

Minutes of the Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Thursday 17 January 2008

Present
Action

Councillors V Dawson (Chair), A Crump, J Caldicott, R Harper, A Rea and J Silver;
Mrs C Limm (Clerk).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Griffin.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared on this occasion.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December were agreed.

4. Clerk's report

i. The Clerk reported on the December Parish Council forum meeting. District Council representatives had sought parish councils' views on how relations between the district and parishes could be improved and had promised further discussions about this. The tone of the meeting had been more constructive than previously.

ii. As agreed at the previous Council meeting, the Clerk had asked the headteacher of the village school, Mrs Payne, if the school children would like to design a logo for the Parish Council to use on its stationery. Mrs Payne had said that the school would be pleased to be involved. The Clerk had sent her further details about this.

5. Planning

i. Cllr Caldicott reported on the planning meeting held on 8 January 2008. The Minutes had been circulated.

ii. The Planning Committee had considered the Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by the District Council and recommended that the Parish Council should write to the head of planning, David Hammond, expressing a number of concerns about this document. A draft letter had been circulated. The Council agreed with the points made by the Planning Committee about the handling of the appraisal and the lack of consultation. The poor communication by the District Council about the Conservation Area appraisal was of particular concern given its relevance to the work that the Parish Council had been doing on the Village Design Statement. A clear explanation was needed of the proposed handling of the appraisal and the process and timetable for consultation. The Clerk was asked to send the proposed letter to Mr Hammond and to seek a response on these points.

Clerk

6. Parish Plan

The Clerk had circulated an assessment of progress on the Parish Plan action points. The Council had agreed that it would be timely to review the Plan and decide whether a revised plan and/or a revised action plan should be prepared. One issue to consider was whether there were important things that were not included in the Plan which should now be identified for action. It was agreed that the Planning Committee should review the Plan in the first instance and report back to the Council with its recommendations.

Planning C.

7. Police Priorities

The Council considered the consultation document issued by West Mercia Police Authority on its priorities for 2008/09. The Council considered these to be unobjectionable and decided not to offer any comments on this occasion.

8. Finance

- i. The Council's bank reconciliation for end December 2007 was circulated by the Clerk and noted by the Council.
- ii. The Council discussed the request for a grant from Bromsgrove CAB and agreed to pay a grant of £60 in 2008/09.
- iii. Payments for January as set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed by the Council.

9. Correspondence

The Clerk circulated a list of items received for information.

10. Councillors Items

Flooding in Church Road and Fockbury Road was raised as a matter of concern, The road surface in Woodland Road had deteriorated further – some potholes had been filled but the filling had already come out. There was also a damaged manhole near 'The Millstone'. The Clerk was asked to report these problems again to County Highways. A possible drainage survey as proposed in the Parish Plan should also be considered.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Minutes of the Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Thursday 21st February 2008

Present

Councillors V Dawson (Chair), A Crump, J Caldicott, L Griffin and J Silver
Mrs C Limm (Clerk).

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared on this occasion.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2008 were agreed.

4. Clerk's report

i. The Clerk reported that she had consulted the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which had confirmed the advice from NALC that borrowing by parish councils was permitted only for capital purposes and that borrowing to lend was not classified as capital spending. The Clerk was therefore asked to write to the Village Hall Committee to explain that it was not an option for the Council to take out a loan to lend to the Committee for the village hall refurbishment project.

ii. Community First had confirmed that some DEFRA funding was still available for Parish Plans. The Clerk was asked to prepare an application for funding of the Council's review of its Parish Plan in consultation with the planning committee. The importance of having a lead councillor was discussed and Cllr Griffin volunteered to lead the review. This was agreed by the Council.

5. Planning

i. Cllr Caldicott reported on the planning meeting held on 7th February. The Minutes had been circulated.

ii. The Clerk had circulated papers on the revised West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy for the Council's consideration. Cllr Harper had planned to attend a consultation meeting on this topic and it was agreed to defer discussion of this item so that he could take part.

iii. Cllr Silver asked if there had been any developments concerning the new wall and reinforced perimeter at the Crossroads Garage, Kidderminster Road. She also asked if a planning application had been received for hardstanding in the field beyond the last house in Warbage Lane. The Clerk said that she had contacted planning enforcement about Crossroads Garage. The District Council and County Council were jointly considering action but there had been no further developments. She would investigate the other issue raised.

6. Appointment of a representative to the Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Silver said that in view of other commitments she was unable to continue as the Council's representative on the Committee. The Council accepted her resignation from this role. There were no volunteers to take on the role, and it was agreed to discuss this again at the next meeting. In the meantime the Clerk would discuss liaison arrangements with the Management Committee secretary.

