

Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held THURSDAY, 6th March 2008.

Present: Councillor W Kennedy (**Chairman**)
Councillors: M Oliver, M Hepplewhite, S Richardson, A Westmorland, M Gustard, L Keegan.
Public: None.

1. **APOLOGIES** R Olaman.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

Prior to the commencement of the Council's Agenda the Chairman addressed the Council as follows.

The Chairman apologised for failing to apply the rules of debate and procedure according to the Code of Conduct at the last meeting that resulted in an emotive atmosphere and distress to Councillors.

However, it is right and pertinent that there is open and healthy debate and at times it will be contentious which is expected, but Councillors should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times, acknowledging that their time is given freely to ensure the smooth, successful and impartial administration of the responsibilities afforded this Parish Council.

I therefore respectfully ask that all questions go through the Chair indicating your wish to speak by raising your hand.

3. **POLICE REPORT**
None.

4. **REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS**
None.

5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 7th 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 5a of the minutes. Members advised that the minutes should read as '40mph speed limit signage to be on the road surface'.

Members expressed concern that no action had been taken concerning the street lighting that is invasive to residents in Dalton Heights. The Clerk advised that this matter had been reported on several occasions through the Highways Action Line (Street lighting portal). Members agreed for the Clerk to write to the Head of Street Lighting on this matter.

The Clerk advised that he was awaiting a response from the District of Easington as he had requested a plan of Graham Way so that the garden boundaries could be examined.

6. **CORRESPONDENCE**

a). District of Easington – The Validation of Planning Applications in Easington. Members expressed concerns and how their consultation could be guaranteed bearing in mind the application process timescales governing the planning authority and the recesses the Parish Council has in August and January. Members wish to maintain a high profile and to be fully advised of matters in advance that affect residents who come to our Parish Council meetings.

b). District of Easington – Parish/Town Council Consultative Meeting – The amended dates were received.

- c). LGR Programme Officer – Local Government Reorganisation – Invitation to key Stakeholders. The Clerk advised that two places were booked at this event for the Chairman and Clerk to attend.
- d). Open Spaces Society – Letter of thanks received.
- e). Victim Support County Durham – Letter of thanks received.
- f). County Durham Economic Partnership – Parish Council Consultation on the Draft County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-13. Members agreed for the Clerk and Chairman to compile a return in favour of Strategy.
- g). Government Office North East – North East Regional Spatial Strategy Further Proposed Changes. The Clerk briefed Members on the changes proposed and is to reply to GONE giving the Parish Council’s support.
- h). CPRE Overview – Spring 2008 Newsletter was received.
- i). County Durham Learning Disabilities Partnership Board Newsletter January 2008 was received.

7. PLANNING MATTERS

- a). District of Easington’s reply on the concerns raised by the Parish Council regarding the siting of static caravan at Poultry Farm. Two Members agreed to walk by the site and make observations of any changes as caravans have been moved around the site. Members need to assess that the planning approval terms are being met.
- b). Planning approvals.
The Clerk advised that he had received notice of the planning approval for a first floor front extension to 29 Dalton Heights which had been previously considered by this Council.

8. HIGHWAYS and FOOTPATHS

- a). Durham County Council – Their reply on the Council’s request for road markings in Dalton Heights. Members debated how other estates had lines whilst others did not. In conclusion it was accepted that this matter could not be pursued.
- b). Overdene Estate verge hardening scheme. The Clerk advised that he had written to the County Councillor and the Highways Section seeking financial support on this project and had only received an acknowledgement from the Highways section. Members agreed to telephone their local County Councillor on this matter and relay any news to the Clerk.
- c). Handrail to footpath at Times Inn. The County Council advised that this matter would be addressed sometime ago, but to date no repairs had been made. Members requested the Clerk to contact the County Council to remind them of their intentions.

9. ENVIRONMENT

- a). Progress of stream footpath – Proposal from Ground Work East Durham. It was agreed that this project be put on hold until such time when the stream fissure/land sinkage had settled.
- b). Stream fissure. The Clerk advised that he had sent correspondence to the Environment Agency, District of Easington, Durham County Council and the MP for Easington. Acknowledgements were received. The Environment Agency had telephoned the Clerk and advised that from their viewpoint that this fissure does not involve them as the lead authority on this matter is the District of Easington. The Environment Agency would only become involved if there was contamination (recent samples suggest not). However, there is a danger of sinking land towards the road (direction) that will inevitably creep upon the sewage network system. Therefore Northumbria Water Board have been contacted and a CCT survey and Geo-technic survey undertaken. Based on the survey’s results (pending) the next actions will be taken. DCC Highways have also been advised due to possible sinkage in the road.

Members noted that the fencing had been extended around the area covering more land and expressed concerns that the land was indeed sinking. Local residents had

made similar comments to Members. Contact had been made with B Weatherall from the District of Easington and T Pearson the County Council footpath inspector. Members expressed further concerns as there were a number of heavy vehicles passing through the Dale. Members requested the Clerk to write to the local Police on this matter and to DCC Highways.

10. REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- a). Easington Community Science College – Members agreed this item be received.
- b). East Durham Community Transport Ltd – Members agreed this item be received.
- c). Dalton-le-Dale Community Association – The Clerk advised that it was possible for the Parish Council to fulfil its pledge to the Community Association under section 19 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. This provides the Council with the powers to provide and equip buildings for its community where athletic, social and educational objectives are provided. Members agreed for the remaining amount to be paid in full.

11. PARISH PLAN TIMETABLE

Members expressed concerns regarding the reluctance of outside bodies to undertake actions and the exercise of producing a Parish Plan at this point in time may not be necessary. It was proposed this matter could be addressed at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and if more residents attended then further more ideas could perhaps be generated. It was agreed that the exercise of gaining resident views could be done at the annual meeting and through the next newsletter.

12. MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk advised that the interest received from the Treasury Deposit Account for the past 6 months was actually £554.52 as the interest rates had fluctuated during the period differing from that anticipated when the advice note is produced at the beginning of the investment period. Members queried the travelling expenses claimed by the Clerk and in reply the Clerk would bring records to the next meeting.

The Monthly report presented to Members was received.

13. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

14. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk distributed the allocation of LCR magazines.

The Clerk advised of the receipt of the Open Space Magazine.

The Clerk advised of the letter received from the District of Easington Tree Officer Jim Jones regarding the Council's queries. The letter stated that even if the tree were protected by a TPO there would still need to be evidence that the tree had been cut down by an individual. A letter will be sent to the local residents on this matter.

The Clerk advised that he had received an acknowledgement from the local MP regarding the stream fissure with further copy acknowledgements from the District of Easington and DCC.

The Clerk advised that a letter of acknowledgement was received from DCC Highways regarding the request for 40mph signage on the Time Inn Bank road heading down from Dalton Heights.

The Clerk advised of the receipt of CE Electric leaflets (what to do in the event of power failure).

The Clerk advised of newsletters received from the District of Easington advising of roadshows to inform residents of the new way that housing benefit will be calculated, the nearest to our residents would be at Dawdon on the 29th February. The District of Easington has also issued fines to people for littering and that work to repair hundreds of graveyard memorials in East Durham has started.

The Clerk advised that he had received an invitation to attend a meeting at Durham County Hall regarding the accreditation process for Quality Status. Members agreed for him to attend.

The Clerk advised that there was an opportunity to invite Lesley Swinbank from the NALC to address the Council at a future meeting. Members accepted this opportunity and requested the Clerk to invite to next meeting.

The Clerk advised that as part of the CiLCA programme he needed to make comment and reference to the Council's Financial Regulations and he could not find a copy of these in the material handed over. He would therefore prepare a draft for Members consideration at the next meeting based on the model produced by the NALC.

The Clerk queried the date for the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and AGM bearing in mind that there would be elections held on the First Thursday in the Month. Members advised that the Church was being used as the Polling Station on the 1st May and therefore the annual meeting would be held on the 8th May.

15. MEMBERS REPORTS

Members requested the Clerk to report an untaxed vehicle at Dalton Heights registration J 873 TEC.

Members expressed concerns at the infestation of moles and requested that this matter is passed to the District of Easington to see if they can resolve this matter.

Members may have a possible candidate for co-option onto the Council. However, this person lives outside the Parish. The Clerk will check if this is possible. This vacancy will also be advertised on the Parish Website.

Members gave an update on the progress of the Community Association. The old centre was now demolished and removed from the site. Foundations have been laid and the group is continuing to seek funding for internal equipment and fittings.

Members expressed concerns of Ivy on the trees, whereby trees are appearing to be heavily laden with the growth and branches are bowing. Members requested the Clerk to report this matter to DCC Highways as a matter of road safety.

Thanks was given to the Members for attending the Joint Consultative meeting where they have successfully campaigned for the green waste bins to be provided in Overdene and Dalton-le-Dale. Members attending this meeting also advised that new Green Bags for recycling paper, plastic and cardboard are soon to be delivered as the District of Easington attempts to increase its recycling rate. During the District of Easington's Spring Clean campaign 2,600 bags of litter were collected, 103 fixed penalties were issued and 422 stray dogs were picked up.

Members advised that a resident had a Blue Bin placed on the roof of his car and tyres let down.

Members expressed concern at the costs involved in training the Clerk through the CiLCA and that should the Clerk leave for other employment then could the Parish reclaim cost from the Clerk. The Clerk would make enquiries on this matter.

Members requested that ideas for the Parish be Agended for next meeting.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3rd April 2008 at St Andrews Church.