

# Dalton Piercy Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 13 April 2023 at Dalton Piercy Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs Noble (Chairman), Ireland, Jackson, Patrick, Rushworth and Savage.

**In Attendance:** 4 Residents

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Timothy and Ward Cllr Martin-Wells – accepted.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs Noble, Patrick and Savage in Item 16 – DP Village Hall.

3. **Public Forum:**

- A resident requested a copy of the Charter; the Chairman explained that she had yet to receive a copy of the final, signed document, when this was received it would be posted on the DPPC website.
- The resident requested that a footpath across the village green be part of any application to the Red Gap Community Fund. The Chairman noted that the Parish Council had not yet decided which projects would be put forward this year.
- The resident asked when the road from Three Gates to the A19 was to be resurfaced, as it had been noted this was to be completed in March, signs had been erected, but to date no work had been done.  
The Chairman noted that the Parish Council had received no further notification from HBC and that Councillors had been expecting the work to be done as earlier notified.

4. **Draft Minutes of 9 March 2023:** The draft Minutes had been circulated in advance. Cllr Jackson referred to Item 10 – the Maintenance Committee Report. He had not been present at the meeting but requested the word ‘removed’ be deleted; he was also concerned that a Councillor had, it appeared, been accused of some action without any supporting evidence being provided. After some discussion, it was unanimously agreed to remove any mention of the Councillor’s name from the published minutes. The minute was duly amended, and Councillors **resolved to approve** the amended minutes. **Action:** Chairman to ensure published minutes are the approved amended version.

5. **Matters Arising:**

- (i) **Historic Wall Listing** – It was noted that the HBC Planning Committee were to make a site visit on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> between 10-10.30 am. A resident who had submitted one of the objections planned to attend the site visit and also intended to attend the Planning Committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April.
- (ii) **Highgate Meadows road sign** – no response had been received from HBC; it was suggested that the issue be raised with Ward Cllr Martin-Wells when he came for his ‘walk-about’ of Dalton Piercy.
- (iii) **Printer** – The Chairman reported she had purchased a printer as requested, which for the time-being was at her house. Cllrs requested she used it for PC work she was undertaking in the absence of a Clerk.

6. **Breach of Easement Contract:** The Chairman noted that DPPC had made no objection to the building of a single dwelling on the land, by Anglian Water, and indeed had granted an Easement accordingly. However, the plans submitted for the dwelling showed the ancient wall was to be substantially removed, which she believed would breach the Easement contract. After a brief discussion, Cllr Ireland proposed the Chairman seek clarification from the Council’s solicitor, who

had drawn up the easement contract, as to whether this was indeed a breach of the contract. All being in agreement, it was **resolved** the Chairman should seek written clarification from the solicitor. **Action:** Charman to contact solicitor for clarification of the Easement contract/historic wall issue.

7. **Traffic calming:** A resident had been pressing HBC to repair the 20mph sign at Manor Fields, and the Council has finally agreed to do this. The resident was thanked for his persistence by Councillors.

Cllr Jackson raised concern that construction traffic was using the village as a short cut to the A689/A19 and stressed that Dalton Piercy should be provided with similar traffic calming measures as at Elwick village. Cllr Timothy had reported to the Chair, prior to the meeting, that he had observed construction traffic regularly coming through the village between 7-7.30am, clearly heading to the High Tunstall development, which was not allowed under the conditions placed at planning approval. All expressed concern at the lack of policing of this condition. It was agreed that the HBC Enforcement Officer should be urged to deal with this breach of the planning conditions placed on the developer of Elwick Park. **Action:** Chair to contact the HBC Enforcement Officer to urge action.

8. **Christmas Tree:** The Chairman noted that a lot of the lights on the tree were no longer working. and she felt the tree was now too tall for volunteers to reach the upper branches to install new ones. The other tree planted was now sufficiently large to take its place. Cllr Patrick proposed the tree be felled and as many lights salvaged as possible. This was seconded by Cllr Rushworth and **unanimously agreed**. Cllr Jackson reminded that a specialist risk assessment would be required as electricity was involved. It was agreed that the tree contractor should be asked to liaise with Rob Daley at HBC before removing the tree. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to liaise with Rob Daley about the Christmas tree removal.

9. **Coronation Working Party Report:** Cllr Ireland reported that four Councillors and a couple of residents had met to discuss plans for the event. It had been agreed that a street party, similar to that organised for the Platinum Jubilee, would be ideal, to be held on Sunday 7th, with residents invited to bring their own food and drink, but with a few BBQs available for residents to cook food if they so wished. Children will be invited to wear a crown of their own making, with a prize for the best. The PC would provide music, a Coronation cake and 'fizz' to toast the new King, children's games and a Coronation quiz; an Events gazebo was being purchased. A resident present at the PC meeting, immediately offered the use of his grain store should the weather prove inclement on the day; he also advised that there may well be an old electricity power point available on the village green, near the old telephone kiosk. The offer of alternative premises was warmly appreciated by Councillors, and Cllr Patrick agreed to assess the potential electricity source with the resident. A flier had already been produced which would be circulated two weeks before the Coronation. Cllr Jackson proposed that the PC allocate a budget for the event and proposed this be £1,000 maximum. This was **unanimously agreed**.

10. **Red Gap Projects 2022:** The Chairman report as follows:

(a) **Orchard project** - outstanding still is the instalment of the stone for the orchard; whilst it is understood this has been delayed by inclement weather and the flowering of the daffodils, this must be completed before the May deadline for new projects.

(b) **Footpath from Three Gates Project** – the 2022 section has still not been completed by HBC. Peter Frost, HBC, has now confirmed he can deliver 40m of footpath for the £4,995 the PC has available from Red Gap and was willing to contribute a further £2,000 from his own budget. He would start this as soon as he received confirmation from DPPC that this was acceptable.

Councillors stressed this should be completed before the May deadline. He also offered to repeat

this offer should DPPC wish to make a bid to Red Gap in 2023 for the final section of footpath.

**Action:** Chairman to follow up with Peter Frost immediately.

11. **Training:** Cllr Ireland reported that 'Training Opportunities for Councillors' would now be a standing agenda item. A one-day training event for chairmen was planned to take place in June; she **agreed** to forward the details to Councillors. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to forward Chairmen's Training event to Councillors.

12. **Maintenance Committee Report:**

(a) **The Batts** – The Chairman noted that Chris Scaife, Access Officer, has been asked to look at the two damaged gates. A resident informed that hedges have been deliberately set alight and wires cut to make an access for quad bikes. Cllr Jackson had tied up the damaged gates with wire and offered to do this again should the wires be cut before Chris Scaife had been to see them -all **agreed**.

Cllr Jackson requested permission to plant 15 Hawthorn whips in the burnt section of the hedge; it was noted that this hedge bounded the land of Mr. Brown, and it was his side of the hedge that had received the most damage. This was **agreed** provided it was completed on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> and Cllr Jackson was to be accompanied by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Savage reported The Batts Working Party had undertaken a walk around The Batts and agreed the positioning of the memorial stone. Dan and TVWT volunteers were to erect the new Information Board on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> and would also be planting spring bulbs. The W/P had reaffirmed the decision to remove the double hedge; (Cllr Jackson objected to this, believing it would be better left to the next planting season). The W/P had further **agreed** that ALL unauthorised planting must stop. They requested that Cllr Jackson deliver the remaining orchard trees and hedging whips to the Village Hall by 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Cllr Jackson raised concern about the report and noted that he had suggested seven places for tree planting in March 2022 and had sent photographs of a planting map to TVWT and both the Chairman and Clerk. He believed the 5-year TVWT Management Plan was based on this map. The Chairman disagreed with this statement. Cllr Rushworth clarified that no-one was being accused of doing anything wrong, simply that from now on, no planting must be undertaken without specific instruction from the Parish Council.

Mr Jackson stated that he had set up a 'Friends of The Batts Group', and had used this group to apply to the Woodland Trust for extra hedging, therefore he owned the whips, not DPPC. The Chairman informed him, The Batts was private land belonging to DPPC, and he had not been authorised to set up a Friends of The Batts Group, without the knowledge of the Parish Council. Therefore he had misinformed the Woodland Trust. After some debate it was **agreed** by all other Councillors present, that Cllr Jackson should keep the whips, and that he would not be allowed to plant these in The Batts. The Chairman proposed that the whips be removed from the second row of hedge and given to Elwick PC as previously agreed. Cllr Rushworth proposed an amendment, viz that those whips removed that were not required to fill gaps in the first hedgerow, be given to Elwick PC. Cllr Patrick seconded the amendment, and the amendment was carried. When put to the vote, the amended proposal was carried 5: 1 with Cllr Jackson opposing. Cllr Jackson then refused to bring the remaining orchard fruit trees to the Village Hall, as requested, as he believed it to be the wrong time of year to plant them. The fruit trees were paid for by DPPC and these are therefore DPPC property.

