

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

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 5TH FEBRUARY 2004**

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

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

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :**

**Councillor R.Olaman**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :**

**There were no interests to declare**

**3. POLICE REPORT :**

**There were no Police officers in attendance**

**4. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :**

**There were no residents present at the meeting**

**5. MINUTES :**

**Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 4th December 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 :**

a) Minute No.5(b) - Traffic Calming - Dalton Heights

The Clerk gave members details of the consultation statistics, which revealed a majority of respondents in favour of the proposed scheme, but reported that in the light of the high number of non-respondents, the County Council declined to proceed. Some concern was expressed at the wording of the consultation documentation, and it was

**Agreed : That the Clerk obtain copies of these documents for further consideration.**

b) Minute No.7(a) - Seaham Town Council - Joint Promotions

It was Noted that this matter would be considered fully at Agenda Item No.8

c) Minute No.12 - Casual Vacancy

It was Noted that this matter would be considered fully at Agenda Item No.9.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS - REPORT OF MEETING ON 8TH JANUARY**

The meeting considered a report by the Clerk on the discussion at this informal meeting. Members noted a number of points which had been raised, but which were not reported, and it was

**Agreed : That a further meeting be arranged for Thursday 18th March as a Steering Group to agree a formal plan of action for the implementation of various environmental improvements per se, and to enhance the Council's chances of attaining Conservation Status.**

## **8. SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL - JOINT PROMOTIONS :**

The Chairman gave a detailed report on the meeting which he, the Vice Chairman and the Clerk had attended at the Town Council offices with the Chairman, Town Clerk, and Councillor Jim Haggan, Chairman of the Carnival Committee. The meeting had been convened to discuss the possibility of some partnership working with the Town Council in connection with the Carnival, Guy Fawkes celebrations and other community events.

It was suggested that mutual benefits might accrue if the Parish Council would consider providing some financial contribution to or sponsorship of one or more of the activities.

The meeting ended with a discussion on burial fees for residents of Dalton-le-Dale who were interred in Seaham cemetery, which were considerably in excess of those for Seaham residents, and ways were suggested of equalising the charges. Following further discussion, it was

**Agreed : a) That Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council could not feel able to financially support any of the community events involved.**

b) That the Clerk obtain details of burial charges made by neighbouring authorities.

## **9. CASUAL VACANCY :**

The Clerk reported that there had been no support for a poll to fill the vacancy in the Dalton Urban Ward caused by the resignation of Councillor Gerry Gustard, and that the Council was now able to fill the vacancy. Following discussion, it was

**Agreed : That the Clerk contact Mrs.Sharon Richardson of Dalton Heights, who had been interviewed for the previous casual vacancy, to establish her interest in filling the position.**

## **10. CORESPONDENCE :**

a) Durham County Council - Urban & Rural Renaissance Initiative

The Clerk reported that this initiative offered a total of £1 million to small communities throughout the County who wished to carry out environmental improvements, for which Dalton-le-Dale was listed as a possible beneficiary. The Clerk further reported having approached its two County Councillors to register the Parish Council's interest, and further details were awaited. The report was Noted.

b) Finchale Training College - Request for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported that the College had celebrated its 60th anniversary as a national training establishment for adults with special needs. The majority of its students were drawn from local backgrounds, with most communities in the County represented.

Its project for 2004 was to provide specialist IT equipment for students' use and it was

**Agreed : That in accordance with the provisions of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, a contribution of £50 be made.**

c) District of Easington - Tree Preservation Orders

The Clerk reported having spoken to the District Council's Countryside Officer in connection with concerns at certain arboricultural activities on land adjoining Dalton Beck which were affecting the flow of the stream. It had transpired that not all of the relevant trees in the village were covered by the current Preservation Order, and accordingly it was

**Agreed : That a meeting be held with the Countryside Officer to ascertain the species and size of trees which should be brought under the protection of a new Preservation Order.**

d) Dalton-le-Dale Community Association

The Clerk read a letter from the Secretary of the Association, expressing appreciation for the donation given by the Parish Council towards the cost of its New Year celebrations.

