

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Doddington Village Hall on Monday 11 May 2026

Present: Cllr Steve Coates (Chairman), Cllr Colin Jones (Vice Chairman) Cllr Kevin Attwood, Cllr Kirsty Clark, Cllr Graham Cuthbert, Cllr Kevin Fraser and Cllr Linda Lumsden and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were Mr Neville Hudson, Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils and eleven members of the public.

1. WELCOME

Cllr Coates welcomed everyone to the meeting. |

The meeting was adjourned for the presentation of the KALC Community Award.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE KALC COMMUNITY AWARD BY MR NEVILLE HUDSON, CHAIRMAN OF KALC

Cllr Coates reported that previous recipients of the KALC Community Award were Mr Les Roberts; Mrs Pan Cowan; Mrs Barbara Roberts; the late Mrs Sandra Parker. the late Mr Doug Doughty and the late former Councillor Mr Peter Duckworth

Mr Hudson announced that the recipient of the KALC Community Award is Mrs Karen Potts for her outstanding contribution to village life: Film Club, Art Show, Valley Players, Panto, History Group, Open Gardens, the Church plus numerous other events which benefit from her calmness and strength. Mrs Potts was presented with a certificate and gift in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the parish.

Following a short break, the meeting was reconvened.

Cllr Coates thanked Cllr Clark for her amazing canapes and also thanked Mrs Jones and Mrs Cotes for their help serving the refreshments which were well received.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING DATED 12 MAY 2025

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2025 as a true record. Cllr Coates duly signed the minutes as a true record.

4. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN

The Chairman's report had been circulated, a copy of which is attached.

5. FINANCE – YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, copy of which is attached. No matters were raised.

6. VILLAGE HALL REPORT

The Village Hall Committee had submitted a written report, copy of which is attached. Cllr Jones commended the Village Hall Management Committee for a successful year; a lot of work has been completed.

7. DODDINGTON ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

The Association had submitted a written report, copy of which is attached.
Cllr Jones commended the Committee for a successful year for the Allotments.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No matters were raised.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman

Dated:

DRAFT

**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 in 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

Doddington Parish Council Finance Report 2025- 26

2024- 2025

The Independent Internal Auditor completed the audit of year-end accounts to 31 March 2025 with no issues raised. The Certificate of Exemption was submitted to Mazars immediately after the June meeting. Full details of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and finance documents can be viewed on the Parish Council website

2025- 2026

The Precept for 2025- 2026 was set at £12,864, an increase of £749 on the previous year; the additional council tax for band D properties in the parish was £40.11 being a 5% increase to Band D property increase 16p per month the previous year.

The forecast budget requirement for the year was £9,390 (ex VAT).

Total receipts were £9,986 which included a VAT reclaim of £500.

Total payments were £10,954 (ex VAT) lower than budgeted for due to no contributions being made towards professional fees to oppose the proposed Highsted Park development. Administrations costs were higher than expected due to the purchase of a new laptop; there were minor repairs to the play area and the Council funded the defibrillator and first aid training day.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Independent Internal Auditor will conduct the audit of year-end accounts to 31 March 2026 in May and the Council will sign off the AGAR at its meeting on 8 June. The Council will seek exemption from external audit again as the expenditure was under £25,000.

Donations made in 2025-2026

The Parish Council made donations of £100 to the Swale Citizens Advice Bureau; £200 to the Heart of Kent Hospice; and £40 to the Royal British Legion for a poppy wreath for Remembrance Day. The Council also made a grant of £500 to Faversham Town Council towards the cost of the Community Shopper Bus as part of its three-year commitment to the service; residents are encouraged to use the bus to help support the scheme.

2026-27

The budget for 2026-27 was set at £11,877 and the Precept requirement for 2026-27 is £9,681, an increase of £752 from the previous year resulting in an increase of £1.91 per annum, less than 4p per week, additional Council Tax for band D properties in the parish.

Wendy Licence

Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer to Doddington Parish Council
May 2026

Chairmans report 2025

25/3/2026

We have had a very busy year once again.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their efforts on behalf of the village hall and particularly the officers who do so much.

This year we said a brief farewell to Liz Grant our letting secretary and I would like to thank Liz for her time in that position. Liz put in a lot of work to improve the letting situation and negotiated through some difficult times.

We welcome Kate Gough as our new letting secretary.

The fabric continues to be improved through the decoration of the upper hall initially then the main hall and front lobby.

Thanks to Chris and Lance for the installation of insulation and MDF panelling.

The ladies toilet facility improvements are underway and will look much brighter and welcoming when completed.

A new storage cabin has been purchased from Andy Hall to increase our storage capacity and has been installed by Chris and Lance.

On a fund raising and letting note the hall continues to flourish. The annual Pantomime was once again a huge success and was financially the best yet by £50.

I would like to thank Steve and Elaine Coates for the two quizzes they provide each year. They are very good fundraisers.

The Fete was a very popular event and drew people from far and wide. (Thanks to the Fete Committee).

The village show was a success despite the changeable weather impacting growing conditions.

Film club continues to be popular (thanks to our organisers). Ballroom dancing lessons given by Chris and Alli Thompson continue and I would like to thank them for their dedication to which they provide and donate the income to hall funds.

Thanks also to all the peripheral helpers who ensure the events continue to perform at a high level.

We have a number of regular users and the hall is used every week day by one or more organisation. There have been some very favourable comments on the condition and facilities of the building.

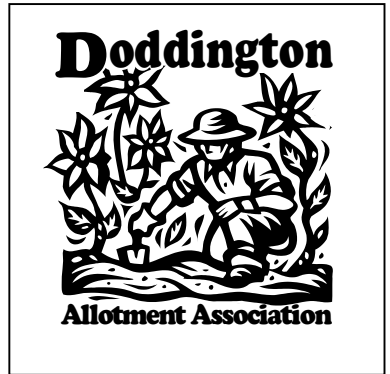
Les Roberts

Doddington Allotment Association

Annual Report - 2025 to 2026

We are all now looking forward to our twenty-third growing season at the site. A little way ahead but we hope to hold a special celebration in 2028 when we reach our quarter century!

Doddington Allotment Association is grateful for the support of both our landowner Richard Oldfield and to Doddington Parish Council for their continued support of the allotment site. Our small committee of officers continues to oversee the running of the site.



We held our AGM on 28 April 2026 and have the same post holders as in the previous year (see below for full committee).

Plot rental for 2026 remained the same as that in 2025 and will remain at the same level for 2027. We have sufficient funds and do not see the need to increase our rent. Our annual stall at Doddington Fete tops up our funds in addition to rent.

The allotment site has plot holders from Wychling, Doddington, and Newnham and all plots are currently rented out. There is a waiting list of two families.

We made two changes to our general running of the site this year which were as follows, (1) to stop plot holders putting rubbish over the fence by the roadside (or indeed any over any fences). There had been an incidence of this happening which we wished to stop. (2) to ban the use of artificial grass on the site as this would not be in keeping with our rural location and is an unnecessary source of plastic which could contaminate the soil.

Many thanks, Kathy Friend (Secretary)

Doddington Allotment Association Committee Members List (as of 29 April 2026)
2026 - 2027 committee

Matthew Jevons	(Chair)
Kathy Friend	(Secretary)
Jan West	(Treasurer)
Joy Dean	(ordinary member)
Paul Mills	(ordinary member)
Chris Thompson	(ordinary member)
John Wood	(ordinary member)