



### **Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the council**

**Held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at the Miners Institute, Langley Park**

**Meeting commenced at 6 p.m.**

#### **Item 1 Record of Attendance:**

Cllr Ollie Moat (Chair), Cllr Edwin Simpson, Cllr Pat Short, Cllr C. Greenham-Denny, Cllr J. Crumbie, Cllr A Walker, K. Harbisher (clerk)

There were two members of the public present.

#### **Item 2 Apologies for absence:**

Cllr A. Wardman, Cllr J. Duddy, Cllr K. Thompson, Cllr J. Clark, Cllr M. Quinn, County Councillor B. Coult

#### **Item 3 Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr Crumbie items 9,16. Cllr Moat, Cllr Walker item 11.

Resolved: councillor items of interest noted

#### **Item 4 Minutes of previous Ordinary meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025:**

The minutes from the ordinary meeting held on 8th January 2025 had been circulated to councillors via email, prior to this meeting, they also had hard copies of the minutes to examine. It was proposed by Cllr Simpson that it be noted that the minutes are a true and accurate representation, this was seconded by Cllr Short.

Resolved: It be noted that the draft minutes are a true and accurate representation of the meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2025.

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

There were 2 people in the public area of the meeting, 1 was a member of the public who had previously attended a meeting to raise objections to a proposed rerouting of a public bridleway. The member of the public voiced their thanks for the support from Esh Parish Council. They updated council that there had been 27 objections to the rerouting of the bridleway. This person was also

representing EVRA and requested use of a beacon on the 80<sup>th</sup> commemoration of VE Day. Cllr Moat approved the request to use a beacon.

At this point the chair asked the council to jump to agenda item 14. and a brief description was given by the chair of an issue of bikes on the rec.

The second person had been invited by the chairperson with full knowledge of the council to help advise with an issue of antisocial behaviour on The Rec. He had also been invited to the meeting by the clerk, who had listened to a proposal that he had for The Rec, which the clerk thought should be taken to council and that they be made aware. The clerk has been approached like this in the past and has invited people with proposals to council meetings. The person is a resident of the parish and also a contractor known to the council. The chairperson explained the issue arising on the rec was with youths and their bikes and that the clerk had received complaints from people using The Rec. The youths are making the area which is a nature reserve very unsafe for themselves and other users of The Rec by creating large holes and mounds of soil and in places barriers with wood and sticks. The clerk has received reports of the youths circling around residents acting in an intimidating manner.

The chair invited the gentlemen to offer some advice on how to stop further damage occurring, there was a suggestion put forward of using logs on the slope and thinning out areas of overgrowth. The clerk explained that she had inspected the area earlier that day and had removed some dangerous barriers that had been made, however as soon as barriers and holes were filled in replacements were dug quickly.

The police had been contacted and notified by residents of the anti-social behaviours displayed by the youths. Going forward, the clerk, to contact the local PCSO and local Warden to help with patrols. The chair stated that she was awaiting some information from fields in trust to help with bike damage. The gentlemen then offered a proposal of a longer-term maintenance/management plan on the 9 acres of The Rec. He explained about thinning the area of self-seeding trees, and overgrown bushes, along with giving the area back its biodiversity. The Rec is a registered charity and the gentlemen explained that funding could be available to the council for an ongoing plan. The proposal was given with a quote from this contractor, he did stress that this was just a suggestion. Councillor Crumbie asked for the plan to be circulated to all councillors. Councillor Simpson stressed that it was a concern that the biodiversity of the land should be uppermost in the mind of the council going forward.

It was agreed to speak of this proposal and plan at the end of the meeting.

Resolved: The thanks from the resident noted. Clerk to contact EVRA with news of loan of the beacon for 80<sup>th</sup> commemoration of VE Day.

#### **Item 6 County Councillors report:**

In her absence County Councillor Coult's report was circulated, the report had also been sent to councillors via email giving them the opportunity to read it prior to the meeting. The report included information regarding grants from Pointnorth for organisations to enable welcome spaces. There are changes to bulky waste collections where due to changes in legislation around furnishings containing Persistent Organic Pollutants, large items such as sofas and fridges can no longer be collected at the same time. The report included a web link for anyone wishing to stand in County and Parish elections: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/32490/News-Guidance-issued-for-County-Durham-election-candidates..>

There was a list of support available from Durham County Council regarding financial issues. Local information included the installation of telegraph poles throughout Langley Park. There have been numerous complaints about public transport inefficiencies which are being investigated. Thanks has

been given in the report for Cllr's Moat and Clark for opening the Miner's Institute during a recent power cut which impacted 600 homes. There has been a complaint to the Highways committee regarding the installation of speed cushions for Low Moor Road, this complaint cannot be appealed therefore this matter is a committee decision to whether the installation can go ahead.

