

Dalton Piercy Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 14th March 2024

at Elwick WI Hall.

Present: Cllrs Noble (Chair), Ireland, Middleton, Patrick and Savage.

In Attendance: Sandra Valkauskaite, 4 members of the public.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Alan Timothy, Ward Cllr. Martin-Wells
2. **Appointment of Parish Clerk:** Cllrs ratified the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and appointed Ms Sandra Valkauskaite as the new Parish Clerk/RFO.
3. **Declaration of interests:** Cllrs Noble, Patrick and Savage in Item 15, Dalton Piercy Village Hall Report.
4. **Public Forum**
 - A resident reported a large pothole on the main road, opposite the entrance to College Close and Dalton Heights.
 - The same resident reported a large volume of fly tipping recently dumped on Dalton Back Lane – at least a lorry load. It was noted that this had already been reported to the Borough Council.
 - Another resident expressed interest in understanding why no Ward Councillors are attending Parish Council meetings, when there are three elected to represent Rural West ward. The Chair explained that she understood the ward Councilors had divided the workload of the ward among themselves, with Cllr Martin-Wells taking responsibility for both Dalton and Elwick, although he attended neither Parish Council. All Ward Councillors normally attended the Ward Surgery held at Hartlepool Cricket Club.
 - A resident raised concerns regarding the deteriorating fence in The Batts. Additionally, they highlighted the need to address neglected flower pots. These issues will be further discussed and actioned accordingly.
5. **Minutes of last meeting:** Unanimously **agreed** as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.
6. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) **Business Savings Account:** The Chairman informed that the savings account had finally been opened and £31,000 had been transferred into it from the Current account.
 - b) **HBC Enforcement Issues:** All three issues were mentioned at the February meeting of the HBC Planning Committee and are now being investigated by the HBC Enforcement Officer.
 - c) **Remedial Work on trees:** Cllr Patrick reported that the tree maintenance tasks on the village green have been completed, however, due to weather conditions there is still one tree remaining to be dealt with, on the Play Area. The trees in The Batts will be dealt with in due course.
 - d) **Highgate Meadows road sign:** Cllr Patrick reported that the sign had now been installed, and thanked Cllr Savage for his help.

7. **Village Green Policy amendments:** The amended policy had been circulated to Councillors in advance; there being no further amendments of corrections suggested, Cllr Ireland proposed adoption, with Cllr Patrick seconding – **unanimously agreed**.
8. **Website:** Cllr Ireland reported the new .gov.uk domain is now live and, after some updating of content, the website will go live on 1st of April. In the next few days, the Clerk, Chair and herself will undertake training on how to maintain the site. The Clerk's email address will also be changed.
9. **Proposed DPPC Green Policy (including EV Charging):** Cllr Middleton led a discussion on the potential for a 'Green/Environmental' Policy. It was noted that both Elwick and Dalton Piercy Parish Councils had previously rejected installing public charging points, as there was no space for public parking around the village greens. Cllr Middleton was concerned that, at some point in the future, individual households wishing to install EV charging points, could face difficulties as the cables would need to cross village green. It was agreed that further information was needed regarding possible government funding. Cllr Ireland proposed a Working Party be formed to investigate the issues and potential solutions, recognising that this would be a long-term process. This was **agreed**, with Cllrs Ireland, Middleton and Savage forming the core group, Cllr Middleton in the Chair.
10. **Ward Councillor's Report:** Cllr Martin-Wells had requested via email, that, as he had not received notification of any concerns or issues in advance of the meeting, residents be informed the next Ward Surgery would be held at Hartlepool Cricket Club at 7.00pm on Wednesday 27th March. He again requested a list of any outstanding issues. The Chair will forward a list of all issues raised at this meeting, i.e. potholes, fly tipping, EV charging points. A resident raised concern that Tony Hanson was providing misleading information about fly tipping, having stated that fewer investigations were required, (although many more incidents were being reported); he asked that HBC use the mobile CCTV cameras they had recently purchased with a government grant, be used on the rural roads to capture fly-tippers. **Action:** Chair to forward issues to Cllr Martin-Wells.
11. **Chair's Report:**
 - Polling Station will be a porta-cabin based in the Stockyard at Manor Farm, 2nd May. Appreciation was expressed to Mark Hanby for agreeing to this.
 - There has been a breach of the Village Green policy – a resident has laid gravel on the Village Green, without the prior approval of the Parish Council. **Action:** A formal letter to be send to the resident, requiring them to remove the gravel, and to reinstate the grass by 30th April; the letter to be accompanied by a map of the village green, showing the approved tracks, and a copy of the amended Policy.
 - Chair will raise use of mobile CCTV cameras at next Parish Liaison Meeting.
12. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr Patrick reported a new Parish Clerk had been recruited. It was noted that the previous Clerk was owed back pay accrued from the 2023 pay rise only recently announced, as well as a financial contribution for her use of broadband and telephone on behalf of the Council. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to deal with this immediately.
13. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Invoice for play area inspection received and paid.

Pond pollution has been investigated by Northumbrian Water; pond drained and refilled with clean water and all drains down as far as The Batts cleaned. The pond will be skimmed again to ensure all pollution is cleared.

There was a blockage near the road manhole closest to The Windmill hotel. The partially open valve inside The Batts gate is supposed to be that way, but Northumbrian Water have acknowledged it is stuck and will be replaced later this week.

14. **Finance Report:** A duplicate Cash Book on the laptop has been removed, all financial records now updated and accurate.

Financial Transactions 12th January – 11th March 2024

Receipts	£
TOTAL:	£0.0
Payments	£
Meryl Gardens (tree care)	550.00
Wave Water (allotments)	60.41
Lyn Noble (printer paper - Amazon)	25.99
Lyn Noble (printer ink - Amazon)	29.29
Signs & Plastics (Highgate Meadows road sign)	282.00
HBC (Play Area Annual inspection)	200.00
HBC (Feeder Pillar re-siting)	780.00
Transfer to Savings Account	31,000.00
Elwick WI Hall Account (Clerk Interview room hire)	12.50
TOTAL:	£32,940.19

15. **Dalton Piercy Village Hall Trustees Report:** Planning permission has still not been approved. The hall is now closed to the public.
16. **Correspondence:** Circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.
- As a result of an email from a resident, all accounts checked and where necessary, corrected.
 - Rural West Ward surgery date – noted.
 - A free A3 size portrait of King Charles III has been ordered.
 - The green outside the allotments has been badly churned up. Letters to be sent to all allotment holders reminding them not to park there when the ground is wet.
 - A rail on the fence by The Terrace has come loose and needs repair – referred to Maintenance Committee for action.
 - Copy of a letter about fly tipping to Tony Hanson from a resident – noted.
 - Letter from a resident requesting the Parish Council purchase anti-litter signs to place around the parish – Councillors concerned as to where these could be legally placed. Cllr Middleton suggested farmers be asked to place them on their land adjacent to roads; this

was put to the vote and failed – 2 for, 3 against. It was **agreed** to purchase signs to be placed at each entrance to The Batts.

- h. Communication from a resident about potential environmental damage to trees. It was noted that DPPC is exempt from much of the quoted legislation, however, the Council always acts responsibly and in accordance with good practice in managing the trees on its land, which is why a full tree survey was undertaken last year.

17. **Planning Applications:** None received.

18. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:**

Cllr Savage concerned that the laying of gravel on the village green could set a precedent and action needs to be taken immediately to have this removed.

Meeting closed at 8.22pm.

Next Meeting to take place at Elwick WI Hall, 7.00pm Thursday 11th April 2024.