(b) **Tree Survey** – The HBC Arborist had provided a quote in the sum of £945.75 to undertake a full survey of all trees on DPPC land, including The Batts. Cllr Jackson proposed acceptance of the quote, with Cllr Patrick seconding. All **agreed**.

The Chairman noted a branch had fallen from a tree in College Close; all agreed no action should be taken until the HBC Arborist had undertaken his survey.

13. **Ward Councillor's Report:** None received.

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

- The April Parish Liaison Group meeting had been postponed due to purdah. The next PLG meeting has been rescheduled to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> June.
- The Book Exchange, set up by the former Clerk, in the defibrillator kiosk, is being well used. Mrs. White would like to continue to run this – **Agreed** unanimously.
- Mrs White had also agreed to continue to be the Defibrillator Guardian, undertaking regular inspections of the machine. All expressed their gratitude and requested a letter of appreciation be sent to Mrs. White.

**Action:** Charman to send letter of appreciation.

15. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr Ireland informed that, in the light of receiving no response to the regional advert for a new Clerk, a new advert had been placed in the local free paper, Hartlepool Life, to be published 12<sup>th</sup> April.

16. **DPVHA Report:** Cllr Patrick reported no further progress with the new Village Hall; he had informed Grantscape of the HBC requirement for a Bat Survey to be undertaken between May and August, before they would consider any planning application.

17. **Financial Reports:** Cllr Ireland presented the reports, which were accepted. She noted that the end of year accounts could not be finalised until the Bank Statement was received towards the end of the month. The financial records maintained by the former Clerk had been incomplete. three cheques were still unaccounted for, and no VAT had been reclaimed for the year 2021-22. Mr. Olsen would be undertaking the Internal Audit and DPPC would be subject to an External Audit as the turnover exceeded £25,000.

Receipts	£	Payments	£
	0.00	Wave Water (reissued cheque)	21.36
		Lyn Noble (Stationery)	90.25
		NEREO (Clerk advert)	45.00
		Edward Egglestone & Co. (Salary admin)	102.60
		Lyn Noble (Wine for Coronation)	<u>65.17</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>324.38</b>

Councillors **unanimously approved** Cllr Ireland's proposal that, from April 2023 onwards, at least one Parish Councillor should be given specific responsibility for monitoring, on a minimum bi-monthly schedule, the Council's finances, with inspections of the Cash Book, PAYE and VAT records, to ensure these were being properly maintained. It was so **resolved**.

The Chairman noted that the annual insurance premium was due on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Cllr Ireland proposed that other PC insurance providers be invited to provide quotes before the Zurich quote was accepted. It would be necessary to ensure the Register of Assets was up-to-date, accurate and complete before seeking quotes. **Agreed**.

**Action:** Cllr Ireland to research insurance cover.

18. **Correspondence:** (i) A resident has requested the PC restore the **Edging stones on The Terrace** – Cllr Patrick agreed to ask J&J to provide a quote for lifting and replacing the blue edging stones, repairing the cover on the well and removing the old Christmas Tree and its stump. Concern was expressed that the blue stones had been pushed down by residents driving their vehicles over them, and this would be a recurring problem. The Chairman proposed that DPPC undertake the work this one time but inform the residents of The Terrace that the PC will not do this again should the damage recur. All **agreed**.

**19. Planning:** No new applications received.

The Planning Committee would be making a site visit on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April to Highgate Meadows; Cllr Savage agreed to attend to represent DPPC, as the PC had objected to the extension to the site.

It was noted the Elwick By-pass application had been withdrawn from the Planning Committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**20. Matters of Concern:**

- Cllr Rushworth raised concern about vehicles speeding from Highgate Meadows, definitely travelling at more than 20mph. **Action:** A reminder that the 20mph zone covers the whole of the village, not just the central village road.
- Cllr Noble raised concern about dogs being allowed to roam around off the lead, which is against HBC Bye-laws, which require dogs to be on the lead in public places.

**21. Date of next Meeting: 7.00pm Thursday 11 May 2023.**

**NB:** This will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.