Cllr Simpson let it be known to thank County Cllr Coult for her comprehensive report in her absence.

Resolved: to accept County Councillor Coult's report.

#### **Item 7 Clerks' report:**

The clerks report included an update on the precept, all documentation was completed and forwarded to DCC before the deadline. The clerk has received confirmation that DCC have received it.

Easter was mentioned by the clerk, in regards to Esh Parish Council hosting events. Last Easter, there was an letter hunt around Langley Park, where children solved cryptic clues about locations and received an alphabetic letter to complete a word, the word was taken to the Tute and the child was given an Easter egg. Cllr Greenham-Denny arranged last years' and was keen to compile a similar event for this Easter. It was suggested that the clerk purchases small Easter eggs and larger eggs for competition prizes. There will also be various activities in the Tute on the day.

The report also mentioned the smooth removal of the Christmas lights around the parish and that the company the erected the trees at Esh Village and Quebec were thanked due to the sturdiness of the trees in situ, they had survived two storms that had battered the parish and caused lots of damage.

Moles are an issue in some of the public spaces around the parish. The clerk has contacted several mole exterminators regarding the issue. One company is willing to quote, however they are requesting that the areas be cordoned off for a time period, the clerk is to obtain further information.

The clerk has received information regarding the Heritage 100 trail and the installation of the starter post on the Rec. Council agreed that this was an opportunity for publicity and that the clerk liaise with interested councillors and organisers from The Heritage 100 Trail with suitable dates and times.

The clerks' report also contained information regarding use of rooms at The Miner's Institute over the next month to inform councillors of opening and closing when required.

Resolved: To accept clerks report

#### **Item 8 Election:**

The clerk distributed information regarding the forthcoming Council and Parish elections, the information included guidance and a timeline of deadlines which must be adhered to. Councillors were reminded that there was training scheduled both face-to-face at County Hall and via zoom. Places had been booked for both sessions, councillors were informed of selections and if there were others that would like to be added. Cllr Short informed the clerk of her inability to make the face-to-face meeting and would require switching to zoom. Cllr Walker said that he would take the place of Cllr Short, clerk to notify CDALC.

Resolved: Clerk to notify CDALC re change of personnel

### **Item 9 Allotment Shop;**

The allotment shop previously managed by Langley Park Allotments Association was handed back to Esh Parish Council. Unfortunately, over previous years of misuse the plot had become contaminated, making it unusable for cultivation or keeping livestock. The plot is in need of TLC, the fence needs to be replaced, the area clearing and 2 large containers need to be emptied. Esh Parish Council had been approached to hire the plot for storage, this gentleman was still in the public area of the room, when asked what he would use it for he stressed it would be used for storage only, and not used for business use. That he was willing to renew the fence at his cost and sort the area and storage units out, however the waste fuel containers within the building he would not be responsible for. At this point the gentleman left. However, going forward no flammable or toxic substances to be stored. Current tenancy agreements held by Esh Parish Council do not cater for the proposed use of this plot, so a new contract/agreement to be written. Figures were discussed and after a discussion, Councillor Greenham Denny- proposal of £100 per year then increase with others, was seconded by Councillor Simpson, a vote was taken, councillors Short, Greenham-Denny, Walker, Crumbie and Simpson voted in favour, Councillor Moat voted against.

Ongoing: clerk to write to Langley Park Allotments Association in regards to clearing the bottles left in the shop.

### **Item 10 Grass Cutting Quotes:**

The grass cutting tender is due for renewal for the coming year. Three companies were approached by the clerk to quote for the work. The work quoted for included grass cutting around the parish. The quotes were distributed among councillors. The clerk had also received a quote for grass cutting around the parish without the Rec being included and a separate management plan for maintenance of the Rec. It was thought that because quotes for similar work had not been given by all three companies, the clerk is to approach the other companies to request quotes for similar work. After a very extensive discussion, It was agreed that the need is there and several councillors voiced how good the idea was, and it could be cost effective. Councillor Moat proposed that all companies quote for grass cutting without the Rec and separately for Rec maintenance, this proposal was seconded by Cllr Simpson, a vote was taken which returned as unanimous. Due to timescales involved, it was noted that an extra ordinary meeting may have to be called.

