

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 10th OCTOBER 2002

PRESENT: Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman)

Councillors E.W.Armstrong, G.Gustard, M.Gustard, W.Kennedy, R.Olaman, A.Westmorland

15 residents of the Parish

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillor M.Oliver

2. DALTON-LE-DALE IN BLOOM 2002 -PRIZE PRESENTATION

The Chairman welcomed the award winners and their wives, although he was sorry to note that the competition judge, Keith Henson of Seaham Town Council Parks Department was unable to attend because of work commitments. He thanked all those who had entered the competition, and complimented everyone for the high standard which had been achieved, and which had made the judging so difficult.

Prizes were presented as follows :

Best overall garden Mr.J.Monarch "DunRoamin", Dene Road

Best front garden Mr.E.Steel "Dalton Lodge" The Dene

Best hanging Baskets Mr.A.Keegan 1 Weymouth Drive, Dalton Grange

Certificates of Merit were awarded to :

Mrs. J.Bradford 14 Yarmouth Close

Mrs.A-Dixon "Hawthorn House" Dene Road

Mr.A-Elliott 4 Yarmouth Close

Mrs.M.Scott 56 Weymouth Drive

Mr.P.Tomlinson "Devon House" Dene Road

Mr.N.Turner 52 Weymouth Drive

3. POLICE REPORT:

P.C.Andy Wilkinson reported little activity during the month, except for the usual seasonal fireworks and the nuisance being caused by youngsters gathering around the Church gathering conkers.

Councillor Olaman advised that this problem was still ongoing, and he cited an instance in which following a particularly offensive confrontation with a gang of youths, he had requested attendance by the local beat

officer and the motorised rural beat unit. Only the latter officer had attended, but with little satisfactory outcome. P.C.Wilkinson pointed out that Police work had to be prioritised, but that they attended incidents whenever possible.

It was reported that drug activities had re-commenced in the disused building near Cragdale Villas, and P.C.Wilkinson undertook to arrange monitoring patrols. The Chairman thanked the officer for his attendance and he left the meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the problems which were being encountered at the Churchyard, and ways of combatting them were considered. It was suggested that one method would be to lop off the lower branches so as to make them less accessible from the ground, while it was felt that an approach to East Durham & Houghall College might offer a less drastic solution. It was

Agreed : That the matter be investigated further and that in the meantime, the District Council be requested to carry out a tidying up operation, both from an appearance point of view, and to minimise the potential danger to pedestrians caused by the debris.

4. DUTCH ELM DISEASE :

At this stage, the Chairman advised members that he had been requested to allow two officers of the District Council to address the meeting. Accordingly Dave Roberts, Director of Operations and Jack James, Maintenance Manager reported that existence of Dutch Elm Disease had been confirmed in trees on the north side of Dene Road from a point near the entrance to Dalden Tower westwards to the old fountain. As well as the necessary felling of the elm trees, it had been decided that as the ash and sycamore trees in the vicinity could cause a hazard when exposed to the wind, they too should be removed and replaced by native species typical for the region. The felling and removal of the trees would necessitate some form of road closure, the timescale of which was as yet unknown. Full details of the operation would be provided in due course.

The officers were thanked for their presentation and left the meeting.

5. MINUTES:

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th September 2002 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES :

a) Minute No.2 - Road Safety - Stockton Road

Noted that the County Council Highways Department had acknowledged the 1 request for a pelican type crossing in the vicinity of the Stockton Road shops.

b) Minute No.4(a) - Floral Tubs

Noted that it was recommended that maintenance of the tubs be carried out at two-monthly intervals, and that this could be done at a cost of £20 per visit.

Agreed : That Approval be given for an order to be placed with Mencap accordingly.

c) Minute No.4(b) - Parish Name Signs

Noted that the County Highways Department had acknowledged the request for boundary signs to be placed at the northern and eastern (Graham Way) boundaries of the parish, and that quotations of cost were awaited. A request would also be made for the refurbishment or renewal of the sign at the Murton boundary.

d) Minute No.4(g)- Chairman's Chain of Office

The Chairman showed members a sample of the type of chain proposed to be purchased to replace the worn ribbon. This would cost approximately £400.

Members felt that a chain which was carried on the shoulders rather than around the neck might be more appropriate, and it was

Agreed : That the matter be investigated further.

e) Minute No.7 - Hedgerows

The Clerk reported that he was still awaiting a meeting with the appropriate officer of the County Council to confirm the quotation which had been given earlier in the year.

Agreed : That the Chairman and the Clerk be authorised to expedite this matter.

f) Minute No.9 - Audit of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2002

Noted that the Council's accounts had been examined by the independent internal auditor appointed under the Accounts and Audit Regulations, and that the formal Statement of Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2002 would be sent to the External Auditors by the 22nd October deadline.

g) Minute No. 10 - Footpaths Nos.2 & 3

Noted that following a site visit by the Footpaths Officer of the County Council, it had been confirmed that a quotation in the sum of £1350 for the resurfacing of Footpath No.2 from the end of StCuthbert's Terrace to the bottom of the steps opposite the Times Inn would be subject to grant aid of £1000. This would be in addition to the grant already approved for the work carried out to Footpath No.3

Agreed : That Approval be given for the work to proceed, the Parish Council to meet the balance of £350

h) Minute No. 15(ii)(a) - Planning Application - Dalton Moor Farm

Noted that the Planning Authority had found no evidence to dispute the applicant's claim that the subject matter had been ongoing for a period in excess of 10 years, and that accordingly, a Certificate of Lawfulness had been granted.

i) Minute No. 15(ii)(b) - Land adjoining former Church Hall

Noted that following an approach to the owner of this land by the Planning Officer, the vehicles complained about had now be removed from the site.

j) Minute No. 15(ii)(c) - Land East of "Coniscliffe"

Noted that the Planning Officer had been requested to investigate this location as a matter of urgency in the light of complaints regarding barking dogs.

k) Minute No. 17(a) - Parish Lengthsman

Noted that Hawthorn Parish Council had expressed an interest in this matter, and that further

information from the County Council was awaited.

l) Minute No.18(a) - Repairs to Footbridge

Noted that repairs to the staging of the bridge to the east of the parish had been carried out.

m) Minute No.5 - Millennium Window - StAndrew's Church

Noted that the artist, Cate Watkinson was to meet with the Diocesan Advisory Committee on 16th October, at which it was expected that concerns over the design of the window would be resolved.

7. OVERDENE ESTATE - ROAD WIDENING :

Councillor Westmorland requested that following the success of the previous road widening scheme on the estate, which had been very successful, investigations might be made into the cost of widening the remainder of South View on its southern side, and the removal of the grass verge on the northern side. It was hoped that a further partnership arrangement with the County Council could be entered into to secure a cost sharing arrangement.

Agreed : That the necessary enquiries be made to facilitate this proposal.

8. MEMBER GROUPS:

The Clerk requested guidance as to the value of these two groups, which had been little used since their inception earlier in the year. Following discussion, it was

Agreed : That the groups remain active, and that they be convened by the members as appropriate.

9. PRECEPT 2003/2004:

The Clerk reminded members that the precept for the 2003/2004 financial year would be approved at the December meeting, and that in the light of the Council's increasing activities, some preliminary discussion on future expenditure might be valuable.

Agreed : That the matter be placed on the Agenda for the November meeting so that further discussion might take place.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

Receipt of the following items of correspondence was Noted :

- a) Details of the forthcoming Easington Music Festival
- b) Correspondence from the Council for the Protection of Rural England re: traffic speeds in the countryside
- c) Horden Parish Council re: reporting of meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership
- d) Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils re: The Countryside & Rights of Way Act
- e) DEFRA re: Rural Services Standard
- f) Freedom of Information Act 2000 - full report to be given at the November meeting
- g) Durham County Council - "Learn East Project"

11. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

Agreed : That Approval be given for Payment of Invoices Nos.38-46 in the sum of £581.29 as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Agenda.

Members further noted the Statement of Account prepared by the Clerk indicating a balance in hand of £43399.87 as at 10th October 2002 following receipt of the 2nd precept instalment for the current financial year.

12 PLANNING MATTERS :

The following new applications were Noted without comment:

- a) Proposed application under Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act for an extension of time for residual matters at Dalton Flatts
- b) Proposed two storey side extension at 55 Weymouth Drive for Mr.S.Usher

The following Approvals were Noted :

- a) Certificate of Lawfulness for vehicle storage - Dalton Moor Farm
- b) Extensions to provide bedroom & bathroom at 29 Dalton Heights
- c) 1st floor side extension at 15 Falmouth Close, Dalton Grange

13. REPORTS:

a) The Clerk gave a detailed report on the Annual Meeting of the Durham Association which he had attended together with Councillor Westmorland on 5th October. The main speaker had been John Findlay. Chief Executive Officer of NALC who gave a very interesting and thought-provoking talk on the opportunities which were being offered to parish councils as a result of the Government's Rural White Paper. He urged all member Councils to grasp these opportunities, or they might be lost for ever, and he emphasised that local councils would never have a better chance to play a more active part in the governance of their communities. The report was Noted.

b) The Clerk reported having received an e-mail message of greeting from his predecessor Linda Hall, who had recently become aware of the Dalton-le-Dale web site and who now passed on her best wishes to all members, to which he had responded. The report was Noted.

13 OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :

a) The Clerk was instructed to make urgent arrangements for the sweeping of the area around the Church following the recent damage caused to the chestnut tree. As well as being unsightly, the debris was causing a danger to pedestrians and Churchgoers.

b) Councillor G Gustard reported that a Service of Nine Lessons & Carols was to be held at St.Andrews on Tuesday 10th December, and an invitation had been extended to a member of the Parish Council to read one of the lessons. This invitation was accepted by the Chairman on the Parish Council's behalf, subject to any previous engagements which he might have.

c) A suggestion was made that future meetings of the Council might commence earlier than the present 7 p.m., and it was

Agreed : That this matter be considered further at the next Meeting following consultation with other members.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Thursday 7th November 2002 at 7 p.m.