

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs, H Fisher, R Hopkins, R Mason, I McNulty, J Shepherd and J Welch.
Cllr M Davis (FDC representative) and the Clerk, Roger Wilkin, were present.
In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Fisher took the chair.

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs R Hufton (Chair), L Jolley, R Leonard and Cllr D Connor (FDC and CCC Representative)

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

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

5. Updates and matters arising:-

a) Cllr Fisher update members on progress for the creation of a “Community Living Room” (formally called Warm Hub). The facility takes place in the Church Rooms each Friday and three sessions had so far been arranged. Numbers attending showed good increases week on week. Cllr Fisher had obtained agreement from Cambs Acre that part of the grant can be used to purchase a small refrigerator for use in the Rooms kitchen. A small float was being arranged in order that the volunteer who was organising refreshments was not “out of pocket” in purchasing the refreshments.

6. Coronation Commemorative Planters:-

Sources of peat/soil etc were being finalised and site meetings would take place to agree the positioning of the planters.

7. Police Matters: -

a) There was no minutes available from the last police meeting but members were advised that Doddington had one of the lowest reported crime statistic. Incidents of hare coursing had been noted.

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

a) The Clerk reported that FDC were providing grants up to £500 to help improve the public view of derelict, vacant or forgotten patches of land, buildings or other sites. Members wondered if improving the posts outside the village hall would qualify for a grant.

b) A resident had asked two members if records are kept on instances of sewage overflows in the village and what improvements had taken place on the sewage station improvements. It was agreed to ask Anglian Water for an update.

9. Fens Reservoir Project:-

a) The Clerk advised the meeting that the ground investigation investigations were nearing completion which were an essential part of the Fens Reservoir Team developing their ongoing proposals.

10. Highway Issues: -

a) The following maintenance items were raised:

- i. The hedge between Cedar Ave and Wood Street had been cut back.
- ii. Areas along Forty Foot Bank were very uneven and could cause vehicles with trailers to sway over to the wrong side of the road
- iii. Parts of Benwick Road were breaking up from Dyke Moor towards the river in Benwick

b) LHI 2023/2024. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Project Manager CCC had provided drawings for the improvements to the Benwick Road footway from Askham to Hospital Road together with costings to undertake the full stretch of roadway. These costings, after the CCC element of £25,000, left an estimated Parish Council balance of £59,417. This included a risk element of £14k which may not be required. The Parish Council had earmarked £35,000 to cover 125m of the 200m stretch. As these works would not be undertaken in the current financial year, members agreed to make financial provision in the 2024/2025 budget to cover the balance of the projects costings.

c) LHI 2024/2025. With the recent opening for CCC to receive applications for submission of schemes, members agreed to submit a “complex scheme” claim for footway improvements on the north side of High Street from number 57 towards the Fish & Chip Shop.

11. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR23/0914/F Erect 9 dwellings (6 single storey 3 bed, 3x3 storey 5 bed) involving formation of new access and demolition of existing outbuildings, and alterations to 3 Wimblington Road including single storey extensions to south and west elevations, extensions to roof to create a first floor and erect a garage, land north of 3 Wimblington Road Doddington

Members voted to object to the application on the grounds that the site was very disjointed and overdeveloped resulting in minuscule gardens for each unit. Many trees will be destroyed if a development of this size goes ahead. The mixture of bungalows and three storey houses does not lend itself to a pleasant development. Houses should be removed from the site and a number of the 3 bed bungalows replaced by 2 bed bungalows. Members had a major safety issue as the proposed entrance into the development is very close to Beech Avenue resulting in misleading information on vehicles signalling over what direction they wish to go. It is also dangerous to allow traffic to cross an established layby.

- ii. F/YR23/0995/O Erect up to 3 dwellings involving the formation of an access (outline application with all matters reserved), land east of 1 Wimblington Road Doddington

Members voted to object to the application on the grounds that the proposed development is ribbon development in an area that abuts a natural open space between Doddington and Wimblington. It will have an adverse impact on the character of the local countryside and as such would be contrary to policy LP12. Members also had a major safety issue as the proposed entrance into the development is very close to the existing entrance of 1 Wimblington Road resulting in misleading information on vehicles signalling over what direction they wish to go. It is also dangerous to allow traffic to cross an established layby.

iii. F/YR23/0962/F Erect a detached double garage with study, kitchen and bathroom above and insertion of front boundary gates 1.95m high (max height) with addition of railings to brick wall, 2 Fen View Doddington

Members considered the history of the site and in line with decisions made on previous applications felt that the description of the application is likely to be changed to that of an annex. That being so members asked that should the application be approved then caveats should be made that at no time in the future will the building be used as a business or the annex can only be used as a residential extension to the main house and occupied by residents of the main building and not sold or sublet as a separate independent residence.

iv. F/YR23/0969/F Erect a dwelling (2 storey 5 bed) involving culverting the drain for access, land south of The Hollies Hospital Road Doddington

Members supported the application

v. F/YR23/0993/O Erect up to 3 dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved), land south west of The Hollies Hospital Road Doddington

Members objected to the application on the following grounds. Each of the three plots has its own access point onto Hospital Road resulting in possible unsafe highway issues. The site would be on open countryside and there is no overriding need for the development to take place given the District Council's housing land supply position. The application would have a detrimental effect on the character and visual amenity of the area. The application site includes a substantial amount of trees and hedges along Hospital Road. In order to provide vehicular access onto the site, the vast majority of the trees and hedges would need to be removed which would have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area. The Parish Council noted that the block plan used in this application is the same plan that was used in application F/YR23/0310/O. That application had an officer recommendation to refuse planning permission as both the Highways Authority and the Ecology Officer recommended refusal. That application was withdrawn by the agent immediately before the application was due to be heard by the Planning Committee on 28th June 2023.

b) Appeals made against FDC's actions on planning matters:

i. F/YR21/1072/FDL To formally record The Planning Inspectorates decision to allow planning permission for the construction of 47 dwellings plus associated items on land east of Bevills Close Doddington

Members recorded their great disappointment over the decision

ii. ENF/009/17/UW To report that an appeal has been lodged against FDC's decision to issue an Enforcement Notice on Elm Farm Hospital Road Doddington for the siting of a mobile home and three container units on the site without appropriate planning permission.

Members noted the action.

c) Other planning application matters:

i. FDC Local Plan. No further information had been received from the District Council.

ii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The Clerk reported that the grant of £3,125 had been received. He also advised the meeting that he had signed and forwarded the Consultancy Agreement to Cambs ACRE

12. Doddington Scout Group:

a) Trusteeship Issue. The Clerk advised members that he was awaiting a reply from the Scout Group.

13. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

- a) The Clerk advised members that he had received any enquiry from a group to use the facilities currently available at the recreation ground. They were currently working with the Doddington FC but wanted to organize an adult team as well as maintain the junior teams. The Clerk was hoping to organize a meeting with all parties in order to ascertain what pitches would be required.
- b) Members gave further thoughts on future uses of the grounds including multi use pitches and tennis courts and agreed to form a sub-committee to explore options. Cllrs Shepherd, Hopkins and McNulty offered to sit on the sub-committee. It was agreed that arrangements should be made to measure the areas of the playing field.
- c) The Clerk informed the meeting that a resident in Holly Drive had asked that the overhanging trees and shrubs along the boundary with Holly Drive should be cut back. Much of this area was overgrown and as it was felt that a tree surgeon would need to deal with some of the work that Cllr Mason and the Clerk would investigate what may be needed.

14. Benwick Road Cemetery:-

- a) Following the completion of the major construction works the following minor actions are outstanding:
 - 1. The water connection needs to be finalised and a push down water tap to be installed.
 - 2. A combination lock needs to be purchased to secure the main gates which in turn required some minor repairs to correct a bent rod.
 - 3. Replanting of some hedging saplings is required.
 - 4. Numbering of plots and row names needs to be finalised.
 - 5. Arrangements to inform the local undertakers would be made when we were in a position to become operational.
 - 6. Arrangements would be made to source a suitable notice-board that could be fixed near the cemetery entrance.
 - 7. 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.
 - 8. Consideration to be given to create a new page on the Council website where Rules and Regulations, charges and official forms can be posted.
- b) Members expressed their pleasure at the appearance of the internal roadway now that resurfacing works had taken place.

15. Street Lighting:-

- a) The Clerk updated members on the status of outstanding street light repairs and also informed the meeting that CCC were proposing upgrading all of their street lights with LED lanterns. This work could take up to 2 years to complete and we would be informed in due course when those county lights in Doddington would be upgraded.

16. Village Maintenance:-

- a) Cllr Fisher had received an enquiry from a resident in Witchford Close regarding the maintenance of the pond in Wimblington Road. It appears that the residents may become liable for this area once the responsibilities of the builders of Witchford Close cease. The resident was asking if the area could become a community area. Cllr Fisher agreed to ascertain further facts on the issue.
- b) Cllr Mason reported that water was sitting on the floor of the Bier House and it appeared that the floor levels and kerbing needed attention. As the building was located within the Village Conservation Area that the FDC Conservation Officer be asked to visit the building and give their opinion on possible works.

17. Website and Communications:-

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

18. Financial Items:-

a) The Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils had reached agreement with the Local Government Association on rates of pay applicable to Local Government Officers from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Members agreed that the Clerks monthly hourly rate be increased in accordance with the agreement and backdated to 1st April 2023.

b) Payments:

It was agreed that on-line BACs transfers be made for the following items:

White September Florist	Flowers for Chair (on her return from hospital)	39.50
Doddington Scout Group	Litter picking	100.00
Npower Commercial	Street lighting electricity	441.49
EonNext	Abbey Pavilion electricity	14.00
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Grass cutting, Abbey Rec & Cemetery	450.00
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Relaying internal roadway in Cemetery	3,800.00
Andy Muskett Ltd	Street Lighting repairs	144.00
Alan Mason	Tree & hedge trimming Cedar Close	130.00
Fenland DC	Annual monitoring CCTY at Abbey Rec	3,000.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary & expenses (inc backpay)	1,161.89
HMR&C	Income Tax on Clerks salary	290.47

c) Preparation of Precept 2024/2025:

The Clerk reminder members that they would be considering the setting of the 2024/2025 precept at the January meeting and invited them to consider possible capital projects for inclusion. Members agreed to provide finance to complete the 2023/2024 LHI scheme and to provide an initial sum towards providing additional sports/recreation facilities at Abbey Rec Ground.

19. Correspondence:-

a) The Clerk informed members that the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Fire Authority had announced a plan to close Manea Fire Station which could have an impact in attending incidents within Doddington. Members supported a request from Manea Parish Council to object to the proposal.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

