



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

**The Council of the Parish of Esh Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on
Tuesday 13th July 2021 at Quebec Village Hall.**

Meeting commenced at 18:59

Ordinary Meeting of the Council

1. Record of Attendance

Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. George Hawxwell, Cllr. Linda Bushell, Cllr. John Duddy, Cllr. Ian Dowson, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. Ruth Hughes, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson (from Co-option item), Cllr. Louise Dudden (from Co-option item), Cllr. Sue Carver (from Co-option item and Cllr. Eric Bushell (from Co-option item)

County Councillors Bev Coult and Arnie Simpson

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

19 members of the public were present at the meeting.

2. Apologies of absence

Resolved by Council to accept apologies from the following members:

Cllr. Ryan Drion –	Working Commitments
Cllr. Mike McGaun –	Working Commitments

3. Declaration of interest

Cllr. Linda Bushell declared in interest in Items 4, 10, 13 & 21
Cllr. Hughes declared an interest in Item 10
Cllr. Dowson declared an interest in item 12
Cllr. Moat declared an interest in Item 12

4. Co-option Requests

Following the last meeting 7 co-option requests have now been received. One of the co-opted applicants was not able to attend the meeting, however Parish Councillors were happy to consider the application received.

As Co-opted applicants were present, they were asked to leave the room whilst Parish Councillors had a discussion.

Following the discussion, it was

Resolved To Co-opt Jillian Crumbie, Kathryn Thompson, Louise Dudden, Eric Bushell and Sue Carver to the Parish Council. With the exception of Jillian Crumbie, Sue Carver and Eric Bushell, all other Co-options signed the forms immediately and became Councillors from this point.

5. Minutes from previous meeting on the 9th June 2021

Discussions took place regarding the minutes from the last meeting, and it was agreed by the majority that the allegation Cllr. Linda Bushell made about the ongoing Police concerns she has in relation to one of the Co-opted applicants, needs to be present in the minutes of the last meeting.

Cllr. Ian Dowson raised concerns regarding the current banking arrangements voicing that prior to being elected to the Council one Parish Councillor who at the time was a member of the public had a bank card and access to be able to spend Parish money. Cllr. Ian Dowson confirmed that this also needs to be referenced in the minutes of the last meeting.

Cllr. Ian Dowson also wants a reference in the minutes of the last meeting to include the concerns he continued to raise over the closure of the Sir Bobby Robson Play Area.

Resolved That the Clerk adds the additions recommended to the minutes of the last meeting. Once added it is resolved to accept the minutes of the last meeting as a true record.

6. County Councillors Report

County Councillor Bev Coult and County Councillor Arnie Simpson both attended the meeting and County Councillor Coult presented a verbal report.

Covid Dashboard

- Current Covid rate is 735.7 to 100,000. This is the highest the rate has been since January
- Currently there are 49 people in hospital
- There are 32 confirmed cases in Langley park
- 82% of over 16's have now had the vaccine
- There are Covid pop up clinics throughout the County

Durham Insight

It was confirmed that DCC MP's are being taught on the importance of water safety

DCC and Thrive

It was confirmed that DCC and Thrive are hosting free swimming activities during the holidays

Lumiere

DCC are organising the Lumiere again this year and this is scheduled to take place from the 18th – 21st November 2021

Seaham Food Hall

Seaham Food Hall is taking place between the 7th & 8th August 2021

Locally

- County Councillors Coult and Simpson are continuously updating local residents on roadworks in the area. In addition, County Councillor Coult continues to ask the public to make her aware of roadworks that are happening in the area.
- Summer Activities are taking place during weeks 3-4 of the Summer holidays for Primary school children. These will consist of sporting and craft activities and the DH7 Group, along with County councillors Coult and Simpson are supporting these activities
- Quebec – 1500 new trees are to be planted to the right-hand side of the folde in Quebec. As part of this project residents are encouraged to attend site meetings
- County Councillor Coult has spoken to Digital Durham to establish if they can press BT Open Reach for a deadline in relation to the internet
- It was confirmed that the pathway from Wilkshill to Quebec is non-existent. Costs have been sought to make the footpath wider and the local residents will be kept informed of any progress regarding this.
- Durham city Youth Group are continuing to work with the community to see what the children want in the area
- After securing funding a De-fib box is going to be sited at Quebec Village Hall
- County Councillor Coult and Simpson are going to survey local residents to ask them what they want and what is important to them on a bigger scale

7. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest

A member of the public present at the meeting confirmed that they have an issue with a local member of the village who goes ahead with building work without planning permission/building control. He has no regards for the Council or the people in the village. It was confirmed that this issue has been raised with the Planning Team, then Building Control and it was confirmed that and building work completed must be accompanied with a retrospective planning application in place. In the absence of a planning application the building work completed will have to be taken down. The member of the public present at the meeting said he does have a complaint about a specific member of the Council. County Councillor Bev Coult suggested that the complaint is escalated to Corporate Management.

Discussions took place from members of the public present at the meeting in relation to trees at the folde. Concerns were raised that the lighting in this area is not good and the trees will need maintaining. Discussions took place over who is responsible for the trees in this area and it was clarified that it does depend on who owns the land. There is an agenda item on the agenda in relation to Trees so it was confirmed by Cllr. Edwin Simpson that these issues can be addressed when we get to this agenda item.

A discussion took place from members of the public present at the meeting regarding Caravans that are parked next to the woodland in Quebec. The Clerk mentioned that this should be reported to the Traveller Liaison Team so they can deal with the issues appropriately.

Resolved That the Clerk makes The Traveller Liaison Team aware of the Caravans that at parked near to the Woodland in Quebec.

8. Clerks Work in Progress

The Clerk presented a short verbal report to the Councillors on the work she has been doing since taking on her role. Payments were discussed as part of the update and Cllr. Ian Dowson stated that he feels that any individual payment that the Clerk makes over £300 need to be agreed by full Council. A vote was taken, and 10 votes were in favour of this request with Councillors Ian Dowson, Allison Wardman, Ollie Moat, Sue Carver, George Hawxwell, Joe Thompson, John Duddy, Edwin Simpson, Katherine Thompson and Louise Dudden all in favour of this.

Resolved That the Clerk ensures that details of any individual payments over £300 which are not related to existing direct debits or Service Level Agreements are brought to future meetings for full Council approval. The Clerk will also ensure that the relevant policy relating to payments made, is amended to reflect the new agreement.

9. Planning Applications Received

As part of the planning information that Councillors receive, it was confirmed that a planning application has been received from a company called Integrated Event Management Ltd who are looking to host events at Ushaw College. Cllr. Edwin Simpson recommends that all Councillors are in favour of this.

Resolved That all Councillors are in favour of this planning application.

10. The Group @ The Tute – Running of the Miners Institute

Chair of the Parish, Cllr. Joe Thompson confirmed that he has been in contact with the Legal Team at Durham County Council, and it has been confirmed that there are concerns regarding the voting process for the Group @ The Tute and this group taking over the running of the Miners Institute.

A lengthy discussing ensued regarding this issue and Cllr. Ian Dowson raised his concerns over the fact that Councillors have not received any paperwork in relation to the CIC group and their involvement with running the Miners Institute. Councillors Linda Bushell and Ruth Hughes who are the Directors for this group said they have in place a legally binding document which states who the group are, their constitution and details confirming their legal status which details that their group are to take over the running of the Miners Institute, however none of the Councillors have seen this agreement and nothing can be found within the Parish.

As a new Cllr. Sue Carver asked for information on who voted on the CIC running the Miners Institute and this information was explained to Cllr. Carver.

It was confirmed in the meeting that in previous resolutions a decision made by the Council shall not be reversed in the last 6 months, however the majority of Councillors confirmed that the result of an illegal vote is not legal and the majority of Councillors do feel that the voting process in relation to this decision was not right.

Councillors Bushell and Hughes confirmed that they have sought Legal advice and until they have had a decision on this, they feel that nothing can progress in relation to the running of the Miners Institute.

In the last meeting it was agreed to close the Miners Institute until a decision was clear on the CIC and their involvement in the running of the institute, however Cllr. Ian Dowson questioned how the window cleaner had access to the building. Cllr. Linda Bushell confirmed that an SLA is in place for the window

cleaner to clean the windows every 4 weeks and as part of the Miners Institutes current lease with CIWSO it is a clear written agreement that the windows are cleaned, therefore we have to allow the window cleaner access to the building. Cllr. Ian Dowson raised concerns that £33,000 has been spent on the Miners Institute and queried why this has been given to The CIC and noted that at the time this money was spent no Councillors were formally elected to the Parish.

Discussions ensued regarding the agreement between the Parish and the CIC and Cllr. Edwin Simpson confirmed that he has previously witnessed a signed copy of the agreement confirming the CIC would take over the running of the building.

