

Dalton Piercy Parish Council

Meeting Minutes 14th November 2024

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm on Thursday 14th November 2024 at Elwick WI Hall, The Green, Elwick

Present: Councillors: Ireland (Chair), Noble, Savage, Patrick, Middleton and Timothy
Clerk: Charlie Porritt
Police Vol Rep: Karel Simpson
Also present: Eight (8) Members of the public

1. **Apologies:** None received.

2. **Declaration of interests:** None.

3. **Speeding**

- (i) Agenda item 13 was given increased priority with agreement of Councillors. Considered urgent due to an accident in the village on Wednesday 13th November caused by a speeding car.
- (ii) Event: Car estimated to be travelling approximately 60MPH through the Village Green on Wednesday afternoon overtook a school coach, clipped a kerb and crashed through multiple static Village Green items causing hundreds of pounds worth of damage. Three occupants of the vehicle were witnessed fleeing the scene. A village resident was subsequently assaulted by one of the vehicle occupants, requiring hospital treatment.
- (iii) Cllr Ireland informed the public that Police and Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) have been informed of the incident; Police Volunteer Representative Karel Simpson has attended meeting to discuss this matter. Cllr Ireland explained that DPPC is limited in their ability to act as this was a criminal matter, however she urged any members of the public with photographic evidence of the damage to provide these to the Police, HBC, and the Clerk of the Parish Council. Cllr Ireland also urged residents to apply pressure directly to HBC to implement safety measures to reduce speeding in Dalton Piercy.
- (iv) Members of the public confirmed that the Police have been provided with photographic and video evidence of damage.
- (v) Members of public expressed desire for speed reducers to be placed in the village, which they have requested in the past. Public were advised that the road is the responsibility of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) and that previous requests by the Parish Council and Dalton Piercy residents for speed bumps has been rebuffed. One member of the public noted their belief that no type of traffic calming measures would have prevented the incident on 13.11.2024 as the driver of the vehicle appeared determined to speed.
- (vi) Cllr Noble advised only the village Pump and Trough were insured for almost £1000. Excess is £100. The two damaged lamp posts are the property of HBC.

Actions:

- Cllr Noble and members of public to supply Clerk with photographic evidence of damage.

- DPPC to gather evidence and lobby Hartlepool Borough Council for enhanced traffic calming measures. Members of public encouraged to do the same.
- Clerk to submit an insurance claim to replace damaged Trough and Pump.

4. Public Forum:

- (i) Members of public expressed concern about the gentleman from the village who was assaulted the previous evening. Parish Council and residents agreed that a get well soon message should be conveyed. Action: Cllr Noble to send a card and possible gift to resident.
- (ii) A resident raised that an email their spouse had sent to DPPC in October raising multiple concerns had not been responded to. The resident was advised that the concerns listed in the email were addressed at the last Parish Council meeting on October 14th 2024, therefore no further discussion was deemed necessary at this time as the council's position had not changed.
- (iii) The same resident raised concerns that there was little cohesion and communication between DPPC and residents; resident was informed that this was the purpose of the monthly meetings, as well as having a means to communicate with the Parish Council via email or the website for more urgent matters.
- (iv) The Batts: Above resident (items ii and iii) requested that four meeting a year be held to discuss how to maintain The Batts. They felt that spending £1200 on grass cutting and landscaping this area was a waste of Parish funds. The resident offered to do the work themselves as they felt this would save DPPC money. Resident was advised that as they held no public liability insurance, the council would be liable for any damage caused, therefore hiring contractors with H&S and insurance policies in place was necessary.
- (v) A new resident to the village requested help with their cracked driveway as it crosses village green. The resident was advised that they are technically not allowed to drive on the village green, or have their concrete part of their driveway over the village green as it does not belong to them and the concrete could be considered a permanent alteration. Action: Resident was given the Clerk's email address and advised to email DPPC with a formal request with what they want to do, and DPPC would see how they could help after this.

