

Dalton Parish Council

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The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.00 pm on Monday 13th July 2026 at Dalton St Michael's School, Higher Lane, Dalton, WN8 7RP.

Present: Cllr Louise Howard, Cllr Iain Pearce, Cllr Gill Rainford, Cllr Chris Murphy, Borough Councillor Katie Jukes and two members of the public.

County Councillor Adrian Owens & Borough Councillors Whittington sent apologies.

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies for absence

All present.

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.

The WLBC contractor has cut some of the verge but residents feel that it is not done to a good standard. Much of the knotweed has been stripped and left on the ground, spreading the problem further. Residents also feel that only the junctions require cutting back to maintain sight levels for drivers and the long sections of Dungeon Lane for example only need twice yearly cuts. There is bind weed on Higher Lane across the road from High Bracken and a dead tree on Long Heys Lane outside Pinewood. Borough Councillor Katie Jukes agreed to convey this message back to WLBC.

Borough Councillor Katie Jukes confirmed that the Fire Brigade had inspected the two vacant former public houses and have them on the vulnerable at-risk register. Residents are encouraged to report any anti-social behaviour to the police.

Fly-tipping around the old quarry has been seen by Ruttles and it is hoped that they will arrange removal. There is still some, including old cupboards, in the hedgerows opposite the field entrance (in Roby Mill). BT Openreach are installing fibre but they cut the hedging back and at the moment it is possible to access the fields via this route.

4. To ratify as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held 11th May 2026

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

5. Accounts:

- **Ratification and payment of accounts**

M Rigby	010626	Grass cutting	13	£55.00
E A Broad	290626	Clerk's salary June 26	14	£319.60
HMRC	290626	3 months tax	15	£216.25
Unity Trust	300626	Bank Charges	16	£7.00
M Rigby	300626	Grass cutting	17	£55.00
Online design	130726	website costs	18	£162.00*

Agreed future payments:

E A Broad	290726	Clerk's salary July 26	19	£319.60
Unity Trust	300726	Bank Charges estimate	20	£7.00
M Rigby	290726	Grass cutting	21	£55.00
M Rigby	260826	Grass verge cutting	22	£55.00

*contains VAT

Income:

HMRC	170626	VAT refund	£57.27
WLBC	240626	Concurrent funding	£200.50
Unity Trust	300626	Interest on reserve account	£33.12

The accounts were ratified and authorised for payment.

Bank balances as at 11th July 2026

Current Account	£2,107.57
Reserve Account	£6,425.53
Total	£8,533.10

The meeting noted emailed correspondence with Borough & County Councillor Adrian Owens regarding the concurrent, council tax support and capital grant schemes. No capital grant applications were invited this year; concurrent and council tax support grants are likely to be withdrawn next year as the local government restructuring continues.

- **Consider projects for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy-
£4,182.15 deadline: 31st March 2030**

Projects to support any work at Ashurst Beacon monument (only if transfer of responsibility from Wigan Council is obtained), and improvements to public rights of way (footpaths) were mooted.

6. To record any police issues

There have been incidents of masked individuals recklessly driving around on quads, and motorbikes, often racing against each other along our rural roads.

7. To note progress of Local Government Reorganisation, in particular that all parishes will hold elections in May 2027

The decision on the structure for the future local government in the area is due imminently and Lancashire is expected to be divided into a Four Unitary model. **South Lancashire Council** – comprised of West Lancashire, Chorley & South Ribble Borough Councils. **Fylde Coast** – Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre. **Pennine Lancs** – Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Rossendale, Pendle & Burnley. **North Lancashire** – Preston, Lancaster & Ribble Valley.

8. Any update on Ashurst Beacon Point

Discussions with the owner, Wigan Council, to transfer responsibility to WLBC are progressing.

The Chairman and Clerk met with the land agent, to discuss the problem of ensuring walkers keep to the route. It was agreed to consider repairs to the surface, way markers and guide walkers the right way rather than across the fields and through Beacon woods.

