

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 18th September 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Hufton (Chair), R Hopkins, L Jolley, R Mason, I McNulty, D Slade and J Welcher. The Clerk, Roger Wilkin was present.

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs H Fisher, J Shepherd, Cllr D Connor (FDC and CCC Representative) and Cllr M Davis (FDC representative)

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

4. Minutes: - Cllr McNulty proposed and Cllr Hopkins seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th August 2024 be approved. These were agreed by the members which were then signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes:-

a) Community Living Room. Members were advised that the weekly Friday sessions were very popular with a steady number of visitors attending.

6. Administrative Items:-

a) Members considered inviting alterations to the Parish Councillor's Service Responsibilities. Cllr Slade offered to take on the defibrillator checks and Cllrs Slade and McNulty offered to take on the MVAS checks and downloads. Arrangements would be made for a representative from SWARCO to visit the village to provide the necessary training on the MVAS units.

b) Members considered adopting new or updated versions to the following Parish Council Policies:

General Risk Policy, proposed and seconded by Cllrs Mason and Jolley

Financial Reserves Policy, proposed and seconded by Cllrs McNulty and Welcher

Financial Risk Assessment, proposed and seconded by Cllrs Hopkins and Slade

All three policies were unanimously agreed by the members. Arrangements would be made to post the documents on the Council's website.

c) The Chair advised members that the purchase of fire cabinets had been deferred since their weight could cause a problem in locating them in private houses and suggested that we initially consider other means of storing prime records. Cllr Slade advised that he had received two quotations from companies who could digitally copy 10 bound hand written copies of historic minutes with a total estimate of 3000 A4 pages. Quotation details were received from the Oasis Group £1,625 plus vat and a second company who quoted £1,498 plus vat. However, Cllr Slade had concerns over the customer service being offered by the second company. Cllr Welcher proposed and Cllr Mason seconded that we accept the quotation from Oasis Group which was unanimously agreed by the members.

7. Police Matters:

Members noted the minutes of the Police and Councillor meeting of 12th September. No matters were raised by members.

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

- a) No routine matters had been raised by representatives from FDC or CCC.
- b) The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority had circulated details of a bus franchising consultation including the holding of stakeholders events throughout the area. The Fenland event was due to take place on 26th September 2024 and the Chair indicated that she was prepared to attend.

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) As well as the works reported at the August 2024 meeting which are still outstanding, the following additional works need attention:
 - i. The road surface on the new roadway at Turf Fen Lane is starting to crack and in addition the area has some brambles encroaching over it.
 - ii. Some of the kerbing opposite 26A/26B High Street is loose and dangerous.
 - iii. A hole has appeared in the roadway near 9/11 Wood Street
- b) LHI 2023/2024. CCC is still to advise on the start date for works to resurface the footway in Benwick Road scheduled for September 2024.
- c) LHI 2025/2026. CCC have circulate Parish and Town Councils requesting expressions of interest for LHI funding during 2025/2026. Members agreed to submit an interest for a large scheme. Final decision on our proposed scheme would be considered at a later meeting but in the interim discussed the possibility that the resurfacing of Wood Street footpath may be a suitable scheme.
- d) CCC had circulated a report showing their Capital Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 and 2025/26. No specific capital works for Doddington had been listed for 2024/25 but a possible scheme to improve the surface of Floods Ferry Road at an estimated cost of £920k was listed for 2025/26. The 2025/26 programme was still being developed but the Chair commented that if these works were to be undertaken then the improved roadway may encourage HGV's to use this road rather than travel through the village. Members noted the report.
- e) Grass cutting. The Chair reported that she was having detailed exchanges of email with CCC and the indication had been given that we would receive a refund of £800 for the costs incurred in cutting the circular Walk within the village.
- f) CCC had launched its Community Gritting Scheme for winter 2024/25 which was in line with similar schemes launched in the previous two years. Members again reiterated their opposition to taking part in the scheme.

10. Fens Reservoir Project:-

- a) The Clerk reported that an update had been received from the Fens Reservoir Team that in order to extend their investigations into ground condition surveys they will be setting up a site compound to assist in this.

11. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR24/0691/VOC Variation of Condition 11 (list of approved plans) of planning permission F/YR23/0303/F involving the demolition of the existing dwelling and an outbuilding to enable revised dwelling design at 29 Primrose Hill Doddington. Members were very surprised that the new design almost doubled the footprint from the original application as a 5 bedroom design was replacing the original 4 bedroom. Members also pointed out that the new architect had made no provision for the biodiversity requirements as set out in the conditions made in the granting of the original application in his design.

ii. F/YR24/0731/F Erect a single storey extension to the side and rear of the existing dwelling which involved the demolition of the exiting extension at 26 Manor Estate Doddington

Members supported the application.

b) Other planning matters:

i. Members were informed that an appeal had been made against an enforcement notice over the stationing of a caravan for residential purposes and the storage of containers on the land without planning permission on land at Elm Farm, Hospital Road, Doddington. The appeal was upheld and the enforcement notice quashed.

ii. The Chair advised members that she had commenced adding planning applications onto the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet and the results of these would be reported to members at each Council meeting.

iii FDC Local Plan. No further information had been received from FDC

iv. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. No report, as no meetings had taken place since the summer break.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

a) Refurbishment of the Pavilion:

i. Electrical rewiring. These works were started on 6th September and were finished on 16th September. Two circuits were installed. One circuit controlled those items that need constant supply; CCTV system, the defibrillator, emergency lighting and the outside light that operates on movement. The second circuit operates all other internal items; lights now operate on movement sensors, power points, heaters, showers, security blinds and kitchen. This system also has a first in and last out facility.

ii. Cllr. McNulty has been coordinating the receipt of quotations from various contractors and the following were presented to members for approval:

1. Replace fascia, soffits and barge boards. Install guttering and downpipes,

A J Henderson £2,516 plus VAT

GLP Installations £3,862 plus VAT

Proposed by Cllr. McNulty, seconded by Cllr. Hopkins that A J Henderson's quotation be accepted. This was unanimously agreed by members.

