

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Hufton (Chair), H Fisher, J Jolley, R Mason, D Slade and the Clerk, Roger Wilkin.

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair: - Cllr Mason proposed that Cllr Hufton be reappointed as Chair and that Cllr Fisher be reappointed as Vice Chair. These nominations were seconded by Cllr Slade and were unanimously supported by the members. Cllr Hufton thanked the members for their support and took the Chair.

2. Open Forum: - No resident was present.

3. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs Hopkins, McNulty, Shepherd, Welcher, M Davis (FDC representative) and D Connor (FDC Representative).

4. Election of Committees and Prime responsibilities,

5. Election of representatives on other bodies: -

In view of the number of absentees from tonight's meeting it was agreed to defer making appointments on the above two items to the next meeting.

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

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2025: - Cllr Slade proposed and Cllr Fisher seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th April 2025 be approved. These were agreed by the members which were then signed by the Chair.

8. 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. A VE Day celebration lunch took place which was well received.

b) The Annual Assembly was taking place in the Methodist Chapel on 22nd May. Invites had been sent out to local organisations and a buffet tea had been booked. Photos of the improvements to the pavilion and footpath in Benwick Road would be on show as would some suggested recreational features.

c) The application for financial assistance from the Ely Foodbank would not be supported but the possibility of introducing a food fridge for residents would be explored.

d) Crossway Wood. Investigations into removing the tree preservation order on the wood would be taken up with FDC.

9. Police Matters:

a) No meeting between the Police and PC representatives had taken place but further reports over the quantity of gas canisters that were being illegally used and discarded throughout the village had been reported. Details of suspected drug transactions had also been given. A complaint had been received regarding motor bikes being driven on private land off Wood Street. It appears that the landowner had given permission for this activity, but Council

will look into the possibility of invoking the Noise Abatement Act to help curtail the noise caused.

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

- a) No updates were available from FDC or CCC.
- b) Pride in Fenland Awards 2025. Members suggested a few possible names and the Chair agreed to submit nomination forms.

11. Highway Issues: -

- a) The following issues were reported:
 - i. The shrubs and trees on Church Lane were severely overgrowing the footpath and need cutting back.
 - ii. Trees in the church yard, which is maintained by FDC, need pruning.
 - iii. Lavender bush from a property in High Street are encroaching over the footpath and need cutting back by the owner.
 - iv. The allocated parking spaces on the footway opposite the doctor's surgery have large pot holes which need to be filled.
 - v. The hedge along Ingles Lane needs cutting back by the owner.
 - vi. The Chair agreed to investigate the reported incidences of cows impeding the footway at the Pocket Park.
- b) MVAS system. Cllr. Slade circulated copies of the latest statistics downloaded from the units in the village.
- c) Proposed Road Closure Order Forty Foot Bank. CCC have approved this closure order for carriageway resurfacing during the period 1st to 30th June 2025. Diversions will affect the village centre.
- d) Proposed Road Closure Order Newgate Street. CCC have confirmed that these proposed works will not take place at weekends and will not clash with the planned village community events.
- e) CCC road verge maintenance arrangements. CCC have advised that they are updating their verge maintenance and payment structure but that the exercise will not affect the current years arrangements and they have a target to implement a revised system for the 2026 season.

12. Fens Reservoir Project: -

The Clerk reported that a Fens Reservoir Community Liaison Group meeting took place on 13th May 2025 in Manea Village Hall at which the Chair, Cllr Mason and the Clerk attended. The meeting received updates on the Reservoir Teams work on surveys, traffic and transport plans plus their Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment. Members were reminded that the Reservoir Team was meeting the Parish Council on 19th May to update members on a number of issues.

13. Planning: -

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR25/0321/TRCA Fell 1 x fir tree within a conservation area at The Old bank 37 New Street Doddington.
Members supported the application but wished to be advised of the type of tree that would be planted as a replacement.
- ii. F/YR25/0291/F Construction of 1.8m high (max) wall with 1.95 high (max) piers and 1.8m high (max) gate at Wildwood 29 Primrose Hill Doddington.
Members supported the application.

b) Other planning matters:

- i. Members noted the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet.
- ii. FDC Local Plan. No further information has been circulated.
- iii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. FDC have provided their initial comments on the draft neighbourhood plan which are being reviewed by the DNPG. No revised dates for the public consultation open events have been arranged.

