

## DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at The Victory Hall, Dalston on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm.

### PRESENT

Ann McKerrell (Parish Council Chairman in the Chair), Cllr Allison (Cumberland Council), 22 parishioners including Parish Council members. The Parish Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer were also present.

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr. & Mrs. Auld, Cllr A Byers & Cllr C Drouet.

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

### MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved as a true record.

### 2. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – Cllr McKerrell

Good evening and welcome to Dalston Victory Hall for the annual parish meeting.

I am still enjoying being able to meet face to face; there is a lot of value in actually seeing peoples' expressions to gauge reactions which I missed very much during the Covid interregnum.

There have been several parish improvement projects carried out this year. In September the grave spaces were levelled in the cemetery, we added new seating and had some of the paths tarmacked ( an ongoing project ). The cemetery is a quiet and tranquil place to visit and have a walk around and we feel it is important to keep it looking tidy and well kept.

Plastic flowers are becoming a bit of an issue which we will be addressing.

We have also added extra seating around the parish which are generally requests from parishioners. We have planted trees around the village, I make special note of the Covid memorial trees planted on the Kingsway. We are always careful to seek advice on the correct type of tree and it's planting, using indigenous species which are locally sourced. Wigton Town Council continue to do a good job grass cutting. We have added several small areas to the contract this year. More flowers and planters are arriving soon to the Nestle end of the village. The 30 mile an hour speed limit has been extended to just beyond the Barras Lane entrance.

While we are talking about trees, I will mention something I am sure you are aware of and that's the ash die back disease. We are very aware of this as we have many ashes, particularly along the riverbank. All the trees have been surveyed and are being closely monitored, as are all the trees in the parish. It could be quite a significant expense to the parish. We are grateful to residents when they let us know of any problems, particularly after high winds when branches are down and causing a hazard.

There are a couple of events coming up, the Kings coronation celebration on 7<sup>th</sup> May, the events and times are on the parish website and also on the noticeboards around the village. The rural fun time days are another very popular activity for children aged 5-11. Three sessions are planned over the summer holidays. Activities include fun games, play, arts and crafts. Last summer Dalston was the only location that was fully booked for all of the days. The Recreation Association was very grateful for the grant to help toward the cost of a trampoline, it has been a really popular addition to the playground. The major challenge this year is undoubtedly going to be the change in Authority. Our aim is to look after the parish and more importantly the residents but most of the big issues are outwith the remit of the parish council. We have no idea what the intention is of the Cumberland Council regarding parish councils and we don't have a clear picture of what responsibilities are going to have to be assumed by us. I won't enlarge on this subject because it would only be conjecture but watch this space for updates.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the volunteers in the parish, they are invaluable in keeping Dalston looking as lovely as it does. On a personal note I would like to thank all the parish councillors, and I am delighted to

welcome back Ian Newton, their knowledge, wisdom and enthusiasm certainly makes my job a great deal easier and I thank them for giving up their time (probably the only tier of government to do so for free). I didn't realise the value of a good parish council until 9 years ago when I became a district councillor and inherited 6 parish councils. They do a fantastic job which should never be underrated, as do the Parish Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer.

My report is short but i am very proud to be chairman of Dalston Parish Council.

### 3. QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRMANS REPORT

There were no questions in relation to the Chairmans report.

### 4. STATEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCILS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 - M Watling (Responsible Financial Officer)

Copies of the Accounts were available on all seats.

When the budget was originally set in November 2021 for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 it was anticipated the year would end with a modest surplus of £2,510. We were recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic and facing the uncertainty Local Government Reorganisation would bring. Since then, we have seen the war in the Ukraine and the cost of living crisis having major impacts on costs and services. Despite this the year ended with a surplus of £4,054 before Dalston in Bloom and transfers to reserves.

There have been fewer grants available but with careful monitoring of costs and increased interest rates it has meant the General Parish Fund income exceeded expenditure by £770. Three new seats were provided in the parish, others were replaced, and a litterbin replaced in the Millennium Garden.

The Cemetery income surpassed budget due to the sale of new grave spaces and two non-parishioner burials. We have been able to level and returf more sections of grave spaces and provide 3 additional seats.

The Parish received a very generous legacy from the Late Josephine Merle Smith with the request that it was to be spent on maintenance of the cemetery. The legacy is held in the Building Society deposit account as a designated fund, some of which will be used to retarmac further sections of cemetery path in the current year. Grass cutting, grave digging, cemetery maintenance and capital expenditure exceeded income by £3,620.

The sale of each grave space reduces the asset value of the cemetery. The £2,050 income from the sale of the 3 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 £16,350.

Forge Green was fully occupied all year. The excess of rental income over expenditure was £6,904. The only major expense in the year has been to replace the gas fire in the flat.

The Dalston and Cumbria in Bloom fund stands at £2,731 and £161 for Kelsey's Meadow. Three small grants were paid to The Wildlife & Biodiversity Group and for maintenance at the Co-op triangle & The Forge.

We start the new financial year still uncertain of changes which may yet arise from Local Government Reorganisation, however 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 years ended 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023 were available on all seats.

Cllr Kyle explained there had been larger than usual applications for grants and therefore more had been awarded than the funding contribution received from the Parish Council. Cllr Kyle explained how the Trust was managed and funded by the annual contribution from the Parish Council and the receipt of the income from the Solar Farm. A new leaflet is going to be produced and will encourage parishioners to consider leaving a legacy to the Trust which invested would benefit the Parish in years to come.

Responding to questions, Cllr Kyle confirmed that applications for grants were welcome from individuals as well as organisations and community groups and also grants for educational needs are considered.

### 6. DALSTON FESTIVAL 2023 UPDATE – David Fowler

David Fowler thanked everyone for their support and the Parish Council and Dalston Parish Charitable Trust for their donations for the 2022 Festival. The break during the Covid pandemic made people appreciate it more. The 2023 Festival will follow a similar format as this has proved popular. Additional seating both at Dalston Show and in The Square during Festival week was requested by a Parishioner.

## 7. KING CHARLES III PARISH CORONATION CELEBRATIONS – Cllr Dinning

Cllr Dinning reported that the following celebrations will take place on the 7 May 2023:-

9.45am - Family Service entitled 'Kings Day Celebration' in St Michaels Church, led by Rev Chris Casey.

10am - Dalston Tennis Club. Refreshments and a free tennis taster session. All ages welcome, equipment provided. No booking required.

10am - The Bowling Club invite you to try your hand at bowls.

10.30am - 11.30am - Coronation Duck Race at the Mill Race. Run by the Scouts.

11am - Joint coronation celebration at Raughton Head Church led by Doreen Hallsworth and Ruth Bainbridge. The service will precede the community lunch at Raughton Head School.

12 noon -4pm - Art and Flowers in the Victory Hall. Refreshments available 12-4pm

12 noon-5pm Art Exhibition in the Victory Hall.

12noon - 5pm - Live Band & Disco on the Kingsway. Some tables and chairs will be provided on the Kingsway. Bring your own picnic.

12 Noon-4pm Dalston Cubs are organising Tomahawk throwing, coconut shy, cake stall and a raffle.

2-3pm Crown making on the Kingsway.

3pm - Community Singing on The Kingsway / The Green. God Save The King.

Post box topper made by Heather Harrison and Catherine Whittear.

Helpers are needed on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May from 10 am to decorate the Kingsway.

## 8. DALSTON IN BLOOM REPORT – Cllr Byers

Cllr Byers was unable to attend the meeting to present her report. The following report was available on all seats. Any questions should be sent to the Clerk at the Parish Office.

The results for 2022 were announced in October last year. Dalston was awarded a Gold medal for the Pride in Your Community competition. The village was also awarded Gold in the Cumbria in Bloom special award for Biodiversity. The Blue Bell was awarded a Silver Medal for its entry into the Public House Tourism category and Dandelion and Hoglet luxury holiday cottages were awarded a Silver-Gilt in the Holiday Accommodation section. The judges especially mentioned the flower beds beside the public toilets and the sunflower bed by the Jubilee Garden.

Rae Beckwith, a national judge from the RHS presented the It's Your Neighbourhood certificates.

Libby Smith received a Thriving certificate for the garden area approaching Nook Lane.

The Cemetery Flower Beds group received an Advancing certificate with a Silver award for biodiversity.

The Bridge End area including Forge Green got an Outstanding award, with Silver-Gilt for biodiversity and Silver for the woodland copse.

The Sheep Dip and Forge Green gardens were awarded a Silver and Silver-Gilts for Bobby Nichol, John Atkinson, Mick Ryan and George Carr.

The Paragon Vets received an Outstanding award for their garden and Silver-Gilt for biodiversity.

The Jubilee Garden and Millennium Garden received Outstanding and Thriving awards, with Silver and Silver-Gilt for biodiversity respectively and a Silver-Gilt award for the Millennium Garden as a woodland copse.

The village success is a tribute to our many volunteers in the community who give up their time and take pride in keeping it tidy and appealing. Thanks must also go to the Mike Capstick Nursery whose flowers gave excellent blooms last year, Wigton Town Council grass cutting contractors and the support of local businesses.

## 9 THE GREEN – available to lease from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024

It was reported that the Parish Council are looking for a new tenant for The Green as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

## 10. OPEN QUESTIONS

A parishioner spoke regarding the lack of disabled parking spaces in the village which has become a problem following the cut in the bus service in the village. They also requested white lines in Glave Hill car park and The Square following damage to their car. Cllr McKerrell advised that it would be difficult to police parking in the Square. Cllr Allison agreed to meet the parishioner after the meeting.

A parishioner spoke regarding the problem of dog fouling and the difficulty trying to contact the dog warden. They were advised that a piece has been in the Parish Paper asking dog walkers to clean up after their pets. The Clerk advised that the dog warden can be requested to come out if there is an issue at the same time of day by the same person.

It was reported that the area around The Co op and Glave Hill car park can be very dark and potentially a trip hazard.

A parishioner commented that due to changes in farming it may be difficult to find a new tenant for The Green. A tenancy for part of the year may be preferable to an annual tenancy.

A parishioner asked if reopening of the cycle path could be looked into on a temporary basis when construction work begins on the by pass.

A parishioner asked if there were any plans for a police presence in the village. The Clerk reported that PCSO Kirkpatrick was keen to re establish a regular surgery and discussions were on going with The Co op in this respect.

A parishioner enquired if there were any plans to plant a tree for the Kings Coronation.

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 8.30pm.