7. Consultation on secondary legislation on the conduct of LA members

The proposals contained in the consultation document circulated by the Department for Communities and Local Government were noted. The Council had no comments.

8. To consider drainage and roads maintenance problems in Dodford

Cllr Griffin and the Clerk had met the County Liaison Engineer in December to discuss the poor state of the roads and had walked round Dodford to show him the main problems. A written response on the items raised had been promised but had not been received despite reminders from the Clerk. Although some repairs had been done these were already failing and in the meantime a number of areas had deteriorated. The roadside was falling away in Woodland Road and Victoria Road, Priory Road had deteriorated further, and there were a number of drainage problems – the drain at the end of Cllr Crump's driveway was in danger of collapsing. Cllr Griffin said that the District Council seemed to have no maps of the local drainage system.

The Clerk said that County Councillor Sheila Blagg had recently consulted her about local flooding problems identified in a flooding survey undertaken by the County Council. It was agreed to seek Cllr Blagg's help in getting some response from the County to the repair problems in Dodford. The Clerk should also continue to press County Highways for a response. The Council noted that it was part of the lengthsman's role to keep drains and gullies clear and it was agreed that the employment of a lengthsman should be considered again by the Council at a future meeting.

9. Finance

- i. The reappointment of the Council's internal auditor, Mrs Diane Malley, for 2008/09 was agreed.
- ii. Payment of a grant of £500 towards maintenance of the village hall was agreed by the Council. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the PCC to remind them to apply for a grant for the parish magazine and upkeep of the Churchyard.
- iii. The terms of the new national pay agreement for Clerks were noted by the Council. The pay increase was backdated to April 2007.
- iv. Payments for February as set out in the schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed.

10. Correspondence

There were no significant items to report.

11. Councillors items for future agenda

No items were raised for the next agenda.

12. Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held on the same evening as the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (15th May) starting at 7.00 pm and that the arrangements should be the same as in previous years.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Minutes of the Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Thursday 20th March 2008

Present

Councillors J Caldicott, A Rea, and J Silver
Mrs C Limm (Clerk).

In Cllr Dawson's absence Cllr Caldicott was elected Chairman for the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Dawson, Crump, Griffin and Harper.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared on this occasion.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st February 2008 were agreed.

4. Clerk's report

- i. The Clerk said that she had submitted an application to Community First for a DEFRA grant to help fund the cost of a review of the Parish Plan. No response had been received as yet.
- ii. The Village Hall Management Committee had written to inform the Council's of its revised plans for staged improvements to the village hall.
- iii. Bromsgrove District Council had passed on a suggestion that the Council's web pages should contain a link to the First School website. The Clerk suggested that it would be timely for the Council to review the content of its web pages since it had been several years since this had been done. It was agreed that Cllr Crump should be asked to take this on.

5. Planning

- i. Cllr Caldicott reported on the planning meeting held on 28th February. The Minutes had been circulated.
- ii. A planning meeting had provisionally been arranged for the following Thursday to consider the planning applications for the Dodford Inn. However, since the applicants were proposing to hold a public meeting on 24th April, the Clerk was asked to contact the lead planning officer to ask if it would be possible to extend the deadline for the Council's comments until after this date.

6. Appointment of a representative to the Village Hall Management Committee

Since several Councillors were absent it was agreed to defer this item.

7. Council's Annual Report

It was agreed that the distribution of the Annual Report should be on the same basis as previous years – with a copy posted to every household.

8. Parish Plan

This item was deferred until the next Council meeting.

9. Drainage and roads maintenance problems

The Clerk had contacted County Councillor Sheila Blagg about the poor response from the Highways service to issues raised by the Council. Cllr Blagg had raised this with the relevant cabinet member and would let the Council know the outcome.

10. Finance

- i. The Clerk reported that the Council's financial position at the end of 2007/08 was broadly in line with the budget, but that its reserves were slightly higher than anticipated at around £7,700. This had been achieved because it had not been necessary to make a transfer from the Council's reserves to meet spending needs. The final out-turn would be reported at the next meeting.
- ii. Grants of £125 and £375 respectively were agreed for the Parish Magazine and Churchyard, in line with the sums provided in the Council's budget.
- iii. In view of the Chairman's absence the review of the Clerk's salary for 2008/09 was deferred.
- iv. Payments for March as set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed by the Council.

11. Correspondence

There were no significant items to report.

12. Councillors items for future agenda

No items were raised for the next agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Minutes of the Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Thursday 17th April 2008

Present

Councillors R Harper (Chair), V Dawson, A Crump, L Griffin and A Rea
Mrs C Limm (Clerk).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Caldicott and Silver.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Rea declared a prejudicial interest in discussions concerning the Dodford Inn.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 March were agreed.

4. Clerk's report

- i. The Clerk said that a draft of the Council's Annual Report would be circulated for comment before the next meeting.
- ii. CALC had sent information about a further series of training sessions which repeated those offered last autumn. The Council had already paid for the four part package so Councillors were asked to let her know if they would like to attend any of the sessions. The dates were 11th June (Powers and Duties), 25th June (Meetings and Management), 16th July (Precepting and Partnerships), and 23rd July (Roles and Responsibilities). All started at 7.00 pm at County Hall.

Planning

- i. A meeting had been held on 27th March to consider the applications received in relation to the Dodford Inn. A number of residents, including members of the 'Save the Dodford' campaign, had attended to give the Council their views. The applicants were holding an open meeting on 24th April so the Clerk had contacted the planning officer handling the applications to ask if the Council's comments could be submitted after this meeting. Since the applications were being considered by the Planning Committee on 19th May the planning officer had agreed to this provided that the Parish Council's comments were submitted as soon after the 24th April as possible.
- ii. The Council considered a letter from Bromsgrove District Council about the limited resources currently available for planning enforcement and agreed with the planning committee that this raised serious concerns about the rule of law. The Clerk was asked to write to Kevin Dicks to register the Council's concerns and to copy the letter to Julie Kirkbride. Cllr Harper suggested that the Council should consider seeking advice from a planning consultant about enforcement issues to ensure that the parish council made its points about specific issues as effectively as possible. It was agreed to put this on the next agenda.

6. Parish Plan Review

i. The terms of reference circulated by the Clerk were agreed. Cllr Griffin had agreed to chair the Steering Committee and Cllr Rea volunteered to become a member. Volunteers were needed from the parish to join the Committee. The Steering Group was asked to report back to the Council in July with proposals for consultation. The Clerk said that Community First had awarded the Council a grant to help fund the review.

ii. The Clerk said that at the recent Parish Councils Forum meeting with the District Council BDC had indicated that they were looking at ways of using Parish Plans and design statements as part of the planning framework. However it was clear that Parish Plans would not be adopted retrospectively so it would be important to ensure that the revised document was self contained and comprehensive. The Clerk was asked to attend the Steering Group, at least initially, and to ensure that the revised document was in step with the wider context.

7. Roads

i. The Clerk said that the Highways Liaison Engineer for the parish area was no longer in post. A letter had been received indicating that our maintenance items would be investigated and some repairs had now been done, However the Council felt that cosmetic work was a waste of resources and that some areas, Priory Road, Victoria Road, and Woodland Road needed to be resurfaced. The Clerk was asked to write again to the head of the Highways Service about liaison arrangements and priorities.

ii. The Council discussed the tasks that could be undertaken by a Lengthsman and agreed that it would be beneficial to joint the scheme. The Clerk was authorised to sign up to the scheme on behalf of the Council and to take this forward.

8. Parish Council stationery

The Council considered that the designs for a logo for Council stationery produced by the First School children were excellent. A choice would be made after the meeting.

9. Village Hall Management Committee

It was agreed that Cllr Griffin should be asked to liaise with the Village Hall Committee on behalf of the Council and to ensure that relevant information was exchanged between the two bodies.

10. CALC subscription

Renewal of the Council's subscription to CALC for 2008/09 was agreed.

11. Finance

i. The Clerk circulated a note on the Council's year-end financial position for 2007/08. The Council had spent about £600 less than anticipated, largely due to the fact that the costs of the 2007 election were less than expected. The Council had ended the year

without the need to transfer money from its reserves and with the same level of reserves (around £7,700) as at the start of the year.

ii. The Clerk's salary for 2008/09 was noted and the Council agreed to contribute to the Clerk's membership subscription for the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks).

iii. Payments for April as set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed by the Council.

12. Correspondence

A note of items received was circulated.

13. Councillors information items/ items for future agenda

No items were raised for the next agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Thursday 15th May 2008

Present

Councillors R Harper (Chair), J Caldicott, A Crump, V Dawson, L Griffin A Rea and J Silver
Mrs C Limm (Clerk).

1. Election of Chairman of the Council and Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Dawson indicated that he would not be a candidate as Chairman of the Council for the current year. He proposed Cllr Harper as Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Caldicott and agreed unanimously. Cllr Harper signed the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office.

