

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 23 July 2015 in Dodford Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Vicky Churchill (Chairman), Rachel Jennings, Christine Thomas and David Valentine

In attendance: District Councillor Karen May, Acting Clerk Katie Limm and one member of the public

1. Apologies

None received.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Churchill declared an Other Disclosable Interest for planning items 6iv a and b because both items involved her neighbours and because she had used the services of Yarnold Lane Cottage.

3. Dispensations

Cllr Churchill explained that, since she was an employee of Worcestershire County Council, she was seeking a dispensation to remain in meetings and vote when items concerning the County Council were discussed by the Parish Council. She said that her area of work was HR for children's services and if any issues concerning this area arose she would withdraw from the discussion. Cllr Churchill withdrew from the meeting whilst the dispensation was discussed. Cllr Valentine proposed, seconded by Cllr Thomas, that a dispensation should be granted to Cllr Churchill to take part in discussions and vote on matters involving Worcestershire County Council for the full term of the Parish Council (until May 2019) unless the issue under discussion concerned her area of work. This was agreed by the Council.

The meeting was adjourned for members of the public to raise matters of interest / items for the next agenda. None raised but the member of the public present indicated that she would like to speak on item 6iv. The meeting was reconvened.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2015

Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr Valentine and seconded by Cllr Thomas after which they were signed by the Chairman as being a true record.

5. Reports

- i. The July report received from County Councillor Sheila Blagg had been received and already circulated to Parish Councillors. Cllr Churchill highlighted three items of interest:
 - The Youth Cabinet – this could dovetail with the proposed Dodford Youth Council.
 - The need for new footpath and tree wardens. It was agreed that the Clerk should advertise these roles in the parish magazine, on the council website and notice board.
 - The Safe Places initiative for vulnerable adults- it was agreed that this would be for a future agenda.
- ii. District Councillor Karen May reported on the following items:
 - She had made enquiries of regulatory services about the Park Gate Inn license - a copy had been sent to the Clerk and was made available to Councillors. She suggested that any significant breaches or disturbances should be reported to the licensing authority and also notified to her. She would let the Clerk have details of the necessary contacts.

- Cllr May was pursuing the Alfred's Well issue and would report back.
 - The County Council would shortly be clearing the silted up gullies in Snakes Lake Lane.
 - Certificate of lawfulness for Yarnold Lane Cottage – Cllr May asked the Council to keep her informed of developments. The Chairman said there would be a discussion of this issue under item 6.
- iii. Report on CALC Parish Conference held on 4 June
The Chairman said that no one from the Council had been able to attend. The Clerk was asked to circulate the Minutes when available.
 - iv. Report on CALC Area Annual Meeting held on 10 June
The Chairman reported briefly on the issues covered, including a presentation on Neighbourhood Plans.
 - v. The Clerk reported that she was still waiting to hear from Lloyds Bank regarding the overdraft fee.

6. Planning

- i. Planning application 15/0387 – Installation of a solar park with an output of approximately 8.94MW on land adjacent to Rectory Farm, Grafton Lane (Resubmission of application 14/0752). The Council had already considered this application and agreed that its comments should be resubmitted as follows: “The Parish Council has no objection but would like to see the part of the farm that falls within the Dodford with Grafton Parish Council area properly screened as outlined in the plan for the area which falls within Wychavon District Council. The land should also be put back to its original condition once the panels have expired.” Cllr Valentine asked how reinstatement of the land would be enforced and whether the applicant would be required to lodge a bond or equivalent to ensure that funds were available for this. Cllr May undertook to make enquiries on this point.
- ii. The Clerk reported that BDC had granted the extensions and alterations to Whinfields, Whinfield Road.
- iii. No planning appeals had been received.
- iv. Enforcement/Environmental issues:
 - a. Development of green field site at Sunrays, Warbage Lane.

Cllr Churchill left the meeting after declaring a Disclosable Interest and Vice Chairman Cllr Valentine chaired the meeting

The Clerk read the response from the District Council's enforcement officer to the Parish Council's request that he review the position. He had visited the site and made clear to the owners what was acceptable. His advice was that if high levels of activity were observed then Councillors and residents should keep a log so that further investigations could be made. Cllr May reinforced the importance of keeping a detailed record of evidence of activity at the site. She asked residents and Councillors to copy this to her as well as sending the information to the enforcement officer.

- b. Update on Yarnold Lane Cottage – Certificate of Existing Lawful Use / Development.
The Clerk read out the responses from the enforcement officer to the questions raised by the Council at its previous meeting. A copy of the certificate of lawfulness for the site had been received and was made available. The certificate contained conditions about the use of specific areas of land and limitations on the permitted uses.

The Chairman suspended standing orders at this point to enable the resident attending the meeting to speak. She said that the conditions were already being breached.

The meeting was reconvened and Cllr May asked residents and Councillors to provide her with evidence of breaches of the planning conditions. She would follow this up with the enforcement officer.

At this point Cllr Churchill returned to the meeting and the Chair.

- v. Any other planning issues:
The license for the Park Gate Inn had already been discussed. Worcester Regulatory Services were going to get in touch with the new operators to ensure they are aware of their license conditions and the hours they can operate for under the license.

7. Highways and footpaths

- i. **Damage to residents' hedges in Victoria Road by lorries turning in from Warbage Lane** – The Clerk reported that WCC Highways do not have the software internally to prove that work to cut into the verge in Warbage Lane would solve the problem and, in any event, Highways do not have any funding. It was agreed that for the moment the Council should continue to monitor the situation. The Clerk was asked to write to the adjacent landowners to ask them to continue to make diary notes and gather evidence to support further discussions with the County Council.
- ii. **To discuss dog fouling in Rose Lane and dog poo bags being left around the village** – The Council discussed whether it should consider purchasing dog poo bins for the village. The Clerk informed the Council of the potential costs. Cllr May said that the District Council now provided and emptied universal bins which could be used for dog poo. Parish Councillors noted that they did not have any hard information about the extent of the problem in Dodford nor a map of where current litter bins are located. It was agreed that in the first instance the Council should apply to BDC for a dual bin to be installed near the new bench at Niblett's Hill. Once installed this should be advertised in the parish magazine.
- iii. **To discuss a dog register to be kept in the village** – Cllr Jennings had suggested this and was asked to expand on the idea. She said that there was some support for a facility to advertise lost and / or found dogs but it was not clear how best to do this – a facebook page or similar facility might work. It was agreed that Cllr Jennings should continue to explore this and bring ideas back to the Council at a future meeting.
- iv. **To discuss Lengthsman unable to clear grips in Bungay Lake Lane** – WCC had advised that if the Lengthsman was being threatening then this should be reported to the police. An alternative solution was for the Clerk to raise a service request to have the grips cleared. Cllr May said that she would ask if it would be possible for the grips to be cleared at the same time as those in Snakes Lake Lane.
- v. **Update on trip hazard in Alfred's Well** – The Clerk had not received a response from the resident to the letter sent last month. Cllr May had already indicated that she was pursuing this item.
- vi. **Update on two new drives at Alfred's Well** – The Clerk reported that BDC enforcement thought it might be Permitted Development but was going to take a look. The Clerk is still waiting to hear further on this.
- vii. **Damage to residents hedges during recent Worcestershire County Council verge cutting**
Two residents had complained to the Parish Council about damage done to their hedges during the recent WCC verge cutting. This had been raised with WCC and a response was awaited.

8. Junior Parish Council

The Clerk had put a piece asking for expressions of interest in the September issue of the Parish Magazine. Cllr May said that the Council might like to find out about how Clent Parish Council run their successful junior Council.

9. Broadband

No responses received from either WCC Cabinet Member Simon Geraghty or the local MP. The Clerk was asked to chase up for the next meeting. Cllr May offered to contact the MP's office if no response was received.

10. Dodford with Grafton Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman said that at the recent CALC meeting and Chairs' training session it had seemed that a number of local councils were now working on these plans and she suggested that the Council should consider setting up a working group to take this forward. Cllr May suggested that the Council should first speak to Mike Dunphy of the District's strategic planning team about the state of play on the District Plan. It was not necessarily worth doing much work on a Neighbourhood Plan until the District Plan had been or was close to being ratified. The Council accepted this suggestion.

Cllr Jennings flagged up the need to consider allocating resources for a Neighbourhood Plan in next year's budget. She also suggested that the Council should consider the scope to work with neighbouring small parishes like Bournheath to share expertise and other resources.

11. Information sheet for members of the public

The adoption of the information sheet circulated by the Clerk was proposed by Cllr Valentine and seconded by Cllr Jennings. It was agreed that this would be made available to members of the public attending all future Parish Council meetings. It was also agreed that an additional point should be added to indicate that any plans for the recording of meetings should be discussed in advance with the Clerk.

12. Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Valentine reported that he had been reading the West Mercia Police reports and would bring any items of information to the Council's attention. However he had noted that these reports were not always comprehensive. Cllr Valentine also queried the allocation of other neighbourhood watch duties. Cllr Churchill suggested that the first step was to find out exactly what these duties were and it was agreed that the Clerk should contact the neighbourhood watch co-ordinator or police as appropriate to find out how the service operates, and for any information about contacts etc. This item should be placed on the next agenda to consider how to take forward.

13. Finance

The Clerk reported the following information:

- Deposit account as at 30 June 2015 - £10,907.91
- Current account as at 30 June 2015 - £2,090.55 (the reason for the high amount in the current account is to cover the Public Works Loan Board direct debit going out in August and other payments going out in July and August)

Payments for approval were proposed by Cllr Valentine and seconded by Cllr Jennings as follows:

- a. Allen Farnsworth (petrol for June) £10.00
- b. Grant Thornton (audit fee in respect of the 2015 Annual Return) £120
- c. Worcestershire CALC (training part one fee for Cllr Thomas) £30
- d. Worcestershire CALC (training part two fee for Cllr Thomas) £30

14. Councillor co-option

A resident had expressed an interest and the Clerk had sent her some background information. However she was not present at the meeting. This item was deferred.

15. Correspondence received – for information

Items of correspondence received since the last meeting were noted.

16. Councillors items

- i. Cllr Thomas mentioned that the surface of Church Road seemed to be deteriorating.
- ii. Cllr Jennings raised the issue of enforcing the double yellow lines near the school. It was agreed that the Clerk should
 - a. write to ask the school to remind parents about parking restrictions at the start of the next school term and
 - b. contact Sergeant Richard Field to ask for Dodford to be made a priority for 'school watch' at the start of term.
- iii. Cllr Valentine said that visibility at the entrance to his house, Park Farm, was now very poor because of the uncut verges owned by the County Council. He had contacted them and BDC on several occasions without any success. Cllr May undertook to follow this up.
- iv. Cllr Churchill said that the edges/verges of Bungay Lake Lane and Timberhonger Lane were collapsing but there was no sign of any remedial work. Cllr May said that she would include this item in her discussions with County highways.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed.....Chairman