

Present Councillors:- A. Mollon (Chairman), C. Bloor, R. A. Bowyer, G. Coulson, H. S. Guildford, A. Harling, A. Hiles, K. Robson, S. Rothwell, M. Sands and W. Tyrie

Apologies:- Councillors F. Crow, H. Tyler and M. Tyler

Also in attendance:- M. G. Ackroyd (Clerk) and County Councillor J. Armstrong

001/04 POLICE REPORT

The Chairman introduced Sergeant McAloan 229 to the meeting to present the Police report in the absence of PC Liddle. Sergeant McAloan advised the Council that since the last meeting there had been 4 dwellinghouse burglaries, 4 thefts from sheds/garages, 6 incidents of criminal damage, 1 theft from a motor vehicle, 1 attempted burglary, a limited number of anti social behaviour cases and the attempted armed robbery incident at the Langley Park Office.

Councillor Guildford referred to an attempted robbery he had heard of at the Kaysburn Road Filling Station but Sergeant McAloan was unaware of this. Councillor Guildford also enquired as to progress re the removal of abandoned cars. Sergeant McAloan stated that there was a vehicle amnesty operating this month and any abandoned vehicles should be reported to the District Council.

Concern was raised yet again on vehicles speeding on certain highways in the Parish. Councillor Sands said that there had been a serious road traffic accident in Esh on Christmas Day and there continued to be problems with parents dropping off and collecting children at the 2 local Schools. Sergeant McAloan suggested that a further letter should be sent to the Chief Constable requesting speed cameras in the Parish and include the suggestion of a matrix board deterrent as used recently in Middleton Tyas (see Darlington and Stockton Times 19th December 2003 edition). It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Chief Constable and suggest that owing to recent problems in Esh Village that area should be given some priority. See also under item 110/03.

Sergeant McAloan then spoke briefly about the recent Force changes and that the Derwentside Division was now covered by 2 sergeants.

002/04 MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 9th DECEMBER 2003

Signed as a true record signed by the Chairman.

003/04 MATTERS ARISING

101/02 Recreation Ground, Langley Park

Draft Management Plan

The Clerk advised that a copy of the County Council's report on this site had been received together with and a letter from Durham Wildlife Trust advising that they were aiming to submit a further comments in this matter towards the end of January 2004.

134/02 and 126/03 Environmental Improvements along Kaysburn Road

The Clerk's advised that the work was almost completed and a meeting had been arranged with Durham Wildlife Services (DWS) on 22nd January 2004 to discuss the matter further including the completion and return of the grant application forms received from the County Council for both Tree Week and the Hedgerow initiative. It was agreed that the Clerk should proceed to complete the appropriate grant application documentation with the County Council. Councillor Rothwell referred to various leaning tubes and the Clerk agreed to check with DWS the maintenance arrangements with the contractor.

Councillor Bowyer referred to the section of newly planted hedging along the stretch, on the left hand side of the road going out of the village towards Kaysburn, from the field opening (gate missing) opposite the entrance to the equestrian centre, to beyond the stream, up to the point the embankment starts. This has been planted alongside the path, whereas the original hedgerow was below the level of the footpath at the foot of the dyke along the existing fence line. The Clerk said that this was not part of the Parish Council's scheme but if the opportunity presented itself he would raise the matter with Durham Wildlife Services.

026/03 Progress re appointment of Part Time Development Worker

Councilor Hiles advised that 2 applicants were being interviewed on Monday 20th January 2004.

060/03 Library Service

County Councillor Armstrong advised the Parish Council that a further report would be submitted shortly to the County Council's Cabinet following which it was intended to have further meetings, with the Parish Council, the EQUaL Partnership and the Community Association. The Church Street premises and another site were possibilities but the School option appeared to be a non starter.

064/03 Noticeboard for Langley Park

The Clerk advised that some further costings had been received from the County Council although it was agreed to defer any further action in this case until the budget process for 2004/05 had been completed.