Police Report (*Given as part of Public Forum*):

Karel Simpson introduced himself to residents who didn't know him. He explained that he has recently been co-opted onto the Village Halls Network and also regularly attends Elwick Parish Council meetings. He is aiming to attend Dalton Piercy PC meetings with more frequency in future; he also is available to be contacted on various village WhatsApp groups he provided information for. Mr Simpson explained his role was to gather information on crimes in the rural villages and use information to compile reports for the Police; he advised all residents to become active in reporting crimes to 101 or 999 so that crimes can be officially recorded to accurately reflect what is happening in rural areas.

[Karel Simpson and a resident left the meeting at this point]

5. **Minutes of 10th October 2024 Meeting:** Unanimously agreed as an accurate record after the following corrections:

- (i) Item 1: Ward Cllr Andrew-Martin Wells added to apologies as he sent his apologies *after* the meeting had concluded.
- (ii) Item 3: Tree care on the village green information considered incorrect. There are no TPOs on the village green trees. The only trees with TPOs are on the public Right of Way to Elwick.
- (iii) Item 15: Planning application H/2024/0210 adjusted to include an Annexe.

6. Matters Arising:

Hartlepool Borough Council Enforcement Issues: Cllr Noble provided an update that she had filled in and submitted the form with HBC for action, but as of yet she has received no response other than acknowledgement of receipt. Action: Cllr Noble to send application paperwork to Clerk for filing.

7. **Ward Councillor's Report:** Report not received.

8. **Chair's Report:** The Chairman reported:

- (i) She and Cllr Noble, with other members of the Rural Plan Group, met with Hartlepool MP Jonathan Brash on 25.10.24. Issues addressed during the meeting included: Government changes to Planning legislation, speeding concerns, affordable housing, the impact of the future Elwick bypass. Mr Brash reassured Cllrs that government plans to relax planning restrictions nationally ought not to impact Hartlepool due to an active 'Town Plan' being in place. They were reassured that he is supportive of rural communities and their protection; he has accepted an open invitation to future Parish meetings should his schedule allow it.
- (ii) She had attended briefing on *Emergency Planning and Public Cohesion* which she found very useful; she proposed inviting the speakers from the meeting to DPPC forthcoming 2025 Annual Meeting. She felt this may be useful for informing and involving the public on developing an appropriate Emergency Plan for Dalton Piercy. She believed that Dalton Piercy is already more prepared than many other rural communities as we are already in possession of a generator; she feels it would be prudent for other Councillors and residents to have an idea of actions to take in disaster planning. She has information leaflets she obtained at the meeting to share should anybody wish to have a copy.
- (iii) She attended the Rural Crime Forum and was impressed by the new Chief Inspector who she felt intended to be more proactive. Future meetings will hopefully be relocated to Police HQ for the convenience of attendees, which she feels is positive development. She raised issues regarding speeding and fly tipping; recognising that fly tipping is a civil offence when on private/public land, but was surely a criminal offence if it occurs on roads. She advised residents to report any identified road fly tipping incidents to Police.
- (iv) DPPC have recruited a new Clerk, Charlie Porritt, as of 1st November 2024.
- (v) She had joined the Civic party at the Civic Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Victory Square on 10.11.24. She saw and spoke to Jonathan Brash MP again and extended an invitation to DPPC meeting on 12th December 2024; he hopes to attend, schedule permitting, though his main aim is to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in 2025. She also spoke to Denise McGuckin, Managing Director of Hartlepool Borough Council; Ms. McGuckin was also invited to the Annual meeting in 2025 and stated her intention to attend.
- (vi) Cllr Noble attended Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting on 04.11.24 but meeting did not contain anything relevant to Dalton Piercy as there were no Rural Area issues on the agenda. She is hoping to work alongside Stephen Smith (Greatham Parish Council) in future to get more rural representation at these meetings.

9. **Personnel Committee Report:**

- (i) The new Clerk started on 01.11.2024. The Parish Council welcomed her to the position.
- (ii) Cllr Ireland raised that previous Clerk (Sandra) was owed backpay due to the late announcement of the annual NJC pay scales dating back to April 2024, as well as an unclaimed Telephone and Broadband allowance for the same period. Unanimously agreed to be paid in full. Action: Cllr Noble to arrange payment.

