

## **Meeting of Doddington Parish Council held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in the Church Rooms, New Street, Doddington at 7.00p.m.**

**Present:-** Cllr R Hufton (Chair), Cllrs S Cross, I Gowler, P Jolley, R. Mason, J Shepherd, B. Whittaker. Cllr D. Connor (District & County Councillor) and the clerk, Mr R. Wilkin were also present.

**1. Apologies:-** Cllrs. V McDougall, J Welcher and Cllr M Davis (District Councillor for Wimblington)

### **2. Minutes:-**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

### **3. Matters Arising:-**

- a. Parish Council Annual Dinner. The Clerk advised the meeting that he had confirmed a booking at The Three Tuns on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
- b. Cllr Mason confirmed that the work on the guttering of one of the bus shelters had been attended to.

### **4. Police Matters:-**

- a. PC Rem Kajzer was not present but his report was read out to the meeting which was noted.
- b. The Clerk advised members that following the reporting last month of instances of bad car parking in Childs Lane, a resident had phoned to report that a child had nearly been hit by a car whilst trying to cross the road. This had been reported to the police along with the car registration numbers of two vehicles who were alleged to park in a dangerous position. The police are monitoring the position. The Chair advised the meeting that this matter was raised at a meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January with the school Headmistress who believed that she knew the drivers of the cars in question and would speak to them.
- c. During the 11<sup>th</sup> January meeting, the Headmistress advised that she believed that responsibility for policing in Doddington was reverting back to March. The Chair had taken this up with the authorities and was advised that discussions were ongoing at this time and no final decision had been made.
- d. The Clerk advised the meeting that the Environment Agency, via the police, had warned of a scam that teams of criminals are approaching farmers and land owners within Cambridgeshire offering cash to store waste leaving owners with large quantities of potential unsafe waste. Posters had been issued warning of the risk.
- e. It was reported that suspicious activity was taking place in Ancaster Way which may involve the use of drugs. Members agreed that the matter be reported to the police.

### **5. Highway Issues:-**

- a. It was reported that the no parking signs on the grass verge opposite the clock tower had been knocked over and/or removed. It was agreed that a quotation be obtained to erect a low post and chain fence along the edge of the verge.
- b. It was reported that a drain cover is proud of the gutter surface so that when water is heading for the drain it has no way of flowing away and remains on the road. The area is between the One Stop shop and the Clock Tower.
- c. A large pot hole has appeared at the junction of Hospital Road and Benwick Road.
- d. A fence near a children's play area in Walden Close/Eastmoor Lane is in a bad condition.

- e. A road track off Turf End Lane had been blocked by concrete blocks. Cllr Connor was asked to look into this.
- f. It was reported that some paving slabs outside of the One Stop shop were loose and rocking.
- g. CCC had reissued its proposed scheme for a Community Gritting Scheme. The Clerk outlined what was now expected:
  - i. The PC must firstly agree with CCC what footways should be covered by the scheme,
  - ii The PC to seek local volunteers who need to complete an application form and attend a training course,
  - iii The CCC will advise the PC when gritting is required and the PC pass the alert to the volunteers who need to complete the work within 24 hours,
  - iv Volunteers need to complete a record of the gritting which is retained by the PC.

After a general discussion, members considered that the proposed scheme was too complicated, put an onus on the PC and required volunteers to keep administrative records which made it unlikely that any volunteers will come forward. Accordingly the PC did not support the scheme.

## **6. Street Lighting:-**

- i. The Clerk had circulated a briefing note to members This reported that the structural survey, received from Skanska, showed some very significant variations to the survey undertaken by Balfour Beatty. Skanska were asked to inspect a sample of 40 cat 2 lights taken from seven parishes. They were unable to locate 6 street lights but of the 34 that were inspected, 22 were in need of replacement. The findings on the remaining 12 were relatively minor such as broken door or defective lock, number missing or defective, and components loose on backboard. There was no suggestion that these 12 columns needed replacing but would just require minor repairs.
- ii. Members were advised that a planned meeting with other Parish Councils was due to take place on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Cllr Simon King from FDC and a representative from Skanska had also agreed to attend that meeting.
- iii. The estimated cost of replacing all 47 category 2 lights is £56,400 but Fenland DC has offered to provide £7,102 towards this cost. The net balance of £49,298 will have to be met by the Parish Council. Whilst there may still be an opportunity to negotiate an improved settlement with FDC, members will now need to make financial provision within its precept.
- iv. The Clerk had prepared a number of financial options that were based on the current offer from FDC and the need to replace all 47 cat 2 lights as identified by Balfour Beatty.
- v. It was estimated that the Council will have sufficient reserves at the end of the current financial year to finance the replacement of 12 columns. In addition when FDC release the £7,102 this will pay for the replacement of 6 columns. This leaves the Council with the task of replacing 29 category 2 columns at a cost of £34,800.
- vi. After a general discussion members agreed to increase the 2016/2017 precept by £18,000 which will allow for an additional 15 street lights to be replaced. The phasing of costs will permit negotiations with FDC to continue and could give the Parish Council time to ask Skanska to survey all of its lights which may show that a number of category 2 lights, as defined by Balfour Beatty, do not need to be replaced at this time.

## **7. Precept 2016/2017:-**

The Clerk had circulated a spreadsheet that showed a budget based on holding the basic precept at £27,500 i.e. the same as the current years precept. The budget took account of the items discussed at last month's Parish Council meeting including making a number of minor increases to a number of votes in order to provide some greater flexibility in the reserves. The Clerk cautioned that the Council should maintain a minimum balance in its

reserves of £30,000 but taking these factors into account, there would be sufficient reserves available for the Council to release £14,400 from its current reserves to finance the replacement of 12 street light columns.

Following a general discussion, members confirmed the budget as prepared by the Clerk and unanimously resolved to issue a precept request to FDC of £45,500 made up of the base figure of £27,500 plus £18,000 to cover the replacement of 15 additional street lights as agreed in item 6 above.

#### **8. School Crossing Patrol:-**

a. The chair advised the meeting that she, along with Cllr Connor and the Clerk, had attended a very useful meeting with the headmistress of the school on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at which concerns were discussed on the possible loss of funding for the school crossing arrangements. The meeting also discussed issues with car parking in roads near the school.

b. Since the meeting with the school, CCC had reviewed their proposal to cease funding of school crossing patrols throughout Cambridgeshire and were continuing to fully fund the service.

#### **9. Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council Matters:-**

a. Cllr Connor provided an update on various matters to the meeting:

i. Partially built units Newgate Street: As the reply date under the Section 215 notice had now expired, FDC were considering its options to move this matter forward.

ii. CCC, as part of their ongoing spending review, are considering making an annual charge on householders of £40 pa to empty their brown bins. Members considered this to be a retrograde step as it would lead to an increase in fly tipping.

b. The Clerk reported that FDC, in conjunction with the Citizen newspaper, was launching the "Pride in Fenland" awards scheme again. Nominations for any of the four categories need to be made by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Members suggested a number of names. It was agreed that information on the scheme should be circulated to all members to enable them to make personal nominations, or if they wished a nomination to be submitted by the Parish Council then details should be returned to the Clerk for him to collate replies.

c. The Clerk reported that FDC had launched a feedback form on their Draft Business Plan and Draft Budget Consultation exercise and he had circulated information to members.

#### **10. Planning:-**

##### **a. New Planning Applications:**

**i. F/YR15/1097/F Erection of a first floor extension to existing dwelling. 31 Wimblington Road Doddington**

Cllr I Gowler declared an interest. No objection raised

**ii. F/YR15/1113/F Erection of a single storey extension to rear of existing dwelling. 5 High Street Doddington**

No objection raised

**iii. F/YR15/1116/F Erection of a 2 storey 4 bed dwelling with detached double garage. Plot 8 site of 65 Newgate Street Doddington**

No objection raised to the existing layout but suggested that a proviso be issued that there should be a restriction on any future loft conversion to prevent any overlooking of neighbours.

**iv. F/YR16/0006/F Erection of a 2 storey side extension, detached garage and shed/workshop and siting of a temporary mobile home during works to existing dwelling involving demolition of existing outbuildings in a conservation area. 4 Benwick Road Doddington**

Cllr I Gowler declared an interest. No objection in principle to an application for an extension but the proposed design is not in keeping with the existing street scene

#### **11. Doddington Village Action Plan:-**

The Chair advised the meeting that the first draft report had been prepared and was currently being refined. The Action Group were hoping to make a power point presentation to the Parish Council, possibly in March 2016 with the launch being made at the Annual Assembly.

#### **12. Neighbourhood Plan:-**

The Chair advised the Council that the next meeting of the working party is planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 and that a representative from Cambridgeshire ACRE had been invited to attend.

#### **13. Benwick Road Cemetery:-**

The Parish Council subcommittee met to consider the next phase of the development. An outline site plan had been prepared which showed an initial location of footpaths and a roadway. The Council confirmed their support for this first phase and agreed that the subcommittee can proceed with the production of more detailed plans.

#### **14. Abbey Recreation Ground:-**

- a. The Clerk reported that no feedback had been received from Benwick AFC on the Council's suggested alterations to the annual licence. Members agreed that if no agreement was reached with the club then the Council reluctantly considered giving three months notice to terminate the arrangements.
- b. Comments were made that there are quantities of rubbish in the car park and authorised the Clerk to arrange for this to be cleared.

#### **15. Website:-**

The meeting agreed that future Parish Council meetings have the facility to hold a 15 minute "open forum" at the start of each meeting in which residents were able to raise points of interest with the Council. The Chair undertook to ensure that the website was noted accordingly.

#### **16. Financial Matters:**

##### **a. Receipts and Payments.**

The following receipts and payments were presented and accepted as follows:-

Receipts:-	£	Payments:-	£
Rent Benwick Ath FC	140.00	St Mary's PCC – room hire	60.00
		Clerk's Salary	424.32
		Petty cash reimbursement to Clerk	230.60
		HMRC – Income tax on clerks salary	106.08
	<u>£140.00</u>		<u>£821.00</u>

#### **17. Correspondence:**

- a. The Clerk advised that Tridos Renewables were offering grants to village halls and community centres to improve their efficiency rating and that he had circulated details to the contacts responsible for these facilities within the village.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.