2. Replace any surrounding broken slabs and relay. JC Gardens & Landscaping had quoted £1,950 but it was possible that a number of the broken slabs could be replaced by second hand slabs. Agreed that this item be further reviewed.

3. Install additional insulation in the roof. This item was suggested by SWA Electrical as they had discovered while undertaking the rewiring that the existing insulation was very thin and one of the water pipes had sprung a small leak due to freezing water. SWA Electrical had quoted £1,400 to supply and relay additional insulation. Agree that this item be placed on hold pending ascertaining if we can apply for a grant towards the cost.

Negotiations are continuing on obtaining quotations for other works. The Clerk informed members that based on known and possible estimates of costs that the likely overall cost of the refurbishment could amount to £20,000. As the refurbishment works were not planned when members set the budget for the current financial year, no specific budget was set. However, we do have the majority of a £10,000 General Projects Budget available that could be used for the refurbishment, but the balance will need to be met from our general reserves. These reserves are quite significant and paying the balance of the refurbishment costs from them will not have any significant effect on the Councils liquidity. Members noted the position and authorised the Clerk to make the necessary changes in the budget allocation.

b) Additional recreational facilities. Since the last meeting a public consultation exercise has taken place inviting comments on installing an outside gym. This showed a positive support for the idea. A meeting between some Parish Councillors and Fresh Air Fitness took place which was followed by a formal quotation being received for 10 pieces of gym equipment based on their standard park pack plus two items aimed at primary aged children and one piece suitable for users in wheelchairs. Cllr. Jolley proposed and Cllr. McNulty seconded that we accept the quotation from Fresh Air Fitness in the sum of £14,642 plus VAT.

c) Following the decision of Doddington FC not to renew their lease on using the football pitch, confirmation had been received from the manager of the infant football club that, had been working under the banner of the Doddington FC, that they wished to continue using the small football pitch. Members agreed to offer a new contract with this club and that for the first year would not charge them a monthly rent in order that they have an opportunity to become financially sound. In the meantime, discussion had taken place with Doddington FC who agreed to sell the storage unit to the Parish Council for £1,200. This had been agreed by a quorum of members.

d) JC Gardens & Landscaping had provided a quotation to cut back the overhanging brambles, undergrowth and low branches around the boundary of the ground for a price of £1,250. Members considered that if the work could be done by a flail hedge mower, the price would be considerably lower. It was agreed to make enquires.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

Weed spraying around the paths and cremation slabs had taken place.

14. Street Lighting:-

It was reported that power to the lighting unit FPC6 outside 11A Benwick Road was dead. The matter would be reported to UKPN.

15. Village Maintenance:-

a) Works to finalise the replacement of the rotten wood in the Bier House roof was due to be completed in September. It was no longer considered necessary for guttering to be installed.

b) The Chair advised the meeting that maintenance works on all the village street asserts had been completed.

c) It was agreed to continue discussions with the directors of the local management committee over the future maintenance of the Crossway Wood & Pond. It was agreed that the council considers the offer of free tree saplings from the Woodland Trust in the spring.

16. Website and Communications:-

The Council's web master had completed the migration change of the web site and individual web addresses to .gov.uk

17. Financial Items:-

a) The Clerk reported an approach had been made by Wimblington Parish Council to Helen Symmons of Legra IAS to become their Internal Auditor and that she was prepared to take on that responsibility of other Parish Councils in the area including Doddington. The Clerk supported the appointment based on the CV that had been provided. Members agreed to offer the appointment of Internal Auditor to Helen Symmons.

b) Parish Council Financial Report. The Clerk had circulated a financial statement to members together with a comparison of financial transactions for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024 against budget for the full year. These showed a significant proportion of reserves are earmarked for “long term “ projects and that our general reserves will be boosted when the second half years precept is paid over by FDC in October. Members noted the report.

c) Payments:

It was agreed that on-line BACs transfers be made on the schedule prepared by the Clerk and certified by two authorised bank mandate members of the Parish Council:-

Doddington Scout Group	Litter picking	100.00
Npower Commercial Gas Ltd	Street lighting electricity	328.20
Eon Next	Abbey Pavilion electricity	28.83
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Grass cutting Cemetery	130.00
Alan mason	Grass cutting Abbey Rec	450.00
Andy Muskett Ltd	Street light repair	192.00
Narkedesign	Domain registration & migration	169.00
M P Carpenter	Village assets decoration costs	630.00
Doddington Football Club	Purchase of storage unit	1,200.00
SWA Electrical	Rewiring of Abbey Pavilion	9,150.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary	960.54
HMR&C	Income Tax on Clerks salary	240.14

The following payments had been made from the Community Room grant since the last Parish Council meeting:

J Holding	Refreshments	50.00
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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

