

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Monday 13 May 2019 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Lynne Griffin, Rachel Jennings (Chairman), Rory Lydon, Alwyn Rea, Scottie Sanderson and Jonathan Shapiro

In attendance: County Councillor Shirley Webb, Clerk Kay Stone and nine members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

District Councillor Drew Beaumont gave his apologies, reasons for which were accepted.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Approval of the Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2018 was proposed by Cllr Rea, seconded by Cllr Shapiro and approved by all after which they were signed by the Chairman as being a true record.

3. Parish Council Annual Report

The Annual Report has been sent to each household, with copies being available at the meeting. The Chairman spoke on how her year as Chairman has been a learning curve and at times frustrating with not always knowing who to contact when escalating residents' concerns and queries. The main issues of the year have been discussions on speed limits, the tree felling at Big Wood and Rights of Way. The Parish Council are holding an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on Monday 3 June to discuss Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) revised proposals for parking restrictions on Fockbury Road and Priory Road in the vicinity of Dodford First School. The agenda will also include the tree felling at High Wood. She spoke on how the village is changing and how it is not always possible for the Parish Council to respond immediately to issues raised on Facebook. There has been aggression shown towards the Parish Council at meetings during the year and she hoped this will change as she pointed out the deeds of kindness that are being shown in the village, such as rubbish collecting and weeding in the churchyard prior to a wedding. Volunteers, like the Parish Council, give up their time to make the village a community. The Chairman finalised her report by thanking all the volunteers in the village, her fellow Parish Councillors and the Clerk to the Parish Council.

4. County Councillor Shirley Webb

County Councillor Shirley Webb had produced her annual report which had been circulated and copies were available at the meeting. Cllr Webb said she is aware of speeding issues within the village and is working with Safer Neighbourhood Partnerships. She thanked the residents who had given up their drives on occasions for speed checks. She spoke of the revised proposals for parking restrictions on Fockbury Road and Priory Road and said there would be a separate consultation for the speed to be reduced to 30mph around the vicinity of Dodford First School. When asked who is responsible for the enforcement of the parking issues, Cllr Webb responded that it was Bromsgrove District Council.

5. Outgoing District Councillor Karen May

It was hoped that Karen would be at the meeting to give her outgoing speech, but she was due at two other Parish Council meetings on the same evening and may be able to attend later.

6. Scott Fuller, Footpath and Tree Warden for the Parish

Scott is new to the role and gave a presentation on the role of the Parish Path Warden and the Tree Warden and his report is attached to the Minutes. Cllr Lydon thanked Scott for taking on

the roles and asked if WCC has any funding to help residents in Dodford plant a tree(s) and County Cllr Webb said she will investigate funding but suggested that it would be a good idea to get the children at Dodford First School involved. The Woodland Trust provide packs to help children plant trees. Cllr Webb also said that if a verge is owned by WCC then they can give a planting licence for a tree(s).

7. Dodford Village Hall Committee Report

No committee members were able to attend, and a promised report had not been received prior to the meeting.

8. Phil Richardson Community Award

Two nominations have been received for the 2019 Award and the Chairman encouraged residents to nominate someone who they knew had contributed to the community. There is no age limit and nominations can come from outside Dodford and Grafton if the community has benefited.

9. Questions / Matters of interest to Parishioners

There were no questions or matters of interest to Parishioners and the meeting closed at 8.22pm.

Signed.....Chairman

Parish Path Warden

The Parish Paths Warden role is a voluntary position, working for Worcestershire County Council within Countryside Services to help maintain and improve Worcestershire's public rights of way network.

Parish Paths Wardens are usually nominated by a Parish or Town Council then interviewed and appointed by Worcestershire County Council. The remit includes Footpaths and Bridleways.

Parish Paths Wardens receive training in all aspects of their work as well as ongoing advice and support from their Countryside Access Maintenance and Improvement Officer.

Parish Paths Wardens are expected to:

1. Survey all the paths within their parish on a yearly basis.
2. Waymark the routes.
3. Carry out minor vegetation clearance around signposts, waymark posts, stiles and gates.
4. Carry out minor repairs.
5. Act as a local contact.
6. Assist WCC with the identification of landowners.
7. Use the Volunteer Manual as guidance.
8. Use the Public Rights of Way online Volunteer Database to monitor and provide updates to reported problems.
9. Communicate with the WCC through the Volunteer Database.
10. Co-operate with other volunteers and contractors undertaking tasks for the WCC.
11. Provide information and advice for landowners who have PRoW's on their land.

Parish Path Wardens do not:

12. Enter into written communications with third parties such as landowners, path users, press or planning authorities.
13. Agree to any changes to the route of a PRoW.
14. Agree to the replacement of items such as stiles and gates without the prior approval of the WCC.

The County Council is responsible for:

15. Signposting.
16. Waymarking.
17. Undergrowth.
18. Most bridges and ditch crossings.

Landowners and occupiers are responsible for:

19. Stiles and gates.
20. Overgrowth.
21. Re-instatement after ploughing.
22. Keeping paths clear of crops.

Although the responsibility for the maintenance of stiles and gates is the landowners, the WCC can sometimes help with the supply of necessary materials for the work to be done.

Public Rights of Way are defined in "The Definitive Map and Statement" documents submitted by councils in 1947, although some councils are still to submit them. Many PRoW's do not follow field boundaries and often cut across a field.

I have particularly exact figures for Worcestershire which has 15,689 paths having a total length of 4,612.5 kms or 2,883 miles. Of these 85% are Footpaths and 15% are Bridleways. Within Worcestershire there are around three thousand problems reported and resolved each year.

Dodford and Grafton have 133 paths with a length of 38.5 kms or 24 miles. Currently there are fifty-six outstanding problems.

For myself I have started training and am awaiting the kit required to start remedial work within the parishes. Should people have issues to report please do this through the Parish Council, the important thing is to be as accurate as possible regarding the location of the problem and a picture would be fabulous.

Tree Warden

The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative founded and co-ordinated by The Tree Council. There are many Tree Warden Networks and co-ordinators across the UK helping local tree enthusiasts to get **involved** and care for the trees in their area. Tree Warden volunteers are usually appointed by local councils. I work for the Greenspace officer & Tree Warden co-ordinator.

The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2015 - there are around eight thousand Tree Wardens in more than one hundred and fifty local networks doing voluntary work for their communities' trees. Over the past twenty-five years volunteer Tree Wardens have planted in excess of seven and a half million trees. The Tree Council is looking to plant more trees, of the right kind, in the right places. Further it encourages better care for all trees. Its goal is to make trees matter to everyone. Today there are many thousands of Tree Wardens in local networks throughout the UK, forming a volunteer force of immense value to the environment. This represents two million volunteer hours a year to trees.

Tree Wardens are a national force of local tree champions and are a part of The Tree Council's Community Action Programme. The Tree Council launched the Tree Warden Scheme in 1990 and co-ordinates the Scheme nationally. It works with local authorities, voluntary organisations, parish councils and local partnerships to set up and develop Tree Warden networks in towns, cities and the countryside.

Tree Wardens:

23. Encourage and help people to plant and care for trees.
24. Carry out woodland management.
25. Set up tree nurseries using seeds collected locally.
26. Survey trees and gather information about them.
27. Provide early warning of threats, disease, decay or vandalism.
28. Involve their neighbours in tree projects.
29. Get together with like-minded people for training and field trips.
30. Spearhead Tree Council initiatives such as its Hedge Tree Campaign to reverse the decline of trees and hedges.
31. Tree Wardens are the eyes and ears of their neighbourhoods.

Not all of these apply to all parishes.

Community involvement is a central aim of the Scheme. They encourage local environmental improvement projects and plan tree planting for The Tree Council. Tree Warden networks also work in their own communities to enable local projects.