089(10)/03 Christmas Trees

The Clerk advised that apart from a couple of incidents on the first two evenings no further incidents were reported. The decorations and fencing had been removed and returned to the Parish garage.

090/03

a) Esh Parish Hall

Cllr Armstrong reported that a pre start meeting had been arranged for 14th January 2004 and that work should start shortly thereafter.

110/03 Proposed Pedestrian Refuge, Front Street, Langley Park

The Chairman, Councillor A. Mollon, declared an interest in this matter and left the meeting. In the absence of the Vice Chair, Councillor M. Tyler, Councillor A. Harling took the chair for this item. Councillor Armstrong reminded the Council of the history behind this proposed scheme which started with a 200 named petition for a refuge resulting in a refuge being identified opposite Ian's Place. Following the initial consultation and comments received from the Doctor's Surgery and Nursing Home re possible interference to ambulances parking outside the premises it was suggested that the refuge was moved towards the site of the former temporary bus stop. At the same time a further request for a second refuge to be located near All Saints Youth Centre. As a result of this exercise a new scheme was prepared and was now out to consultation with comments required by 23rd January 2004. Although there were no objections from the Police and Traffic Commissioners to the westerly refuge, marked C on the plan supplied, opposite No 25 Front Street (crossing over to Browney Court) they had expressed concern over the refuge, marked D on the same plan, opposite 13 Front Street (crossing over to All Saints Youth Centre).

After considerable debate on the merits of both schemes and any possible safety implications with the refuge outside No 13 Front Street, the costs involved in any possible alternatives to a refuge and the problems encountered in crossing this road at busy times Councillor Coulson moved that the Council supports the proposed refuge marked C on the plan but expresses reservations over the siting of a refuge marked D on the plan. This was seconded by Councillor Rothwell.

Councillor Hiles put forward a second motion to support both refuges. This was seconded by Councillor Robson.

The Acting Chairman took the second motion first and this was lost by 5 votes to 4 on the Chairman's casting vote.

The first motion was carried by 7 votes to 1.

Councillor Armstrong reported that in addition to the refuge further traffic calming measures might be introduced early in the new financial year possibly using "speed visor" signs at 2 (possibly 3) sites on the main road through Langley Park over a 10 day period to encourage reduced speeds. It was also possible that CCTV, once established in Langley Park might help to reduce speeding traffic.

111/03 Commuted Sum for the erection of 25 dwellings at Woodside Farm, Woodside Terrace Langley Park

Reply still awaited from the District Council re application of the commuted sum.

114/03 Annual Audit

Clerk advised that the accounts had now been approved by the Auditor following which a copy of the Certificate should be displayed in a conspicuous place, including Sections 1 to 3 of the Annual Return submitted (including a summary of the financial details for 2001/02 and 2002/03). It was agreed that these should be displayed in the Parish Room, Langley Park Post Office and the 2 notice boards at Esh and Quebec) with a sort footnote on the potential level of balances for 2003/04 together with an explanatory note on the Council's Capital Assets.

126/03 National Tree Week 2003 – Trees Matter, Plant Them

The Clerk advised that he had applied for funding under this initiative which would be used towards the Kaysburn Road hedgerow and tree planting scheme. See under 134/02.

131/03 Playgrounds

EQUaL Partnership Play Group

The Clerk advised that he had been asked, by the County Council, to provide a letter of support for the EQUaL Partnership Play Group initiative the Esh, Quebec and Langley Park play areas together with confirmation that the Parish Council would maintain these sites and take out Public Liability (PL) cover on them. This assurance would be required by any prospective fundholder before any grant awards could be made. The County Council was therefore seeking this assurance before releasing a cheque for the initial feasibility study.

The Clerk's draft letter had been circulated with the Agenda and in it he had made clear that the

Council's assurances were subject to various conditions being met and to the Parish Council only arranging for PL cover and to maintaining the equipment for as long as reasonably practicable. Subject to a slight rewording of the letter re land ownership the draft letter was agreed.

