

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at The Victory Hall, Dalston on Thursday 12th May 2022 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Ann McKerrell (Parish Council Chairman in the Chair), Cllr Allison (Cumbria County Council & Carlisle City Council), 23 parishioners including Parish Council members. The Parish Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer were also present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Ebbatson, Mr Ronnie Auld and Mrs Stephanie Diver.

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2021 were approved as a true record.

2. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – Cllr Byers

Thank you all for coming to the 2022 Dalston Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting. It is good to be here face to face instead of a Zoom meeting. We have been having our monthly meetings face to face in the Victory Hall, the Primrose Hall, Gaitsgill and Cumdivock WI Hut this year to enable more distance between Councillors.

It is still a difficult time for the parish council to perform all its normal tasks as many people are still working from home and are not good at answering emails from our clerks who do an excellent job and we are indebted to them for their diligent work.

In the past year we have had two new bins placed at the Jubilee Garden entrances. The bins were continually overfilled especially at bank holiday weekends. The amount of litter has increased with the increase in walkers in the parish. We have bought litter pickers for anyone to request and use, please apply to the clerk. Unfortunately, not everyone disposes of litter including cigarette ends in the correct way. This also applies to some dog owners leaving other people to clean up after them.

We are continually having tree work done in the parish as we have so many trees needing attention. The new village signposts have been erected at three entrances to Dalston. We are waiting for approval of the 30mph moving before erecting the last one. We continue to do the grass cutting and general maintenance in the parish, including at Forge Green. Some maintenance is unfortunately against vandalism. Some of the cemetery paths have been tarmacked. We have removed old and damaged benches. New benches will be installed in their place shortly. Fruit trees have been planted outside Raughton Head School funded by the parish council and our city Councillor. Hopefully this will be beneficial for the pupils.

The Dalston Parish Council has a website where you can find a quick link to report fly tipping, potholes, look at planning applications and also see any temporary road closures that we are notified about amongst many other items. The web address is www.dalston.org.uk

Dalston did well in the Cumbria in Bloom competition in 2021 which was back to face to face again this last year. Thanks go to all the volunteers who contribute in any way and Capstick's who plant and water many of the planters in the village. The judges came to Dalston to give us the results when we received many awards, certificates, and the Houghton Hall trophy for Pride in Our Community. The judges were very constructive and complimentary about Dalston.

We have planted trees in remembrance of people in the parish who have passed away due to Covid-19. Relatives and friends of the deceased were present. The trees are also registered on the National Royal Horticultural Society register. We have also planted two trees for the Queens Platinum Jubilee, one on the Green for Dalston Parish Council and one for the Anglicans and Methodists in the Jubilee Garden.

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 we are awaiting their proposals. However, with flooding all over the old county of Cumbria and limited money we cannot be too hopeful for anything in the near future.

The festival committee have been organising events for everyone to enjoy when possible due to the restrictions. These include festival week and a lunch for Remembrance Sunday, which were really successful. Fortunately, the festival week this year will take place and is packed with events for everyone. Thanks go to the festival committee for all your hard worthwhile work.

Once again, the Dalston Parish Council is pleased to have allocated grants of financial support to many local voluntary groups and organisations. This has been more important than usual due to the restrictions from the last two years. These were administered by the Dalston Parish Charitable Trust, so my thanks go to the trust for organising the grants.

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 6 pence 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. I want to thank the Councillors for their help and co-operation and not forgetting our two very capable hardworking clerks who keep me right; and yourselves, the parishioners. It has been a privilege to be your chair of the Dalston Parish Council for the last few years and I wish Ann my successor every good wish for her term of office.

Thank you.

3. QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

There were no questions in relation to the Chairmans report. A parishioner did ask if it were only questions which could be raised or could he speak on another matter. He was advised he could speak at the end of the meeting in open questions.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCILS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022 - M Watling (Responsible Financial Officer)

Copies of the Accounts were available on all seats.

When the budget was originally set back in December 2020 for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 it was anticipated the year would end with a modest surplus of £5,863. We were still in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic and we were not to know the effects this would have on the budget. The year actually ended with a surplus of £10,116 before Dalston in Bloom and transfers to reserves.

We are catching up with work in the Parish which was put on hold during the lockdowns. The General Parish Fund income exceeded expenditure by £2,905. Backdated rates assessments for Kingsway Car Park and standing water under the trampoline at Summerfield play area were unexpected expenses. Two new litterbins were bought for the entrance to The Jubilee Garden and the office printer had to be replaced.

We were able to obtain grants from The National Lottery 25th Anniversary Fund and Carlisle City Council Welcome Back Fund. These enabled us to support the Festival Committee with funds for Festival Week, a picnic bench was provided to the Recreation Centre and 3 new seats are awaiting installation in the Parish. The Cemetery income surpassed budget due to the sale of new grave spaces and some non-parishioner burials. This has enabled us to re tarmac cemetery paths and we are awaiting a further section of grave spaces to be levelled. After grass cutting, grave digging and cemetery maintenance there was a surplus for the year of £6,104.

The sale of each grave space reduces the asset value of the cemetery. The £5,300 income from the sale of 7 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 £14,300.

Forge Green was fully occupied all year. The excess of rental income over expenditure was £1,107. Included in expenses are costs to replace the kitchen in the flat and to divert the drains at Forge Green which are causing rising damp in the office. The roof still needs replaced but before we can start to put a tender document together it was necessary to have a bat survey conducted. The presence of bats in the roof space determines when the work can be carried out. It is anticipated the work will begin in Spring 2023. A further £5,000 has been transferred to an earmarked fund to spread the cost of the roof replacement. This fund known as the Forge Green Roof Replacement Reserve now stands at £10,000.

The Dalston and Cumbria in Bloom fund stands at £2,186 and £161 for Kelsey's Meadow. Three small grants were paid to The Grange Gardening Group, The Square Gardeners and the Gardening Club.

Three trees were planted in memory of Parishioners who died from Covid using funds from the Tree Maintenance Reserve. The Fund now stands at £4,185.

We start the new financial year with the challenge of Local Government Reorganisation in the months ahead and we 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

A copy of the receipts and payments account for the year to 31st March 2022 was available on all seats.

Cllr Kyle reported that there are now three funds. Dalston Ladies Choir had donated the balance of their funds to the Trust with a request that the fund was to be used for musical purposes. Section 106 money is in a fund for provision of sports and recreation equipment for young people. The Trust welcomes recommendations of people or organisations in the Parish which it can support. In addition, the Trust has agreed to finance new seats in the cemetery, at Cumdivock and Stockdalewath.

6. DALSTON FESTIVAL 2022 UPDATE – David Fowler

David Fowler reported that the 2022 Festival was back with a full week of events including the Carnival on The Kingsway, Strawberries and Champagne event, Festival Friday and Dalston Show. After 2020 was cancelled and 2021 was scaled down the 2022 festival would be as big as possible. Further details will be announced on facebook and in the Parish Paper.

7. PLATINUM JUBILEE UPDATE – Cllr Dinning

Cllr Dinning reported that the proclamation would be made at 1 pm on Thursday 2nd June at ‘The Lamp’ followed in the evening by a piper and lighting of the beacon on The Green. There will be a coffee morning on Saturday in the Methodist Hall and the celebrations would conclude on Sunday with the street party on The Kingsway.

8. DALSTON IN BLOOM REPORT – Cllr Byers

Dalston has enjoyed great success in the Cumbria in Bloom awards over the years. We have entered the Cumbria in Bloom Pride in Your Community competition in the large village category again for 2022 along with several RHS ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ entries. The judging will be in July, and I hope everyone will do their best to try to keep the village looking clean and tidy with lots of super blooms. Litter seems to be a particular problem but fortunately we do have quite a few people who litter pick around the area. We hope that Dalston will once again enjoy success in the Cumbria in Bloom competition for 2022.

9. OPEN QUESTIONS

A parishioner spoke in relation to a fence erected on common land at Forge Green Wood and requested a motion to have the fence removed be put on an agenda. Cllr McKerrell agreed to meet with the parishioner to discuss the issue. In response to questions from another parishioner on this matter Cllr McKerrell confirmed that the Parish Council had not paid for the fence and that no objections have been received from any other parishioners. A parishioner asked if the Parish Council had any influence over speeding issues in the village. The Clerk read out the report from the PCSO regarding a speed monitoring visit in the village conducted in April.

Cllr Dinning expressed his sadness over the recent case of killing of lambs on The Showfield. He asked everyone to be vigilant and report any incidents.

A parishioner asked for an update on changes to the bus service. Cllr Allison advised that there had been a good response to his bus survey. A spreadsheet of the replies was being prepared and he would hopefully have this for the next Parish Council meeting.

There being no further questions the Chair thanked everyone for attending and invited everyone to stay and enjoy the refreshments served by Dalston W I.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.