

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 14th February 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Hufton (Chair), H Fisher, R Hopkins, R Mason, I McNulty, J Shepherd, J Welcher and the Clerk, Roger Wilkin.

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs L Jolley, 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 meetings held on the 10th and 31st January 2024 were approved and signed by Cllrs Hufton and Fisher.

5. Updates and matters arising:-

a) Cllr Fisher updated members on the increasing numbers of visitors to the “Community Living Room” (formally called Warm Hub). The small refrigerator had been delivered and would become operational once an additional power point had been installed. Arrangements are in hand to create a “Food Bank” in order to provide assistance to the needy.

b) Possible closure of Manea Fire Station. The Clerk informed members that Manea PC were achieving success in encouraging more residents to volunteer in becoming an on call fireman.

c) Coronation Commemorative Planters. Cllrs Shepherd, Mason and Fisher would arrange to move the four planters into the cemetery and onto the land near the Bier House. Enquiries would be made to see if Delfland would be able to supply the compost.

d) Pride in Fenland Awards. The Clerk informed members that a nomination form had been submitted to FDC.

6 Police Matters: -

a) The Chair had circulated copies of the December meeting of the Police/Council meeting. At the January meeting, the Chair had raised the question on whether electricity from streetlights in Wimblington Road was being used to supply power to the cannabis factory that was recently raided and closed down by the police.

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

a) No matters were raised under this heading.

8. Fens Reservoir Project:-

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

b) The Middle Level Commissioners had provided details and timings on their plans to desilt and raise the banks of the Sixteen Foot and Forty Foot Drains.

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. A deep pot hole is in Hospital Road near its junction with Benwick Road
 - iv. There is a broken drain cover near the Bier House
 - v. A resident had complained of vehicles parking at bus stops in the village resulting in busses blocking the road when collecting or dropping customers off. The position may be eased if a white “Bus Stop” sign was painted on the road by the brick bus stop.
 - vi. A resident had complained that some of the pathways in New Street and Benwick Road were being obstructed by overgrown hedges. A check was to be made on whether the hedges were in private ownership or maintained by FDC
 - vii. It was reported that the hedging and brambles on Primrose Hill from its corner back towards the village had been cut back.
- b) The Clerk reported that CCC had reviewed its Highway Operational Standard in relation to Weed Management and had decided to reinstate the use of chemical weed control across the county. A one off non-chemical weed removal program will be implemented to cleanse all areas affected by weeds. This will serve as a deep clean measure before the cyclical chemical weed treatment programme will take place twice a year commencing in May 2024.
- c) LHI 2023/2024. The Clerk reported that he had made enquiries with the residents of the Askham Row Management Committee over CCC’s enquiries on cutting back the hedges and trees on the strip of land between the Askham Row private roadway and Benwick Road and for pedestrians to use this roadway when the footway needed to be closed during resurfacing. No objections had been received but regarding CCC possibly using the Recreation Grounds car park for the storage of kerb stones and positioning of a welfare unit, the Recreation Ground Committee advised that it would not be possible until after Easter as the car park needed to be totally available for its Easter Egg hunt. All this information had been relayed to CCC who had still not finalised a potential start date for the improvement works.
- d) LHI 2024/2025. The Clerk informed members that our application to improve the footway on the north side of the High Street from its junction with Benwick Road to the Fish & Chip shop had been submitted to CCC and acknowledged.
- e) CCC was inviting applications from Parish Councils who may be interested in introducing 20mph speed limits on their roads. Members considered that a reduction in speed limit on Ingles Lane would be beneficial. The Clerk would investigate the conditions of making an application.
- f) The Clerk reported that a Temporary Road Closure Order Application had been made to close Parson Land Drove from 26th to 28th March 2024. Members noted the order.

10. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR24/0114/RM Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping and scale (for Plot 1 only) (1 x dwelling 2 storey 4 bed) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0539/O (Erect up to 4 dwellings) involving the demolition of existing dwelling and storage buildings at 32 Wimblington Road Doddington

Members were extremely concerned that the street scene from Wimblington Road will effectively be a 2-storey brick wall behind a 1.8m close boarded fence. The existing frontage consisting of trees, shrubs and vegetation gives a natural shield to the site. As this area has not been surveyed it may be totally levelled to erect the 1.8m fence. Members suggested turning the property 90 degrees to face Wimblington Road

which would reduce the need for a 1.8m fence and the existing access could possibly be used instead of being blocked up.

b) Other planning matters:

i. F/YR23/0807/O Erect up to 4 dwellings on land west of 27 Benwick Road Doddington.

