

Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held THURSDAY, 3rd December 2009

Present: Councillors: W Kennedy (Chairman), M Oliver, M Hepplewhite, C Olsen, J Humes and K Sutton.

Public: J Arpino, K Wright, M Lennox, D Rennoldson, PCSO C Douglas and PC G Stephenson.

125. **APOLOGIES** M Gustard, L Keegan.

126. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None.

127. **POLICE REPORT**

The police advised that there had been 7 incidents of rowdy behaviour in the area of Jubilee Avenue and Plymouth Drive.

Progress has been made with the youth centre in Murton Welfare Park with internal fittings now being made. The youth centre is scheduled to open during December and it is hoped that it will have an impact on deterring youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

Residents advised that full alcoholic drinks cans were found at the public footpath adjacent to Graham Way. This area is well known to the police and will be monitored.

128. **REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS**

Residents expressed concerns that the hedgerow had not been cut back on the Time Inn Bank (B1285). The Clerk advised that he had reported this matter to DCC Highways and the local DCC Councillors. The Clerk also advised that the trees on private land to the rear of St Andrews Church had been cut by the land owners.

Residents advised that the issue of access and use of the dirt track is going to Adjudication and a site meeting is being requested.

Residents expressed concerns regarding the resubmission of planning application for Fairfields. The Chairman advised that this matter was agended and copies of the plans were received by members.

129. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 5th November 2009.

These were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

130. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a). Members received the invitation from Haswell and District Mencap. It was agreed to fund the attendance of 1 member at this event and for the Clerk to make arrangements.
- b). Members received the information provided by CDALC on Predisposition, Predetermination and Bias, and Personal and Prejudicial interests and Lobbying.
- c). Members received the information from CDALC concerning the **appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) for parish councils in 2010/2011 will remain at £6.15**
- d). Members received the invitation from Seaham Town Council to attend the Christmas Carol Service on the 16th December. It was agreed for 3 members to attend and for the Clerk to forward the details to Seaham Town Clerk.

131. **PLANNING MATTERS**

- a) **Proposal:** Resubmission, Extension to dwelling house
At: Fairfields, Dene Road
For: Mrs H Clark

Members expressed concerns at the changes to the front of the property where the plans indicated that the new entrance lobby and section of the garage would protrude into the driveway. This would create a new building line when compared with adjacent properties. Members also found it hard to see any reduction in the proposed development when compared to the previous plans and still considered the

mass of the extension to be too severe for this type of property. The footprint of the site remains overtly large and is not in-keeping with previous planning development approved in The Dene. The double storey extension is slightly reduced but still massive and creates a huge brick wall for adjacent neighbours to on to. This extension would be most unsightly and out of character in The Dene. Members were concerned that this 1950s house was being developed into a 5/6 bedroom dwelling totally out of character with property in The Dene and that previous planning history had not witnessed such a development. If the property was to be fully occupied then the car parking arrangements would be inadequate.

Members were also concerned that should this application be approved the long term consequence could result in the dwelling being further transformed into flats, B&B or Care Home.

Members requested the Clerk to advise planning of the above concerns.

- b) **Proposal:** Retrospective, 4 No. Steel Containers and surfacing of existing track.
At: Land Rear of Dene Road
For: Mrs P Emmanuel

The Parish Council considered this matter and raised the following concern:

The proposal gives little indication as to the reason why 4 No. Storage Containers are required on this site. Members are concerned that the site may be used for business purposes which may ultimately lead to a further planning application for Livery or Kennelling that would bring both noise and smell to the area. The painting of these containers to match the existing caravan should be undertaken (if approved) immediately.

The council is aware of the previous planning approval for this site and that the conditions state the caravan is due for removal on or before 22 November 2010. The council will monitor this condition.

The council is also concerned that the existing caravan is perhaps occupied on more occasions than what was previously agreed in the conditions. The council will endeavour to monitor this matter but requires the planning authority to monitor this site with more vigour.

The council is fearful that this site may be subject to further developments and that the parish council may have to report such matters again to the planning authority. The council is again concerned that the planning authority has not monitored this site with due diligence.

Members requested the Clerk to advise planning of the above concerns.

- c) The Clerk provided members with a briefing note for the planning training session held at the Easington Area Office.

The presentation given highlighted the importance for Town and Parishes to have a 5 year local Parish Plan. The use of Section 106 funds was also mentioned and how at the planning stage the authority is taking a wider view on the needs of local services such as doctors surgeries, leisure facilities, local shops, schools etc. At the planning stage such issues will be investigated and Section 106 funding negotiated with developers.

The planning authority was aware of the working relationships with local parishes and due to their limited resources relied upon local councils to be whistle blowers where planning matters were possibly in contravention.

The session also advised that the Regional Spatial Strategy has identified the need for 5,000 new homes in County Durham with 20% of these being 'affordable housing'.

The issue of reapplying for 'Conservation Status' was raised by our members and the parish was advised that an application could be submitted for their consideration.

132. DRCC BURSARY

The Clerk advised that a further monitoring report was due to be sent to DRCC concerning the use of the £750 bursary for the CiLCA and Quality Parish Status. The Clerk advised that an additional £55.10 of expenditure had been incurred bringing the total spend to date to £520.48. Due to the present position of the council having only 5 elected members the position of quality status could not be pursued. The Clerk therefore recommended that the remaining £229.52 should be returned to DRCC. Members agreed to this recommendation.

133. QUALITY STATUS

The Clerk advised that the process of attaining Quality Parish Status (QPS) would have to be suspended as the council did not have sufficient elected members to fulfil the criteria.

The Clerk advised that whilst the council was unable to pursue QPS he could still develop several issues in readiness and firstly this would be publicising members contact details in literature and on the website. Members agreed for this to be done.

134. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates of attendance were presented to Cllr. C Olsen for the training sessions attended.

135. COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Clerk advised that only one expression of interest is received for the position and that this was the previous member whose resignation had created the vacancy. The council agreed to appoint Sharon Richardson as a co-opted member to the parish council. The Clerk was requested to advise accordingly and invite to the next meeting.

136. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

- a). **Unclassified Road, The Dene.** The Clerk advised that he had written to DCC Highways regarding the speed humps and a letter of acknowledgement was received stating the matter was being dealt with.
- b). **B1285, Times Inn – Road Signage.** The Clerk advised that he had written to both the local County Councillors and DCC Highways regarding the lack of action taken on this section of road.

137. ENVIRONMENT

- a). **Collapsed header wall and pipe outlet at stream.** The Clerk advised that no response had been received from Northumbrian Water on this matter as they were extremely busy dealing with flood issues.
- b). **Village Green.** The Clerk advised that some 350 bulbs were planted around the edge of the village green with help from members and volunteers from BCTV. Planting was also undertaken around the site of the Parish Hall.
The Clerk advised that he had had a further meeting with Groundwork who are still considering the opportunity to apply for the funding to undertake the design work associated with the village green. The Clerk advised that a community group would be the best vehicle for this application and Groundwork are seeking to meet with the horticultural group who meet in the parish hall.
The Clerk advised that he had received a costing from DCC (Easington Area Office) for the purchase and installation of new seating to the village green and on the corner of St Andrews junction. Seats are £623.82 each which includes delivery and can be fitted for £150 each. This would cost the council in total £1,547.64. The council agreed to have them installed and requested the Clerk to make arrangements via DCC Easington Office.
- c). **Rose Bed at St Andrews Junction.** The Clerk advised that he will inform the Easington Area Office to tidy the land as promised to coincide with the new seating installation.
- d). **Woodland to the rear The Dene.** The Clerk advised of the information received from Jim Jones (Tree & Woodland Officer) who had spoken to his predecessor regarding this matter. Jim advised that the matter of placing a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is one that he cannot personally deal with as he has no authorisation to enter private land to evaluate the woodland. The purpose of a TPO does not give the Authority the means of imposing conditions that the owner has to maintain the woodland in a specific method as previously stated. The owner does have a duty of care to ensure the trees are kept in a safe manner. It would be prudent to speak to an officer within the Planning Department who has the authorisation to enter land to place a TPO on the woodland. Again this would not stop the owner carrying out any work. The owner would just need to apply to carry out the work through the Local Planning Authority. Finally the Tree Officer advised that should a specific person/member have a concern with the health of a tree then he/she must speak to the owner of the trees. He can give general advice, however he is not insured to write a tree evaluation report on trees that are outside his remit.

The Clerk advised that in view of the information received, should any specific person or member have an issue with the trees then it would be courteous for them to make contact with the owner to see if matters can be resolved.

The Chairman advised of fallen trees in the Dene which have since been cleared away. The road was closed for a period and fortunately nobody was injured. The issue of the safety of these trees was reported last year as they were heavily laden with Ivy. A site meeting involving members took place and works were promised. The Clerk was requested to write to DCC Highways on this matter advising of the recent incident and the need for these trees to be inspected.

138. REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Members considered the request for financial support from the County of Durham School Benevolent Fund and agreed to donate £35 to this cause.

139. MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk provided Members with details of the financial transactions for the month with invoices received. Members agreed to the payments/invoices as provided for vouchers 101532 to 101535.

140. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman advised she had attended the area meeting for Town and Parish Council's and advised that the Member selected as the AAP representative had resigned.

141. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk advised members that he had reported the fountain leakage to DCC and they were to undertake repairs to it.

The Clerk advised that he reported the issue of the dog bin to DCC and was advised that the replacement could be used for dog waste. Members accepted this but requested the Clerk to contact DCC seeking to have it changed to a Red Dog Bin.

The Clerk circulated information on Winter Salting Routes provided by DCC.

The Clerk advised that he had prepared a letter to the resident of Dene Road regarding Parking on the Grass Verges. He intended to do the letter drop but when viewing the site could see very little signs of damage. The Clerk had also received correspondence from DCC stating it was not illegal to park on the verge and a more appropriate method of preventing such damage would be to install a fence which would not be done due to financial constraints. Members advised that circumstances in the street had changed improving the situation and it would be monitored.

The Clerk provided copies of the December Parish Newsletter for members to display in the Church Hall and Parish Hall. The Clerk has placed copies in the notice board and on the website.

142. MEMBERS REPORTS

Members advised of the blocked drain in front of Seth House in Dene Road and requested the Clerk to report this matter to DCC.

Members advised of their attendance at the Planning Training session.

Members advised of their attendance at the Police Consultative Group meeting.

Members advised of their attendance at the switch-on for the Seaham Town Council Lights.

Members requested the Clerk to contact DCC to ensure that the local estate grit/salt bins were replenished for the winter period.

143. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 4th February 2010