

Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 5th September 2024 at 19.00 in the Parish Room, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D Dicker, Mr G Smith, Mr T Lockhart and Mr D Potter

Also Present: Borough Cllrs. R McCheyne and C Poppy

Mrs C Fuller – Clerk/RFO

Two members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr. A Smith and (during the meeting) Cllr. P Arnell

2. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda

None.

3.  Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 25th July 2024

Approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Public Participation

- Cllr. Poppy reported that the NATS Team will be in Doddinghurst week commencing 23rd September and invited members to submit tasks which help to keep streets clean and tidy.

5. Clerk's Report

- Play Area - Broadmead Leisure Ltd have carried out their bi-monthly inspection and it was attached to the agenda. They have pinned down the back of the goal net and the grass is growing through the new surface in front of the goal. A pile of fly-tipped children's toys was kindly removed by BBC's operative. It was reported to the police.
- Burial Ground – a loose headstone has been laid flat for safety. The gravedigger has been asked to top up some sunken graves. Grass is being cut and strimmed by Joe Webb in the absence of Ken Roast.
- Open Spaces – the new hard surface and gate at the entrance to Budgens Field has been completed by MD Landscapes. Bollards at the three smaller entrances are awaited. Prince Tree Surgery were called in to move and cut up a tree that had fallen over and blocked the nature trail.
- Nature Trail – No communication had been received from the developer of Waterworks Spring Farm, so to progress this project it was agreed to instruct IDC Greenscapes Ltd to produce a specification for the nature trail path. The project can then go out to tender.
- Allotments – the next year's tenancy agreements and invoices are being sent out for renewals from 1st October.
- Tesco Lorries – Damaged kerbs and verges have been repaired. Thanks to Cllr. Lesley Wagland. It was noted that the Tesco store is currently shut due to a collapsed ceiling, and is due to re-open mid-late October.
- Finger Posts – the finger post at the junction of Doddinghurst Road and Mountnessing Lane has been repaired and refurbished and looks very smart. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Lockhart for his work on this. Cllr. Lockhart reported that the finger post at the junction of Warren Lane and Church Lane is in need of some work, but has been informed that it is on a list at ECC to be renewed next year at no cost to the Parish Council.
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- No. 61 Bus – the Chairman has been liaising with Cllr. Wagland as the new operator (Nibs) appears unreliable, has changed the timetable, and no longer goes to Brentwood Station morning or evening. The Station stops have been reinstated from 8th September. The Chairman is liaising with a regular passenger to monitor the service. Cllr. Potter reported that large developments generate regular services, but regular bus services are being wound back by ECC and contracts often go to the cheapest bidder. Cllr. Wagland to be asked to provide statistics on the No. 61 bus's performance. There will be a Bus & Rail meeting in November which the Chairman will attend. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Wagland and Cllr. David Kendall for their support and continued campaigning.
- Community Bus – Trip to Cambridge took place on 15th August. Monthly trips up to December have been booked and will appear in the Doddinghurst Link. Bookings are being taken by the office and are proving very popular. Cllr. G Smith reported that a Section 19 Permit from the Office of the Traffic Commissioner is required for non-profit-making trips by smaller buses and the bus should not be driven without one. The Clerk had prepared an application and cheque for payment (£11.00).
- Office – answerphone service has been reinstated. Three fire extinguishers have had their annual safety inspection by Falcon Fire. Annual PAT testing is due in the autumn and KJF Electrical have been instructed to carry this out as they are local and cheaper than the current contractor. The office alarm has had its annual maintenance check.
- Planters – a resident has kindly volunteered to water the two Brook Lane planters while the regular volunteer is unable to. The Chairman is currently watering two at Middle Green and one at Peartree Pond to cover temporarily for regular volunteers.
- Defibrillator – the new defibrillator will replace the one currently on Tesco's external wall when the Tesco repair works are completed. The current defib becomes obsolete in February. There is also a defib machine within the store.

6. 🖐️ Financial Reports

- a) Resolved to approve the Bank Reconciliation for August 2024.
Cash in hand = £161,373.79
- b) Resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments & Receipts for August 2024.

7. 🖐️ Feedback from Committees & Other Meetings Attended

Resolved to note the following:

- a) Planning Committee meeting held on 1st August. Draft minutes were circulated with the agenda.

8. Co-Option

One applicant who had expressed an interest in being co-opted had withdrawn her application. A second applicant intends to attend the next meeting when her application will be considered.

9. 🖐️ Grant Application from St. Margaret's Church - £300.00

Members considered the application and resolved to offer 50% of the grant requested as the application appeared to be for building maintenance and it was felt that a contribution to the full amount would be more appropriate.

10. Planning Update

Noted. The Chairman flagged up 24/00700/S191 Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use or operation or activity including those in breach of a planning condition for a mixed use residential and car sales – Farm View, Doddinghurst Road – and the number of cars for sale parked in Lime Grove, often causing a road safety hazard. Cllr. Lockhart will word a letter setting out the Parish Council's concerns to be sent to BBC Planning.

11. 🖐️ New Planning Applications

a) Land to the South of Baskevyns, Days Lane, Doddinghurst

Change of use of land from Agricultural to mixed use Agricultural and Equestrian
Ref: 24/00785/FUL
RESOLVED: OBJECT on same grounds as for previous similar applications

b) The Oaks, Days Lane, Doddinghurst

Oak tree branches trimmed so that they no longer overhang the driveway
(TPO3/1996)
Ref: 24/00869/TPO
RESOLVED: NO OBJECTION

c) 6 Steeple Way, Doddinghurst

Single storey front porch extension, relocation of front door to front elevation
Ref: 24/00779/HHA
RESOLVED: NO OBJECTION

d) Land Opposite Chivers Farm, Wyatts Green Road, Wyatts Green

Remove existing 965ABC overhead span and replce it with 120ABC span and upgrade the existing Pole Mounted Transformer to 200kVA
Ref: 24/00881/OHL
RESOLVED: NO OBJECTION

12. Essex County Council Consultation: Transport Strategy for Essex

Noted. Deadline for responses is 22/09/24.

13. 🖐️ Groundsman Duties

Members considered whether to advertise for a replacement member of staff following the resignation of the groundsman, or whether to seek quotes from contractors. It was resolved to advertise for a replacement member of staff.

14. Notice of Conclusion of Audit

Noted that PKF Littlejohn have completed their review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2024. All in accordance with proper practices and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, Accounting Statements and Auditor's Certificate have been published.

15. Other Urgent Information

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 17th October 2024.

The meeting closed at 20.20

Minutes signed:

Date: 17th October 2024