9. Any issues arising at Dalton Quarry

Councillors met with ecologists at Dalton Quarry. Green Earth plans are to rewild and restore to work as a biodiversity net gain, against which companies can off-set their carbon footprint. The site may have heritage cattle added but there is no intention that this area should become open to the public. Some material will be required for the restoration of levels so resumption of lorry movements is anticipated. Green Earth are offering to attend a public meeting if that is thought to be useful.

10. To record any highway or public rights of way issues

No issues raised.

11. To consider any planning issues or applications including

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

2024/0224/FUL

Prince William Inn Beacon Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RU

Conversion and alterations (including partial demolition) to the former Prince William Public House to form a single family dwelling; erection of new detached dwelling on land formerly used as beer garden and children's play area

Application refused by WLBC on 9th February 2026 and an appeal has been lodged. Refusal on the basis that:

- The site is greenbelt and there were no special circumstances demonstrated that would outweigh the resultant harm caused,
- The proposal is contrary to WLBC Policy GN3 in that the siting, scale, design and appearance is an incongruous addition, detrimental to the character and appearance of the site and the wider area.

Dalton Parish Council had no objection to the proposed development.

The status of the appeal, lodged in February 2026, is not known.

The site continues to deteriorate.

Beacon Inn: There is no information on WLBC planning portal regarding this property.

Ref. No: 2026/0471/FUL

Proposal: Single storey rear extension and associated alterations to the existing dwelling, including replacement of an existing flat roof with a dual pitched roof.

Location: Rookery Bungalow Dungeon Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RH

Response: Dalton Parish Council has no objection to this planning application providing all the criteria for development in the greenbelt have been met, and that it meets the guidelines in the Dalton Village Design Statement

Ref. No: 2026/0532/CON

Proposal: Approval of details reserved by condition no 3 of planning permission 2025/0474/FUL relating to Drainage.

Location: Viewlands Hillock Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RJ

Noted.

It was resolved to record the following timeline of events regarding allotments on Higher Lane:

11th May 2026 - question raised by resident regarding Donate A Tree field on Higher Lane at Parish Council meeting, as to what could or couldn't be done on agricultural land, as they had seen people sitting on chairs, using it for leisure uses.

18th May 2026 - Councillor Howard emailed Borough Councillor Whittington and Borough Councillor Jukes, to ask if they could clarify with Planning, if the below was correct as to what could or couldn't happen on greenbelt agricultural land, as there may have already been breaches of planning.

- "Allowed:
 - Agricultural use only — grazing, crops, hay, horticulture
 - Simple stock fencing (post and wire)
- Not allowed without planning permission:
 - Sheds, cabins, greenhouses, tool stores
 - Caravans or tents (leisure use is NOT permitted on agricultural land)
 - Domestic-style fencing or turning plots into “gardens”
 - Storing domestic items (lawnmowers under tarps, furniture, materials etc.)
 - Any leisure use — camping, picnics, BBQs, sitting out, weekend use, play equipment

Because it's Green Belt and still classed as agricultural land, even though none of the new owners are farmers, any structure or leisure use would need planning permission?"

18th May 2026 - Borough Councillor Whittington took the action onboard and asked Planning if they could confirm if the above was correct.

22nd May 2026 - planning replied to Borough Councillor Whittington, with the below.

"Thank you for your query. Based on the information provided, the Parish Council's general understanding is broadly correct. The land remains designated as agricultural (and within the Green Belt), and as such its lawful use is restricted to agriculture (e.g. grazing, cropping, horticulture). The subdivision of land into plots and their sale in itself does not necessarily constitute a breach of planning control. However, issues may arise where the use of those plots changes or operational development takes place.

In particular, the following would likely require planning permission and could represent breaches if undertaken without consent:

- Erection of buildings or structures (e.g. sheds, cabins, greenhouses, storage units)
- Stationing of caravans or use of land for residential or leisure purposes
- Creation of domestic curtilages (e.g. garden use, domestic-style boundary treatments)
- Storage of non-agricultural/domestic paraphernalia
- Any material change of use from agriculture to leisure or mixed use

Simple post-and-wire fencing associated with agriculture may be acceptable, but more domestic or subdivisional boundary treatments could also warrant further assessment depending on their nature and impact.

Given the concerns raised, there is potential for breaches of planning control to occur (or to have already occurred), but each case would need to be assessed on its individual merits. If

residents or the Parish Council believe unauthorised development or use is taking place, they can submit a report to the Council's Planning Enforcement Team, who will investigate and determine whether any action is expedient. More details and the ability to submit the complaint online can be found at: Breaches of planning control and enforcement notices - West Lancashire Borough Council."

22nd May 2026 - above reply from Planning forwarded to Councillor Howard by Borough Councillor Whittington. As a result of the reply from Planning, Councillor Howard asked Borough Councillor Whittington to raise a potential breach of planning with Enforcement. Which he did the same day and was given reference: CS0277549.

9th June 2026 - an Enforcement Officer from WLBC visited the site.

10th June 2026 - the Enforcement Officer sent his report (see below) to Borough Councillor David Whittington, who in turn shared it with Councillor Howard.

"As it stands we do not consider that there was any development or activity on the land that would constitute material change of use and require planning permission at this stage.

At present the land remains open with no permanent buildings or structures and in terms of domestic furniture/items there was only one small patio table and several chairs at my time of visit. In view of this, we intend to send the landowners a warning, reminding them that the land is agricultural and that the LPA will take enforcement action if there is any intensification of domestic use to the point we consider a material change of use has occurred.

As it stands however, for the reasons referred to above, it is considered that no further action could be justified at this stage and subsequently our file will be closed."

24th June 2026 - Councillor Howard notified Borough Councillor Whittington that the plot owner adjacent to the agricultural barn had erected a shed, and could he please inform Enforcement.

Councillor Whittington informed Enforcement the same day.

1st July 2026 - Enforcement carried out a further site visit.

3rd July 2026 - Enforcement updated Borough Councillor Whittington, who in turn updated Councillor Howard (reply below).

"Further to your email below, I did see a timber base on my initial site visit which I suspected was probably to support a shed and I therefore addressed this in my letter to the owners and I reminded them that there are no permitted development allowance for any buildings on the site and requested they made contact with me.

To date they haven't made contact and a further visit to the site on Wednesday this week confirmed a shed has been constructed on the base as reported. After discussing it in our enforcement meeting later the same day I am going to write to the owners again and seek removal. If the owners come forward with an application we may withhold from taking further action until it has been determined but in the absence of an application or if planning

permission is sought and refused we will consider taking formal enforcement action if the building remains in situ.

As stated above, I haven't had a response from the owners following the letter I sent to the address which is stated on the title deeds I retrieved so I'm not sure if they still live there. I haven't been able to find details of any other addresses for them on the planning files we have so if I establish they don't live at that address as stated on the deeds I'll have to try and trace them which may take a bit of time.

Please however be assured that I am following it up and if any of the residents have any information re the addresses of the landowners or any details relating to any other persons who may have an interest in the land please let me know."

10th July 2026 - further update from Enforcement received, as below.

"Since my last email of 3rd July I have established that the parcel of land in question has been subject to relatively recent sale and the details on the title deeds have not yet been updated by the land registry office.

I have however managed to make contact with the new owners who have advised that the shed is intended to serve as a storage facility for site maintenance tools and machinery. I have advised the owners that that there are no permitted development allowances for any buildings on the land but given the land has now been separated from the land with the large agricultural storage building on site and under different ownership, we have given them the opportunity to apply for planning permission to retain the building and they have assured the application will be submitted within the next 28 days.

If we receive the application as assured we will withhold from taking any further action until it has been determined. The owners have been made aware that permission is not guaranteed and that they will be required to remove the shed if the application is unsuccessful.

They have also been informed that the land will be subject to monitoring going forwards and they have assured that it will not be domesticated any further and don't intend to construct any more buildings or bring on any more domestic furniture or paraphernalia.

I'll let you know if/when we receive the application for the shed."

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.41 pm.

Cllr Iain Pearce
Vice Chairman

15th September 2026