Ongoing: Clerk to contact the other contractors to obtain quotes for similar work.

### **Item 11 Grant Applications:**

The clerk has received grant applications from The Banner Group and Building Better Community Partnerships Baby Bank. Both applications were examined by councillors Cllr Greenham-Denny proposed that the full amount of grant available be awarded to The Banner Group.

The supporting documentation for Building Better Community Partnerships did not include the recent name change, therefore it was proposed by Cllr Moat that once supporting documentation displays name change, then they be awarded the grant. This was seconded by Cllr Simpson and returned a unanimous vote.

Resolved: The clerk to contact both The Banner Group and Building Better Community Partnerships to inform them of council decisions.

**Item 12 Bobby Robson Park Refurbishment:**

In the absence of Cllr's Thompson and Clark who were steering the refurbishment, it was agreed that this item be deferred until next months meeting. Cllr Simpson proposed that it be deferred, seconded by Cllr Moat and returned a unanimous vote.

Resolved: to be deferred until next month's meeting.

**Item 13: Roofing Quote**

During recent storm Éowyn some tiles have become dislodged and others have blown off the roof of The Miners' Institute. The clerk obtained a quote for the repair of the tiles and bedding in of some ridge tiles of £480. The contractor is willing to go ahead with work as soon as instructed. Council discussed the quote as being reasonable. Council was informed that this contractor had been used in the past and completed work to and exceptional standard. Cllr Simpson proposed that this quote be accepted and the contractor be instructed to carry out the work. Cllr Short seconded this which returned a unanimous vote.

Resolved: The Clerk to contact contractor and instruct them to carry out work to the roof.

**Item 14: Bikes on the Rec**

This was discussed alongside item 5 and had been moved up the agenda, therefore had been addressed in agenda item 5.

The clerk to pass on reports of anti-social behaviour to PCSO and neighbourhood warden for support.

Resolved: Clerk to pass on incidents of anti-social behaviour to PCSO and neighbourhood warden.

**Item 15: Amended room booking form:**

The clerk had made changes to the existing booking form to include a discretionary charge for setting up and clearing away of the hall if requested. Cllr Moat suggested revisiting the booking form to include if setting up/ clearing away is not requested it is to made explicit on the booking form that this is the responsibility of booker to do this and that all bins are to be emptied into the correct bin outside. The clerk is to make the new amendments and bring back to council for approval.

Ongoing: Clerk to make changes and bring amended booking form to council.

**16 Allotment:**

It had been brought to the attention of Esh Parish Council that there had been a case of poor animal husbandry by a tenant of Langley Park Allotments Association. The incident had been reported to the clerk by the secretary of Langley Park Allotments Association and had said that there had been extenuating circumstances at the root of the issue. The secretary had advised that the matter had been dealt with and that the perpetrators had been evicted.

Councillor Crumbie was asked about the incident and informed the councillors that it had occurred over a significant period of time, the birds had not been fed or watered and that they were eating each other. As far as she was aware DEFRA had not been contacted. A long discussion took place between councillors on what we as a parish council can do. It was stressed that the council have a Management Plan in place for Langley Park Allotments Association to manage the site on behalf of Esh Parish Council. Esh Parish Council acknowledges that although this is an unfortunate case, ultimately as Langley Park Allotments Association manage their tenants directly and Esh Parish Council can offer support and will write to Langley Park Allotments Association to offer support with the eviction if needed.

Esh Parish Council would like to receive an update on the inspection that Esh Parish Council were invited to in November 2024.

Resolved: Clerk to write to Langley Park Allotments Association to offer support if needed and request an update from the previous inspection.

#### **17. 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.

Chair informed the council that the annual review for the clerk had been carried out, this had been done by Cllrs Quinn and Crumbie due to the fact that Cllr Moat as the chair had a prior arrangement. Unfortunately, Councillor Quinn was unable to attend tonight's meeting to update council. Councillor Crumbie stepped in for Cllr Moat because she had been present on the interview panel when the clerk was hired. The clerk is to undertake the cleaner review with a member of the HR committee and which will include training for the cleaner on handling with the new sink.

Chair highlighted that it had been requested for black out blinds in the main hall, and if the clerk had had any response from the projector companies.

#### **Item 18. Date of next ordinary meeting:**

The date of the next ordinary meeting for Esh Parish Council is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