2. Election of Vice Chairman of the Council and Vice Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Rea was proposed as Vice Chairman by Cllr Caldicott, seconded by Cllr Griffin and was elected unanimously. Cllr Rea signed the Vice Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.

3. Apologies

There were no apologies on this occasion.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the need to keep their register of interests up to date. The Clerk was asked to provide Councillors with a copy of their completed register of interests forms so that they could check the accuracy of the information.

5. Membership of Committees and Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC) Bromsgrove Area Committee

Membership of the Planning Committee was agreed as follows:

Cllr Caldicott (Chair)
Cllr Dawson
Cllr Harper
Cllr Griffin
Cllr Rea

The Chairman and Vice Chairman were nominated to represent the Council at CALC and Parish Council forum meetings.

6. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17 April

The Minutes of the meeting on 17th April were agreed.

7. Planning

- i. Cllr Caldicott reported on planning meetings held on 17th April and 25th April (the Minutes had been circulated). He mentioned concerns about the construction of the new stable in Woodland Road and said that the Planning Committee would be monitoring this.
- ii. The Council noted the response received from Kevin Dicks about planning enforcement. It was agreed that the Planning Committee should give further consideration to whether the Council should obtain some professional advice on enforcement issues.
- iii. The installation of a mobile home at Primrose Cottage, Priory Road had been raised with Cllr Caldicott. The Planning Committee would follow this up.

8. Annual Report

The Council's draft Annual Report had been circulated by the Clerk. The report was approved by the Council and the Clerk was asked to arrange printing and posting to all households in the parish.

9. Lengthsman Scheme

Cllr Harper reported that he and Councillor Dawson, with the Clerk, had interviewed one potential lengthsman and would be seeing another candidate the following week. An important issue to be clarified was the insurance position.. The Clerk explained the financial arrangements - £2,060 was available for the current year from Worcestershire County Council to fund the work. This meant that the Council could employ someone for about 4 hours a week. It was agreed that a lengthsman should be appointed as soon as possible and decisions on the appointment and contractual arrangements were therefore delegated to Cllr Harper, Dawson and the Clerk.

10. Council stationery

The logo for the Council's new stationery had been selected at the end of the last Council meeting and this choice was endorsed. The Council agreed to donate £200 to Dodford First School for new library books and to give £15 book token to the child who had drawn the selected logo. The Clerk was asked to make arrangements for members of the Council to present these at a school assembly.

11. Finance:

- i. The Council considered the risk assessment (Risk Review Log) and paper on the Council's internal financial controls and internal audit arrangements which had been circulated by the Clerk. Cllr Crump had taken on the role of overseeing this aspect of the Council's business and he was therefore asked to meet the Clerk to review the previous year's bank reconciliations and to ensure that the internal financial controls set out in the paper were in place.

Subject to this the Council agreed the risk assessment and was satisfied about the adequacy of its internal financial controls.

- ii. The Council had agreed a three year contract with its insurers (Allianz plc) at a fixed price and the payment of the renewal premium was therefore endorsed by the Council. The Clerk was asked to consider any changes required to the policy in the light of the lengthsman appointment.
- iii. Payments for May as set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed.

12. Correspondence

A note of items received was circulated.

13. Councillors information items/ items for future agenda

It was agreed that a report on the review of the parish plan should be on every Council agenda.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 17th July 2008 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs R Harper, L Griffin, A Crump, V Dawson, A Rea and J Silver, and C Limm, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Caldicott.

2. Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 19 June 2008

The Minutes were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports

- Cllrs Dawson and Griffin had attended an assembly at Dodford First School and made a presentation to the school and to the pupil who designed the new logo for the Council. They had promised a letter of thanks to the pupil on the new headed note paper when this had been produced.
- Parish Plan review- the District Council was consulting on proposals to adopt parish plans as a local information source so it was important to take account of this new process. However, the group could continue with the groundwork and further volunteers were still needed.
- The Clerk had attended a second seminar organised by the District Council to discuss relationships between the District and parishes. A draft concordat setting out how the two tiers of Government would work together was promised for September. In relation to planning, the District was looking at the scope to give parish councils a right to speak at District planning meetings on applications from their parish that were being considered by the Planning Committee. At the Parish Councils forum meeting a number of parish councils had raised concern about the lack of consultation on certificates of lawfulness and the District was looking at this too.

5. Planning

- Cllr Harper reported on the planning meetings held on 19th June and 3rd July. The minutes had been circulated.
- It was agreed that the Clerk should send details of the planning enforcement issues identified at the planning meeting on 3 July to Stuart Vick, Planning Consultant with a view to meeting him in September.
- The Clerk was asked to write to ask the landlord of the Park Gate Inn to request the removal of the temporary signs erected at the roadside to advertise the Inn.
- The Clerk reported that Mike Walton was now back in post as County Highways liaison engineer.

6. Community Transport

It was agreed that the Council had no hard information on which to respond and it would not be practicable to collect this in the timescale available for comment. However, the Clerk was asked to raise the issue in the parish magazine and ask for feedback from residents about transport problems. This would provide a source of

information for the future. Cllr Crump had personal experience on this issue and it was suggested that he should submit a personal view to the District Council.

7. Parish Council Website

Cllr Crump had been asked to consider the Council's website and any improvements that could be made. He said that it was important to decide whether the website covered just the parish council or the parish as a whole and whether the objective was to give basic information or to be more topical. Information about current events and village activities would make the website more relevant but someone would need to keep this information up to date. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda for Council meetings and councillors were asked to think about how the website could be improved. There were good examples of parish websites that could be viewed for ideas. Cllr Crump was asked to make some enquiries about potential costs of a commercially operated website.

8. Finance

- The Clerk had circulated a note of expenditure to date against the agreed budget. There were no surprises. The position was noted by the Council.
- The end of June bank reconciliation was noted.
- Payments for July set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed.

9. Correspondence

A note of the main items received was circulated for information. A consultation document from the District Council on Local Neighbourhood Partnerships would be included on the next agenda.

10. Councillors Items

Councillor Dawson raised the problems still affecting Priory Road. Following the resurfacing of the road, additional water was collecting near Rose Lane and on the bend near the village hall. The uneven footpath and broken kerbs were also now more prominent. The Clerk was asked to write to County Highways about these problems.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 18th September 2008 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs R Harper, J Caldicott, A Crump, V Dawson, A Rea and J Silver, and C Limm, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Griffin.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Rea declared a prejudicial interest in any discussions about the Children's Holiday Farm.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 17 July 2008

The Minutes were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports

The Clerk reported on the following items:

1. A letter had been sent to Mike Walton, County Highways, about the footpaths and flooding problems in Priory Road, but no response had been received to date. However, County Councillor Sheila Blagg had informed the Clerk that she had visited the area with Mr Walton to inspect the problems.
2. The lengthsman had reported that the ditches in Bungay Lake Lane were not deep enough and needed to be dug out. The Clerk would report to WCC, He had suggested putting weed killer on the footpath in Priory Road and this was agreed by the Council.
3. At the CALC area meeting in early September Hugh Bennett, deputy Chief Executive at BDC, had talked about the District's proposals for adopting parish plans and had indicated that it should be possible to include existing plans in the process. An adopted plan would be an information source for the Local Strategic Partnership and the LSP would be able to push for appropriate action. Village Design Statements raised other issues and, if a parish wanted one adopted as formal planning guidance, then the statement would need to go through the formal process and 'all the hoops'. The District Council was unlikely to have the resources to process design statements much before 2011.
4. Sheila Blagg had circulated a note to local clerks about a potential grant available for children's projects. A bid had been put forward by the Children's Holiday Farm and this was endorsed by the Council. It was noted that the Holiday Farm did not receive a grant from the Council and it was agreed that this should be considered when the budget for 2009/10 was set.

5. Planning

Cllr Caldicott report on planning meetings held on 21st August and 11th September. A meeting with a planning consultant to discuss enforcement had been arranged for 26th September.

6. Parish Plan review

Cllr Griffin had decided to resign as Chairman of the review group. Cllr Rea volunteered to take on this role and this was agreed by the Council. He said that he would review membership and progress but would need support to do the work. It was agreed that the Clerk should be involved and that she could be paid for any additional hours necessary.

7. Council's website

The Council had agreed that it should keep the website under review. Cllr Crump said that the costs of a managed website could be substantial – ranging from £800 to £6,000 pa. It would be possible to have a site more cheaply if the Council ran it themselves – but it would need to be kept up to date. The Clerk was asked to explore how other Councils operated their websites – including Gurnard on the Isle of Wight.

8. Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

The Clerk had circulated Bromsgrove District Council's proposals for LNPs and a draft response to the questions posed in the consultation document. The Chairman said that the pragmatic view was that the Council should be involved since the LNPs could have some influence and a small amount of money to spend. However, he had concerns about the constitutional position and, in particular, that the LNPs could undermine the role of parish councils. Other members of the Council agreed and the general view was that the proposals were vague about important issues, for example the extent to which members of the LNP could commit their organisation to action. The role of the parish council in identifying issues of importance to local residents was not acknowledged whereas a role was envisaged for the (unelected) PACT groups and other local representatives. The Council also noted that the outcomes of the first two LNP pilots had not been explained.

The Clerk was asked to amend the draft response to reflect these comments.

9. Benches

At its last meeting the Council had been asked to consider having the benches outside the village hall and at the end of Priory Road repainted. This was agreed in principle and the Clerk was asked to explore whether the lengthsman could do this.

10. Finance

- The Clerk said that the external auditor had closed the 2007/08 Accounts and an unqualified audit opinion had been given.

- An update of expenditure against the budget would be provided at the next meeting and the Council could begin to give some thought to items for the 2009/10 budget.
- Payments for September set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were approved for payment.

11. Correspondence received

A note of correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated by the Clerk. The Council discussed a letter from a resident asking if any funding was available locally to assist her daughter with the costs of equipment for a training course. The Clerk was asked to establish whether the Council could offer support to an individual for this purpose. The general issue of support for young people in the parish should be considered as part of the parish plan review.

12. Councillors Items

Councillor Harper said that he had written to the leader of WCC about the impact of the motorway network on the parish. He had copied this to Julie Kirkbride and had received a response from her indicating that she might be able to broker a meeting with the Highways Agency.

Cllr Crump raised an issue about a tree planted in the grass triangle near the Holiday Farm. This had been damaged by a visiting vehicle. The Council noted that this piece of land belonged to WCC Highways and queries about planting there should be referred to them .

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed.....Chairman

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 16th October 2008 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs R Harper, J Caldicott, A Crump, L Griffin, A Rea and J Silver, and C Limm, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Dawson.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Rea declared a prejudicial interest in any discussions about the Dodford Inn.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 18 September 2008

The Minutes were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports

The Clerk reported on the following items:

- i. The lengthsman had put down weed killer on the footpath on Priory Road and had painted two benches (one at the end of Priory Road and one by the village hall).
- ii. A design for Parish Council stationery had been produced by Bromsgrove Printing Company and this was approved by the Council.
- iii. There had been discussion at the previous meeting about whether the Council could provide financial support to individual students from the parish to enable them to undertake education or training. The Clerk confirmed that the Council could provide support under S137 for the benefit of all or some parishioners but that this could not be used to provide support for an individual. However the Council could, if it wished, develop a general scheme to help young people in the parish with education or training.
- iv. County Highways had written to notify the Council that a new gully was being installed in the dip near Rose Lane to alleviate the flooding problem there and that notices had been served on Severn Trent to make good their poor workmanship on the kerb and footpath in Priory Road. Mike Walton was also 'seeking to get this footway included on next year's footway reconstruction programme'.

5. Planning

- i. Members of the Planning Committee had held a very useful meeting with a planning

a planning consultant on 26th September to discuss enforcement. The Clerk circulated a note of the meeting. It was agreed that the Planning Committee would consider how to handle enforcement issues in the light of the advice and information received.

- ii. The Council noted the new legislation relating to Permitted Developments which was intended to reduce the number of planning applications made to planning authorities. The changes could however make it harder to identify whether a planning application was necessary in a particular case.
- iii. The Council also noted BDC's proposals to inform Parish Councils about applications for Certificates of Lawfulness and to give Parish Councils a right to speak at District planning meetings.
- iv. The Council asked the Clerk to respond to the planning appeal concerning the Dodford Inn by reiterating its opposition to the change of use of the Inn to a single dwelling house.

6. Parish Plan review

Cllr Rea said that he was recruiting additional members of the review team and would develop some ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Village Design Statement

At recent meetings with Parish Councils BDC had made clear that it had insufficient resources at present to take Parish Council documents through the process of formal adoption as planning guidance. However, the District had proposed a process for recognising parish plans as a local information source. The Clerk suggested that the Council should aim to have its revised parish plan adopted in this way. However, this would not carry any weight in the planning process and the Parish Council should therefore make clear to the District Council that its aim was to have the Design Statement adopted as formal planning guidance in due course. When resources permitted the PC would like BDC's advice and support to achieve this. In the meantime the Parish Council could seek its planning consultant's advice to tighten up the wording of the Design Statement and then actively use and promote the document. The Parish Council endorsed this approach.

8. Christmas newsletter

The production of a Christmas newsletter for inclusion with the December Parish Magazine was agreed. The Clerk was asked to produce a draft for consideration at the next meeting.

9. Finance

- i. A note of income and expenditure to date was circulated by the Clerk and noted by the Council. The Clerk said that a draft budget for 2009/10 would be on the agenda for the next meeting. It was suggested that this should include provision for grants to the school and the Children's Holiday Farm.
- ii. The bank reconciliation for end September was noted. Cllr Crump had been sent copies of the accounts to date and bank statements.

- iii. The Clerk circulated a list of accounts for payment and these were approved.

10. Correspondence received

A note of correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated. There were several consultation documents for the next agenda.

WCC had notified the Council of its intention to make a Public Path Order diverting footpaths and bridleways at Foxwalks Farm – the Parish Council had been consulted about these diversions.

The Chairman reported on exchanges of correspondence with the Chair of WCC and Julie Kirkbride about noise and light pollution from the motorway. There was a growing awareness nationally about light pollution and the cost of lighting stretches of motorway. Resurfacing with a quieter surface was planned for a stretch of motorway north of the parish and it was the intention that a quieter surface would be used when motorway running through the parish was resurfaced – but as yet there was no planned date for this. It was important to keep up the pressure so that improvements were eventually achieved.

11. Councillors Items

- Cllr Rea raised two planning items – the construction of a garage at Chelwood, Priory Road and whether this had planning permission and the tipping of material in the field in Woodland Road where a stable was under construction. It was suggested that the Environment Agency might be alerted to this since there was a stream nearby.
- Cllr Crump said that a new headteacher had been appointed at Dodford First School and that she was keen to build links with the local community.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 20th November 2008 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs R Harper, J Caldicott, A Crump, V Dawson, L Griffin, A Rea and J Silver,
and C Limm, Clerk

District Councillor Brian Lewis also attended.

1. Apologies for absence

No Councillors were absent.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 16 October 2008

The Minutes were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Planning

- 1) Cllr Caldicott reported on the planning meeting held on 23rd October – the minutes had been circulated. In relation to enforcement the Planning Committee had agreed standard procedures for handling enforcement issues in a systematic way. This included having standard letters to residents to raise issues direct with them. The Chairman said that the planning consultant had pointed out that it was not always necessary to raise issues with the District Council, at least in the first instance. The Parish Council could be proactive and write to residents about specific concerns and to raise awareness.
- 2) The Planning Committee had also discussed the new arrangements introduced by the District Council for electronic consultation with parish councils. The Committee had agreed to consider using a projector to display plans at planning meetings but in the meantime had agreed that the District Council should be asked to reinstate the provision of hard copies of plans to enable parish councils to gear up for the change. It was a matter of concern that the new arrangements had been introduced without consultation and no apparent regard for the impact on parish councils.

5. Parish Plan review

- 1) Cllr Rea had circulated a paper setting out the key aspects that the review needed to cover. He suggested that it was important to consult residents early on in the process to find out what they saw as the key issues. The working group should do this before any rewrite of the plan. The group also needed to update the information on which the plan was based (much of it was ten years old and the previous plan took little

account of demography). The group should produce a realistic action plan which could be reviewed regularly.

- 2) The Council endorsed the approach and key issues outlined in Cllr Rea's paper. It was agreed that the consultation process was crucial. It was suggested that the Clerk should ask Community First for advice on what had been tried successfully elsewhere and BDC for information from the housing needs survey in relation to the parish.

6. Christmas newsletter

The draft Christmas newsletter circulated by the Clerk was agreed. Copies would be distributed in the parish magazine.

7. Consultation documents

1) **Codes of Conduct for LA members and employees.** The Council supported the proposals to make it clear that the Local Authorities Code of Conduct applies to the conduct of members in a non-official capacity and the proposal to apply the ethical framework to parish councils' employees. However, whilst the Code of Conduct is appropriate for administrative and Finance staff it would not be appropriate to apply it to contractors or part-time staff who undertake practical work, the lengthsman for example. The discretion mentioned in paragraph 3.13 for local authorities to decide if and how the employees' code should apply should be available to parish councils in relation to their staff.

2) **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.** The Council noted that there did not appear to be any land identified within the parish for future housing and asked the Clerk to write to support this since the parish did not provide a sustainable location for additional housing.

8. Finance

- 1) Budget for 2009/10 –the Council discussed the draft budget circulated by the Clerk. It was agreed that the budget should include a global figure of £1,500 for grants to parish bodies rather than specific amounts for particular bodies. This would enable the Council to consider how much to offer at a later stage. It was agreed that in principle the Council should help those parish bodies which most needed support. Further information should be sought of parish organisations about this. It was also agreed that, particularly in view of the current economic climate, the Council should hold the precept at the same level (at £8,780) as in 2008/09. The budget was agreed on this basis. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries of the Village Hall Committee about when the Committee expected to start work on the refurbishment of the hall and when it might ask for payment of the grant agreed in principle by the Council.
- 2) The national agreement to award of an interim pay increase for Clerks backdated to April 2008 was noted by the Council.
- 3) Payments for November set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were approved.

