

## Dalton Piercy Parish Council

### Meeting Minutes 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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

**In attendance:** C. Porritt, Clerk; four members of the public

**1. Apologies:** Cllr Alan Timothy; Ward Cllr Andrew Martin-Wells

**2. Declaration of Interests:** Cllrs Noble and Patrick– Item 11.

**3. Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024:**

1. *Item 5 (Matters Arising):* Cllr Noble believes the inference to be incorrect and ought to read “*potentially illegally built properties*”. The Clerk advised text in minutes was verbatim from December meeting, but DPPC accepted that less ambiguity should be used.
2. *Item 7 (Chair’s report), part 1:* Cllr Noble believes it is the *extension* agreement that needs checking. Accepted.
3. *Item 7.7:* Item ought to include “a range of issues” such as paths, not just playground relocation. Accepted.
4. *Item 9.1 (Trees):* Ought to read as “In front of Abbots Lea”, not “In Abbots Lea”. Accepted.
5. *Items 9.3; 9.4:* Incorrect contractors listed. Both ought to read as “Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping Ltd.”. Accepted.

Minutes accepted with amendments acknowledged.

**4. Matters Arising:** Cllr Middleton said two trees in North View still need crown lifting. **Action:** Cllr Patrick to arrange this with Meryl Gardens.

**5. Ward Councillor’s Report:** None received.

**6. Chair’s Report:**

1. **Village Event:** Attended ‘Carols around the Tree’ on 24<sup>th</sup> December. Noted it was a lovely event with a good turnout. Gave thanks to Village Hall group for arranging refreshments.
2. **Director of Finance meeting:** Had a one-to-one meeting with the Director that she found very insightful. Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) are still in a dire financial situation. The recently announced increase in National Insurance contributions will hit HBC hard, particularly their Children’s and Social Care budgets.
3. **Red-Gap Funding:** Attended the Grantscape Panel meeting on 09.01.25. She is hopeful that DPPC will receive the grant requested.
4. **HBC Finance & Policy Committee:** She will attend the forthcoming meeting on 20.01.25; update to follow.

**7. Personnel Report:** Nothing to update.

**8. Village Maintenance:**

1. **Allotment Fencing:** Two quotes received for repairing the fence. Quote accepted from G. Bell for £1,660.00. **Action:** Cllrs Noble & Patrick to arrange for repair as soon as possible.
2. **Parish Notice Board:** Locksmith has been out and replaced the two broken locks at a cost of £70.00. **Action:** Cllr Noble to provide spare set of keys to Clerk.
3. **Village Tubs:** Work has been completed by Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping Ltd. Meadowfields will be back in late Spring to maintain the tubs, as well as cutting the Orchard.
4. **The Batts:** Wild areas have been cut back before daffodils started showing.

5. **Trees:** Cllrs Noble and Patrick have checked the previously received report from Arborist. The next round of work should now be planned. Three trees in Village need deadwood removing. **Action:** Cllr Patrick to obtain quote from Meryl Gardens.

**9. Tree Replacements:** (T016 from Arborist's report) Ash tree near pond potentially needs removing. It could pose a danger to a nearby property. Agreed that if removed, the tree will be replaced by planting a new tree in The Batts. It was noted that at a previous meeting a resident had offered to provide replacement tree free of charge; councillors had accepted generous offer. **Action:** Cllr Patrick to arrange a professional inspection of T016, to inform further decisions.

**10. Insurance claim progress:** Clerk has spoken to insurance provider who advised that they will pay out for like-for-like replacements. Invoices/quotes can be submitted to them either after or before work is carried out. Insurance value was £1000 with a £100 excess to pay. Cllr Noble has sourced quotes for replacement Pump and Trough. Pump will cost £399 with free delivery. Trough prices are between £150-200. Meryl Gardens have quoted £750 for removal of old pump and full installation of the new. Quotes unanimously **accepted**, though DPPC acknowledge that insurance pay-out may not cover the full costs of the work. **Action:** Cllr Noble to order Pump & Trough and provide all invoices to the Clerk, who will forward to the insurance company.

**11. Dalton Piercy Village Hall Trustees Report:** Planned meeting with National Lottery representative in December was cancelled. New date to be agreed. There has been no progress with HBC for arranging demolition of the old Village Hall.

**12. Red Gap Application:** Partly covered under Chair's report (Item 6.3). Application was for £1,800 to install a handrail and improve access to the playground. Meeting on 09.01.25 met with a favourable reaction, but final Board decision meeting will not be held until February 2025.

**13. Banking Signatories:** Another application to add Cllr Ireland to online banking has now been started. Cllr Noble has arranged for bank statements to be sent directly to Clerk's address for more efficiency in arranging financial reports. She has also requested Debit Cards for account signatories so councillors no longer need to use own funds for Parish purchases and claim reimbursement. Clerk to complete financial reports to month end upon receiving bank statements.

**14. Finance Report:** Transactions for 11.12.2024 – 13.

Receipts	£
Allotment Income	28.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>28.00</b>
Payments	£
HMRC	86.80
Clerk Salary (December)	301.60
Clerk Broadband Allowance	20.00
Dec. Meeting Refreshments	35.39
SD Card Purchase	15.98
Locksmith	70.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>529.77</b>

\*Yellow denotes Jan. payments not on Actual Against Budget for Dec. 2024

Presented was Actual against Budget report for Dec. 2024, including Bank reconciliation. Both **accepted**. **Action:** Clerk to post December's 'Actual against Budget' to website. Previous months dating back to April 2024 to be added to website in due course.

### 15. 2025/2026 Budget Projections:

Pear Technology subscription has been cancelled, saving £132.50.

The Chair took Cllrs through the draft Budget prepared by the Clerk item by item, amending as felt necessary. Total expenditure for 2025/2026 period anticipated as £20,610. There is expected to be £2000 carried forward from 2024/2025 period.

Precept request for 2025/2026 is £13,447.00. Including LCTS Grant and Concurrent, total requested from HBC is £16,870.00. **Unanimously agreed. Action:** Cllrs and Clerk to sign precept request form at end of meeting. Clerk to submit form to HBC on 17.01.2025.

**16. Speeding:** Clerk received an email from Peter Frost at HBC advising Dalton Piercy is still low down the priority list for council funded traffic calming measures, due to low incidence rate of accidents. He clarified that only accidents resulting in injuries will increase priority for areas. Mr Frost is in contact with 'Design Team' to provide an updated scheme with costings for Dalton Piercy, should DPPC decide to pay themselves; he will give an update once he receives more information. It was noted that no design scheme had previously been provided by HBC.

### 17. Matters of Concern to Councillors:

1. **Highways** – Blue motorway sign near Sambucca restaurant has fallen and needs fixing or replacing. Cllr Middleton has already reported matter to Highways. Ongoing.
2. **Potholes** – Potholes at the side of the road are very bad at the moment, particularly at night. Keiron Bostock has not yet visited Village. **Action:** Cllr Patrick to take photographs of potholes in daylight and report to HBC. Cllr Ireland to follow up with K. Bostock.
3. **Signage in Village** – Cleaning of signs is needed. Cllr Middleton will undertake the task. Ongoing.
4. **Fly-Tipping** – Cllr Middleton requests that any residents reporting incidents to HBC also copy DPPC into their emails so a spreadsheet can be compiled and used to lobby HBC on this matter.
5. **Trees** – Two trees opposite North View are low hanging and need a cut. See item 4.
6. **Salt Bin** – Salt bin bulging from excess water and broken lid. Resident suggested drilling holes to release water, but as lid is also broken a replacements are thought to be more appropriate. **Action:** Cllrs to give details of locations of bins to Clerk. Clerk to contact Peter Frost with details and request replacement.
7. **Hart Back-lane** – Cllr Grylls concerned about public safety due to no proper passing place, plus increase in vehicle use in this area. **Action:** Cllr Grylls to contact Peter Frost.
8. **Action Plan:** Cllr Middleton has done excellent and extensive work compiling a running Action Plan spreadsheet of public inquiries, which he will update regularly so residents can track actions taken by DPPC. **Action:** For the time being, Cllr Middleton to be responsible for updates. Once ready, Clerk to add full plan to Dalton Piercy website; abridged version of plan to be added to Parish Notice board. Chair extended thanks to Councillor Middleton for the extensive work he has put into creating the action plan thus far.

### 18. Public Forum:

1. **Jonathan Brash MP:** Resident concerned that Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> December don't detail specifics of Mr Brash's conversations with residents. Advised that Mr Brash's surgery with residents didn't constitute part of the official DPPC meeting and therefore not appropriate to include in official minutes.
2. **Ward Councillors:** Residents annoyed that ward-councillors have refused to attend meetings. Cllr Martin-Wells has issued a long-standing abstention from meetings. Cllr Scott Reeve has never been to meetings or met. **Action:** Clerk to email all ward councillors with dates of next four meetings and request their presence.
3. **The Batts Gate:** Still broken. DPPC is still awaiting information from local farmer with details of his new gate so that they can gather quotes for replacement. Ongoing.
4. **Transparency:** Concerns that financial information has not been posted to website since September. **Action:** See section 14. Clerk to update website backlog in due course as accounts are updated for accuracy.

5. **S106 Monies:** Concerned DPPC not receiving interest on the money. Cllr Ireland disclosed in a previous meeting that she has been informed that DPPC will not receive the interest on this money. **Action:** Cllrs Ireland and Noble to check extended agreement, also to share copy with Cllr Middleton.
6. **Tree Chippings:** Questioned whether tree chippings were being spread on all paths in The Batts. Chippings from three or four trees had been spread previously, however it didn't spread very far. A quote previously obtained for chipping ran into thousands of pounds, and was deemed too expensive to implement.
7. **Path across Village Green:** A resident still didn't feel necessary for Secretary of State to intervene to install a path. Cllr Middleton has checked laws from 1856/57 and 2006 which state non-destructive path can be placed so long as it's liftable. Sec of State needs to agree permanent path. **Action:** Cllr Ireland to include path in future public consultation.
8. **Cinder Path:** Trucks have been seen driving over the path to Three Gates. and it's currently muddy and unkempt. HBC are responsible for the weeding, not DPPC. Not possible to police vehicles on the path.

#### 19. Correspondence:

1. **Police Precept:** Survey sent out for public consultation on how much extra people are willing to pay. **Action:** Clerk to post link to survey on DPPC website.
2. **DPPC Website:** Users subscribed to email notifications of updates have not been receiving them. Clerk has tried to resolve to no effect. Ticket has been raised with provider. **Action:** If no further updates soon, Cllr Ireland will contact provider directly.
3. **Testimonial:** Cllr Noble received a request for a testimonial from a previous contractor to DPPC who has started their own business. Unanimous agreement. **Action:** Cllr Noble to provide positive testimonial.
4. **Christmas Card:** Received from resident with thanks.
5. **Paths, Gulleys & Drains:** Resident has emailed numerous concerns to Ralph Young at HBC, and has cc'd Cllr Noble into the exchange. Situation ongoing.

20. **Planning Applications:** None received.

21. **Date of Next Meeting:**

7:00pm, Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Elwick WI Hall, TS27 3EF