



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the council

Held on Wednesday 9th October 2024 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 Kathryn Thompson, Cllr Jillian Crumbie, Cllr Pat Short, Cllr Jackie Clark, Cllr Carole Greenham-Denny, Cllr Andy Walker.

There were 7 members of the public present.

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Cllr John Duddy, Cllr Mike Quinn, Cllr A. Wardman.

Item 3 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Crumbie, item 8,9,10,17,18. Cllr Thompson item 14

Resolved: councillor items of interest noted

Item 4 Minutes of previous Ordinary meeting on 11th September 2024:

The minutes from the ordinary meeting held on September 11th had been circulated to councillors via email, prior to this meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Simpson that it be noted that the minutes are a true and accurate representation, this was seconded by Cllr Clark.

Resolved: It be noted that the draft minutes are a true and accurate representation of the meeting on September 11th 2024.

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

There were seven members of the public present, 2 from Langley Park Allotment Association, 3 from EVRA, 1 from the Walk and Talk Trust and 1 local resident.

The representative from the Walk and Talk Trust explained that they are a charitable trust and have received funding for their flagship project the Heritage 100, which aims to create 100 collectable, circular walks around County Durham. They have installed walks in Ushaw Moor, Esh winning and

Bearpark and are wanting to add Langley Park to their list. This will be walk 21 which once installed will be walked with the members of the Walk and Talk Trust, the community and children from Langley Park primary school. The aim of the trust is to place a start/ finish post on land belonging to Parish Council, preferably outside of the Miner's Institute. It was noted that The Miner's Institute is not owned by Esh Parish Council and would have to seek permission from CISWO who are the landlords. It was suggested that the start/finish post be placed on parish owned land at the Rec or at the allotments which are near to the lines which was part of the walking route. The representative from the Walk and Talk Trust was going to view both locations and liaise with the clerk to assess the suitability. Cllr Moat proposed that the start/finish post be erected on land owned by Esh Parish Council, this was seconded by Cllr Clark with a unanimous vote returned.

The local resident gave an update to where he was with the residents only parking at Browney Court. There has been some improvement and the resident is awaiting instruction from Durham County Council's legal assistant with a view to have polite signage requesting that people leave the parking in Browney Court for residents only. Cllr Simpson suggested that Esh parish council support the resident by writing in support of the resident to DCC's legal assistant, this was seconded by Cllr Moat and returned a unanimous vote.

Ongoing: in relation to the first enquiry, the Walk and Talk Trust are to liaise with the clerk about suitability of the Rec or allotments area as a start/ finish point.

The second enquiry, the clerk to communicate Esh Parish Council's support of Browney Court being a resident's only parking zone.

Item 6 County Councillors report:

County Councillor Coult presented her report which highlighted measures that DCC are taking to pursue elderly residents who qualify for Pension Credit but aren't in receipt of it, news of the expansion of the Bread and Butter programme supporting families that are in need and youth awards handed out to over 40 recipients. Local issues such as extra parking, speed cushions along Low Moor Road and funding for flower beds were included within the report. It was noted that County Councillor Coult was thanked for her comprehensive report by Cllr Greenham-D12enny.

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 Management Agreement between Esh parish Council and Langley Park Allotments Association, the findings of the audit done by County Durham and Darlington Fire Department, also notification of the completion of the external audit by Mazars and details of complaints from members of the public regarding speeding traffic in Langley Park.

Resolved: To accept clerks report

Item 8 Management Agreement:

The Management Agreement that Esh Parish Council have with Langley Park Allotments Association is to be renewed. There were issues regarding the signing of the new agreement. A meeting between Esh Parish Council and LPAA has been arranged to reach an amicable situation in order to move forward.

Ongoing: Clerk to arrange a meeting that is suitable to LPAA and a quorate Esh Parish Council.

Item 9 Allotment Update;

After a recent inspection of the allotments at Cross Fell and Earl of Durham sites by members of Esh Parish Council, it was highlighted that 7 allotments had failed to meet the minimum standard expected. This was in addition to several issues regarding the state of some of the communal areas on the Earl of Durham Site. Esh Parish Council are keen to move forward in bringing both the individual allotments and communal areas up to an acceptable standard and a suggestion was made to have a staged plan of 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of improvements to be made and that this plan is shared with the clerk. It was agreed that further discussion needs to take place for Esh Parish Council and Langley Park Allotments association to be in agreement in order to progress forward. Cllr Moat proposed that a further meeting take place between Esh Parish Council and Langley Park Allotments Association to discuss how move forward, this was seconded by Cllr Walker. Cllr Crumbie abstained from the vote which was returned as unanimous for a further meeting to take place.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange a meeting that accommodates a quorate Esh Parish Council and full LPAA committee.

Item 10 Smallholding inspections:

A Follow up inspection to the smallholdings was carried out and it was noted that there had been a marked improvement and that the tenant has carried out extensive works to the site. There is still an issue of ivy on a tree that needs to be cut back and destroyed. This was identified in a tree report carried out by a contractor last year. It was noted that the cutting back of the ivy is part of ongoing scheduled works to be carried out around the smallholdings and the Rec. It was agreed that the tenant be congratulated for the work that has been done to the small holding.

Resolved: Clerk to contact contractors to establish when the Ivy was going to be cut back and clerk to write to the tenant to express Esh Parish Council's satisfaction with the improvements made to the small holding.

Item 11 Baby bank grant application update:

Last month, Esh parish council received an application for a grant from Building Bearpark Community Partnership. There was some conflict regarding the name of the organisation, suggesting that it was only for people of Bearpark and not inclusive of all areas. Due to this the decision was taken to defer paying the grant until there was confirmation that Bearpark would be dropped from the title of the organisation. The clerk has since received confirmation of progress towards a name change. The whole process can take up to two months.

Ongoing: Once name change has gone through the clerk will pay the grant.

Item 12 Benches at Esh Village and Quebec:

The clerk has received communication from people outside of the area regarding the purchase and installation of benches for Esh Village and Quebec. Both benches are to be a memorial for family members who grew up and have fond memories of the area. The location that the family proposed

for the bench at Esh Village green belongs to DCC, therefore it was suggested that the clerk contact the family and to tell them the location on Parish Council land to see if they were still interested due to the location change. The proposed location for the bench at Quebec was in the play area. Due to the play area being covered in a rubber mulch and disturbance of this would mean that the guarantee had been voided, therefore it was suggested that the bench still be placed at the play area but outside of the fenced area for the park.

Resolved: Clerk to email both parties explaining changes to the locations and assess if they were still happy to go ahead.

Item 13 Flower tubs at Esh Village:

The clerk received a request from EVRA for permission to replace flower tubs at the entrance/ exits to Esh Village. It was agreed that as the tubs were in a state of disrepair Esh Parish Council gave permission for them to be replaced. This was proposed by Cllr Moat, seconded by Cllr Clark and returned a unanimous vote. There were also questions raised by EVRA, who had representatives present, regarding the amounts of flowers in Langley Park and other villages around the parish as opposed to the amounts on display in Esh Village. It was stated that at the time of agreeing the current planting arrangements, companies in Esh Village were approached to display hanging baskets which would be supplied, watered and maintained by Esh Parish Council. Those companies and the school declined the invitation to have the hanging baskets, therefore the only places to display flowers were in tubs at the entrance/ exit to the village. It was proposed by EVRA that if they sought tubs for the village, could Esh Parish Council fill the tubs with flowers which would be maintained and watered by the contractor that Esh Parish Council has. Clerk to contact the contractor for information regarding the plans for next year.

Resolved: EVRA are to replace flower tubs in Esh Village. Clerk to contact contractor with a view to examine plans for planting next year and bring back to council.

Item 14 Bat Boxes for Rec:

This item has been carried over from last months meeting, Cllr Moat had prices for bat boxes which were sought from Amazon and some owl boxes. Cllr Moat was going to contact local companies to obtain a price from them to supply the bat and bird boxes. This was the favourable option with councillors as they are keen to support local business. Cllr Moat will bring the price list to council next month. Cllr Moat proposed that this go ahead which was seconded by Cllr Clark and returned a unanimous vote for Cllr Moat to obtain prices of bat and bird boxes.

In regards to the track that was overgrown the clerk has obtained quotes to have the track area cleared and other pieces of work done. The quote was put to council, Om proposed that council gives the go ahead for this work to be completed, which was seconded by Cllr Clark. A vote was held which was in favour as Cllrs Crumbie and Thompson abstained from the vote.

Resolved: Cllr moat to seek prices for bat/bird boxes. Clerk to contact contractor to give the go ahead for work to be completed.

Item 15 Table and benches at parks/ roadside towards Kaysburn:

This item was brought forward from last month. The clerk has contacted County Cllr Coult in regards to the ownership of the benches towards Kaysburn. It has been noted that these benches are under the jurisdiction of DCC and as they are still in good order there are no plans by DCC to replace them.

There was a proposal to place a games bench at Quebec play area. Cllr Moat proposed that the bench be placed between the play area and the football field, this could be utilised as extra seating when the park is busy. It was discussed that the games bench chosen is made from recycled plastic bottles. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Clark and voted on by council, returning a unanimous vote.

Resolved: Clerk to contact suppliers of the games bench to place an order.

Item 16 Forthcoming Events – Halloween, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas:

Forthcoming events were discussed, it was agreed that there would be a children's Halloween party in the Miner's Institute, to be held on 30th October from 5.30 – 7pm. For Remembrance Sunday it was agreed that Esh Parish Council would be represented at the following locations; Esh Village- Cllr Moat, All Saints – Cllr Simpson and at the cenotaph by Cllr Short. Timings for all events are to be confirmed. It was also agreed that the clerk will purchase more lamppost poppies to display throughout the parish.

Esh parish Council are yet to confirm arrangements for Christmas. It was proposed by Cllr Thompson to have a grotto set up in the garden at The Miner's Institute.

It was noted that the tree at Quebec will no longer be in the village hall but in a designated area opposite the village hall in Quebec, this area has its own electricity supply, which will mean that the stewardship of the tree lies with Esh parish Council rather than Quebec Village Hall.

Resolved: There will be a children's Halloween Party held in the Miner's Institute, the parish clerk is to advertise this through social media. Councillors have volunteered for allocated roles to represent Esh Parish Council at events on Remembrance Sunday.

Item 17 Rats at Small holdings:

A small holding tenant has highlighted the issue of rats at the small holdings. Langley Park Allotments association deal with rats at neighbouring allotments through means of poisoning. The rats are now over running the small holdings and are causing damage and eating food purchased for poultry. The tenant enquired if Esh Parish Council were following the lead from LPAA and purchase the same poison so that the rats can be dealt with. A representative from LPAA stated that they use a product called Sakarat Bromabait which costs £29+ VAT and carriage per bag. Cllr Moat proposed that Esh Parish Council purchase this product, this was seconded by Cllr Greenham-Denny. A vote was taken and returned in favour of Esh parish Council purchasing the rat poison

Resolved: LPAA to inform clerk of where they purchase Sakarat Bromabait which the clerk will purchase and forward to tenants at the small holdings.

Item 18 Permission to move turkey:

Esh Parish Council have received a request from a tenant who is also a tenant of LPAA to move a turkey that they have on an allotment to reside at the smallholding. The tenant has assured Esh parish Council that the turkey will be securely penned in, which will prevent escape. The tenant explained that the turkey is a rescue bird and is now becoming elderly. They explained that the allotment site is quite muddy and the small holding provides better conditions for the turkey. Cllr Simpson proposed that Esh Parish council allows the movement of the turkey to better pastures, this was seconded by Cllr Moat, a vote was taken which was in favour of the move.

Resolved: Permission granted for the turkey to be moved.

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 13th November 2024.