

# Doddinghurst Parish Council

## ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09



### 1. A review of 2008/09

#### 1.1 Good News:

- Allotments expanded to 45 full plots with all being let.
- Childrens Play area soft surfaces replaced and all edging replaced.
- Loans for Priest House and Village Hall refurbishments progressed.
- New web site launched on [www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk](http://www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk).
- 10 Councillors elected at the 2008 local council elections.

#### 1.2 Bad News:

- Brentwood Borough Council cut the discretionary grant for 2009/10 by 10%.
- Economic outlook resulted in Village Hall rebuild being postponed.

Contents: Page Number

1. Cover Page /Good News/ Bad News	1
2. Parish Council Contacts	3
3. Areas of Responsibility	3
4. Chairman's Statement and Report	4
5. Finance Report 2007/08 and Pie Charts	5/6
6. Village Hall Redevelopment	7
7. Committee Reports	7
8. Bus Club	8
9. Recreation Grounds	8
10. Burial Grounds	9
11. Allotments	9
12. Footpaths	9
13. Website	9
14. Support for Village Events	9

## 2,Contact Details

### Councillors

Debbie Dicker (Chairman)	68 Lime Grove	01277 823410
Alison Richards (Vice Chairman)	2 Park Meadow	01277 823465
Graham Bateson	82 Glovers Field, Kelvedon Hatch	01277 374344
Denise Carroll	92 Lime Grove,	XD
Alan Smith	24, Peartree Lane	XD
Colin Enderby	Viroflay, Rectory Chase	01277 821927
Alan Farrow	38 All Saints Close	01277 821058
Julia Le Page	Sans Souci, Doddinghurst Rd.,	01277 822867
Amanda McGregor	12 Plovers Mead, Wyatts Green	01277 822228
Gerry Smith	25 Park Meadow	XD

### Officers

Roger Blake (Clerk & RFO)	Parish Office (adjacent Village Hall)	01277 824245
Deborah Tonkiss (Deputy Clerk)	Church Lane, CM15 0NJ Email: <a href="mailto:clerk@doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk">clerk@doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk</a>	

3. Areas of responsibility: In addition to the Parish Council meetings, the following councillors

have these additional responsibilities (2009 onwards):

Debbie Dicker	Planning (Chairman), Allotments (Chairman), Finance (Chairman), Cheque Signatory, Borough Planning Committee. , BBPCA
Alison Richards	General Purpose, Finance, NHS issues
Graham Bateson	Planning, General Purpose, Allotment, Finance, Cheque Signatory
Denise Carroll	Planning, Police, Village Correspondent.
Alan Smith	Planning, Village Hall (rep for Parish Council)
Colin Enderby	Planning, Bus Club (Chairman), West Essex Forum, Risk Management, Transport.
Alan Farrow	General Purpose (Chairman), Cheque Signatory. Finance, Footpaths.
Julia Le Page	General Purpose, Allotment, Village Planter
Gerry Smith	General Purpose, Finance, Cheque Signatory, Youth Development, Highways, Transport, West Essex Forum

#### 4. Chairman's Statement and Report

I am writing to inform you of the work carried out during the last year, together with our future plans for the village that we hope to complete during 2009/2010.

All the work has now been completed on the children's playground and we hope there will be no more vandalism, e.g. fires, broken steps etc. We know how much the younger children enjoy their playground. The football net that was requested by some young people and very much enjoyed by all, was damaged and was unusable. The football club who installed the kicking goal have repaired it and put it up again. The last planting for the nature trail will soon take place. The Council has once again discussed the area outside the shops, but with the financial constraints on us all we have decided it would be too expensive to go forward with our plans for this area – the snowballing incident and Church Lane damage has been investigated and arrests made.

The Council still carries out its normal work; litter clearing, grass cutting, lighting along the scout path, safety checks on the playground and all other items in the village that we are responsible for. The increase in car parking on our grass verges is upsetting, there really is no need for this as most people have paved their house fronts and could easily use them for parking. If we all care about our village, then we would keep our grass verges in good order. In addition, there are some places where parking on the road creates unnecessary hazards. It would not take much effort to park safely without obstructing the pavements or limiting visibility.

As you may be aware we now have 30 mph speed limits across the village and there are volunteer residents who carry out speed checks along our roads. Unfortunately, it is mainly Doddinghurst people who are caught speeding.

The Council is looking into ways of helping the Village Hall and Priest House with their refurbishment plans. We have tried to help residents with a Parish Council surgery and a CAB day, neither of these have been used, but we will persevere. We were disappointed with the lack of interest from residents coming forward to become new Parish Councillors. We were lucky that most of the Parish Councillors decided to stay, which meant only finding two. We will continue to inform residents of our work, and look forward to seeing you at our normal PC meetings on the first Thursday of the month. Please keep a lookout for forthcoming events throughout the year that we hope to organise.

A list of future work to be carried out, together with the money needed to be spent on these projects is available for your perusal. Unfortunately we have had to increase our precept as we are losing 50% of our funding from Brentwood Borough council over a five year period. This years' increase will enable us to continue the work we have to do.

On behalf of all members of the Parish Council I would like to wish you all a pleasant Spring and Summer.  
With best wishes,

Debbie Dicker - Chairman

## 5. Financial Report. - Audited accounts for 2007/08

### ANNUAL RETURN

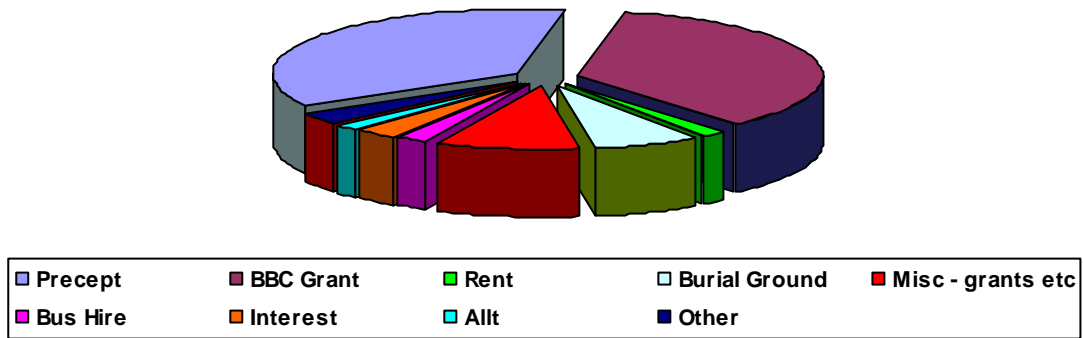
#### Doddinghurst Parish Council Statement of Accounts

For the year ended 31st March 2008

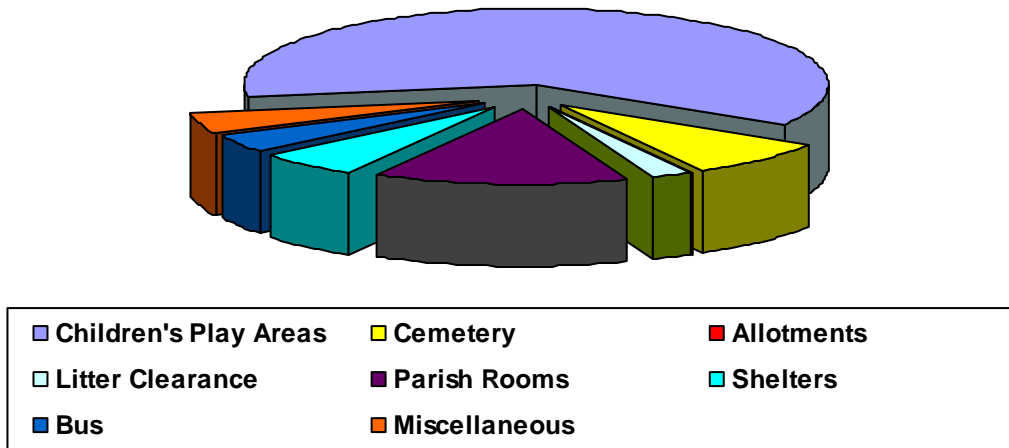
	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-08	
1. Balances B/F	51,622.00	49,500.00	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the council's financial records
2. Annual Precept	28,016.00	28,856.00	Total amount of precept income received in the year.
3. Total other receipts	56,594.00	50,562.00	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the precept.
4. Staff costs	20,496.00	25,792.00	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all council employees, including salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses
5. Loan interest/ capital replacement	4,380.00	3,862.00	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the council's borrowings.
6. Total other payments	61,856.00	56,612.00	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook, minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/ capital repayments (line 5).
7. Balances carried forward	49,500.00	42,652.00	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. (1+2+3) -(4+5+6) (Note: all figures rounded to nearest whole £)
8. Total cash and investments	49,286.00	41,990.00	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 March. (NB +£622 for accrued VAT to = Line 7).
9. Total fixed assets	305,622.00	307,701.00	The recorded current book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the council and any other long term assets eg loans to third parties.
10. Total borrowings	3617.00	0.00	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (inc PWLB)

For 2009/10 Brentwood Borough Council applied an ongoing 10% reduction in the discretionary grant to all Borough Parishes. This reduced the income to this Parish for 2009/10 by a further £2744 being an overall reduction of £8233 since grant cutting commenced. This grant reduction is to be repeated for each of the next two years, (totalling 50% over 5 years) an overall reduction of £15912 (from 06/07). It is also clear that a number of community buildings will need financial support into the future and therefore the Parish Council has made provision to borrow up to £100,000 through Public Loan Works funding at some point in the near future. The Parish Council has no large reserve of funds and therefore a precept of £43,167 has been set for 2009/10 to do no more than restore income to the 2006/7 levels, following the erosion of grant and the value of money due to inflation over the past 3 years.

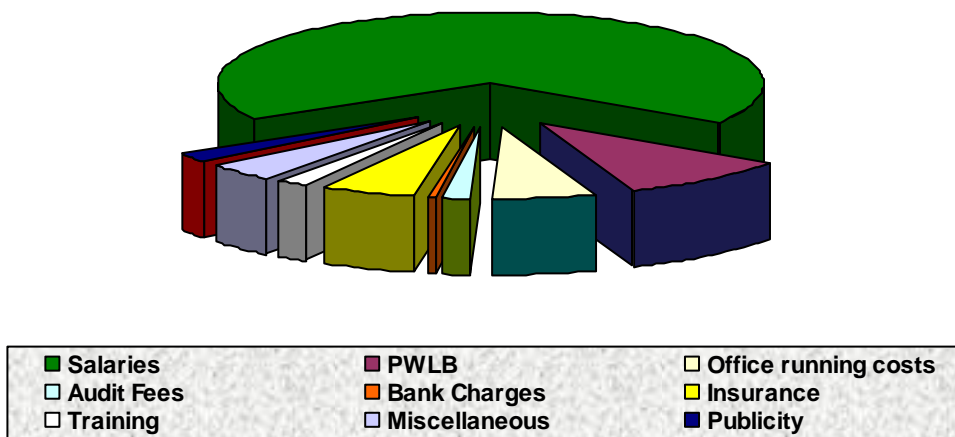
Sources of Income for 2007/08- £79415.92



Direct Expenses 2007/08 - £ 48,097.37



Overhead costs 2007/08 - £38,167.51



## 6. Village Hall Redevelopment Project

The Parish Council and the Village Hall management committee formed a joint steering committee to consider the future of the Village Hall and how best to secure its future for the next 50 years. An architect was engaged to prepare outline plans and a number of consultation exercises were held from May 2008 through to the summer of 2008. The cost of a complete rebuild was estimated to be in the region of £1.3m. By September 2008 it was clear that the UK economy was in severe difficulty and matters have got worse, limiting access to grant funds for work of this type. Consequently the plans to rebuild the Village Hall have been shelved until after 2012 when, hopefully, more funds will become available from sources such as the national lottery. In the meantime limited funds will be spent keeping the existing building up to good serviceable standards.

**7. Committee Activities** – all committee meetings are open to the public and derive their authority to act from the full Council of the Parish, which is a body corporate re-elected every 4 years. The next full council elections are in May 2012.

### 7.1. Planning Committee.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning matters and the planning committee members each have responsibility for designated roads in the Parish. Care is taken that they do not represent the area in which they live. In 2008/9 the committee met 8 times and reviewed 25 planning application for the Parish of Doddinghurst. This is half the number seen in the previous year and reflects the economic climate. Of the applications seen, Brentwood Borough Council approved 19, refused 5, and one is still under consideration. Two enforcement orders were raised by Brentwood Borough Council relating to planning breaches within Doddinghurst Parish.

### 7.2. General Purpose Committee.

This committee is responsible for the detailed management activity of certain areas of responsibility on behalf of the Parish Council. It has oversight of the Burial Ground, and, as the Burial Board, deals with sensitive issues relating to the burial ground. It also monitors the Children's Play Areas, including football fields, ensuring that safety checks are carried out and that the management activity is appropriate and timely. The committee also reviews and recommends council fees and charges for Parish Council services such as room hire etc.

The committee met 10 times during 2008/09. Among many other items it reviewed the RoSPA report on the Children's Play Area and the follow-up action; approved new fees for the hire of the Parish Room, Burial Ground interments and Allotments annual leases.

### 7.3. Finance and Resources Committee

This committee meets a minimum of twice a year in November and January, once to review the Council's Governance arrangements, its annual spend, budget and precept proposals for following year and a second time to review the major projects and other issues that may have impact on the Council financial plans such as Public Loan Borrowing. Precept proposals are always considered and voted on by the full council. The committee is also responsible for the overall control of Council Governance including standing orders, financial policies and audit process. Finally, the Finance and Resource committee is responsible for recommending personnel appointments, terms and conditions of contract and salary reviews. The Council adopts the National Association of Local Clerks agreed recommendations for staff terms, conditions, and rates of pay, which for 2008/9 rose by 2.75%.

#### 7.4. Allotment Working Party, Allotment Association, Allotment Holders and Allotment Committee.

A working party was initially established to meet at least twice a year to deal with management issues relating to the allotments such as the tenancy agreement and progress letting allotments. The working party comprised three members of the Parish Council. These councillors work with three volunteer allotment tenants in an association. Their remit was to ensure that the allotments operated smoothly and to deal with any adverse issues that arise over misuse of allotments by any tenant. In addition there are ad hoc meetings (not formal committee meetings) of all the allotment holders to capture ideas and suggestions for the ongoing development of the allotments. For 2009/10 the working party has been established as a functional committee of the Parish Council with authority to set allotment fees for allotment holders. This reflects the growth in the scale of the allotments and the numbers of people now involved.

#### 8. Bus Club

The Bus Club is managed by the Parish Council with Cllr Colin Enderby as the Chairman and the Parish Clerk as Treasurer. It has not been constituted as a Parish Council committee and the funds are separate from the Parish Council. The Bus Club has unpaid volunteer drivers who have to have a "Midas" certificate to drive minibuses. The Midas certification is awarded by Essex Community Transport following a training course and practical driving test. The Bus Club is registered as a member of the Community Bus Transport organisation; it plans the timetable and books the buses for the trips, which are approximately twice a month. The charge to the users is to cover the hire of the bus and fuel used and is non-profit making. During the course of the year fees had to be revised upwards due to the increase in cost of diesel and the bus hire cost rising to £1/ mile. The Bus club accounts for 2008/09, and the preceding year, are as follows:

2008/09		2007/08	
Brought Forward:	£ 287.58	Brought Forward	£295.15
Income	£ 1067.20	Income	£1920.00
Expenditure	£ 985.00	Expenditure	£1927.57
No of trips	19*	No of Trips	21
Closing Balance	£369.78	Closing Balance	£287.58

\* 21 planned - Two trips cancelled

Some trips used more than one bus (e.g. the December trip to Bluewater)

A current timetable is shown on the Parish Council notice boards and the website

#### 9. Recreational Grounds.

The Parish Council owns and leases significant areas of land in the village for recreational use. The land is all covered by byelaws to enable a rapid enforcement of any breach of use should this be necessary. The land includes Peartree Recreational Field, a junior and senior football field and the Children's Play area and the field in which it is located.

Doddinghurst Olympics Football Club is the major user of the Football Fields owned by the Parish Council and the Village Hall. The Parish Council also manage and maintain shower, referee and changing room facilities for the football club in the Parish Rooms complex adjoining the Village Hall. The Parish Council has agreed a "Heads of Agreement" document with DOFC that allows both parties to contribute towards the cost of managing and maintaining the facilities. For 2008/09 the total cost of football facilities provided for the village was £3,130.39, of which the Parish Council funded £1,956.49 (62.5%). Expenditure is incurred on items of ground management such as white lining, mowing, fertilising, ground de-compaction, turf repair, rolling, and field perimeter brush cutting. For the changing rooms the cost of water, electricity, cleaning, and water system maintenance is also included where appropriate.

## 10. Burial Grounds.

The Parish Council manage one of the few burial grounds in the area where there are facilities for both burial and ashes interments. The burial ground was established in the early 1970's as a Lawn Cemetery. Deeds of grant are valid for 30 years, which covers 30 years of maintenance. Income from the Cemetery Deeds of Grant and other charges pay for the day-to-day maintenance and go towards the capital cost of extending the area of usage for the future, as demand requires. Plots are not available for purchase in advance! Members of the public have donated memorial seats in memory of loved ones interred in the Burial Ground and memorial plaques may be purchased for loved ones interred elsewhere. The revenue for 2008/09 was £4205, £1423 down on the previous year. In all there were 8 burials and 7 ashes interments during the financial year, of which 6 were in existing plots.

## 11. Allotments.

Garden Allotments measuring 17m x 5m are now available at £60/ year or £30 for a half plot. The number of plots has grown significantly as the popularity of owning an allotment has soared and the Parish Council opened a new strip of land taking the number of full plots to 44. All the new plots have been let involving some 50 people (since there are a number of half plots tenants). Total revenue for 2008/09 was £2900 and expenses were £1917, but this year many people renewed early so revenue income includes some rent for 2009/10. A waiting list is currently in place but further expansion of the site will be deferred until sufficient numbers are confirmed to justify the additional development costs since additional storage, water supply and car parking are likely to be required.

## 12. Public Footpaths

Public footpaths in the Parish are set out on a map showing the definitive footpaths. Essex County Council makes available funds under the banner of Parish Paths Partnership (P3) that enables Parish Councils to obtain funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the designated paths. This money enables the Parish Council to engage contractors to clear the paths of bramble and nettle that will quickly engulf these rights of way and accordingly they are cleared at least twice a year. In addition, bridges and gates are kept in good repair. In all there are 10 defined footpaths in the Parish and the year the P3 grant received totalled £821.

## 13 Website

The Parish Council website has changed to: [www.doddinghurst-gov.co.uk](http://www.doddinghurst-gov.co.uk) . The site has been expanded to include community activities other than the Parish Council. Please visit it and let us have your recommendations for improvement.

## 14 Support for Village Events

The Parish Council website regularly sponsors, supports or runs Village events.

- A. May Fair. The Council is a key sponsor for the annual May Fairs at the Village Hall, involving the schools in the Maypole dancing and funding the Punch and Judy.
- B. Senior Citizens Lunch The Council paid for and organised a Senior Citizens Lunch in January 2008 where St Margaret's Hall was booked to host a Christmas Lunch for over 70 people from all over the village including the provision of a community bus for those unable to travel themselves.
- C. For 2009 a Village Fun Day is being funded and organised by The Parish Council for Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

**This report was approved for publication by the Parish Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009.**