

Dalton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.00 pm on Monday 11th November 2024 at Dalton St Michael's School, Higher Lane, Dalton, WN8 7RP.

Present: Cllr Louise Howard (Chairman), Cllr Iain Pearce (Vice Chairman), Cllr Toni Newman, Cllr Gill Rainford.

In Attendance: Borough Councillor David Whittington, Borough Councillor Katie Jukes, Dalton St Michael's Head Teacher, and one resident.

MINUTES

1. To record apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Chris Murphy.

2. To receive declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Public Participation: Any item raised by a member of the public will be discussed at this point.

Dalton St Michael's Deputy Head Teacher, Ian Atkins, who will take the Headship in January introduced himself to the meeting. The Chairman congratulated him on his appointment and agreed that a closer relationship between school and community would be to the benefit of all.

LCC Mineral & Waste policies were discussed with concern that there was a lack of regular monitoring at neighbouring, Round O Quarry. New policy and procedures were talked about but these policies are not issued to the public so it is not possible to know what they contain or if officers are adhering to them. Councillors had asked for an independent drainage plan for Round O but the onus to produce this was on the land owner, so Round O quarry owners commission the plan, leading to the question of it's 'independence'.

There was nothing new on the portal about Dingle Quarry. It was confirmed that videos of this land flooding had been sent to LCC Development Management.

Borough Councillor Katie Jukes thanked the member of the public for working around the clock and behind the scenes and confirmed that she will request sight of the monitoring policy and procedures.

National Planning Policy was discussed with the new government consultation, drawing together a desire to build new homes. West Lancashire has a large amount of green belt. Whilst it is really rare to get greenbelt new homes, the definition of brown field widening, to include car parks, greenhouses, hardstanding and quarries). The specific starting point is vague – suggestion of grey-belt areas providing the potential for application that will have to be sorted out by caselaw or appeal decisions. Questions such as: - does that site within the greenbelt become designated as grey-belt if it has already got a substantial build (maybe, for example an agricultural barn) or does that plot of land contribute to the general purpose of greenbelt in the wider basis? If no, can build, but who is to say? What is substantial? All very subjective and will probably be case-by-case decisions. With no obvious yes or no, there is a risk of overwhelming the appeal system. The fairly big changes that are proposed also demand a review of the greenbelt and boundaries and West Lancs Local Plan appears a little behind schedule.

West Lancashire housing allocation looks to be an increase of 260%. As such the Borough is under pressure to find places for homes, ensure maintenance of greenbelt intention as separating settlements, boundaries, fields, grey-belt, brown-field, it still talks of ‘sustainable’ with little clarification as to the weight they put on that; how important is that? In the preamble they discuss how and where they want the new homes; nearness to bus routes, railway stations, but there is an enormous mis match between West Lancs and the criteria being put forward, so whilst the policy looks fine on paper, they are not looking at actual place. It’s unclear what the over-arching criteria actually is. West Lancashire comprises of post-industrial sites as a result of heavy mining and factory-based industry. The settlements go right up to the greenbelt, which itself is Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, and food security at this time is of the highest importance. This does not really fit in with the national situation and so the requirements made by the national policy are not easily achievable without fundamentally changing the nature of our area. Hence, housing may appear low density in the Skelmersdale area in comparison to other areas, this high numerical requirement will inevitably spread into greenbelt.

West Lancs has been given the tenth highest amount in allocation for housing in the whole of England and this needs to be brought to the attention of Ashley Dalton MP that there will be a struggle to find the sites.

The National Planning Policy Framework is accelerating the Local Plan process. If it is agreed before the Plan is complete, West Lancashire will be judged on national policy.

Borough Councillors were asked about maintenance at Ashurst Beacon monument point. With cuts to funding and a review of WLBC Rangers there was little scope to include this Wigan Council owned land. Discussions across both district-level councils continue. Public present requested why WLBC portion of CIL couldn’t be used for this and Borough Councillor Katie Jukes agreed to take this enquiry further. It was noted that two portions of CIL money had been spent by WLBC at Fairy Glen.

4. To ratify as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held 8th July 2024

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

5. Accounts for ratification and payment

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|----------------------|--------|---------------------------------|----------|
| M Rigby | 230724 | Grass cutting | £50.00 |
| E A Broad | 290724 | Clerk's salary July 2024 | £299.18 |
| Online Design | 050824 | Website services | £288.00* |
| E A Broad | 270824 | Clerk's salary August 2024 | £299.18 |
| M Rigby | 270824 | Grass cutting | £50.00 |
| HMRC | 270924 | Tax for three months | £201.40 |
| Unity Trust | 300924 | Bank service charge | £18.00 |
| E A Broad | 280924 | Clerk's salary Sept 2024 | £299.18 |
| E A Broad | 281024 | Clerk's salary Oct 2024 | £299.18 |
| Unity Trust | 301024 | Monthly banking fee | £5.40 |
| Up Holland PC | 051124 | Contribution to SLCC fees | £36.15 |
| M Rigby | 051124 | Grass cutting on 090924, 011124 | £100.00 |
| Royal British Legion | 051124 | Donation to Poppy Appeal | £35.00 |

*contains VAT

The accounts were ratified and authorised for payment.

6. To commence budget process for 2025/26

The budget process was opened, with a clear deficit apparent should the precept remain at £5,000.00 Councillors were asked to consider adding £200-£300 onto the precept request to maintain the level of current service.

7. To acknowledge 2031 deadline for alterations to the Definitive Map and consider any implications for Dalton Parish

Noted, with no modifications required in Dalton Parish.

8. To consider Ashurst Beacon Point, ownership, maintenance responsibilities

No progress at this stage.

9. Update on maintenance of Dalton signs

Two Dalton signs are currently being repainted. The Parish Map Project was a West Lancashire District Council project many years ago. The map and casing are now showing age and need replacement or removal. There has been some damage to the wall and bench on the corner outside the church. Quotations for repair to the bench are being sought and the damaged section has been taped with hazard warning tape; the bench is considered safe and stable, despite the damage.

10. To consider proposed changes to national planning policy, WLBC Local Plan and determine whether a Neighbourhood Plan for Dalton should be pursued

The discussion in open session was referred back to and the pros and cons of a Neighbourhood Plan considered. Such a Plan is costly in terms of time and money. It must align with the WLBC Local Plan but the WLBC Local Plan process appeared stalled. A Neighbourhood Plan for Dalton could have more of an impact if it is produced before the Local Plan is finalised, as it might helpfully inform the Local Plan.

11. To record any police issues

There were again complaints that there is no method of keeping records of road traffic incidents that do not attract police attendance. It was noted that the wall at Rock Haven has been damaged by a vehicle.

12. To record any highway or public rights of way issues, including

There was concern raised that the Public Realm Agreement for maintenance between LCC and WLBC has not been agreed for 2025/26. This could lead to fewer cuts to roadside verges and troublesome trees not being dealt with.

- **Lees Lane issues**

Borough Councillor Whittington confirmed that he had reported these issues to Lancashire County Council Highways.

- **Coronation Bridge - FP080740**

LCC PROW team has repaired the bridge.

- **Japanese Knotweed on Dungeon Lane**

Item ongoing.

- **Himalayan Balsam on roadside verges**

Concern was raised that the roadside ditch near Mount Farm and Ivy Cottage is filled with branches from trees so it can't cope in rain. Electricity North West cut trees and put the offcuts into the culvert but they refuse to return to remove them.

- **Surface water issues - ED 48706 Dungeon Lane Higher Lane junction**

Item is still outstanding.

13. To consider WLBC consultations:

- **Skelmersdale Town Centre Masterplan**
- **Wellbeing & Leisure**

Parish Councillors were encouraged to answer these consultations as individuals.

Dalton Parish Council is unable to complete the survey as it is worded as it is set up for individual rather than corporate response. Dalton Parish Council objects to the closure of the swimming pools proposed under the Wellbeing and Leisure consultation, particularly as it will have an adverse effect upon Dalton St Michael's Primary School.

14. To consider any planning issues or applications including:

- **Progress of development under Application 2022/1210/FUL - land adjacent to Old School House, Higher Lane, Dalton.**

2024/0171/FUL | Variation of condition 8 of planning permission 2022/1210/FUL relating to completion date of works. | Land Adjacent The Old School Higher Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RA

2022/1210/FUL | Retrospective demolition of existing out building and construction of new building for storage with improved access including boundary wall & fencing. | Land Adjacent The Old School Higher Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RA

Concerns continue that this applicant is not adhering to the conditions. A window has been put into the rear wall when it was understood that this new storage building would not have a window there. The site often had building paraphernalia visible from the road in contravention of condition that no business items be stored there.

- **Update on Enforcement action to remove shipping container from the land west of Woodvale, Higher Lane.**

Application Number 2023/0422/PNP determined that prior approval is required for the proposal of a new access road at Land West of Woodvale Higher Lane.

- **Empty Public Houses: Prince William and The Beacon Inn**

No update available.

- **Application 2024/0321/FUL – slurry store off Lees Lane**

The following comment made on 15th October 2024 to meet the deadline was ratified by this meeting.

Comment: Dalton Parish Council's original objection still stands. The points raised with regards to proximity to residential properties and the problems that will inevitably bring, plus the issues with flooding, traffic, etc haven't been addressed by these recent reports, so still stand

The following granted permissions were noted:-

Reference Number: 2024/0658/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a two storey rear extension and upper roof line alterations to a detached property including demolition of original elements of the property

Location: Stone Hall Cottage Crow Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RY

Reference Number: 2024/0620/FUL

Proposal: Proposed first floor extension and single storey extension to dwelling

Location: Delph Cottage Crow Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RY

Reference Number: 2024/0610/LDP

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness Proposed inside of greenhouse to be painted grey for security reasons.

Location: Lees Lane Nurseries Lees Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RB

Reference Number: 2024/0598/FUL

Proposal: Removal of condition 2 relating to use and variation of condition 8 on planning permission 2016/0178/FUL.

Location: Lees Lane Nurseries Lees Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RB

15. To consider responses to County Applications for Quarry restoration:

- **Dingle Quarry -**
<https://planningregister.lancashire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/LCC/2024/0024>

The response from Dalton Parish Council sent on the 28th August 2024 to meet deadlines was ratified at this meeting. Dalton Parish Council requests that LCC refuse permission under this application.

- **Ravenhead Quarry, Up Holland**
<https://planningregister.lancashire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/LCC/2023/0043>

Decision noted.

16. Resolution for the Exclusion of Press and Public

It is recommended that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and as, in all circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Section 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Resolved.

17. To ratify NALC guideline salary scales and back pay award

Chairman:.....

The NALC scales were confirmed and back pay agreed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8 pm.

*Cllr Louise Howard
Chairman to Dalton Parish Council*

11th January 2025