

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs, H Fisher, R Hopkins, L Jolley, R Mason, I McNulty, J Welcher, and the Clerk, Roger Wilkin. 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), J Shepherd, R Leonard, Cllr M Davis (FDC representative) 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 13th December 2023 were approved following the addition of Cllr Fisher's name to item 13b. The updated minutes were then signed by Cllr Fisher.

5. Updates and matters arising:-

a) Cllr Fisher updated members on the "Community Living Room" (formally called Warm Hub) with facilities restarting after the Christmas and New Year break. The small refrigerator was being ordered.

b) Possible closure of Manea Fire Station. Members noted the report supplied by the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service which explained the issues on staffing the station on a full-time basis. Members agreed to continue its support opposing the fire station closure.

c) Coronation Commemorative Planters. Two of the planters would shortly be moved into the Benwick Road Cemetery.

6 Police Matters: -

a) There were no minutes available from the last police meeting.

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

a) The Clerk advised members that FDC were seeking nominations for this years Pride in Fenland Award. Members agreed to nominate Ruth Hufton for her work as an individual volunteer.

8. Fens Reservoir Project:-

a) No matters had been reported from the Fens Reservoir Team since the last Parish Council meeting.

9. Highway Issues: -

a) The following maintenance items were raised:

i. Parts of Benwick Road were breaking up

ii. There is a dangerous dip in the road surface of Primrose Hill when travelling towards the village.

iii. CCC to be asked to cut back the hedging and brambles on Primrose Hill from its corner back towards the village.

b) A resident had complained that vehicles were being parked in Oaktree Close when events were taking place in the Village Hall. Members agreed to refer the matter to the Village Hall Committee with a request that they ensure that the car park is open whenever an event takes place.

- c) LHI 2023/2024. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Project Manager CCC had stated that they may need to trim back the hedges and trees on the strip of land between the Askham Row private roadway and Benwick Road. The PC would make enquiries with the residents Community Management Committee
- d) LHI 2024/2025. Members agreed that an application should be made to improve the footway on the north side of the High Street from its junction with Benwick Road to the Fish & Chip shop, some 120mtrs. They also agreed to make a financial contribution to the scheme of £25,000 on the basis that if the application was successful, it would be unlikely that works would start before early 2025 and that payment would not be due until the financial year 2025/26, allowing the financing to take place in the 2025/26 precept.
- e) Grass cutting of village road verges. The Clerk reported that as the manager of the local idverde branch had resigned and his number two was on extended absence, he was concerned that the branch was closing. In addition, no request for payment had been made for any of the cuts since the contract had started. However, an enquiry to the Operations Director showed that the branch was operational and new contacts had been provided. The company had since provided details of all cuts made together with a covering invoice which would be listed for approval later in the meeting.
- f) Street naming – Land southwest of 10 Newgate Street. Members raised no objection to the proposed name of Nellies View.

10. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR23/1046/F Erect 1 dwelling (2 storey 4 bed) and detached summerhouse at land northwest of 11 Church Lane Doddington
Members agreed to support this application.
- ii. F/YR23/1061/F Erect 1 dwelling (single storey 2 bed) and formation of a new access and revised parking/turning arrangements to serve the dwellings approved under planning permissions F/YR09/0460/F and F/YR04/3921/F and including realignment of the footpath on Newgate Street at land southwest of 10 Newgate Street Doddington
Members agreed to support this application.
- iii. F/YR24/0006/F Erect a 3-storey side extension to the existing dwelling at 4 Manor Estate Doddington.
Members agreed to support this application.

b) Other planning application matters:

- i. FDC Local Plan. No further information had been received from the District Council.
- ii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The PC had received a status report from the Project Manager of the DNPG which stated that they would be discussing the results of the Housing Needs Survey that had just been published. They will also be discussing changes to the National Planning Policy and the implications of those on neighbourhood planning. The Landscape & Village Charter Report was being reviewed together with identifying potential Local Green Spaces.

11. Doddington Scout Group:

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

12. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

- a) The Clerk advised members that although no meeting had taken place with the organizers of the two groups, he had spoken to them individually. There were several issues between the groups which were taking time to resolve. Until the question of pitch use was resolved, members agreed to put on hold further thoughts on future uses of the grounds.
- b) The Clerk informed the meeting that he had attended a site meeting with the contractor who cuts the grass on the Recreation Ground to provide a quotation for cutting back the overhanging trees and shrubs along the boundary with Holly Drive. In addition, he was asked to trim back all the hedges on the south side of the grounds including the area around the car park and the junior child's recreation area. His quotation for all the work was £900 which members accepted. Work was likely to take place at the end of the month, weather permitting.
- c) Members were asked to consider providing new picnic seating facilities near each of the two children's play areas. Cllr Fisher had made possible enquiries on costings which were in the region of £500 each. Members agreed to proceed with the suggestion.

13. 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 able to become operational.
 - 6. Arrangements would be made to source a suitable noticeboard 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) As the current method of fixing a small metal number on the concrete plinth had not proved to be effective it was still important to accurately mark the width of each plot. Cllr McNulty agreed to investigate marking the start and finish of each grave space with a groove cut into the concrete.
- c) The Clerk advised members that he was finalising the necessary forms and records and would liaise with Cllr Jolley over providing a new page on the Council's website where the necessary documentation could be stored.
- d) Cllr Mason agreed to make arrangement to jet wash the concrete plinths and footways.

14. Street Lighting:-

- a) The Clerk advised members that all outstanding street light repairs had been completed. As there was still a number of areas in the village where street lighting was poor, it was agreed to approach Cable Testing to revisit there quotations to adjust the luminaire strength of each lantern, clean the lanterns and assess any "black holes" in the village.

15. Village Maintenance:-

- a) Cllr Fisher confirmed that he was making further enquiries with residents of Witchford Close over the future maintenance of the pond in Wimblington Road.
- b) Cllr Mason reported on his meeting with the FDC Conservation Officer and had discussed with him various options to solve the ingress of water into the Bier House. These works would not require any planning or special permissions. Cllr Mason would seek comments from a suitable contractor and the Clerk would apply to UKPN for access into the site of the adjoining substation and location of their power lines which may lie near the walls of the Bier House.

16. Website and Communications:-

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

17. Financial Items:-

a) Payments:

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

Doddington Scout Group	Litter picking	100.00
Npower Commercial	Street lighting electricity	459.10
EonNext	Abbey Pavilion electricity	20.23
Idverde Ltd	Verge cutting – June to October	4,080.00
St Mary's Church	Church Room hire – Community lounge	150.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary & expenses	895.65
HMR&C	Income Tax on Clerks salary	223.91
Cambs ACRE	Support work for Neighbourhood Plan	630.00

b) Preparation of Precept 2024/2025:

The Clerk had circulated members with a report and draft calculations for the 2024/2025 Precept requirements. Members carefully considered the potential liabilities that would be required for the next financial year and agreed that additional sums should be made to significantly improve the street lighting in the village. Taking all matters into consideration, members resolved to increase the current precept level of £60,000 to £65,000.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

