

**Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council General Purpose Committee held at 19.30 on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in the Parish Room, (adjacent Village Hall), Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ**

**Present: Cllrs. G Smith (Chairman), J. Le Page, D. Potter, T. Brooks and P. Arnell**

**Also present: Mrs C. Fuller (Clerk/RFO) and one member of the public**

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs R. McCheyne and D. Rogers-Harrison. Cllr P. Arnell for lateness.
- 2. Declaration of interests relating to items on the agenda:** None.
- 3. 🗳️ Resolution:** Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June were approved.
- 4. Public Participation:** The member of the public raised the following points:
  - Pathway entrance near scout hut to Budgens Field is blocked by brambles.
  - Scout path hedge is overgrown.
  - A tree in the tree belt at the rear of the Recreation Ground has a broken low-hanging branch.
  - The edges of Budgens Field are being encroached on by brambles and nettles.
  - Nature Trail needs clearance for easy access.
  - Benches would be appreciated by walkers.

Members discussed the issues raised and

- Agreed that the entrances to Budgens Field needed to be cleared.
- Noted that MD Landscapes have been instructed to cut back the scout path hedge.
- The tree with the broken branch will be inspected.
- Noted that the Nature Trail MD Landscapes have been instructed to flail a path through.
- Considered bench(es) but raised concerns about vandalism.

It was generally agreed that the area had been neglected and was now partially inaccessible to the dog walkers who use it regularly, and largely inaccessible to the more infirm residents.

It was agreed wait until MD Landscapes had carried out their clearance works and then formulate a longer-term plan for the area to make it more accessible by way of a maintenance programme, surfaced pathways, seating, and local wildlife information boards. The plan to include areas for enhancement to encourage and support wildlife and native plants.

It was noted that there may be some drainage works required as the entrances to Budgens Field become boggy in the wetter months.

It was noted that a planning condition of the 15 new homes in Dagwood Lane included a dedicated pathway through to the area and this is to be included in the plan.

It was agreed that this is a major project, for inclusion in the 2024-25 budget and a sum of £20,000 to be included in the draft budget.

The member of the public agreed to liaise with her fellow dog-walkers and with the committee on the project. The Chairman thanked her and she left the meeting.

(Cllr. Arnell arrived at the meeting)

**Information:** Update on activities undertaken since 14<sup>th</sup> June meeting.

**a) Play Area**

- Bi-monthly inspection report identified no high or medium risk issues.
- Broadmead Leisure are addressing all issues raised in the ROSPA report.
- The goal net has been replaced.
- Path will be weed-killed by MD Landscapes.
- New sign has been ordered to replace the one on the small car park gate.

**b) Open Spaces**

- MD Landscapes have been instructed to flail the nature trail path to enable people to walk through.
- The new surface to Peartree Field (Doddinghurst Road entrance) is being installed this week.

**c) Parish Office/Parish Room**

- Gents' toilet refurbishment has been ordered.
- Alarm is now fully finished and working well. The Clerk was asked to draft an Alarm Protocol.
- New doorbell and sign for the front door has been fitted.

**d) Trees**

- Prince Tree Surgery have carried out the works identified in their April inspection.

**e) Scout Path**


- MD Landscapes have been asked to weed-kill the surface so that we can see what needs to be done to repair it. It may require patching.
- MDL have been asked to face back the hedge as this is no longer carried out by the NATS team.

**f) Planters**


- The six planters owned by the Parish Council have been successful and are cared for by local volunteers.

**5. Items for Resolution**


**a) Cemetery Fees**


 **Resolved** to increase fee for a 30 Year Deed of Grant Renewal from £20 to £100 to cover necessary admin costs. Consideration was given to the fees charged by other Parish Councils for this service.

**b) Cemetery Maintenance**


 **Resolved** to instruct L&J Hall to clear 50 linear metres of brambles and small saplings, remove all roots and seed area alongside the footpath to gain an additional row of burial plots. Cost £1,940.

**c) Cemetery Ashes Plots**

i)  **Resolved** to instruct L&J Hall to install a 9 linear metre memorial base adjacent to the existing base in the lower garden. Cost £2,180.

ii)  **Resolved** to instruct L&J Hall to re-fix 26 ashes memorials which are loose in the upper garden, nearest the church. Cost £1,170.

**d) Peartree Pond**

 **Resolved** to accept quotation from Cut Above Landscapes to remove dead tree, coppice mixture of shrubs & small trees and cut down brambles. All waste to be removed from site. Cost £1,100.

## **6. Budget 2024/2025**

Members put the forward the following items for consideration in the draft budget:

- Nature Trail, including benches - £20,000
- Improvement to surface on Recreation Ground – no amount suggested

## **7. Information Items**

- Some form of speed control is required outside the schools in Church Lane.
- Church Lane towards Kelvedon Hatch is dangerous – there are overhanging trees and eroded roadsides which force vehicles into the middle of the road, and there are no refuges for pedestrians.

Both items to be reported to Essex County Cllr. Lesley Wagland.

- Football with lighting is being played on Peartree Field on Monday and Wednesday evenings. The situation to be monitored.

**The meeting closed at 21.15**

**Minutes signed:**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024**