

# **Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council**

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**held THURSDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008.**

**Present:** Councillor W Kennedy (**Chairman**)  
Councillors: M Oliver, M Hepplewhite, S Richardson, A Westmorland, M Gustard, L Keegan, R Olanan.  
**Public:** Police Nigel Advent, PCSO Graeme Cockerill

### **1. APOLOGIES**

None.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **3. POLICE REPORT**

Several nuisance reports were received for Plymouth Close and Pageats Garage where youths were congregating being rowdy and drinking. An incident of criminal damage occurred at Overdene Estate with damage to a shed. Two off road bikes have been going through the Dale regularly and one of these bikes has been seized and will not be returned to the owner. A spate of burglaries has taken place in Seaham. Three suspects have been apprehended and the police are confident that these incidents are closely linked to their recent actions. Good detective work, together with information provided from the community has helped to curtail the activities of this group. Members advised that a report concerning St Andrew's Church had been rung in as tiles were loosened on the property. The police suspected that was part of the recent activities of the 3 youths apprehended.

A member who had been a victim of this recent crime wave commented upon the 1<sup>st</sup> class service received from the police. The Chair gave thanks to the Police for their endeavours on behalf of the residents of the Parish.

Members expressed concerns regarding a car in Dene Road where the two occupants had been knocking on people's doors. The police had no news of this and would make enquiries.

Members expressed their concerns at youths who had already set alight the gorse bush in the field adjacent to Graham Way. The Police were aware that this was an area for them to monitor and would be targeted.

The Police had been informed of the Scarecrow event to be held in the Parish in June. St Andrew's Church would liaise with the Police regarding necessary arrangements.

### **4. REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS**

None.

### **5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008 which had been circulated to Members previously were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5a. Matters arising from that meeting.**

Item 8a of the minutes. A member had visited the new estate at Seaham and advised that this estate had road markings. Photographs would be taken for possible use in challenging Durham County Council Highways decision on this matter.

The Clerk advised Members that the District of Easington would take no action against mole infestation, the reported untaxed vehicle had been moved onto private land and a letter of receipt was received from DCC concerning the street lighting to the rear of Dalton Heights.

The Clerk had made enquiries regarding the opportunity to co-opt a person onto the Council and advised that such a person should be a member of the Commonwealth, a registered elector, over eighteen, reside in the locality or own such land or premises. Members would await the possibility of a person coming forward from the next newsletter.

Members commented that the handrail to the public footpath opposite the Times Inn was now completely down and that this matter should be reported to DCC as a matter of public safety.

The Clerk advised that he had received a site plan of Graham Way that depicted the garden fence line. Agreed for three Members and the Clerk to undertake a site visit and to look at Sidmouth Close also as Members expressed a query regarding fencing there.

## **6. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a). District of Easington – Parish Remuneration Panel (copy enclosed). Members received the report from the Remuneration Panel
- b). The Clerk read out the letter of thanks received from Dalton-le-Dale Community Association.
- c). The Clerk advised that Haswell & District Mencap Society were hosting an Annual Ball and due to past success they are now taking bookings for the event planned in 2009. Members declined the opportunity to book a table.
- d). Members received the March Newsletter from the Standards Board.
- e). Members received the Durham Spring Newsletter from the Rural Community Council.
- f). Members received the March Newsletter from the Campaign to Protect Rural England.
- g). Members received the Active Easington Project Report.
- h). Members received the March Newsletter for Building Schools for the Future.

## **7. PLANNING MATTERS**

### **Planning approvals.**

- a). The Clerk provided Members with the District of Easington's Particulars of Decision regarding the planning permission for the Siting of static caravan at Poultry Farm. Members agreed for the Clerk to write to the District of Easington requesting a site meeting as the size of caravan is not suitable for security purposes as it is a large family unit, the colour treatment is not as specified in the particulars of decision and that the two caravans that were to be removed for this planning application had been removed, however one of them has returned to the site.
- b). The Clerk advised that Planning Permission was approved for Rear Conservatory, Shangri-la, Overdene with the Particulars of Decision stating that the proposed windows facing west should be glazed with obscure glass.

