

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 12th April 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Hufton, H Fisher, R Hopkins, R Leonard, R Mason, I McNulty and J Shepherd. The Clerk Roger Wilkin and Cllr M Davis (FDC representative) were present.

1. Open Forum: - Two residents were present but no questions were asked.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs L Jolley and J Welcher. Apologies were also received from Cllr D Connor (FDC and CCC Representative).

3. Declaration of Interests:- No declarations were made.

4. Minutes: -The minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2023 were approved and then signed by the Chair.

5. Updates and matters arising:-

- a) The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the Middle Level Commissioners regarding abandoned or unregistered boats and was informed that they were aware of the boat moored near Carters Bridge.
- b) Fens Reservoir. The Clerk informed the meeting that Anglia Water had now published their phase one consultation feedback summary which can be viewed in full on their website.

6. Administrative Items:-

- a) Annual Assembly. Members were reminded that the Annual Assembly would be held in the Methodist Hall 18th April 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.
- b) Parish Council Elections. The Clerk advised members that following the nomination period there would be no election for Parish Councillors as nine nominations had been received for the nine places. However there would be an election on 4th May 2023 for the two local District Council places as five nominations had been received.
- c) Parish Council Clerk's Annual Performance Review. The Chair proposed that following a performance review that the Clerks salary be advanced by two points to Spinal Column Point 33 with effect from 1st April 2023.

7. Coronation of King Charles 11:-

Members had previously suggested that the Coronation should be celebrated by purchasing a permanent item of street furniture. The Chair suggested that members may like to consider purchasing one or more planters that were engraved and painted in gold. These were available from Gordon Ellis & Co at a cost of £697.68 plus vat per unit. Members agreed to purchase four planters; two to be located in the new cemetery and two to be sited on the area near the flag pole. These two could be planted up with a selection of herbs and be available to the community who would be invited to take small quantities of fresh herb for personal use.

8. Police Matters: -

a) The minutes of the Police and Councillors meeting of 21st March 2023 had been circulated to members. No matters on the minutes were raised but it was reported that there had been an incident in the village where car windows had been smashed.

9. Fenland DC, CCC and other external organisation matters:-

a) No reports were given from Fenland DC or CCC.

10. Highway Issues: -

a) Pot holes were reported in Cooks Green, Ingles Lane and on Wimblington Road near Beech Avenue.

b) Members considered, from the last meeting, the County Council scheme to fund applications to reduce speed limits on roads down to 20mph and concluded that the scheme was not appropriate to roads within the parish.

c) Further to the need, as reported in the last month's minutes, to find a replacement contractor to cut the grass along the village roads, the Clerk had contacted the clerks of a number of Fenland parishes who undertake this work on behalf of CCC. Members concluded that idverde, who undertake work for Wimblington PC, could be a suitable replacement. It was agreed that an approach be made to that company and seek an estimate of costs.

d) The Clerk advised the meeting that the Parish Councils claim for an LHI contribution from CCC would be heard on 26th April 2023 and that he was prepared to present our claim to the CCC panel. The meeting thanked the Clerk for his offer.

e) Cllr Leonard advised the meeting that the MVAS statistics on traffic speed along Benwick Road during March 2023 had been submitted to the Police Speed watch unit.

11. Pedestrian Crossing:-

a) The Chair advised members that although the main elements of the crossing had been completed, the lighting element will not be completed in time for the proposed opening date of 18th April. This is due to the lanterns not being received by the contractors. Members expressed their extreme disappointment at this delay and agreed that a suitable notice be placed on the Parish Council website and face book page pointing out that this additional delay is entirely due to the CCC.

12. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

i. F/YR23/0204/F Formation of a pond with bund (retrospective) at Pond Land north of 5-7 Askham Row Benwick Road Doddington.

Members agreed to support the application

ii. F/YR23/0238/F Erect 1 x dwelling (single storey 5 bed) involving the demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings at 12 Wimblington Road Doddington

Members objected to the application on the grounds that the size and appearance of the property is out of character with the street scene and it will create a significant intrusion to the adjoining property.

iii. F/YR23/0251/F Erect a stable/hay store including change of use of land to paddocks and grazing at land south west of The Hollies Hospital Road Doddington.
Members agreed to support the application with the caveat that the proposed stable/hay store will not at any time in the future be used or converted into living accommodation.

b) FDC Local Plan and Doddington Neighbourhood Plan:-

- i. No further news had been received on the proposed new FDC Local Plan.
- ii. The Clerk had circulated to all members, a copy of a letter that had been received from the Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group, in which the Parish Council were asked to forward it to Fenland DC. The letter outlined various arguments that as part of the planning procedures, attention should be given to the impact that developments have on the capacity of the Lionel Walden Primary School. The Chair invited comments from the members on whether it was appropriate for the Parish Council to become involved in this argument. After a full and frank discussion which included whether the DNPG had the authority to suggest this action; a vote was taken and by a majority vote members concluded that the Parish Council would not be prepared to forward the letter to FDC. The consensus was that the time to present this sort of argument would be when the Neighbourhood Plan was presented at the village referendum. The Chair agreed to seek external advice on whether the DNPG had the authority to send a letter direct to FDC.
- iii. Members were reminded that a public meeting was due to take place on 22nd April in the Village Hall on the survey findings.

13. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

- a) The Clerk advised the meeting that the signed copy of the lease agreement had now been received from the football club. Comments received from the Club Secretary were that BAFC were only able to run one team at the present time and she was not aware if they would be in a better position for the next football season.
- b) The Clerk reported that following repair work taking place on the roller shutters LPS Shutters suggested that a new protective roller box be fitted. At the same time they would be able to offer a repair to the damaged security post in the car park. Members agreed to ask for appropriate quotations.
- c) The Clerk reported that the next Safety Compliance Inspection on the skate park equipment was due to take place later in the month.
- d) It was agreed that Alan Mason be asked to trim the grass area around the pavilion and skate park fencing.

14. Benwick Road Cemetery:-

- a) Following the completion of the major construction works the following minor actions are outstanding:
 1. The existing grasscrete roadway was to be covered in gravel to match the car park area.
 2. The water connection needs to be finalised and a push down water tap to be installed.
 3. A combination lock needs to be purchased to secure the main gates which in turn required some minor repairs to correct a bent rod.
 4. Replanting of some hedging saplings is required.
 5. Numbering of plots and row names needs to be finalised.
 6. Arrangements to inform the local undertakers would be made when we were in a position to become operational.
 7. Arrangements would be made to source a suitable notice-board that could be fixed near the cemetery entrance.

8. It was agreed that “Reserving of Plots” would be allowed but would be restricted to those rows identified for immediate use. The Rules and Regulations would be updated to take this into account.
9. Consideration to be given to create a new page on the Council website where Rules and Regulations, charges and official forms can be posted.

15. Street Lighting:-

The Clerk advised members on his findings in comparing the costs and arrangements for the routine maintenance of the Parish Councils street lights being offered by Balfour Beatty with our current supplier. Members agreed to remain with their present arrangements.

16. Village Maintenance:-

- a) The Clerk advised members that he was seeking a status report from the contractor on the new bus shelter on Primrose Hill.
- b) The Clerk advised members that an official order for two new dog waste bins had been sent to FDC. Exact siting was being agreed.
- c) The Clerk had researched possible contractors for taking over the grass cutting on the village roads and was recommending an approach be made to idverde who currently were undertaking work for Wimblington PC. Members agreed that idverde be asked to provide a quotation for the work.
- d) The Chair informed the meeting that the Scout Group representatives were seeking a follow up meeting over the question of the Scout Hall. The meeting was due to take place on 14th April.
- e) It was reported that a seat near Policeman’s Corner had been slightly damaged. The Chair agreed to approach our “odd job man” to effect repairs.

17. Website and Communications:-

Routine updates were being made to the website and face book page.

18. Financial Items:-

- a) Update on banking arrangements.

The Clerk advised members on the progress of the updates to the mandates on the Council’s bank accounts:

- i. NatWest Bank. The additional signatures on the Business Reserve Account are expected to be activated shortly. Notification has been received that the March branch of the bank is closing on 25th July 2023.
- ii. Lloyds Bank. The mandate application to open a new current account together with all approved signatures has been submitted to the bank.
- b) Draft Year End Accounts for 2022-2023. The Clerk had circulated the draft year end accounts for members information. Members noted the enhanced reserve balance. Sign-off arrangements and audit verifications have changed this year.

The following arrangements and timetable need to be observed:

1. Internal audit of the Councils accounts and financial affairs take place and his report needs to be noted by the Council before members formally approve the accounts,
2. Both AGAR returns are then approved by the Council and signed by the Chair and Clerk,
3. The completed AGAR returns and internal audit return are submitted to the external auditors,
4. Before 1st July 2023 authorities must publish on their website a notice of the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the Council’s accounts together copies of the two signed AGAR returns,
5. Finally before 30th September 2023 authorities must publish the external audit report and certificate.

c) Possible additional capital expenditure for 2023-2024. As the draft financial accounts, noted by members in point b) above, showed a significant growth in our cash reserves, the Chair invited members to suggest possible one off items that could be costed and if approved purchased or financed during the current year. These would be in addition to the projects already provided for in the current years precept. The following ideas were suggested:

- Extend the car park at the Abbey Recreation Ground
- Gift an amount of money to the Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group
- Install an additional two street lights making four new lights to fill “black holes”
- Replace any item of street furniture that was beyond reasonable repair
- Move the seat near the Three Tuns to a new location
- Provide two new seats on the Abbey Recreation Ground
- Replace the Councils PC computer

b) Payments:

It was agreed that cheques be drawn for the following items:

Doddington Scout Group	Litter picking Abbey Rec	100.00
NPower Commercial Ltd	Street lighting electricity	194.93
LPS Shutter Doors Ltd	Further repairs to roller shutter	216.00
Alan Mason	Hedge trimming at Abbey Rec	140.00
R Hufton re DNPG	Expenses from Doddington Village Survey	628.80
CAPALC	Affiliation Fee	685.54
CAPALC	Training courses	240.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary	805.79
HMR&C	Income Tax on Clerks salary	201.45

19. Correspondence:-

The Clerk reminded members that the Government’s new Emergency Alerts system was due to be tested at 3.00pm on 23rd April 2023

20. Any Other Business:-

The Chair reminder members that the joint planting of the PC’s tree and the WI tree to commemorate the Queens Green Canopy would be taking place at 11.00 on 29th April.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

