

DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Doddington Village Hall on Monday 13 November 2023

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 was Ward Member Terry Thompson and two members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Coates welcomed everyone to the meeting.

All Members were present.

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Rich Lehmann (at another meeting);
apologies noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

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

It was agreed to consider item 15. KALC Community Award 2024 in closed session.

4. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2023

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

Cllr Coates duly signed the minutes as a true record.

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

Cllr Coates reported that the administration at KCC has informally voted to withdraw their proposals for the closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres. This was positive news for the Faversham site but no official decision has been taken yet.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Cllr Coates said PC Garry Morris has reported that there are no issues in the village in the past month.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Question Time

A resident raised concern that a soakaway in a field on the Ringlestone Road has been blocked for a number of years, it was last emptied by KCC Highways in 2011. Work on the drains in Ringlestone Road was carried out in 2018 but no maintenance was carried out on the soakaway. The traffic is pushing the hedge over into the field where KCC Highways built up the road to make a passing place.

Cllr Coates said the matter was raised last month and the issue was reported to KCC Highways. Cllr Jones added that the portal shows it is under investigation.

ACTION: Cllr Jones to follow up.

The meeting was reconvened

8. HIGHWAYS

i. To receive an update

Cllr Coates reported that he and Cllr Jones had had a positive meeting with KCC Highways regarding issues in the village.

Cllr Jones said pot holes were also discussed and these have been marked up for repairs.

ii. Drainage and Flooding

Cllr Jones reported that the remainder of the flood mitigation work on the Old Lenham Road has started and will be completed by Christmas with new hedging being planted. The work that has already been completed is having a beneficial effect.

Cllr Cuthbert reported that following works outside Abbey House, the signs are still in place and this has been reported twice. The concern is that this is having a detrimental effect on businesses as customers try to find an alternative route into the village.

SBCllr Thompson informed Members that Swale Borough Council is looking at the policy as currently the contractors use a traffic management company and it does not seem to be working.

Cllr Coates said the matter was discussed at the meeting with KCC Highways. Wychling Parish Meeting and businesses have raised this issue, the Chairman of Wychling Parish Meeting is liaising with Maidstone Borough Council.

9. PLANNING MATTERS

i. Ref: 23/503908/FULL

Address: Southdown And Periwinkle Cottage Chequers Hill Doddington Kent ME9 0BN

Proposal: Conversion of existing dwelling to 4no. residential apartments including part demolition and erection of a single storey side extension and a two storey rear extension, erection of two storey extensions to either side of existing cottage, and erection of 5no. new residential dwellings, with associated parking, biodiversity and landscape enhancements

Revised details

It was noted that the site address has been amended to include Periwinkle Cottage

ii. Ref: 23/504710/FULL

Address: Homestall Farm Homestall Road Doddington Sittingbourne Kent ME9 0HF

Proposal: Erection of 1no. glasshouse.

Councillors considered the application and had no objections to the proposal.

iii. Any other planning matter received by 13 November 2023

Ref: 23/504043/LAWPRO Monks Hut Lady Margaret Manor Road Doddington ME9 0NT

Lawful Development Certificate for proposed installation of solar panels to north and east elevation

Application permitted

10. FINANCE

i. Councillors Expenses

There were none.

ii. Invoices for Payment

a. It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to pay Mazars: £252.00 for the external audit (cheque no 1349).

b. It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to pay Commercial Services: £ 294.96 for grounds maintenance (cheque no 1350).

c. It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to pay War Memorial expenses: £80.99 (cheque no 1351).

12. SPEED WATCH

Cllr Fraser reported that Speed Watch sessions continue and remain effective.

13. PLAYING FIELD

Cllr Fraser reported that the moss control works and the tree works continue. The grass cutting has stopped although the field may need to be tidied up by the local contractor.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

1. 22.09.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
2. 29.09.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
3. 03.10.23- Kent Police: Police Officers attendance at meetings
4. 03.10.23- KALC: events
5. 06.10.23- KALC Newsletter
6. 06.10.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
7. 12.10.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
8. 16.10.23- SBC: Policy round-up
9. 18.10.23- NALC: Newsletter
10. 20.10.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
11. 21.10.23- SBC: Policy round-up
12. 26.10.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
13. 31.10.23- KALC SAC: planning concerns and free training, 14 November
14. 01.11.23- South East Water: update on the East Kent project progress
15. 03.11.23- KALC News and training information
16. 03.11.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
17. 06.11.23- SBC: Policy round-up
18. 09.11.23- KALC CEO bulletin
19. 10.11.23- NALC: CEO bulletin
20. 10.11.23- KALC training events

Cllr Coates said someone has offered historical information to the village and this will be given to the History Society.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – Information Items only

Cllr Coates said KCllr Lehmann had provided information about the Swale Borough Council Parking Policy consultation.

Cllr Cuthbert said charges have been increased to encourage more use of public transport but this is not available in rural areas. There is a charge for motor cycles and there is a limited number of spaces; you can only pay for a motor bike by using the RingGo App which charges an extra fee. People with EE cannot get a signal in some car parks.

Cllr Lumsden said charges now apply in the evening. Sittingbourne and Faversham businesses have pay business rates and people are being penalised for going into town.

SBCllr Thompson informed Members that Swale Borough Council considered the issue regarding large motorbikes which are not efficient. There was also concern about the noise. The Council also thoroughly debated the parking fees and considered the balance on revenue and impact, it was decided not to charge the higher level.

ACTION: Cllr Cuthbert to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Coates reported that a resident has volunteered to take over the Newsletter and printing.

i. Planning and Policy Potential Changes

Cllr Coates reported that there is a KALC Swale Area meeting regarding concerns about proposed changes to Swale Borough Council's approach to planning.

Cllr Jones said he had attended the last Swale Area Committee where concern was raised by the proposal to downgrade Parish Councils which would undermine our position as statutory consultees.

Cllr Attwood said if a Parish Council objects to a planning application, it should go to Committee, it should not be decided by officers. Democratically elected Councillors should make the decisions and officers should give advice. If an elected Member votes contrary to the officer recommendation, Councillors are being told to explain why to the Head of Planning. Councillors are not beholden to officers; they are elected to make the decisions. Doddington Parish Council would not object to any application if there are no planning grounds to object.

SBCllr Thompson said there is concern that some Parish Councils put things to Committee and then do not attend the meeting. Officers also stress that if the Committee goes against officer recommendation, there will be costs to pay.

Cllr Attwood said the problem is that Swale does not have a five-year housing land supply, nor an up-to-date Local Plan so the new Local Plan needs to be progressed.

Cllr Lumsden reported the agreed salary scales have been published and Councils are encouraged to implement them as soon as possible.

Cllr Jones **PROPOSED** to accept the new pay scales for Parish Clerks; **SECONDED** by Cllr Coates: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

15. KALC COMMUNITY AWARD 2024

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the KALC Community Awards

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to take part in the scheme for 2024.

Date of next Meeting:- Monday 11 December 2023

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Date: 13 November 2023