

Doddinghurst Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10



1. A review of 2009/10

1.1 Good News:

- Parish Council sponsored Fun Day on the 5th July well received.
- Power of Well-Being adopted.
- Bike Racks and new hard surfacing implemented near the shop car park
- Senior Citizens Lunch hosted by the Parish Council on the 23rd January well attended.
- £100,000 in grants for Priest House and Village Hall made available by the Parish Council.
- Full complement of Councillors in place despite several changes during the year.
- The Deputy Clerk achieved her CiLCA qualifications.

1.2 Bad News:

- Brentwood Borough Council cut the discretionary grant for 2009/10 by 10%.
- New doctor's surgery plans not progressed as hoped but action by the PCT expected in 2010/11.

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Parish Office (adj. Village Hall]
Church Lane, Doddinghurst,
Brentwood, Essex CM15 0NJ

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3. Councillors

Contact Details

Debbie Dicker (Chairman)	68 Lime Grove	01277 823410
Alison Richards (Vice Chairman)	2 Park Meadow	01277 823465
Graham W Bateson	82 Glovers Field, Kelvedon Hatch	01277 374344
Adrian Oliver	88, 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
Diane Rogers Harrison	16, Harpers Lane, Doddinghurst	XD
Gerry Smith	25 Park Meadow	XD
Peter Davenport	"Acorns", Doddinghurst Road	XD

Officers

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

3. Areas of responsibility: In addition to the Parish Council meetings, the following councillors have these additional responsibilities (2010 onwards):

Debbie Dicker	Planning (Chairman), Allotments (Chairman), Finance & Resource(Chairman), Cheque Signatory, Borough Planning Committee, BBPCA, Local Strategic partnership
Alison Richards	General Purpose, Finance & Resource, NHS issues
Graham Bateson	Planning, General Purpose, Allotment, Finance & Resource, Cheque Signatory
Diane Rogers Harrison	Village Correspondent, General Purpose.
Alan Smith	Planning, Village Hall (rep for Parish Council)
Colin Enderby	Planning, Bus Club (Chairman), West Essex Forum, Risk Management, Transport, Police
Alan Farrow	General Purpose (Chairman), Cheque Signatory. Finance & Resource, Footpaths.
Julia Le Page	General Purpose, Allotment, Village Planter
Gerry Smith	General Purpose, Finance & Resource,, Cheque Signatory, Youth Development, Highways, Transport, West Essex Forum, Police.
Peter Davenport	Planning
Adrian Oliver	

4. Chairman's Statement and Report for 2009/10

I'm writing to update you about the work that Doddinghurst Council has carried out in the village during the past twelve months.

We hosted the May Day event which included the infant school children Maypole dancing, together with local stalls and refreshments in the Village Hall. This is always a popular event and one we intend to continue in 2010. At the beginning of July we held a Village Fun Day, which had races and games for the younger children, a climbing wall, a bungee run, an exhibition by the Essex Dog Display team, a stilt man who juggled plus Mr Giggles the magician – and very popular they all proved to be. We also had a dance display by the Junior School, outdoor music, a raffle, a Hawaiian disco in the Hall, a police interceptor car, the Neighbourhood Watch and briefly, before they had to leave, the Fire Brigade. Hot food was available from “Bert the Butcher” and the Village Hall Bar was open for drinks. Free tea and cakes were available in the afternoon. The raffle had superb prizes that were especially appreciated by the winners! Best of all the weather was kind and the sun shone! Feedback received from visitors suggested that the day was an excellent family event and enjoyed by people of all ages. We hope to do something similar in the future.

This January we held a free Senior Citizens lunch, complete with entertainment and drinks, in the Village Hall which was attended by sixty local people who all seemed to appreciate and enjoy the day – even the local press said so! The lunch was cooked, served and organised by the Parish Council who did all the catering and provisioning in order to keep the costs as low as possible.

We still try to keep the village as attractive as we can with our flower tubs, daily litter clearing and general repairs as and when they become necessary.

Perhaps you have noticed that, with the land-owners permission, we have paved the side of the path leading to the Budgens store and installed bike racks. This improvement has been long overdue, and now, since the Council became eligible for, and adopted, a new piece of legislation called “The Power of Well-Being”, we will be able to do more work on non-council controlled land if it is considered to be to the general benefit of the community. We know this is one of the improvements that you, the resident, wanted from our survey of some years ago. Improving the shop area is something we have discussed at our monthly meetings but to do the preferred work would cost a great deal of money so at the moment this is not being actively pursued. However if anyone has any ideas on practical improvements to the shop areas please let us know. Remember this is your village and I am sure you wish to have it as nice as possible.

We have been fortunate enough to have recruited two new Councillors during the year, and they joined the team before Christmas. They have already been on a course for new Councillors and contributed well at the January lunch.

You may be aware that the Doddinghurst Council has secured a low fixed interest loan of £100,000 in order to help both the Priest House and the Village Hall with refurbishment programmes. Work on the Priest House, which is a listed building, is well under way and the Village Hall has just started its programme of work with the replacement of the outside fascias and guttering. We look forward to seeing all this work completed so that Village clubs and societies can enjoy the improved facilities, in both premises, well into 2030.

Although I began with the good news, unfortunately, again we have had criminal damage in the village, namely arson, since an expensive picnic table in the play area was deliberately destroyed by fire and verge trees broken down by people who should know better. We have also had to put up with childish and silly behaviour by youths, particularly in the snow. A new phenomenon has been the arrival of a swarm of motorised scooters. Their riders delight in driving their vehicles up and down Church Lane and creating a hazard for other road users. Doddinghurst Council has set up a working party to try and find ways to overcome these problems, and is in discussion with the youth services, the police and other councillors to see what can be done to include these youths into some alternative activity that would stop them creating a nuisance. I have asked many times for parents to know where their children are, and what they are doing, but it seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Considering this is a small attractive area, with the majority of young people enjoying their lives here in a sociable way, it is sad that just a few irresponsible people can make life unpleasant for others.

I am very pleased to inform you that our Deputy Clerk, Deborah Tonkiss, has obtained her Certificate in Local Council Administration so is now qualified as a Council Clerk. We are therefore very fortunate now to have two well qualified officers and we congratulate them both and thank them for the hard work they put into running a Quality accredited Council.

I would like you to imagine what it would be like without a local Parish Council (which despite the name has no connection with any church). Firstly there may be no-one local to represent the Village needs with the Borough Council, the County Council, the Police and the NHS. Secondly, village facilities such as Children's Play Areas might have to go as Brentwood Council may feel they could not afford to keep them and the village would be unlikely to be litter picked every day. Moreover, our football and recreation fields, currently owned by Doddinghurst Council, might well come under threat of development as the Borough searches for land to build its next main set of houses upon to meet Government targets for new homes and the Green Belt is now very much under threat of urban development. Yes, there are a few Borough Councillors that represent the rural areas but they are outnumbered by the urban area Councillors at Brentwood who already show that they believe too much Brentwood grant is being spent in the Parishes and are moving to cut that money every year. Finally, without Doddinghurst Council, there would be no Community events such as the Fun Day, May Day, Senior Citizens lunch or support for local community accommodation such as the Village Hall and Priest House - or any other item that makes the village a better place to live.

Please support Doddinghurst Parish Council. I look forward to meeting you at our monthly meetings, normally on the first Thursday in the month at 20.00 in the Parish Room, which is semi-detached to the Village Hall. Much more information about the Parish Council and the Village facilities is on our website: www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk.

I hope this letter has given you some idea of what we do and our concerns for the future.

Debbie Dicker – Chairman, Doddinghurst Parish Council

5. Financial Report. - Audited accounts for 2008/09

ANNUAL RETURN

Doddinghurst Parish Council

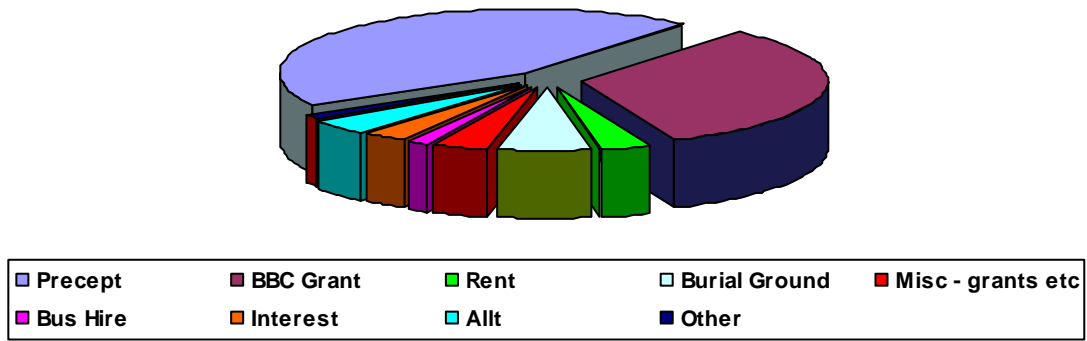
Statement of Accounts

For the year ended 31st March 2009

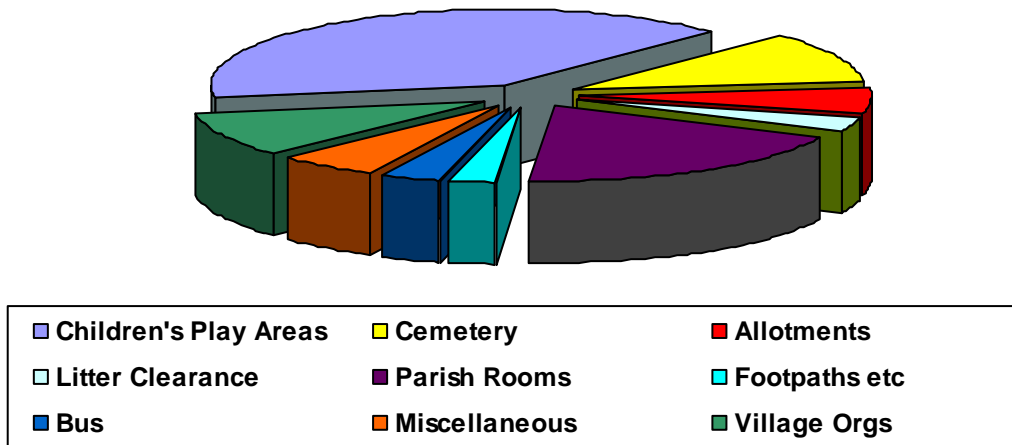
	31-Mar-08	31-Mar-09	
1. Balances B/F	49,500	42,652	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the council's financial records
2. Annual Precept	28,856	29,721	Total amount of precept income received in the year.
3. Total other receipts	50,562	37,157	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the precept.
4. Staff costs	25,792	25,696	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	3,862	0.00	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the council's borrowings.
6. Total other payments	56,612	49,880	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	42,652	33,954	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	41,990	33,568	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 March. (NB + £386 for accrued VAT.)
9. Total fixed assets	307,701	307,540	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	0.00	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 borrowed £100,000 through Public Works Loan Board funding to provide £60,000 towards Village Hall restoration and £40,000 to the ongoing Priest House restoration, (under the Essex Act which permits Parish Councils to support historic buildings) and following the provision of a renewed 20 year lease for this building to the PCC from the Diocese. Doddinghurst Parish Council has no large reserve of funds and therefore a precept of £43,167 has been set for 2009/10 and the year on year increase does 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.

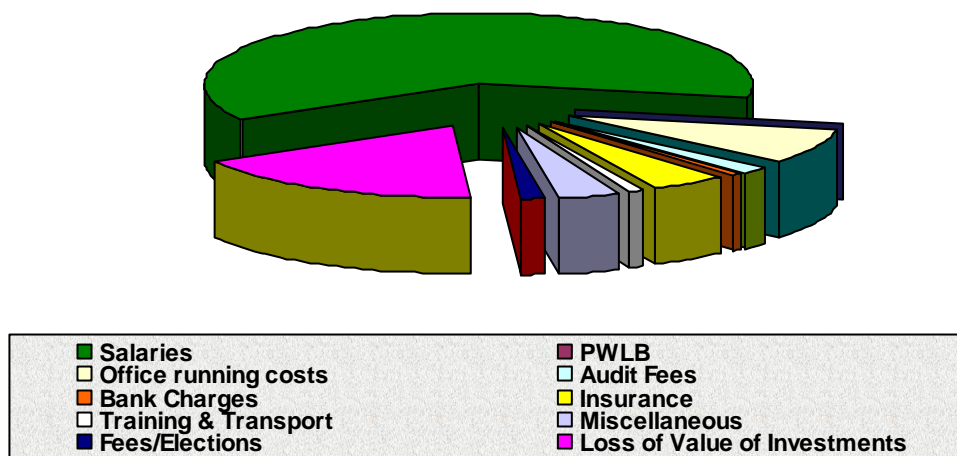
Sources of Income for 2008/09- £66,878



Direct Expenses 2008/09 - £35,322



Overhead costs 2008/09 - £40,253



6. Community Action.

6.1 Village Hall and Priest House Redevelopment Projects.

The Parish Council approved and obtained a loan of £100,000 from the Public Works Loan Board to help with the refurbishment of both the Village Hall and the Priest House by means of grant payments against actual invoices for work done. £60,000 was made available to the Village Hall and £40,000 to the PCC for the Priest House. This finance has been secured on a 20 year fixed interest, which is currently at its lowest level for over 20 years. The refurbishment work has been started and will be completed on both buildings during Spring 2010.

6.2 Mayday

The Council is a key sponsor for the annual Mayday event at the Village Hall, involving the schools in the Maypole dancing and funding the Punch and Judy.

6.3 Fun Day.

On Sunday the 5th July the Parish Council sponsored a family Fun Day with a budget of £4000. The events included entries from the local Schools, professional entertainers such as a Stilt Walker, Juggler, Magician, the Essex Dog Display, a Bungie run and a climbing wall with the latter managed by the Essex Association of Boys' Clubs. There was live music from Thirsty Work, a raffle with prize items donated or provided at discount by local businesses. Hot food was provided by Bert the Butcher and drinks available with the Village Hall bar open. In the afternoon there were free cakes, courtesy of Budgens, and Tea to wash them down. Other stall holders included the Police, The Fire Brigade and Neighbourhood Watch and an Hawaiian disco.

6.3 Senior Citizens Lunch.

On the 23rd January the Parish Council members turned out in force to help out at the Senior Citizens Lunch which served lunch and entertainment to nearly 70 people from the village. Councillors cooked and served the meal and organised the collection and return of those who needed help with travel.

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 2009/10 the economic downturn had a notable effect on planning activity with a significant fall in the number of requests being processed. In addition to the economic situation new planning rules introduced in 2008 means that many more development activities are part of permitted development and no longer require planning permission. During 2009/10 the planning committee met 7 times and reviewed 35 planning applications for the Parish of Doddinghurst and of the applications seen, Brentwood Borough Council approved 23, refused 6, one was withdrawn, and the remainder are still under consideration. Four 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 9 times during 2009/10. 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 and Burial Ground interments.

7.3. Finance and Resources Committee

This committee met three times in 2009/10, once to review the Council's Governance arrangements, staff contracts and reviews, once to review the Council's annual spend, budget and prepare precept proposals for following year and a third time to review the major projects and other issues that may have impact on the Council's financial plans such a 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, audit process, insurance and risk assessment. 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 2009/10 rose by 1%.

7.4. Allotment Committee.

The allotment committee met three times in 2009/10. The popularity of the allotments has continued with 43 allotments in use and a small waiting list. Whilst additional land exists to provide further allotments the growth in demand has peaked and turnover during the renewal period has shrunk the waiting list with some new joiners but more leavers than joiners. This has allowed six of the "waiters" to get allotments so the longest "waiter" on the list has been there 6 months. The Allotment committee has decided to suspend the provision of new allotments for the foreseeable future.

8. Bus Club

The Bus Club is managed by the Parish Council with Clr Colin Enderby as the Chairman and the Parish Clerk as Treasurer. It is 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 2009/10, and the preceding year, are as follows:

2008/09		2009/10	
Brought Forward:	£ 287.58	Brought Forward	£370.78
Income	£ 1067.20	Income	£1045.00
Expenditure	£ 985.00	Expenditure	£ 924.00
No of trips	19	No of Trips	13
Closing Balance	£370.78	Closing Balance	£491.78

* 18 planned - Five 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 2009/10 (all bills received up to mid Feb 2010) the total cost of football facilities provided for the village was £2557.55, of which the Parish Council funded £1,598.47 (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 2009/10 was £4465, During the 2009/10 financial year there were 1 burial and 6 ashes interments with one ashes interment being a re-open.

11. Parish Room.

The Parish Room is rented to clubs and societies as well as being used for business meetings of the Parish Council. 2009/10 has been a very popular year for the Parish Room with the Priest House closed for refurbishment for part of the year. In addition to the Parish Council, the Parish Room has had 11 regular user groups: Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens Advice Bureau, Crèche, Village Art Group, Thursday Art Group, Tai Chi, Quilters, Card Club, Conservative Party, Thos A Beckett Lodge and Love2Craft. Occasional use has been for the Fun Day, May Day, Senior Citizens Lunch, Dance groups and the Horticultural Society. Full occupancy of the room would yield an income of £5625 (3 sessions a day for Monday to Friday inclusive for 50 weeks of the year). Actual earning has been £2707 giving an earned occupancy of 48%. The Neighbourhood Watch have 10 sessions a year and CAB 5 sessions booked at no charge, (worth £112.50) and the Parish Council hold 20 meetings a year in the room, at a nominal worth of £150, which makes the overall utilisation for the year over 53%.

12. Allotments.

Garden Allotments measuring 17m x 5m are provided at £60/ year or £30 for a half plot. The allotment gardens have remained popular throughout 2009/10 with a waiting list of about 8 people. Total revenue for 2009/10 is shown as £2,967 due to timing of renewals falling into 09/10, with the underlying annual income being £2,580. Costs include £1290 for 09/10 land lease and revenue sharing leaving £1290 for the running and maintenance of the allotments. Other costs were £1050 in Feb 2010 for additional water tanks and £64 during the year for miscellaneous repairs. The car park area has been extended to the left hand side of the gate entrance by the land owner at no cost to the Parish Council.

13. 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 £585.99. We have been advised that in future years the maintenance of the footpaths will return to the County and P3 funding will be withdrawn.

14. Website

The Parish Council website is: www.doddinghurst-pc.gov.uk. The site includes community activities other than the Parish Council. Please visit it and let us have your recommendations for improvement.

This report was approved for publication by the Parish Council on the 13th May 2010.