

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Victory Hall on Tuesday 3rd May 2016 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Ronnie Auld (Parish Council Chairman in the Chair), Ann Byers (Parish Council Vice Chairman), Cllr Allison (Cumbria CC & Carlisle CC), Cllr McKerrell and Cllr Christian. 58 parishioners including Parish Council members and the Clerk were also present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dalton, Cllr Ebbatson, Cllr Lancaster, Stephanie Diver, Molly & David Marsden.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th May 2105 were approved and signed by Cllr Auld as a true record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting. He stated that this year had been a particularly busy year with so much happening in and around the Parish.

Sue Milburn who was Acting Clerk this time last year is now Clerk to Dalston Parish Council in her own right. It takes many months, at least 12-18 months for a new Clerk to learn the role of running quite a large Parish Council. Paul Barton who had been in the post previously fell ill and unfortunately was unable to continue in the position. Paul has since made a good recovery and was able to retire and move closer to his family.

In April 2015 Wigton Town Council started the grass cutting work in Dalston. The Parish Council feels that they have done an excellent job and hope that everyone in the Parish feels the same.

As you know Dalston is undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. This is something which came out of the Localism Act. Chris Drouet will provide more information in regards to this later in the meeting. Once the Neighbourhood plan is complete it will form part of the Carlisle District Local Plan and will certainly help with the management of development in the parish over the next 15 years.

The future of the recycling bins in the Glave Hill car park has been discussed throughout the year. There has been considerable disquiet at the mess that is caused around the bins, particularly at Bank Holidays. Quite obviously some commercial organisations see the site as an easy place to deposit their cardboard. This is illegal and anti-social. As a result of this the Victory Hall Committee felt they would like to see the bins relocated and wrote to Carlisle City Council asking for them to be removed. With the assistance of District Councillor Trevor Allison other sites were looked into, but unfortunately without success. It can however be reported that the bins will remain in Glave Hill car park until a proper recycling service is provided for the Grange Estate. If they were to be removed it would be a great loss to those who live in the village and surrounding hamlets.

In May 2015, at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Ann Byers was re-elected as Vice Chairman. She along with other members of the Parish Council have been of huge support to both Ronnie and the Clerk and this has been very much appreciated. Both the Clerk and Ann are beginning to get to grips with the complexities of running Dalston Cemetery and the burials and internments of ashes. The digital version of the cemetery records will soon be brought into use and become available to members of the parish.

One of the on-going issues throughout the year has been vandalism. The Recreation Association has been affected from this by the mindless activity of youths, many of whom come from Carlisle. In Dalston village the public toilets have had to be closed and should this sort of thing continue, the Parish may lose the toilets or even have to bear the financial.

Ever since Dalston Library closed there have been groups involved in trying to find a replacement premises. County and City Councillor Trevor Allison has been at the forefront of this campaign and has kept pressure on all of the County Library Officials, Parish Councillor Pauline Dalton has also strongly encouraged this. The good news is now that we no longer have a library van coming to the village a temporary library will be installed at the rear of St Michaels Church, to be run by volunteers.

No Annual report would be the same without some reference to planning. Throughout the year the Parish Council has seen a steady stream of applications. All of these come under the category of 'windfall', i.e. they are not part of any planned developer's project for multiple houses. Almost every Parish Council meeting sees one or more of these applications. The biggest contribution to new house completions in our parish is in the Grange development. To date, of the 121 houses planned, 71 have been completed and occupied, 44 of which were completed in 2015/16. A further 32 will be built in the next 12 months, leaving the balance to be constructed after April 2017..

The Government is pushing all local planning authorities very hard to build as many houses as possible, and Carlisle is no exception. The Parish Council feels that Dalston has taken its fair share for now and for the early years of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is why it is very important to complete the plan. If more houses are required, then it is more likely that developers will find it easier to find sites in parishes that do not have a Neighbourhood Plan.

Last year, Dalston was once again successful in Cumbria In Bloom, winning the National Park Trophy Gold Award for the second year in succession. Dalston also won the Cumbria County Council Local Committee award for achievement in the District. These major awards were supplemented by the Cumbria In Bloom it's your Neighbourhood awards; Dalston Village, Square, Kingsway car park, Jubilee Garden, Indian Court and 4 The Square gained level 5 outstanding; Dalston Station Gardeners gained level 4 thriving. In the Special Category Awards put forward by Cumbria In Bloom, Dalston won the best Churchyard and Cemetery. All of these awards are a great testament to the work of the many volunteers and contractors who work tirelessly to keep the village looking so good.

As a result of this success in the Cumbrian competition, Dalston has been asked to represent Cumbria in the Large Village section of Britain In Bloom.

In the last 12 months, two of our residents have been recipients of awards. In July 2015 Stephanie Diver, MBE came 2nd in the Cumberland News Unsung Hero Awards. Earlier this year Councillor Ian Newton was given a community award in recognition of all the work he does for many different organisations and people in and around Dalston.

Finally Councillor Auld said a big thank you to all the volunteers within the Parish. There are many people who 'just do things', these include Ian Gray, Stephanie Diver, Pat Jackson, Brian Hetherington, Alan Dinning and the Recreation Committee and many others.

As this was Councillor Auld's last Annual Report as Chairman of Dalston Parish Council, he wished his successor all the best.

3. QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

There were no questions.

4. EDEN CATCHMENT FLOODING UPDATE

Devastating floods once again hit Cumbria in December 2015 and Carlisle was affected very badly. Dalston was affected but not too seriously. For the first time the Victory Hall was flooded by the run off water from the Show Field and No.1 and No.2 The Green were threatened. The County Council are looking into the cause of this.

After the floods 8 years ago Stockdalewath formed a flood group and work undertaken by the residents included river clearances and tree planting. The village are now at stage 6 of the Flood Alleviation Plan and all their hard work paid off during the floods in December 2015.

As Chairman of CALC, Councillor Auld represents Parish Councils on the Cumbria Flood Partnership, which is led by the Environmental Agency and has representatives from County, Districts and many other groups across the country. These meetings are extremely important and tackle all issues in relation to flooding.

5. STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCILS ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2016

A comprehensive set of account were available for parishioners to see.

At the Annual Parish Meeting last year it was indicated that the Parish Council foresaw considerable financial pressure in the years ahead and it was therefore important that steps be taken to rectify the position for 216/17.

As a result of this the increase Dalston's share of the council tax equates to an increase of £8.64 per annum for a band D property which is 17p per week.

It was stated that both the current account and the savings bank account had been changed from Barclays Bank to the Cumberland Building Society, this was due to accessibility for the Clerk and a higher interest rate on the savings account.

Thanks were given to Cllr Smith for the huge amount of time he spends helping the Clerk to prepare the monthly Parish Council accounts. Thanks were also given to Cllr Kyle.

6. BARRAS HOUSE – REBECCA KENVYN

It was explained that Barras House was originally sheltered accommodation. Riverside Housing have completed an options appraisal and has put forward a proposal to re model Barras House and make it into 14 rented properties. 6 of these would be a two bedroom property and 8 would be a one bedroom property. The planning application is to be submitted to the planning department over the next couple of months.

The properties are hoped to be completed by Summer 2017. To improve the properties there will be disabled access, balconies and gardens where appropriate.

Feedback forms were available for parishioners to complete, all suggestions would be warmly received.

7. DALSTON CHARITABLE TRUST UPDATE – Cllr KYLE

The accounts for the period October 2014 – March 31st 2016 were discussed and available for parishioners to see. They showed the Charitable Trust have a Building Society balance of £4,631. The following organisations have received rewards:- Raughton Head Little Rascals, Dalston Tennis Club, Dalston Recreation Assosiation, Dalston Festival Committee and Knit and Stitch. The total amount of grants awarded was £1,911.

It was explained that the new Solar Farm at Welton has been connected to the grid. One of the conditions of the permission of this development was that an annual payment has to be made for the benefit of the community, i.e. Dalston Parish. The amount of this payment is £4,900 and the Trust has been asked to be responsible for the administration and distribution of this to local organisations. This will be reviewed by the Parish Council annually. Organisations from within the Parish and individuals with special projects were encouraged to complete a grant application and return to the Clerk.

A leaflet was also distributed to parishioners detailing the Trusts objectives and ways in which donations can be made to the Trust.

8. ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH DEVELOPMENT – Cllr Cowen

The Parochial Church Council have committed to building a community hall onto the side of the Church, this will provide much needed facilities for meetings, administration, hospitality, church groups, prayer, worship and counselling. It is hoped that this will be a partnership involving St Michael's, the Parish Council, the Library Service and other organisations. A selection of slides were shown detailing the proposed plans for the extension.

The next steps of the project will be to make submissions to the Conservation officer (Carlisle City Council), get approval from English Heritage as St Michael's is a grade 11* listed building, seek permission from the Planning Authority and Building Control.

The church is to finance the entire project. Sufficient funds are available to start the project however additional fundraising will be necessary within the community and further afield.

At the meeting on the 8th March 2016 the Parish Council made the following resolution; "resolve to prepare a list of opportunities to be evaluated for Parish Council Office & Meeting Room for the long term benefit of parishioners". It was thought that in order to do this the office and meeting room should be more centrally located in the village.

Cllr Auld explained that there had been a special meeting of the Parish Council on the 23rd March 2016 to discuss 2 new possible locations. The first was to relocate to No.4 The Green, this was however rejected. The second option was to move to the church; a decision is yet to be made.

The Bishop of Carlisle, James Newcombe has been shown the proposals and expressed his enthusiasm for the project.

9. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE – Cllr DROUET

The vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect its rural environment and qualities, to sustain its communities and to encourage change and development which will serve to preserve and enhance these qualities and lead to a thriving and sustainable future.

By the end of July this year it is hoped that all of the policies in the plan should be complete. During August 2016 there will be a public consultation of the draft plan, this will be achieved by some "Drop in" events publicised by poster and leaflets distributed around the parish. At this time certain Statutory Consultees will be asked for their opinions of the draft plan. Comments arising from the consultation will be considered and any appropriate amendments will be made to the draft plan.

In November this draft plan will be checked for "Legal Content" by Carlisle City Council Planning Department and put forward for inspection by an independent examiner.

After successful examination the Local Authority will publicise and hold a referendum in Dalston. This is likely to be February 2017. If the majority of those who vote, vote for the plan it is then considered "made" and is part of the legal planning process and has to be considered in any planning application within the Parish.

There are over 50 people involved in developing this plan and their work is very much appreciated.

10. DALSTON FESTIVAL 2016 UDATE – ALAN DINNING

The festival is to take place between the 6th - 13th August 2016. Activities include a Soapbox Derby, Gala Day, Village Cricket Match, Quiz Night, Junior Football Competition, Circus Workshop, Strawberries and Champagne, Festival Friday and much, much more!!

There will be a scarecrow, decorated garden gates and wheelbarrow competition. An art exhibition will take place in the Methodist Chapel and a flower festival to mark Britain In Bloom will be held in St Michael's Church.

11. DALSTON IN BLOOM / BRITAIN IN BLOOM – Cllr AULD

Because of time pressure this item was not discussed. Parishioners were informed that all information regarding the subject could be found on the Parish Council Website.

Judging for Cumbria In Bloom will take place in early July and judging for Britain In Bloom will take place on the 8th August 2016.

12. OPEN QUESTIONS

- Carol Robson asked Cllr Drouet how the Neighbourhood Plan would be enforced and who's responsibility it would be to ensure that it is. Cllr Drouet explained that the document is based on the Localism Act and that if the plan is approved then it will become part of planning legislation.
- Peter Brookes requested that the Parish Council consider the village speed limit and he proposed that the limit should be reduced to 20mph. Due to the Story development there has been a significant increase in traffic and this has particularly affected Low Moorlands and Nine Rigg. Lindsay Cowen stated that when the Story project was undertaken they were asked to look into reducing the speed limit within the centre of the village and having a roundabout at the end of Station Road. Cllr Allison stated that the speed limit from the Buckabank entrance to the village, through Bridge End and into the centre of the village was currently in the process of being changed to 30mph, the speed limit currently changes to 40mph on a section of the route at Bridge End. Ian Metcalfe stated that 6th formers from Caldew School are using Nine Rigg to park their cars during school hours. On occasions because of the high volume of parked cars the bin men have been unable to empty house holders bins. Cllr Allison expressed his concern on the subject and said that when Caldew School built their new extension he requested that they provide more parking. Cllr Craig reported that the school are aware of the problem and do target cars that are inappropriately parked. It was also stated that St Michaels school regularly write to parents in regards to the situation. It was thought that a traffic warden would help alleviate the problem. Cllr Allison is to explore the idea. It was also mentioned that Barras Close is targeted and used as an area for cars to race. Cllr Auld agreed that this would be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting.

Thanks were given to the parishioners for the fantastic turnout.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

The meeting was followed by refreshments provided by Dalston WI.