

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 6th DECEMBER 2001

PRESENT: Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman) Councillors E.W.Armstrong, M.Gustard, W.Kennedy, M.Oliver, A.Westmorland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors G.Gustard & R.Olaman

2. MINUTES:

Agreed : That the Minutes of the following meetings, copies of which had been sent previously to each member, be Approved and Signed as a correct record:

- a) Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1st November 2001
- b) Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 8th November 2001
- c) Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 9th November 2001

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

i) Council Meeting - 1st November :

a) Minute No.4(c)- Land east of Coniscliffe)

The Clerk reported having taken Solicitor's advice with regard to a possible appeal against the Government Inspector' decision in this case. Advice was that because of the "narrow" grounds for objection, the requirement that the appeal must be conducted through the High Court, and the possibility of a counter claim on behalf of the applicant which would require the retention of the services of a barrister, the costs of this course of action would be very high, with little chance of success.

Agreed : That the report of the Clerk be Noted, and that no further action be taken with regard to an appeal in this matter.

b) Minute No.4(g)- Stained Glass Window - St.Andrew's Church

The Clerk reported that he had consulted with Canon Bill Hall, who had been advised of the support for the design brief which had been prepared by the Parish Council's working party. Canon Hall had confirmed that he would now identify a number of artists who would be suitable for the type of design proposed, and that a further meeting would be held when this had been achieved.

The report was Noted.

c. Minute No.4(h) - Hedgerows

The Clerk reported receipt of one quotation in the sum of £2828.50 in respect of hedgerow reinstatement south of Dalton Bridge. Despite specifications being sent to two further contractors, no other quotations had yet been forthcoming, and further progress was awaited.

The report was Noted.

d) Minute No.6 - Parish Council Audits

The Clerk reported that in accordance with Best Value requirements he would arrange with Councillors Kennedy and G.Gustard for the periodical internal auditing of the Council's financial records.

4. PRECEPT 2002/2003:

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 the report of the Clerk, giving details of expenditure incurred to 30th November, projected expenditure to the end of the financial year, and estimates of income and expenditure for the 2002/2003 financial year. The report emphasised that no provision had been made in the budget estimates as presented, for items such as the re-instatement of hedgerows south of Dalton Bridge or for the proposed stained glass window for St Andrew's Church, for which adequate balances were in place. Subject to this, nett expenditure for 2002/2003 was estimated at £6415.

Discussion ensued, and consideration was given to the suggested widening of the Council's sphere of activity within the parish, which would be debated at a future meeting in the light of the Government's emerging Rural White Paper, and the need to note the concern of District Audit at the level of balances which had accrued over recent years, and it was

Agreed : That a Precept of £11,000 be issued in respect of the 2002/2003 financial Year, and that the Council of the District of Easington be advised accordingly.

5. RURAL WHITE PAPER:

The Clerk informed the meeting that he was to attend a Seminar arranged by the Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils on Saturday 15th December at which detailed consideration would be given to the Rural White Paper, the concept of Quality Parish Councils, and the associated National Training Strategy.

6. QUALITY PARISH COUNCILS:

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 the report by the Clerk on the rationale behind this proposal, which formed part of the Rural White Paper. He advised that this matter would be discussed at the seminar referred to in Minute No. 5 above, and a report given at a future meeting.

The report was Noted.

7. NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY:

Members considered the report which had been attached to Appendix 2 above, and noted that this item would be discussed more fully at a future meeting together with the Clerk's report on his attendance at the seminar on 15th December.

8. COMMUNITY APPRAISALS:

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 the Clerk's report on his attendance at an information meeting arranged by the District Council on 6th December following the Appraisal in which the Council had participated vis-a-vis community facilities, environmental concerns, health issues and other matters. The survey across all parishes in the District, had revealed a uniform concern over a number of issues, which would now be addressed by a number of agencies, and further strategy development workshops arranged. It was explained that the Government Office for the North East would now consider the

findings of the survey, and the results of this exercise should be made known in February 2002. The report was Noted and further details awaited.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS:

The meeting considered as Appendix 4 the report by the Clerk following the meeting which the Chairman, Councillor Westmorland and himself had had with Dave Roberts, Head of Operations at the District Council, and Colin Huntington the Environmental Services Manager. The meeting had been arranged following Mr.Roberts' undertaking to meet with parish councils to discuss matters of concern on environmental issues. Both officers took on board the Council's complaints, which were forcefully made, and promised to attend as a matter of urgency to complaints over encroaching undergrowth on the main road through the village which was reducing the width of the highway. The meeting had been helpful and informative, though it was recognised that vigilance would be needed to monitor the success of the attention which had been promised.

The report was Noted.

10. LAND EAST OF DENE ROAD:

Following the decision of the Government Inspector to approve with certain conditions, the housing development on this land, the Clerk reported that the Chairman, Councillor M.Gustard and himself were to meet with Ian Forster, Head of Development at the District Council on 11th December, to express a number of concerns which the parish council entertained over various aspects of this planning application, and to seek clarification on the question of land ownership.

The Clerk reminded the meeting of a meeting which he had arranged with the Council's solicitor in order to investigate the practicability of contesting the decision (see Minute No.3(i) (a) above).

11. HEDGEROWS:

The Clerk reported that only one quotation had been received for the re-instatement work, although a further one was expected. In view of the lukewarm response to the invitations which had been issued to a number of contractors, it was :

Agreed : That attempts be made to seek in-house quotations from the County Council and the District Council for this work.

12. PARISH COUNCILS (MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT) ORDER:

The Clerk apologised for not having been able to circulate copies of this document as intended; this was caused by copyright problems. A shortened version would be made available for the next meeting, long with full details of the legislative requirements.

13. CORRESPONDENCE :

a) District of Easington - Sewerage System

Acknowledgement from the Head of Planning re: a request for certain information following the meeting with officers of Northumbrian Water. A full response would be given by the Council's deadline date of 12th December.

b) Dalton-le-Dale - Conservation Status

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from the Head of Planning at Easington District Council advising that following consultation with the County Council, he was unable to consider the village as

a candidate for Conservation Area Status. The Clerk further reported on a telephone conversation with the appropriate officer of the County Council, who outlined the criteria for the granting of such status, which included evidence of the survival of the original settlement. He took the view that because of relatively recent intrusive development, such evidence was minimal, and further claimed that the lack of what he called "commercial activity" reduced the attractiveness of the village to potential funding bodies. The report was Noted, but

Agreed : That further attempts be made via the Council for the Protection of Rural England and by the imposition of further tree preservation orders to protect the village from further piecemeal development

c) National Association of Local Councils - 14th/16th June 2002

The Clerk reported receipt of documentation relating to Conference, at which he suggested representation would be advantageous on this occasion in view of the onset of the Rural White Paper and associated matters. The delegate fee would be £82.25 including VAT.

Agreed : That the Clerk be authorised to represent the Parish Council at the Annual Conference, and that the appropriate rates of travel and accomodation allowances be paid.

d) Dalton-le-Dale Community Association - Financial Assistance

The Chairman declared an interest in this item, and vacated the Chair.

Agreed : That Councillor A.Westmorland take the Chair during discussion on this matter. (Councillor Westmorland in the Chair)

The meeting considered a letter submitted by the Chair of the Community Association referring to the suggestion that confirmation be sought from the Parish Council that should any future financial support be required towards its efforts to obtain funding for a new village hall, a sum of £2000 be provided for the project. Discussion ensued, during which it was felt that the wording of the letter was somewhat ambiguous, and that further clarification was necessary.

Agreed :

- a) That the principle of the Parish Council's support for this project be upheld and re-inforced.**
- b) That clarification of the Community Association's precise requirements on this occasion be requested, so that further consideration could be given.**

(Councillor W.Hepplewhite in the Chair)

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS :

The following new applications were Noted :

- a) Proposed private garage at 5 Weymouth Drive for Mr.& Mrs.Brown
- b) Proposed conversion of garage to study, front porch & storage building at 46 Dawlish Close for Mr.& Mrs.Shek

15. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

Agreed : That Approval be given for payment of the following Accounts :

040	J.Abbot	Clerk's Salary - November 2001	£307.60
041	J.Abbot	Postage/Telephone/Printing - November 2001	£17.21
042	A.Westmorland	Travel Expenses - DAPTC Annual Meeting	£29.45
043	District of Easington	Servicing Dog Bins - Sept.2001-March 200	£133.25
044	Geo.F.White	Rent of Recreation Ground	£15.00
045	Audit Commission	Audit Fee 2000-2001	£158.63

16. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :

a) Golden Jubilee - 3rd June 2002

The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the Queen's Golden Jubilee Party, and it was suggested that a joint celebration be held with the Parochial Church Council, Women's Institute and Community Association - to be discussed at the next meeting.

b) District of Easington Standards Committee

The Clerk reported proposals for this committee, which would be summarised for consideration at a future meeting.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

The Chairman reminded members that the normal practice was to have a meeting recess in January, but that in view of the wishes of members to become more proactively involved in parish affairs, he felt that an additional meeting might be advantageous in order to progress this. Accordingly, it was

Agreed :

a) That a Special Meeting of the Council be held on Thursday 10th January 2002.

b) That the next meeting of the Council take place on Thursday 7th February 2002, and that Approval be given to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk to conduct any urgent items which may arise during the recess.

The Chairman closed the meeting by wishing everyone present the Compliments of the Season.