Site inspections

The Council's Insurers require daily visual inspections, 1 to 3 monthly detailed inspections and annual engineering checks. It was agreed to approach some local residents re the daily inspections, for the Clerk and Chairman to meet Mr J. Cassidy re the more regular inspections and the District Council the annual engineering inspections under the District Council's Play Areas opt out agreement.

132/03 Appointment of new Clerk

Item deferred until the budget for 2004/05 had been finalised.

147/03 Allotments – Notices to Quit

The Clerk advised that the Notices to Quit with no reaction to date.

152/03 Langley Park OAP Treat Fund Christmas Tea and Concert and 161/03 Esh Treat Fund

The Clerk advised that had attended the Langley Park Treat Tea and Concert and the together with the Chairman had visited the Esh Treat and presented a cheque for £50 towards the OAP's Christmas lunch.

155/03 Parish Council representation on the Langley Park Primary School Governing Body

Letter sent to the Director of Education advising that Councillor Bloor had been nominated as the Parish Council's representative on the Governing Body.

156/03 Allotment Rents 2004

Councillor Robson declared an interest in the following item.

It was reported that a substantial number of rents had been received and 2 further rent collection sessions had been arranged. It was agreed that in the event of any tenant not paying their rent by Friday 23rd January 2004 then Notices to Quit should be served. If the tenant then wishes to pay their rent during the Notice period then it will be subject a £5 per allotment administration charge.

The Clerk also advised the Council that he had now let ED4 to a Mr E. Harle, 34 Logan Street. The Clerk's action was confirmed.

157(a)/03 Parish Reports

Pantomime

The Clerk advised that 190 had attended the pantomime. It was possible that the extra numbers were due to the leading actress spending 2 hours at the Langley Primary School on the Thursday before the Pantomime.

Winter Gritting

The Clerk advised that he was still awaiting a trigger point formula from the Northern Area Manager before he could instruct Whartons to carry out any gritting work if the occasion demanded.

Esh Leaves

The Clerk advised that a quote was still awaited from Keith Reay to deliver Esh Leaves throughout the Parish. In addition he had been advised that there were approximately 20 houses in Cornsay, 60 in Cornsay Colliery and around 250 on the Hamsteels Estate. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Cornsay Parish Council to ascertain if it was interested in buying 2 pages for their own articles in Esh Leaves and arranging for delivery at no cost to Esh Parish Council.

160/03 BUDGET 2004/05

Councillor Coulson reported on recent discussions with the District Council's Group Leader on the threat to withdraw the District Council's annual Contribution (currently £12101) and that it might be advisable for the Parish Council to defer any decision on its precept for the time being. The Clerk had circulated a discussion paper setting on possible options if the District Council's Contribution is withdraw or severely reduced. Councillor Hiles said that if there is a substantial reduction then the Parish might need to consider handing back some of its existing services to the District Council. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the District Council's Treasurer expressing concern at the potential loss of the Contribution, which would have a major bearing on the Council's budget, and to ascertain the latest date by which the Parish Council would have to set its precept. It was also agreed that if necessary a Special Meeting would be called to discuss in greater detail the budget for 2004/05.

Councillors Coulson and Guildford were thanked for their efforts in trying to persuade the District Council not to withdraw its annual Contribution to the Parish Council's finances.

004/04 CORRESPONDENCE

105/03 BT Payphones

Letter received from BT advising that following the consultation process it had been decided not to remove the phone boxes near the Board Inn and 27 Park Drive, Langley Park. The matter would however be kept under review. It was agreed that an article should be included in Esh Leaves with a plea for residents to use these payphones or lose the service.

005/04 MINOR CORRESPONDENCE

Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils

- a) DEFRA – letter on Equine Issues – referred to Councillor Hiles
- b) Minutes of Ordinary Meeting on 3rd September 2003
- c) Minutes of Annual Meeting on 1st November 2003
- d) Tombstones and Memorials in Council Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards. Article requested from the Neighbourhood Office for an update on the situation in this area.
- e) Audit Commission – reduced fees for Smaller Councils
- f) The Boundary Committee on the Draft Recommendations on the review of two tiers in the NE Derwentside District Council. Discussion deferred to the February meeting

Durham County Council

- g) Pension Scheme (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations and LGPC Bulletins 145 and 146
- h) Highways Member Area Panel (Derwentside MAP) at St Patrick’s Church Hall, Consett on Wednesday 4th February 2004 commencing at 7.00pm. Includes workshops on Traffic Management, Maintenance and Public Transport.
It is anticipated that these sessions will be held approximately every 6 months
- i) Local Action 21 – Partnership News Issue 24
- j) Extra Care Preview – invitation the Orchards, Brandon on 22nd January 2004

Other

- k) Notes of Pre Inquiry Meeting on the County Durham Waste Local Plan
- l) DRCC Community News and Readership Survey
- m) Northern Rock Foundation Newsletter
- n) Northumbria in Bloom Competition 2004. Agreed to refer the Children’s Calendar Competition to the 3 local Primary School

006/04 PLANNING MATTERS

It was noted that Councillors Coulson and Guildford had an interest in all the following applications.

Applications

No FJC/1/2003/0991/DMFFP
 Applicant Mr J. Doran
 Proposed Change of use of ground floor to hairdressers, middle floor to Solicitors consulting rooms and top floor to residential (retrospective)
 At 35 Front Street, Langley Park
 No objections subject to adjacent owners being consulted.

No CS/1/2003/1132/DMTP
 Applicant Derwentside District Council
 Proposed Pruning of one oak tree (TPO 17)
 At 9 Ramshaw Close, Langley Park
 Already approved by the District Council’s Development Control Committee

No SL/1/2003/1164/DMFP
 Applicant Mr N. J. Cassidy
 Proposed Erection of garage
 At 16 Springwell Avenue, Langley Park
 No objections subject to adjacent owners being consulted.

No FJC/1/2003/1195/DMTP
 Applicant Mr and Mrs Stephens
 Proposed Felling of one tree (TPO 62)
 At Plot 4 Kingswood, Langley Park
 Already approved due to the decayed state of the tree

Councillor Robson declared an interest in the following application

No 4/03/01147/FPA/PGH
 Applicant Anderson and Young Coachworks
 Proposed Erection of 14 residential dwellings and associated roads and access
 At Land at Anderson and Young Coachworks, Wallnook Old Station Yard, Langley Park
 Whilst there was considerable discussion on this application there was general support for the principle of residential development on the main area but strong reservations on the field to the west of the footpath being included as it lay outside the boundaries of the existing developed area. In addition

there could be safety issues involved where pedestrians are crossing a public footpath. It was agreed that the Council should raise no objections to the main site but object to any residential development on the area of land to the west of the public footpath.

007/04 REPORTS

a) Parish

Nothing further to report

b) District

Councillor Tyrie referred to the following

- a) The District Auditor had given a GOOD award for the District Council's Best Value Plan
- b) Councillors able to opt into the Council's Pension Scheme
- c) Commuted Sums now £284,00 for play areas.
- d) Garden services initiative for Council House tenants of a pensionable age with no one living them who could reasonably be expected to help them. £30,000 budget earmarked had any tenants in the Esh Ward taken advantage of the scheme. The Clerk to make enquiries with the Neighbourhood Office.

Cllr Coulson referred to the following

- e) The Audit report.
- f) Play areas

c) County

Cllr Armstrong reported on the following matters.

- a) Works to the cemetery turning area should start shortly
- b) Budget process underway for 2004/05 although the Fire Brigade were now levying their own precept

d) EQUaL Partnership

Cllr Hiles gave a report and referred to the need to attract new members. This could be addressed through Esh Leaves with a reminder to the residents of the next AGM.

e) 092/03 Parish Transport Working Group

Councillor Geany not present. Clerk asked to contact her re progress report.

008/04 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be held at the Parish Room, Langley Park on Tuesday 10th February 2004, commencing at 7.00pm.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded for the remainder of the Meeting during consideration of the items listed below on the grounds that if they are present during the discussion of these items there could be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 10.