

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Monday 25 March 2025 in Dodford Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Scott Fuller, Lynne Griffin, Rachel Jennings (Chair), Rory Lydon (Vice Chairman), Jonathan Shapiro, and Jenni Schuett

In attendance: County Cllr Shirley Webb, Clerk Kay Stone, and 3 members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllrs Scottie Sanderson gave his apologies for reasons given which were accepted by the Parish Council.

2. Declarations and Register of interest

- i. None.
- ii. Cllrs Griffin, Jennings and Lydon declared an interest in item 8ii

3. Dispensations

No dispensation requests received.

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public attending the meeting to raise matters of interest.

A resident was concerned to see the Memorial Garden still on the agenda to discuss and the Chair assured the resident that there are updates to discuss in the meeting.

The meeting continued as follows:

8. Parish Council Grants

- i. This item was brought forward to enable the Chair of the Governors to explain the reason for the grant request, which was for £704.54 being 50% of the total cost for equipment for children in Reception Class. After discussion, Cllr Griffin proposed, Cllr Lydon seconded, and all approved a Parish Council Grant of £600.00.
- ii. After discussion on the grant request from the Gardening Club for £200 to assist with the cost of coach hire for two trips, Cllr Shapiro proposed, Cllr Schuett seconded, Cllr Fuller agreed, and the request for a Parish Council Grant of £200 was approved.

Cllr Shapiro requested a formal discussion about the rules of Parish Council Grants to be added to the April agenda.

Cllr Fuller suggested that a budget should be set for Grants each year and the Clerk confirmed that the budget was set in November and finalised the following April. 2025/2026 Grant budget is £1,000.

5. Reports

This item was brought forward to enable Cllr Webb to leave early

- i. County Cllr Webb reported that additional horse signs have been ordered for Fockbury Road, but Worcestershire County Council will not reduce the speed between the junction with Priory Road to the junction with Kidderminster Road. However, it has been suggested that they will paint more SLOW signs on the road in this section.
- ii. As District Cllr Taylor had given his apologies, Cllr Webb reported on his behalf that there are no start or end dates for the Motocross which takes place in Grafton, just that the 14 permitted days start from the first practice or race day.

At this point Cllr Webb left the meeting.

- iii. Nothing to report on social media.
- iv. The Clerk reported that:
 - a. two residents had contacted the Clerk last week about the Motocross commencing on 22 March, with one expressing concern that this was happening during lambing season;

- b. a resident had enquired about the additional business starting in Yarnold Lane as the resident was concerned about the additional traffic in Yarnold Lane, and the Clerk had responded to say this had been reported to Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) for them to investigate;
- c. she had attended an HMRC Webinar about the changes in National Insurance Contributions for 2025/2026 but had not learnt a great deal other than, as expected, the Parish Council, as an employer, will have to pay 15% Employer National Insurance Contributions. The Clerk is hoping it will become clearer as to how this is to be paid when she completes the April pay roll, but if not, she will enquire from the Internal Auditor;
- d. Catshill have a bleed out kit within their defibrillator cabinet and after discussion Cllr Fuller proposed, Cllr Jennings seconded and all agreed for the Clerk to purchase a bleed out kit at a cost of £85 plus VAT. Cllr Shapiro asked the Clerk to clarify how this will be accessed and she confirmed by dialling 999 and then the code to enter the defibrillator cabinet will be given, and
- e. Worcestershire Libraries have secured an allocation of free books from The Reading Agency for World Book Night which takes place on 23 April. The Clerk has sent an expression of interest for either 25 or 50 books (closing date 31 March) and if successful they can be distributed at the 14 April meeting or at the Annual Parish Meeting on 6 May. Any left over can be given to the School.

4. Meetings

Cllr Shapiro proposed the approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 27 January, Cllr Jennings seconded and all agreed. The minutes were then signed by the Chair as being a true record.

6. Planning

- i. BDC has approved the following planning applications
 - a. 24/01155/FUL – Haymakers Barn, Fockbury Mill Lane – Garage conversion to include self-contained living accommodation.
 - b. 24/00419/FUL – Great Meadow, Victoria Road – Internal amendments
 - c. 25/00053/FUL – 2 Malvern View Cottages, Whinfield Road – Rear extension
- ii. The Planning Inspectorate has allowed the appeal for an outbuilding on land at Fockbury Mill Farmhouse.
- iii. No update on current enforcements.
- iv. The application for an agricultural building on land in Swan Lane has been withdrawn by the applicant, and the Parish Council has received consultation notification for the use of Woodside Farmhouse Annex as an independent dwelling house and a Parish Council planning committee meeting will take place on Monday 31 March at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

7. Highways and footpaths

- i. No update on the solar light on the island at the top of Alfreds Well.
- ii. No applications have been received for the Footpath Warden role, but a resident has asked for a job description.
- iii. No footpath or bridleway issues.
- iv. Updates on training to monitor the streams
 - a. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust were unable to help, but the Clerk has been in touch with Citizens Against River Pollution (CARP). Roger Meade is a volunteer and has advised that testing for phosphate, nitrate and ammoniacal nitrogen in water samples is quite easy. Hanna testing kits can be bought on line for phosphate and ammoniacal nitrogen around £80 a kit, with enough reagents for a few tests.
 - b. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust has advised that the Parish Council may wish to become a stakeholder of the Worcester Middle Severn Catchment Based Approach. CaBA is completely free to join, it is a civil society-led initiative which brings together various organisations, communities and Government or Local Authorities to enhance and protect rivers on a catchment scale. By becoming a stakeholder, it would give the Parish Council the opportunity to attend meetings and presentations that relate to the catchment and/or river health and enhancement. It'll also give the Parish Council the

- opportunity to be involved in discussions around opportunities or concerns regarding local catchment. It was proposed by Cllr Jennings, seconded by Cllr Fuller and agreed by all to become a stakeholder in CaBA.
 - c. Cllr Fuller offered to speak to North West Water Management (NWWM) and then the Parish Council to review further steps at the April meeting.
- v. CALC's newsletter last week included a request to ask other Parish Councils how they cope with the increase in fly tipping, but the Clerk has not received any responses yet. The Police have not responded.

9. First Aid Training

- i. For BARN to arrange the training it would cost in the region of £440 with the Parish Council arranging the venue and refreshments. This would provide Basic First Aid Awareness training around CPR, Defibrillators, Recovery position, Choking etc. for up to 20 learners. It usually takes around 3 hours with time at the end for questions.
- ii. After discussion it was agreed to open this training up to the parish, charging residents £10 per person (non-refundable) with a matching subsidy from the Parish Council.
- iii. The Clerk to contact Dodford Village Hall Committee to see if the offer of free hall hire is still available for this community event.
- iv. The Clerk to obtain dates from the Village Hall to offer to BARN.

10. Memorial Garden

- i. Cllr Schuett has met with Lorraine Smith and produced a report which included suggested wording for the plaque (A2 size) on the information board which has been circulated to Parish Councillors.
- ii. It was agreed that the plaque should include the following in addition to the suggested wording:
 - a. Map of historical cottages with names of original people who lived in them – Cllr Schuett to produce
 - b. A picture of Fergus O'Connor
 - c. Rosedene
 - d. Dodford Priory
 - e. Dodford Church
 - f. QR Code to link to a web site.
 - 1. The Clerk to find out more details on QR Codes
 - 2. As the QR Code needs to be linked to a web site, Cllr Jennings to ascertain if it is possible to piggy-back on to the Church's web site
- iii. Cllr Lydon has produced guidance for suitable plants and bulbs from a nursery which had been circulated to Parish Councillors. Cllr Griffin to speak to Lorraine about their suitability for the Memorial Garden.
- iv. It was suggested that the children from Dodford School might like to grow the plug plants and then be invited to plant them. It was also suggested that residents could be invited to plant their own wild plants from their own gardens.
- iv. The Memorial Garden budget currently stands at £4,268 with the quote for the information board being £2,398 plus VAT

11. Annual Parish Meeting – Tuesday 6 May 2025

Currently the speaker confirmed is Chris Roberts, Chief Executive of Citizen's Advice Bureau in Bromsgrove and Redditch. Cllr Karen May is unable to attend. The Clerk to still receive confirmation from the Police. It was suggested that the new MP, new Vicar, Cllr Sam Ammar who is Chair of Bromsgrove District Council and the Dodford Village Hall Committee Chairman should also be invited to speak. A resident suggested the Police and Crime Commissioner.

12. Dodford Village Hall

- i. A former Parish Councillor has advised the Parish Council that the bench outside the Village Hall was obtained by the then Parish Council. The notice board was made for the Village Hall through a grant from the Parish Council with the understanding that half would be used by the Parish Council for notices.

- ii. Current questions remain outstanding – more historical information on the Village Hall walls, 50/50 on the cost of a portrait of HM King Charles III and being able to use the visual equipment for speakers.
- iii. As the small hall was extremely noisy the Clerk was asked to obtain an update from the Village Hall Committee on the soundproofing between the two Halls.

13. Finance

- i. It was proposed by Cllr Jennings, seconded by Cllr Shapiro, and agreed by all to approve the expenditure of £282.20 to purchase postage stamps before the price increase on 1 April for the Annual Report mailing and for the Clerk to be reimbursed after the purchase and before the next meeting.
- ii. The February Financial Report:
 Deposit account as at 28 February - £19,034.14
 Current account as at 28 February - £407.71
 Payments to be made by bank transfer on 25 March – Proposed by Cllr Shapiro and seconded by Cllr Griffin:
 - a. Clerk's salary - £642.62
 - b. Clerk's expenses - £52.90 (Travel 12 miles @ 45p per mile £5.40; Storage £5.00; Use of telephone and internet line £25.00, and Heating £17.50)
 - c. HM Revenue and Customs - £160.60
 - d. Lengthsman duties for February and part March 2025 + VAT and travel - £217.80
 - e. Dodford Village Hall for hire of hall on 11 and 24 February - £60

15. Correspondence received – for information

Correspondence received was noted.

16. Councillors items

Cllr Fuller requested clarification on Councillors having a Parish Council email address as per the Privacy Notice. The Clerk to ascertain at the Internal Auditors meeting on 23 April and report back to the Parish Council.

The meeting was closed at 9.43pm.

Signed..... Chair