



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the council

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

Meeting commenced at 6 p.m.

Item 1 Record of Attendance:

Cllr Ollie Moat (Acting Chair), Cllr Allison Wardman, Cllr Edwin Simpson, Cllr Pat Short, Cllr Carole Greenham-Denny, Cllr Mike Quinn.

There were no members of the public present.

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Cllr George Hawxwell, Cllr Jillian Crumbie, Cllr Louise Dudden, Cllr John Duddy, Cllr Andy Walker, Cllr Kathryn Thompson, County Cllr Bev Coult.

Item 3 Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest

Item 4 Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 13th March 2024

Accepted as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Edwin Simpson and seconded by Cllr Mike Quinn.

Resolved: to accept Minutes of the meeting on 13th March 2024 as a correct record.

Item 5 : Opportunity for Public to raise matters of interest:

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Item 6 County Councillors Report:

In her absence, the County Councillors report was distributed among parish councillors. The report highlighted county wide and local issues such as the securing of funding for Durham County Council via Devolution and notification of coming events for the county. Locally, the Big Spring Clean was very successful, with many new participants becoming involved. There are plans to resurface sections of Low Moor Road at the west side of Langley Park. A schedule of work will be published

nearer to the time. The report also mentioned ongoing issues with excess water in the cemetery and stated that an update will be provided in due course.

Resolved: To accept County Councillor Coult's report.

Item 7 FOI request:

There has been a request under The Freedom of Information Act (2000) by a member of the public. They requested several pieces of information, all of which have been discussed at parish council meetings and are therefore in the minutes of those meetings. They were directed to the parish website which holds all of the information that was requested.

Resolved: Clerk responded within allocated time frame, stating that minutes were available online and that hard copies of those minutes could be arranged if there were issues in accessing the parish website.

Item 8 Allotment/ Smallholding update:

Cllrs Short and Denny attended the meeting held by Langley Park Allotment Association, alongside a representative from Northern Counties Allotment Association. The current documentation surrounding the lease for the Langley Park Allotment Association is outdated and is need of restructuring. The proposal is that Cllr Denny and the NCAA will construct a five-piece plan with actions over a twelve-month time period for LPAA, focusing on how Esh Parish Council can work alongside and support LPAA before a new lease is given.

There is a large allotment which remains untenanted, it has been cleared of rubbish which had been fly tipped. The Chair welcomes suggestions for use of the allotment.

Ongoing: Cllr Denny will continue to meet with NCAA and LPAA during the restructuring of documentation regarding the lease to LPAA.

Item 9 Fencing Update:

Esh Parish Council have had issues with the workmanship from the company that was awarded the contract for renewing fencing at both The Rec and the smallholding at The Crescent. It was requested by Esh Parish Council that the owner of the company come and inspect the work on both sites. A representative came and agreed that the work was substandard and that it would be rectified. The fence at The Rec has since been completed to an acceptable standard, however there were still ongoing issues with the fence at The Crescent, one of which being materials used were smaller than those quoted for. After multiple communications with the contractors, it was decided that if the quoted specifications could not be met then the contractor be asked to remove the fence they installed to enable new quotes to be sought. Cllr Moat proposed that this to be taken forward, which was seconded by Cllr Short and voted for unanimously by councillors.

Resolved: Clerk to make contact with contractors to express the views of Esh Parish Council and to seek new quotes for fencing at The Crescent. Esh Parish Council are happy to complete payment for the work carried out at The Rec.

Item 10 Events Committee:

The events committee recently organised and held an Easter Treasure Hunt for under 14's in the parish. The event included clues to locations around Langley Park that held letters in displays. Once all of the letters had been collected, they then spelt a word associated with Easter. Upon completion of the task, the children received an easter egg. There were also easter themed activities in The Miners' Institute, for which the children could win additional prizes. The event was successful, all children that attended enjoyed the event. Spare easter eggs were donated to The Friendship Group for distribution amongst its' members.

Esh parish council would like to thank all of the shops in Langley Park that participated with the event, either through a window display or displaying a letter.

Esh Parish Council have plans to hold a D-Day commemoration event on June 1st. The location to host the event has been sought and there are many activities planned for the day. As the costs of providing activities and a marquee for the day are mounting, it was proposed that events committee request a budget from the Parish Council of £4000 to cover the costs of hosting the event. Cllr Simpson proposed that a budget be allocated and ring fenced to the events committee, which was seconded by Cllr Quinn. A vote was taken which returned unanimously to support the motion.

Resolved: The Chair and clerk to make contact with companies providing activities to book them.

Item 11 Councillor Training:

Cllr Quinn has requested that he attend training provided by CDALC on Being a Good Employer in light of his position on the HR Committee. The training consists of four sessions at a cost of £25 per session. Cllr Simpson proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Short and council agreed that Cllr Quinn attend the training with the caveat that he presents to the council once the training is completed.

Resolved Clerk to book course for Cllr Quinn and to seek New Councillor Training for Cllrs Short and Denny.

Item 12 Rec Gates Quote:

Due to ongoing issues from the fencing contractor, new quotes have been sought for The Rec, these include motorbike inhibitors rather than kissing gate which was quoted for by the fencing contractor. In total there would be three motorbike inhibitors at a cost of £1,353 including delivery and the cost for installing the inhibitors is £660, making the total £2013. Cllr Simpson proposed a motion that the motorbike inhibitors be bought and installed as this would prevent damage to The Rec from motorbikes. Cllr Moat seconded the proposal, on which a vote was taken. Cllr Denny abstained from the vote, the majority voted in favour of the purchase and fitting of the motorbike inhibitors.

There was also a quote submitted to install play equipment at The Rec, the play equipment was purchased last year along with the postcrete required for installation. The costs given for installation are £760, quotes for the installation have been sought from other companies and are higher than this. Cllr Moat proposed that this quote be accepted and the contract given to install the play equipment at The Rec. Cllr Simpson seconded this, a vote was taken which returned unanimously in favour.

Resolved: Clerk to make contact to order motorbike inhibitor gates and contact contractors to install them once delivered.

Item 13 Heather on the Rec:

A meeting was arranged with the Ecology Department from Durham County Council regarding the heather on The Rec. Esh Parish Council would like to thank County Councillor Coult for arranging this. Cllr Moat met with them to take advice. The outcome from the meeting was that the heather is dead and needs to be cut back in sections to see if it reseeds. If the heather doesn't reseed then the ecology department are going to supply the parish council with heather plug plants to plant. The heather cut back programme is to be a lengthy process and will take place over a number of years.

It was suggested that a sub committee be formed to oversee work on The Rec. Moving forward there needs to be a plan of action for The Rec, with long term plans which are environmentally proactive.

Resolved: Heather to be cut back to see if it reseeds and comes back healthier.

Item 14 Newsletter update and positive comments:

Esh Parish Council has received positive comments both verbally and via email regarding the reintroduction of the Esh leaves Newsletter. A copy of the newsletter was delivered to every household within the parish. Esh Parish Council would like to thank an ex-postman for delivering a substantial amount around Langley Park and to the volunteers who delivered to other areas of the parish. There are excess copies which will be placed in shops around Langley Park and the village halls in Quebec and Esh Village.

Resolved: Esh Leaves was successful, the parish council wish to repeat the publication on a quarterly basis.

Item 15 Funding applications:

There have been two applications received by the clerk for funding of local clubs and projects. The applications were discussed by councillors. Both applications resulted in the need for further questioning. It was agreed that until these questions were answered then the applications would be deferred.

Resolved: Clerk to contact both bodies making the applications with questions raised from councillors.

Item 16 Rear Garden at the Miners' Institute:

The garden to the rear of the Miners' Institute is overgrown and in need of tidying up. Cllr Denny has volunteered to do this and was wanting to purchase some plants to do this. It was agreed that the garden did need work doing to it, however there are plants there that might still be successful once the garden is tidied.

Resolved: Cllr Denny to progress with the garden and see what is there before purchasing new plants.

Item 17 Clerks report:

The clerk presented her report to councillors, which includes oversight of ongoing issues relating to various contracts and contractors, including ongoing issues with contractors for fencing and the garage door installation. The park refurbishment at Quebec is now completed and open to the public, feedback from the public is very positive and the play area is being well used. The clerk has carried out work to the accounts in preparation for auditing.

Resolved: To accept the clerks' report

Item 21 Payments to be made and bank reconciliation

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

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

Item 22 Date of Annual General Meeting

Date of the Annual General Meeting Wednesday 8th May 2024, 6pm, The Miners Institute.