



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

DRAFT Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the council

Held on Wednesday 13th September 2023 at the Miners Institute, Langley Park

Meeting commenced at 6 p.m.

Item 1 Record of Attendance:

Cllr Joe Thompson (Chair), Cllr Ollie Moat (Vice Chair), Cllr Allison Wardman, Cllr Kathryn Thompson, Cllr John Duddy, Cllr Ross Lardner, Cllr Jillian Crumbie, Cllr George Hawxwell, Cllr Edwin Simpson, Cllr Karenza Passmore

Also in attendance County Cllr Bev Coult and 1 member of the public

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Cllr Mike Quinn, Cllr Louise Dudden, Cllr Linda Bushell, Cllr Ruth Hughes

Item 3 Declarations of interest:

Cllr Jillian Crumbie – item 20

Item 4 Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 12th July 2023

Accepted as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Edwin Simpson and seconded by Cllr Ollie Moat.

Resolved: to accept Minutes of the meeting on 12th July 2023 as a correct record.

Item 5 Planning Applications:

No planning applications have been received

Item 6 County Councillors Report:

County Councillor Coult had circulated the report prior to the meeting, giving councillors opportunity to raise points. Councillor Coult's report highlights local issues such as off-road parking and youth facilities within the area. Councillor Coult agreed that the County Council are looking into issues and concerns raised by the public from surveys that had been carried out.

Resolved: to accept Cllr Coult's report

Item 7 Opportunity for Public to raise matters of interest:

There were no matters arising from the public

Item 8 Introduction of the new clerk and clerks report:

The clerk's report was circulated. Cllr Simpson raised concerns for training to be completed by the clerk. It was agreed that the clerk join SLCC and research training, in particular ILCA, to complete within first year of employment progressing to CILCA thereafter. It was agreed that all costs incurred are met by the Parish Council.

Resolved: Clerk to join SLCC as a governing body to provide support and register with ILCA for training.

Item 9 PACT report from PCSO Hart:

The PACT report was circulated to councillors. It highlighted issues concerning levels of anti-social behaviour within the area, with 8 per cent coming from youths. It also highlighted the need for reporting incidents for a true reflection.

Resolved: to accept PACT report from PCSO Hart

Item 10 Consultation:

To date there have been eight out of ten consultations with the public, giving them the opportunity to view the plans for the purchase by the parish council, of the Methodist Church in Langley Park. Cllr Passmore informed that all consultations had run as planned with the main concern from the public being unclear of the vision without a formal business plan. The results of the survey will be analysed once the consultation period has ended. The member of the public said that she was willing to give out surveys in order to gather public opinion. Cllrs Moat and Duddy volunteered to chair the next consultation meeting.

Resolved: that the consultation period continues until the ten public meetings have taken place

Item 11 Surveyors Report:

An overview of the surveyor's report was circulated, the overview highlights the main areas of concern. Concerns were raised repairs needed to make the building useable and the costs that would be incurred. Cllr Joe Thompson confirmed that the building could be made useable and that

these costs had been factored into the budget. Once purchased there would be a rolling programme of improvements potentially funded by grants.

Resolved: In light of the issues raised by the surveyor's report, the parish council has the opportunity to submit a reduced offer to purchase The Methodist Chapel.

Item 12 Tree Report:

The annual tree report had been circulated via email to councillors. The main causes for concern were that a high number of the trees at The Old Rec were infected and diseased, the cause of which will be investigated. The report highlighted that there are a number of trees in Quebec and Esh Village Green that need to be taken down and destroyed.

Resolved: that Cllr J Thompson action commission of OJM tree and Landscape services to remove the affected trees.

Item 13 Application for tree erection at Esh Village:

A letter of enquiry was circulated amongst councillors, stating two locations for a memorial tree in Esh Village. The locations were the village green and the park. Cllr J. Thompson proposed that the tree be planted in the park. A vote was taken, which was unanimously in favour to go ahead.

Resolved: Clerk to make contact and inform of the council's decision.

Item 14 Benches on Esh Village Green:

There are two memorial benches on the village green that are in a state of disrepair which has been highlighted by a family member. The proposal from the family member was to contribute to the upkeep to a sum of £250. Cllr Moat proposed that the costs incurred should be met by the parish council. Cllr J. Thompson is to assess the state of disrepair and how much repair costs will be.

Resolved: Cllr J. Thompson to assess repairs to be carried out with costs and report back to Parish Council.

Item 15 Photocopier:

The contract for the photocopier hired from Total Business Solutions is due for renewal in October. They have proposed that they supply a new photocopier with cheaper running costs for colour and monochrome printing, saving the Parish Council £542.20 per year. A vote was taken and passed unanimously that the contract is renewed.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Total Business Solutions to inform them of council's decision.

Item 16 Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr Simpson proposed that the council construct a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan is a way for the community to have ownership of where new homes are built and how the new buildings should look as well as the types of businesses in the area. The Neighbourhood plan will give the Parish Council greater autonomy in granting permission of planning in the future and would benefit the community

in the long term due to it being inclusive, encouraging diversity and preventing the saturation of one type of business. Cllr Passmore raised that pursuance of a plan requires sub groups to be formed and tasked with certain areas due to the enormity of the plan. Cllr Coult suggested that a representative from Whitton Gilbert be invited to the next meeting and to share best practise.

Resolved: Cllr Simpson to bring an example of Witton Gilberts plan to the next meeting

Item 17 Community Emergency Action Plan:

Cllr Passmore had shared the Community Emergency Action plan with councillors prior to the meeting. This is a document open for community engagement to be populated with phone numbers and communication pathways in the event of an emergency affecting substantial numbers of residents. It was discussed that the clerk contacts local businesses and pubs to establish their level of support with an action plan for key places of interest in an emergency.

Resolved: The clerk to contact local businesses to establish engagement

Item 18 Facebook:

It was established that the clerk has sole responsibility for Facebook and that Cllrs Wardman and Duddy were relinquishing their admin rights to the page. Currently there are two pages, The “likes” page was going to be discontinued and Facebook is used to advertise parish/community events and monitored by the clerk.

Resolved: Clerk to have sole responsibility for Facebook

Item 19 Quotations for fencing at the small holding and Old Rec:

Three companies, Charleton, CJ Fencing and Burnell have visited both sites to provide quotes. To date Charleton is the only company to have given a quote. It was agreed by council to wait for all three quotes before a decision is made.

Resolved: Wait for all three quotes to be submitted.

Item 20 Small Holdings:

Cllr Crumby gave an update: - Northumbrian Water have visited the smallholding due to flooding issues. Concerns were raised by them with the stream and manhole/access chamber. They also raised concerns over access to the site by Northumbrian Water. It was agreed that Cllr Coult hand over keys for entrance to allotment to remain at the Parish Council office. Cllrs J. Thompson and Crumby are in possession of keys to the small holding. Northumbrian Water have requested that the overhanging trees be cut back. OJM Tree and Landscape Services to be contacted re quote for work and that the clerk contacts Cllr Crumby to show them the work that needs to be carried out regarding the quote. There are 11 chickens needing to be rehomed, homes have been found for them, just waiting for fence and works to be sorted to aid with their capture.

Resolved: OJM to be contacted about work to the trees, clerk to update Northumbrian water and contact Cllr Crumby when times and dates sorted for quotation to take place.

Item 21 Bobby Robson Play Area:

It has been brought to the attention of the Parish Council by a member of the community that a panel is missing from equipment in the toddler play area. Cllr J. Thompson suggests buying a replacement. It is noted that the matting in the park supersedes statutory requirements therefore the park can remain open until the replacement panel is fitted.

There is remedial work to be carried out such as removal of nettles and a broken hinge on the gates. Cllr J. Thompson suggests that an appointment be made with the county council to assess needs, he also proposed that the whole area be opened up to increase visibility, as this would require removal of the existing hedge and front fence it was suggested that permission be sought from DCC for this and that Esh Parish Council take on responsibility for cutting the grass. Cllr J. Thompson also raised that the play equipment be updated at The Bobby Robson and Quebec play areas, making the equipment suitable for all age ranges and increase accessibility. There are possible funding sources available, it was suggested that the clerk research such areas.

It was also noted that planned summer activities were cancelled due to poor weather.

Resolved: Cllr Thompson to meet with Playdale Equipment suppliers and fitters about upgrading parks and clerk to research funding opportunities

Item 22 Payments to make and Bank reconciliation:

The clerk distributed information on payments made, petty cash income / balance and bank balances. Clerk to research VAT 126 with Inland Revenue.

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

Item 23 Applications for Co-opted councillors:

There were 2 applications for the positions of co-opted councillors from Pat Short and Carole Greenham-Denny, both of which apologised for absence due to holidays. Information provided by both was circulated amongst councillors and a show of hands was taken for both candidates, each of them successful.

Resolved: Pat Short and Carole Greenham-Denny are co-opted onto the Parish Council.

Item 24 Councillor Conduct:

It has been noted that there was an incident at The Miners Institute on July 26th between Cllrs Hughes and Bushell and Cllrs Duddy and Hauxwell in front of a member of the public. The incident resulted in Cllrs Hughes and Bushell being barred from The Miner's Institute other than attending pre-arranged appointments and council meetings.

Cllr J. Thompson requested that councillor conduct be included on agenda until Cllrs Hughes and Bushell attend.

Resolved: Councillor conduct to be included in agenda

Item 25 Date of next ordinary meeting:

Confirmed as Wednesday 11/10/23 6 p.m. at Miners Institute