

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 29th May 2025
at 19.00 in the Parish Room, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM15 0NJ.**

Present: Cllrs. Mrs D Dicker, Mr A Smith, Mr D Potter, Mr P Arnell, Mr T Lockhart,
Mrs D Rogers-Harrison & Mrs P Crozier

Also Present: Mrs C Fuller - Clerk/RFO
Mrs A Davies – Deputy Clerk
Borough Cllr. R McCheyne
County Cllr. L. Wagland

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

Cllr. Dicker was nominated by Cllr. Potter and it was resolved unanimously to elect Cllr Dicker as Chairman for the civic year 2025-26. Cllr. Dicker signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman. Members thanked Cllr. Dicker for agreeing to another year, and for her long service.

2. Apologies for Absence None

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

4. 🖐 Appointment of Vice Chairman

Cllr. Dicker nominated Cllr. Potter and it was resolved unanimously to appoint Cllr. Potter as Vice Chairman for the civic year 2025-26.

5. 🖐 Minutes

- a) Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd April were approved and signed as a correct record.
- b) Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 8th May were approved and signed as a correct record (inquorate).
- c) Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th May were noted.

(Cllr. Arnell arrived at the meeting)

6. Public Participation

County Cllr. Lesley Wagland reported:

- ECC Locality Fund has opened again and applications are invited.
- New member of staff at ECC is dealing with Highway Licence Applications – the Clerk has the details.
- Highways and South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) had been asked to carry out a review of parking at Steeple Way; a problem predominantly at school times. Assessment showed that a minority of parents are causing the problem and Highways do not advise bollards or barriers as they can create injuries, there are underground BT cables, and there would not be enough room for pedestrians. Double yellow lines are already in place and SEPP do not recommend more, but do recommend active engagement between themselves, schools and parents and they will contact the school again. Cllr. Wagland offered to attend a meeting with SEPP

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and Headteachers at both schools. 3PR (a parking scheme where pupils influence parents) is not being implemented. It was noted that there had been no accidents at the junction, although there had been one at the junction of All Saints Close. Cllr. Wagland will obtain further details from the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP). Cllr. Wagland would appreciate the Parish Council's support in finding solutions to a problem being caused by a few people, without having to spend large amounts of money.

Borough Councillor R. McCheyne reported on BBC's Call For Sites: nothing will be decided until this time next year at least. Cllr. Wagland added that, although BBC is not inviting comments, the Parish Council may wish to consider the sites and submit comments.

7. General Power of Competence

The Parish Council is not eligible to exercise the Power as two-thirds of members did not stand for election.

8. Clerk's Report

- Burial Ground – rear field has been cleared of overgrown vegetation and spoil left on site. Trellis to be removed. Two burials have taken place in recent weeks.
- Open Spaces – Rospa report on children's play equipment will take place in May. Motorbikes being ridden on Parish Council land have been reported to the police. A quote for additional CCTV coverage is being sought.
- Allotments – 2 full plots and one half plot available.
- No. 61 Bus – complaints have reduced considerably, although the live app fails occasionally.
- Community Bus – trips went to Polhill Garden Centre on 30/4 and Cambridge on 21/5. Next trips to Frinton and Walton on 19/6 and 9/7 are over-subscribed and volunteer drivers may be able to run additional trips. Next meeting of volunteers in June will plan Sept-Dec trips.
- Land at Doddinghurst Road (Goat Field) – BBC have deemed application for Certificate of Lawfulness as unlawful.
- Fingerpost at Warren Lane – has been completed and recent vehicle strike repaired.
- Community Hub Lunches – grant from BBC has been applied for.
- Projector & Screen – have been fitted in the Parish Room.
- Waterworks Spring – Clerk is still trying to secure a site visit for councillors.
- New Trees on Recreation Ground & Village Hall Field – six were planted and are being regularly uprooted and re-planted. One has been broken. BBC has been asked for supporting stakes.
- Tree Survey – Prince Tree Surgery will carry out annual survey of Parish Council trees on 9th June.
- NATS Team – will be in Doddinghurst w/c 26th May.

