

***DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL***

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 6TH NOVEMBER 2003**

**PRESENT :**

**Councillor W.Hepplewhite (Chairman)**

**Councillors D.Gleghorn, M.Gustard, L.Keegan, W.Kennedy, M.Oliver & A.Westmorland**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :**

**Councillors G.Gustard & R.Olaman**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS :**

Councillor L.Keegan declared a Personal Interest in the subject matter to be discussed in Agenda Item No.12(a).

**3. POLICE REPORT:**

P.C's Paul Hails and Heather Bilton presented a joint report on the past month, which included two cases of youngsters, causing nuisance and trespassers at Glebe Farm. The Police dog handler who lived in the village had been approached by a man, who had been frightened off. The officers reported a situation in which a vehicle parked in Stony Cut had been used as sleeping accomodation, and incidents of a person selling chocolate which had been stolen from Seaham Co-op. It was emphasised that any suspicious circumstances should be reported immediately to the Police.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their concise report, and they left the meeting.

**4. GREAT NORTH FOREST :**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Steve Scoffin, Forest Director, who had been invited to give a presentation on the application for a Woodland Grant Scheme on land at Stotfold Farm.

Mr.Scoffin explained that the proposal was for the creation of a 130 hectare native broad-leaved woodland on land to the west of the A19 trunk road, which would afford an excellent access opportunity for residents of the surrounding area. Work on the scheme would take place over the winter of 2003/4 and would involve the planting of ash, oak, silver birch, rowan, hawthorn, hazel, wild cherry and holly trees. 20% of the land would be kept as open space, and would include footpaths and access to viewpoints towards the coast. Other tree planting would involve wetland species such as willow and alder. Footpaths would be seeded to include a wildflower mix, and would tie in with the existing Rights of Way and to the National Cycle Network Route1 developed by Sustrans.

Funding for the work had come from the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grants Scheme and DEFRA's Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, which would be a significant step towards delivering the Great North Forest over the coming years, following the landowner's commitment for some 3 decades.

The launch date had been provisionally set for Friday 5th December from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the ceremony being performed by the Chairman of the Forestry Commission.

Following members' questions, the Chairman thanked Mr.Scoffin for his excellent presentation, and he left the meeting.

## **5. MINUTES :**

**Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 2nd October 2003 (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:**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes

## **7. PRECEPT 2004/2005 :**

Members considered as Appendix 1 the report by the Clerk setting out details of expenditure for the financial year to 31st March 2003, expenditure from 1st April to 30th September 2003, projected expenditure to 31st March 2004, and estimates of expenditure for 2004/5.

It was noted that although the Council carried healthy balances, a number of commitments were outstanding, notably the cost of the Millennium Window for St.Andrew's Church, the recent road widening scheme at Overdene, possible traffic calming measures at Dalton Heights, and environmental improvements in the village which were to be considered in the near future to facilitate the granting of Conservation Status.

Following further discussion, it was

**Agreed : That an unchanged Precept of £11,000 for the 2004/financial year be Approved and that the District Council be advised accordingly.**

## **8. TRAFFIC CALMING AT DALTON HEIGHTS :**

The Clerk reported that the house-to-house consultation exercise in connection with this proposal had now been completed, and that the County Council would now carry out the statutory public notice procedure. Of 185 consultation cards which had been delivered, 90 had been returned to County Hall. Of these, 57 were in favour of the calming measures and 33 were against. Further information would be reported as appropriate.

**Agreed : That the report of the Clerk be Noted and that further information be awaited.**

## **9. MILLENNIUM WINDOW - SERVICE OF DEDICATION :**

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The Chairman reported that following confirmation that the new window would be installed on 25th November, the Vicar had indicated that the Service of Dedication would be held on Monday 1st December at 7 p.m. as part of the Patronal Festival and that the ceremony would be conducted by Bishop Stephen Sykes, Principal of St.John's College, Durham.

The Chairman further reported that he, Councillor M.Gustard and the Clerk had drawn up a provisional invitation list, together with suggestions in connection with the arrangements for the service. These included an appropriate floral display around the window, a suitably inscribed plaque to commemorate the occasion, some external lighting to highlight the colours of the new window, and a post-service finger buffet with drinks.

These suggestions had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, and on the Chairman's recommendation, it was

**Agreed : That the proposals as set out by the Chairman, Councillor M.Gustard and the Clerk be Endorsed and Approved, and that the necessary arrangements be made.**

### **10. ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION :**

Further discussion took place on ways in which the environment of the village could be improved. It was noted that the working group initially set up to consider this matter was now reduced to two members following the resignation of Councillor Armstrong and the absence on business of Councillor G.Gustard. In view of this, it was felt that the item should be considered by all members of the Council at a special meeting. Accordingly, and bearing in mind that the Council did not meet in January, it was

**Agreed : i) That membership of the Working Group to consider Planning, Conservation and Regeneration should be revised to include all members of the Council.**

**ii) That a meeting of the Group take place on Thursday 8th January 2004 to which members contribute their own ideas and suggestions as to what improvements were desirable to further the wish to secure Conservation Status for the village.**

### **11. FLORAL BASKETS :**

Following a member's enquiry at the October meeting as to whether it would be possible to extend the lamp post mounted floral displays currently provided by Seaham Town Council on Stockton Road, into the Parish of Dalton-le-Dale, the Clerk reported having had discussions with the Parks Manager as to the feasibility of such provision on a partnership basis. Details of costs were given, and it was

**Agreed : That the matter be discussed in detail at the special meeting of the Working Group to be held on Thursday 8th January 2004.**

### **12. CORRESPONDENCE :**

a) St.John Ambulance Brigade - Request for Financial Assistance

(Councillor L.Keegan having declared a Personal Interest in this matter, took no part in the discussion).

The Clerk reported receipt of a written request from the Brigade seeking financial assistance towards the cost of replacing four ambulances to cover the County Durham area. It was pointed out that these ambulances were fully equipped, and as occasion demanded, they could supplement the regular NHS vehicles wherever they were needed.

**Agreed : That in accordance with the provisions of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, a contribution in the sum of £100 be Approved.**

b) District of Easington - Precept 2004/5

The Clerk reported for members' information, the arrangements for issuing this Precept and for its payment to the Parish Council in the 2004/5 financial year.

c) Durham County Council - Community Information Database

It was:

**Agreed that the Clerk submit appropriate information for inclusion on the database.**

d) Durham County Council - Review of Local Government

The Clerk reported receipt of a copy of the County Council's submission to the Boundary Committee which was available for members' inspection.

e) Easington NHS Primary Care Trust

The Clerk reported receipt of a copy of the Trust's Annual Report for 2002/3, which was available for members' inspection.

**13. PLANNING MATTERS :**

The following new application was Noted :

a) Proposed side extension at 25 Dalton Heights for Mr.& Mrs.J.Price

**14. SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 the report by the Clerk on the benefits of membership of this body, especially in respect of Clerks' training in order to qualify for Quality Parish Status. The report indicated that the membership fee for the remainder of the year would be £42, with a new subscription becoming due in January 2004.

**Agreed : That membership of the Society be deferred until January 2004**

**15. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :**

**Agreed : That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 38/39/41/42 in the sum of £518.90**

## **16. REPORTS :**

### **a) Clerk**

The Clerk reported on his attendance, along with Councillor Westmorland, at the Annual Meeting of the Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils. Dalton-le-Dale's Notice of Motion seeking longer response times in dealing with consultation documents was approved by those present, and would go to National Office for further consideration. As well as approving the Annual Report and Accounts, and re-electing the Executive Committee, the meeting urged a re-structuring of the secretariat in the light of growing concerns over its effectiveness.

### **b) Councillor M.Gustard**

Councillor Gustard reported on a recent meeting of the Community Association Management Committee, at which progress was reported on efforts to secure funding for the new building. Further approaches were being made to the National Lottery Community Fund and other grant making bodies. New members were being enrolled at a reduced subscription of £1 and events for the festive season were being arranged.

### **c) Councillor W.Hepplewhite**

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the recent Tidy Ted meeting, at which opposition had been expressed to the suggestion that it merge with the District Council's area forums. It was reported that new telecam technology was being used to record instances of vandalsim, litter dropping and rubbish tipping, while finance was now becoming available to employ street wardens.

The Chairman also commented on the recent meeting of the Consultative Committee, at which it as reported that the grass cutting season was at an end, while complaints regarding open-sided bus shelters were explained by the need to make them accessible to the disabled. Councillor Hepplewhite pointed out that he had been able to clarify the situation regarding the overgrown hedge at the eastern end of the village, and arrangements were now in hand to avoid it overhanging the pavement.

## **16. OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS :**

a) Following discussion, and with the consent of the Town Clerk of Seaham who had written similarly, the Clerk was instructed to express concern at the positioning of the bus stop and central bollard near Westlea shops, which it was felt were causing a road safety hazard.

b) Further discussion ensued regarding the positioning of the dog waste bin in Weymouth Drive, which a resident claimed was intrusive, and a health hazard to youngsters who played on the nearby grassed area. Local members felt that the bin was sited in the best location, since it was not directly in front of any houses.

c) The Clerk reported having investigated complaints of poor television reception of I.T.V. Channel 3 programmes, and surges in the electricity supply to domestic lighting appliances. Both Tyne Tees Television and NEDL had requested further details, and these would be provided.

d) Councillor Oliver reported on her attendance at a recent meeting of the Police Liaison Committee, at which it had been decided to divide the area into two sections - Easington /Blackhall and Seaham.