

Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held THURSDAY, 6th November 2008.

Present: Councillor W Kennedy (**Chairman**)
Councillors: A Westmorland, S Richardson, M Oliver, M Gustard, C Olsen.
Public: CSO's G Cockerill and G Stephenson (Seaham Police).
L Swinbank (Council Officer, Sedgfield).

1. **APOLOGIES** Councillor's R Olaman, M Hepplewhite and L Keegan.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

3. **POLICE REPORT**

CSO G Cockerill introduced G Stephenson who is new to the area serving Seaham.

The Police reported that it had been quiet in the area, however youths were still causing nuisance at Pageats Garage with several complaints from nearby residents. Alcohol had been seized, however the problem is not only with underage people but includes young adults. In future young adults will have their alcohol seized. The Police are also in touch with Envirocall to ensure the area is cleaned up.

Two incidents of criminal damage to motor vehicles were reported, with one male arrested for both incidents.

Members enquired about the vehicle theft from Dalton Heights that occurred last month. The Police had no news on this matter. House to house door knocks had been done revealing nothing and Dusk till Dawn lights are being sought for the area.

Members expressed concerns at youths gathering in the fields to the rear of Dene Road (behind houses). The gate at the top of the field has already suffered damage. The Police were concerned that they were moving youths on from areas and it would appear that this is where they are now congregating. They will make observations in this area in the future.

Members advised that now the new hall was open they would like to resurrect the Police liaison meetings with the residents of the Parish. The Community Association has already contacted the Seaham Office on this matter.

4. **REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS**

None.

5. **QUALITY COUNCILS**

Lesley Swinbank representing the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) addressed the council in her work of promoting Quality Status (QS) for Councils in the North East.

She distributed information to Members and advised that the scheme was 5 years old and provided the basic minimum standard if Town and Parish Councils wanted to be recognised in the way they conduct their business. The scheme was approved by the NALC, Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Communities and Local Government Department.

One of the most important stages in achieving QS is for the Clerk to obtain the CiLCA. The Clerk would then steer the Council through the submission of a portfolio of evidence to meet the QS criteria for external examination.

If Quality Status was achieved it would provide the basic benchmark that could be used to establish if a council was functioning correctly.

Members advised that the Clerk has recently submitted the CiLCA portfolio and would embark upon the QS in the future.

6. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 4th September 2008 which had been circulated to Members previously were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

6a. Matters arising from that meeting.

Members advised that the minutes should be corrected to contain apologies given at the previous meeting. Members requested that the last sentence concerning the issue of fence boundaries in the Members Reports section should be deleted as this was not stated at the meeting. Clerk to amend minutes prior to distribution.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

- a). Members received the information concerning the 'It's Never Too Late To Feel Great' event held at the Glebe Centre.
- b). Members received the Sustainability Newsletter.
- c). Members received copies of the Winter Salting Routes provided by DCC Highways.
- d). Members received the CDALC September newsletter.
- e). Members received the Autumn 2008 – Open Space magazine.
- f). Members received the Valuing People - September 2008.
- g). Members received the Seizing the Future – NHS County Durham consultation document.
- h). Members received the CDALC Annual report.
- i). The Clerk advised of the information received from George F White concerning a proposed increase to the rent for the recreational ground. This currently stood at £15 per annum and had not been reviewed for 10 years. The proposed new annual rent was £45. Members agreed to the new proposed increase and also requested the Clerk to contact the agents with a proposal of the Parish Council purchasing this land if a common solicitor could be found (to keep costs to a minimum) and to enquire of the estimated cost of purchase and conveyance.
- j). The Clerk advised that the District of Easington has replied to both himself and the complainant concerning the light pollution from the Community Association (CA). Members advised that this matter was being addressed by the CA.
- k). Renewal of Mortgage Loan 2005m. Members declined the offer from the District of Easington to renew this investment opportunity.
- l). The Clerk advised of his submission of the CiLCA portfolio and the receipt received from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

8. PLANNING MATTERS

- a). The Clerk advised of the planning application received.
Proposal: Conservatory
At: 5 Exmouth Close, Seaham
Members requested the Clerk to contact the local Member and ask him to visit the site to make observations.

9. HIGHWAYS and FOOTPATHS

- a). Sidmouth Close, relocation of barrier. Correspondence is received from Durham County Council apologising for the delay and stating that the works will be undertaken shortly.
- b). The Clerk advised that he had written to DCC Highways regarding the replacement of the 40mph signage at Graham Way. Members advised that this sign had not been replaced.
- c). The Clerk advised that he had written to DCC Highways requesting 40mph signage to be painted on the Times Inn Bank road surface. Members advised that this signage has recently been done and requested the Clerk to send letter of thanks.
- d). The Clerk advised that he had written to DCC Highways requesting the central reservation area on the Times Inn Bank to be paid in the new red colour.
- e). The Clerk advised that he had written to DCC Highways requesting a costing to provide the road marking in Dalton Heights Estate.
- f). The Clerk advised that the District of Easington have apologised for the delay in replacing the Escalland Drive sign to Escallond Drive due to an oversight in administering this matter. Members requested the Clerk to contact the District of Easington with regards to a start date for the Overdene Estate verge hardening scheme.

10. ENVIRONMENT

- a). **Cleansing of Stream.** The Clerk advised that he had contacted Brian Weatherall for an update on the cleansing of the stream but had not received any report. Members requested the Clerk to keep in touch with the District of Easington on this matter.
- b). **Stream Fissure.** The Clerk advised of the correspondence received from Simon Longstaff at the District of Easington. The letter read as follows;
'After consultations with the Highway authority, Northumbrian Water Limited, Environment Agency, British Geological Society and a Geotechnical consultant our current position is; to continue monitoring the progress made by the fissure. To a greater extent the hole has appeared to repair itself, but being mindful of the approaching winter period I want to observe how the stream and embankment perform during the expected increased wet weather flow and the anticipated freeze/thaw action brought about by cold weather.
If, in the spring the embankment and stream have remained stable then the safety fencing will be completely removed and the area reinstated. However, in the short term and in an effort to reduce the visual impact of the fencing I will have the fence moved to approximately 1.0m from the edge of the embankment, and efforts will be made to tidy and reinstate the grassed area currently enclosed by the barriers.
It should be remembered that if the embankment does fail again or the swallow hole to be back filled in the grassed area makes a return, the fencing will be reinstated to its current position'.
Members requested the Clerk to obtain copies of the reports from Simon Longstaff.
- c). **Trees along Graham Way.** The Clerk advised that he had not seen any further evidence of tree cutting in this area and neither had Members.
- d). **Village Green.** The Clerk advised that the Landscape Architect from Groundwork East Durham had recently been seconded to Groundwork Northumberland and the work for the village green had been passed over to a colleague. Patrick Nichol would be our contact for this scheme.

11. FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Members considered the request for financial assistance from NEPACS and agreed to provide a £25 donation.
Members agreed to provide a donation of £35 to the Royal British Legion (Poppy Appeal).

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Members agreed to adopt the Model Publications Scheme concerning the Freedom of Information Act. The Clerk had also prepared a Schedule of Information available/applicable to the Parish Council to be published on the website and provided a schedule of charges for the reproduction of that information when requested by the public. Members agreed to these schedules.

13. MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk provided Members with details of the financial transactions for the month and further advised that the NJC pay award for 2008/09 had been set at 2.45%. Members agreed to adhere to the NJC pay award. The Clerk would make the back-dated salary adjustment next month.

14. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman advised of her attendance at the 62nd CDALC AGM. The election of officers was made and 3 councils received their Quality Parish Status. The Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and the role of Parish Councils were discussed and the new unitary authority is now proceeding to make officer appointments to the AAPs.

15. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk advised that the Church of St Andrew's were not seeking to invoice the Parish Council for the use of the Church to hold its meeting. However, they would accept a donation at a rate comparable to that of the WI Hall. Members agreed to pay St Andrew's Church £75 for the use of the Church for the period February to July 2008.

The Clerk distributed information from DCC concerning the Winter Salting Routes. Members requested the Clerk to contact DCC to ensure the Salt Bins are full for the forthcoming season.

The Clerk advised of his submission of the CiLCA Portfolio and that he had sought funding from DRCC and the District of Easington to support the cost of undertaking the course.

The Clerk advised of the receipt of the Countryside Voice Magazine.

The Clerk advised that he had submitted an application for funds in the National Tree Week scheme.

The Clerk distributed information on Hedgerows.

The Clerk advised that he had reported the overhanging tree branches to the District of Easington and DCC. Members requested the Clerk to report branches overhanging onto the play equipment in the playground.

The Clerk advised that he had received confirmation that the swings had been taken down in the playground.

The Clerk advised of his findings concerning Members request to bind the previous year's minutes. Members requested the Clerk to find the previous bound volumes and to source a costing similar to that previously done.

The Clerk advised of the receipt of the Communities and Local Government consultation document. A Member took this for perusal.

The Clerk advised that the website was resurrected and the ownership had been transferred to him.

The Clerk advised of the information received from Dalton-le-Dale Community Association (CA) concerning hiring the CA for its meetings from January to December 2009. This Parish is invoiced at the new rate of £180 inclusive which Members agreed.

16. MEMBERS REPORTS

Members reported that from the Joint Parishes Consultative meeting the District of Easington's kerbside recycling collection was running satisfactorily and Easington had the highest tonnage of material collected for recycling.

Members requested the Clerk to contact Murton Parish Council concerning the fencing from the new roundabout to the Times Inn Bank as it has become an eyesore. Members suggested that perhaps both Dalton-le-Dale and Murton Parish Council could instigate some improvement works to this area in partnership with DCC to improve the appearance of the dilapidated fencing.

The Member representing the Community Association advised that they are producing the yearly calendar and request the Parish Council to partake/sponsor at the cost of £60. Members voted 4-1 in favour of supporting this.

The Member representing the Community Association advised that they were holding a sponsor night and wished to invite the Chairman of the Council to the event who accepted this invitation.

Members reported that a tree had been cut down towards the end of the village near the boundary stone. This was possible for the freeing of overhead wires. Members requested the Clerk to check this matter with the District of Easington Tree Officer.

Members reported concerns of vehicles parking on the grass verge and requested the Clerk to contact the District of Easington and DCC with regards to possible action on this matter.

Members agreed the style and colour of the new notice board that was being produced for the Parish Council to stand in the grounds of the CA.

Members reported that workmen have been to see residents concerning the complaint of the street lighting in Dalton Heights.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 4th December 2008