

**Minutes of the meeting of Dalton Piercy Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Thursday
9th March 2023 at Dalton Piercy Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs L. Noble (Chair), M. Ireland, M. Patrick, S. Rushworth, , S. Savage, A. Timothy

In Attendance: 2 residents

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Jackson, Ward Cllr Martin-Wells – accepted.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs Noble, Patrick and Savage, in item 14 – DP Village Hall
3. **Public Forum:** No items raised.
4. **Minutes of 9th February 2023:** Cllr Timothy proposed, with Cllr Patrick seconding, the acceptance of the minutes as a true record. All being in agreement it was **resolved** to accept the minutes.
5. **Matters Arising:** (i) **Historic Wall Listing** – The Chairman had sent another Objection on behalf of the PC, noting that, although the wall was not actually ‘Listed’, it was of historic interest, being one of the few stretches of village green enclosure walls remaining, and Historic England should be consulted; she had also submitted a copy of the Easement contract as additional evidence.
(ii) **Highgate Meadows road sign** – Kieran Bostock, HBC, has been requested to add a sign indicating the whereabouts of Highgate Meadows to his programme of works.
6. **Traffic Calming:** Cllr Patrick had requested this remain a standing Agenda item until the problem had been resolved. It was noted the 20mph sign on the road from the A19 was still not working, 6 months after initially reported. It is hoped this will be repaired when the road resurfacing is undertaken shortly. Councillors noted the speed signs that indicated the actual speed of a vehicle, such as those at Hart, were more effective than the 20mph signs
7. **Coronation weekend 6-8th May:** After a brief discussion it was **agreed** the Parish Council would organise a similar event to the celebration of the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Cllr Timothy proposed it take the form of a barbeque, starting at 2.00pm on May 7th, with residents invited to bring their own food to cook on BBQs provided, as well as liquid refreshment. The PC would provide a Coronation cake, games for the children, including prizes for ‘Making a Crown’ competition and for the best decorated house. It was further **agreed** that a Coronation event working party be set up, to include interested residents, with Cllr Ireland convening. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to convene Coronation Event WP, residents to be invited to join.
8. **Red Gap Projects:** The Chairman reported that:
 - a) the **Solar Lights** project had now been completed and closed. £3,740 would be received for this project from Grantscape.
 - b) **Batts Orchard/Bluebells** project was almost complete, only waiting for the stone and plaque to be put in place. Cllr Patrick informed this would be done by the end of March. A part claim had been made, in the sum of £3,263.70, the remainder to be claimed once the project was completed.
Cllr Savage requested a Batts Working Group be convened, and the Chair agreed this should take place early the following week.
 - c) The final section of the **Footpath** project– from Three Gates to the village, is due to be completed this year; however the quote recently received from HBC for the work to lay a section some 113m x 1.5m, has come in at over £14,300. This is much higher than the original forecast and the Chairman will speak to Peter Frost, HBC, to negotiate a lower figure. **Action:** Cllr Noble to negotiate the cost of the final section of footpath with Mr. Frost.

9. **Councillor Training:** Cllr Ireland informed she had attended the free one-day event for Parish Councils on Civility & Respect held that day at Newton Aycliffe; she noted it had been an informative event. Councillors were reminded they had agreed to undertake such training when they signed the Pledge - there is information about on-line courses available on the NALC website.
10. **Maintenance Committee Report:** It was noted that Cllr Jackson had organised an Orchard Tree Planting session; two residents had turned up to help but there were only three trees to plant as the rest had been planted by Cllr Jackson earlier in the week. Cllr. Jackson still had more orchard trees heeled in in his garden that could be used if residents wished to plant a memorial/occasion tree. Cllr Noble noticed that more hedging seemed to have been replanted to replace some lost over the winter – this was in an area that had been agreed hedging should be removed. Cllr Savage expressed concern that he/she was ignoring the minuted instruction that he/she was not to undertake any work in the Batts without the express permission of the Parish Council – a 5-year Batts Management Plan was in place, agreed by the PC with Teesside Wildlife Trust and no other works were to be undertaken. Whilst it was recognised that his/her heart was in the right place, he/she had to follow the proper procedures and accept he/she had no right to undertake any activity in the Batts on their own volition. All agreed the situation had to be addressed. After some discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Ireland ask for advice from the Borough Solicitor if such actions would amount to a breach of the Code Of Conduct. It was **unanimously agreed** the Personnel Committee and Chair, were to invite him/her to meet them to discuss their activities in the Batts. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to seek advice and then issue an invitation to him/her as agreed.

The Chairman noted HBC's likely quote would be of the order of £1,500 to undertake a full survey of all trees on PC owned land, which included The Batts. The mandatory survey is to be carried out every 2 years. She will contact HBC to arrange a site visit.

11. **Ward Councillors' Report:** Cllr Andrew Martin-Wells had submitted a written report in which he confirmed that a charge of £32 was to be introduced for the collection of garden waste (brown bin), with a £20 charge for every other brown bin up to a maximum of 4 per household. It will take approx. 4 weeks to obtain the official sticker for the brown bin, without which it will not be emptied. He further reported the A19/Elwick By-pass was to go to Finance Committee on 13th March, after which it would go to Planning Committee, along with a Compulsory Purchase Order for the land.
12. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr Noble reported:
- She had completed the Red gap solar light project and submitted the necessary documentation.
 - She would be attending the Parish Liaison Meeting later in the month.
 - HBC Highways have planned for the road from Three Gates to the A19 to be resurfaced imminently at a costing of £50,000.
 - Cllr Timothy has kindly donated a second-hand B/W laser duplex printer to the PC. Cllrs expressed their gratitude to Cllr Timothy.

Cllr Ireland wished to put on record the Council's appreciation of the time the Chairman has spent fulfilling the Clerk's role, in dealing with correspondence etc.

13. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr Ireland reported that 7 Information packs had been issued in response to requests about the Clerk vacancies. Whilst she appreciated the donation of a fast laser printer, she felt the PC still required a colour printer that did duplex printing and also scanned/photocopied. Cllr Savage proposed, with Cllr Patrick seconding, the purchase of such a printer up to a maximum of £120; this being **unanimously agreed** it was **resolved** that Cllr Noble purchase such a printer for the PC. Finally, Cllr Ireland informed she had some confidential matters to discuss with Councillors and requested these be taken after the press and public were excluded. **Agreed.**

14. **Dalton Village Hall Association Report:** Cllr Patrick reported nothing had progressed with HBC since the previous meeting. Trustees were ensuring that anything that did not require HBC permission was being progressed.

15. **Finance:** The Vice Chair presented the financial reports, which were approved.

Receipts	
Grantscape – Solar Lights project	£3,740.00
TOTAL:	£3,740.00
Payments	
Wave water	£21.36
Lyn Noble (stamps & printer ink)	£15.88
Lyn Noble (One.Com website & domain name)	£295.04
TOTAL:	£333.28

The Chairman noted that the payment for our current website hosting and domain name, was over £100 more than the previous year. It was therefore even more important that the PC seek another, cheaper website host, and, Cllr Ireland proposed, also move to a '.gov.uk' domain name before the next renewal date. Cllr Timothy proposed, with Cllr Ireland seconding, that DPPC change website hosts and move to a '.gov.uk.' domain name within a year – **unanimously agreed**.

16. **Correspondence:** (i) Cllr Jackson email– noted; (ii) CLCA information about specialist VAT advice now available – noted.

17. **Planning Applications: H/2021/0096 – Highgate Meadows** – Phase 2 – 7 dwellings.

DPPC fully support the Planning Officer who states in her report to the Planning Committee that the site is unsustainable due to:

- lack of infrastructure
- grade 2 agricultural land
- against Local Plan and Rural Plan.

Cllr Savage informed he had spoken with several residents of Highgate Meadows who were opposed to the proposed pedestrian footpath. It was unanimously agreed to put in a **strong objection**.

It was noted the original plan for Highgate Meadows showed a plot for a detached bungalow that had subsequently not been built. In this later application this was now to be replaced with one detached and 2 semi-detached dwellings, to which Councillors raised no objection. All residents would be pleased to see the original development properly completed, with roads properly surfaced and buffer zone trees planted, as promised.

18. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:** None raised.

19. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm Thursday 13th April 2023 at Dalton Village Hall.

20. **Exclusion of Press and Public:** Residents left the meeting.

21. **Confidential matters:** Cllr Ireland brought to the attention of Councillors matters pertaining to the previous Clerk. These were recorded in a confidential Minute.

Meeting closed at 8.20pm