

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

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

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs I McNulty, 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 Hopkins proposed and Cllr Jolley seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 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. Blackfield Creatives and a local Fire Officer had attended a session. An air fryer had been purchased. A Christmas lunch at the Three Tuns for 30 people had taken place on 6th December.
- b) The meeting was informed that FDC had planted new rose bushes around the war memorial.
- c) Cllr Slade and Cllr McNulty together with the Clerk had attended a training meeting with a representative from Swarco on the downloading of data from the new MVAS units. Cllr Slade had circulated the statistical data from the units over the last two months. It was agreed that Cllr Slade be given authority to investigate the purchase of a new lap top rather than use his own equipment.

6. Administrative Items:-

- a) The Chair reported receipt of the resignation from Cllr Lucy Jolley on personal grounds. A vote of thanks for all the work that she had undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council was recorded. The Clerk advised members that due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, he would delay reporting the resignation to FDC until the New Year.
- b) Members considered adopting updated versions to the following Parish Council Policies:
 - Code of Conduct Policy; proposed and seconded by Cllrs Mason and Slade
 - Dignity at Work Policy; proposed and seconded by Cllrs Welcher and Hopkins
 - Privacy Policy; proposed and seconded by Cllrs Fisher and JolleyAll policies were unanimously agreed by the members and arrangements would be made to upload the approved policy documents onto the Council's website.

7. Police Matters:

Members noted the minutes from the 2nd December 2024 meeting of the Police and Councillor committee.

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

- a) No matters were received from FDC or CCC

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) The following works were reported as needing attention:
 - i. Following the cutting back of the Abbey Rec boundary hedge abutting Holly Drive, the resident had sent in an email expressing her thanks for the excellent job undertaken by the contractor.
 - ii The Chair would again speak to the owner of 35 High Street regarding their lavender bushes that are encroaching over the footway.
 - iii. There are deep potholes in Dykemoor Drove and Benwick Road that need attention and there is a dangerous dip in the road from Primrose Hill into the village.
- b) The Clerk reported that CCC had asked Parish Councils to suggest schemes within their area that could benefit from their Capital Funded Highway Maintenance Scheme. As applications had to be submitted by 8th December he had, in conjunction with the Chair, suggested that the footway on the east side of Wood Street would benefit from being improved under this scheme. Members noted and approved the action taken.
- c) LHI 2025/2026. As previous suggestion that footway improvements in Wood Street has been submitted to CCC, (see 9b above), it was agreed that an LHI application be made to improve the white lines at various junctions within the village.
- d) Grass cutting. The Chair was chasing for a resolution on the refund of costs incurred in cutting the village Circular Walk.

10. Fens Reservoir Project:-

- a) The Fens Reservoir Team had circulated the minutes of the 23rd October Community Liaison Group meeting.

11. Planning:-

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR24/0901/F Change of use of building from B8 to B8 and E(C)(iii), including the division of the building to form 4 x units. And erect a 2 storey extension to the existing building involving the demolition of part of the building at The Quadrant Primrose Hill Doddington.

Members supported the application.

- ii. F/YR24/0944/F Change of use of land and buildings to equine use (for horse riding lessons), the formation of a manage and the erection of stables involving the demolition of existing barn (retrospective) at Land North of Dykemoor Farm Dykemoor Drove Doddington.

Members lodged their concern that the various building works associated with this retrospective application were undertaken on a piece meal basis over a significant period of time rather than applying for permission to develop prior to any works taking place. However, despite their concerns they agreed not to raise any objection to the application.

b) Other planning matters:

- i. F/YR23/0993/O Erect up to 3 dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) and associated highway improvement works at Land south west of The Hollies Hospital Road Doddington.

This planning application was being determined by the FDC Planning Committee today and although the officer recommendation was to refuse the application, it was reported that FDC Planning Committee granted the application with conditions.

