

Doddington Parish Council
Chairman's Report
11th May 2026

This is my sixth annual report as Chairman.

Overall this was a relatively quiet year for the council apart from our ongoing commitment to the Highsted Park Planning Inquiry which concluded in November 2025.

We have continued to retain a full complement of councillors and, once again, I should like to thank them and our clerk for their hard work and the support and advice they have given me throughout the year.

Public Engagement. Residents have attended our Parish Council meetings and have also raised a variety of issues outside of this forum, by email, telephone and by personal approach. As a result, we have responded to enquiries and comments which have included: the provision of the visiting post office at the Chequers, Community Speedwatch (CSW), road drainage, parking and planning applications.

By some margin the issue which has directly affected residents the most was the constant series of roadworks by SE Water, KCC (Highways) and BT in the village and local area. Concerns can be summarised as: road signs being left in place after work had finished, the signs being unclear, e.g “road ahead closed”, inappropriate diversions along unsuitable roads and the unnecessary use of “emergency powers” to close roads. I raised this issue with our MP when she met with local council representatives and again when, along with Newnham PC and a Wychling resident, I attended a meeting with KCC (H) and a County Councillor. These organisations now have a complete understanding of our concerns and promised positive change, but the quality of their response will be decided by actions not words.

HGVs using the Old Lenham Road as a “cut through” has been a continuing problem for residents who live near the junction with the Street. This has included damage to property. The council worked with KCC (H) to develop a plan to install additional “Unsuitable for HGV” signage in the Street and at the junction with the Faversham Road, near Wychling. The signs were installed in December 2025 and it would appear that they are having an effect, but we will continue to monitor this.



The council maintains the village defibrillator which is located on the wall of the village hall. Training is not required to operate a defibrillator, but in March we organised an event for residents with the objective of improving their confidence when using the equipment and performing CPR. The event was supported by volunteers from *Community Lifesavers* who give up their time to help the public with training. The event was very well received by attendees, including some from Sittingbourne and Wychling, but overall the number of Doddington residents who came was disappointing.

One resident who did attend commented on social media that:

“it was very well presented. Clearly explained, positive and enthusiastic. Loved the videos. Great fun in the small groups where we could also ask any questions we had. I feel more confident about dealing with an emergency like that now”



Borough & Local Meetings. We have continued to represent the Parish Council and residents at routine meetings with Swale Borough Council (SBC), other local parish councils and also at meetings to discuss specific matters, most notably the Highsted development (see below). We have sought advice from, and provided advice to, neighbouring parish councils. For example, we welcomed a councillor from Teynham to observe one of our CSW sessions in action as they plan to adopt the scheme.

Planning. This year the Parish Council received a small number of planning applications, the majority of which were supported without comment. Otherwise we made our objections and/or comments to SBC for their ultimate consideration and decision.

Highsted Park. By now residents will be aware that these outline planning applications include 8400 new houses, a new junction off the M2 Motorway, a relief road, new schools and medical facilities. In all but name, a new town (Go to <https://teynham-highsted.org/> for further information). Doddington PC had joined with Teynham, Lynsted with Kingsdown, Newnham and Tonge to fight the proposals and together were granted a status which gave us direct access to the Inquiry and the ability to present evidence. This was done under the name of the “Teynham and Highsted Action Group”. The Inquiry is understood to be the longest inquiry for a housing-led scheme ever considered by the Planning Inspectorate. At the time of writing we are awaiting the publication of the Inspector’s report.

Finance. This is covered in the Clerks Finance report.

Hopper Bus. This bus service commenced in April 2024 and continues to provide a link between various villages, including Doddington, and Faversham. The Council made a financial contribution to the service start-up costs and a commitment to support it for a further two years. Councillors received an update from the Project Manager at our January meeting and were pleased to hear that our investment has proved to be worthwhile as passenger usage is increasing.

The Chequers. The Parish Council successfully applied to SBC to have the Chequers status as an Asset of Community Value renewed. This does not mean that the pub cannot be sold at some stage, but it does give the community a right to become involved with any offer to sell.

Playing Field. Thanks go to Councillor Fraser for his work in maintaining the playing field. This includes managing the various contractor and inspection visits, ensuring that the play areas are clean and tidy and his diligent general upkeep of the field for the benefit of all.

Councillors were pleased to note that a record of the Roman road foundations at the Playing Field had been added to the KCC Historic Environment Record. The council is grateful to Mr Leigh-Pemberton for agreeing to this.

Speed Watch (CSW). Our CSW group continues to be led by Councillor Fraser and supported by Councillors and members of the public, six operators in total. Kent Police report that in 2025, overall numbers of speeding vehicles across the county is down. The evidence that CSW works as an effective educational tool is real. An additional benefit is that Kent Police are now deploying officers to conduct enforcement sessions in the village to reinforce the CSW message.

We are seeking additional CSW team members to bolster our group and if anyone is interested in joining they should contact Councillor Fraser whose contact information is contained within the village newsletter and also on the council website.

The council is grateful to all operators who give up their time to support this important scheme.

STEVE COATES