

**Minutes of the meeting of Dalton Piercy Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January  
2023 at Dalton Piercy Village Hall**

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

**In Attendance:** Mrs. J. White, Clerk, 4 residents

1. **Apologies:** Cllr S. Rushworth – accepted.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs Noble, Patrick and Savage in item 10 – DP Village Hall
3. **Public Forum:** Cllr Jackson raised concern about two youths seen riding Quad Bikes along the road at 8.00am; as they were not causing any trouble, it was deemed this was not PC business. He also raised concern about the number of construction vehicles using the road through the village to reach the A689 – he was advised to inform the HBC Enforcement Officer of each, and every such incident noted, together, if possible, with the name of the company and numberplate of the vehicle in question.

A resident expressed concern that no Minutes or Financial records had been posted to the Parish Council's website since July 2022 – the Chairman advised this matter as being dealt with. He requested an update on progress on the Village Hall planning application and was referred to item 10 on the agenda. Finally, he asked what criteria was required to qualify for the Christmas gift to volunteers – the Chairman apologised for the late delivery of gifts, due to the Clerk's illness and noted that Mr & Mrs Parker were amongst the most proactive volunteers in the village and definitely qualified and would be receiving their gift very soon.

4. **Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022:** Acceptance of the draft Minutes was proposed by Cllr Timothy, seconded by Cllr Noble and agreed. It was therefore **resolved** to accept the Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.
5. **Matters Arising:** (i) Item 3 – **Historic Wall Listing** - It was noted that no response had yet been received from HBC, in regard to the listing status of the historic wall between Manor Farm and Leamont.  
  
(ii) Item 5 – **Highgate Meadows** – Cllr Savage reported the petition from the residents of Highgate Meadows had been submitted to HBC but no response had yet been received; the Clerk reported similarly, regarding the submission made by the Parish Council on the same issue.
6. **Red Gap Projects:** The Clerk informed the grants had now been received in full for the Orchard and Bluebells projects, however the funds for the Street Lights project had yet to be received; this was in part, due to the project no longer appearing on the Grantscape website, due to its age. She had therefore submitted the claim and relevant documents directly to the Grants Officer and payment was expected shortly. She noted that information requested from Peter Frost in relation to the Footpath project was still outstanding, despite several reminders. Cllr Timothy noted that much of the footpath already completed was riddled with weeds.

7. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Noble reported nothing much had happened since the December meeting, though Cllr Patrick had overseen the tree works at the allotments, which had been successfully concluded.

The Christmas Tree was to be felled in the spring, once the weather improved, at which time the lights would be removed, and the good ones retained for future use. A resident suggested that lights be placed on a smaller tree nearby and the power box moved. It was **agreed** to defer further discussion on this to the April meeting. **Action:** Clerk to put Christmas lighting on April agenda.

A resident informed of several potholes recently appearing, on the main road through the village, close to the lane to the Village Hall, others near Three Gates. Another resident noted the drain on the road opposite North View was permanently full of water. **Action:** Clerk to report these issues to HBC.

The next Batts maintenance visit of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust is not due until February. Cllr Jackson noted the very muddy state of the public footpath through the Batts, and Cllr Patrick proposed the Parish Council seek funding from Red Gap to 'improve' the footpath with dolomite. It was **agreed** to investigate the potential for such a bid.

8. **Ward Councillors' Report:** No report had been received, nor apologies. Cllr Ireland suggested Cllr Martin-Wells be invited to take a walk about the village with Councillors, to gain a better insight into the issues/concerns of the Parish Council.

9. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr Noble reported:

- The Parish Charter Working party had completed the draft Charter, which would now go to the HBC Constitution Committee, with the full support of the Leader and Managing Director of HBC. Once approved by the Constitution Committee, the draft Charter would then be circulated to all parish councillors for Parish Council endorsement, as well as being presented to Full Council. It was hoped to have the Charter adopted before the Council went into purdah at the end of March.
- She had attended the Parish Liaison Meeting, held on 9<sup>th</sup> January, where she had raised some issues that were operational rather than strategic, ensuring that the Leader and Managing Director were made aware that DPPC had no other conduit for these issues as Ward Councillors were not attending Parish Council meetings. Issues raised included: the Village Hall planning application, the need for traffic calming in the village (and she requested speed bumps be installed as a matter of urgency) and the 20mph sign at the entrance to the village that was still not working. Chairmen had raised concerns, in particular, the A179. The draft Charter had been well received by all present.

