

# *Dalton Parish Council*

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**Clerk: Mrs Elizabeth-Anne Broad JP, LLB (Hons), MA, CiLCA  
1 Pinewood, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6UZ  
Tel: 01695 557678 Mob: 07973 340254  
e-mail: daltonpc.clerk@yahoo.com**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held at 7.00 pm on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at Dalton St Michael's School, Higher Lane, Dalton, WN8 7RP.**

**Present: Louise Howard, Ian Pearce, Gill Rainford, Chris Murphy and one Member of the public.**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. To elect Chairman and hear declaration of acceptance of office**

Cllr Louise Howard was elected Chairman. Declaration of acceptance of office was read out, witnessed and signed.

### **2. To elect Vice Chairman and hear declaration of acceptance of office**

Cllr Iain Pearce was elected Vice Chairman. Declaration of acceptance of office was read out, witnessed and signed.

### **3. To record apologies for absence**

None, all present.

### **4. To receive declarations of interest, and complete new Registration of Interest Forms**

Declarations were read out, witnessed and signed. New ROI forms were completed for submission to WLBC where they will be available to view online.

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

No items raised.

### **6. To ratify as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

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

### **7. To set schedule of meetings for 2023/24**

The following schedule of meetings was agreed:-

10th July 2023, 11th September 2023, 13th November 2023, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Meetings will commence at 7pm.

### **8. To agree annual memberships - CPRE, LALC, SLCC**

It was resolved to continue membership of the following organisations: Campaign to Protect Rural England - £36, Lancashire Association of Local Councils – £ 73.81 Society of Local Council Clerks - £36.

### **9. To amend Standing Orders where necessary**

Standing Orders were reviewed and no amendment required.

### **10. Accounts for ratification and payment**

Zurich Municipal	260423	Insurance premium	£167.44
LALC	260423	Annual subscription	£73.81
J Riley	260423	Artistic Map	£975.00
E A Broad	270423	Clerk's salary April 2023	£281.73
S A Jones	100523	Internal Audit fee	£25.00
M Rigby	100523	Grass verge cutting	£50.00

190423 WLBC precept of £4,815.00 received.

Account Balances: £4,764.99 in current account. £3,011.56 in reserve account.  
Total = £7,776.55

### **11. To receive Internal Audit of accounts for financial year 2022/23 and complete Audit Forms, including the Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

The final documentation, including Annual Governance and Accountability Return forms were accepted by the meeting and duly signed.

The following internal audit was received and recommendations accepted.

#### **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022-23**

An internal audit was undertaken following examination of the accounts and minutes as presented by Mrs E Broad, Clerk to the Council and RFO.

It was found that overall the processes in place show a good standard of internal control. Sample checks of income, expenditure and bank statements were carried out and the audit trail was found to be in order. The cashbook is maintained and balanced on a regular basis and the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment Register have been reviewed during the year.

However, there were a few instances, which I bring to the Council's attention:

1. **Accuracy of Parish Council meeting minutes**

It was found that there was a discrepancy with the minutes as described:

**May 2022 and June 2022 Minutes**

- The payment to Zurich Insurance of £167.44 was included on both sets of minutes.

It is recommended that adequate checks are carried out to ensure that all Parish Council meeting minutes are accurate and complete. It is vital that those checks are carried out as Parish Council minutes are legal documents once signed.

2. **Expenditure – Quotes**

Minutes from October 2022 confirmed that quotes were being sought for the creation of a Parish map. December 2022 minutes were found to state that a meeting had taken place with the artist. However, there was no confirmation on any minutes regarding who had been chosen, the cost to create the map or why that decision had been taken.

It is recommended that where a quotation process is involved, minutes clearly state the decision made including the provider, the cost and why the provider was chosen to ensure transparency.

3. **Transparency Code Requirements**

It was noted that the analysis of variances during the previous financial year 2021-22 was not included on the website as part of the Transparency Code requirements.

It is recommended that all relevant documents as listed on page 1 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) are included as part of each financial year's AGAR when published on the Parish Council website in order to comply with the Transparency Code regulations.

4. **Website Requirements**

Although not strictly part of the internal audit requirements, it has been noted that there is still no Accessibility Statement published on the Dalton Parish Council website. It was also noted that there was no Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL) Statement published on the Dalton Parish Council website either. The Accessibility Statement is a legal requirement under The Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. In addition, West Lancashire Borough Council require Parish Councils to publish an annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Statement on its website each year.

It is recommended that a process is put into place to ensure that checks are made at certain times of the year to ensure that all website publication requirements are being met. An Accessibility Statement and up to date Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Statement should be published as soon as possible in order to comply with the Accessibility regulations and Borough Council requirements.

Sandra Jones. CiLCA 2 May 2023

**12. Ashurst Beacon: to resolve question of responsibility for maintenance.**

The meeting noted Election leaflets suggesting that Ashurst Beacon monument and surrounds may be transferred from Wigan Council to West Lancashire Borough Council for maintenance and care. Clarification is awaited from the newly elected Borough Councillors.

**13. To discuss problem of off-road bikes**

There has been an increasing number of reports of disturbance from motor bikes and quads being driven off road, along public footpaths, causing chaos for farming and ripping up the leisure land as well. The installation of the parish council kissing gate prevents access to the open fields and land around the Beacon via the church grounds. Ibstock has erected additional fences around the quarry to protect that land and most land owners have done what they can. Police resources being low, it is appreciated that this is not their highest priority at present but residents are urged to continue to report incidents. It was resolved to ask WLBC Councillors to consider the issues, perhaps along with Community Partnership try to tackle the issue.