- ii. Members noted the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet.
- iii. FDC Local Plan. No further information had been received from FDC
- iv. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was to be referred to FDC for their initial comments. Members were advised that the formal Consultancy Agreement with Cambs ACRE had been signed by the Clerk. The Chair had agreed to prepare an Introduction paper for the draft report.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground:-

a) Refurbishment of the Pavilion:

The status position is that all works for which an approved quotation had been awarded have either been completed or are in progress. Some additional work has been identified as follows:

1. A new external fire door is needed as the existing door is rotting at the bottom. A contractor has provided a quotation to replace the door at a cost of £390 but would be unable to undertake the work until late January 2025. Members agreed to accept this quotation.
2. The flooring contract only related to a limited number of areas. The flooring in the toilets, showers, the two small changing rooms and referees changing room have not been replaced. Members considered either extending the new flooring to cover these areas or applying a deep clean to these areas. Members agreed to seek a price for extending the flooring.
3. It was agreed to purchase a new refrigerator and microwave unit for the kitchen and seek prices for suitable tables and chairs for the community area.

b) Additional recreational facilities:

A suggestion had been made to the Parish Council that a games area using artificial grass could be a popular asset as similar facilities in March and Ramsey are fully booked by clubs using such a facility for training purposes. The Chair had made some preliminary enquiries from a local company that provides this arrangement who advised that costs for laying an area ranged from £60,000 to £100,000 plus. Fencing and lighting would be an added cost. Clubs are usually charged a fee for using this type of facility. Grants are likely to be available to help offset any installation cost. It was agreed to investigate this arrangement and make a capital provision in the 2025/26 budget towards such a facility.

c) Marketing of the Abbey facilities:

It was agreed to market the facilities available for the community and sports clubs by hosting an open day and creating a brochure.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

The Clerk reported that the alleged outstanding water supply invoice from Wave was for the estimated consumption of water plus the daily fixed meter charge. As no water was currently being used he had requested a revised invoice.

14. Street Lighting:-

Repairs had been made to FPC25 on Primrose Hill and FPC6 on Benwick Road had been referred to UKPN as there was no supply.

15. Village Maintenance: -

a) Two meetings had taken place with the directors of the local management committee of the Crossway Wood & Pond. The local management committee wished to retain ownership of the area but was requesting assistance from the Parish Council in sourcing finance to provide the cost of works in renovating the area. The Council had previously offered to help secure grants from funders and a practical offer to undertake some works had been made by a representative of the Street Pride Group who had been invited to the second meeting.

16. Website and Communications:-

Following the resignation of Cllr Jolley, the Clerk agreed to undertake updating the website and Cllr Hopkins agreed to undertake updating the Council Facebook page.

17. Financial Items:-

a) Members submitted suggestions on capital projects for inclusion in the 2025/2026 precept. These included extending the car park and making provision for additional recreation facilities at the Abbey Field, replacing the public seats throughout the village, undertaking a lighting survey in the areas controlled by the Parish Council, and initiating a Tree survey.

b) The Clerk advised members that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) had agreed new pay scales for 2024/25 to be implemented from 1st April 2024. Members noted that the back dated pay arrangements would apply to the Clerk.

c) The Internal Auditor had provided her interim Internal Audit Report that the Clerk had circulated to all members together with comments that he and the Chair were making. The majority only required changes to our administrative procedures but some required decisions being made to our policy documents and payment to the Clerk for home working allowance. Members agreed that the policy wording changes would be incorporated into the policy when it was due for its next review. The Chair suggested that the home working allowance of £6 per week, which has been agreed by the HMRC, should be paid backdated to 1st April 2024 but the Clerk was happy for that to be paid from 1st January 2025. Members agreed.

d) 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	451.93
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Hedge cutting Holly Drive	180.00
Legra Internal Audit Service	Interim Audit charge & travel	196.35
E Mason & Son	Cutting of briars etc Abbey Rec	480.00
Andy Muskett Ltd	Street lighting repairs	192.00
A J Henson	Pavilion Refurb – new fascia, soffits etc	3,019.62
Odd Job Ben Handyman	Pavilion Refurb – decorating, kitchen etc	3,800.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary & backpay	1,148.36
HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary & backpay	287.08
Wonderwall Products	New noticeboard – Primrose Hill bus shelter	186.84

The following payments have been made since the last meeting from the Community Room grant:

J Holding	Refreshments & air fryer	250.00
The Three Tuns & H Fisher	Christmas lunch costs	318.50

18. Any Other Business:-

a) Residents had asked if pressure can be applied to the developers to make up the roadway in Juniper Close.

b) It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Council dinner in February 2025. The Clerk would make arrangements.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

