

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council held at 19.00 on Thursday  
4<sup>th</sup> March 2021, via zoom video conferencing.**


**Present:** Cllr. Mrs D. Dicker, Cllrs Mr G. Smith, Mrs J. Le Plage, Mr A. Oliver, Mrs D. Rogers Harrison, Mr A. Smith, Mr A. Farrow, Mr M. Capon, Mr D. Potter, Mr P. Arnell, Mrs P.L. Brooks and Brentwood Borough Councillor Mr C. Poppy, Mr R. McCheyne, Mr K. Parker; Essex County Councillor Lesley Wagland

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. 🖐️ **Resolved.** Minutes of the meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 approved and signed.
3. **Declaration of Interests** from Members of any item(s) on this agenda. None.
4. **Information:** Clerk's report back on progress and from decisions taken at prior meetings:
  - a) The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have continued to work from home following Government guidelines.
  - b) Parish Room. The creche returned on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. Room was cleaned before they returned.
  - c) Children's Play Area – The play area can remain open during the current lockdown but signs have been put up on the Outdoor Gym equipment as this is closed. It is still being cleaned on a weekly basis.
  - d) Rubbish /Litter. An offer has been received from two residents who would be happy to volunteer to litter pick when the groundsman is away.
  - e) Burials – very quiet at the moment.
  - f) Allotments – Renewals will be done in April 21
  - g) Office Refurbishment. The builder started the refurbishment of the Ladies toilet on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, and pipework, tiling, plastering and electrics now completed. Floor next week and final fit out by mid-March. There was a supplier delay with the door order.
  - h) Annual Tree survey. Tree work and green waste clearance in the burial ground will be completed this month.
  - i) Pear Tree Field. Liaising with contractor re digging out a trench at the rear of Pear tree field – see Agenda item
  - j) Pear tree pond area. Cllr Dicker organised a survey of the pond which identified the need to prune back trees only. I am liaising with Cllr Farrow on the planting of the replacement tree that a resident kindly offered to buy to replace the one cut down last year. Cllr Farrow confirmed that a flowering cherry tree is now on order. We are also in dialogue with the Ehren family about refurbishing the bench (agreed by the GP committee) and replacing the plaque in memory of Eileen, a former DP Councillor who passed away before Christmas.
  - k) Footpaths. The Clerk is investigating an enquiry from a resident regarding the pond adjacent to the entrance on Frog Lane of Restricted Byway 36/Footpath 21. They ask if the Parish Council have obtained a closure award for the pond area in the past. It is not shown on the deeds of either of the neighbouring properties or on the Parish Council Asset Register. Enquiries have been made with Brentwood Land Charges who confirm that Brentwood BC do not own the pond and I have now passed it to ECC highways for their response.

- l) Highways. Logging highways issues on the ECC website portal continues. Councillor Wagland responded to the email sent regarding bin lorries destroying kerbs and verges in The Gardens as there are in excess of 35 logged items on the portal will be include in future routine maintenance as not seen as a priority. No reply on the All Saint's Close kerb / Budgens issue. Hugh Gorton is following through on Priory Mead parking issue with The Local Highways Panel. Rubbish clearance of the Z bends on Doddinghurst Road has been logged.
- m) Scribe Accounts. The Clerk and RFO have completed the initial training on the new accounts package Scribe and a demo of the related Cemetery package – see agenda item
- n) Risk Assessments. The Parish Office risk assessment will be completed after the toilet refurbishment is finished because of building work and covid restrictions
- o) Freedom of Information Request regarding unmanned aerial vehicles was responded to within the required timescale.
- p) Football contract negotiations are on hold because of lockdown. There are still some football items to be cleared from the Parish Office now the referee's room is being refurbished.
- q) Parish Council election advert has been put on the DPC website and Doddinghurst FB Discussion Page. Chairman's report will go out shortly.

5. **Information:** Schedule of correspondence received up to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 -noted

## 6. Financial Reports and Minutes and Feedback from Committees.

- a) **Information:** Noted: Financial Reports for January /February 2021 including RFO Report:
  - i. Bank account funds on 22nd February 2021 stood at £132,492.00. In addition, there was £18,170.67 held in the Santander Bank and £40.15 held as petty cash making £150,702.62 in total (this excludes any accrued VAT refund). Overall, the funds are down by £11,645.84 from the £162,348.46 held on 29th December 2020.
  - ii. A VAT refund claim for Q3 (Sept, Oct, Nov 2020) amounting to £703.51 has been reimbursed by HMRC.
  - iii. The Parish precept demand for 2021/22 of £76,014 was submitted to, and acknowledged by, Brentwood Borough Council in mid-January 2021. This was calculated using the latest Council Tax Base of 1217.14 and freezing the Band D rate at the 2020/21 rate of £62.45 and approved at the January 2021 full council meeting.
  - iv. The "build" for the Doddinghurst PC "Scribe" finance system as a future replacement for Sage has been undertaken and the new cost centre and code structure circulated to the F&R committee for comment. The agreed 2021/22 budget has been applied to the new database as well as the 2019/20 audited AGAR information. Discussions are ongoing with Scribe to ensure that the reporting formats are understood and the system is ready for the entry of the end of year data from 2020/21 at the end of March 2021. As the Parish Council has an income of less than £250k per year it is set up as a "Receipts and Payments" financial reporting structure. This will mean that some reports, such as the "Balance Sheet", will no longer be produced after the end of March 2021.
  - v. To date, no money from the £5000 allocated towards a C-19 village relief/support fund has been spent or requested
- b)  **Resolved:** Approved the Schedule of Payments for January/February 2021

c) **Information and 🖐️ Resolved:** Planning Applications and enforcements for January/February 2021 discussed and agreed. Brentwood Planning have confirmed that Waterworks Spring Farm planning application has been delayed in order to arrange an officer site visit. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, social distancing measures and personal need to shield, Brentwood Planning Officers have not been able to gain access to the interior of the site. Due to the nature of the application, the public response and Cllr interest it is prudent to present the application to committee with a full suite of photographs of the site once restrictions allow them to be obtained safely. DPC will resend the statement that was prepared in October and distributed to the Committee Chair, Borough Councillors and Planning Officers at the time. This statement will then be read out by the Chair or Vice Chair of the planning committee.

d) **Information:** Noted: Draft Minutes of the General Purpose Committee of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

e) **Information:** No feedback related to committees attended since last meeting.

7. **Public Participation:** Essex County Councillor Lesley Wagland gave an update on the closure of the 71C bus to Pilgrims Hatch following recent consultation, the success of the covid vaccination rollout, and support for the community for Covid including the Education task force providing 5000 laptops to schools. She confirmed that there will be another round of the 'locality fund' where Cllr Wagland is able to distribute £10k of funding to Local Parishes. There will also be £200k for each Highway panel each year for 3 years. She gave an update on the project to reinstate historic footpaths which has a deadline of 2026. The PROW team will be given more resource. There was a question raised by Cllr Capon regarding the footpath on Brook Lane and he will send more details to Cllr Wagland.

Brentwood Borough Councillor Roger McCheyne advised that the Brentwood Local Development Plan is progressing on schedule for the end of the year and Covid testing at the Brentwood Centre and vaccinations are going really well. The Brentwood Centre will re-open as soon as allowed. Councillor Cliff Poppy gave an update on the Covid Community support hubs and Foodbanks and the success of responding to the localised testing for the South African covid variant. The Brentwood Borough Council budget has been agreed and there will be no council tax increase. Childerditch Industrial Estate purchase has been agreed to generate employment and revenue and the work at King Georges Park is progressing.

8. **Information and 🖐️ Resolved:** At the last meeting the Council discussed the quotation to excavate a trench along the Peartree field internal boundary adjacent to Dagwood Lane to prevent access through the hedgerow by vehicles which has recently occurred. The spoil would be banked on the field side of the trench. The Council agreed to accept the quote and responsibility for the open trench by providing the contractor with the letter of instruction that he requires to proceed. However, on checking with our Insurers they have advised against doing this in email of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 Quote 'We would not recommend digging this to stop unwanted vehicles on the recreation ground, if someone was to fall down this etc the Council would be held liable. We would recommend putting up a fence and /or hedges to combat this problem. If this is still an issue, then you should inform the local authority (police)'. This was discussed and questioned as it is common practice in rural areas to use the ditch and spoil approach. It was agreed that the Council will take photos of the ditch and spoil by the footpath /Childerditch to enable Councillor Smith and the Clerk to reclarify with DPC insurers.

9. **Information.** Noted. Following the recent decision to move to the Scribe Parish Council Accounts package the Clerk and RFO and Deputy Clerk have received a demo of the Scribe Cemetery package. This will cost an extra £42 pm which could be recovered from the burial fees and will provide a method

of keeping an electronic record of all DPC burials and the associated administration/payments including Deed of Grant renewals.

- 10. Information:** Noted. The Clerk updated the meeting on the planning for the forthcoming election on 6<sup>th</sup> May, and advertising.
- 11. Information:** Noted. The Census will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Cllr Smith had received his pack and asked to query how people can complete a paper copy. The Clerk will take this back.
- 12. Information:** Noted. Cllr Dicker updated the meeting on recent discussions to hold a post covid 'welcome back' event on 11<sup>th</sup> July in the Village Hall to correspond with other events in the Village Hall that weekend. This would replace the VE day celebration scheduled to take place in May 2020 that had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. Although the VE day celebration had been budgeted for in 2020, the Councillors pointed out that this event has not been budgeted for in 2021 as it was not included in the budget planning F&R meeting in November 2020 because of continuing covid lockdown. It was suggested by a few of the Councillors present that this date is very premature as it is very close to the planned lifting of all covid restrictions on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 which may be delayed and that it would be reckless to plan an event with 80 predominantly elderly persons so soon. There needs to be a risk assessment completed and discussed with DPC insurers. Cllr Dicker agreed to review the timing of the event and bring it back to a future meeting for decision.
- 13. Information:** Noted. The Clerk updated the Council on her plans to move house to the Lake District in the summer which means that she will be tending her resignation, leaving at the end of May 2021.
- 14. Other urgent information** not requiring a resolution:  
Councillor Dicker expressed thanks to Councillor David Potter for arranging help in cutting the tree around Pear Tree Pond. Cllr Gerry Smith updated the committee on his actions with highways/UK power networks regarding pavement repairs and removal of redundant electricity poles along Doddinghurst Road and hedge cutting along the footpath. Councillor Dicker suggested that the Council might assist in paying for an electrician to connect a replacement outside light on the staircase behind the shops that has recently been vandalised.

**The meeting closed at 21.00**

Minutes signed electronically:

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021