

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Parish Council held in The Church Rooms, New Street on
Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

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

1. Open Forum: - Representatives from Bidwell's and Bellway were present to make a presentation on the possible development of a parcel of land at Turf Fen Lane Doddington. Cllr Mason declared an interest, and remained in the meeting but took no part in the discussion. A number of questions were raised by members. The representatives confirmed that they would be happy to revisit the Parish Council when they were in a position to submit a planning application.

2. Apologies: - Apologies were received from Cllrs I McNulty, D Connor (FDC Representative) and M Fisher (CCC Representative).

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

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2025: - Cllr Mason proposed and Cllr Hopkins seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th June 2025 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. Discussions were currently taking place with the Police for a representative to make a presentation on the "Bobby Scheme".

6. Administrative Matters:-

a) Addition to the representatives of a Committee. Cllr Jolley requested membership of the Planning Committee which was agreed.

b) Policy reviews and updates. Members had been circulated with updates on the Parish Council's prime policies; Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. It was proposed by Cllr Mason, seconded by Cllr Welcher and agreed that both policies be adopted.

c) The Chair outlined the options being proposed for the reorganisation of district, county and city councils in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas into a single-tier council. An engagement survey has been launched on the change, that will become effective from April 2028. Parish and Town Councils will not be affected and will continue to operate as they do now.

7. Police Matters:-

a) No meeting between the Police and PC representatives had taken place.

b) It was reported that a new sergeant Avid Zaferani has been appointed to replace Sgt. Chris Arnold

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

a) Cllr.Davis reported that, following FDC's annual meeting in May Cllr. Connor had retained the position of Chair of FDC Planning Committee and that she had retained the position of Chair of FDC's Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) The following existing issues are outstanding together with a number of new items:
- i. The shrubs and trees on Church Lane were overgrowing onto the footpath and needed cutting back. Cllr. Davis offered to chase this up with FDC.
 - ii. Trees in the church yard, which are maintained by FDC, need pruning.
 - iii. A lavender bush from a property in High Street is encroaching over the footpath and needs cutting back by the owner.
 - iv. The road surface near the doctor's surgery is in a bad condition and has a number of potholes.
 - v. The hedge along Ingles Lane needs cutting back by the owner.
 - vi. There are reports of a missing footpath sign on the Circular Walk.
 - vii. Surface water from the road surface near Shenandoah, Benwick Road encroaches into the grounds of this property.
 - viii. There is a raised area, in the layby near the entrance to the Pocket Park that is both a trip hazard and a danger to vehicles driving over it.
 - ix. The concrete base under the fencing outside Benwick Road electric substation has become a trip hazard.
 - x. A drain cover located between Duck Pond corner and the white gates at Primrose Hill has sunk causing a large drop in the road surface.
- b) MVA system. Cllr. Slade circulated copies of the latest statistics from the units in the village. He agreed to supply a summary of 6 months data for speeding along Wimblington Road and Primrose Hill which could be used to support an application to reduce the speed limits of traffic coming into the village.

10. Fens Reservoir Project: -

- a) No response had been received from Manea Parish Council on a possible group meeting of local Parish Councils affected by the reservoir project.

11. Planning: -

a) New planning applications:

- i. F/YR25/0491/RM Reserved matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0995/O to erect 3 x dwellings involving the formation of a new access at land east of 1 Wimblington Road Doddington.

Members objected to this application on the grounds that the appearance of the proposed development is out of character with the area and contrary to Policy LP16. The gardens of the dwellings, rather than the front of the houses, are shown as backing onto Wimblington Road. In addition, the buildings will be three storey with a Dormer window in the roof. If the positioning of the properties was reversed and serviced with a slip road to the front of the dwellings there would be no need for an access road along the eastern side of the development. This would give greater space for each property and a redesign of the layouts could allow for the proposed 4 bedrooms to be accommodated without the need to build in the roof area.

- ii. F/YR25/0500/AG1 Erection of an agricultural building on land north west of 37 Wood Street Doddington.

This application, with its AG1 indicator, was not formally circulated to the Parish Council for consultation.

Members expressed concern that there was a risk of mud being brought onto the highway, as there was only a track leading from Wood Street, running parallel to Juniper Close, into the field where this proposed building is to be constructed. Plans show that the siting of the building is in the centre of this field and there is no indication of a service road being provided to serve the building.

b) Other planning matters:

i. An instant of alleged breach of planning permission was raised by members and will be referred to the FDC Enforcement Team:

Land near Old Swan now has 17 caravans sited on the land that are being advertised to let, and the 'hay barn', which has not received planning permission is being used for vehicle repairs.

ii. Members noted the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet.

iii. FDC Local Plan. No further information has been circulated.

iv. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. FDC's initial comments on the draft neighbourhood plan were reviewed by the DNPG at their meeting on 1st July and some amendments are being made to the plan. Dates for the public consultation open events will be announced in due course. No further government sponsored grants to support neighbourhood plans will be forthcoming. The Parish Council agreed to support any additional funding needs.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground: -

a) Grass cutting for Abbey Rec and Benwick Road Cemetery. The Chair updated members on discussions that she was having with Kingsfarming Ltd on their costings. Members agreed to offer a three-month probationary period to the company based on their cutting programme as presented to last months Parish Council meeting. A combined cost for cutting both sites was agreed at £500 per cut and in addition, perimeter hedge cutting at both sites would take place twice a year. Cost for the Abbey Rec hedge was £180 per cut and the Cemetery hedge was £100 per cut. Other quotations would be sought for this work.

b) A survey, of trees surrounding the grounds, has taken place and was discussed by members:

- 21 individual trees were surveyed: 8 required attention within 3-6 months, 5 could wait for 6-12 months and 8 had no time frame set.
- 8 grouped areas were surveyed: 1 required attention within 3-6 months while the remaining 7 had no time frame set.

Members agreed to seek quotations from tree surgeons for all work identified as being required during the following 12 months. Members also agreed to consider using the Community Payback scheme to clear the undergrowth once the tree surgery work had been completed and to use the opportunity to consider creating a nature trail around parts of the boundary.

c) Provision of additional recreational equipment on site. Members were advised that the Chair and Clerk had met with a representative from Online Playgrounds, and had received quotations on supplying a number of recreational options as follows:

- Timber cableway (zipwire) with metal feet £11,185
- All steel frame cableway (zipwire) £12,785
- Rota cone climber £10,346
- Columbus rope climber £7,799
- Site set up & preliminaries £1,295 (all figures are plus vat)

Members were circulated with pictures of the equipment and expressed a preference for having a cableway and rota cone climber installed. Quotations would be sought from other suppliers before the work was agreed. The possible costs of installing a small MUGA in the grounds was also discussed and again, quotations would be sought.

The clerk advised members that an amount of £25,000 had been included in the current years budget for new facilities and that there were earmarked funds of £4,108 from last years budget left over from the cost of the outside gym. The possibility of grant finance could be sought towards the costs.

d) The Clerk had received an approach from a resident in Beech Avenue for the damaged No Parking sign near the entrance to the carpark to be repaired or replaced. The Parish Council own the strip of land on which the sign was positioned. but have no record of erecting the sign or being approached for permission to erect it. The Clerk had advised the resident that as the original sign was believed to have been erected by the residents, it could be replaced at their cost, and the Parish Council would give permission for it to be positioned on its land. Members supported the action taken by the Clerk.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

- a) Grass cutting. See above (item 12a).
- b) Possible reservation of a burial plot. The Clerk advised members that he had been approached by a Doddington resident to possibly reserve a burial pitch.

14. Street Lighting: -

No matters to report.

15. Village Maintenance: -

- a) Second-hand telephone box. Discussions are currently taking place on arrangements for the installation and preparation of the base and fitting out with shelving.
- b) Public seats. We currently have 8 public seats throughout the village. 7 will be replaced and the one near Doddington Hall will be scrapped. 3 additional seats are required, one at the new Cemetery, one near the outside gym on Abbey Field and an additional seat at Manor Estate. The metal seat in the cemetery is to be moved to Policemans Corner. Members also agreed for a picnic set to be installed in Abbey Field and quotations for all, using recycled material, would be sought.
- c) Bedding plant sites for the village. The Chair had received a suggestion from Street Pride who had been offered surplus plants from Delfland to use to brighten up the village by creating some planting areas at the village sign. Members supported the idea.
- d) Rose bushes in the Churchyard. As some of the rose bushes planted by FDC last October were dying for lack of water. The matter was taken up with FDC who claimed that as a general rule they do not water flower beds.
- e) A request was made to ask FDC to install a rubbish bin near the bus shelter at Primrose Hill.

16. Website and Communications: -

- a) Members issues with email on the .gov facility need to be resolved as a matter of urgency in order to ensure that the Parish Council is compliant.

17. Financial Items: -

- a) The Clerk circulated a financial statement to members for the period April to end June 2025 which members noted.

- 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 May 2025	31.46
Doctor Tree Ltd	Tree survey	1,038.00
CAPALC	Training Fee	75.00
Recreation & Sports Cttee	Recycling credit paid over	304.11
Heritage Trading Co	Purchase of second-hand telephone box	3,630.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary June 2025 + petty cash	1,026.72

HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary	246.48
Payments made via PC debit card for goods previously authorised:		
Amazon	Flag for VJ Day	7.99
Payments made from the Community Living Room Grant		
St Mary's Church	Room Hire May 2025	120.00

18. Correspondence: -

The Clerk reported that Askham Village Community were proposing hosting a community outdoor cinema night on their premises aimed at bringing together their residents, their families and members of the local community. Members fully supported the idea.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.00pm