9. 🖐️ Financial Reports

- a) Resolved to approve the Bank Reconciliation to end of April 2025.
Cash in hand = £236,528.10. This is artificially high as BBC has forwarded both tranches of the precept in April.
- b) Resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments & Receipts for April 2025.

10. Budget v Actual at end of March 2025

Final position noted. Net surplus of £4,895.

11. 🖐️ Internal Audit

- a) Internal Audit Report from M J Raistrick for A M Sewell & Co. Ltd was circulated and noted and accepted. No areas of concern.
- b) Resolved to appoint M Raistrick of A M Sewell & Co. Ltd to carry out the internal audit for year ending 31st March 2026.

12. 🖐️ Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Approved.

13. 🖐️ Statement of Internal Control

Approved.

14. 🖐️ Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

Resolved to approve and sign.

15. 🖐️ Accounting Statements 2024/25

Resolved to approve and sign.

Members thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their work throughout the year.

16. 🖐️ Insurance

Resolved to renew with a three-year Fixed Rate Agreement with Clear Councils. Policy renewal from 1st June 2025. Cost £1,448.42.

17. 🖐️ Community Bus

- a) Financial status at end of March 2025 was noted. A loss of £220.81 was reported due to ticket prices being £5.00 and not covering the cost of each trip.
- b) Resolved to continue to subsidise the service and charge £5.00 per person per trip.

18. 🖐️ Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Resolved to defer this item to the next meeting due to time constraints.

19. Review of Other Council Policies & Procedures

- a) Asset Register as at 31st March 2025 was noted.
- b) Subscriptions, Direct Debits & Use of BACS or CHAPS was noted.

20. 🖐️ Committees

- a) Resolved not to reinstate the General Purposes Committee or the Finance & Resources Committee for 2025/26 as the Council only had seven members.
- b) Planning Committee – resolved to approve the constitution, and membership to comprise Cllrs. Dicker, Smith, Potter, Lockhart and Crozier.
- c) Allotments Committee – resolved to approve the constitution, and councillor membership to comprise Cllrs. Dicker, Potter and Arnell.

21. 🖐️ Meeting Dates for Full Council 2025/26.

Resolved to approve. First Thursday of each month except August and December (no meetings). No June meeting due to delay of today's meeting.

22. 🖐️ Appointments of Representatives

- BBPCA Cllr. Dicker
- Village Hall Committee Cllr. Arnell
- Dagwood Trust Cllr. Potter
- BBC Planning Committee To be decided on ad hoc basis
- Village Bus Chairman Mr D Schuster
- Bus & Transport matters Cllr. Dicker
- Tree Warden Mrs G Farrow
- Footpaths Cllr. Crozier

23. 🖐️ Planning

- a) Resolved to approve Planning Committee minutes from 27th February 2025.
- b) Resolved to approve Planning Committee minutes from 29th April 2025.
- c) Planning Update – Use of the Old Goat Yard, Doddinghurst Road for storage has been deemed unlawful by BBC. It was noted that the Enforcement Officer dealing with the case had left BBC and Cllr. Wagland asked the Clerk for details of the officer now dealing with it.
- d) New Planning Application Ref: 25/00478/HHA.
Application: Erection of a 2m high fence to the front of the property on the boundary line. This will include an electric sliding gate and a pedestrian access gate. Address: Castleton, Days Lane, Doddinghurst.
Resolved to object due to being out of character and too high for the roadside.

24. 🖐️ Chairman's Allowance

Resolved to set at £500 for 2025/26 (unchanged).

25. 🖐️ Clerk's Emergency Funding

Resolved to set at £1,000 for 2025/26 (unchanged).

26. 🖐️ Request to use Small Car Park for Fish & Chip Van

Members considered the applicant's request for permission and after discussion Resolved unanimously to refuse permission as the Parish Council supports local shops and this would undermine an existing shop.

27. Other Urgent Information

- a) BBC's Call for Sites. It was noted that the consultation has officially closed, but sites may be submitted on a rolling basis as part of BBC's Local Plan Review.
- b) Cllr. Wagland reported on Devolution. The question of which area will join with which area in the south of Essex is still being debated.

The meeting closed at 20.35

Minutes signed:

Date: 3rd July 2025