

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Forge Green
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Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held at Forge Green on Tuesday 24th October 2023 at 7pm.
M Watling (Assistant Clerk)

Present

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

Apologies

Cllr Clarkson Webb Cllr Melrose both for work commitments.

Minutes

After correction of the word solid in line 6 of paragraph 5 it was resolved to authorise the Chairman to sign, as a true record, the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

1. Annual Review of the Financial Regulations

- The Financial Regulations had been circulated prior to the meeting. The RFO confirmed no changes have been made by NALC to the July 2019 Model Financial Regulations already adopted. The Financial Regulations 2023 will be recommended for adoption at the next Parish Council meeting.
- Following the resignation of Cllr Utting it was agreed that Cllrs Byers and Kyle will be recommended as additional signatories to the bank mandate.
- The list of Approved Contractors was reviewed and accepted without any amendments.
- The procedure for carrying out asset inspections was discussed. Cllrs McKerrell and Dinning had inspected all assets on the register in August 2022. It was agreed that the register should be divided and allocated between councillors to carry out inspections on an annual basis. The RFO will prepare asset lists for distribution in February 2024 along with the inspection templates for each asset type.
As the play equipment at Summerfield and the electric vehicle charging point in the Kingsway Car Park are higher risk Cllr McKerrell agreed to inspect these monthly.

2. Annual Review of Rents

- The current rent for 1 Forge Green is £330 per month. Since the last rent review based on the RPI for August 2023 the RPI has increased by 9.1% which would be a £30 per month increment. After discussion it was recommended an increase of £15 per calendar month, which equates to 4.5 %, be applied from 1st January 2024.
- The current rent for 2 Forge Green is £500 per month. This was a new tenancy in June 2021. The RPI for the year to August 2023 has increased by 9.1% which would be a £45.50 per month increment. After discussion it was recommended an increase of £ 25 per calendar month, which equates to 5%, be applied from 1st January 2024.
- It was agreed the rent for Forge Green Gardens should remain at £40 per annum.
- It was agreed that the rent for The Pinfold would be renewed for a further 5 years at £10 pa and the rent for The Sheepwash for a further 5 years at £1 pa.

- After discussion it was recommended the rents for 2 & 3 Walk Mill should be renewed at £100 pa for a further 6 years and 364 days. The Clerk will seek written confirmation that the Parish Council cannot terminate the leases and return the land back to the Parish following a request from a parishioner.
- All other rents are current with no further action required.

3. Annual Review of Cemetery Policies and Fees

- A schedule comparing cemetery fees for Dalston, Wetheral, Wigton and Carlisle had been circulated. After discussion it was agreed that there should be no increase in fees this year.
- It was agreed that permanent signage stating the Parish Council policy in respect of flowers and adornments on graves was a good idea. Cllr Baxter agreed to report back to the full Parish Council with draft wording for the cemetery policy and permanent signage to display in the Cemetery.
It was reported that the cemetery policy is now being sent with the Exclusive Right of Burial Deed when a grave space is sold.
It was also reported that when a permit for a headstone is received, the clerks will now check to see if a flower vase or rose bowl is included on the plinth and the mason made aware of the Cemetery Policy as necessary.
It was agreed the Property & Maintenance Committee should inspect and monitor headstone safety when it next meets. Any costs should wherever possible be recovered from the family of the deceased.

4. Annual review of Policy For Memorial Seats and Trees

It was agreed that no changes to the policy were required. It was reported that seats are maintained by the family where the Parish Council has current contact details.

5. 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.

6. Margaret Gore Trust Fund

Correspondence from St Michaels PCC rejecting the request to withdraw £10,000 from the Trust Fund had been circulated. Cllr Kyle reported that there were two issues regarding the Fund. There is the ongoing situation in respect of the Fund being shown as a PCC asset although they have no involvement with the maintenance of the Cemetery which means it is still preferable to have the legacy in a separately administered Trust Fund. Secondly withdrawal of £10,000 would still leave the original capital value of the legacy intact and would be using the legacy for the purpose for which it was bequeathed. The refusal to withdrawal from the Fund was therefore not justified. It was agreed to invite Rev Phillips and one other member of the PCC (if he so wished) to meet with Cllr Kyle and one other member of the Parish Council to discuss the way forward. The RFO will write to Rev Phillips to arrange a date.

7. Legacies

The legacy from the Late Josephine Merle Smith is currently held in the Parish Council Deposit account with Cumberland Building Society earning 4.1% interest at current rates. Cllr Kyle recommended this should be transferred to The Dalston Parish Charitable Trust to be administered in the medium to long term in a separate ringfenced fund in her name. The Parish Council would be consulted in respect of any conditions attached to the transfer.

8. Draft Budget for 2024/25

The draft budget and notes for 2024/25 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The figures show a precept request of £90,046 which is an increase of 5% or 7p per week for a Band D property. Before transfers between reserves the budget showed a surplus of £116. It was agreed that the renovation of Forge Green was a long term project which did not at this stage require incorporating into the budget. There were no queries and a precept of £90,046 for 2024/25 will be recommended to full Council.

9. Councillor matters

Cllr Drouet asked whether it had been established if the vehicles parked in The Square reported at the last Parish Council meeting were taxed. It was reported that all did have valid road tax.

10. Dates of Forthcoming Meetings

Next meeting of The Parish Council to take place on 14th November 2023 at 7.15pm at Forge Green.
Policy & Resource Meeting dates for 2024:- TBA
Property & Maintenance Meeting dates for 2024:- TBA

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm