

Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 7th March 2024 at 19.30 in the Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker (Chairman), Mr G. Smith, Mr R. McCheyne, Mrs J. LePage and Mr M. Capon

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs. D. Rogers-Harrison, A. Smith, T. Brooks, D. Potter and P. Arnell

2. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda None

3.  Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 11th January 2024

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Clerk's Report

- Total funds held as at 28th February 2024 = £156,794.03
- Play area path has been weed-killed, new sign has been placed at small car park, new basket swing seat has been installed (insurance claim)
- Burial plots where the EROBs are due to expire are being identified and owners contacted, work is underway to cut back brambles to increase area for burials
- New surface has been installed at Peartree Field
- Gents' toilet refurbishment has been completed, but some decorating work is required
- New doorbell to office has been vandalised and broken
- Tree work at Peartree Pond has been completed
- Spring/summer flowers for the planters have been ordered.
- NATS team cut back Church Lane hedge, tidied Dagwood Triangle and Peartree Pond
- Meeting held with Active Essex to secure ongoing funding for outdoor fitness classes
- The General Purposes Committee meeting scheduled for 14/2/24 did not take place as it was inquorate. The Clerk reported that an agenda item required urgent attention and an order had been placed to address the problem of horses & carts entering Budgens Field:
 - Lay two 3m oak sleepers across lowest point of main entrance to hold in the material, lay graded crushed concrete nuggets and Type 1 on top - £599.00 plus VAT
 - Gate at padlock at entrance with post to the side to allow pedestrian access – cost to be advised.
 - Supply and fit wooden bollards in three of the smaller field entrances, 175mm x 175mm with weather top posts - £125.00 plus VAT each.

The Clerk reported this to the full Council in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5.

5.  Financial Reports

- a) Bank reconciliation for January & February 2024 was noted and approved.
- b) Schedule of Payments & Receipts for January & February 2024 was noted and approved.

6. Public Participation

County Cllr. L. Wagland reported:

- Recent floodwater has resulted in some potholes re-opening. Responses to flooding enquiries are prioritised. She has visited Outings Lane where flooding has been an issue. Parish Councils can tell local people to maintain their ditches.
- A little more money has been made available to mend potholes and staff are working hard to fix them. Please report any problems to her.
- The Local Highways Panel has undergone a complete revamp of its rules. £1.5m projects are in the pipeline and the scope of the LHP has been reduced to keep all existing funded work going. Communities can still get proposals looked at by the Panel via their County Councillor. All 12 Panels have different remits, some have District/Borough/Parish representation, but usually non-voting.
- Large vehicle on M25 will cause disruption overnight this weekend.
- The new Beaulieu Park train station will open mid-2025.
- Local A12 roadworks are on schedule, but the larger A12 project is subject to judicial review.

Cllr. K Parker reported:

- The M25 will close both ways due to forthcoming bridge works.
- Local potholes are getting bad – some have received temporary fixing.
- Works at Waterworks Spring Farm are making good progress.

7. Feedback from Committees and Other Meetings Attended

- a) Planning Committees 25th January and 29th February did not take place as there was no business to transact.
- b) General Purposes Committee 14th February did not take place as it was inquorate.
- c) Public Meeting with PC Madeline Payne 15th January was attended by the Chairman, Clerk and four members of the public. Meeting notes were circulated with the agenda.

8. Annual Review of Fees

- a) Burial Ground. Resolved to increase all fees by 5% (rounded) from 1st May 2024.
- b) Parish Room. Resolved to increase fee from £10 to £12 per session from 1st May 2024 (from 1st September 2024 for the pre-school).

9. Council Reserves

Members noted the report submitted by Cllr. Capon and resolved:

- a) £40,000 to be identified within the Council's reserves to assist with the long-term maintenance costs of the burial ground once it ceases to generate enough income for this purpose.
- b) £40,000 to be identified within the Council's reserves to assist with the replacement costs of the children's play area.
- c) The Council reserves should not be used to pay off its current PWLB loans as it is probable that significant expenditure may be necessary as interest rates on future loans are unlikely to be as favorable as those of the present loans.
- d) The Council to identify £20,000 for reserves to support other expenditure to the advantage of the community.

10. 🖐️ CCTV for Parish Office

Resolved to accept KJF Electrical Ltd's Quote No. 464 for two CCTV cameras and recording equipment for the cost of £1,115.76 plus VAT. Members also resolved to adopt the CCTV Policy which was circulated with the agenda.

11. 🖐️ Recreation Ground – Improvements to Goal Area

Resolved to instruct Broadmead Leisure Ltd. To supply and fit matting 10m x 6m to prevent further wear to the goal area. Cost £1,550 plus VAT, and to peg down the rear of the net.

12. 🖐️ Councillor Emails

a) Resolved to instruct Fasthosts to supply each Councillor with a dedicated email address to comply with NALC best practice advice. Cost for each 2GB mailbox = £1.64 per month. Therefore, cost to provide 11 new email addresses to be £18.04 per month, or £216.48 per annum. All plus VAT.

b) Resolved to instruct Bits & Bytes to set up new email accounts onto Councillors' individual devices if required.

13. 🖐️ Football at Peartree Field

Resolved to grant permission to the person currently giving one-to-one football tuition to children on Peartree Field, subject to receiving a copy of his personal liability insurance and DBS check. The Clerk to offer Budgens Field as an alternative location.

14. Planning Update

a) New Applications, Pending Decision and Decided were noted.

b) 🖐️ New Application:

Ref: 24/00110/HHA. Address: 39 The Gardens, Doddinghurst.

Development: Demolish existing front porch. Single storey rear extensions, conversion of existing garage into habitable room, new front porch with pitched roof, and alterations to fenestration. Resolved to raise no objection.

15. 🖐️ Public Consultations

a) Essex County Council Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review 2025-2040.
Resolved to make no comment

c) Mid & S. Essex NHS, including proposed changes to type of care at Brentwood Community Hospital.

Resolved to support Option A – use all 50 beds for patients needing post-stroke care from across Mid and South Essex. The vote was tied, so the Chairman used her casting vote.

16. Information

- Next Planning Committee meetings – 27th March and 24th April
- Next General Purposes Committee meeting – 17th April
- Election – 2nd May
- Annual Council meeting – 16th May
- Annual Parish Meeting – 16th May (just prior to Annual Council Meeting)

- D-Day – 6th June. Church will ring bells. The vicar will be asked whether the Parish Council could use the flagpole and host a short official ceremony on the evening.
- Cllr. Smith reported that he and the Clerk had met with Will Russell and had walked the proposed Nature Trail with a view to it potentially joining the new path provided by the developer from the Waterwork Spring Farm development into the village. Mr Russell was asked to contribute and he was provisionally keen on the project and will work with the Parish Council towards delivery.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Minutes signed:

Date: 16th May 2024