

Dalton Piercy Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 8th February 2024 at Dalton Piercy Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Noble (Chair), Patrick, Ireland, Middleton, Savage and Rushworth (from 7.25pm)

In Attendance: 9 members of the public

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Timothy, Ward Cllr Martin-Wells.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs Noble, Savage and Patrick – DPHVA

3. Public Forum

- A resident sought ideas for how the Parish Council could address the problem of rubbish being discarded around the parish;
- He also requested to know the final Precept demand. (£13,0551)
- Another residents raised concern that HBC had sent him a letter regarding water on the road outside his residence, and noted for information, that the water was, in fact, flowing from the property of his immediate neighbour, of which fact he had informed HBC. He was advised that he should contact Ward Cllr Martin-Wells regarding this, as this was not Parish Council business.
- Several residents complained about the visibly increasing amount of rubbish around the parish.

4. **Draft of Minutes 14th January 2024:** The draft Minutes were **Unanimously agreed** as a true record.

5. Matters Arising:

- (i) **Business Savings Accounts** – The Chair informed that the bank had now informed her that the Parish Council did not qualify for a 90-day account and therefore a different savings Account was to be applied for.
- (ii) **HBC Enforcement issues** – No further information received from HBC.
- (iii) **Remedial Work on trees** – Cllr Patrick reported that the work had been postponed due to inclement weather.

6. **Website:** The Chairman noted that she had received the invoice from One.Com, payable by the 31st March. She reminded colleagues that they had previously agreed to change provider, due to the increasing cost and difficulties with the One.Com provision. Cllr Ireland had obtained quotes from two British-based companies, for the transfer of the current website content, on-going hosting and provision of domain name. It was known that the Government was looking to require all Councils to move to .gov domains in the near future, and might be providing financial help with the move. The quote from WJPS included a change of domain to a .gov address. After a brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Savage, seconded by Cllr Middleton that, as the move to a .gov domain would have to be made at some point, the quote from WJPS, be accepted. This was **unanimously agreed**. Cllr Ireland was requested to liaise with WJPS to ensure the new website was up and

running by the end of March, Cllr Noble to inform One.Com that the contract with them would not be renewed. **Actions:** Cllrs Ireland and Noble to contact relevant firms as agreed.

7. **Ward Councillor's Report:** Cllr Martin-Wells had requested that residents be informed the brown bin collection renewal payments were now due.
8. **Chairs Report:** Cllr Noble reported:
 - She had attended the recent Parish Liaison meeting with the Leader and Managing Director of HBC and that it had been a very short meeting, only lasting 40 minutes. She noted that parish council Chairmen are bringing up the same issues every time – fly-tipping, speeding and flooding and, although the MD notes these down, there is no money available within the HBC budget to respond to these concerns. The Chair noted that whilst fly-tipping collection by HBC has increased, general littering had increased considerably. It was noted that much of the litter is dropped at night or early in the mornings and that much of it was beer or wine containers. A resident suggested that HBC be asked to write to all construction companies in the region, requesting they ask their personnel not to throw rubbish out of their vehicles. The Chair had raised concern at the Liaison Meeting, that the illuminated 'Take Your Litter Home' sign on the A689, had been sited on the outskirts of the town rather than at the Borough boundary, thus missing out the rural communities altogether.
 - She had informed HBC that the Village Hall would be closing for good at midnight on 8th February and would therefore not be available on 2nd May, leaving nowhere in the village for a Polling Station. The Monitoring Officer subsequently requested permission to install a portacabin on the Dene Garth car parking area for this purpose, to which the Chair had responded in the negative, as residents needed the parking availability. The Children's Home had also refused access to one of their outdoor classrooms, as they looked after vulnerable children. Mr. Hanby offered to allow HBC to place a portacabin on the stockyard next to The Priory, for which offer he was warmly thanked. The Chair agreed to forward his contact number to HBC. **Action:** Chair to forward Mr. Hanby's contact details to HBC.
 - The Hartlepool Rural Plan Group was now in the process of reviewing all its policies; the representatives on the Group from Dalton Piercy are Jo Grylls and Cllr Noble.
9. **Personnel Committee:** Cllr Ireland reported that interviews for the Clerk's position were to take place on Monday 26th February, venue to be confirmed. A training session for new Councillors was to be held on Zoom on Thursday 27th February, 6-8.00pm; Cllr Middleton **agreed** to take part and agreed to his e-address being provided to the trainers; Cllr Ireland to make the booking. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to book place for Cllr Middleton and to confirm the venue for the interviews.
10. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Noble reported the sign for The Batts had now been erected, thanks to Cllr Patrick. The Annual Play Area Inspection Report had been received; it was noted the PC needed to keep an eye on overhanging trees and worn patches of grass. The costings for a heavy-duty aluminium road sign for Highgate Meadows had been received, £235 + VAT. Cllr Patrick proposed that DPPC purchase this, seconded by Cllr Middleton and **unanimously agreed**.
11. **Finance:** No transactions had taken place since the last meeting. An invoice had been received from HBC for the relocation of the electricity feeder post for the Christmas Tree, in the sum of £650 + VAT. Cllr Ireland moved payment, seconded by Cllr Savage and **agreed** by all.

A resident questioned why the opening balance at the start of the year was £45,000, yet the balance shown on the statement in January was 8,450 – and asked ‘should the bank balance not be greater?’ Cllr Ireland agreed to investigate.

12. **DPVHA Report:** Cllr Patrick reported that the Hall was to be closed to the public from midnight that day as the charity could not afford to insure the hall, other than as an unoccupied building. All contents will be removed; volunteers were needed to help with this – meeting at 10.00am on Saturday 10th. As soon as planning permission is granted, the hall will be demolished.
13. **Correspondence:** (i) Letter from ‘Walk and Talk’, a Durham-based charity wishing to discuss with the PC the possibility of including a walk around Dalton Piercy; it was **agreed** to invite them to the March meeting. (ii) Copy of a response from Ward Cllr Martin-Wells to a resident’s letter regarding fly-tipping, which included a number of suggestions for HBC to consider; A M-W noted that the HBC MD had stated nothing they tried worked. (iii) e-mail from the same resident regarding information on the accounts presented in January (already responded to). (iv) e-mail from same resident providing information obtained from the Government website on Village Greens, for the Village Green policy review, and questioning the necessity of using a barrister; the Chair noted the barrister had been contracted to deal with a specific legal issue concerning the Village Green and in the process offered advice on the VG policy. (v) e-mail from the same resident raised a query as to the overspend, later amended to underspend. (vi) e-mail from the same resident raising concern about flooding on the village green, apparently coming from behind the wall on the access track alongside the pond; it was noted that this seems to have cleared up, but needs investigating. (vii) e-mail from the same resident with another query on the accounts – already resolved; (viii) Response to letter from same resident to Tony Hanson, HBC, regarding fly-tipping – discussed earlier in the meeting; TH outlined what actions HBC was taking to deal with fly-tipping.
14. **Planning Application** – none received.

Matters of Concerns to councillors:

- Cllr Middleton raised concern that the drains throughout the village are nearly all blocked; the Chair noted that she had raised this concern at the Parish Liaison Meeting.
- Cllr Noble raised concern regarding the defibrillator, which needs checking every month to ensure it is in full working order; Cllr Middleton **agreed** to undertake this.
- It was noted that the metal flap-valve on the outfall into Dalton Beck, five yards from the gate into The Batts is stuck in a partially open position. It was unclear who was responsible for the outfall.

The Parish Council were sad to note the closure of the Village Hall and extended warm thanks to the DPVH Trustees for its use over many years, and hopes for a new Village Hall in the near future.

Meeting closed at 8.58pm.

Next Meeting Thursday March 14th 7.00pm – venue to be arranged.