### **Planning Applications**

The Clerk advised that he had received notice of a planning application for a First Floor Extension at 5 Bournemouth Drive, Seaham.

## **8. HIGHWAYS and FOOTPATHS**

- a). Members agreed for the Clerk to send a reminder to DCC regarding the repairs to the handrail for the public footpath opposite the Times Inn.
- b). Overdene Estate verge hardening scheme. The Clerk advised that no replies of supporting funding had been received from the DCC Highways or the local County Councillor. Members proposed that the Clerk telephone those concerned to ask for a donation towards the project.

## **9. ENVIRONMENT**

Members received the correspondence from Durham County Council and the Environment Agency concerning the fissure in the stream. Members had spoken to B Weatherall at the District of Easington who had promised a cleansing of the stream. An ideal opportunity to undertake this work would have been when the stream was running dry. Members expressed concerns at the volume of material tipped into the fissure and as a result of this action the stream bed has been dammed in areas and the stream is deflected in the walls of the stream eroding the bank side and exposing tree roots.

Members agreed for the Clerk to write to our MP expressing dissatisfaction at the lack of reply from the District of Easington and to further question the Council on what possible future dangers and damage could result from this fissure.

#### **10. REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- a). After considering the request for financial assistance from the Great North Air Ambulance Service, Members agreed to provide a donation of £50.
- b). One Member declared an interest with the request for financial assistance from the Durham Miners' Association. Members agreed to provide a message of support with the donation of £35.

#### **11. CONTRACT RENEWAL DOG BINS**

Members agreed to contract renewal and requested the Clerk to ask if the Council can provide evidence of the service being provided by means of works log or tick sheets completed by the work force.

#### **12. CDALC SUBSCRIPTION CHARGE 2008-2009**

Members agreed to the Annual renewal charge.

#### **13. RENEWAL OF CPRE MEMBERSHIP**

Members agreed to the Annual renewal charge.

#### **14. QUALITY STATUS FOR COUNCILS**

The Clerk advised that having attended the last mentoring session concerning the CiLCA he was given information (leaflets distributed to Members) on the Quality Status Criteria for Councils. The Clerk had also received a portfolio file for completion as part of the process in achieving Quality Status. The Clerk advised that he would progress through this portfolio once the CiLCA portfolio was completed.

#### **15. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Members received the report provided by the Clerk that outlined areas of training that would be beneficial to him as part of his Continuing Professional Development as Clerk to the Council and also useful in the process of obtaining the CiLCA.

#### **16. ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Clerk advised that it is necessary for the Council to undertake a Risk assessment on an annual basis. The Clerk advised of a number of areas where the Council may have potential risks, these were as follows; **Administration of the Council's finances.** With all cheques and invoices being considered by Members there was no risk of any fraud or unrecognised payments. The Council does not operate any petty cash system or collect any monies from services, which reduces many risks also. All financial records are maintained by the Clerk and subject to internal and external Audit and determined by financial regulations. **Risk to Assets of the Council.** The Clerk advised that all assets such as floral tubs and notice boards were included in the Insurance Schedule. Risks to these include accidental damage by vehicles, vandalism, theft and storm damage. Previous records indicate that risk of such incidents is low.

**Services provided by the Council.** The Council provides a children's playground which is covered by a contract with the District of Easington for the regular inspection and subsequent maintenance works. Risks to the playground include vandalism and theft. Previous records indicate that risk of such incidents is low. The Council also provides a number of Dog bins whereby the emptying of such is contracted out to the District of Easington. Risks to these dog bins include accidental damage by vehicles, vandalism and theft. Previous records indicate that risk of such incidents is low.

**Administration of the Council's business.** All records are kept by the Clerk with electronic information being backed up to memory stick on a regular basis. The risk of losing Council records is low. The Clerk keeps an adequate supply of Stationary and Office supplies to undertake the functions of the Clerk and is reimbursed on a regular basis by the Council. All receipts are kept in the financial records. Risk low.

Members are in receipts of the Standing Orders of the Council and have been provided with publications on being a Good Councillor. All Members have received a copy of the Code of Conduct. The risk of Members acting outside their powers is low.

In considering the above Members could not add any further issue of significant risk for the Council and therefore agreed that they had undertaken an annual Risk Assessment.

**17. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

The Clerk advised that he had attended an event with the Chairman at Shotton Hall, Peterlee concerning the Local Government Review that outlined the process that the existing County and District Councils are undertaking in order to merge into the new Unitary Authority. The Clerk provided copies of the presentation for Members information.

**18. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Clerk provided Members with a draft copy of financial regulation for the Council's consideration. The Clerk advised that this draft was prepared using the model from the Society of Local Council Clerks. Members agreed to adopt the draft provided.

**19. NEWSLETTER**

The Clerk circulated a draft of the next newsletter and advised that the newsletter can be delivered at the same cost as last year. Members put forward suggestions, changes and amendments that will be included. Members agreed for the newsletter to be distributed two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting of Parishioners.

**20. PARISH PROJECTS**

The Chairman anticipated that during this year a significant project could be undertaken and that this could be the verge hardening scheme at Overdene. Members put forward the village green as a possible project where the seating could be renewed, fencing replaced and curbing installed by the road. The Clerk would check through our library of land searches with regard to the land concerned.

**21. MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT**

The Clerk advised that there were additions received since compiling the agenda. Interest from the Mortgage loan had been credited to the account and the invoice for the Contract to empty the Dog Bins was presented for payment. The balance in the Community Account at the close of meeting was £531.48. The Clerk also produced records of travel expenses which had previously been claimed. It was agreed that such future records/claims would be signed by the Chairman and records kept.

**22. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman advised of her attendance accompanied by the Clerk to a presentation on the Local Government Review.

**23. CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk advised that Shildon and Aycliffe Councils had been drawn for the Queen's Garden Party. The Clerk advised that he had received notices concerning the forthcoming elections and these will be posted in our notice boards.

The Clerk had received information on the Primary Strategy for Change and the consultation questionnaire to return. Members agreed for the Clerk to make a supportive response.

The Clerk had received a Newsletter from the Heritage Coast.

**24. MEMBERS REPORTS**

Members requested that the Clerk agenda the floral tubs for next meeting and in the meantime seek quotation from Horn's Garden Centre.

Members requested the Clerk to write to the District of Easington expressing the dissatisfaction at the recent recycling collection that left refuse lying in the street and roads. When the collection vehicle left there was a need for a litter pick whereby Members and residents in the Parish had to clean up after this deplorable service. The opportunity to report or complain about this service was further hindered as the switch board appeared to be jammed or perhaps closed.

Members expressed concerns regarding the state of the stream. The Clerk advised that this matter would be included in the letter to our MP concerning the fissure with copy forwarded to the District of Easington.

The Member representing the Community Association reported that the foundations were laid with the building project going as planned.

A Member suggested that it would be beneficial for digital photographs to be taken and used as evidence in supporting our concerns and complaints. Members agreed that where and when possible photographic records should be made.

A Member had attended a local Police meeting at Dawdon that covered a variety of issues, off-road vehicles, internet sites being access in public libraries. Police are reporting that County Durham is one of the safest places to live.

Members requested the Clerk to agenda the Environment Committee for the next meeting.

Members requested the Clerk to contact the District of Easington for the East side of the B1285 to be cleared of litter.

A Member had visited East Shore village to examine the road markings within the estate and report that this new estate had road markings. Photographs would be taken as evidence to be used in the case for road markings at Dalton Heights.

## **25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008**