

# *Dalton Parish Council*

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**Clerk: Mrs Elizabeth-Anne Broad JP, LLB (Hons), MA, CiLCA**  
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**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.00 pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023  
at Dalton St Michael's School, Higher Lane, Dalton, WN8 7RP.**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllr Louise Howard (Chairman), Cllr Iain Pearce (Vice Chairman), Cllr Gill Rainford, Cllr Chris Murphy

**In attendance:** Twelve members of the public including Borough Councillor May Blake, Wrightington Borough Councillor Katie Jukes.

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

None, 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.**

Wrightington Borough Councillor Katie Jukes attended the meeting to discuss quad bikes and motorbikes accessing private land behind St Joseph's College, Up Holland and churning up the countryside. The risk they pose on the public roads along Beacon Lane, Farley Lane is of concern. Cllr Jukes asked for parish council support to take the case to the police and LCC Highways for any assistance in tackling the issue.

Borough Councillor May Blake attended specifically to answer any questions from the public about the WLBC input into the application for camping under the Freedom Camping Club organisation.

Other members of the public present expressed their concerns about the Freedom Camping Club application as resident surrounding the field.

### **4. To ratify as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

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

**5. To consider land owner's application to Freedom Camping organisation for licence permitting up to 5 campervans and/or 5 tents on land off Higher Lane**

Members of the public attended and expressed their concerns about this proposal. Dalton Parish Council submitted comments to Freedom Camping as follows:

Dalton Parish Council objects to this proposal for the reasons below.

We strongly object to the proposal by to operate an exempted camping and caravan site on land off Higher Lane, Dalton.

In the West Lancashire Local Plan, under rural economy, it states the irreversible development of agricultural land will not be permitted, therefore this application should be dismissed.

The site, as is the whole of Dalton, is greenbelt, and as for all development in the greenbelt, unless exceptional circumstances are shown no development should be allowed....that should also apply in this case, as no exceptional circumstances have been shown.

Dalton is a small village of just over 150 residential properties; therefore five tents and five caravans/glamping pods is a significant increase and would have a significant impact on residents' quality of life.

The village has no amenities, no shop, no pub, and no public transport.....these amenities are not within walking distance.....therefore increasing vehicle movements to get to them.

The site is visible not only from Higher Lane, but properties close to the site, therefore creating significant impact on the visual aspect of the greenbelt.

There will also be an obvious noise impact.

Both of the above particularly true, as the applicant wants to create a car park at the entrance to the field, as the field is not suitable for non-agricultural vehicles to drive over.

This land has problems with surface water running onto and flooding Higher Lane, so any hardstanding areas would further exacerbate flooding problems.

For all the reasons above this development should not be allowed.

Freedom Camping replied as follows:-

Thank you for your email and inviter to the next Parish Council meeting. Whilst the club has attended parish council meetings in the past, we no longer consider this a necessary or expedient undertaking, as such we will respectfully decline the Parish Councils invite.

The consultations with local residents undertaken by the club, is a means of gaining an understanding of likely impact to local residents, however this is limited to material considerations (infringement of rights of residential occupants ) which are reasonably likely to be suffered by those residents. Whilst the club has received a high number of communications regarding this application, the volume of objections has little effect to the

weight of each factor. Whilst campaigns by local residents shows the strength of feeling they do little to assist in identifying a fair and reasonable outcome for all concerned.

It is often that local resident highlight matters which have not been brought to our attention by other parties or identified in our assessment process. These matters will be investigated through the proper means of consultations with regulatory bodies or relevant third parties. Our aim is to come to an informed and balanced decision for the applicants, local residents and members of the club. We thank local residents and Parish Councils for highlighting sensitive issues, however we do not intend to engage in debate with third parties who have no regulatory or professional responsibilities for the assessment of such matters.

The club is happy to engage with Parish Councils where the council act as representatives of local residents. As above, collating concerns of many residents is a much more effective method of highlighting issues to us than multiple resident's communications where key issues may be diluted or overlooked due to the volume of communications.

West Lancashire Borough Council were consulted on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. An acknowledgement of service was received on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Jan along with a request to extend the consultation period. The club will always agree to extend consultation periods for a reasonable period of time where consultees appear to have not been given reasonable opportunity to comment. As such a further two weeks have been added to the consultation period. Once the consultation period has ended the club will review comments, determining if further information, consultations or advice is required, we will conduct a final review of the application once we are satisfied that all relevant information has been gathered in order to make an informed decision, there are no prescribed time scales for this process.

We do not consider that there are any specific requirement for the Parish Council to understand how the club works, however we do provide general information relating to our operations on our website, here:

<https://www.freedomcampingclub.org/campsite-startup.asp>

<https://www.freedomcampingclub.org/uk-campsite-law.asp>

<https://www.freedomcampingclub.org/Impact-assessment.asp>

You may also wish to review the club terms and conditions, here:

<https://www.freedomcampingclub.org/STC.htm>

We hope this information is useful.

