

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7pm.

PRESENT

Ann Byers (Parish Council Chairman in the Chair), Cllr Allison (Cumbria County Council & Carlisle City Council), Cllr Mckerrell (Carlisle City Council & Dalston Parish council). 13 parishioners including Parish Council members, and the Responsible Financial Officer were also present.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Auld, Cllr Dickinson and Cllr Baxter

The Chairman welcomed everyone and invited the Parish Councillors to introduce themselves to the meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th May 2019 were approved and signed by Cllr Byers as a true record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Thank you all for coming to the 2021 Dalston Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting by zoom. The last one was in 2019 as last year it was cancelled due to Covid-19.

It has been a difficult time during the pandemic for the parish council to perform normally but we have done our best with holding meetings by zoom. It has been particularly difficult for our 2 part time clerks who have done an excellent job and we are indebted to them for their diligent work. Thank you also to all those who have helped others in this unprecedented time.

Since the 2019 meeting we have had the road resurfaced outside the church, also the area outside the Cumberland Building Society, grass crete has been laid along The Green, the garden outside the Co-op has been renovated, a new flag pole has been erected outside the Co-op, there has been a new area for cremated remains allocated in the cemetery as well as levelling an area of graves, we are currently having more levelling done on sunken graves, several bins have been replaced with the much needed larger ones around the village, five new planters have been placed at Bridge End along with a picnic table near the bridge on the Cumbrian Way, we are continually having tree work done in the parish, 2 Vehicle Electric Charge Points have been established on the Kingsway carpark and new village sign posts have been made and will be erected.

The Dalston Parish Council has a completely new website. Please have a look at the same website address www.dalston.org.uk for details. You can find a quick link to report fly tipping, pot holes, look at planning applications and also see any temporary road closures that we are notified about amongst many other items. Dalston has done well in the Cumbria in Bloom competition in 2019 and also in the virtual judging of the 2020 competition.

Last year the Parish Council had prepared a day of events for VE Day which had to be cancelled. However, many areas in the parish organised their own amazing socially distanced celebrations which were enjoyed by all in the sunny weather.

We are providing a tree in remembrance for people in the parish who have passed away in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. The tree will also be registered on the national Royal Horticultural Society register. Please contact the Clerk if this is of interest to you and provide the following details: name, date and place of death of your loved one.

Flooding is still an issue in the parish. We are currently in contact with the flood and development management team looking at The Green and awaiting their proposals.

On this year's Council Tax bill you will have noticed that the portion for Dalston Parish Council has increased. This rise only equates however to 3pence per week for a Band D property. We want to keep Dalston 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 and we believe that it continues to be very good value for everything which is being provided in the parish.

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. Especially this last year with everyone pulling together.

3. QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

There were no questions.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCILS ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

When the budget was originally set back in December 2019 for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 it was anticipated the year would end with a modest surplus of £5,491. We were not to know the effect Coronavirus was to have. The year ended with a surplus of £24,052 before Dalston in Bloom and transfers to reserves. The General Parish Fund received a Coronavirus grant of £10,000. A small amount was spent on signage, cleaning materials and Zoom subscriptions to allow the Parish Council to continue to operate remotely but we didn't incur any of the costs many other businesses did such as protective screens and social distancing adjustments. The unspent grant to date of £9,500 has been transferred to reserves. £4,500 has been set aside for planting trees in memory of those in the parish who died as a result of Covid and £5,000 has been set aside in a Covid Recovery Fund as we still don't know what adjustments may lie ahead as we continue to come out of lockdown. Applications to The Charitable Trust from community groups were lower than previous years. Partly as some groups have not been running during lockdown while other groups benefited from Covid funding, The installation of Electric Vehicle Charging points was completed and fully funded with no cost to the Parish Council other than signage. £5,000 had been included in the budget in case there were costs for lighting. The balance of Section 106 money from the Grange Estate of £7,139 was received and transferred to The Parish Charitable Trust and is earmarked for the maintenance of the playground equipment. We are gradually catching up with work in the Parish which was put on hold during the lockdowns.

The Cemetery income was half of what it had been in the previous exceptional year but still ahead of budget. The temporary closure of the cemetery and rules relating to numbers attending funerals during the pandemic have impacted on cemetery income. Levelling a section of grave spaces has been held up by the weather but £2,600 is included in cemetery maintenance expenditure for the year. The work started last week. After grass cutting, grave digging and general cemetery maintenance there was a small deficit of £335.

The sale of each grave space reduces the asset value of the cemetery. The £3,000 income from the sale of 4 grave spaces in the year has been transferred to an earmarked fund for the eventual extension of the cemetery. This fund known as The Cemetery Diminishing Asset Reserve now stands at £9,000.

Forge Green was fully occupied all year. The excess of rental income over expenditure was £6,181. The major expense was to replace the boiler in the flat at a cost of £1,690. The roof however still needs replaced and it is intended to put a tender document together in the autumn. £5,000 of the surplus has been transferred to reserves to spread the expense.

Dalston and Cumbria in Bloom was affected by Coronavirus. There was no sponsorship income so the Parish Council agreed to give £2,000 of funding. A grant has been paid to Dalston Gardening Club to maintain the Jubilee Garden and improve the Millennium Garden and a grant to maintain the pots at The Forge. The balance remaining including brought forward from previous years is £2,621 and £161 for Kelsey's Meadow.

We start the new financial year ready to face the challenges of coming out of covid lockdown restrictions and will continue to monitor expenses to maintain and improve the Parish for those who live, work and visit here.

5. DALSTON CHARITABLE TRUST UPDATE – CLLR KYLE

Cllr Kyle gave a report covering the last two years. Two years of Solar Farm income has been received and the balance of £7,139 from Section 106 money which is ringfenced for maintenance and repair of playground equipment. The Trust was chosen to benefit from the Co-Op Charity Fund and received £2,512. The balance in the bank at 31 March 2021 was £35,528 which is a substantial sum for a charity just over 5 years old. Only two requests for assistance were received during Covid lockdown amounting to £500. The Trust is in a good position and looking forward to making a difference by supporting people and organisations in the Parish in the future.

6. DALSTON FESTIVAL 2021 UPDATE – DAVID FOWLER

The 2020 Dalston Festival could not go ahead due to Covid. It would be irresponsible in current circumstances to plan a normal Festival so a scaled down event will take place in 2021 to keep it in the forefront of peoples' minds. It will start on Saturday 9th August with the scarecrow trail. On Thursday 14th August a champagne and strawberries event and children's entertainment is planned. Although it will not be the Festival people are used to this year, it will return bigger and better in 2022.

Cllr Byers advised that Dalston Show has been cancelled for the second year due to Covid fears. The Dalston Art Group were planning an exhibition in the Victory Hall on 9th & 10th August to coincide with the scarecrow trail.

7. DALSTON IN BLOOM REPORT – Mrs. E Auld

In 2020 Cumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom had been unable to operate as normal. Cumbria in Bloom revamped its website and received over 50 project reports and photographs and over 40 stories and held an awards event via Zoom. Dalston was given a well deserved award for Endeavours in the Community. In 2021 Cumbria in Bloom is hoping to run assessments as normal. Dalston is entered in the large village category with judging in July. The village also has six entries in the Royal Horticultural Society 'Its your Neighborhood'

awards. Dalston will also represent Cumbria in the new virtual digital assessment RHS Community Awards along with Ulverston, Workington, Penrith and Kirkoswald. Good luck to everyone in Dalston!

8. OPEN QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm