

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Victory Hall on Tuesday 1st May 2018 at 7.pm.

PRESENT

Ann Byers (Parish Council Chairman in the Chair), Cllr Allison (Cumbria County Council & Carlisle City Council), Cllr Christian (Carlisle City Council) & Cllr Mckerrell (Carlisle City Council). 28 parishioners including Parish Council members, the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer were also present.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Auld, Cllr Kaye-Kreczowski, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Dalton, Liz Auld and Alan Dinning.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd May 2017 were approved and signed by Cllr Byers as a true record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting.

The world is continually changing and Dalston Parish Council is no different. During the year the parish has lost a much valued couple to the other side of the world. Cathy and Alan Oakley have gone to live near their family in New Zealand. Cathy was a Parish Council chairman for eight years and a parish councillor for many, many more. She was very efficient and is a hard act to follow. There were many farewell gatherings to show how much they were both valued. We will miss having them here over the summer months.

In July we employed Margaret Watling, a new part-time responsible financial officer and assistant clerk. She has very good financial knowledge and has been a great help for the Clerk. She has fitted into the office procedures extremely well.

Unfortunately in the autumn we had 3 Councillor resignations; Ian Newton, Ollie Rickerby and Paddy Lancaster. However we are pleased to welcome Ann McKerrell from Dalston and Philip Utting from Stockdalewath as new Councillors. Two longstanding parish Councillors, Pauline Dalton and David Cowen have not stood for re-election this time. We thank them for all their work and contributions over their time in office. There are three vacancies at present but we are hoping to fill these next week.

The Grange development is now fully occupied. We are delighted to have parishioners from The Grange joining into local clubs and taking an active part in local events. The Grange gardeners group held a very successful 'Open Gardens' event last June as well as making the Doctors Surgery much more welcoming. Dalston Parish Council now lease the Summerfields play area from the City Council. We used some of the S106 money from The Grange development to replace the old play equipment and provide new benches and a new bin. It is good to see it is getting well used.

This year the Parish Council provided a new notice board for Cumdivock and Story Homes provided one for the Station road entrance to The Grange estate. We replaced 4 benches in the cemetery, levelled the cremated remains area and repaired many headstones. New planters have been placed at the Bridge End roadside and a new seat has been placed near the doctor's surgery. After the tenant in No 2 Forge Green left we had the property damp proofed, cleaned painted and re-carpeted. The new tenant has just recently left the property so we are presently looking for a new tenant. Mr Howie from Carlisle City Council came to Dalston to discuss dog fouling signs within the parish. He agreed to put up dog fouling signs in various locations throughout the parish. He also informed us that a prosecution can be made if a statement of a dog fouling offence is submitted detailing who the responsible dog owner is, this can be done by anyone. We have had another parishioner join the team of volunteers who go out in different areas of Dalston using the speed gun. The entrance to The Grange has had dropped curves added to the pavement to help with prams, wheelchairs etc. Eventually we welcomed the opening of Bell Bridge which has been rebuilt and opened the road again after storm Desmond in December 2015.

We have done a lot of work to trees. Because much of Dalston is in a conservation area and all the work we do requires planning permission, the city council is inundated with applications from Dalston Parish Council.

The festival committee have been busy throughout the year organising events for everyone to enjoy. These include festival week, bonfire night and the Christmas market which have all been really successful. There will

be a festival again this year. After recent meetings it sounds like another fun packed week. The local squirrel group are having a bigger presence in the parish with meetings in the village hall showing a film with amazing photography and scenery.

The precept has risen again this year. The increase equates to 6p per week for a Band D property in this Parish. There is an increasing amount of work asked of the Parish Council with less help in the form of grants. We want to keep Dalston in the way we are used to seeing it as well as making improvements where we can. It was necessary to put up the precept to enable us to achieve this. (For reference - 6 % increase making the precept total £66,462, = 6p per week increase for a band D property.)

The Victory Hall have some new members on the committee and are busy with refurbishment plans to help bring the building up to date and cope with the ever increasing demands of the modern society. The Parish Council support them in their plans and look forward to seeing the accomplished hall.

With the PCSO Graham Kirkpatrick the police visits have been very reliable. However he cut them back to one a month for one hour as there were not many complaints and visitors. There has also been a change of venue from the Co-op to Church House which gives everyone much more privacy. The days of the visits now vary, but are usually on Mondays or Wednesdays from 6-7pm. So please check with your Parish Paper for the next visit. In September we had a visit from the police crime commissioner Peter McCall. It was a very successful evening where the visitors kept him busy for most of the evening. We are pleased he was able to visit Dalston to give parishioners this opportunity.

Once again Dalston Parish Council is pleased to have allocated grants of financial support to local voluntary groups and organisations. These were administered by the Dalston Parish Charitable Trust, so my thanks go to the trust for organising the grants.

Dalston library in St Michael's Church now has a self-issuing machine, to make it easier and more accurate, but volunteers will be available for those who don't like self-service and of course to have a chat. The library is an asset to the community, but please remember if you don't use it, you'll lose it! Thanks go to all the volunteers on duty and Cllr Dalton for organising the rota.

Dalston took part in the Cumbria in Bloom 2017 competition where we won the most trophies ever. We also received a Gold medal award in the RHS Britain in Bloom Large Village category. Both of these are huge achievements due to the involvement and help of many individuals, groups and businesses, led by Ronnie Auld. For the second year in succession, Dalston is privileged to represent Cumbria in the RHS Britain in Bloom competition in the Large Village category. Many people turned up to celebrate these attainments on a very wet flooding evening in November. Liz Auld also received a Community Champion Award in recognition of her contribution to the Bloom group's success, a much deserved award which honours her work over many years. St Michael's School had a visit from the mayor of Carlisle Trish Vasey, to present a trophy to the school gardeners. She also brought along the sword and mace. The children asked her many inquisitive questions including her age. Meetings and plans are progressing for this years entry.

After five years the Dalston Neighbourhood Plan was passed by the members of the parish in the February referendum. It is now an instrument of planning for land use in Dalston Parish. There was a 26% turnout with 513 votes for and 72 votes against the Neighbourhood plan. A big thank you goes to Cllr Drouet for the enormous amount of work and time he has spent in achieving the success of the Dalston Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks must also go the Cllr Dalton the chairman and all those who have helped in any way during this long drawn out process.

I want to thank all the many volunteers in the parish who do a great job in many different aspects of the running of the parish. There are too many to mention individually but we are truly grateful for all your work. In addition this year thanks also go to all the businesses and individuals who open and close the public toilets. I also want to thank Ronnie as vice chairman, who I frequently contact for help and advice and not forgetting our two very capable clerks who keep me right; and not forgetting yourselves, the parishioners. Thank you.

3. QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

There were no questions.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCILS ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2018

A comprehensive set of accounts for year ended 31st March were available for parishioners to see.

When the budget was originally set for the year it showed a small surplus of £1,737 however the overall result for the year ended with a small deficit with expenditure exceeding income by £1,632.

The General Parish Fund shows an excess of income of £2,681. The Chairman has already mentioned in her report some of the work carried out in the Parish which included the noticeboard at Cumdivock, new planters and troughs and the seat at the doctor's surgery. In addition Kingsway Car Park was weeded and the pond at Unthank was cleaned. Unfortunately grants to help with the cost of General Parish work are difficult to obtain. Sundry expenses include one off costs of legal fees to lease Summerfield Play Area from the City Council and training for the forthcoming changes to Data Protection Legislation.

The Cemetery shows an excess of expenditure of £4,560. A reduction in burial fees received together with the cost of replacing 4 seats and gravestone repairs is the reason for this. A grant from Carlisle City Council covers part of the expenses but this is received in arrears in January. The £1,097 grant income shown in the accounts is in respect of expenditure incurred in 2016/17.

The excess of expenditure on Forge Green Property was £5,131. The refurbishment of 2 Forge Green which started last year continued and the property was only rented out from August. In the autumn the chimney had to be repaired and all the windows painted and a new boiler is to be installed next week.

Dalston and Britain in Bloom generated a small excess of income which is carried forward to help with flowers and new and ongoing projects in 2018.

The Parish Council continue to monitor expenditure to maintain and improve the Parish for those who live, work and visit here.

5. DALSTON CHARITABLE TRUST UPDATE – Cllr KYLE

The Dalston Parish Charitable Trust has now been running for 3 ½ years.

The accounts for the year to 31st March 2018 were discussed and available for parishioners to see. They show that the Charitable Trust have a building society balance of £10,829.

The awards to organisations this year were given to Dalston Tennis Club, Primrose Hall Gaitsgill, St Michaels Pre-School Nursery, Dalston Recreation Association, Heskett In the Forest Scout Group and Dalston Festival Committee. Cllr Kyle explained that Dalston Scouts are currently full therefore children in the Parish were also attending Heskett Scouts hence the reason they received funding. All applications this year were granted funding. The total number of awards granted was £2,850.

It was noted that the trustees would like to help fund an individual in the Parish who would like to further their education, for example a pupil from Caldew School has recently completed a litter pick of the village to help raise funds to travel to Sri Lanka to help save turtles.

The Charitable Trust leaflet was available for parishioners to see, this details the Trusts objectives and ways in which donations can be made.

6. THE DALSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE – Cllr DROUET

Cllr Drouet re-iterated that after 5 years of working on the Neighbourhood Plan it had been passed by members of the Parish in the February referendum. He also stated that a letter from Carlisle City Council had been received giving notice that the plan has now been adopted under 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulation. Therefore the plan now forms part of the adopted Development Plan for Carlisle District for planning decisions within Dalston Parish.

7. DALSTON FESTIVAL 2018 UPDATE – Pam Coke

This year the festival is to take place between the 4th August – 12th August. It was noted that updates on the festival would be published in the parish paper. Activities will take place throughout the week, there will be a flower festival in the church, a scarecrow / decorated gate / wheelbarrow and doorstep competition, art exhibition, open gardens, Kingsway carnival, treasure trail a 10k fun run, festival Friday and much, much more!

8 DALSTON IN BLOOM REPORT – Cllr AULD

Cllr Auld was unable to attend the meeting, however Cllr Byers read his report.

In recent years, Dalston in Bloom became the title of our traditional annual work by the Parish Council and volunteers to make Dalston a lovely place in which to live, work and play. The look of Dalston continually changes throughout the year.

Of course, the two competitions in which we will be judged this year, Cumbria in Bloom in July and Britain in Bloom in August, show a different Dalston in terms of bloom. Our gardens will be a riot of colour, our trees will be in full leaf and our open spaces a pleasure to be among.

Dalston has enjoyed a long history of success in the Large Village category of Cumbria in Bloom. We have been fortunate to win a Gold Award for a number of years. However, as this entry class is quite small with there being only ourselves, or sometimes one other entrant, there was always the worry that winning Gold was too easy. So, in 2016, when Cumbria in Bloom invited Dalston to represent Cumbria in Britain in Bloom, there was understandable nervousness. Could we live with the 'big boys'?

Winning Silver Gilt in 2016 at our first attempt was a considerable achievement. However, our Gold Award in 2017 was huge for both Dalston and Cumbria. This national recognition cemented our achievements in Dalston's history. How was all this achieved and can we repeat it again in 2018?

The answer is really quite simple. We have a huge team of volunteers, some of them totally invisible to the community as they work quietly, almost under the radar. It would be totally wrong of me to start mentioning the names of key people, but they know who they are and so do all of us. You should know that I have a database of around 60 people who receive regular communications from Dalston in Bloom, many of who are out, rain or shine, weeding and tidying the village.

However, an army of volunteers is only part of the picture. From a distance of over 400 miles I want to shout 'Dalston Parish Council' to you all. Without the precept funding provided by all of you to The Parish Council, we would not have our open spaces cut, our baskets and planters filled and the weeds sprayed. It is incumbent on all councils around the country to look after its environment and Dalston is right up there with the best of them.

So, thank you to our volunteers and thank you to our Parish Council.

This year we are planning a judging route which is hoped to, wow the judges in both competitions. The route will show the very best of Dalston village. The problem is going to be knowing what to leave out. As well as our established stopping points, beginning at the Bowling Green and including the Jubilee Garden and its wildflower extravaganza, our public toilet garden, the exquisite gardens of The Grange, our new play area at Summerfields, we will be showing the developing project outside the Co-op to get rid of the muddy path which is used as a shortcut to the entrance of our fine Co-op building. You will hear a lot more about our plans for this area in the coming weeks.

Dalston is determined to win Gold Awards again in 2018. So, please continue to give us your support. Just keeping your frontages weed and litter free is a huge contribution and supports the efforts of the Parish Council and the volunteers who work in the bigger public areas.

Let me just finish by thanking all those involved in Dalston in Bloom, and that is every one of you who are Dalston ratepayers and contribute through the precept.

Dalston In Bloom grant forms were available for parishioners to take.

9. OPEN QUESTIONS

- Two parishioners reported the growing number of dangerous pot holes throughout the Parish; they noted how dangerous the section of road opposite the church is. It was stated that the wrong materials had previously been used to repair this section of road in the past. Cllr Allison reported that Cumbria County Council had received funding of 2.9 million pounds to repair pot holes throughout the County. He is to speak to Cumbria County Council in regards to the Parish. It was also stated that pot holes need to be reported through the County Council website. It was stated that in some instances pot holes had been reported on the website however the information had been lost.
- It was stated that a private road sign had been placed at the entrance to Low Mill. Clerk to find out if this is privately owned land. It was also noted that a drain outside the entrance is constantly blocked frequently causing standing water on the road.

Thanks were given to the parishioners for attending the meeting and to the WI for providing the refreshments. The meeting closed at 8.05pm

The meeting was followed by refreshments provided by Dalston WI.