

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Hufton (Chair), H Fisher, R Hopkins, R Mason, D Slade and J Welcher. Cllr M Davis (FDC representative) and the Clerk, Roger Wilkin, were present.

1. Open Forum: - No residents were present

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs McNulty, Shepherd and Connor (FDC and CCC Representative).

3. Declaration of Interests: - Cllr Fisher declared an interest in planning application 11a.ii that will be discussed later in the meeting.

4. Minutes: - Cllr Mason proposed and Cllr Welcher seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th February 2025 be approved. These were agreed by the members which were then signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes: -

- a) Parish Council vacancy. Members noted that the current vacancy on the Parish Council had been offered to Jason Jolley which had been accepted. Arrangements were being made for him to sign the “Declaration of Acceptance of Office” and to complete the “Register of Members Financial and Other Interests” document.
- b) Community Living Room. Members were advised that the weekly Friday sessions were very popular with a steady number of visitors attending. A further grant of £500 had been offered to the group providing it could be spent before the end of the month. Cllr Fisher advised the meeting that the group had plans to spend the grant on paying for an advert in the next 12 issues of Doddington Diary and purchase a sound system for the Church Rooms.
- c) Archiving of minutes and historic paperwork. The Clerk advised members that the Cambridgeshire Archives Service in Ely offers a free service to Parish Councils for the storage of historic minutes and papers. Access to view or remove items can be arranged on an appointment basis. They do offer a digitalisation facility and details of costs are to be obtained. In the meantime, it was agreed to arrange for the historic handwritten minute books to be sent to Ely.
- d) Citizens Advice Service. Members were reminded that, at the present time, Wimblington PC arranged for a monthly CAB session to take place in the village at which Doddington residents can attend; costs are apportioned between the number of residents attending from each parish. It has come to our attention that a free weekly CAB session takes place in March, which residents from the surrounding villages can attend. In the circumstances Wimblington PC have agreed to monitor the attendance at each session for three months’ Following this, a joint decision as to whether we wish to terminate the current arrangements, thus saving the costs of hosting for both villages will be made. Members noted the position and agreed to post appropriate notices informing residents that CAB facilities are available in March Town.

6. Administrative Items: -

- a) Members considered adopting updated versions of the Data Protection Policy and Information Technology, Email & Internet Policy. The adoptions were proposed by Cllr Welcher, seconded by Cllr Mason and unanimously agreed by the members. Arrangements would be made to upload the approved policy documents onto the Council's website.
- b) Members were informed that FDC were holding a free on-line training session for Parish Councils on 25th March covering planning policies. The Clerk asked members to let him know if they wished to attend in order that he can register their interest.

7. Police Matters:

- a) Members were informed that to date 24 people had been arrested in connection with the hare coursing and violent disorder that had occurred in the area.
- b) The Chair advised members that the Cambridgeshire Police Shrievalty Trust on The Bobby Scheme was still being reviewed.

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

- a) Cllr Davis advised the meeting that FDC was considering its position, under the future local government plans announced by the Government.

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) The following work was reported:
 - i. A pothole is in Burdett Close leading towards The Larches.
- b) LHI 2023/2024 Footway resurfacing along Benwick Road. CCC have merged the footway works with resurfacing of the main highway. These combined works have started and are due to finish on 19th March 2025. Cllr Connor and the Clerk visited the site on 27th February. The combined works have resulted in a revised costing arrangement with the Parish Council making a LHI contribution of £30,000. As the Parish Council had earmarked reserves totalling £55,000 for the LHI works, this has resulted in a clawback of £25,000.
- c) LHI 2025/2026 Repainting white line at 3 junctions within the village. No further news on our application progress.
- d) 2025/2026 20mph funding programme is now open. Members agreed to make an application to designate Ingles Lane and Church Lane with 20mph speed limits..
- e) FDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Suggestions made at the last meeting had been reported to FDC.
- f) CCC Doddington to March travel and safety consultation. Suggestions made at the last meeting had been reported to CCC.
- g) MVAS system. Cllr. Slade circulated copies of the statistics downloaded from the new MVAS units for February 2025. He also reaffirmed sites where the existing units should be moved to and it was agreed to take this up with CCC.
- h) Dog fouling posters. It was agreed to purchase posters for sticking on the parish lamp posts at a cost of £48.

10. Fens Reservoir Project: -

No updates had been received from the reservoir team.

