

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 6TH FEBRUARY 2003

PRESENT: Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman)

Councillors E.W.Armstrong, G.Gustard, L.Keegan, R.Olaman, M.Oliver, A.Westmorland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillors G.Gustard & W.Kennedy

2. POLICE REPORT:

Sergeant Stephen Taylor reported little Police activity since the December meeting. Three incidents had been dealt with - a burglary in the village on 30th December, in which tools were stolen, damage to properties in the area of the waterworks on 19th January, and a damaged car in Dale Terrace, possibly in an attempt to steal it. Sergeant Taylor's letter to Traffic Headquarters regarding the continuing concern at traffic speed on the Times Inn bank was noted. In discussion, it was acknowledged that the general layout of the road prevented further calming measures, although it was suggested that the provision of rumble strips might assist with the problem. The use of unmarked police vehicles to help combat speeding was suggested, and Sergeant Taylor reported that this was already in place to a limited extent, with the purpose of warning drivers about excessive speeds. It was noted that there was to be a traffic office based on the new Dalton Park retail centre, where a dedicated car may be provided to cover the A19. If this became operational, it would free a car from Seaham, which may be able to cover the B1285 to a greater degree. It was pointed out that the hours of 8a.m. to 9a.m. and 5p.m. to 6.30p.m. were the worst times for speeding, and that these should be given priority. Sergeant Taylor requested that a direct approach should be made to the Police Traffic Section via the County Council Highways Department.

3. COUNCILLOR L.KEEGAN-DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE:

Following his co-option to fill the casual vacancy on the Council, Councillor Keegan duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was countersigned by the Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council.

4. MINUTES:

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th December 2002 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member), be Approved and Signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Minute No.14(a) to read "Councillor M.Gustard"

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES :

a) Minute No.4(a) - Chestnut Tree

The Clerk reported attempts to arrange a site meeting with an officer of Houghall Agricultural College to investigate means of restricting the growth of conkers on the tree in an attempt to alleviate the nuisance caused to residents by youngsters in the Autumn.

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

The Clerk reported that the District Council would commence the tree felling near Dalden Tower during the week commencing February 3rd, during which time, the road through the village would be closed to traffic. The report was Noted.

c) Minute No.4(e) - Chairman's Chain of Office

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by the retailers that the Chain was not a stock item and would be made to order. Delivery would therefore be delayed. The Clerk further reported that in consultation with the Chairman, he had ordered a suitable carrying case at a catalogue price of £80.

Agreed : That the report be Noted, and that the action of the Chairman and the Clerk be Endorsed.

d) Minute No.4(f) - Hedgerows

The Clerk reported that work on planting the hedgerows had now been completed and the invoice paid. The application to the County Council for grant aid had been issued, and payment was awaited. There had been a number of complimentary comments passed regarding the outcome. The report was Noted.

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

The Clerk reported that because of the recent bad weather, no progress had been made with the resurfacing. This would now be progressed as a matter of urgency.

f) Minute No.6(b) - Conservation Status

Councillor M.Gustard requested that this item be placed on the Agenda for further consideration at the March meeting. This was **Agreed**.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

The Clerk reported receipt of the following items :

a) Horden Parish Council-Local Strategic Partnership

It was Noted that agendas for future meetings of the LSP would be sent to all Parish councils for information purposes, and that any items for inclusion should be submitted no later than 12 noon on the day prior to the meeting.

b) Peterlee Town Council-District of Easington Sports Action Zone Bid

Details of this bid were outlined, and the agreed involvement of parish and town councils as key partners was approved. Accordingly, it was

Agreed : That approval be given in principle to a contribution of £50 towards the matching funding of the bid should it be successful.

c) Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils-Section 137 Expenditure

It was Noted that Councils' maximum expenditure under this provision was to be increased from £3.50 to £5 per elector with effect from 1st April 2003.

d) Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils-Rights of Way

It was Noted that under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 extra duties were to be imposed on Highway Authorities to ensure that their rights of way and public footpaths were brought up to acceptable standards, so as to provide for a wider range of user.

Agreed : That consideration be given to the walking of the Rights of Way within the parish so as to ascertain their condition and suitability.

e) Durham County Council-Environment Award Scheme 2003

Details of this scheme and the conditions relating thereto were Noted.

f) District of Easington-Cultural Strategy

A copy of the Council's Strategy Report was Received for Members' information.

g) Tyne Tees Television-Video of Broadcast on 9th January

Details of the cost of acquiring this item were submitted and considered, and it was

Agreed : That no further action be taken.

h) District of Easington-Tree Felling

Details of the timetable for carrying out this work, including the closure of the village road as a through route between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.-from Monday to Friday 3rd to 7th February, were Noted.

i) Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils-Quality Status Seminar

Details of this event, to be organised by the National Association in London on 18th March were Received.

j) District of Easington-Music Festival 2003

It was Noted that a meeting to discuss the Festival would be held at the District Council offices on Monday 24th February at 6.30 p.m. The Festival itself would take place between Saturday 4th October and Saturday 1st November 2003.

k) Durham County Association for the Disabled-Letter of Appreciation

A letter of thanks from the Association in acknowledgement of the Council's recent donation in the sum of £30 was Noted.

7. PLANNING MATTERS:

a) Proposed New Community Hall

It was Noted with satisfaction that the application by the Dalton-le-Dale Community Association for the provision of a new purpose built community facility on the site of the existing W.I.Hall had been approved, and that steps were now being taken to secure the appropriate funding.

b) Proposed Change of Use from Signmakers to Hot Food Takeaway-Grasmere House

It was Noted that the application by Mr.D.Batth had been rejected on highway and environmental

considerations.

8. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & FINANCIAL REPORT :

a) Agreed : That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 061 to 068 in the sum of £4894.96 as listed in Appendix 1 to the Agenda.

b) Agreed : That the Statement of Account for the period 1st April 2002 to 31st January 2003 (a copy of which was circulated at the meeting) be Noted and Approved.

c) Agreed : That the Clerk's report that the Audit of the Council's accounts for the 2001/2002 financial year had been satisfactorily completed under the new Audit Regulations regime be Noted and Approved.

9. OVERDENE ESTATE - ROAD WIDENING :

Councillor Westmorland reported on the site meeting which he and the Clerk had attended with a Technical Officer of the County Council in connection with the proposed extension of the road widening in South View in order to facilitate traffic movement and improve residents' parking facilities. Agreement had been reached on the best method by which this could be accomplished. The Clerk reported that an estimate of the cost of the work involved was now to hand, in the sum of £4,000 to which the County Council had agreed a 50/50 contribution. Councillor Westmorland requested that as he had done during negotiations on the first phase of the scheme, he be given authority to approach the officer again to seek an increase in the County Council's contribution on this occasion.

Agreed : That Councillor Westmorland be authorised to carry out further negotiations as outlined .and that he and the Clerk proceed accordingly.

10. MILLENNIUM WINDOW:

The Clerk submitted Cate Watkinson's revised design for the window, incorporating the appropriate biblical references, which had been approved by the Vicar and the Parochial Church Council. The next step would be for the Vicar to proceed with the necessary faculty, and this would be considered at a meeting of the Diocesan Advisory Committee in early March. Members were unanimously in favour of the new design, and in view of the urgency which it was felt should now be attached to the project, it was

Agreed : That the current position be Noted, and that the Clerk oversee progress with a view to securing a satisfactory outcome at the earliest opportunity.

11. FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS :

Discussion ensued on the need to carry out a scheme of environmental improvements in the village, especially in the vicinity of the village green and the bridge, which in view of its historical associations might qualify for some form of grant aid. The Clerk clarified the precise boundary of the green, which it was felt had to be protected from further vehicular encroachment, and undertook to ascertain the ownership of the bridge, expected to be under the control of the County Council as Highway Authority.

Agreed : That when the necessary information was to hand, the Planning, Conservation and Regeneration sub-committee meet to draw up a scheme of improvements for consideration by the Council.

12. DISTRICT OF EASINGTON - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES :

The meeting Noted the report of the District Council on the working of its various Operations as outlined in Appendix 2 to the Agenda circulated by the Clerk.

13. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT:

The Clerk reported having received correspondence from the County and District Councils canvassing the views of Parish & Town Councils as to the desirability of holding a referendum to establish interest in the creation of a Regional Assembly for the north east. In view of the tight deadline for responses, the Clerk advised that he had consulted with the Chairman, who had authorised the sending of positive responses to both Councils.

Agreed : That the action of the Chairman and Clerk in this matter be Noted and Endorsed.

14. DISTRICT OF EASINGTON - NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS :

Members considered as Appendix 3 the report by the District Council on the operation of the forthcoming local government election as a result of the ward changes which will come into force in Dalton-le-Dale. As members were already aware, the village of Dalton-le-Dale and Overdene would remain within Murton East Ward, while the rest of the parish would be included in Deneside Ward. As far as the parish election was concerned, separate nominations for office would be required for each of the wards, with 4 members being required to serve the village and Overdene, and 5 members for the remainder of the parish.

Agreed : That the implications for the electoral changes be Noted.

15. REPORTS :

a) The Chairman gave a brief report on his attendance at a recent TED meeting, at which it had been reported that the usual notification for litter and refuse collection arrangements at holiday periods were to be discontinued. It had also been agreed to ensure that the Council's waste disposal sites should be available for public use at the published times.

b) Councillor M.Oliver reported that because of work commitments, she had been unable to attend the recent meeting of the Police Liaison Committee.

16. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :

The Clerk was instructed to attend to the following matters reported by members :

a) To arrange for the replacement of the broken handrails on the wooden bridge

b) To arrange for the removal of a tree which had fallen across the stream, and which was impeding the flow of water and was threatening to undermine the banks.

- c) To arrange for the replenishment of the grit bin at the end of Dale Terrace
- d) To report to the RSPCA the problem of feral cats roaming parts of Dalton Grange.
- e) To make arrangements for the problem of speeding vehicles on Dalton Heights to be discussed during the Police Report at the March meeting. It was suggested that instead of the usual road humps, it might be possible to impose a 20 mph speed restriction throughout the estate.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Thursday 6th March 2003 at 7p.m.