14. Abbey Recreation Ground: -

- a) The Sovereign Compliance Inspection took place on 24th April. Some minor repair work is required to one of the pieces of skate park equipment. However, the inspector undertook a safety inspection on all items within the recreation ground, many of which were owned by FDC. Clarification is being made with the company over what items should be included within the contract that we have with them.
- b) Members agreed, subject to cost, to arrange for a tree survey to be undertaken and to explore the feasibility of using the Governments Community Payback scheme to clear the undergrowth around the perimeter of the recreation ground.
- c) Grass cutting. Issues have occurred over the frequency of grass cutting of the recreation ground (and the Benwick Road cemetery). Members considered a suggestion received from a resident and the existing contractor that if the Parish Council were to purchase its own mower that was of a size suitable for cutting the whole of the ground then an increased frequency of grass cutting could be undertaken. In addition, members were concerned over the quality of the grass and it was decided to seek the advice of a specialist company on spraying and feeding the grass.

15. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

Grass cutting. See above (item 14c).

16. Street Lighting: -

No matters to report.

17. Village Maintenance: -

- a) Council are looking for a quotation for an additional bus shelter on Benwick Road. Support for this has been received from Fenland Group Practice and Doddington Court. Quotation has been received for the installation of a red phone box next to the bus shelter opposite the Clock Tower, at a cost of £2,750 plus delivery and vat. It was proposed by Cllr Slade, seconded by Cllr Mason and agreed by the members that this be purchased and installed.

18. Website and Communications: -

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

19. Annual Appraisal of the Clerk & RFO of the Parish Council:-

The Chair informed the meeting that she believed the Clerk had given outstanding service over the last year but that he had advised both her and the Vice Chair that for personal family reasons, he felt that he was perhaps not always available to support the Council as he should and he declined, any suggestion of a salary or working time increase. The Chair spoke firmly against any suggestion from the Clerk that he would resign, as he was seen as a valuable member of the team, and always gave full support to the Council's needs, often working outside of his contracted hours, and she suggested that the Council should ensure that his working hours were better advertised, in order to ensure that he has more personal time. Notification of these hours would be added to any Council emails or letters, and would be made clear on our website. Members were pleased to support these suggestions and added their thanks to the Clerk for his exemplary work.

20. Financial Items: -

a) Year-end accounts for 2024/25.

- i. Internal audit report. A copy of the yearend internal audit report had been circulated to all members, the contents of which were noted and adopted. Members agreed to retain the current internal auditor's services for a further year.
- ii. Certification of AGAR Annual Governance Statement 2024/25. Proposed by Cllr Slade, seconded by Cllr Mason that this statement be approved. Agreed by the meeting and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- iii. Certification of AGAR Accounting Statements 2024/25. Proposed by Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Jolley that the AGAR statement be approved. Agreed by the meeting and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- iv. Notice of Public Rights of Inspection. The Clerk advised the meeting that the rights of inspection will take place between 3rd June 2025 and 14th July 2025. He also advised the meeting that copies of the approved documents would be published on the Council's website and sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP for the external auditor's approval.

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
Eon Next	Electricity Pavilion April 2025	38.68
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Grass cutting Abbey & Cemetery April 2025	500.00
Clear Ins Management	Cyber insurance renewal due 1 st June 2025	410.25
Narked Ltd	Parish Web Hosting	225.00
Doddington Diary	Advert for Annual Assembly	25.00
Helen Symmons	Internal audit fee	190.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary April 2025	1,011.92
HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary	246.48

Payments made via PC debit card for goods previously authorised:

Office Furniture	Tables & chairs for Abbey Pavilion	1,263.60
R Hufton via Amazon	"Clean up after your dog" stickers	46.28
Amazon	Flag for VE Day	6.99

Payments made from the Community Living Room Grant

H Fisher	VE party food & general refreshments	300.00
J Holding	Refreshments	50.00

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm