

# DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 3RD JULY 2003

**PRESENT : Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman)**

**Councillors M.Gustard, L.Keegan, W.Kennedy, R.Olaman, M.Oliver.**

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

**Councillor G.Gustard (Work commitments)**

**Councillor A.Westmorland (Holiday)**

-----

### 2. POLICE REPORT :

Sergeant Gary Webb was welcomed on his first attendance at a Council meeting to present the monthly report.

On 7th June at around 4 p.m. two young girls were accosted by a group of youths while on their way from Dalton Park, and although they were not physically attacked, they were very upset. Enquiries were pending. On 22nd June damage was caused to a car in Maureen Terrace near the parish boundary, while youths on motor scooters were causing a danger to pedestrians in the same area. A domestic dispute in Queens Avenue on 28th June in which a lady had been held in a house, led to a person being arrested. No formal complaint had been made.

Referring to members' concerns raised at the June meeting, Sergeant Webb reported that Police had questioned a number of people in and around a car parked at the eastern end of the village. Drug activities had been suspected, but no action had been taken, although monitoring would continue.

One person had been charged with the theft of diesel fuel at Glebe Farm which had been ongoing for some time.

General discussion ensued on the continuing problems on the B1285 caused by speeding, and it was acknowledged that increased traffic following the opening of Dalton Park retail outlet was exacerbating the problem. Sergeant Webb explained that he was awaiting up to date statistics, but that in the meantime, he would contact the Traffic Section at Police H.Q. to seek further assistance. At this stage, the Clerk reported that he had invited a traffic officer to a site meeting to discuss the situation, especially at the Overdene junction, and to look at a growing problem at the entrance to Dalton Heights.

In answer to a member's question, Sergeant Webb reported that Police activity on the evening of July

2nd had been in response to reported drugs activity in the Stockton Road area.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Webb for his comprehensive report, and he left the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES :**

**Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th June 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 :**

#### **a) Minute No.4(a) - Horse Chestnut Tree**

It was Noted with satisfaction that Houghall Enterprises had completed the pruning of the tree, and it was generally agreed, that the result was most satisfactory.

#### **b) Minute No.4(c) - Debris in Stream**

While agreeing that the clearance of the remaining rubbish had been carried out well by Northumbrian Water, and that the water was now flowing freely, members felt that further work needed to be done further downstream. It was also felt that some form of grille should be attached to sewage outflow pipes to prevent them from becoming blocked, causing the escape of sewage into the stream, which had occurred recently.

#### **c) Minute No.4(h) - Blocked Drains**

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the recent meeting of the District Council's Consultative Committee, at which he had drawn attention to the long-standing cases of drains which remained blocked despite several requests for their clearance. It was Noted that some drains had now been cleared, but that others still needed attention. The Chairman undertook to take this up further.

#### **d) Minute No.4(i) - Alleyways at Doreen/Queens/Doreen Avenues**

The Clerk reported having met the contractor to discuss the re-surfacing of the alleys, but that the cost of a full tarmac surface would be in the region of £4000. During the meeting, it had been suggested that the weeds and undergrowth might be cleared and sprayed and the dolomite surface scraped and rolled, This exercise would cost only £400 to £500. Following discussion, it was

**Agreed : That the second option be Approved, and that L.& G Plant Hire be engaged to carry out the work as outlined.**

#### **e) Minute No.6(c) - Rear Dunelm Terrace**

The Clerk reported that no further information had been forthcoming at this stage.

#### **f) Minute No.8(c) - Insurance Cover**

The Clerk gave a verbal report on the extent of the insurance cover for the various risks involved.

### g) Environment & Conservation

The Clerk reported details of correspondence which he had had with an officer of the County Council on this matter, and having asked for a meeting on site, so that members could discuss their wishes for an environmental improvement scheme in the village.

## 5. CORRESPONDENCE :

a) The Clerk reported that an invitation from Durham County Council had been issued to the Chairman and himself to attend a function in County Hall on the evening of Wednesday 16th July to mark the 10th anniversary of the Parish Paths Partnership, at which Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council would receive a commemorative certificate. The information was Noted.

b) The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the Durham Association indicating that under the National Training Scheme, the Durham County Partnership had been established, and that a training programme for Clerks would shortly be commencing. This was a pre-requisite to the granting of Quality Status, which was now available to interested Parish/Town Councils. The report was Noted.

c) The Clerk reported that as from May 1st Parish & Town Councils were empowered to pay their members a Participation Allowance. The level of such an allowance would be determined by a Parish Remuneration Panel, and a meeting would take place in the near future, at which the rate would be fixed proportionate to the size and resources of individual parishes. The payment could be made to each member, or to the Chairman only, and was not mandatory. The report was Noted.

d) The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the District Council indicating that at its Annual Meeting in May, it had been resolved that the composition of the Standards Committee remain unchanged. It was however, up to Parish Councils through their Area Association to determine their own representation of two members, currently Councillor Bill Horsfield of Peterlee Town Council, and Mrs. Marina Goyns of Wheatley Hill. It was suggested by the District Council that in view of the training and experience gained by Councillors Horsfield and Goyns during the first year, it would be beneficial for them to remain in office. As a response was required by 20th June, the Clerk reported having indicated that Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council would be happy to endorse the status quo.

**Agreed : That the action of the Clerk be Approved and Endorsed.**

e) The Clerk reported briefly on the forthcoming review by the Boundary Committee of the structure of local government in the two tier areas of the North East subsequent to a positive response in the referendum to establish a Regional Assembly. It was the Government's policy that there should be a single tier of local government below an elected assembly, and that the Boundary Committee must recommend at least two options for unitary authorities within the consequent two tier system. The Committee was now embarking on a detailed consultation process, and further information would be issued in due course.

f) The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation from the District Council for the Chairman and himself to attend the Chairman's Civic Service on Wednesday 23rd July in St.John's Church, Seaham. Councillor Hepplewhite indicated that he would be unable to attend on this occasion, and it was

**Agreed : That the Vice Chairman of the Council would attend in his place.**

g) The Clerk reported receipt of a letter of appreciation from the Secretary of the Women's Institute for the support and assistance given at the Coffee Morning on 21st June at which the sum of £300 had been raised.

h) The Clerk reported on a document received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister setting out the process to be adopted in dealing with cases of alleged misconduct. The report was Noted.

## **6. PLANNING MATTERS :**

Councillor Keegan submitted a letter from a resident of Seaton Village, which had been circulating in the area, regarding a planning application for Seaton which allegedly involved vehicular access and egress via Walton Avenue. The Clerk reported having raised the matter with the District Council's Planning Department, and having obtained a copy of the application and supporting plans. These plans indicated an access on to the public highway leading from Seaton to Murton, but not to Walton Avenue. Nevertheless, it was

Agreed : That the situation be monitored, and that support be given to Seaton Parish Council to any objections which it might make against the application.

## **7. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & FINANCIAL REPORT :**

**Agreed : a) That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 017-019 in the sum of £ 617.18 set out in Appendix 3 to the Agenda.**

b) That the action of the Clerk in seeking the services of Mr.David Wilson of Dalton Grange to carry out the mandatory independent Internal Audit of the Council's accounts prior to submission to the External Auditor be Approved and Endorsed.

c) That the report of the Clerk on the Accounts for the period 1st April to 3rd July 2003 be Noted and Approved.

## **8. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS - 2002-2003 :**

**Agreed : That in accordance with the notification of Audit for the 2002/2003 financial year Approval be given to the Statement of Assurance given and signed by the Clerk in accordance**

**with the Audit Regulations, and that this Statement be countersigned by the Chairman.**

### **9. TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 4 a letter from the District Council Monitoring Officer explaining the efforts which he was making to arrange a suitable date for a training course to be held for members in accordance with the Ethical Standards

Framework. The intention was to hold sessions on three different occasions within the District, two of them in the evening. Further information was awaited.

### **10. THE STANDARDS BOARD - DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 5 the report by the Clerk summarising the circumstances in which members must declare their interests, both personal and prejudicial at meetings of the Council. The report was Noted.

### **11. MILLENNIUM WINDOW - PROGRESS REPORT :**

The Clerk reported that following discussions with English Heritage and the Reverend A.Milne, the paperwork and application for the Faculty to allow the installation of the window was now with the Chancellor of the Diocese of Durham. This was the last stage in the process, and it was hoped that early approval would be given to allow the work to proceed. The report was Noted with satisfaction.

### **12. DALTON-LE-DALE IN BLOOM GARDEN COMPETITION :**

The Clerk reported a poor response to date for the competition, and it was

**Agreed : That a further effort be made to increase the number of entries.**

### **13. VACANCY ON PARISH COUNCIL - CO-OPTION :**

The Clerk reported having had enquiries from two residents to fill the vacancy caused by insufficient nominations for office at the election on 1st May.

**Agreed : That both applicants be invited to attend the next meeting of the Council.**

### **14. QUALITY STATUS :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 6 the report by the Clerk on the features and criteria relating to Quality Status, and it was Noted that Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council satisfied all of the conditions involved, with the exception of a qualified Clerk, the opportunity for which had not been previously available.

### **15. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :**

a) Councillor Kennedy informed the meeting that an Officer of the National Lottery Community Fund would be visiting the hall on Friday 18th to discuss the funding application with members of the Management Committee.

b) The need to arrange for the overgrown foliage at the junction of Church Bank with the B1285 to be cut back to improve drivers' visibility, as well as the bushes to the south of the Times Inn bus stop was raised, and arrangements made for this to be done.

c) Councillor Keegan reported that a car was being driven along the bridle road to the west of Walton Avenue, and he undertook to get the registration number for reporting to the Police.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :**

It was Noted that in view of the Summer recess, the next meeting of the Council would be held on Thursday 4th September, and it was

**Agreed : That authority be given to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk to conduct any urgent items of business during the recess**