

Minutes of the Meeting of Denby Dale Parish Council held on Tuesday 5 January 2016 in the Civic Chamber, Council Offices, Skelmanthorpe

Members Present: Cllrs: William Jewitt, Polly Ann Flinders, Richard Brook, Graham Turner, John Cook, Ray Gott, Eddie Shaw, Cynthia Naylor, Kelvyn Waites, Paula Kemp, Paul Cassidy, Steven Slater, Maggie Blanshard, Lynn Hardy, Stuart Merry, Janet Depledge and Susan Hellewell

Members Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr Summers, Denby and Senior.

15/129 Chairman's Opening Remarks

Cllr Cook welcomed the councillors to the meeting.

15/130 Declarations of interest/disclosable pecuniary interests

No declarations of interest were received.

15/131 Open Session

Rob Dalby from Kirklees Council spoke to the council re item 16.1 below.

15/132 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Summers, Denby and Senior.

RESOLVED that the reasons submitted be approved.

15/133 Admission of the Public

RESOLVED that no items needed to be taken in private.

15/132 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved:

Full Council – 1 December

Plans Scrutiny Committee – 15 December

Item 16.1 Countryside Project Brought Forward

Rob Dalby, Parks and Green Spaces Manager at Kirklees, addressed the council regarding changes to be made with regards to the Countryside Officer's post.

- Due to the changes to be made with regards to service standards, Kirklees Parks and Open Spaces would be looking at changing their operations, in terms of more facilitation of volunteer groups and other trusts.
- Andy Wickham's current position with Denby Dale Parish Council would come to an end, and along with 3 other officers, he would take up a role within Kirklees across the four districts with Andy's role changing to work with volunteers across the Rural District. This and the other 3 roles will be more strategic, facilitating volunteer groups, managing work on site, improving volunteer skills, producing management plans...and therefore would be less 'hands on' as in his current role. He stated that they hoped to replicate much of the work Andy had done with volunteers and Corporate Social Responsibility and expand it across Kirklees as a template, as Andy had had achieved such good work in this parish.
- This would leave the Parish Council with several options. If the PC wished to retain a countryside officer, Rob Dalby stated that he could provide figures for the next F&GP for councillors to make a decision on what the PC could afford. For example, at the current contribution of £25k, the PC could afford 0.8% (4 days a week) of a Grade 6 Environmental Ranger post, plus the hire of a van at approx. £5,500 per year, or 2/3 days a week of a Grade 9 post.
- Rob stated that Kirklees Council would arrange the recruitment and the management of such a post including the costs of recruitment and would absorb the management overheads should the PC choose to retain an officer. He stated that a smooth hand over period would be ensured, with flexibility in the timescale which would hopefully be approx. 2/3 months, but could be longer if the PC needed. He assured councillors that the PC would only be paying for one officer at any one time.

Councillor Questions:

- Surprise was expressed at the lack of pre-warning of the situation. It was stated that only one, brief meeting had been held prior to the Christmas break, and that the situation had not been clear at that point, and had to be hurriedly added to the January agenda to ensure all members were aware of the situation in one, clear meeting, rather than notification being ad-hoc by email prior to the Christmas break.
- It was expressed that the best course of action was for Rob Dalby to provide costings for the possible replacement of the Countryside Officer in the time for the next Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting on 19 January where options could be discussed, so that a decision could be made by Full Council on 2 February.
- Councillors acknowledged that this was an opportunity for Andy to take his expertise forward in a wider role, and agreed that the work Andy had undertaken for the parish should be celebrated.
- It was clarified that at present, Denby Dale Parish Council was the only PC to have this sort of arrangement and employ a Countryside Officer. It was acknowledged that this parish would get an equal amount of time as the other wards, but that this parish would get an initial handover period should council replace Andy.

Rob Dalby then gave a brief overview of Parks and Open Spaces and the new service standards of 'Natural, Bronze, Silver and Gold'. He stated that he would be happy for councillors to see these standards and comment on them by the end of the month.

15/133 Ward Councillor's Report

Cllr Turner gave a verbal report:

- Cllr Turner agreed to circulate the report mentioned previously by Rob Dalby.
- DCLG had announced the financial settlement, a target reduction of £165 million had to be reached by 2018/19, with 50% of this already having been achieved by Kirklees.
- Work on the budget was on-going.
- The Pathfinder Project had successfully settled in the refugee families in Kirklees.
- A Street Cleaning Operations review was to be undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

15/134 Report from Andy Wickham, Countryside Officer

Andy Wickham provided a written report.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

15/135 Clerk's Report

- Denby Dale Station – a meeting had been arranged of the Working Party on Public Transport for 10am on Wednesday 13 January in the Council Offices for any councillors interested to attend.
- Building Site Impact (item 16.4 brought forward)- Cllr Kemp requested that the parish council write to individual developers advising them of the requirement to keep roads cleared of contractors vehicles which have been causing obstructions in Skelmanthorpe, and that debris should also be cleared. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Kemp work together to contact developers.

15/136 Kirklees Public Rights of Way Forum

No further meeting had taken place.

15/137 Heritage Working Party/EPIP Report

Cllr Brook reported that an application had been sent to Heritage Lottery Fund by the Friends of Skelmanthorpe Heritage Textile Centre regarding the purchase which would be decided upon in approx.8 weeks. He advised that it was no longer necessary to request the loan.

The EPIP programme was about to start up and would hopefully be of benefit to local businesses.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

15/138 Churchfield Update

No further update was available.

15/139 Rural District Committee Meeting

Cllr Blanshard reported that the next two meetings would be held in Kirkburton in February and Denby Dale in March if anyone wished to attend.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

15/140 Skelmanthorpe Library Building Update

No further update was available.

15/141 Denby Dale Community Project Update

Cllr Turner stated that building work was nearing completion. Cllr Brook stated that running costs would be needed to be raised each year, therefore he would be repeating the Christmas draw.

15/142 Matters Raised by Councillors

Transport Committee Membership Cllr Waites stated he would be attending the consultation event on the bus service review with Cllrs Depledge and Shaw.

Application for New Homes Bonus Cllr Turner requested that it could be worthwhile applying for this for the library building i.e. for new windows. It was agreed to pursue this and get quotes for the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.

15/143 Finance Matters

- Orders for Payment: **RESOLVED** that the orders for payment No 646 be approved for payment, totalling £445.08
- Precept: To be discussed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee and reported back to February Full Council meeting. Cllr Turner advised that this had not been capped.
- New External Audit Arrangements: **RESOLVED** that the council remain opted in to the appointed external auditor arranged by the Smaller Bodies Audit Appointment Body.

15/144 February Council Meeting Items:

- Report back from Naylor's by the Working Party on Public Transport (*Cllr Depledge*)
- Beacons for Queens Birthday (*Cllr Shaw*)
- Bus Timetable Consultation (*Cllr Waites*)

15/145 Dates of next meetings:

- Finance & General Purposes Committee – 19 January
- Plans Scrutiny Committee – 26 January

Signed.....

CHAIRMAN