



Dodington Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES of the Meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP)** held in the Council Chamber at Dodington Parish Hall on **Monday 23rd September 2024** at **7.30pm**.

PRESENT: Councillors David Fitt (Chair), Adrian Hutton, Paul Hulbert, Bob Graham, and Jean Thomas.

Also present: Clerk for the meeting, Hannah Saunders Clerk to the Council and 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies for absence and request for approval

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllrs Chris Zapata, Christine Howard, Laura Pearson Tong, Sandra Jee, Karl Tomasin and Richard Evans.

2. Declarations of Interests Under Localism Act 2011 and Requests for Dispensations

Cllr Paul Hulbert declared an interest in Item 9 – he will leave room whilst the applications in South Ward are being discussed. Cllrs David Fitt and Adrian Hutton declared an interest in Item 5 on the agenda – they are both allotment holders – and will leave room.

3. Public participation

There was one member of the public (MOP) in attendance, interested in being co-opted onto the council at next Full Council Meeting. Chair invited MOP to pop hand up if had any queries throughout the meeting. MOP invited anyone interested in asking questions to do so at end of meeting (Clerk offered up office which is quieter than chambers).

4. Approval of Minutes and matters arising from the previous meeting on 12th August 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the meeting on Monday 12th August 2024, as printed and circulated, be confirmed as a true record. Cllr David Fitt signed a copy of the minutes.

Matters arising – not covered off during course of agenda: -

Deputy Clerk will sort out quarterly checks with relevant councillors when back from Annual Leave.

Addition of Cllr A Hutton to NW Bankline has been completed – and Cllr Hutton has approved a payment successfully.

Hall Hire Documents are still in process of being updated.

The confidential minutes were also looked at (not discussed / signed until end of meeting when no public present) – as Clerk felt it would help members with items 6 & 7 on the agenda (which she wasn't recommending going into closed session for).

5. Grants to review / Approve

It was necessary to defer Grant Application re Dodington Allotment Association to a future meeting as with 2 members declaring interest – committee would no longer be quorate.

6. Reinstatement Valuations for Dodington Parish Hall and QEII changing room

Clerk explained that this was something that the Parish Council were required to do as valuations hadn't been carried out since 2017 and with work that had been done to the Parish Hall recently and fact insurance provision needed reviewing in 2025 these details were necessary.

Members had deferred decision last month – as they were awaiting a 3rd quote. Clerk confirmed that 3 quotes had been received (and details of anonymized quotes had been circulated to members by Deputy Clerk the previous week).

Clerk and took members through quotes (see table below), explaining that company who had carried out previous valuation no longer offered service – but they had recommended someone, and Deputy had also asked YTC who they used – and got quotes from that company too.

After due consideration members were keen to go with a recommendation – and it was RESOLVED to appoint company recommended by previous surveyors.

This was Company 3 – which clerk informed members was J S Reakes Ltd – based in Bristol. They would personally visit site and carry out valuation / do report.

| COMPANY | QUOTE | OTHER NOTES |
|---------|--|---|
| 1 | £1200 - £1400 + VAT (excl disbursements – eg travel) | If wanted a full report and not desk based would be approx. £500 more |
| 2 | £1800 + VAT (this figure incl travel, etc) | Includes report (company recommended) |
| 3 | £1250 + VAT | Includes report (company recommended) |

7. Fire System Monitoring & Installation

Again, this item was deferred from previous meeting – as members were after more information. This had been provided and circulated by Deputy Clerk the previous week. Councillors were satisfied with the response from Bristol Fire and Avon Fire & Rescue and it was unanimously RESOLVED to install the monitoring system (using the spare phone line – if still available).

8. Consultations

Members had received draft comments that both Clerk and Cllr Laura Pearson Tong had worked on since the Planning and Transport Committee Meeting. After due consideration it was resolved to delegate combining comments and submitting them to the Clerk.

A copy of comments sent can be found in Appendix 1 attached to these minutes

Cllr Paul Hulbert left meeting while applications in South Ward were discussed

9. Planning Matters

Applications considered by council (as per SGC Planning Portal) can be viewed in Appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

Cllr Paul Hulbert returned to room while final application in Witcombe was reviewed.

10. Finance Matters

Members reviewed the income and expenditure figures as at 30th August 2024, confirmed all in order and they also reviewed up to date Ear Marked Reserve figures.

It was agreed that as not many members were at meeting to receive information regarding Budget – item be deferred to a following week prior to meeting looking at Grounds Maintenance Contracts.

11. Items To Report.

Clerk reported the following items:-

- As Wednesday 9th October 2024 has been set aside and officers / councillors available – hall free, etc. an open evening will be facilitated – so that local residents can see newly refurbished facilities and chat to councillors. Cllr David Fitt would like to pop leaflet advertising event through doors of homes in Woodchester (following up what he and Cllr Laura Pearson Tong did earlier in year with Newsletter). Everyone was okay with this – so Clerk will arrange printing of flyers.
- Clerk has heard from 3 neighbouring councils that sit on JPCC and all are happy for letter to be sent to MP Claire Young regarding meeting with Police Crime Commissioner.
- Co-op are wanting to push business – so need to think of ways to work together.
- List of forthcoming meetings were checked (as timings and venues vary) PMN all of these meetings have had calendar appointments sent to councillors accordingly.
- Allotment AGM is to be held in hall on Friday 27th September starting at 6:30pm.
- Email has been received from Raysfield PTA confirming that they will be holding annual Firework Display again this year – scheduled for Sunday 3rd November 2024.

The member of public then left the meeting at 8.45pm

The Meeting went Into Closed Session and confidential minutes were agreed and signed.

The next meeting for the F&GP Committee is Monday 4th November 2024.

As there was no further business – the meeting was closed at 8.50 pm.

SignedCommittee Chair

Date

Appendix 1:-

COMMENTS FROM DODINGTON PARISH COUNCIL – IN RESPONSE TO NPPF CONSULTATION

Officers and Members of Dodington Parish Council have with limited time and experience tried to engage with this consultation as best they can.

There is a lot to take in – and the language is very technical – which can be off putting and misleading – so we have very much relied upon Strategic Planning Policy Specialists from LPA – and associations such as National Association of Local Councils for guidance – and trying to find out what is relevant – what isn't.

The key areas of relevance to parish of Dodington from the 'Proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to Planning System' document are **Chapter 5 – Brownfield, Grey Belt and the Green Belt**, which includes Questions 20 – 44, (whilst also looking at some of the early questions about Housing Needs Assessment).

This is because 80% of the parish of Dodington is 'Rural' with a lot of it classified as Green Belt. Only 20% of our residents live in the rural area. (on the flip side 20% of the Parish is semi urban – and developed to such an extent that there is no room for further development – 80% of residents live in 20% of the parish).

In the past when the LPA has been preparing new plans – and carrying out 'Call for Sites' land within the Greenbelt has been put forward. These parcels have never been considered – due to 'Green Belt' protection – and other sites that are more easily developed.

It is our (and the LPA's) understanding if the new draft NPPF is confirmed as currently presented – then LPA's will be required to undertake a review of their Green Belt to assess whether any of the existing Green Belt falls into the category of Grey Belt – as part of strategic planning functions.

It is also very probable that applicants seeking planning consent in the Green Belt will undertake their own evaluation to assess if the land they are promoting should be categorised as Grey Belt.

This then leads us to look at the 'Golden Rules' that the proposed NPPF is suggesting be applied to any 'major development' on land released from the Green Belt. These developments MUST include necessary improvements to local / national infrastructure, provision of or improvements to public green spaces and housing schemes that provide at least 50% affordable housing.

In the past major development has been any site with more than 9 – 10 houses (although in rural area's threshold can be lower).

Please see answers to selected questions below:-

Q21 – Given that there is development in the greenbelt – that could be considered PDL – and thus released for redevelopment – Dodington Parish Council (DPC) would want to ensure that this can't be abused. Could 9 holes of a golf course that is in Green Belt – be developed on (if the business states that 9 of the holes are no longer required / sustainable)? This would dramatically alter the landscape and there is concern that if restrictions to Previously Developed Land are relaxed – there could be instances such as those above?

Q22 – Dodington Parish Council (DPC) feel that there is a need to protect horticultural land – and as such where there are structures such as glass houses / poly tunnels for horticultural production – these should be maintained as such (and not redeveloped).

Grey Belt Land Definition:- For the purposes of Plan-making and decision-making, grey belt is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes (as defined in para 140 of this Framework) but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of this Framework (other than land designated as Green Belt).

Q23 – Does DPC agree with the above definition of Grey Belt?? If not what changes would you recommend?

DPC feels that the wording '*and any other parcels and / or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes (as defined in Para 140 of this framework)*' be excluded so that definition reads:-

For the purposes of Plan-making and decision-making, grey belt is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of this Framework (other than land designated as Green Belt).

Q24 – Are there any additional measures needed to ensure that high performing Green Belt land is not degraded to meet Grey Belt Criteria?

Yes DPC feels that historic assessment of characteristics and spatial changes should be taken into consideration. It should be possible with data, to tell whether land has been purchased and purposely left to degrade (which is different to leaving fallow for a while), or whether there has been continual encroachment on a parcel of land.

Q25 – Do you agree that additional guidance to assist in identifying land which makes limited contribution of Green Belt purposed would be helpful? If so is this best contained in NPPF or other document?

Yes, DPC feel that additional guidance is needed – and so as not to complicate an already complicated document further – it should be a planning document of it's own – that is clear and easy to understand.

Q27 - Do you have any views on the role that Local Nature Recovery Strategies could play in identifying areas of Green Belt which can be enhanced?

Yes – DPC feel that Local Nature Recovery Strategies should play a key role in identifying areas of Green Belt that can be enhanced, or possibly more importantly, joined up to provide wildlife corridors beyond the other natural capital & biodiversity benefits. Local knowledge from conservation groups that have monitored the areas more consistently than national approaches provide insights that are not available on larger spatial views.

Q28 - Do you agree that our proposals support the release of land in the right places, with previously developed and grey belt land identified first, while allowing local planning authorities to prioritise the most sustainable development locations?

DPC agree in principle that the sequential approach is correct, Brownfield > PDL > Grey Belt > Green Belt. It is how LPAs will monitor this to ensure the investment in redeveloping brownfield sites first will be carried forward, or how they will enforce against what is considered incorrect or misaligned release of Green Belt land.

Q30- Do you agree with our approach to allowing development on Green Belt land through decision making? If not, what changes would you recommend?

DPC feel that initially time (1-year) should be allowed to start the planning process for existing brownfield and possible Grey Belt sites first before any amendments to the Green Belt are decided.

Q31 - Do you have any comments on our proposals to allow the release of grey belt land to meet commercial and other development needs through plan-making and decision-making, including the triggers for release?

DPC aren't against the usage for commercial purposes but feel it's important that that existing brownfield needs to be used first.

Q32 - Do you have views on whether the approach to the release of Green Belt through plan and decision-making should apply to traveller sites, including the sequential test for land release and the definition of PDL?

DPC feel that the repurpose and use of PDL sites for traveller sites, with appropriate facilities, would seem sensible and agree in principle – but as with above – brownfield – greyfield to be used prior to any amends to Green Belt.

Q35 - Should the 50 per cent target apply to all Green Belt areas (including previously developed land in the Green Belt), or should the Government or local planning authorities be able to set lower targets in low land value areas?

DPC feel that there should be consistency here – and that if 50% is the target – it should be for PDL as well as Grey Belt / Green Belt.

Above is linked to Q40 as well – there needs to be consistency and if the target is 50% and being met accordingly then no further contribution should be requested. DPC appreciate that there are instances when developments may have 100% affordable housing – these should be looked at on an individual basis (as has been the case in Dodington).

Q37 - Do you agree that Government should set indicative benchmark land values for land released from or developed in the Green Belt, to inform local planning authority policy development?

DPC feel the values should be to guide / inform as local knowledge will be insightful and helpful.

Q44 - Annex 4 – Viability in relation to Green Belt Release – pleased this is being looked at so that land can't be released and building started and then plans changed as not viable. This process needs to be robust and fully transparent – and comments made above should be taken into account.

Protecting Green Belt land

P 142. Provides 'safeguards' - the test will be in evidencing that circumstances are exceptional. A full list of tests/criteria could be used by the council to challenge any development considered in breach of this 'exceptional' aspect and if still agreed, best available designs (carbon neutral home standards for example) are what we should then be arguing for.

Housing Needs Assessment – Urban Uplift...

Q3 - Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on the urban uplift by deleting paragraph 62?

DPC think the reduction in urban uplift is good – (although it doesn't have a direct impact on them - one of the neighbouring authorities is Bristol City Council).

Q15 - Do you agree that Planning Practice Guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is housing stock rather than the latest household projections?

DPC agree with this amendment. Looking at the data regarding setting a standard method for assessing housing needs – SGC won't be impacted too greatly by this. However, other neighbouring authorities aren't delivering new homes to the same extent as SGC and this new method will have a greater impact on them. Question is then – would SGC be expected to take up some of other authorities' shortfall through cross border co-operation?? A

Some of the questions to do with fee's for planning applications, etc. members felt it was more appropriate that the LPA responded to these.

Whilst they could have spent longer looking at other questions – they felt that these were the key ones in relation to Dodington Parish Council – and would conclude by agreeing that new housing of a good mixture of tenures is required. The infrastructure NEEDS to be in place prior to the houses being sold (particularly with PDL / Grey Belt) and as such the framework must have ‘teeth’ adhere to the Golden Rules and have enforcement in place should these be flouted.

One area that Dodington would have liked to spend more time was looking at tenure mix – as if things continue as they are in the Long term we are going to see a high proportion of landlord owned properties – trapping people in rental market.

Appendix 2:-

Planning Matters

- [Erection of two storey side extension to form additional living accommodation.](#) 

1 Barley Close Cottages Wapley Road Codrington South Gloucestershire BS37 6RX

Ref. No: P24/02168/HH | Received: Fri 13 Sep 2024 | Validated: Fri 13 Sep 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

Members duly considered this application to extend a dwelling for farm workers. They had no issues with the plans.

- [Movement of material to facilitate the levelling of the site compound.](#) 

Dodington Spring Wapley Road Codrington South Gloucestershire BS37 6RX

Ref. No: P24/02106/F | Received: Wed 04 Sep 2024 | Validated: Thu 12 Sep 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

Members duly considered this application to level compound – they noted that some officers from SGC had requested further information. DPC don't have any issues with the plans.

- [Erection of a single storey rear and two storey side extension to form additional living accommodation](#)

330 Witcombe Yate South Gloucestershire BS37 8SA

Ref. No: P24/02195/HH | Received: Tue 17 Sep 2024 | Validated: Tue 17 Sep 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

Plans were reviewed – and although some queries were raised members didn't feel it was their place to ask questions. Essentially they had no issues with application.