



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the council

Held on Wednesday 10th July 2024 at the Miners Institute, Langley Park

Meeting commenced at 6 p.m.

Item 1 Record of Attendance:

Cllr Ollie Moat (Chair), Cllr Allison Wardman (Vice Chair), Cllr Edwin Simpson, Cllr Carole Greenham-Denny, Cllr Mike Quinn, Cllr Kathryn Thompson, Cllr Jillian Crumbie, Cllr pat Short, County Cllr Bev Coult.

There were 3 members of the public present.

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Cllr John Duddy, Cllr Andy Walker.

Item 3 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Crumbie, item 10. Cllr Thompson item 13 and Cllr Short item 14.

Resolved: councillor items of interest noted

Item 4 Minutes of previous Ordinary meeting on 12th June 2024:

The minutes from the ordinary meeting held on June 12th had been circulated to councillors via email, prior to this meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Wardman that it be noted that the minutes are a true and accurate representation, this was seconded by Cllr Simpson.

Resolved: It be noted that the draft minutes are a true and accurate representation of the meeting on 12th June.

Item 5 Opportunity for members of the public to raise matters of interest:

There were three members of the public present, from Building Bearpark Community Partnership. This organisation run a baby bank supporting families around the Durham area. Presently they are based at Ushaw College with the accommodation being on a third floor there are accessibility issues. Therefore, the group require premises that are accessible to everyone and have expressed an interest in renting the vacant room at The Miner's Institute. The group explained their ethos and

mission statement to the council and that they are a not-for-profit organisation and that they are in the process of renaming the organisation so that people will know that they serve a wider area other than Bearpark. They have grown over the previous six months mainly through word of mouth and referrals. The organisation also offers a food bank and hygiene product care packages.

Resolved: Council will consider their application for the vacant room.

Item 6 County Councillors report:

County Councillor Coult presented her report which highlighted events over the summer holidays at a county wide level. Locally, there were reports of works being progressed around the parish at the moment. Also, there was a comprehensive list of meetings that County Councillor Coult has/ is scheduled to attend. There was also a plea for residents to report anti-social behaviour such as dog fouling, littering, drug taking and harassment. County Councillor Coult also thanked residents who have helped to litter pick around the parish. County Councillor Coult was thanked by the chair for her comprehensive report.

Resolved: to accept County Councillor Coult's report.

Item 7 Clerks' report:

The clerk's report had been distributed to councillors prior to the meeting and included information such as the ongoing Civil Money Claims case, the clerk sought clarification from the council as to proceed the claim and have a CCJ issued. The council voted unanimously for this to happen.

The clerk has also sought rate relief for the Miner's Institute on behalf of the parish council as the held documentation at county was obsolete and the existing rate relief was for company that no longer exists. All documentation held at county has since been updated and rate relief allocated to Esh Parish Council.

The D-Day event held by Esh Parish Council has been costed, the events committee were given a budget of £4000 to host the event. The total cost of running the event was £3978.25p. The event was attended by the community. However, numbers were low with approx. 200 attendees. This gives a cost per head of £19.89. It is hoped that future events hosted by Esh Parish Council are better attended which would lower the cost per head.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return was submitted to the auditing company Mazars by the allotted date and The Exercise of Public Rights is on display at The Miner's Institute, which runs until 9th August 2024.

The company that cuts the grass across the parish have complained about the amount of dog faeces which has been left by local residents, in particular at The Bobby Robson play area and at The Old Rec. The company has had to purchase extra face protection for their workforce to protect them against splatter from the dog foul whilst cutting is taking place. This has been noted and reported to DCC.

Resolved: To accept clerks report

Item 8 Councillor Resignations:

Resignations have been received from Councillors George Hawxwell and Louise Dudden. Both resignations have been accepted by the Chair. The Chair and parish councillors would like it noted that thanks be given to both councillors for their support, dedication and work for the community.

Resolved: The resignations are accepted and the clerk pass them to the relevant authorities.

Item Co-option request:

A co-option application has been made to join Esh Parish Council. The applicant supplied a covering letter detailing their experience and work already done for the community. The applicant has been invited for an interview with a selection of councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Moat that if successful at the interview, then the applicant be invited to join Esh Parish Council. Cllr Wardman seconded this. A vote was taken which returned as unanimous.

Resolved: If suitable at the interview the applicant be invited to join Esh Parish Council.

Item 10 Allotment/Smallholding Update:

On Sunday 30th June, several councillors took part in an inspection of The Earl of Durham Allotments site. This was prior to a meeting with Langley Park Allotment Association. Some of the allotments are in a poor state and there are several issues with many of them.

Esh Parish Council alongside Northern Counties Allotment Association are in the process of drafting new documentation to support their continued partnership with Langley Park Allotment Association. It was acknowledged that there are issues regarding the draft documentation from both sides and that a good working relationship be maintained. The time frame for completion of the draft documentation was given as 14 -21 working days. After this time frame the documentation will be available for inspection by allotment tenants, whose views will be collated. Cllr Simpson thanked Cllrs involved for the progression of this matter.

Resolved: The draft documentation once formulated be available to Langley Park Allotment Association

Item 11 Bobby Robson play area:

After consideration of the current plans for refurbishment of the Bobby Robson play area. It was suggested that the contractors be invited to redesign with equipment being placed in all areas of the park and quote for all works including groundworks and landscaping. It was also mentioned that some of the play equipment in the plans was similar to that at Quebec play area. Cllr Quinn proposed that funding sources to help pay for the refurbishment be explored and that a user/consultation group be set up which would be led by Cllr Quinn. Cllr Moat seconded these proposals. A vote was taken which returned unanimous in favour.

Resolved: Clerk to invite contractors to meet with parish councillors. Clerk to explore funding opportunities and set up and advertise consultation group with the public. .

Item 12 Football (late addition):

Esh parish Council in conjunction with Langley Park Primary School and a coach are in the process of running three interest sessions for football with local children. There are to be three interest sessions running throughout July depending on the weather. Each session is split into two age ranges. At the first session, the number of participants was better than expected with 18 children turning up for the session for younger children and 14 being present at the session for older children. May it be noted that the school are keen to have this as a regular event for children in the area. Cllr Crumbie suggested Esh Parish Council supply footballs to help with the start up. Building Bearpark baby bank mentioned that they often have football boots and strips donated and they could pass these on. Parents in the village are keen to start a Langley Park football team to play competitively.

Ongoing: Interest sessions continue to run, weather dependent. Moving forward attendance will be monitored and assessment of need will be taken for continuation of sessions.

Item 13 Aqua Ease Quote:

Esh Parish Council have received a quote for the continuation of checking of the water hygiene requirements and annual boiler service. It was proposed by Cllr Simpson that Esh Parish Council continue with the service provided by Aqua Ease, Cllr Wardman seconded this a vote was taken which was returned as unanimous.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Aqua Ease to inform them of the decision to continue with the contract.

Item 14 Quotes for scheduled work:

After an allotment inspection on June 30th by parish councillors, there were a number of works identified such as, overgrown area between large allotments which would need raising to ground level. Fencing at two of the large allotments are in need of replacement. There is also remedial works required at the Miner's Institute to replace the rotten skirting boards in the toilet area with UPVC. The clerk has obtained quotes from three companies in relation to these required works. Quotes have also been received for the fitting of a new garage door and for carrying out park inspections.

The quotes for the works were examined by councillors, where works were prioritised due to need. May it also be noted that the works to trim the overgrown section between large allotments be done Esh Council as a goodwill gesture as moving forward this areas' maintenance is the responsibility of the tenant of the large allotment as per their tenancy agreement. Contributing factors for this decision are one of the neighbouring large allotments owned by Esh Parish Council is vacant and has been for some time.

Cllr Quinn proposed that the contracts for the most urgent works, i.e. gate and fencing to large allotment close to the watercourse where the fence is falling over, the clearance to the land between the large allotments and the replacing of the skirting in the toilets at The Miner's Institute be awarded to a company that had quoted for all three jobs, which Cllr Simpson seconded. A vote was taken which returned a majority verdict as Cllr Thompson and Cllr Greenham-Denny abstained.

The quote for the play area inspections was circulated among councillors, there were two quotes one price per month pending a 12-month contract and the other price per month pending a 48-month contract. Cllr Quin proposed that Esh Parish Council enter into the 12-month contract, Cllr Wardman seconded, A majority vote was returned as Cllr Thompson abstained from this.

The quotes for the garage door and other fencing were deferred until Septembers' meeting.

Resolved: Clerk to contact company to award contracts and commence work at their earliest convenience.

Item 15 Vacant Room (Baby bank and Langley Park Community Gym)

There has been some interest expressed in renting the empty room at The Miner's Institute. The clerk was approached by a baby bank who showed interest and by Cllr Short who expressed interest on behalf of Langley Park Community Gym.

Both applicants were invited to give pitches in support of their enquiries. The merits of both were discussed by councillors. Allocation was given on greatest need and benefit locally and as Langley Park Community Gym has an accessible base already, the decision was made in favour of Building Bearpark. Cllr Moat proposed that the room be rented to Building Bearpark on a six-month initial lease with the caveat that the name be changed as not to alienate local communities. Cllr Quinn seconded the proposal. A vote was taken which was returned as unanimous in favour of leasing the room to Building Bearpark Community Partnership.

Resolved: The room be leased to Building Bearpark Community Partnership for a six-month period and then reviewed. Clerk to inform Building Bearpark Community Partnership of council's decision.

Item 16 I.D. Cards:

In light of councillors carrying out meetings and tasks within the local community and being representatives of Esh Parish Council. It is considered good practice for all representatives of Esh Parish Council to have photographic identification, therefore the clerk has made photo ID cards of all parish councillors. They are to be held in the parish office at the Miner's Institute and are to be signed in and out as required.

Resolved: The ID cards are kept in the parish office and signed in and out as required.

Item 17. Articles for the newsletter:

Cllr Greenham-Denny is in the process of compiling the latest version of Esh Leaves, Esh Parish Council's newsletter. She is including items regarding the community garden, football club, St Cuthberts, improvements to recreation spaces around the parish including the park refurbishment at Quebec, the improvements to The Rec and planned refurbishment of The Bobby Robson Play area in Langley Park.

Ongoing: Cllr Greenham-Denny is continuing to work on Esh Leaves and plans to have a draft copy ready for inspection by September's meeting.

Item 18. Empty retail premises

Due to unforeseen circumstances Cllr walker was unable to attend the meeting therefore this item is deferred until September's meeting.

Resolved: Item deferred until September.

Item 19. Payments to be made and bank reconciliation

The clerk distributed information on payments made, petty cash income / balance and bank balances for councillors to take note.

Resolved: Accounts are correct and that payments are authorised by the Council.

Item 20. Date of next ordinary meeting:

The date of the next ordinary meeting for Esh Parish Council is Wednesday 11th September 2024