Members noted that this application had received planning permission at the FDC Planning Committee on 10th January 2024. This decision was made against the Officers recommendation to refuse permission and against the objection lodged by the Parish Council. Members discussed whether any action can or should be taken against that decision and decided to take no action.

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

iii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The DNPG have been discussing the results of the Housing Needs Survey and the Local Green Spaces and will be formulating a response to Cambridgeshire Acre.

11. Doddington Scout Group:

a) Trusteeship Issue. The Clerk advised members that he had briefly discussed this matter with the Scout Group who were waiting a reply from the Scout Association Trust.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

a) The Clerk advised members that a safety inspection of the skate park equipment had recently taken place that showed some fixings were missing causing the metalwork to be loose. Cllr Shepherd agreed to discuss the position with Brian Elmore.

b) The Clerk reported that following the cutting of hedges around the Abbey Rec Ground and the area abutting Holley Drive, a resident had written in praising the excellent work undertaken by the contractor. Members also expressed the quality of his work.

c) Members agreed to purchase two new picnic seating facilities to be sited near each of the two children's play areas from Realise Futures at a total cost of £912.18 plus vat. The Clerk agreed to discuss with the groundwork's contractor the construction of concrete slabs on which the seating can be secured.

d) The Clerk had discussed with the two football club managers the long-term options for their use of the football pitches. At the present time both teams are using the small pitch on different days but when the 2024 winter season starts one of the teams will need to move to a large pitch. Both sets of players are now operating under the Doddington Football Club banner and the possibility of an over 35 team being formed and using one of the large pitches has been dropped. On this basis it appeared that the football pitch that runs from the Pavilion towards the skate park would not be needed. A statement of agreement still needs to be drawn up and signed which will then leave the Parish Council free to consider additional equipment being constructed in that area.

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) Discussions were taking place with Anglia Water over the provision of a water supply into the cemetery.

14. Street Lighting:-

a) The Clerk reported that one streetlight was not working in Church Street and this had been referred to our lighting contractor.

15. Village Maintenance:-

a) The Clerk reported that he and Cllr Mason had met a representative from UKPN to gain access into the substation grounds so that various works can take place to the Bier House. The Clerk had obtained plans showing the location of the underground power cables and none of them came close to our property.

b) The Clerk reported that the two new defibrillators had been ordered and he had discussed the possible siting of the Kingsland Close unit with two of the residents who raised no issue on having the unit fitted to the wall abutting the developments security gates. Arrangements would be made with EG Electrical Services to wire the units in.

16. Website and Communications:-

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

17. Financial Items:-

a) Following the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 receiving the Royal Assent in October 2023 it clarified that Parish Councils had the power to fund church works including the maintenance of open churchyards. Members therefore agreed to make a grant to the Church of £2,000.

b) 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	494.56
EonNext	Abbey Pavilion electricity	26.10
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Hedge cutting Abbey Rec	900.00
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Grass cutting Abbey Rec & Cemetery	450.00
Imperative Training Ltd	2 new defibrillators	3,204.00
Ruth Hufton	Reimbursement of bin charge at Church	44.00
St Mary's Church	Grant towards ground maintenance	2,000.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary & expenses	895.65
HMR&C	Income Tax on Clerks salary	223.91

The following items had been paid out from the Community Living Room Grant

Argus Ltd	Refrigerator – Community Living Room	175.00
Elaine Stratford	Tablecloths & DIY Cards – Comm Living Rm	107.99

c) Retirement of the Internal Auditor

The Clerk advised members that Ivan Cooper had announced that whilst he was able to undertake the internal audit on the current year's accounts, he would then be retiring, and we would need to appoint a new internal auditor for the 2024/2025 internal audit.

18. Any Other Business:-

a) Members agreed to hold the Annual Parish Assembly on 16th April 2024

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.