

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

1. Open Forum: - No members of the public were present.

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

3. Declaration of Interests: - Cllr H Fisher declared an interest in a planning matter to be discussed later in the meeting.

4. Minutes of the meetings held on 8th October and 3rd November 2025: - Cllr Welcher proposed and Cllr Slade seconded that both sets of minutes be approved. These were agreed and the October minutes were signed by the Chair and the November minutes were signed by Cllr H Fisher who had been appointed Chair for that meeting.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes: -

a) Community Living Room. Members were advised that during October, the weekly Friday sessions had accumulated a total of 134 attendees. At one meeting, Radio Cambridge had arrived and interviewed some of the helpers and residents.

b) Local Government Reorganisation. Cambridgeshire County Council were supporting option A in their submission to the Government. There was no overall agreement between the District Councils or their support of option A. Two further options, D and E had been suggested and while Fenland DC was calling on the Government to halt the Local Government Reorganisation process describing it as “fundamentally flawed”. It requested a full and independent review be undertaken to investigate all possible local government reforms without the unrealistic rules and criteria imposed by the current process. FDC acknowledged that under the current procedure councils must indicate their preferred option if they are to retain any voice in shaping the outcome and expressed support for option D.

6. Administrative Matters:-

a) Parish Council Policies. The General Risk Assessment, Complaint Policy and Tree Policy had been circulated for review and it was suggested that additional wording be included within the General Risk Assessment pointing out that the Councils Insurance Company provides a comprehensive toolkit that contains information and guidance on risks that require assessing and managing. No alterations to the current wording of the other two policies were deemed necessary, but it was suggested that future reviews on all policies take place every two years unless national or local circumstance dictate otherwise. Cllr Mason proposed, and Cllr Slade seconded that the suggestions made be adopted. This was agreed by the members present.

b) Burnthouse Community Fund. The Chair informed members that she had attended a meeting when the procedure for supporting the extension to the current grant scheme was discussed. The Cambridgeshire Community Foundation would be revisiting the arrangements and in due course would publish clear and detailed steps to be followed. Until these revised procedures were available, no further action will be taken by the Parish Council.

7. Police Matters:-

- a) No meetings between the Police and PC representatives have taken place.
- b) It was reported that the Rural Crime Action Team had this month responded to multiple reports across Ely, Littleport and Manea over hare coursing and had seized a vehicle, arrested one man and issued notices on a further four men.

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

Cllr M Fisher (CCC Representative) reported that he was holding meetings with County Highway Officers to inspect some of the worst road issues in order to get a clear picture on progress and promises of future works. This particularly applies to the Forty Foot Bank.

9. Highway Issues: -

- a) General maintenance.
 - i. Additional cutting of the “Circular Walk” has taken place, to supplement that undertaken by CCC.
 - ii. The routine cutting of the grass along the pathway from Wood Street to Cedar Ave has been commenced.
 - iii. Members complained that the recent painting of yellow lines in Benwick Road was not up to standard and should be reported to CCC.
 - iv. The verge at the front of the Old Antique Shop in Benwick Road needs reseeding.
- b) MVAS system. Cllr Slade circulated the current statistics obtained from the MVAS units.
- c) Members were updated on discussions between Doddington PC, Wimblington PC and Cllr M Fisher on reducing the speed limit over the short length of Wimblington Road between the two villages.
- d) CCC’s Delivery Transport Strategy. Cllr M Fisher had advised the Clerk that CCC appeared to be undertaking some preparatory work on the Doddington – March active travel and safety consultation that had been commented on by the Parish Council in the first quarter of 2025. The Clerk subsequently informed Cllr M Fisher that two recently approved planning applications by FDC may conflict with the CCC designs. Cllr. M.Fisher had suggested to the design team that they keep the Parish Council informed of their progress.
- e) 2026/27 LHI application. The Clerk advised members that applications for the 2026/27 funding round opened yesterday and would close on 16th January 2026.
- f) 2025/25 LHI results. Members were advised that our application for a non-complex project involving the repainting of white lines at a number of junctions within the village had been successful. However, our application for certain roads to be reclassified with a speed limit of 20mph was unsuccessful. It was also noted that 2026/27 applications to impose 20mph limits would open in January 2026.

10. Fens Reservoir Project: -

- a) The Clerk advised members that during November 2025, the Reservoir Project Team would be carrying out camera-based traffic surveys including the use of public rights of way.

11. Planning: -

- a) **Revised proposal to a previous application:**
 - i. F/YR25/0616/F Partial demolition of existing dwelling and new two storey and single storey extensions to the side and rear including internal works at 33 Newgate Street, Doddington.
- Members supported the application.

b) New planning applications:

i. F/YR25/0777/F Erect a 2.5m (max height) fence with gabions, wall at entrance and gate on front boundary of existing dwelling and paddock at Happy Anywhere Farm, Forty Foot Bank, Ramsey.

Members were unable to make any comment on the application whilst there were outstanding issues being raised by County Highways and Middle Level Commissioners.

ii. F/YR25/0794/F Erect a detached garden room /office in the garden at Happy Anywhere Farm, Forty Foot Bank, Ramsey.

Members supported the application with the caveat that at no time will the garden room/office be converted into living accommodation.

iii. F/YR25/0780/VOC Variation of condition 5 (Highway Improvements) of planning permission F/YR23/0993/O (Erect up to 3 dwellings, outline permission with all matters reserved, and associated highway improvement works) – Rewording of condition at land southwest of The Hollies, Hospital Road, Doddington.

Members objected to the suggested rewording of condition 5 that would effectively have delayed the improvements to Hospital Road. Members asked that no changes are agreed to amend clause 5 and that improvements to Hospital Road are completed to standards agreed by County Highways before the occupation of the first dwelling.

iv. F/YR25/0786/F Erect single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling at 7 Askham Row, Benwick Road, Doddington.

Members supported the application.

v. F/YR25/0814/PIP Permission in Principle for 4 dwellings at land north of 10 Askham Row accessed from Hospital Road, Doddington.

Members objected to the above application for the following reasons:

The proposed development which is accessed from the west of Hospital Road is on a site which provides an important gap between Hospital Road and the public footpath adjacent to the Askham House care facility. This site therefore clearly comprises open countryside for the purposes of applying planning policy and there is no overriding need for the development to take place given the District Council's housing land supply position.

The District Council had refused Planning Permission F/YR22/1243/PIP for the erection of 3 dwellings north of 8-10 Askham Row accessed from Hospital Road on the grounds of encroachment into the open countryside which would result in significantly affecting the character and visual amenity of the area. The current application for 4 dwellings will have a similar unacceptable impact.

The application site includes a substantial amount of trees and hedges along Hospital Road. The proposed block plan (Indicative Layout) shows each of the proposed dwellings having its own independent access onto Hospital Road and a vast quantity of the trees and hedges would need to be removed which again would have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area.

The proposed development would lead to unsafe highway and access conditions involving Hospital Road due to its narrow single tracked nature with a lack of any formal passing spaces, street lighting or footpaths. The proposal has failed to demonstrate that the location is appropriate in having regard to biodiversity considerations. The removal of a substantial amount of trees together with developing the land itself will create a significant negative impact on the biodiversity value of the site and would be contrary to a number of sections within Policies LP12 and LP16.

c) Other planning matters:

- i. Members noted that the latest copy of the Planning Monitoring Spreadsheet would be circulated shortly.
- ii. FDC Local Plan. No further information has been circulated.
- iii. Doddington Neighbourhood Plan Group. Any suggested changes made by FDC had now been incorporated into the draft report which would be resubmitted back to FDC.

12. Abbey Recreation Ground: -

a) Following the work that had taken place on the boundary trees, members considered that the quantity of work required to clear a nature walk through the tree line would be excessive and that a more appropriate idea may be to investigate the creation of a den that children could use. It was agreed to consider this matter at a future meeting, including floating the idea with a number of the village children.

b) Discussions had been taking place with the suppliers of the approved zip wire and conical climber on its location. Cllr Slade suggested that an overview of the recreation ground should take place to ascertain how best the facilities are planned and used going forward. At the request of The Chair, Cllr. Slade agreed to produce a report to propose best use of the facility.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the tentative approach that had been received from a football club had not materialised into any meaningful discussion.

c) Fire Risk Assessment on the Pavilion. The meeting was informed by the Clerk that the BSI information being quoted by Bridges Fire & Security over a fire alarm system was advisory and not mandatory. The Council's insurance company was aware that no fire alarm system was installed in the building and had raised no concerns.

13. Benwick Road Cemetery: -

a) No issues were raised.

14. Street Lighting: -

No new issues reported.

15. Village Maintenance: -

a) New bus shelter in Benwick Road. The location of the bus shelter still needs to be finalised.

b) Telephone Box (book swop). Arrangements for its installation need to be finalised.

c) Replacement public seats throughout the village. Members noted that approximately half of the public seats were fixed to concrete bases, the others were free standing on the ground. It was agreed that all seats should be fixed to concrete bases, and installation would be discussed with our contractor.

d) Meridian Markers. A decision was deferred until the next meeting.

16. Website and Communications: -

No updates reported.

17. Financial Items: -

a) Payments:

The Clerk reminded the meeting that at last months meeting members deferred approval for making a £1,000 grant to the Magpas Air Ambulance service pending clarification on whether payment can be made under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. He informed the meeting that before incurring expenditure under section 137, the parish council must be satisfied that there is a direct benefit to the area, or part of the area, or to some or all of the residents. Members were clear that residents had benefitted from having an air ambulance facility and it had been used on a number of occasions including aiding one of the current parish councillors.

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 Business Solutions	Street lighting power September 2025	470.33
Eon Next	Electricity Pavilion October 2025	33.98
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Circular walk maintenance	800.00
JC Gardens & Landscaping	Path maintenance Wood St to Cedar Ave	80.00
B Jupp Horticultural	Tree works Abbey Rec	1,080.00
Kings Farming Ltd	Ground/hedge maint Abbey Rec & Cemetery	4,920.00
Fenland DC	CCTV Contract 2025/26	2,500.00
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Membership	72.00
Magpas Air Ambulance	Section 137 Grant	1,000.00
R Wilkin	Clerks net salary Nov 2025	1,011.92
HMRC	Income Tax on Clerks salary	246.48

Payments made during the month for goods/services previously authorised:

British Legion Poppy Shop	Wreath	24.49
Amazon	Padlocks for cemetery water taps	9.99

Payments made from the Community Living Room Grant

St Mary's Church	Room Hire Oct 2025	120.00
J Holding	Refreshments	75.00
The Three Tuns	Deposit – Christmas Lunch	400.00

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm