

Doddinghurst Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



1. Overview of 2020/21

In March 2020 the Government announced a National Lockdown to commence on Monday 23rd March 2020 due to the Corona virus. The Parish Council Office including the Parish Room and the Play Area were closed from this date with all staff working from home. Despite this, and unable to meet in person, the Parish Council had an extremely busy year in supporting the residents of Doddinghurst through the pandemic. In particular our Chairman, Councillor Debbie Dicker was involved in discussions with Reverend Ann of All Saints and her team of volunteers in setting up the Doddinghurst Covid Support Group now known as the Wellbeing Hub.

Despite the lockdown, subsequent postponement of the elections until 2021 and many events cancelled, a change in Government Legislation allowed the Council to fulfil its duties with all meetings moving online with Zoom video conferencing.

- Plans to refurbish the Parish Office Toilets continued and stage one, the new unisex disabled toilet, with baby changing facility was completed in April 2021
- The Play Area was regularly maintained and inspected and cleaned weekly after the re-opening in July 2020.
- The Football pitches were used by Blackmore Youth Football with young players from the village when Covid guidelines allowed.
- There was high demand for the Allotments during lockdown.
- The Burial Ground remained open.
- Significantly more amounts of Litter was removed during the lockdown by the DPC Groundsman and more Bin collections took place.

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2.**Contact Details**website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/doddinghurst-pc>**Councillors (May 2019/20)**

Debbie Dicker (Chairman)	68 Lime Grove	01277 823410
Alan Farrow	38 All Saints Close	01277 821058
Gerry Smith	25 Park Meadow	XD
Adrian Oliver	88, Lime Grove	XD
Julia Le Page	Sans Souci, Doddinghurst Rd.,	01277 822867
Alan Smith	24, Peartree Lane	XD
Diane Rogers Harrison	16, Harpers Lane,	XD
Phil Arnell	Treble F, Brook Lane	01277 822240
Michael Capon	11, Peartree Lane	XD
David Potter	65, The Gardens	XD
Patricia Brooks	Doddinghurst House, Place Farm Lane	XD

Officersemail: clerk@doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk

Ann-Marie Smith (Clerk)	Parish Office (adjacent Village Hall) Church Lane, CM15 0NJ	Tel: 01277 824245
Roger Blake (RFO)	Parish Office	Tel: 01277 824245

3. Areas of responsibility: In addition to the Parish Council meetings, the following councillors had these additional responsibilities.

Debbie Dicker	Parish Council (Chairman), Allotments (Chairman), Finance & Resource (Chairman), Planning (Chairman), Cheque Signatory, Borough Planning Committee, BBPCA, Brentwood Parish Liaison Committee.
Diane Rogers Harrison	Village Correspondent, General Purpose.
Alan Smith	Finance and Resource, Planning
Alan Farrow	General Purpose (Chairman), Cheque Signatory, Footpaths.
Julia Le Page	General Purpose, Allotments, Village Planters, Event co-ordination, Finance and Resource
Gerry Smith	General Purpose, Finance & Resource, Cheque Signatory, Highways, Youth
Adrian Oliver	Planning, Police
Phil Arnell	General Purpose, Allotment, Village Hall Liaison
David Potter	General Purpose, Dagwood Trust
Michael Capon	Finance and Resource, Planning, Bus / Transport

4. Chairman's Statement and Report for 2020/21

Dear Resident

What a dreadful year we have all experienced, but with the beginning of 2021 some light has appeared with the advent of the vaccine. The Brentwood Centre is doing a wonderful job getting the people of Brentwood and villages vaccinated and we thank the volunteers for their help.

We have been extremely fortunate in our village to have wonderful people who have volunteered their services to help those in need, taking shopping, medicine, and just phoning and having a chat. This help has been co-ordinated by our wonderful Rev Ann and her many volunteers. If you need help then please contact the telephone numbers on the leaflet which has been delivered to your door recently. You can of course ring me or the parish council office for information.

The parish council is supporting these efforts all be it in the background as most councillors are of the age that need to isolate.

We started the first stage of our office refurbishment, mainly the ladies toilets and we look forward to their completion. Other refurbishments will take place as the year progresses. The office etc has not been brought up to date for many years and needs to be of a better standard than it is at the moment.

Even though we are in lockdown, the work of the parish council still goes on. We are still keeping the burial ground in good order, our groundsman is still keeping the village clean and tidy, and the general welfare of the village carries on.

The government has decided that elections will take place this May, and Doddinghurst will be up for election. The members of our parish council have all been on the council for some years giving their time and energy on behalf of the village.

If you would be interested in becoming a parish councillor, please contact the parish office. Perhaps some of our volunteers would be interested. We look forward to hearing from you.

When we know that we are able to get together again. the parish council will be organising some events that had to be cancelled last year, so look out for these dates.

I am pleased to inform you that The Link magazine will be back once again when lockdown is over. It has been missed and we look forward to seeing it once again.

You are always welcome to contact me if I can be of help.

I hope you all keep well.



Debbie Dicker - Chairman of the Parish Council – March 2020

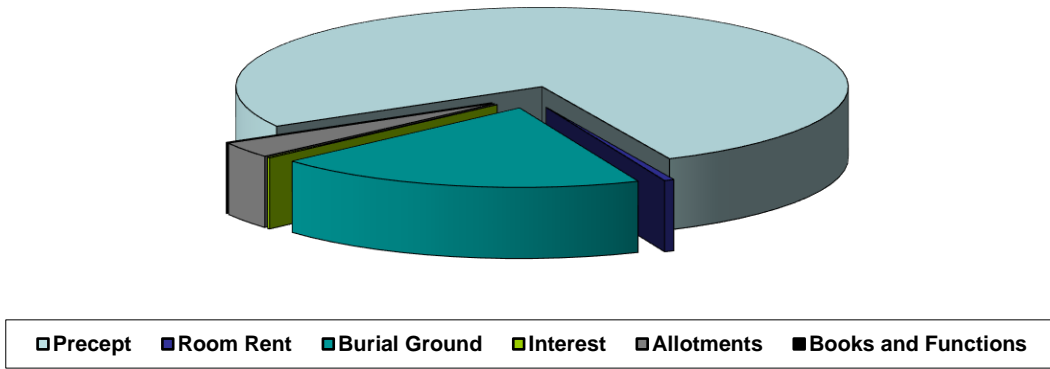
5. Financial Report - Accounts for 2020/21 (pending audit approval)

ANNUAL RETURN
Doddinghurst Parish Council
Statement of Accounts
For the year ended
31st March 2021

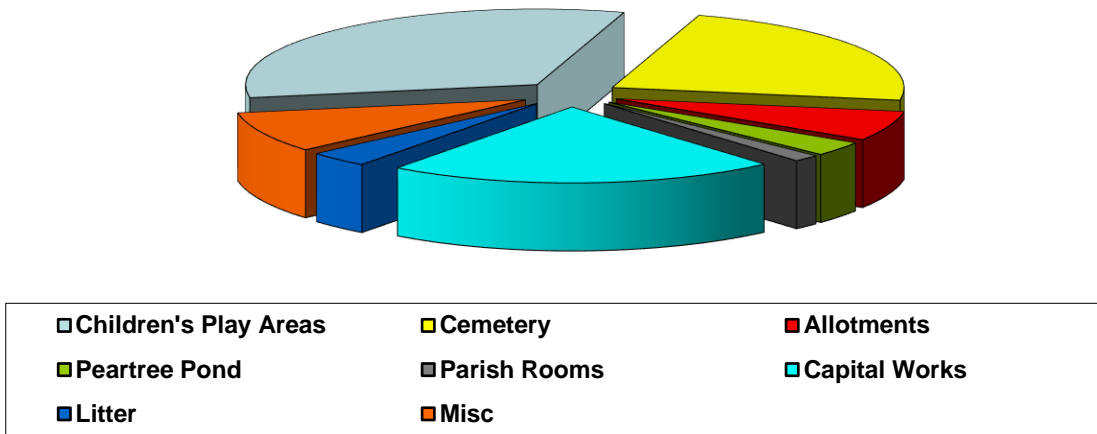
	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	
1. Balances B/F	83,734	114,891	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the council's financial records.
2. Annual Precept	71,914	75,175	Total amount of precept income received in the year.
3. Total other receipts	20,596	22,431	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the precept.
4. Staff costs	29,500	34,042	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all council employees, including salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses
5. Loan interest/ capital replacement	7,564	7,564	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the council's borrowings.
6. Total other payments	24,289	21,605	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook, minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/ capital repayments (line 5).
7. Balances carried forward	114,891	149,286	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. (1+2+3) - (4+5+6) (Note: all figures rounded to nearest whole £)
8. Total cash and investments	114,891	149,286	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 March. (excludes accrued VAT since not yet paid, else matches box 7 above.)
9. Total fixed assets	563,458	563,458	The recorded current book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the council.
10. Total borrowings	58,745	53,596	PWLB Borrowing, originally £99,000: This money has been granted to the Village Hall (£60k) and Priest House (£39k) for renovation work, now completed.

The Auditors approved the 2019/20 annual accounts for the Parish Council in August 2020 with no significant observations.

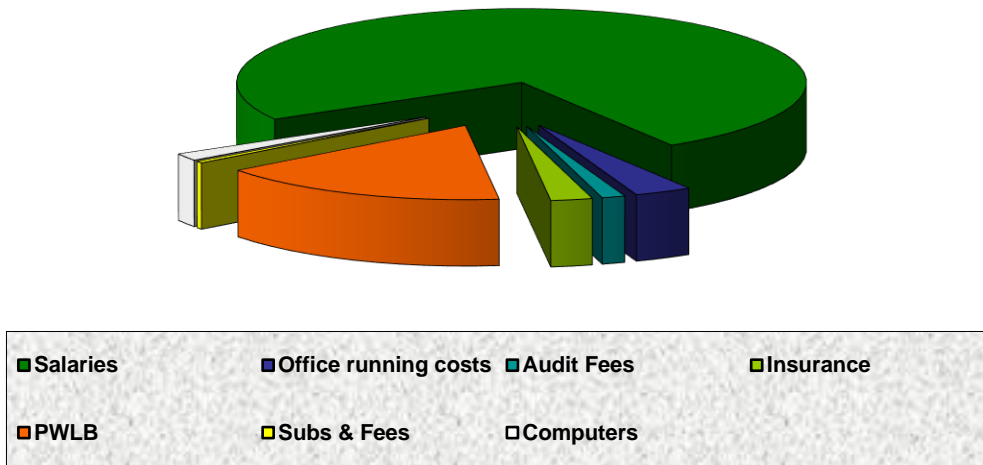
Sources of Income for 2020/21 - £98,253



Direct Expenses 2019/20 - £ 17,532



Overhead costs 2020/ 21 - £45679



Doddinghurst Parish Council - 2020/21 Expenditures over £100.00	
Ref 2014 Transparency code for smaller authorities clauses 13 & 14 (n.b. wage totals for the financial year are stated separately)	
Activity	Net Cost
	£.p
Grass Cutting 27 March 2020	245.00
payment for burial ground maintenance	718.00
BBC litter bin emptying	208.76
Repayment of Loans Half Year	3782.07
Allotment rev share payment	840.64
Annual Insurance - BHIB	1077.33
Peartree Pond Posts	540.00
Mowing of fields etc 3 times in May 2020	735.00
RoSPA Annual Safety Inspection	103.50
Skip for Allotments	216.67
Grass cutting April 2020	245.00
Grass cutting in June 2020	402.50
Q1 Burial Ground mtce	760.00
Repairs to blue wetpour	300.00
2019/20 Internal Audit fee	300.00
Field Mowing in July 2020	402.50
Village sign post/ frame repairs	900.00
Fallen tree removal by burial ground	450.00
Field mowing 28th Aug 2020	245.00
Interment fees x 4 plots	247.00
Printer cartridges - Viking	131.46
Bauer Analysis Ltd - Asbestos survey	200.00
Sage Finance System annual support	235.00
Annual External Audit Fee	300.00
Repairs to various items of play equipment	1485.00
Field mowing on 11 Sept 2020	245.00
PWLB repayment	3782.07
Cemetery 8 fence post repairs	475.00
Q2 Burial Ground maintenance	789.00
CPA litter bin emptying Q1 & 2 x safety insp.	206.03
Cemetery Interment fees etc	135.00
Field cutting 1st October	245.00
Flail Brambles at rear side of cemetery	150.00
SLCC membership fee for 2021	144.00
Q3 Cemetery Maintenance etc	819.00
Scribe Accounting System and service pack	468.00
Toilet refurb - 1st Instalment	3783.33
CPA Inspections and bin emptying July to Dec 2020	442.03
Cutting Peartree Field Hedge	225.00

6. Community Action.

The Parish Council in normal times hold two annual events which help to bring the community together; the May Fair and a Christmas buffet. Unfortunately, both of these, the Family Fun Day and the planned VE Day celebrations had to be cancelled because of Covid. In addition, the Council supports local clubs and societies which give local people leisure opportunities and keeps people in contact with one another, avoiding loneliness and isolation. But lockdown changed all this and instead the Council supported the Doddinghurst Covid Support Group now known as the Wellbeing Hub.

6.1 Newsletters/ Facebook Page

The Parish Council prepares a newsletter that is normally inserted into the centre of the "Link" magazine which is distributed to all households in the Village as well as Wyatts Green and Hook End. In addition to essential contact information the newsletter is used to advise residents of pending events and current affairs affecting residents. This year, with the LINK being unavailable the newsletter was published on the Doddinghurst Parish Council website and facebook page and shared with the Doddinghurst Facebook Discussion Page.

6.2 May Day Fair

In 2013 the Parish Council took over the management of this event from the Horticultural Society and usually makes the Village Hall available to clubs and societies to set up stalls to raise money for their charities. The May Fair remains a popular event in the village but again this had to be cancelled this year because of Covid.

6.3 Annual Parish Meeting.

The Parish Council convene the Doddinghurst Annual Parish meeting of the leaders of the community between March and June every year. This meeting records the activities of groups such as the Churches, Schools, Uniformed organisations and Neighbourhood Watch. The meeting planned for 28th March 2020 had to be cancelled when the National Covid Lockdown came in on 23rd March 2020. The minutes of previous year's meeting are posted on the Parish Council website and the Annual Parish Meeting will again take place on 24th May 2021.

7. Committee Activities

All committee meetings are open to the public and derive their authority to act from the full Council of the Parish, which is a body corporate re-elected every 4 years. The full council elections would have occurred in May 2020 but again Covid interrupted this and the election has now taken place in May 2021. The vacancy on the Council throughout 2020 was filled by Co-option in January 2021 when Mrs Patricia Brooks, a resident of Doddinghurst joined the Council.

7.1. Planning Applications.

The Parish Council is given an opportunity to comment on planning matters and the Council review all development planning applications received for Doddinghurst Parish at Full Council meetings. In between meetings all planning applications notices relevant to the village are sent electronically to the Deputy Clerk, who logs them for a full council planning review and the Clerk,

who assesses them for impact. If potentially sensitive or controversial these applications will be flagged immediately to planning committee members for their comments and feedback. Care is taken that planning committee members abstain from commenting on applications that are local to the part of the village in which they live.

7.2. General Purpose Committee.

This committee is responsible for the detailed management activity of certain areas of responsibility on behalf of the Parish Council. It has oversight of the Burial Ground, and, as the Burial Board, deals with sensitive issues relating to the burial ground. It also monitors the Children's Play Areas, including football fields, ensuring that safety checks are carried out and that the management activity is appropriate and timely. The committee also reviews and recommends council fees and charges for Parish Council services such as the burial grounds and room hire etc. The committee met 5 times during 2020/21. Among other items it reviewed were the use of the football pitches, the RoSPA report and 6 weekly inspection reports on the Children's Play Area and re-opening after lockdown and burial and parish room charges.

7.3. Finance and Resources Committee

This committee met twice in 2020/21 to review the Parish Council Insurance, Risk Assessments and Financial Governance including the audit results and to review/ agree proposals for the 2021/22 budget, staff pensions and pay review, next year's precept and banking arrangements. It should be noted that Precept setting is always considered and voted upon by the full council in January.

The committee is also responsible for the overall control of Council Governance including standing orders, financial policies, audit process, insurance and risk assessment and transparency. Finally, the Finance and Resource committee is responsible for dealing with recommendations concerning personnel appointments, terms and conditions of contract, superannuation and reviews of salaries if not dealt with directly by the Full Council.

7.4. Allotment Committee.

The allotment committee met once in 2020/21 with regular inspection visits also undertaken by committee members. The allotments during Lockdown were in high demand and continue to be a popular resource within the Village. There is currently a small waiting list

8. Transport

Doddinghurst is a rural community and the Bus service is an essential component in maintaining a thriving village life. Not only is the service used by non drivers to head into Brentwood to shop and to venues such as the Brentwood Centre sport centre but many prefer to use the Bus to a car to get to work either in Brentwood or to the rail station for transfer elsewhere. It is also used by School children who are at schools in Brentwood.

8.1 Blackmore to Brentwood – 61 Service

The 61 service is the primary service from Doddinghurst on Monday through to Saturday running from Blackmore, through Doddinghurst to Brentwood and serves some 5000 residents of Blackmore and Doddinghurst.

Unfortunately Swallow Coaches went into administration with effect from the end of March 2020 and Arrow Taxis (Essex and Suffolk Dart) operated the Swallow Saturday timetable between Brentwood and Blackmore during the start of the Pandemic lockdown.

Essex County Council procured the service with 'Vectare' operating the contract with effect from 30th August 2020, with first day of service being Tuesday 1st September as service 61 does not operate on Sundays or bank holidays. Vectare is a new operator in Essex. The service operates to a very similar timetable to Swallow's, however, there are some changes to the timetable to aid reliability. Vectare provided timetable leaflets and the timetable is also available on Traveline.

8.2 Village Bus (Bus Club)

The Bus Club is managed by the Parish Council with David Schuster taking over from ex Cllr. Colin Enderby as the Chairman in October 2019. It has not been constituted as a Parish Council committee and the funds are separate from the Parish Council. The Bus Club has unpaid volunteer drivers who have to have a "Midas" certificate to drive minibuses. The Midas certification is awarded by Brentwood Community Transport following a training course and practical driving test. The Bus Club is registered as a member of the Community Bus Transport organisation; it plans the timetable and books the buses for the trips. The charge to the users is to cover the hire of the bus and fuel used and is non-profit making.

The Bus club accounts for 2019/20 were as follows:

2019/20	
Brought Forward	£414.09
Income	£ 993.00
Expenditure	£1039.54
No of Trips run	9
Closing Balance	£ 367.55

Unfortunately, due the Corona Virus pandemic the bus trips were unable to run in 2020/21. It is hoped that they will be able to resume in 2021/22.

9. Recreational Grounds.

The Parish Council owns and leases significant areas of land in the village for recreational use. The land is all covered by byelaws to enable enforcement of any breach of use should this be necessary. In 18/19 the council had the opportunity to purchase the previously leased 5 acre Peartree Recreational Field which it now owns in addition to the 6 acre fields on which a junior and senior football field and woodland Nature Trail are located and a further wholly owned and separate recreation field for the Children's Play area. Parish Council owned land is managed under contract for field mowing and hedge cutting.

9.1 Children's Play Area. The Children's Play Area including the Teen Village and Kicking Goal facility which are both well used is inspected regularly and maintained to a high standard, offering a valuable facility to families in the village.

9.2 Football Facilities. Since the Summer of 2019 Blackmore Youth Football have used the facilities for their young players, many of whom live in Doddinghurst. From March 2020 they could only play when Government Covid guidelines allowed

10. Burial Grounds.

The Parish Council owns and manages one of the few burial grounds in the area where there are facilities for both burial and ashes interments. The burial ground was established in the early 1970's as a Lawn Cemetery. Deeds of grant are valid for 30 years, which covers 30 years of maintenance. Income from the Cemetery Deeds of Grant and other charges pay for the day-to-day maintenance and go towards the capital cost of extending the area of usage for the future, as demand requires. Plots are not available for purchase in advance. Members of the public have donated memorial seats in memory of loved ones interred in the Burial Ground and memorial plaques may be purchased for loved ones interred elsewhere.

The revenue for 2020/21 was £19252.00. The expenses incurred were £4009.00, leaving a net income of £15243.00

The Parish Council has agreed to establish a maintenance support fund for the Burial Ground to cover an extended period of time in the future when all the burial and ashes plots are full and income to pay for maintenance ceases. For the 2020/21 year a sum of £50,000 has been reserved for this purpose and a total fund of at least £100,000 will be required from about 2030 onwards.

11. Parish Room.

The Parish Room of approximately 40 square metres is rented to clubs and societies as well as being used for business meetings of the Parish Council. For 2020/21 the rent has been £10 (prior 5 years also £10.00) per morning, afternoon or evening session or £30 per day. It is equipped with kitchenette and is modern in style representing outstanding value for money since heating and lighting etc is included in the rent. In addition to the Parish Council, the Parish Room had regular user groups that now includes the creche as a major user together with Love2Craft, the Essex Cycling Association and other occasional users. Full occupancy of the room would yield an income of £7,500 (3 sessions a day for Monday to Friday inclusive for 50 weeks of the year).

Actual earning in 20/21 were considerably reduced on previous years income because of the pandemic at £510 giving an earned occupancy of only 7% (previous year was 23%, 28%, 15.5%, 9.6%, and 17.7% before that).

12. Allotments.

Garden Allotments measuring approximately 17m x 5m are provided at £60 per year or £30 for a half plot. The 20/21 income was £1307.51 and less the revenue share, lease and administration costs, leaves a sum of £466.87 to pay for maintenance and repairs - e.g. the storage shed and other facilities such as the water system, access gate and car park.

13. Public Footpaths

Public footpaths in the Parish are set out on a map showing the definitive footpaths and these are also available to view via the Parish Council website. The repair and maintenance of the footpaths in Doddinghurst is the sole responsibility of Essex County Council but the Parish Council does press for repair work to be carried out by the County when required.

14. Website and Office.

The DPC website address is now

: <https://e-voice.org.uk/doddinghurst-pc>

The site includes village community activities as well as the Parish Council reports. The Parish Council has a policy of transparency and follows the government 2015 code on transparency in the publication of data. Please visit it and let us have your recommendations for improvement or suggestions for the publication of other Parish Council held information you feel we should keep on the web-site as a public record.

The Parish Council owns an office that is normally staffed from 09.30 to 12.30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The Parish Office is semi-detached to the Village Hall in Church Lane and access is on the left hand side of the building up the first short flight of steps. Visitors are welcome to call into the office to discuss parish matters and where we keep copies of the Village Book "A Place in the County" which can be purchased at £4 each.

This report was approved for publication by the Parish Council on 7th June 2021

Issue – 1.00