

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

I am pleased to send you a copy of the Parish Council's Annual Report for the last financial year. This sets out briefly what we achieved during the year and how we spent your money. The Parish Council is required to publish all financial documents on the Parish Council's web site, and you will find these documents, by the end of May, in the folder entitled Annual Reports.

The Council's income for 2023/2024 was £21,895.78 (*previous year £14,497.80*). However, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) transferred the first Precept payment for 2024/2025 on 28 March 2024 instead of 1 April 2024 which has distorted the true income for 2023/2024 of £15,568.48 (*previous year £14,497.80*) and the spending was £16,490.18 (*previous year £12,224.49*).

The Council's income (unaudited at the time of writing the Report) for the year:

	2023/2024	2022/2023
Precept	£18,981.90	£12,052.00
Grants	£500.00	£1,500.00
VAT refund	£654.40	£0
Lengthsman	£1,532.13	£903.50
Interest	£227.35	£42.30
Total income	£21,895.78	£14,497.80

The main areas of spending (unaudited at the time of writing the Report) for the year:

	2023/2024	2022/2022
Staff costs	£9,353.50	£8,833.77
Admin (postage, stationery, and audit fees)	£961.82	£685.35
Insurance	£330.56	£330.56
Subscriptions	£779.06	£750.26
Hire of meeting room	£650.00	£170.00
Grants	£1,896.67	£600.00
Phil Richardson Community Award	£0	£62.36
Training	£0	£0
Communications	£71.48	£83.54
Contingencies	£307.25	£15.65
Lengthsman	£1,978.96	£693.00
Election costs	£160.88	£0
Total spending	£16,490.18	£12,224.49

During the year Cllr Scott Fuller resigned his role as Footpath Warden and the Parish Council would like to express their thanks to Scott for his tireless work in reporting issues and looking after the footpaths within the parish. The Parish Council are grateful that Scott has continued in his role as voluntary Parish Tree Officer. There is a vacancy for the role of Footpath Warden and if anyone is interested in taking on this role, further information can be found on Worcestershire County Council web site <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/environment/countryside-and-leisure/public-rights-way/public-rights-way>

The 2024 Phil Richardson Community Award nomination form is included with this communication. Closing date for nominations will be 30 June 2024 and it is hoped the Award will be presented at the Dodford Show in September 2024. Please contact the Clerk if you require any further information.

Towards the end of 2023 the Parish Council made the difficult decision that due to efforts being thwarted along the way, the proposed Memorial Garden on the corner of Warbage Lane and Priory Road will not be going ahead. The Parish Council is now looking to install an information board on the Chartist History and the various walks through the Parish. There will also be a QR Code for further information and will not be used as a notice board as there is already one at the Village Hall. If you have any ideas of what you would like to see on this information board, please let the Clerk know. There is currently £3,268 ring fenced in the budget for this expenditure and the Parish Council will be considering how to reallocate any money left over for special projects within the Parish. The Parish Council would like to thank the Memorial Garden Working Party and the residents who submitted their splendid designs for a Memorial Garden back in 2021 and are sorry that this project is unable to go ahead.

Planning

The determining Planning Authority for planning applications in our parish is Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and part of the process requires Dodford with Grafton Parish Council to be consulted by BDC. The Parish Council considers each application and submits their comments to BDC within a prescribed timescale. These comments take the form of either 'no objections' or 'objections', with appropriate commentary. BDC is obliged to deal with minor applications within eight weeks of being formally registered or 13 weeks if it is a major application. There are two routes for applications to be determined. The first is under 'delegated powers' which means the decision is made by BDC Planning Officers. The second is decided by BDC's Planning Committee (made up of District Councillors) at their monthly meeting and is open to the public. There is a large part of Dodford that sits within the Conservation Area which means there are greater restrictions for properties within this Area. These relate to the size of extensions, the type of external cladding permitted, inserting dormer windows, satellite dishes and solar panels. Trees can also make a significant contribution to the character of Conservation Areas and six weeks' notice must be given to BDC if residents in the Conservation Area wish to carry out works on trees, which are more than 7.5 centimetres in diameter (measured 1.5 metres above the ground). The Parish Council remain impartial and are not in a position to judge alleged breaches of planning brought before them. When anyone sees a potential breach of planning and contacts the Parish Council, then the Parish Council passes on information about the alleged breach to BDC to investigate. If you see or feel there has been a potential breach of planning, then contact the Clerk or alternatively you may wish to contact BDC's Planning Department direct by using the following link:
<https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-enforcement/breach-reporting-online-form.aspx>

Lengthsman

The Parish Council would like to thank Chris Cooke for continuing to take on this important role within the Parish. Please contact the Clerk if you see any work that needs doing, particularly if it causes a safety hazard to pedestrians and vehicles, preferably with a photograph and note of the precise location. Alternatively, residents can report overgrown shrubbery, fallen trees, potholes, flooding, or drainage problems on the highway, damaged or missing road signs, even dog fouling direct on the Report It section of WCC's web site - www.worcestershire.gov.uk

The Parish Council will continue to represent residents in all matters going forward and residents are always most welcome to come to meetings and give the Council their views and comments on what we are doing. If you have any concerns or queries about anything that is happening in the parish, please do not hesitate to contact either the Clerk or any of the Parish Councillors who will do their best to help or point you in the right direction.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to my fellow Councillors for their dedication and support, and our Clerk for keeping us on the rails, actioning our decisions promptly and responding in an efficient and courteous manner to queries from Councillors and residents. Thanks also to our County Councillor Shirley Webb and District Councillor Kit Taylor for their help and support throughout the year.

Rachel Jennings

Chair

Clerk to the Parish Council:

Kay Stone Email: KStone5757@aol.com Telephone: 07776 180207

Parish Council web site: <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/>
and then search for Dodford

PLEASE REQUEST A COPY IN LARGE PRINT FROM THE CLERK IF NEEDED