10. Maintenance Committee Report: Cllr Noble reported:

- (i) **Allotments:** Cllr Middleton has decided to stand down from his allotment but a new tenant has already been allocated from a waiting list. The handover is scheduled to take place on 16.11.2024.
- (ii) **Algae in pond:** Blue dye was purchased and administered last year which worked, however full benefit was not received as it was added later in the year than recommended. Cllr Noble has raked grass out of the pond this year and requested that the Blue dye treatment (which costs approx. £40) be administered early in Spring 2025. Unanimously agreed. Action: Cllr Noble to purchase blue dye and undertake treatment in 2025.
- (iii) **Trees on village green:** Two trees need a crown lift, these are outside Abbots Lee and North View; neither has a TPO. Cllr Noble believes that the overhanging branches on the tree by the pond may pose a danger to the public, and therefore a potential liability to the Parish Council; this issue has been ongoing for over two years therefore Cllr Noble believes that the best course of action may be to remove these trees rather than pay for continuous maintenance just to reduce likelihood of danger. Cllr Timothy stated he believes that any trees removed ought to be replaced with newly planted trees, even if they're located elsewhere in the village; there was no objection from Councillors, or residents present at the meeting. New location decided is to be 'The Batts'. One resident offered to donate a new tree. Action: Cllr Noble to arrange a quote for work. Parish Council to investigate and discuss appropriate types of replacement trees.
- (iv) **Weed Control:** Cllr Noble has requested a quote for weed control from CE & Walkers Ltd (current Village grasscutter), but quote has not yet been received.
- (v) **Flower Tubs:** Residents have shown little interest in adopting the maintenance of the flower pots, despite repeated attempts to engage them to do so. Maintenance of the unadopted tubs is becoming too much work and expense for the Maintenance Committee, therefore Cllr Noble believes that any unadopted flower tubs ought to be removed. This was unanimously agreed by the council with no objection from the public. Action: Cllr Noble to ask Meryl Gardens for a quote for removal next time they undertake work in Dalton Piercy.
- (vi) **The Batts:** Trees are scheduled to be trimmed by an arborist on 27.11.2024. Quote has been received by Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping Ltd of Stockton for £2,200. This quote includes (but not limited to): Supply of all appropriate equipment inc. 5kg wild flower seeds. Creating a path to, and cutting all grass in the orchard twice annually. A resident stated that their previous experience sowing wildflower seeds for the Borough Council indicates that good quality seeds ought to last for many years, and hopes that the ones supplied will do so. The quote was accepted by the Parish Council. Action: quote to be sent the Clerk for filing; Cllr Noble to contact Meadowfield and accept quote, checking quality of supplied wild flower seeds.

11. Red Gap Community Fund:

Cllr Noble had submitted the application for £1,120 of funding to improve the access to the play area. Action: Red Gap will hold a decision making meeting in December and Cllr Noble will update the Parish Council on the outcome when she receives it.

12. Finance Report:

Financial Transactions 9th October 2024 – 12th November 2024

Receipts	£
Bank Interest	119.55
TOTAL:	119.55
Payments	£
Clerk's Payroll	245.62
Egglestone's Accountancy Fee	126.00
Data Protection Fee	40.00
Stationery	40.98
CE & Walkers Ltd (grass cutting)	254.40
Misc. Gardening Expenses	58.97
TOTAL:	765.97

Financial Report **accepted**.

It was noted by Cllr Middleton that there appeared to be a £0.43 discrepancy in the Actual against budget report when totalling up the columns. The new Clerk noted some discrepancies had been found with allocated categories within the Cash Book which may account for this.

The Parish Council Budget is to be discussed at December's meeting.

Action: The new clerk to check all banking transactions against the cash book dating back to the start of April 2024, allocating payments to categories as needed. A Bank reconciliation to take place before the December meeting when she presents the next financial reports.

It was noted that the gate to The Batts has been broken again. It was felt that simply replacing the gate with another security gate would not stop the problem, as vehicles illegally using the path would simply smash it down again. The need was to prevent any vehicles from accessing the RoW. It was suggested that the installation of a 'Cattle Gate' would be the most effective solution to deterring those who repeatedly break the current gate. A resident at the meeting stated their switch to this type of gate has greatly reduced vandalism and trespass DRAFT on their property. Councillors were unsure that HBC would agree to change the style of gate, but welcomed the idea. Action: Resident to share further details of their effective gate with Clerk. Clerk to approach HBC with a request to update the gate.

13. **DPVH Trustees Report** – Cllr Patrick reported no further progress.

14. **Parking and vehicle access to Village green**: Cllr Timothy had circulated a proposal to Councillors in advance of the meeting, in which he suggested how the issue of vehicles driving

over part of the village green between Dene Garth and Leamont could be ameliorated. The proposal was to increase the number of vehicles which can park in front of Dene Garth by clearly marking diagonal parking bays to improve parking efficiency, as well as adding a 'Reverse Park into bays' advisory sign. Clerk has recently emailed Peter Frost at HBC regarding this but no response received so far. Cllr Noble expressed concern about DPPC telling the public how to enter a parking bay; Cllr Timothy stated that the current system means that some people are illegally reversing from the bays onto a public road which he feels the Parish Council ought to dissuade. No firm decision made. Action: Clerk to approach engineering firms and request quotations for the painting and marking of bays to bring to next meeting.

15. Correspondence:

- (i) Clerk has received letter advising that no requests for an election have been received following the resignation of Cllr Rushworth. Therefore, the Parish Council is now able to Co-Opt for the position. Action: Cllr Noble to add vacancy for new councillor to the Parish notice board, as well as inclusion to December's issue of 'Village Life'.
- (ii) Parish Council received a request from a resident to create a path across the Village Green. DPPC are in the process of improving access along the paths which are already in place. The resident's request was discussed and denied as it could require an Act of Parliament. Resident was informed but stated they still want an extra path.
- (iii) Letter received from DP resident requesting that the play area be relocated. DPPC stated that this was discussed at previous meetings and is not possible as risk assessments of other potential sites deemed them unsuitable. The play area is in the only suitable location possible and cannot be moved. DPPC is looking at measures to take long-term to improve access to the play area.
- (iv) Cllr Ireland followed up a previous request to find out if DPPC will benefit from the interest on the 106 Monies. She has not yet received a response.

15. Planning Applications –

- (i) **H/2024/2023** – This is an amendment to planning application already agreed and therefore DPPC can have no impact on the decision. **No comment.**

16. Matters of Concern to Councillors:

- (i) Cllr Timothy discussed his recent proposition to increase the number of vehicles which can park by the Village Green. His idea is to clearly mark parking bays by the village green to improve parking efficiency, as well as adding a 'Reverse Park into bays' advisory sign. Clerk has recently emailed Peter Frost at HBC regarding this but no response received so far. Residents stated that they don't feel this endeavour would be a good use of Parish money. Cllr Noble expressed doubt and concerns about DPPC telling the public how to enter a parking bay; Cllr Timothy stated that the current system means that some people are illegally reversing from the bays onto a public road which he feels the Parish Council ought to dissuade. Action: No firm decision made. Clerk to approach engineering firms and request quotations for the painting and marking of bays to bring to next meeting.
- (ii) Cllr Noble said she had received correspondence from Helen Smith, HBC Planning Dept. requesting where DPPC would like SO61 money spent now and in future. Cllr Noble stated that DPPC has already addressed almost everything on their current list, with a new Village Hall the only item outstanding. A new list is needed urgently. She noted that she had been advised to

'flag up' the list of priorities whenever we receive planning applications in the future. Cllr Timothy suggested Superfast Broadband. *Action*: Cllrs to discuss and agree priorities Section 106 monies arising from developments within Dalton Piercy parish at the December meeting.

17. **Next Meeting:** to take place at **7pm** at Elwick WI Hall, Thursday 12th December 2024.

Meeting closed at 9.03pm.

DRAFT