Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held on Thursday 3rd April 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

Borough Cllr. R McCheyne Borough Cllr. C Poppy One member of the public

The meeting commenced with a minute's silence in memory of Cllr. Gerry Smith who sadly died last month.

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declaration of interests in items arising on the agenda

None.

3. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on the 20th February 2025

Approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Public Participation

Borough Cllr. McCheyne reported:

 Devolution – Essex will be divided into 3-5 unitary councils and a Mayor for the whole of Greater Essex will be elected next year. Cllr. Smith, who had attended an EALC webinar on the subject earlier in the day reported that the cost is estimated to

The member of the public reported that parking on yellow lines on both sides of the road, and on the pavements, at Steeple Way was causing obstruction, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times. Requests to move are often met with verbal abuse. The school has been pro-active but any solutions are short-lived. The resident had corresponded with County Cllr. Lesley Wagland, who was supportive but admitted that the problem is widespread outside schools and difficult to resolve. It was acknowledged that parking enforcement was useful, but could not be in place all the time. The resident suggested physical forms of barrier to prevent parking, eg bollards and sought the Parish Council's opinions and support. After discussion it was agreed to ask Cllr. Wagland to send someone from Essex's Risk Assessment Team to take a look and advise on a long-term solution.

(Cllr. Crozier arrived at the meeting)

(Cllr. Arnell arrived at the meeting)

It was further noted that pavements in Steeple Close had not been maintained for 20-30 years and are deteriorating. The Chairman reported that similar parking issues are reported at Outings Lane, and similar maintenance issues in Lime Grove.

(The member of the public left the meeting)

5. Clerk's Report

- Burial Ground plans to clear the rear field to be discussed later in the meeting.
- Open Spaces Greenscapes have started their temporary grass cutting contract.
 Broadmead Leisure have completed their bi-monthly safety inspection report on the Children's Play Area no areas of concern. Rospa report on the Children's Play Area will take place in May. We are not advised of the date. Ken Roast (contractor) has not been working for us since the summer due to ill health, and has now confirmed that he will no longer be cutting grass at the cemetery, digging ashes plots, or carrying out general tidying. He has been doing this for the Parish Council for the last 54 years.

Joe Webb has been doing an excellent job in Ken's absence as well as maintaining the allotment communal areas, and I propose to prepare a contract for him for consideration at the next meeting. (Joe does not dig ashes plots - this is done by Les Hall who also digs the burial plots) but he does do other ad hoc work as required, priced individually).

- Allotments 2 full plots available.
- Defibrillator / Tesco KJF Electrical has fitted the new defibrillator and it has been registered
 with The Circuit (the national defibrillator network which provides the NHS ambulance
 services with vital information about defibrillators across the UK so that in those crucial
 moments after a cardiac arrest they can be accessed quickly to help save lives).
- No. 61 Bus -_Complaints about this service had slowed up considerably, with only one being
 reported in the last month. More have come in recently, reporting that the tracking app is
 not working correctly. Cllr. Wagland is arranging a meeting with Nibs Buses to be attended
 by a representative from both Doddinghurst & Blackmore Parish Councils.
- Community Bus went to Bluewater on 19th March with 12 passengers. Roger McCheyne was the volunteer driver. Next trip will be to Polhill Garden Centre on 30th April one seat left. Whether to apply for a Section 19 Permit from the Office of the Traffic Commissioner is under review.
- Fitness Classes four new participants have joined.
- Land at Doddinghurst Road, known as the Goat Field decision on change of use is still pending.
- Finger Post at Warren Lane / Church Lane Funding from the ECC Locality Fund has been approved to refurbish this directional fingerpost. Highways permission has finally been granted.
- VE80 Day 8th May. The Chairman has met with the vicar and some arrangements are being made. Flag being flown at 9am, church bell ringing, refreshments in the Priest House in the evening until the light is lit at 9.30pm. All are welcome.
- Community Hub Lunches The Deputy Clerk is applying to Brentwood Council for grant funding to support the lunches into 2026.

6. **B** Financial Reports

- a) Resolved to approve the Bank Reconciliation at March 2025. Cash in hand = £163,044.15
- b) Resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments & Receipts for Feb & March 2025.

7. **Bank Signatories**

- a) Resolved to appoint Cllr. T Lockhart as a signatory on the Unity Trust Bank Account.
- b) Resolved to appoint Cllr. T Lockhart as a signatory on the CCLA Account.

8. Feedback from Committees and Other Meetings

- a) Planning Committee 27th February Minutes noted.
- b) BBPCA 20th March. The Chairman & Clerk had both given apologies. Minutes awaited.

c) Kelvedon Hatch Parish Council meeting – 26th March. The Chairman, Cllr. Lockhart and the Clerk attended at the invitation of the KHPC Clerk. The Extraordinary Meeting had been called to discuss concerns in the village that the Brizes Corner development was being sold to a London based housing association, and the homes would be offered to people from outside of the area. Two Borough Councillors and the County Councillor also attended and assured those present that this was not the case. The development is being sold in its entirety to a housing association, but not one from London and residents would be informed accordingly.

9. Planning Update

Noted.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would be invited to a site visit at the Waterworks Spring development in the near future. Cllr. Smith reported that the developer has promised to put up a fence in the passing place on Dagwood Lane where Parish Council trees had been removed, to prevent access onto the land from that point. Cllr. Crozier reported that the development has resulted in a spring being blocked as the ditch is either dry or containing stagnant water. Cllr. McCheyne will look into this issue. Cllr. Lockhart asked for news on a development at Swallows Cross which was approved over a year ago but had not yet been started. Cllr. McCheyne reported that there is not

10. **W** Grant Application

news yet.

Resolved to approve a grant of £500 to the Wellbeing Hub for their weekly community lunches.

11. **W** Overhead Projector

Two quotes were considered. It was resolved to accept the quote from KJF Electrical of £1,249.67 + VAT for the projector and pull-down screen.

Resolved to accept the quote from Greenbarnes Ltd for a single bay man-made timber noticeboard for £1,038.20 + VAT (supply & delivery only).

Resolved to accept verbal quote from Joe Webb (up to £2,000) to cut back and clear away undergrowth, trees and general vegetation, clear and dispose of large soil heap, reinstate the ground and remove rotted trellis. Members requested that the soil heap be spread on site rather than removed, to reduce cost.

14. **Triple Interment**

A resident had requested three interments in one double grave plot (one burial to take place shortly, plus a further burial and an ashes interment in the future) due to special family circumstances. Resolved to agree this as a special concession.

15. Parking at Steeple Way

This had been covered earlier in the meeting.

16. 🢖 VE Day 80

- a) A resident has requested a bench on the Recreation Ground (there are currently none) and it was resolved to place a Wooden Tommy Memorial Bench supplied by the Royal Legion. Cost £755.00 to supply only.
- b) Members considered purchasing a pair of Commemorative Unknown Tommy & Women in War Statues for a location in the village. After discussion it was resolved not to do so due to risk of vandalism.

(Cllr. McCheyne left the meeting)

17. **P** Devolution

Cllr. Smith reported that he had attended an EALC webinar on the subject earlier in the day. Members considered the Chairman's draft response to the Government's consultation and it was resolved to submit it.

18. Staff Matters Update

The Clerk reported that the recent recruitment process had not resulted in any interviews, and in the meantime the Deputy Clerk had indicated a wish to stay on instead of resigning. The Clerk had agreed that the role would stay as Deputy Clerk on the same rate of pay and the weekly hours would reduce from 14 to 9.

18. Other Urgent Information

- a) To note that the next meetings will be:
- i) Annual Parish Meeting on 8th May 2025 at 6pm
- ii) Annual Council Meeting on 8th May 2025 at 7pm 8.30pm

Members discussed the dates of full council meetings to be held from May 2025 to May 2026 and agreed to hold them on the first Thursday of the month (except Aug & Dec).

b) A new Borough Assembly is to be set up to bring together community groups across Brentwood and act as a two-way forum with the Borough Council. Parish Councils will be invited to nominate a representative.

The meeting closed at 20.40

Minutes signed:	Date: 8 th May 2025
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