

## DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021



Dear Residents

The world is constantly evolving around us and throughout our lives we face many challenges, many changes, some of which we discover we can do very little about, or even nothing at all. That, for me, as Chair of your Parish Council sums up this last 12 months.

When you look back over photographs and postcards that were taken of the 'Dodford' since the Second World War properties have developed, some beyond recognition, but the introduction of the Conservation Area helped the integrity, the fabric of the Chartist Village to be maintained, or so we thought. The reality is that this

only gives limited protection over the buildings themselves.

There is no doubt, how we live our life is changing. Most of us have broadband, some even have 'fibre to the door' and all who live in Dodford and Grafton will over the coming years be forced to review how we heat our homes in a more sustainable and ecologically friendly way. In the meantime, why not plant some trees, create a wildlife pond, which will benefit the generations to come and will help to sustain the wildlife that lives alongside us all.

More importantly, I would encourage each of you, to become involved in our community, in whatever way you can. Whether this be by helping us with new initiatives, welcoming those who come to live in the area, or by volunteering your time, partaking in a local activity, or helping the church to put on a village fete to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee. By coming together, and supporting one another, we honour the hard work done by those we have lost, those who helped to forge and sustain a community.

New residents have moved into the Parish, and these are not always known to the Parish Council. I would like to ask residents to notify the Clerk when a new neighbour moves in as the Parish Council is considering putting together a Welcome Pack for new residents which could include the Parish Magazine, information on schools, Churches, Doctors, SmartWater Kits, Footpath and Conservation Area maps, list of clubs and societies with contact details, and a brief Chartist history. If there is anything any new residents to the Parish would have found useful when they moved into the villages, please contact our Clerk, Kay Stone, (KStone5757@aol.com or 07776 180207) with your suggestions.

The Parish spreads out over a wide area beyond the centre of Dodford and Grafton, including parts of Upton Warren and Woodcote. The Parish Council would dearly like residents on the outskirts of Dodford and Grafton to feel more involved and if any of these residents have any ideas on how you would like this to be moved forward, again please contact our Clerk, Kay Stone with your thoughts.

If you are concerned about staying safe and making your property secure, please remember we still have some Smart Water kits available to residents. Please contact our Clerk, Kay Stone, for a Smart Water kit. Natalie Lowe, the West Mercia Rural Business crime officer, will be happy to visit and offer practical and impartial advice on 07773 638594 but this mobile number is not monitored 24/7 so Natalie suggests still dialling 999/101 for crime reporting. Natalie also welcomes reports of any suspicious activity, for prevention purposes, rather than just crimes committed. They have a team email address of [ruralcrime@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ruralcrime@westmercia.pnn.police.uk) or visit the West Mercia police website.

Over the last two years holding Parish Council meeting has been a challenge. For the first 14 months meetings were held via zoom. In May legislation changed in that Parish Councils had to meet in person and over the last few months the Parish Council has met in the Church. Going forward (we hope to be able) to return to Dodford Village Hall although this has not been decided at the time of writing this letter.

Last year the Parish Council launched a Memorial Garden Competition for a garden to be established on the triangle of grass on the corner of Warbage Lane and Priory Road. This was well received by residents and six excellent entries were received. The Parish Council was unable to decide on an outright winner as each entry had certain elements which would work really well. I am pleased to announce that the entrants were willing to collaborate and produce a design which would incorporate as many of the excellent ideas as possible. The Working Party made up of entrants and Cllr Jenni Schuett have met and at the time of writing the Parish Council will be seeking acceptance of the new design by Worcestershire County Council Highways.

The Parish Council has requested new Village signs from Worcestershire County Council to be posted at the entrances to the village which will highlight the fact that Dodford is a Chartist Village, and it is hoped that they will be put in place early in 2022.

Possibly due to the strange times we all found ourselves in over the last two years, I am sad to say that the Parish Council did not receive any nominations for the Phil Richardson Community Award 2021 and so the Parish Council are considering holding these Awards every other year. The next one being in 2023.

The Parish Council has been made aware of the need for additional School Governors at Dodford School and if anyone is interested in serving the community in this way, please contact the Chair of the School Governors, Jonathan Shapiro via his email address - [JShapiro@dodford.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:JShapiro@dodford.worcs.sch.uk)

If any club or society within the Parish who may welcome grants, please apply to the Parish Council, via the Clerk, by 1 March, for the Parish Council to consider requests at their March meeting.

In addition, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend is taking place (Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June 2022). The Church is thinking of pulling together a village fete for the Jubilee Weekend and there is an open invitation to create a steering group. In the meantime, if any group or society in the parish wish to organise an event to benefit the village, they can apply to the Parish Council for a Queen's Jubilee Grant by contacting the Clerk.

Parish Councillors remain committed to taking their role seriously; they endeavour to remain impartial and open to ideas; to represent the residents and to think about what is best for the parish. Some issues are not simple or possible to resolve, and it is easy to become frustrated at what you perceive to be the lack of action, or lack of results by your Parish Council. But let me assure you it is not for lack of trying, and whilst the Parish Council has no magic wand and very little power, we will always try to help, where-ever possible and appropriate.

Minutes of meetings and agendas are available on the web site: [eservices.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/](https://eservices.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/) and on the Dodford Bromsgrove Facebook page.

Dates and venue for 2022 meetings are to be confirmed but it is hoped they will Monday 24 January, Monday 28 February, Monday 28 March, Monday 25 April, Monday 9 May (Annual Meeting of the Council and Annual Parish Meeting), Monday 27 June, Monday 25 July, Monday 26 September, Monday 24 October, and Monday 28 November all at 7.30pm.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors, our District and County Councillors, and our Clerk, Kay Stone, and to wish you all a peaceful and safe Christmas, and a Merry New Year.

Rachel Jennings  
Chair

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