11. Planning: -

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR24/0944/F (Revised proposals) 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 reiterated their concerns that works had taken place on a piece meal basis rather than on a single application. They also noted, without comment, the change in the plans.

ii. F/YR25/0129/O Erect up to 37 dwellings, the formation of a vehicle access and associated works including necessary sustainable drainage and open space, land west of Hermitage Gardens accessed from Benwick Road Doddington.

Cllr Fisher declared an interest in this application.

Members objected to the application on numerous grounds including its location with important views of the Church. Benwick Rd is one of the busiest roads in the village and used by many HGV, there is a blind bend to the east. There is a ditch along side which has experienced drainage issues. Doddington has already significantly exceeded its growth factor set in the current Local Plan.

iii. F/YR25/0174/LB Internal and external alterations to existing listed building to enable conversion of barn to form 1 dwelling involving alterations to doors and windows (retrospective) land north of 25 Wimblington Road Doddington.

Members supported the application as they had previously supported the initial application on the site.

b) other planning matters:

- i. Members noted the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet.
- ii. FDC Local Plan. FDC have launched a consultation on their Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. Members were very pleased to note that the FDC report mirrored many points being made in the draft neighbourhood plan.
- iii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. Due to the County Council elections taking place on 1st May, the public consultation procedures are being delayed until the latter part of May

12. Abbey Recreation Ground: -

- a) Refurbishment of the Pavilion: The Clerk informed the meeting that a new refrigerator and microwave had been purchased and installed in the pavilion.
- b) JC Gardens & Landscaping had provided a quotation for £200 to cut back the trees abutting 19 Beech Avenue. Members accepted the quotation.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

No matters to report.

14. Street Lighting: -

No matters to report

15. Village Maintenance: -

- a) The Chair is still awaiting an update on a further meeting with the directors of the local management committee of the Crossway Wood & Pond.
- b) Members agreed to seek quotations for a bus shelter to be installed on the grass area between the roadway to the hospital and the boundary of the doctors surgery.

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) Update on the Parish Councils bank account. The Clerk reported that he had arranged, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair, to transfer £45,000 from the PC NatWest Bank Account to its Lloyds Bank Account. This is in readiness of paying the LHI contribution to CCC (see item 9b above) plus providing additional cash float for the start of the new financial year.

b) Yearend procedures:

1. Agreed that the £25k earmarked funds, mentioned in item 9b above, be renamed as earmarked for general projects,
2. Agreed that the Clerk be granted permission to pay the CCC £30k for its LHI contribution if an invoice is received before 31st March and in addition refund any unused Neighbourhood Grant by 31st March.

These two items were proposed by Cllr Welcher, seconded by Cllr Slade and agreed by the members.

c) Yearend accounts and internal audit. The Clerk reported that he was proposing circulating draft unaudited final accounts to the April meeting. Internal Audit is scheduled to take place on 30th April and year end sign off including completion of the AGAR returns would take place at the May meeting.

d) Application to provide a donation towards the refurbishment of the Benwick Road childrens play area. Members were given a brief background to this childrens play area and members considered pledging a sum of £5,000. Proposed by Cllr Hopkins, seconded by Cllr Slade and agreed by members that a suitable letter pledging our donation be made available to the Recreation subcommittee in order to assist them seek grants from other organisations.

e) 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 Feb 2025	441.34
Eon Next	Electricity Pavilion Nov 24 to Feb 25	422.97
Anglia Water Business	Water supply cemetery Dec 24 to Feb 25	21.72
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Extending slabs into outside gym	1,250.00
Dream Clean Services Ltd	Deep cleaning of the pavilion	558.00
St Marys Church	Annual donation	2,000.00
Ruth Hufton	Reimbursement of brown bin charge Church	47.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary March 2025	1,011.92
HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary	246.48

Payments made via PC debit card for goods previously authorised:

Amazon	Samsung Galaxy phone (MVAS)	245.00
Currys	White goods for Pavilion	217.98

Payments made from the Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Grant:

Wonderwall Products Ltd	Exhibition display boards	330.00
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Consultancy support	2,289.00

18. Any Other Business: -

- a) It was agreed that the Parish Annual Assembly would take place in the Methodist Hall on 22nd May 2025
- b) It was agreed to purchase a VE flag celebrating the 80 years since war ceased in Europe.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm