

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 5TH DECEMBER 2002

PRESENT: Councillor W.Hepplewhite

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

1 resident of the parish

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillors G.Gustard & M.Gustard

2. POLICE REPORT:

Sergeant Stephen Taylor reported that the village had remained quiet over the past month. There had been one case of a stolen car at Parkside, the culprit having been arrested, and an incident on a bus on the Times Inn Bank. An outbreak of stone throwing on to the A 19 from the footbridge near Dalton Heights had been dealt with.

The Chairman referred to a telephone call which he had received from a resident of Dunelm Terrace, expressing continuing concern about the speed of traffic on the Times Inn Bank. It was suggested that consideration might be given to the painting of speed limits on the carriageway at this location, and to the provision of "rumble strips"

Sergeant Taylor undertook to take this matter up once again.

In answer to a member's question, Sergeant Taylor indicated that the new Police Station should be re-opened early in the New Year, following criminal damage to the building in the summer. He also reported that the Easington Police Division was to be re-organised, which would involve more officers being based in Seaham. This information was noted with satisfaction.

3. REPRESENTATION BY RESIDENTS:

The resident present at the meeting thanked the Council for its speedy attention to his request for two dog waste bins at Dalton Heights. He reported that a garden hedge at Dalton Grange was overhanging a public footpath, causing a potential hazard to pedestrians, and the Clerk undertook to contact the householder to request that it be cut back.

4. MINUTES:

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7th November 2002 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES :

a) Minute No.4(a) - Chestnut Tree - St.Andrew's Church

The Clerk reported that despite having sent a second letter to Houghall Agricultural College seeking advice on this matter, no response had been received. Councillor Olaman produced a document dated 1981 issued by the Department of Environment Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service on

the subject of the Control of Conker Formation. The document concluded that at that time, no recommendation could be made for the inhibition of fruit formation in the horse chestnut tree.

Agreed : That a copy of this document be passed to Houghall College in order to ascertain what new information was available to control conker growth.

b) Minute No.4(b) - Dutch Elm Disease

The Clerk reported having spoken with the District Council's Tree & Woodland officer regarding members' concerns over the proposed re-planting of trees to the east of the parish boundary to replace the dead elm trees. The officer had advised that planting would be carried out in consultation with the Forestry Commission, and that by virtue of their diverse mixture of species and maturity, the new trees would be sufficiently hardy to deal with the conditions. Additionally, it was intended to use seed from the existing ancient woodland to the south of the stream in order to retain the indigenous nature of the area, and to simulate other wooded areas on the East Durham coast, such as Hawthorn and Castle Eden Denes. The officer indicated that once the initial consultation with the Forestry Commission was complete, he would provide fuller details of the work to be done, and would be happy to give a presentation to a future meeting. The report was Noted.

c) Minute No.4(g) - Chairmans Chain of Office

The Chairman reported having made further enquiries into the acquisition of a new chain of office, and drew members' attention to a suitable mode! from the catalogue of Messrs.Toys, Kenning & Spencer. Following discussion, it was

Agreed : That Approval be given for the purchase of Chain No.C112 in silver gilt at the catalogue price (January 2002) of £512.70 plus carriage, packing, insurance and VAT.

d) Minute No.4(g) - Footpaths Nos.2 & 3

The Clerk reported that he had been advised by the contractor, that work would be undertaken as soon as possible. This would entail spraying the existing tarmac surface to eradicate weeds, followed approximately two weeks later by final re-surfacing. The report was Noted.

e) Minute No.4(i) - Millennium Window

The Clerk reported having spoken with Cate Watkinson, who had confirmed her meeting with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and the requirement that certain biblical references should be incorporated in the design. She was currently working on this, and indicated that the overall cost of the design would be increased by around £100. Once the revised design was complete, it would be re-submitted for final approval by the Advisory Committee and the Parish Council and Parochial Church Council. Her current estimate of the timescale for the completion of the window was Easter 2003. The report was Noted.

f) Minute No.4(k) - Road Widening - Overdene

The Clerk reported that Councillor Westmorland and he had arranged a site meeting with an officer of Durham County Council to discuss a possible extension to the previous road widening scheme, to ascertain the cost, and whether any further work could be carried out on a cost-sharing basis. The report was Noted.

g) Minute No. 11 - Parking - Proposed New Community Hall

The Clerk reported as a matter of information, that in order to address concerns over parking provision at the proposed new hall, enquiries were ongoing to establish ownership of appropriate parcels of land. The report was Noted.

6. CORRESPONDENCE :

a) The Chairman advised members that following an invitation from the District of Easington, the Clerk and he had attended the Chairman's Reception for Chairmen and Clerks of Parish Councils. The evening had been very enjoyable, although the attendance had been very disappointing. The report was Noted.

b) The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from the Head of Planning at the District confirming the undertaking which he had given at the last meeting of the North Area Forum to review, without prejudice, the decision not to grant conservation status to part of Dalton-le-Dale village. The correspondence was Noted.

c) The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the District Council, outlining the work which was being done to meet the Government's requirements vis-a-vis e-government and web site development. A public consultation exercise would be carried out in the near future in order to ascertain the needs of the community, and to identify likely public access points. The correspondence was Noted.

d) The Clerk reported that the Head of Economic Development at the District Council had indicated that the Local Strategic Partnership was currently working to develop a learning plan which would include a number of workshops designed to promote partnership/community cohesion. The first of these workshops was to take place in March 2003. The correspondence was Noted.

e) Members considered correspondence from the Arts Development Officer of the District Council in which he proposed a change in the format for future Music Festivals. For practical and logistical reasons, it was proposed that the date of the event be changed from October/November to mid June, although if approved, this change could not have effect until 2004. The officer sought views on this proposed change, and also requested ideas for new events/activities.

Agreed : That the proposed change of dates be supported, and that the Arts Officer be recommended to consider arranging a "buskers" event as part of the programme.

f) The Clerk reported on correspondence from Barclays Bank, offering a choice of benefits for holders of Community (Current) Accounts. The Clerk recommended that in view of the minimal balances which were carried in this Account, with the consequent minimal interest which would accrue, the alternative of unlimited free banking would be more beneficial.

Agreed : That the recommendation of the Clerk be adopted, and that the Bank be advised accordingly.

g) The Clerk submitted a request for Financial Assistance from the Durham County Association for the Disabled, and it was

Agreed : That in accordance with the provisions of Section 137 of The Local Government Act 1972 as amended. Approval be given for the payment of the sum of £30 to this organisation.

h) The Clerk reported receipt of a Christmas Card from Mr. John Cummings M.P. which was handed to the Chairman on behalf of the Council.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

The Clerk reported receipt of the following new applications :

- a) Proposed Community Hall-Dene Road for Dalton-le-Dale Community Association
- b) Proposed change of use from Signmakers to Hot Food Takeaway-Grasmere House
- c) Proposed side extension & replacement garage-30 Sidmouth Close
- d) Proposed side kitchen & garage extension-10 Falmouth Close

Agreed : That:

- i) **A strong letter of support be sent to the District Council in respect of item (a) together with a request to speak at the appropriate planning meeting.**
- ii) **A letter of objection be sent to the District Council in respect of item (b) on the grounds of traffic problems, road safety, and litter, noise and smell nuisances, together with a request to speak at the appropriate planning meeting.**
- iii) **Items (c) and (d) be Noted without comment.**

8. 2003/4 NATIONAL SALARY AWARD (STAGE 2) - CLERICS SALARY :

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 the report of the Clerk in respect of this award.

Agreed : That the report be Noted and that Approval be given for the implementation of the joint recommendations of the National Joint Council, the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

9. PRECEPT - 2003/2004 :

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 the report of the Clerk setting out details of expenditure incurred to 30th November, projected expenditure to the end of the current year, and estimates of income and expenditure for the 2003/2004 financial year. Discussion ensued on the level of available balances, and on current and projected commitments, and it was

Agreed : That an unchanged Precept of £11,000 be issued in respect of the 2003/2004 financial year, and that the Council of the District of Easington be advised accordingly.

10. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 :

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 the report of the Clerk in respect of this legislation which the Council was obliged to adopt by 31st December 2002.

Agreed : That the report be Noted and that in accordance with the Model Scheme for Parish Councils as designated by the Information Commissioner, the recommendations of the Clerk be Adopted as follows :

- a) Core Classes of Information Nos. 1 to 6
- b) Optional Classes of Information Nos. 1,4,5 & 6 within the Core Class
- c) Optional Classes of Information Nos. 7 & 9

11. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 55 - 60 in the sum of £662.80 as outlined in Appendix 4 to the Agenda.

12. COMPUTERISED ACCOUNTING SYSTEM :

The Clerk submitted information from Redview Computers in respect of an accounting system appropriate to small and medium parish councils whose limited income and expenditure required a Receipts and Payments method of accounting only. The system was designed to provide a basic cashbook summary of income and expenditure with supporting cashbook statement and bank reconciliation, a budget report monitoring cumulative payments against budget provision, concise monthly reports for submission to meetings, and an automatic year end VAT repayment claim. The initial cost of the package would be £115 (nett), with an option to take up telephone support cover at £20 per annum after the first year. At the Clerk's request, it was

Agreed : That Approval be given for the purchase of "The Cashbook Clerk" basic package in the sum of £115 plus VAT (recoverable).

13. HEDGEROWS :

Further to Minute No.4(f) of the November meeting, the Clerk reported the receipt of a late quotation for the infill planting of new hedgerows on public footpath No.1. In view of the urgent need to expedite the planting, the bona fides of the contractor concerned, and the price quoted, it was

Agreed : That the quotation from Trevor Atkinson & Co. of Mickleton, Barnard Castle in the sum of £3171.00 (nett) be Approved, and that the Clerk be authorised to arrange for the work to be carried out as soon as practicable.

14. REPORTS:

a) Councillor M.Gustard reported on the Annual Meeting of the Community Association, which had been very well attended, but at which differing views had been expressed on the need for such a large building, whether its use should be confined to residents of the village, and the question of parking facilities. Members of the Management Committee made a robust defence of the proposals for the project, which was now at the planning application stage, and the outcome of this was eagerly

awaited. The report was Noted.

b)The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Tidy Easington District meeting on 13th November, at which emphasis was placed on the tougher measures being introduced to deal with dog owners who allowed their animals to foul public areas. The expectation was that a 40 success rate could be achieved. It was also reported that the Christmas tree recycling initiative would be repeated. The report was Noted.

15. CASUAL VACANCY - CO-OPTION :

Mr. Leslie Keegan of Dalton Heights who had expressed an interest in filling the long-standing vacancy on the Council was invited to address the meeting. Mr.Keegan pointed out that he had been attending meetings regularly for some months, and now felt that he could confidently submit himself for co-option, especially since his part of the parish was not presently represented on the Council. Accordingly, it was

Agreed : That Mr.Leslie Keegan be formally co-opted as a member of Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council, and that he be allowed to sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next meeting.

In welcoming Mr.Keegan as a member of the Council, the Chairman expressed great satisfaction that all areas of the parish were now represented.

16. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :

- a) The Chairman expressed the hope that the Parish Newsletter would be ready for Distribution early in the New Year, and the Clerk confirmed that preparation work was well under way.
- b) Councillor Westmorland suggested that the notice board near the entrance to Dalton Heights, one of whose perspex windows had been damaged, be repaired using unbreakable glass, and the Clerk was authorised to make the necessary arrangements.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

Agreed : That in view of the usual Christmas and New Year recess, the next Meeting of the Council be held on Thursday 6th February 2003, and that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk be authorised to deal with any urgent matters which may arise during the recess.

In closing the meeting, the Chairman wished everyone the Compliments of the Season