10. **Dalton Village Hall Association Report:** Cllr Patrick reported the latest designs had been submitted to HBC Planning Department, but it appeared they refused to validate the application until a full Bat Survey had been completed; this had to take place between May and August, which position left the Village Hall Association in limbo. It was known that other Planning Authorities validated applications, making it a condition of Approval that a Bat Survey was completed, so the architect working for the Village Hall was seeking verification from senior Planning Officers as to the validity of the refusal to validate. Cllr Noble informed

that the HBC Leader, Managing Director and Solicitor had all agreed at the Parish Liaison meeting that the survey should merely be a condition. Cllr Patrick raised concern that the delay in getting Planning approval might mean the loss of the S106 monies allocated to the Village Hall; Cllr Noble informed that she had received confirmation from the HBC Managing Director that an extension would be granted, as the delay was entirely down to the Borough Council.

Cllr Patrick further informed that a fence had recently been erected behind No.2 North View, by HBC staff. They had left a considerable mess behind, and he had raised a complaint with HBC. In the discussion that followed this, it became clear that ownership of some of the land, on which the Village Hall stood, was not yet fully resolved, as a North View resident paid Stockton Borough Council rent for the land, though HBC claimed they owned it. This is a matter for the Borough Councils to resolve between themselves but could cause further delays to the Planning approval.

11. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr Ireland reported that recruitment of a new Clerk was in hand. She indicated that the Personnel Committee and Chairman would need to meet to discuss interim measures, as this was the last meeting to be attended by the current incumbent.
12. **Finance:** (a) **Financial Transactions** - The clerk presented the Transactions report, noting the cheques for flower tub volunteers required signing. The Borough Council had undertaken their quarterly inspection of the Play Area and had been paid for this service. Cllr Jackson queried whether the inspection included the trees at the Play Area and was informed by the Clerk that those trees within, or overhanging the area, were covered. Cllr Jackson noted the trees to the north of the area were owned by Anglian Water and therefore not the responsibility of the Parish Council, but he was very aware, in the light of the recent tragic death of a 6-year-old at a school in the region, that trees could prove lethal if not maintained properly. He asked if the trees on land owned by the Parish Council were fully insured, given the concern raised previously by Cllr Ireland and was assured that, for the moment they were. Cllr Timothy proposed adoption of the Report, seconded by Cllr Patrick, and **agreed** by all.  
  
(b) **Precept** - The Clerk informed that the Precept demand form had been completed in accordance with the decision of the December meeting to increase the precept by 5%; the form was then signed by the Chair of the meeting, and Cllrs Patricia and Timothy, and countersigned by the Clerk.
13. **Correspondence:** (i) email received from the resident at No 1, Manor Fields, regarding the slight possibility of damage occurring to an Ash tree during the building of the approved extension. They wished to have the approval of the Parish Council to an agreement that, should the Ash tree be damaged, or later die, as a result of their building works, they would commit to replacing it with another tree to be planted within 100m of the house. After a debate, led by Cllr Jackson, a proposal from Cllr Timothy that "DPPC accept the offer to replace the Ash Tree should it die, but with the proviso that it was to be replaced with three trees, planted at sites chosen by DPPC". The proposal was seconded by Cllr Ireland and put to the vote. 5 Councillors voted in favour with Cllr Jackson voting against. The proposal was therefore **carried**. Cllr Jackson then proposed a TPO be placed on the said Ash tree, but this proposal had no support and was dismissed.

(ii) email received from HBC, forwarding information from TVCA on grants available for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure now to be extended to include community-owned land – noted that DPPC has no land available.

(iii) email from a resident regarding the 20mph sign at the edge of the village which was no longer working. **Action:** Clerk to report to HBC using the Councillor Portal.

(iv) Cllr Ireland informed of a request from the SLCC that local councils write to their MP requesting they support an Early Day Motion requesting the Government to revisit their decision not to bring in sanctions against Councillors who breached the Code of Conduct. Cllr Ireland proposed, with Cllr Noble seconding, the request be supported and that DPPC should write to Jill Mortimer MP, requesting she support the EDM. This was unanimously supported, and it as so **resolved**.

14. **Planning Applications:** None received.

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

16. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at Dalton Village Hall.

*Meeting closed at 8.30pm*

