DALSTON PARISH MEETING 7TH FEBRUARY 2009

A Parish Meeting was held in the Victory Hall, Dalston on Saturday 7th February 2009. Mr R Auld, Dalston Parish Council Chairman presided over the meeting. There was capacity attendance. Invited representatives who formed a panel were Tony Young, Developer, JJ Lattimer; David Swarbrick,, Architect, Swarbrick Associates; Craig McCullough, Operations Manager,Tim Hansen, Property Acquisitions NE & Cumbria Region, Amanda Craw, Shop Manager, David Mockford, Co-op; Richard Majewicz, Carlisle City Council Conservation Officer; Richard Hayward, Cumbria County Council, Senior Highways Engineer; Kevin Crawley, Capita Symonds; Bruce Walker, Westwood Landscape, Landscape Architect.

At the beginning of the meeting Georgina Ternent spoke about the Cumbria Community Awards 2008 entries and winners. Cumbria County Councillor John Collier presented the runner-up Certificate in the Greener Community Award to three representatives (Messrs Roberts, Forster and Todd) from Barras House for their community garden. They were warmly congratulated.

The Chairman introduced the discussion on planning application **08/1254 Ben Hodgson Bodyworks, Dalston Service Station – removal of existing garage buildings and erection of convenience store and two residential units.** The following points were made and responses given by those attending the meeting:

- Too much development on the site and parking an issue. Response – needed to look at bigger picture. Initial requirement given by Cumbria Highways was for 8 on-site parking spaces.
- Difficult access to site for articulated delivery vehicles. Response – a swept passage route had been given to the planners for clarification.
- Superstore or village store? Response – Community store with 30% increase in total floor space on existing premises.
- 3 types of goods delivery vehicles would be replaced by one delivery resulting in 5 fewer deliveries per week.
- Timing of deliveries can be flexible and can be changed to accommodate local wishes.
- The few car parking designated spaces on site would conflict with the delivery vehicle parking.
- Amended proposed store opening hours 7am – 10pm.
- Need for houses on site questioned. Response – of benefit for security and as a buffer to adjacent dwelling.
- The approach to the Agricultural Society Committee to buy part of the Show Field for car parking had been made for community benefit, not just for Co-op customer use. Development of the land for parking would require planning consent and a condition could be imposed to limit housing use in the future.
- Mr Hayward, explained the initial Cumbria Highways consultation response, the Traffic Regulation Orders required in Dalston for time limited parking in the Square area, speed restriction changes and the reduction in width of the Kingsway. A funding contribution from the developer for traffic and parking improvements were requested, as was the case from Caldew School in connection with its application for an extension.
- If vacated, what use would be made of the existing Co-op building? Response – enquiries for Parish Office, library facility and other interested parties.
- The development would be an advantage to locals from outside the village, but would be a disturbance to central residents. There was no space for expansion of the current premises as property had been sold off, with little consultation.
- Why a Co-op store development? Response – initially there had been a housing moratorium imposed, the garage use of the site had been a nuisance to the community recently, but garage trading was protected in rural areas and it was a commercial use site at present. Use of the site, if not a Co-op, would probably be car sales.
- The proposed store would allow for an increased product range and improved accessibility, viable for disabled access within and without the store.
- Mr Majewicz stated that an application in a Conservation Area would be looked at carefully in terms of materials and size, but this proposal had not been considered by him to date.
- Access to site from B5299 was thought to be difficult and bins at the front unsightly. Response – 2m high stone wall introduced to form screen.
- The current Co-op would remain if the application was refused. There was no other obvious site available.
- Query relating to canopy, opening hours, CCTV, lighting, ATM being in keeping with a Conservation area.
- Mr Hayward indicated that access could not be refused from Townhead Road as designated as highways land.

The Co-op petition in favour of a move to a new site had 104 signatures. The Dalston website straw poll was 85 in favour of a move to the Glave Hill site and 32 against. The show of hands at the meeting indicated approximately two thirds in favour of a move (roughly 70 for, 35 against).

The Chairman reminded those present that the **Traffic and Parking Questionnaire March 2008** identified that 80% respondents wanted parking controls in Dalston with 70% seeking off street parking facilities, 79% of which showed a preference for on the Kingsway.

Mr Walker presented the sketch plans for the Kingsway block and linear parking proposals showing 61 spaces. The landscape changes were kept low key by retaining the existing trees, grass mounding, the use of reinforced grass and further planting of native trees and shrubs to soften the visual impact. The parking spaces were not enclosed for security reasons, but the parking proposal was organised and improved the scruffy areas and the ambiance of the environment.

Mr Crawley produced a draft plan for the Square parking based on the philosophy of the original regeneration ideas put forward in 2004. It showed fewer marked bays with a pedestrian route through the east side of the Square. Time restriction signage and road markings would be required, but could be kept to a minimum. A 20mph speed restriction could be introduced without traffic calming measures.

Mr Hayward indicated that 2 or 3 Traffic Regulation Orders would be required for the proposed changes in Dalston. The Cumbria Area Committee had agreed to the principle of time restricted parking during the day in the Square area in July 2008. Exceptions would be made for residents with frontage properties. Regulations would prevent car share parking in the Square and improve the space for the library van and special church events. Speed Restriction Orders might be in place by March 2011 including the B5299. The north and south ends would probably remain 30mph, with this being extended further west on Barras Lane and 20mph being introduced from Station Road junction to the Kingsway/Victory Hall. There could be some funding available from Cumbria and Carlisle Councils for the provision of grasscrete on the verges of the Kingsway, but not for any block parking areas or planting. Planning approval would be required for block parking but not for on the verges. A 6’6” width restriction point with a gate at the side could be introduced to prevent larger vehicular access.

Comments raised were:

- Improved order with parking bays in Square.
- Traffic wardens needed to enforce parking regulations. This was not the remit of the PCSO.
- 2 hour time restriction could be amended to 1 hour or 90 minutes.
- Position of north bound bus stop should not be moved unless necessary.
- Confirmation that 30mph would extend to Barras Brow.
- Diagonal parking should be considered for the Kingsway.
- Additional parking facilities should be created before any reduction in spaces was introduced in the Square.
- Preference for avenue of trees further down the Kingsway not cars.
- Suggestion that businesses could contribute to the cost of parking provision by purchasing permits. Voluntary contribution schemes were possible to implement, but it was not straightforward.
- There was no parking provision for commercial vehicles in Dalston.
- Yellow lines would be introduced into Ninerigg. Yellow lines were requested for the end of the Kingsway/Cumberland Building Society area.
- Parking problems on the service road/Smithfield area. A 1.2m (4’) passageway was required – obstruction of the footway was a police matter. Disabled drivers could only park for a maximum of 3 hours in restricted areas such as on double yellow lines.
- The Square improvements were to enhance ‘people’ community space and funding as a consequence of building development should contribute to this. It was suggested that the City and Parish Councils could ask for planning consent, if granted, to include a Section 106 Agreement.
- The Townhead Road junction was dangerous and should be a ‘Stop’ junction and narrowed.

A show of hands indicated that those present at the meeting were broadly in favour of 1) the Kingsway parking proposals 2) reduced number of parking spaces in the Square 3) 20mph speed restrictions in the Square area 4) time limited parking in the Square area.