area with the Land Registry. Mass & Co of Brentwood have been instructed to carry out valuations as required for the registration.
- NATS team will carrying out works to the Dagwood triangle, overgrown nettles in Outings Lane and a hedge on Church Lane opposite the church, in September
- MD Landscapes will cut back the hedge along the Scout Path in September and will also weed-kill the path so that its condition can be assessed
- ECC has repaired the bridge on Footpath 5 (rear of cemetery)
- Children's Play Area – Broadmead Leisure will carry out repair and maintenance works identified in the bi-monthly inspections and by ROSPA. Paths will be weed-killed. The two trees planted by ex-Cllr. Alan Farrow have both died. The accompanying plaque is in the office.

5.  Financial Reports

- a) Bank reconciliation for July & August 2023 was noted and approved.
- b) Schedule of Payments & Receipts for July & August 2023 was noted and approved.

- c) It was noted that the Conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31st March 2023 gave no matters for concern, regulatory requirements have been met, and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been published as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- d) Resolved to publish the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for 30 days

6. Public Participation

None

7. Feedback from Meetings Attended

The Chairman reported that she had attended a Zoom meeting at the invitation of Alex Burghart MP on 7th July. She raised concerns about the police, youth matters, and highways. His report back had not yet been received and the Clerk was asked to chase this.

8. 🖐️ Planning Update

Noted. It was further noted that application 23/00896/FUL will be refused by BBC officers (Change of use from agricultural to mixed use of agricultural and private equestrian use – Land to the South of Baskevyns, Days Lane). The Clerk was asked to chase up a response to the developer of the Water Works Spring Development regarding public engagement.

9. 🖐️ Bank Signatories

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.4 signatories were re-confirmed as attached. Finance & Resources Committee to consider adding one signatory onto each account and to review the spread of funds across the Council's accounts.

10. 🖐️ Gigaclear

Cllr. G. Smith reported that he had spoken with Gigaclear's Community Engagement Manager who confirmed that the Village Hall would qualify as a community hub and Accordingly be eligible for free installation and supply of broadband for one year, with an annual review. The Parish Council could apply on behalf of the Village Hall and obtain one router for its own potential future use, and another for the Village Hall, to be connected by cabling. This would provide good coverage and would be especially appreciated by the Doddinghurst Preschool. It was noted that connection should be password protected for use by Village Hall hirers.

Initially the Parish Council would remain a customer of British Telecom, with a view to considering switching to Gigaclear in the future.

The proposal hinges on the Village Hall's agreement to the arrangement with Gigaclear and Cllr. Smith will prepare a written report setting out Gigaclear's terms and conditions to be presented at the next meeting of the Village Hall Trustees on 22nd September.

Cllr. Smith's recommendations:

- He will complete the application form on behalf of the Village Hall as a Community Hub (this could be withdrawn if the Village Hall do not agree to proceed).
- Gigaclear to be asked to assess any costs.

This was agreed

(Cllr. P. Arnell arrived during this item)

11. 🖐️ Grant Funding

Members noted Cllr. LePage's report on the activities of the Well Being Hub which benefit so many residents.

- a) Resolved to donate £200 to the Well Being Hub towards the cost of their recent summer lunch, and to donate a further £200 towards the cost of the forthcoming Christmas lunch.
- b) Resolved to draft terms and conditions for a Grant Scheme, potentially to be administered by the Finance & Resources Committee.

12. 🖐️ Office Alarm

It was noted that the new alarm had been installed, with one keypad near the main door. It was resolved to install two further keypads to cover the Parish Room door and the door between the Parish Office and the Village Hall, along with a new lock for the latter door so that it can be opened from both sides by keyholders.

13. 🖐️ Entrance to Peartree Field

Resolved accept Dangecon Services' estimate dated 12th July of £410.00 to put a MOT Type 1 surface at the pedestrian entrance.

14. 🖐️ Refurbishment of Gents' Toilet in Parish Office

Resolved to accept the quotation dated 6th June from SJB Mechanical Ltd of £3,678 plus VAT.

15. 🖐️ Find your Active Brentwood

It was noted that an application had been made to provide two sessions per week with a personal trainer to use the outdoor gym equipment. The proposal is for an early session to suit people who have just dropped off their children and school, followed by another for a different age bracket. £1,040 had been granted, and this could fund sessions initially until November, but with the option to re-apply in the spring. The personal trainer to hold all necessary liability and first aid cover, and be sourced by the Parish Council. This was agreed.

(Cllr. R. McCheyne left the meeting)

16. 🖐️ Budget 2024-25

Members proposed the following projects to be considered for the budget:

- Funding for new Grant Scheme
- Upgrade Scout Path
- Surface for entrance for football fields
- Surface for entrance to Peartree Field from Dagwood Lane
- Nature Trail
- Personal Trainer sessions (see 15 above)
- Men's Shed
- Improvements to connectivity footpaths, potentially working in conjunction with the developer at the Water Works Spring development

17. Correspondence

- a) BBC Review of Polling Districts Polling Places & Polling Stations to be published on 8th September, with consultation closing date of 23rd October.
- b) BBC's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule has been through a public hearing and the examiner's final report recommends that it should be approved in its published form without changes.

18. Information

Next meetings

- Planning Committee 28th September
- General Purposes Committee 11th October
- Full Council 2nd November

PC Madeline Payne to host a community policing event on the evening of 20th September in the Parish Room – time to be confirmed.

The Chairman requested an informal meeting of Councillors to discuss the Parish Council's aims in the run-up to and beyond the May elections. Following a discussion on the Parish Council being pro-active in the community this was agreed and a date set for Tuesday 10th October at 7pm in the Parish Room.

Members to receive a weekly Councillor Bulletin to keep them informed about local news and the day-to-day activities of the Parish Council. The Deputy Clerk was thanked for this suggestion.

19. Exclusion of Press & Public

In view of the confidential personnel nature of the business it was resolved to exclude the press and public (Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960. The Deputy Clerk left the meeting.

20. Pension Scheme – Deputy Clerk

Resolved to enrol the Deputy Clerk into the Parish Council's NEST pension scheme.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Minutes signed:

Date: 2nd November 2023