Kind regards, Freedom Camping Club

WLBC Planning Enforcement Officer visited the site on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023, spoke with the land owner and reported back as follows:-

### **Site Visit**

In planning terms, the land is classified as agricultural land within the Green Belt. The site consists of approximately 22 acres (8.9 hectares).

The site owner confirmed Freedom Camping Club are currently assessing the suitability of the site to operate a certified exempted camping and caravan site under paragraph 5 of the

first schedule, Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960 and paragraph 6 of section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936.

During my visit, I noted the following:

- The access into the site is a previously existing access, governed by a metal bar gate
- Towards the centre of the land, planting had taken place of various trees/plants and there were several portable water containers used in connection with that cultivation
- Within the north western corner of the site there were two ponds. The site owner confirmed they had been clearing the pond area of debris
- Within the site and opposite the ponds, were two green containers approximately 1.80m high; these containers were used for storing equipment associated with the maintenance of the land

### **Planning Assessment**

Post visit, I discussed the matter with the Planning Services Team Leader.

- The planting taking place on the site does not breach planning control.
- The water containers on the site do not breach planning control.
- Council records indicate the ponds are previously existing on the site. The clearance of these ponds does not breach planning control.
- The two green containers on the site used for storing equipment, constitutes unauthorised development in the Green Belt and breaches planning control.

### **Action Required.**

The site owner will be asked to remove the two green containers from the land within 28 days. I will keep you updated with developments in this matter.

### **Other Matters - Freedom Camping Club**

Within my correspondence of 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023, I outlined the relevant legislation applicable for the site owners to operate a certified exempted camping and caravan site.

I established yesterday afternoon, the council have indeed received written correspondence from Freedom Camping Club who have asked the council to consider if they have any objection or due consideration to this application. The deadline for a response was set as 05.01.2023.

This correspondence appears to have been delayed within the Xmas post and I understand on receipt, the Planning Support Team obtained a two week extension to the deadline.

A planning colleague has today been asked to respond to this correspondence on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council.

I am advised the council's response will be contained to outlining the requirement for the site owners to comply with the relevant permitted development legislation. I understand this is not a matter for which the council accept external representations, as this does not form part of a planning application.

I am also advised, if residents, parish councils/ other bodies etc... wish to make any representations regarding the site operating as a certified exempted camping and caravan site, then those representations should be made direct to the Freedom Camping Club.

I trust this clarifies matters to date, WLBC Enforcement Team.

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Concerns at this meeting included water extraction, tree removal, installation of tracks and other development that would require planning permission. Also, that Freedom Camping Club had a number of applications in surrounding areas. The meeting heard that, at this stage, Dalton Parish Council had done all possible to protect the interests of residents.

It was agreed to write to the landowners to ask that they explain their plans for this land. Councillors to provide the Clerk with accurate names and addresses.

**6. To record any police issues**

PC Stewart proposed a meeting with Skelmersdale Police on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 7 pm for residents to meet the Rural Task Force Team.

**7. To record any highway or public right of way issues**

There is a dangerous, deep pot hole on Lees Lane, between Hillock and Dungeon Lane. Traffic cones had been put there to warn drivers but these have been removed.

The footpath diversion around Rockhaven was still a permissive path with no public consultation on a modification order at this time.

Coronation Bridge was damaged and quite dangerous. This will be reported to LCC Public Rights of Way.

A footpath directional fingerpost has been dug out of the ground and thrown into the nearby field at Long Heys Lane.

**8. Update on land ownership issues at Ashurst Beacon Monument Point**

No update available. The meeting noted that public consultation regarding the future use of the land at Beacon Golf Club was to commence. It was agreed to contact Borough Councillor David Whittington to ask if the consultation could be widened to include discussion about the land around the Beacon Monument.

**9. Accounts for ratification and payment**

E A Broad	281222	Salary – December 2022	£276.73
HMRC	281222	Tax for three months	£229.00
Unity Bank	311222	Bank charges	£18.00
E A Broad	160123	Stamps and sundries	£ 8.60

**Chairman:.....**

The accounts were ratified and authorised for payment. The clerk confirmed that the new savings account was now in place and £3,000 will be transferred into it from the current account.

**10. Update following meeting with the artist for the Capital Grant supported project to produce an artistic map of the parish**

Councillors had met with the local artist to discuss the design and a working draft is expected this week.

**11. To consider any planning issues or applications**

No current applications to comment upon.

**12. To finalise precept for 2023/24**

A precept amount of £4,800 was agreed.

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

*Cllr Louise Howard*  
*Chairman*

*13<sup>th</sup> March 2023*