

## DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Forge Green  
Riverside  
Dalston  
CA5 7QG  
Tel: 01228 712766  
Email: clerk@dalston.org.uk

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held at Forge Green on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7pm.  
M Watling (Assistant Clerk)

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### **Present**

Cllr Baxter   Cllr Drouet   Cllr Irving   Cllr Kaye-Kreczkowski   Cllr Kyle   Cllr McKerrell

### **Apologies**

Cllr Byers.

### **Minutes**

Resolved to authorise the Chairman to sign, as a true record, the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

#### **1. Annual Review of Rents**

- The current rent for 1 Forge Green is £345 per month. From the last rent review until September 2024 the RPI has increased by 2.7%. After discussion it was recommended an increase of £10 per calendar month be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- The current rent for 2 Forge Green is £525 per month. After discussion it was recommended an increase of 2.7% or £15 per calendar month be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- It was agreed that rent for The Green should be renewed at £100 per annum.
- It was agreed the rent for Forge Green Gardens should remain at £40 per annum.
- It was agreed that the grazing licence for Chalkfoot should be offered to D Allen for a further 3 years at £40 per annum.
- It was agreed that the rent for The Sheepwash should be renewed for a further 5 years at £1 pa.
- All other rents are current with no further action required.

#### **2. Annual Review of Cemetery Policies and Fees**

- A schedule comparing cemetery fees for Dalston, Wetheral and Carlisle had been circulated. The fees were last increased with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. After discussion it was agreed that all fees should be increased by 7.5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- The reference to american caskets and biodegradable caskets in scale of fees should be removed as this is already included in the cemetery policy.
- The reference to local registered funeral directors should be replaced with the relevant paragraph from the cemetery policies.
- The following were agreed to be added to cemetery policies:  
Artificial flowers are not permitted nor any other unnatural or loose items.  
At the end of the first paragraph of headstones and memorials the following sentence will be added.  
'Nothing must be added to the memorial subsequently.'  
The following sentence will be added at the end of the policy. 'In exceptional circumstances matters will be discussed and decided at the monthly Parish Council meeting.'

- As the cemetery has Commonwealth War Graves it was agreed that the placing of poppy wreaths for Remembrance Day was permitted. An article will be placed in the Parish Magazine requesting poppy wreaths be removed by the end of November.
- It was agreed that should a grave owner wish to sell a space back to the Parish Council the amount they would be paid would be 50% of the fee they originally paid for the space.
- It was agreed that as long as steps were taken to ascertain the owner of damaged or unsafe gravestones the current policy for the safety and upkeep of gravestones and memorials was satisfactory.
- The revised cemetery policy will be sent to all funeral directors and memorial stonemasons along with the new schedule of cemetery fees.

### **3. Annual review of Policy For Memorial Seats and Trees**

It was agreed to amend paragraph 2 to read ‘The Parish Council, in conjunction with Cumberland Council, must approve the location and details, including tree species, any plaque or dedication requested and may require or suggest other options.’

### **4. Annual Review of Other Fees**

- It was agreed no change to the schedule of charges for fishing permits.
- It was agreed the charge for postcards will remain at 50 pence.
- It was agreed the charge for maps will remain at £2.

### **5. Habitual & Vexatious Complaints Policy**

The draft policy produced by CALC had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following minor amendments were agreed:

- Paragraph 2.3 ‘complaint letter’ to be replaced with ‘communication’.
- Paragraph 3.1 to read ‘Dalston Parish Council defines unreasonable persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with Dalston Parish Council, hinder the Parish Council fulfilling its duties. The description ‘unreasonably persistent’ and ‘vexatious’ may apply separately or jointly to a particular complainant.’
- A new paragraph 6.3 inserted to read ‘This policy will only be implemented in exceptional circumstances.’

The policy will be submitted to the Parish Council meeting on 12 November for adoption.

### **6. Cyber Protect cover**

After discussion it was agreed that this product offered by Onecom at £9.95 per month was not required. The RFO will cancel the cover.

### **7. Draft Budget for 2025/26**

The draft budget and notes for 2025/26 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The figures show a precept request of £94,458 which is an increase of 4.9% or 7p per week for a Band D property. Before transfers between reserves the budget showed a surplus of £2,100. The RFO explained that not all of the detail regarding changes to Employers National Insurance announced in the Chancellors Autumn Budget was known when the papers were circulated. The reduction to the starting point at which Employers National Insurance liability begins equates to an additional £615 per employee.

The RFO also advised that government grants for trees affected by ash die back were only available for traffic management whilst trees were being felled and for replanting. Grants were not available for felling of diseased trees.

The RFO will amend the budget for the additional Employers National Insurance cost and the proposed increase in Forge Green rental income.

There were no queries and Cllr Kyle proposed that a precept of £94,458 for 2025/26 should be recommended to full Council. All agreed.

**8. Councillor matters**

There were no councillor matters.

**9. Dates of Forthcoming Meetings**

Next meeting of The Parish Council to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.15pm at Forge Green.

Policy & Resource Meeting dates for 2025:- TBA

Property & Maintenance Meeting dates for 2025:- TBA

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm