

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

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

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllr D Connor (FDC and CCC Representative) and Cllr M Davis (FDC representative)

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

4. Minutes: - Cllr Mason proposed and Cllr Hopkins seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th December 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. Clarion Housing are offering to supply reconditioned laptops that can be used in the rooms to assist residents gain or improve basic computer skills. A Wi-Fi facility was to be set up.

b) No response had been received from Oasis over the digitisation of the old minute books. An approach would therefore be made to an alternative company. The Clerk requested authority to purchase a fire cabinet at a cost of £777, in which to store archived material. Cllr Mason proposed, and Cllr Fisher seconded the purchase which was agreed by the meeting.

c) The Chair proposed that a protocol should be drawn up setting out procedures to be followed in the sudden prolonged absence of the Chair or Clerk. Included within the protocol would be arrangements for access to Parish Council financial and computer passwords together with the location of historic, current and legal records and documents.

6. Administrative Items: -

a) Following the resignation of Cllr Lucy Jolley, the Clerk had formally reported her resignation to Fenland DC who would be issuing a public notice when ten residents may call for the vacancy to be filled by public election. Should no call be received, FDC would pass the responsibility for filling the vacancy back to the Parish Council to fill the vacancy by co-option.

b) Members considered adopting updated versions of the Media Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. The adoptions were proposed by Cllr Welcher, seconded by Cllr Shepherd and unanimously agreed by the members. Arrangements would be made to upload the approved policy documents onto the Council's website.

7. Police Matters:

No meeting of the Police and Councillor committee had taken place since the last Parish Council meeting.

8. Fenland DC, CCC and other external organisations: -

- a) No reports were received from FDC or CCC

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) The following works were reported:
 - i. Dangerous potholes along Primrose Hill and Ingles Lane.
 - ii. The road surface along the Forty Foot bank between Alderman Childs' Bridge and Swing Brow is very dangerous. There are reports of three incidents involving HGV's leaving the road and ending up in the ditch over the last few weeks.
 - iii. Two drop kerbs need to be installed on Church Lane. One near the parking area in front of the St. Mary's Church Lynch gate and the second at the end of the footpath where Church Lane joins Ingles Lane, to facilitate wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
 - iv. A road sign to be installed at the junction of Wood Street and Wimblington Road pointing up Wood Street advising that this route gives pedestrian access to the Abbey Recreation Ground.
- b) LHI 2025/2026. Members agreed to submit an LHI application for the repainting of white lines at three junctions to improve road safety. The application would include making a £2k contribution to the scheme.
- c) Grass cutting. The Clerk reported that CCC had confirmed their offer to pay £800 reimbursement for the PC's cost in cutting the circular walk by sending in their purchase order. An invoice had therefore been submitted to CCC.
- d) MVAS system. Members agreed to provide an android mobile phone to aid the downloading of data from the units. It was also agreed to donate the old MVAS laptop to the Community Living Room. Contact will be made with SWARCO to make enquiries on using the old MVAS unit and spare batteries as a trade in against a new unit.
- e) Road Closure Orders. The Clerk informed the meeting that two RCO's had been issued by CCC covering the resurfacing of Benwick Road from 3rd to 5th February and 10th to 12th February 2025. He had contacted County Highways and had asked if the works to enable the 2023/2024 LHI for the resurfacing of the Benwick Road footpath could be done at the same time but had been informed that it was not possible to incorporate those works into the road surfacing works.

10. Fens Reservoir Project: -

No further updates had been received.

11. Planning: -

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR24/0828/VOC Variation of list of approved plans relating to planning approval F/YR23/539/O (Erect up to 4 dwellings) relating to changes to layout of plots 2, 3 and 4 at 32 Wimblington Road Doddington.
Members considered the revised proposals and made no changes to the comments that they had previously submitted.

b) Other planning matters:

- i. F/YR24/0557/F Erect a hay store, 1.5m high weld mesh and 1.8m high close board boundary fencing (Retrospective) at land south of Swan Cottage Benwick Road accessed from Dykemoor Drove Doddington.

This planning application was before the FDC Planning Committee, and although the officer recommendation was to refuse the application, the Planning Committee had deferred the application to enable consultation with CCC to take place.

- ii. F/YR24/0400/F Members noted that an Appeal Decision had been made by The Planning Inspectorate on FDC's decision to refuse planning permission to make changes by the insertion of a dormer roof extension and raising the roof height of the garage on 1 May Meadows Doddington. The appeal decision was to grant planning permission.
- iii. Members noted the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet.
- iv. FDC Local Plan. No further information had been received from FDC.
- v. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The Chair's Introduction paper for the draft report had been circulated and agreed by members.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground: -

a) Refurbishment of the Pavilion:

There are a few final pieces of work to be arranged and completed before the opening of the pavilion and facilities takes place. The Chair and Cllr. Hopkins agreed to take on the task of creating a brochure and other marketing ideas.

b) Additional recreational facilities:

It was agreed to hold the provision of any additional recreational equipment or any possible improvements to the area until availability of grants and finance become available in the next financial year.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

It was agreed that the Chair would seek to promote the opening of the new facility through the local press.

14. Street Lighting: -

There are currently three faulty lights in the village:

FPC6 on Benwick Road had been referred a second time to UKPN as they claimed the fault had been repaired.

FPC43A Junction Wood Street/Wimblington Road – referred to our lighting contractor.

FPC20 Outside 45/47 Newgate Street - announced at the meeting and would be referred to our lighting contractor.

15. Village Maintenance: -

a) The Chair agreed to request an update from the directors of the local management committee of the Crossway Wood & Pond regarding a further meeting to discuss taking the project further.

b) Members raised concerns over the increase in dog fouling in Abbey Rec. and asked if the CCTV system would be able to record any incidents that could be referred to the FDC Dog Warden.

c) A new dog waste bin was needed by the Coneywood Pumping Station as this is a regular dog walking route.

16. Website and Communications:-

Members were still reporting issues with email on the .gov facility which need to be discussed with the Administrator.

17. Financial Items:-

a) Members considered a briefing note prepared by the Clerk on the Annual Precept for 2025-2026 and, following a general discussion, Cllr Mason proposed and Cllr Shepherd seconded that the precept should remain unchanged with no change to the current level of £65,000. This was unanimously agreed by the members.

b) 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	479.32
Anglian Water Business	Water Charge – Cemetery 28/3 to 3/12	45.85
Contract Flooring Services	Pavilion Refurb – new flooring	3,116.33
Odd Job Ben Handyman	Pavilion Refurb – new external fire door	390.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary	1,011.92
HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary	246.48

18. Any Other Business: -

a) The Parish Council's annual dinner will take place on 27th February 2025.

b) The new public noticeboard in the Primrose Hill bus shelter had now been installed. Cllr Hopkins had added that noticeboard to her schedule and had also agreed to keep the notices in the noticeboard outside the Church Rooms updated.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40pm