

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING -10th JANUARY 2002

PRESENT: Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman) Councillors G.Gustard, M.Gustard, W.Kennedy, R.Olaman, M.Oliver & A.Westmorland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillor E.Armstrong

2. QUALITY PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS :

At the outset of the meeting, the Clerk circulated a summary of the Government's intentions in proposing the establishment of Quality Councils as part of its Rural White Paper, the benefits which would accrue to those local councils which attained quality status, and the tests which would have to be met in order to achieve this goal.

He pointed out that the aim of the proposals was entirely consistent with the nature of the discussions which the meeting had been convened to conduct, and would persuade members that their wishes were in line with the need to modernise and extend local government at its grassroots level.

It was emphasised that the matter was currently at the consultation stage, and farther guidance and information would follow in order to allow individual councils to decide whether or not to embrace the opportunities which the new legislation would offer.

3. "THE WAY FORWARD - AIMS & OBJECTIVES" :

The Chairman reminded members that the meeting had been convened in response to a stated wish for the Council to become more pro-active in its approach to local affairs, and to extend if possible, its functions in order to enhance the level of various services which were provided in the parish by other local authorities and agencies.

Lengthy discussion took place, during which many ideas were put forward as to how progress could be made and monitored, and during this debate, a subjective pattern emerged which it was felt would present the best means of approach, and which would give each individual member a stake in one or more aspects of the Council's work, and allow detailed and efficient decisions to be made on how these could be best dealt with. The following headings were put forward :

- o Health & Safety
- o Planning
- o Conservation
- o Maintenance
- o Regeneration
- o Publicity & Communications
- o General Purposes

It was suggested that these seven heads of activity could be divided between two teams of members,

which would establish a form of subject "specialisation" and enable a more detailed consideration to be given to each topic, with appropriate recommendations being passed to the Council for decision, and it was

Agreed : That the matter be debated further at the next meeting of the Council, when the necessary procedures could be approved.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS :

Various members referred to the noxious smell which had pervaded the village since 2nd January, following spraying which had taken place in fields to the south. In reply to complaints, the District Council's Environmental Health Department had indicated that this had been caused by the spreading of fertiliser pellets manufactured by Northumbrian Water, derived it was believed, from human waste. Further enquiries were ongoing, but in the meantime the Department was to issue Witness Statements to those residents who wished to make formal complaints, and if the demand was sufficient, action would be taken under the Public Health Act.

Agreed : That a formal letter/of complaint be sent to the District Council, with a request for an investigation to be carried out into the background to the nuisance, and for the appropriate remedial action to be taken.