It was confirmed that the CIC running the Miners Institute was to take the pressure off the Clerk as the previous Clerk was completing tasks such as room bookings, setting up for meetings, etc and this was not part of the Clerks role. Discussions took place around the previous Clerk and the fact that she has now left the role. At this point a member of public present in the meeting made reference to the fact that the previous Clerk received a large pay out after she left the role at which point Cllr. Hughes asked this member of the public to clarify what they had said. The member of the public present at the meeting was happy to clarify this comment further.

To move the issues forward regarding who is to take over the running the Miners Institute, Councillors were asked to revisit the vote for the Parish to take back over the running of the building. A vote took place and 9 Councillors agreed that the Parish would take back over the running of the building. Councillors who voted in favour of this were Councillors Ian Dowson, George Hawxwell, Joe Thompson, Kathryn Thompson, Sue Carver, Allison Wardman, Ollie Moat, John Duddy and Louise Dudden. Councillors Edwin Simpson, Linda Bushell, Eric Bushell and Ruth Hughes abstained from voting.

Resolved That the Parish take back over the running of the Miners Institute building.

11. Update on Sir Bobby Robson Play Park

Following repair works from Wicksteed, the park is now open. Cllr. Ian Dowson confirmed that due to the delays in the park been open he did raise a complaint to Durham County Council and as a result of this he and some other Councillors met with Jack Marshall from Durham County Council to inspect the park. Jack Marshall also provided advice which confirms that Esh Parish Council have a legal licence in place with Durham County Council which determines as per the licence the Parish are responsible for paying a fee each year to DCC and one of the stipulations of this licence is that the Parish Council maintain and are responsible for the upkeep of the park.

Resolved That the Clerk liaises with Jack Marshall from Durham County Council to ensure that the Parish Council have a copy of this licence and ensure that the relevant fee is paid to Durham County Council going forward.

12. Langley Park Sport and Social Club – Community Right to Bid

Cllr. Ollie Moat confirmed that the DH7 group she manages have declared an interest in running Langley Park Sport and Social Club in the future. Cllr Moat briefed Councillors on her plans for the building if she, along with Rachael Smith who are hoping to jointly run the building, are successful with their bid. Cllr. Moat confirmed that the building is up for sale for £1,000,000, however she is unsure how the building has been valued. Cllr. Moat confirmed that she is confident she can raise £500,000 and any monies she secures need to be raised by the 4th December 2021.

Resolved That Cllr. Ollie Moat provides a further update in relation to this building as soon as she is able to do so.

13. Keyholder list for the Miners Institute

Discussions took place regarding the current key holder list for the Miners Institute and Councillor Thompson proposed that himself and Councillor Hawxwell have keys to the Miners Institute. Councillors took a vote and 9 Councillors voted in favour of the keyholders proposed. Councillors who voted in favour of this were Councillors Ian Dowson, George Hawxwell, Joe Thompson, Kathryn Thompson, Sue Carver, Allison Wardman, Ollie Moat, John Duddy and Louise Dudden. Councillors Edwin Simpson, Linda Bushell, Eric Bushell and Ruth Hughes abstained from voting.

Resolved That the keyholders proposed become the new keyholders for the Miners Institute and Councillors with current keys hand these keys over, with immediate effect.

14. Esh Play Area

The Clerk has received a quote from Olivers Tree Services to lift some trees that are trailing over electric cables in the park. This was raised as a previous concern from Cllr. Drion as children are constantly climbing onto the trees and these are close to the electric cables. The quotation received is for £190.00, plus VAT. In addition, the Clerk has received a quote from Eibe Play Ltd for some broken plastic which was broken on some play equipment. This quotation was costed at £132.57, plus VAT and a further 10% delivery charge.

Resolved To accept the quotation from Olivers Tree Services and move forward with this work, however alternative options are to be explored for the plastic part for the play equipment.

15. Update on Trees in Quebec – Parish Council Land

Following a meeting between Olivers Tree Services and Cllr. Moat who met at Quebec to look at an area of trees which require attention at the corner of Laude Bank, Children's Play Area, the Clerk is now in receipt of the quotation, which is priced at £1,200.00, plus VAT.

Resolved For the Clerk to look at alternative companies and source further quotations. In addition, the Clerk is to ensure that 3 quotations are received in future for any works priced over £1,000

16. Funding for Summer Activities

The Clerk confirmed that County Councillor Bev Coult is looking to secure funding for £600 from the Parish Council for some Summer Activities she is holding in weeks 3-4 of the Summer holidays for Primary School children. Councillors were provided with a brief of these activities and a discussion on this ensued.

Resolved That the Council agree to provide the funding to County Councillor Bev Coult.

The meeting closed at 21:00pm

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE