

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 16th May 2024
at 19.00 in the Parish Room, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.**

**Present: Cllrs. Mrs D Dicker, Mrs D Rogers-Harrison, Mr G Smith, Mr P Arnell, Mr D Potter and
Mr T Lockhart**

**Also Present: Borough Cllr. C Poppy
County Cllr. L Wagland
Mrs C Fuller – Clerk/RFO
Mrs A Davies – Deputy Clerk
One member of the public**

Prior to the meeting all members present signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

1.  Election of Chairman and completion of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr. Dicker was nominated by Cllr. G Smith and seconded by Cllr D Potter.

Resolved unanimously to elect Cllr. Dicker as Chairman for the civic year 2024-25.

Cllr. Dicker signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs. J Lepage and A Smith. Both would sign their Declarations of Acceptance of Office at the earliest opportunity.

3. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda

None.

4.  Appointment of Vice Chairman

Cllr. G Smith was nominated by Cllr. Dicker and seconded by Cllr. Potter. Resolved to appoint Cllr. G Smith as Vice Chairman.

5.  Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 7th March 2024

Approved and signed as a correct record.

6. Public Participation

Cllr. Poppy reported that the recent Borough elections resulted in 19 Conservative members, 17 Liberal Democrats and 3 Labour. The Annual Meeting will be held next week.

Cllr. Wagland reported:

- The Locality Fund is now open, with grants of up to £5,000 available.
- Each Councillor has access to grounds crews/workforce every five weeks to carry out works to defects on carriageways and pavements. Please contact her with a week's worth of work.
- Two drainage problems in the village have been passed to the drainage team for action.
- The Local Highways Panel had a meeting yesterday. It has £112,400 to allocate but money has been diverted away from projects to address defects. Each County Councillor has two schemes allocated and Cllr. Wagland's are Swallows Cross and one other.
- Cllr. Wagland encouraged members to report any highway defects on line and ask her to chase up if required.
- In response to Cllr. Smith's question, funding from the Locality Fund would be available for the Parish Council's Nature Trail Project.

The member of the public raised the following:

- When will the surface in front of the goal posts be extended? (Answer: late May)
- Could the Parish Council put a litter bin behind the goal to encourage the youngsters to pick up after themselves? (This will be considered)
- Can the overgrown pathways through woods be cleared? (This will be considered)
- Can a bench/benches be put in Budgens Field for people to rest? (This will be considered during the planning of the Nature Trail)

Cllr. Smith reported that he would like to involve the community in the design of the Nature Trail.

7. Clerk's Report

- Play area - Defects are being repaired. RoSPA inspection during May.
- Burial Ground – New small signs have been purchased to help contact grave owners. Brambles have been cut back to provide an extra row of burials. Some loose headstones in the ashes section have been re-fixed.
- Open Spaces – New hard surface at the entrance to Budgens Field, plus bollards, are awaited when weather improves. Extension to matted area in front of the goal is due to be completed in May>
- Parish Office/Parish Room – Gents' toilet works are now completed. CCTV has been installed to the outside of the building and external sign is on order.
- Councillor Emails – Tracy Hinton of Bits & Bytes will help Councillors set up their new email addresses if required.
- Internal Audit – Michael Raistrick will attend the office on 20th May to carry out the internal audit.
- Allotments – A skip was delivered at the beginning of the season for one weekend. Problems with the padlock on the gate seem to have been resolved by the purchase of a new padlock and chain. A leaky water pipe has been fixed.
- Tesco Lorries – The manager of Tesco has called in the risk assessment team to look at and address the broken kerbs in All Saints Close.
- Fitness Classes – Ongoing funding is still being sought so that the classes can continue through the summer.

8. Financial Reports

- a) Resolved to approve the Bank Reconciliation for March & April 2024.
- b) Resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments & Receipts for March & April 2024.

It was noted that Cllrs. Arnell, Capon and Brooks were not present at the meeting so their committee membership would be established at the next Council meeting.

