

# DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely via Zoom on  
Monday 9 November 2020

Present: Cllr Steve Coates (Chairman), Cllr Jones (Vice Chairman), Cllr Kevin Attwood, Cllr Graham Cuthbert, Cllr Peter Duckworth, Cllr Kevin Fraser and Cllr Alison Shaw: and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present was County Councillor Andrew Bowles and one member of the public.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Coates welcomed everyone to the meeting.

All Members were present.

Apologies had been received from Ward Member David Simmons (at another meeting) apology noted.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Attwood declared a pecuniary interest in 5.i.

Cllr Jones declared a non- pecuniary interest in 9.iii as his wife, as secretary of the Village Hall Committee, submitted the request for a grant.

Cllr Cuthbert declared a non- pecuniary interest in 9.iii as he is a member of the Village Hall Committee.

## 3. TO DETERMINE WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION

None were identified.

## 4. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2020

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting and that Cllr Coates will sign the minutes as a correct record when face-to-face meetings of the Council are permitted again.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING (except those issues appearing under specific headings)

### i. Telecoms mast update

Deferred to later on the agenda.

### ii. Any other matter arising

#### The Chequers

Cllr Coates reported that The Chequers has had its status as an Asset of Value to the Community renewed and thanked Cllr Shaw for her work in application process.

#### Remembrance Sunday

Cllr Coates reported that he had attended the ceremony at the War Memorial, which was much reduced, to lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

#### BT Exchange

Cllr Coates said the issues raised at the last meeting by a resident regarding the flue outlet, are still ongoing and being investigated by Swale Environmental Health and BT

## **6. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Sally Mills, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, had sent the following report:

A few issues for Neighbourhood Watch this month, with residents reminded to stay alert for telephone and text scams.

One resident reported receiving a telephone call purporting to be from the Inland Revenue claiming that he was under investigation for tax fraud and that he should proceed to Press 1 or be under threat of arrest. Luckily, the resident recognised it to be a likely scam, probably asking for bank details or similar, and hung up. However, there is cause for concern that other residents might take it seriously, so we are all reminded not to ever give out bank details over the telephone and if in doubt, just hang up the phone.

Kent Police sent out a couple of vehicle alerts:

- On 6 October, between 2.50pm and 3.30pm, a silver Honda FES 125-7 motor bike, registration LG58 U UW was stolen from Shurland Avenue, Sittingbourne.

- On 17 October, a car window was smashed in Crossways, Sittingbourne, between 8pm and 8.30pm.

Cllr Coates thanked Sally Mills for her report.

## **7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

*The meeting was adjourned for the Public Time*

*A resident said that she had forwarded a neighbour's email regarding the telecoms mast suggesting the Parish Council should adopt a policy that future applications for telecoms masts in the village be disguised or the shared use of existing masts be promoted.*

*The meeting was reconvened.*

## **8. PLANNING MATTERS**

### Telecoms Mast, Down Court Road

Cllr Fraser said that there is very little the Parish Council or Swale Planning Committee can do as planning applications are weighted in favour of the telecoms companies.

Cllr Coates said there had been a very helpful and robust response from Graham Thomas, Swale Borough Council Planning Officer. In light of that letter the Parish Council's role has come to an end as has the planning process. Some residents consider the mast an eyesore and others are pleased with improved telecoms reception.

Cllr Attwood said a policy is difficult because of where it would sit within any formal planning policy for the Parish Council. The natural place would be in the Local Plan and this is always subject to legislation, at the moment the Government is keen to deliver 5G network and roll out Broad Band across the country. The Parish Council cannot have a pre-judged policy as suggested, the Council has to look at each planning application when it has been lodged.

KCCllr Bowles said Councillors need to be able to discern planning applications and a formal policy would lead to predetermination and the Parish Council will lose the right to comment.

Cllr Coates thanked the resident for raising the matter. The Parish Council is unable to develop a formal policy for the reasons stated, but we would learn lessons from this application for any future applications for telecoms masts.