9. Correspondence received

A note of the correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated for information.

10. Councillors Items

The Clerk was asked to report potholes in Woodland Road (by the pig farm and outside Malvern View) and in Warbage Lane and a blocked/damaged drain in Woodland Road (by the entrance to 'The Millstone') to County Highways. Cllr Griffin suggested that the Lengthsman should be asked to clear the weeds and leaves from the path in Priory Road.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed.....Chairman

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Thursday 18th December 2008 in Dodford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs R Harper, J Caldicott, A Crump, and V Dawson, and C Limm, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Griffin and Rea.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 20 November 2008

The Minutes were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Planning

- 1) Cllr Caldicott reported on planning meetings held on 20th November and 11th December – the minutes had been circulated. It was noted that the old caravan at Salt Bay Farm had been removed. The Clerk said that she had not yet been able to obtain any information from the Planning Department about the new garage at Chelwood, Priory Road. It was agreed that this issue must be pursued by the Planning Committee.
- 2) The Clerk reported on the discussion at the recent CALC area meeting about the new arrangements introduced by the District Council for electronic consultation with parish councils. CALC was writing on behalf of Councils to ask BDC to provide more support for the new process – including financial support for the purchase of equipment. The Council agreed in principle that a projector should be purchased to enable plans to be projected at planning meetings. This could be kept in the village hall. The Clerk was asked to pursue this in consultation with Cllr Crump.

5. Parish Plan review

The Clerk had contacted Pauline Striplin, a former member of Community First, who had considerable experience of parish and community planning. She was willing to offer a consultancy service to the Council. It was agreed that Mrs Striplin should be invited to a meeting to advise the Council, particularly about consultation with the community. It was also agreed that the Council should pay her travelling expenses in addition to the consultancy fee.

6. Freedom of Information Act

The Council noted the new statutory obligations to publish information about the Council and its activities and agreed to adopt the model publication scheme. The Council also agreed the schedule of information to be made available either by inclusion on the District's website or as a hard copy from the Clerk. The Council agreed that charges for hard copies should be £1 for the first sheet (to cover administration costs) and 10p for each subsequent sheet plus standard postage costs.

7. Consultation Documents

The draft Bromsgrove District Core Strategy had been issued for consultation – there was an open day on 8th January at which the proposals would be presented. The Clerk said that the strategy would be an agenda item for discussion in January.

Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy – the Council agreed the comments suggested in the note circulated by the Clerk and asked her to respond accordingly.

8. Finance

i. The Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee had written to outline the planned timing for the hall restoration work. The work was being split into stages with the first stage being replacement of the boiler. A grant application for half the cost of this work had been made and a decision was expected shortly. The Committee planned to fund the other 50% from its own resources. Grant applications would then be made for stage 2 (refurbishment of rear storage area and roof replacement) with the intention of starting this work in 2009. It was the Committee's intention to ask for the Parish Council's grant as part of this stage. The Clerk was asked to respond asking the Committee to keep the Council informed of progress. The letter should also remind the Committee that borrowing approval for the funds to support the village hall project had lapsed and that the Council would have to reapply for borrowing approval again before the grant could be guaranteed.

ii. In Mr Richardson's absence, consideration of the purchase of Smartwater signs for Dodford was deferred until the next meeting.

iii. Payments for December set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were approved.

9. Correspondence

A note of the correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated for information.

10. Councillors Items

Cllr Crump said that the County Highways gritting routes did not cover the area immediately outside the village school and that in icy conditions the roads and path could be very slippery. He also said that flooding at the bottom of his drive in Woodland Road was causing access problems. The damaged drain at this site had been reported to WCC on more than one occasion but no action had yet been taken.

Cllr Dawson said that the pothole in the left hand bend just after the village hall was now fairly deep and often filled with water.

The Clerk was asked to raise these problems with Highways and also to ask whether Severn Trent had been contacted about repairs to the footpath in Priory Road.

11. Dates for 2009

Dates for meetings in 2009 set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were agreed. Most meetings were to be held on the third Thursday of the month, but the Council agreed to hold the February meeting on 26th since the Clerk was not available on 19th February. The Annual meeting of the Council and Annual parish meeting would be held on 21st May.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Signed.....Chairman