**14. Speeding vehicles including Quarry lorry incidents of inconsiderate driving**

Consideration to purchasing a parish SPID has been given but the costs involved rule this out. The Chairman continues to be in contact with Ibstock management regarding incidents of speeding or inconsiderate driving of quarry lorries. It was resolved to request LCC Highways install repeater 30mph signs or write them on the tarmac along Higher Lane to remind drivers of the speed limit. It was also decided to request community road watch undertake speed checks along the main roads of Beacon Lane and Higher Lane.

**15. Update on Capital Grant assisted project for an artistic map of the parish**

It was resolved to seek quotations for casing an A3 sized map for installation on the grass next to the bench at the Lees Lane/Higher Lane junction.

Under the terms of the Capital Grant the estimated total cost of £4,000, £3,000 can be recovered from WLBC.

Costs so far are £1,900 for design creation.

**16. To record any police issues**

No items to report.

**17. To record any highway or public rights of way issues**

**Lees Lane:** The roadworks initially to be completed in August 2021 were cancelled by LCC Highways. The road edge is now deteriorated and the plastic barriers are in the ditch. This is quite dangerous as there is nothing to stop vehicles veering off the road into the fields. The Clerk was asked to remind County Councillor Rob Bailey that this has not yet been attended to.

**PROW 8-7-FP40 Diversion Application:** Lancashire County Council is considering an application to divert parts of the network of public rights of way, along 8-7-FP35, in the vicinity of Rock Haven, Higher Lane, Dalton, WN8 7RA, Ordnance Survey at SD 4929 0897. Clerk was asked to email Adrian Ibison for an update on the progress of this request.

**PROW 8-7-FP40 – Coronation Bridge:** This footpath has been marked as closed awaiting repair to the bridge. Councillors will do a site visit to see if the bridge has been repaired as residents are reporting that it has been visited by LCC but it does not look safe to use.

**LCC Reference: 70071 Fingerposts at junction of Lees Lane/Higher Lane:** Eleanor Shaw, District Lead Officer, Highways and Transport, Lancashire County Council confirmed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that the fingers are not ‘heritage’ and will be replaced by LCC ‘like-for-like’ without removing the black and white pole. Clerk was asked to request an update from LCC Highways as to when they will be replaced. Whether or not to use parish funds to clean or repaint the pole will then be considered.

Following continued concerns about a water butt being filled with dog waste bags, on Harrock Estate alongside the public footpath from Lees Lane to the canal, the Clerk wrote to Harrock Estate Management. Fisher German responded that Mr James Hodge of Priorswood Hall Farm had been requested to make efforts to resolve the matter swiftly. Unfortunately, the water butt is still in situ and continues to be filled.

## **18. To consider any planning issues or applications**

Application Number: 2022/1138/FUL

Proposal: Single storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Demolition of existing porch with erection of new porch. Internal alterations with the addition of new rooflights.

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

Parish Council 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.

Decision Noted:

Application Number: 2023/0129/FUL

Proposal: Proposed rear extension.

Location: Quinta Higher Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7TW - Permission granted 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Application Number: 2022/1204/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a slurry store

Location: Land Off, Lees Lane, Dalton, Lancashire,

Clerk to request an update, as it is understood an Environmental Health report is awaited.

2022/1210/FUL- Land adjacent to The Old School House, Higher Lane

Clerk to request an update. Residents noticed a three-piece-suite, used window frames and bricks onsite.

**Freedom Camping application for licence permitting up to 5 campervans and/or 5 tents or camping pods on land off Higher Lane**

Freedom Camping confirm that they club have issued an agreement in principle to the applicant. The agreement in principle sets out a number of requirements to be completed before any further action is to be taken by the club.

Dalton Parish Council requested what conditions these might be with the following response from Freedom Camping Org.

“Unfortunately not from ourselves. Whilst those requirements are not, in our view sensitive or require any form of secrecy, we do uphold our privacy policy and maintain a confidential relationship between the club and applicants.

We agree with applicants to release necessary details of proposals to permit third parties to comment as to the direct effects of the proposal, however do not see that non regulatory third parties have interest in other aspects. As such there are no legitimate purposes to the release information to third parties without legitimate interests and doing so would be a breach of our privacy policy and the trust which applicants put in the club.

The applicants are part of your community. If the Parish Council have failed to secure the confidence of its community and fail to provide a platform for community discussions, then what is the purpose of the Parish Council? Taking an indirect route to attain information for a purpose of seemingly critical scrutiny does not in our view foster a platform of trust, openness and integrity. If the applicant is unwilling to provide details of their intentions to the Parish Council the Club is certainly not going to override that intent, degrading the trust the applicant has in the Club.

Kind regards  
Freedom Camping Club  
FreedomCampingClub.org”

The meeting noted the recent addition to the planning list of the following application:

Planning application 2023/0422/PNP

Proposal: Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for details - New Access Road

Location: Land West Of Woodvale Higher Lane Dalton Lancashire

The heavily redacted application is a matter for WLBC Planning Officer to determine if the proposal described as ‘new access road’ but accompanied by photographs of a toilet block, is within permitted development rights by the landowner. This is a legal matter for the Planning Authority to decide. If it is not within permitted development rights, the proposal would need a full planning application, at which point community would be consulted.

The meeting further noted that the shipping container already subject to enforcement action remains in situ.

Chairman: .....

The Clerk was instructed to respond to Freedom Camping's email and to request Borough Councillors liaise with the Planning Officer to address community concerns about a camping site at this location.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45 pm.

*Cllr Louise Howard*  
*Chairman*

*10<sup>th</sup> July 2023*