### 18/504562/FULL Ellens Court Lady Margaret Manor Road Doddington ME9 0NT

Cllr Coates reported that he had spoken at the Swale Planning Committee meeting to reinforce our previous request for a site visit. SBCllr Simmons gave strong support for this request. A site visit subsequently took place on 4 November where a video for the Committee was made and Cllr Attwood and SBCllr Simmons attended.

Cllr Attwood said that this was not ideal, no residents were permitted to attend so there was a loss of the democratic process. The Officer spent a long time and picked out the vantage

points. The video was made the day before the second lockdown came into force and a senior officer will review the video. The matter will go back to Committee in November or December.

Cllr Coates thanked Cllr Attwood for attending on behalf of the Parish Council.

ii. Any other planning matter received by 9 November 2020

20/504677/FULL | Erection of timber stables and exercise menage (retrospective). | Slips Cottage Church Hill Doddington Sittingbourne Kent ME9 0AZ

Cllr Coates informed Members that the Clerk has applied for an extension of time for the application and this will be on the December agenda.

## **9. FINANCE**

i. Councillors Expenses

There were none.

ii. Invoices for Payment

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to pay Landscape Services £191.22 for playing field maintenance (cheque no 1240).

iii. To consider request from Doddington Village Hall for a grant

Cllr Coates said the Village Hall has previously received a £10,000 COVID-19 grant.

Councillors considered the request and agreed that an application form be completed in line with the Council's Grant Policy.

Cllr Cuthbert said that when he took the ivy off a tree in the Playing Field, the trunk was rotten so in future there might be further expense with the tree management.

## **10. GDPR**

Cllr Coates said that it is good practise to have an annual reminder to Councillors to be careful with third party personal data which we hold. Personal data can only be retained if needed and must be kept in accordance with the Council's Record Management Policy. He reminded Councillors that this policy was on the Parish Council's website.

## **11. SPEED WATCH**

Cllr Fraser reported that approximately twenty vehicles were recorded speeding in the last month; two have received warning letters for speed in excess of 45mph and three have received first warning letters as they have been recorded twice by Speed Watch, not necessarily in Doddington. Cllr Fraser expressed his thanks to the volunteers who help with Speed Watch.

## **12. PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr Duckworth reported that there has been a large amount of moss growth around the play area and that this has been sprayed. There may be a need to repeat this in two or three weeks. The climbing frame bolt has been ordered. Cllr Cuthbert and Cllr Jones have removed the ivy from the trees but the work may need to continue. A lot of leaves have blown off the trees and there is a huge mound of leaves by Dully Hill.

Cllr Cuthbert said the leaves will decompose naturally or they can be removed.

*ACTION: Cllr Cuthbert and Cllr Duckworth to ascertain the best course of action.*

Cllr Coates thanked Cllr Duckworth for his report.

Cllr Fraser thanked Cllr Cuthbert and Cllr Jones for their sterling work cutting the ivy back on the trees and this will make it easier to maintain in the future. The ivy has been cut back from trees which have been overburdened with ivy and there is plenty of ivy on the trees behind for birds and wildlife.

### **13. HIGHWAYS**

#### i. Parish Highways Improvement Plan

Cllr Coates reported that the Working Group met on 20 October and are arranging to meet with Sarah-Jayne Ellcock, KCC Highways, to discuss the Parish Highways Improvement Plan. Thanks to Cllr Jones's intervention, KCC Highways has made temporary repairs to Brewster Road. KCCllr Bowles and SBCllr Simmons have also helped with this issue.

KCCllr Bowles said that he would like to attend the meeting with Sarah-Jayne Ellcock which might become a Zoom meeting.

KCC Highways made temporary repairs to Brewster Road on 5 November, with the promise of a full resurface in the next Financial Year

#### ii. Drainage

Cllr Jones reported that Earl Bourner, Asset Manager KCC Highways, has responded that the scheduled cleaning within Doddington was completed earlier in the year and that drains will be cleaned as and when they have been reported through the KCC portal. The Parish Council had felt that the work carried out previously was not sufficient.

KCCllr Bowles said that he could push the matter if given the specifics of the problem.

Cllr Cuthbert said the drains are being cleaned but they are not cleaning out between the drains.

Cllr Fraser said that reporting blocked drains and gullies is useless because the portal says they have been cleaned when nothing has been done.

*ACTION 1: Clerk to respond to Earl Bourner and copy KCCllr Bowles.*

*ACTION 2: KCCllr Bowles to contact Earl Bourner.*

#### iv. Flooding

Cllr Jones said local landowners have been carrying out work and asked if everything has been done to protect the village.

Cllr Attwood said the drainage system can cope with normal rain events. Annie Thurgarland's interventions were to slow down the water from cataclysmic events when the water runs off the sides of the valleys into the Old Lenham Road. It was not easy to do something substantial as it would require a lot of private land. There was a plan designed to ditch and bund the western side of the Old Lenham Road from the pumping station heading south but this was abandoned as unpractical. The pasture land on the eastern side opposite the pumping station is within a permanent grassland environmental scheme and was considered but this also was not practicable. Further interventions at the southern end of the Old Lenham Road were considered but Annie Thurgarland did not come back and she has not been able to do a site visit since the first lockdown because of the Environment Agency's staff policy.

*ACTION: Clerk to contact Annie Thurgarland.*

### **14. CORRESPONDENCE**

1. 15.10.20- KALC: Planning White Paper & Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry on the planning system

2. 15.10.20- KALC: Notice and papers for AGM 28 November

Cllr Coates said he will attend the KALC AGM on behalf of the Parish Council

3. 20.10.20- KCC Highways: Pothole and patching data

4. 20.10.20- KALC: CEO bulletin

5. 22.10.20- Swale Borough Council Economic Development News

6. 22.10.20- KALC SAC: motion to be put to the KALC AGM

7. 26.10.20- Swale Borough Council: letter from Cllr Mike Baldock about Parish and Town Council participation at Area Committees

8. 26.10.20- KCC: press release regarding support for families in half term

9. 27.10.20- NHS Kent and Medway CCG: Community Bulletin for October 2020

10. 29.10.20- NALC: CEO bulletin

11. 30.10.20- NALC: Tree Charter newsletter

12. 02.11.20- Post Office: possibility of outreach Post Office in Doddington

Cllr Coates said the Parish Council has been approached by the Post Office about the possibility of restarting services in The Chequers.

13. 02.11.20- KALC: HCLG Select Committee Public Survey - The Future of the Planning System in England (deadline 11 November)

14. 06.11.20- KCC Highways annual parish seminar on 19 November

Cllr Fraser said he will look at this.

### **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr Shaw said that she will attend the Swale Planning training on 10 November.

Cllr Jones said the discussion regarding the mast and why there cannot be a policy needs to be explained in the newsletter.

Cllr Jones asked if anyone was aware of any issues since the second COVID-19 lockdown. Cllr Fraser reported that he had contacted those he had previously helped.

*ACTION: include in newsletter.*

Cllr Fraser reported that he has received complaints about fencing which Optivo has erected by the bungalow to the left of Sunnyside. The garden has been cleared and a 6' close boarded fence has been erected; this is out of keeping with anything else in the area. The previous resident who put up a 4' fence was told to remove it by Swale Borough Council. The resident has said that he cannot look out, could Optivo be asked to put a better fence in?

*ACTION: Cllr Fraser to provide photos for the Clerk to write to Optivo.*

KCCllr Bowles said SBCllr Simmons should be copied in.

Cllr Cuthbert said that he will attend the Parish Highways seminar.

Cllr Coates expressed concern about the way the white lines are being refreshed late at night and only a few lines being refreshed at a time. The white lines are an important aspect of the Parish Highways Improvement Plan.

KCCllr Bowles said this can be raised with Sarah-Jayne Ellcock.

### **Date of next Meeting:- Monday 14 December 2020**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.02pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Date: 14 December 2020