



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting of the council

Held on Wednesday 26th 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. Crumby, Cllr A Wardman, Cllr J. Clark, Cllr K Thompson, K. Harbisher (clerk)

No members of the public present.

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Cllr A. Walker, Cllr M. Quinn,

Cllr J. Duddy failed to respond regarding intentions

Item 3 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Thompson had applied to the clerk and chair for a Dispensation regarding item 4. Councillors were notified of the dispensation at this point in the meeting, no councillors questioned the dispensation.. Cllr Thompson stated the interest in item 4.

Resolved: councillor item of interest noted and dispensation.

Item 4 Contractors quotes (Grass cutting and The Rec):

The purpose of the extra ordinary meeting was due to a contractor in February's meeting handing Esh Parish Council a proposal. Council were in favour of the proposal in principal and in the interest of fairness, it was thought that a similar proposal be tendered to local companies. This meant that the previous quotes for grass cutting around the parish be separated to Grass Cutting and Maintenance on The Rec and Grass Cutting Around the Rest of the Parish. Three quotes were obtained, one from the current provider and two from other contractors. The three quotes were presented to council blind, both as the full quote and a précis, summarising the main prices in each of the quotes.

The Rec at Langley Park is nine and a half acres, the site is an area of natural beauty and used by many people and has charitable status which hasn't been pursued for many years. There are natural plants on the Rec that if not kept under control they become invasive and take over such as bramble

bushes, laurels which have self-seeded and heather. Once the invasive bushes are cleared and at a manageable level then areas are cleared giving other plants the opportunity to grow such as bluebells, crocuses and daffodils in the spring and others in the summer. The maintenance of the Rec must be constantly done, if not the invasive plants take over and the whole site becomes impassible in places for users. Previously, Esh Parish Council has tasked one contractor for grass cutting around the whole of the parish without looking at maintenance of the Rec.

Councillors examined the quotes and points were raised. Cllr Moat said that she was aware that the current contractors don't litter pick before cutting the grass which leaves empty cans being shredded and having sharp edges should children pick them up. Cllr Crumbie suggested that the original quotes for grass cutting from the meeting on February 12th be put forward for a vote and that a day rate is paid for any other work that is to be carried out in light of maintenance on the Rec, this was counteracted by Cllrs Moat and Clark saying that there was the potential to have two separate contractors on site at once which they thought wouldn't work, with areas unearthed that could and probably would increase the grassed areas over time.

Cllr Clark highlighted the need for a commitment from councillors going forward, and mentioned that there was the potential for funding for the Rec due to its charitable status and that she had been exploring avenues for funding, however, the Rec would need to be in a good state to start with, which currently it is not. Funding could be awarded based on the potential that the Rec had and the vision of Esh Parish Council and residents of Langley Park to drive it forward, making it an enjoyable space for all to use.

Cllr Wardman suggested that council explore all funding sources available and this year go with the quote for grass cutting throughout all of the parish and then quote separate for next year.

Cllr Greenham-Denny mentioned that she thought that the whole process was moving too quickly, Cllr Moat reminded her that issues with the heather on the Rec had been highlighted over 2 years ago. Cllr Thompson mentioned that because there hadn't been a lot of maintenance in recent years the laurels had self-seeded and they were 3-4ft tall. Cllr Clark reminded council that it was the responsibility of all councillors as custodians of the Rec and that any work carried out there needed to be continuous, not paying peace-meal as The Rec had the potential to become unusable and that councillors needed to commit to a rolling programme of maintenance as this would be the cheaper long-term option.

Cllr Greenham Denny raised the point why did maintenance need to be done for a 12-month period when the growing season was from April to October, with a response of invasive species such as heather can be cut back at this point in the year and that there were other things to do such as installing equipment in the area at the bottom of the Rec.

Cllr Simpson stated that Esh Parish Council must look at quotes which offer the best value for money, this was reiterated by Cllr Clark and that a decision be reached at tonight's meeting.

Cllr Moat proposed that Esh Parish Council adopt the separate entities of grass cutting and maintenance at the Rec and grass cutting around the parish and that this be for a trial period of 12 months, which would be looked at again in 12 months-time and that contractors send progress reports to the clerk. Cllr Clark seconded this, Cllr Thompson abstained from the vote, Cllrs Crumbie and Greenham Denny objected, leaving Cllrs Wardman, Simpson, Moat, Short and Clark to vote in favour and carry the proposal forward.

Cllr Wardman proposed that quote 1 be used going forward as this provided the best value for money over a twelve-month period with the caveat that there are regular progress reports to the clerk with before and after pictures. Cllr Clark seconded this, Cllrs Greenham Denny and Crumbie abstained from the vote, leaving Cllrs Moat, Wardman, Simpson, Clark and Short voting in favour of carrying the proposal forward. Councillor Thompson abstaining from all voting.

Resolved: that the work around the parish is divided into two separate entities and that the clerk contacts the contractor who gave quote 1 to award them the work. Clerk to contact unsuccessful companies and ask if their details can be held on record for future reference.

Item 5 The Rec:

The Clerk has received several complaints about anti-social behaviour on the Rec and this was conveyed to PCSO and Neighbourhood Warden also the matter had been risen with MAPS team from DCC, who had expressed an interest in a time mutual to all to visit the Rec and assess damage caused by ASB. Cllr Moat expressed her concerns that PCSO and wardens were not always aware of everything going on at the Rec and that every incident of ASB must be reported whether it's at the Rec or in the villages. It was noted that cannabis use seems to be an issue in Langley Park.

Ongoing: Clerk to arrange with MAPS a mutual time for a visit to the Rec to examine damage caused by ASB. All incidents of ASB must be reported so that a picture is formed which can be acted upon.

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