**11. REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN COUNTY DURHAM -BOUNDARY COMMITTEE REPORT :**

The Clerk reported that the Boundary Committee had now published its draft recommendations for the structure of Unitary authorities in the County should the forthcoming Referendum result in a "yes" vote. The options put forward were :

- a) A single unitary authority - "County Durham Council"
- b) Two unitary authorities :
  - i) "North & East Durham" (Chester-le-Street, Durham, and Easington)
  - ii) "South Durham" (Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley)
- c) Three unitary authorities :
  - i) "North Durham" (Derwentside & Chester-le-St)
  - ii) "East Durham" (Durham City & Easington)
  - iii) "South Durham" (Sedgefield, Teesdale & Wear Valley)

It was noted that the current consultation period would end on 23rd February, after which the

Boundary Committee would finalise its submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 25th May.

## **12. QUALITY STATUS - CLERK'S TRAINING & AQA QUALIFICATIONS :**

The Clerk reported on the procedure and costs of obtaining the AQA qualification which was an essential element of achieving Quality Parish Status. The qualification was gained by the submission of a Portfolio of Evidence on a number of core topics relating to Parish & Town Council law, finance, proceedings and protocol, administration etc. The initial costing would be :

- a) Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks - 2004 £80.00
- b) "Working with your Council" Training Manual £135.00
- c) Registration and costs of submitting and assessing portfolio £55.00
- d) Training Launch Event £13.50

£283.50

The Clerk further reported that the costs of the training exercise could be shared equally with Tow Law Town Council, of which he was also Clerk, and it was

**Agreed : That Approval be given to the proportionate payment of training fees as indicated.**

## **13. PLANNING MATTERS :**

The following items were Noted without comment :

- a) New Application

Proposed rear conservatory at Dale Terrace for Mr.&Mrs.C.Johnston

- b) Approval

Sun room extension at 42 Dalton Heights for Mr.& Mrs.Guy

- c) Refusal

Proposed change of use from off-licence & foodstore (Class A1) to hot food takeaway at Grasmere House, Stockton Road

Discussion took place in connection with a piece of land at the southern end of Jubilee Avenue, which was being offered for sale as being suitable for a garage/workshop for up to six cars. It was noted that this use was totally inappropriate at this location, given the residential nature of the area, and the narrow and congested street which would have to be used to gain access to the land. The Clerk reported that planning approval was already in place for a single residential garage, and that he had written to the Planning Department urging vigilance in order to prevent a larger construction on the site. The report was Noted.

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

**Agreed : That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 50 to 64 in the sum of £3093.04**

The Clerk circulated a Statement of Account for the period 1st April 2003 to 31st January 2004 indicating Income of £12915.12 and Expenditure of £17356.46. Balances available at 31st January amounted to £35418.46. The report was Noted.

## **15. REPORTS :**

- a) Councillor Keegan reported that damage had been caused to a dog waste bin at Dalton Heights, and that a replacement had been provided.
- b) Councillor Westmorland urged that early action be taken to ensure that the road safety measures, identified during a site meeting with the Police some time ago be put in place.
- c) Councillor Gustard reported on the success of the Community Association's New Year's Eve festivities. She also drew attention to a circular letter which had been sent to Parish residents in Dalton Urban Ward, canvassing views on the need for community facilities at The Lawns following proposed housing development. She felt that this would cause confusion in the minds of those residents who had already expressed support for the proposed new community hall to replace the W.I. Hall, and might negate the preparatory work which had already been carried out. Efforts had been made to persuade the District Council to clarify the position by means of a further letter of explanation to residents.
- d) Councillor Oliver reported on the Police Community Group's Annual Meeting, at which Durham Constabulary had been acknowledged as one of the best in the country for helping provide a safe living environment. All crime levels had fallen with the exception of violent crime.

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

- a) Councillor Keegan reported that new street lighting was now in place along Walton Avenue, financed from Police funding sources.
- b) Councillor Gustard expressed further concern at the situation in the beck, which had been exacerbated by tree felling operations upstream of the bridge. Logs had fallen into the water, causing further blockage and further erosion of the banks. She reported having contacted the District Council's Countryside Officer with regard to Tree Preservation Orders, but had learned that the trees in question were not covered by the Order currently in force. In view of the growing concern, it was

**Agreed : a) That a site meeting be arranged with officers from the County Council's Highways & Bridges section to check for potential undermining of the foundations of the bridge.**

- b) That the Chairman and Councillor Gustard meet with the Countryside Officer to inspect the Land

Terrier with a view to extending the Tree Preservation Order to those areas not presently covered.

**17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :**

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Thursday 4th March 2004 commencing at 7 p.m.