9. Councillor Vacancies / Co-Option

- a) It was noted that Cllr. Roger McCheyne had resigned from the Parish Council.
- b) It was noted that there are now three vacancies on the Parish Council and that two people had expressed an interest in being co-opted. Resolved to request written statements from each of them and email them to members.

10. General Power of Competence

The Parish Council is eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence and resolved to do so.

- 11. 🖐️ Review of Council Policies & Procedures in accordance with Standing Order 5 (j)**
It was resolved to adopt the following with no amendments:
- a) Complaints Procedure
 - b) Communications Strategy & Social Media Policy
- 12. 🖐️ Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**
Resolved to review these at the next meeting.
- 13. 🖐️ Review of Asset Register**
Resolved to approve as presented at the meeting.
- 14. 🖐️ Review of Subscriptions**
Resolved to note and approve the annual subscriptions to the Information Commissioner's Office, Essex Association of Local Councils and NALC, Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management, Rural Community Council of Essex and the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- 15. 🖐️ Bank Signatories**
Resolved to remove M. Capon from the list of signatories as he is no longer a Parish Councillor, and to add Cllr. D Potter. Signatories are now Cllrs. Dicker, G. Smith and D. Potter for Unity Trust Bank.
- 16. 🖐️ Committees**
Members noted the Clerk's report on the matter and resolved:
- a) In light of the reduced number of Councillors to dissolve the General Purposes Committee and Finance & Resources Committee for the civic year 2024-25, and for all those committees' business to be conducted by the full council.
 - b) Resolved to agree the Constitution of the Planning Committee as circulated. Membership to be Cllrs. Dicker, G. Smith, A. Smith, D. Potter and T. Lockhart.
 - c) Resolved to agree the Constitution of the Allotments Committee as circulated. Membership to be Cllrs. Dicker, Arnell, LePage and Potter.
 - d) Resolved to agree the Calendar of Meetings for 2024-25 as circulated. Full Council meetings to be held approximately once every six weeks, apart from there being no meetings in August or December.
- 17. 🖐️ Appointment of Key Council Representatives.**
Resolved to appoint as follows:
- | | |
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| ▪ BBPCA – Cllr Dicker | ▪ Health Matters - Cllr Le Page |
| ▪ Village Hall Committee – Cllr Arnell | ▪ Police Matters - None |
| ▪ BBC Parish Liaison Cttee – Cllr Dicker | ▪ Dagwood Trust - Cllr Potter |
| ▪ Village Bus Club Chairman – D. Schuster | ▪ Tree Warden – G. Farrow |
| ▪ Bus & Transport – Cllr Dicker | ▪ Highways – Cllr G Smith |
| ▪ BBC Planning Committee – to be decided on an ad hoc basis by DPC Planning Committee. | ▪ Footpaths and PROW's (Michael Capon to be asked) |
- 18. 🖐️ Internal Auditor**
Resolved to approve the appointment of Michael Raistrick to carry out the internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2025.

19. 🖐️ Insurance

The current policy expires on 31/5/24.

Resolved to renew with Clear Councils (formerly BHIB) from 1/6/23. Total premium £1,412.07 (Last year it was £1,254.57).

20. 🖐️ EALC/NALC Annual Subscription

Resolved to renew for 2024-25 for the total cost of £654.95 (Last year it was £638.19).

21. 🖐️ Chairman's Allowance

Resolved at £500 for 2024/25 (unchanged from last year).

22. 🖐️ Clerk's Emergency Fund

Resolved at limit of £1,000 for 2024/25 (unchanged from last year).

23. Other Urgent Information

To note that the next events/meetings are:

- 23rd May – Planning Committee
- 30th May – Annual Parish Meeting
- 6th June – D-Day 80th Anniversary
- 13th June – Full Council Meeting

The meeting closed at 20.20

Minutes signed:

Date: 13th June 2024