

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING – 3RD APRIL 2003

**PRESENT : Councillors M.Gustard, W.Hepplewhite, L.Keegan, W.Kennedy, R.Olaman,
M.Oliver & A.Westmorland**

**CHAIRMAN : In view of the indisposition of the Chairman, Councillor M.Oliver, Vice
Chairman, took the Chair.**

(Councillor M.Oliver in the Chair)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillors E.W.Armstrong & G.Gustard

2. POLICE REPORT :

P.C.Nigel Avent reported that Sergeant Stephen Taylor had been succeeded by Sergeant Gary Webb, who would be attending meetings in future, operational duties permitting.

P.C.Avent went on to report on a fairly quiet month, during which Police had responded to an alarm at Dalton Moor Farm, and a break in at the Times Inn during the early hours of Monday 17th March. This latter incident followed a number of similar occurrences in Murton, in which thieves had targeted fruit machines. Police dogs had tracked the culprits through Dalton-le-Dale village, and he warned residents to be vigilant. The usual times for such offences were Thursdays to Sundays, and the Police could be contacted on 581 2255.

In early March a tanker type vehicle had been abandoned in the village, though it was subsequently recovered by the driver, while a car with its windows broken had been abandoned in the park. P.C.Avent explained that the Police could only arrange for the removal of such vehicles if they had been reported as stolen, otherwise the local authority had to affix a seven day notice prior to their removal and disposal.

Reference was made to traffic speed in Dalton Heights, and Councillor Keegan undertook to make enquiries as to the best method of combating the problem.

3. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6th March 2003 (a copy of which had

been sent previously to each member) be **Approved and Signed** as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES :

The Clerk reported on progress with the following matters :

a) Minute No.4(a) – Horse Chestnut Tree

Following the advice given by Councillor M.Gustard regarding the legal status of the Churchyard, an approach was to be made to the Archdeacon for formal approval for the appropriate treatment to be given to the tree. Consultation had taken place with the District Council's Tree Officer, who had suggested that new blossom should be pruned at the appropriate time in order to curtail the growth of conkers, but it was acknowledged that this would not solve the problem of the overhanging branches which were causing the tree to tilt, causing a potential danger to pedestrians and parked vehicles. Accordingly, it was

Agreed : That Approval be given for the remedial action suggested by Houghall Enterprises to be carried out subject to the approval of the Church authorities, and that the District of Easington be invited to contribute to the cost.

b) Minute No.4(b) – Public Footpath, St.Andrew's Recreation Area

It was Noted with satisfaction that the re-surfacing had now been completed.

c) Minute No.4(d) – Road Widening at Overdene

It was Noted that the County Council was unable to improve on its 50% contribution towards this work, and accordingly, a request had been made for the widening to be carried out at an early date.

d) Minute No.4(e) – Millennium Window

The Vicar had confirmed that he had applied for the Faculty to allow the work to proceed. Once the permission was confirmed, the artist would commence the manufacture of the window, which she indicated would take around one month to complete.

e) Minute No.5(e) – Hedgerow Grant

It was Noted that the grant from the County Council in the sum of £2506.60 had now been received.

f) Minute No.15(b) – Sunday Gun Club

It was Noted that details of the conditions under which the club operated were awaited from the District Council's Planning Section, though it was felt that the activities were finishing earlier than usual.

5. CORRESPONDENCE :

a) District of Easington – Dog Waste Bins – Maintenance Contract

The Clerk reported having signed the Contract for the servicing of the waste bins for the 2003/4 financial year. The Clerk's action was Noted and Endorsed.

(At this point, Councillor G.Gustard joined the meeting)

b) Countryside Agency – Countryside & Rights of Way Act

The Clerk reported for information and consultation purposes, a copy of the Draft Map of open country and registered common land (of which there is none in the parish of Dalton-le-Dale). The documents were available for members' inspection if requested.

c) District of Easington – Local Government Elections

The District Council reminded Clerks that it would be necessary to require their new members to complete new Declarations of Acceptance of Office, even though they might be elected without contest, and also to complete new Declarations of Interest.

Councillor E.Armstrong had written to the Chairman advising that he was not seeking re-election, and had not therefore completed a nomination form. In view of this, it was

Agreed : That a suitable reply be sent to Councillor Armstrong thanking him for his services to the Parish Council over a number of years.

The Clerk pointed out that Councillor Armstrong's decision meant that there would be a vacancy on the new Council for the Dalton Urban Ward, and that this would have to be filled by co-option.

d) Mencap – Floral Tubs

Following the recent theft of the central shrubs from the tubs, Mencap had confirmed that they would replace these with suitable plants as requested. Delivery of these was awaited, and they would be planted as soon as possible.

e) Society of Local Council Clerks - Membership

The Clerk advised that as the proposed County Durham branch of the Society had not yet been formed, there was at this stage little need for membership to be taken out, although since the Society would be involved in the forthcoming Clerks' training programme, the situation might change.

f) District of Easington – Dalton Bridge and Environs

The District Council's Head of Planning indicated that he was to meet with the County Council's Design & Conservation Officer to consider the Parish Council's request for advice and assistance in its desire to improve the appearance of the bridge and its surroundings, as well as to re-address the possibility of Conservation Status being granted to that part of the village. It was felt that members should meet to discuss what needs to be done, with a view to seeking the advice of the Countryside Agency as to the availability of financial assistance, and the "Doorstep Greens" project to seek information on grants for feasibility studies.

g) DEFRA – Quality Status

The letter sought to re-affirm the value of Quality Status and to remind Councils of the criteria required for attaining the status. Detailed guidance for the scheme would be made available in May, and the County Panels which would assess applications were expected to be set up by June.

6. PLANNING MATTERS :

a) New Applications :

- i) Proposed conversion of existing shop into 2 units and Change of Use to Hot Food Takeaway – Jubilee Stores.
- ii) Proposed private garage at 26 Escallond Drive

Agreed : a) That an objection be made in respect of Item (i) on the same grounds as for other similar applications in this area.

b) That application (ii) be Noted without comment

b) Approved Applications :

- i) Proposed conservatory at 30 Sidmouth Close
- ii) Proposed side extension at 44 Escallond Drive

Agreed : That these approvals be Noted

c) Refused Application :

- i) Proposed static residential caravan at The Paddock, North of Dene Road

Agreed : That this refusal be Noted

7. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & FINANCIAL REPORT :

Agreed : a) That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 001 to 003 in the sum of £430.09 as listed in Appendix 1 to the Agenda.

b) That the Statement of Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2003 (copies of which were circulated at the meeting) be Noted.

c) That in accordance with the report of the Clerk in connection with the nationally negotiated Local Government Pay Award 2002, and circulated prior to the meeting, Approval be given to the payment of the revised monthly salary of £371.97 effective from 1st April 2003.

8. DALTON-LE-DALE NAMEPLATE SIGNS :

The Clerk reported having consulted with the County Council's Area Traffic Engineer over the

imposition of a charge for the renewal of the nameplate sign at the Murton parish boundary, the understanding being that signs which were in need of attention were replaced at the County's expense, and this practice had been borne out in conversations with other parish council clerks.

Agreed : That Approval be given for the provision of new style signs at the parish boundary on The Graham Way and on Stockton Road, in accordance with the County Council's quotation, and that the County be invited to review the situation with regard to the Murton sign.

9. REPORTS :

- a) The Clerk reported that he had passed a copy of Sergeant Stephen Taylor's letter in connection with the continuing concerns over traffic speed on the Times Inn bank to the County Council's Area Traffic Engineer. The letter contained a number of recommendations for the alleviation of the problem, and would be passed on to Police headquarters for their comments.
- b) Further to previous discussion regarding the provision of traffic calming measures at Dalton Heights, Councillor Keegan undertook to consult with residents as to whether the preferred option was speed humps or the imposition of a 20 mph speed limit.

10. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :

The Clerk was instructed to take appropriate action with regard to the following matters raised by members :

- a) To seek the re-instatement of the missing "Graham Way" nameplate sign.
- b) To report the uneven stretch of road near the Times Inn and former blacksmith's cottage, which posed a danger of damage to passing vehicles. It was noted that County Council staff had been seen carrying out repairs at this location.
- c) To investigate the complaint that the District Council's gulley cleansing machines were travelling too quickly to be effective.
- d) To seek urgent action for the removal of the remaining debris from the stream which was causing increasing erosion of the bank sides.
- e) To enquire whether any invitations had been issued to neighbouring parish councils to be represented at the opening of the Dalton Park retail outlet which was due to take place on 10th April.

11. CHAIRMAN'S CHAIN OF OFFICE :

The Clerk reported receipt of the new chain and carrying case which was displayed for members' inspection, and which was received with approval.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

In view of the Local Government Elections which were to be held on 1st May, it was

Agreed : That the next meeting of the Council, which would be the Annual Meeting, would be held on Thursday 8th May, immediately following the Annual Meeting of Electors which would commence at 6.30 p.m.