



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

**The Council of the Parish of Esh Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council
held on Tuesday 20th July 2021 at The Miners Institute, Langley Park.**

Meeting commenced at 7:03pm

Extra 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. Mike McGaun, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. Ruth Hughes, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Louise Dudden, Cllr. Sue Carver

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

There were no members of the public present at the meeting

2. Apologies of absence

Resolved to accept apologies of absence from the following member:

Eric Bushell - Personal commitments

3. Resignation

The Clerk confirmed that she has received a resignation letter from Cllr. Drion.

Resolved To accept the resignation from Cllr. Drion and for the Clerk to make Electoral Services aware of the resignation enabling the Parish Council vacancy to be advertised.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Linda Bushell declared an interest in Item 6

Cllr. Ruth Hughes declared an interest in Item 6

5. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest

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

6. Management of the Miners Institute

Discussions took place regarding the management of the Miners Institute and Cllr. Dowson stated that he does not feel that the current Clerk has enough contracted hours. The previous Clerk worked for 30 hours per week; however the new Clerk is contracted to work 10 hours per week. Cllr. Bushell stated that when the previous Clerk was in post a lot of the tasks undertaken were not part of her role. When the Clerk left her role and

Councillors were on a Rota system to manage the Miners Institute, it was commented that there were very few members of the public who actually used the Miners Institute, therefore when the decision was made to appoint a new Clerk advice on the hours required was sought from CDALC. CDALC confirmed that 10 hours per week was sufficient.

The majority of current Councillors are in favour of the Miners Institute re opening as this generates income when used for room bookings and also allows the community to use the facility as it is intended for.

Cllr. Dowson said that when he speaks to people in the community, they want the Miners Hall to be re-opened. Cllr. Hughes stated that until the legal side of the CIC and their involvement in running the Miners Hall is clarified then she feels that we cannot move forward with opening the hall. Discussions took place regarding the CIC's involvement in running the Miners Hall and whilst the legal side of things is not in question the voting process regarding this is. Cllr. Jillian Crumbie confirmed that as a new Councillor she is not aware of the CIC and what they do and to understand this she needs further information about them and their constitution.

It was highlighted that at the meeting on the 4th May 2021 where it was agreed that the CIC would take over the running of the Miners Hall, that this meeting was quorate. Cllr. Simpson confirmed that as stated in the Standing Orders the voting process was correct. 3 people voted for the CIC to take over running the Miners Hall and 2 abstained. The standing orders do not state that for example the 5 Councillors present at the meeting have to vote and therefore in his opinion, the correct voting process was followed.

Discussions continued on the running of the Miners Hall and it was discussed that if another person was employed they could potentially assist the current Clerk and their duties could be to open the Miners Hall, take messages and take room bookings.

Following a lengthy discussion and a vote in which 12 councillors were in favour of, it was

Resolved That the Miners Hall should re-open. To move forward with opening the Miners Hall Cllrs. Allison Wardman, George Hawxwell, Edwin Simpson, John Duddy and Kathryn Thompson would assist with staffing the Miners Hall, on a Rota basis.

7. Future Tree Planting

Cllr. Edwin Simpson confirmed that The Trees for Children Programme are arranging to get children from the nearby schools involved to help with tree planting at Quebec. On the days planting is arranged volunteers will be needed.

Resolved That when The Trees for Children Programme is confirmed the Clerk will share details with all Councillors.

8. SLA with Durham County Council Grass Cutting and Maintenance and Land at Davis Crescent

Cllr Joe Thompson confirmed that he spoken to Martin Briscoe from the Clean and Green Team who we have a contract with for the grass cutting, in relation to the poor standard of grass cutting in our villages and the fact that generally we are not getting the service we are paying for. Cllr. Linda Bushell stated that in the Councils defence the majority of the Clean and Green Team were redeployed to focus on the graveyards during the pandemic and this has had an impact on the Teams other areas of work.

The Clerk shared the costs for Durham County Council to cut the grass at Davis Crescent which is £246.87 per annum.

Resolved For the Clerk to speak to the Clean and Green Team to ask if there is any way in which the team can notify the Parish when the grass has been cut in the village so this can be monitored. For the land at Davis Crescent to be added to the existing SLA.

9. Seats at Esh Village Green

The Clerk confirmed that she has received an email from a local resident regarding the seats at Esh Village Green which confirms that one of these seats requires painting. It was confirmed that the Parish receive a donation off a local family to maintain these seats.

Resolved That the Clerk contacts L & S Services who we have an SLA with to ask if they can repaint the seats.

10. Parish Newsletter

Cllr. George Hawxwell confirmed that he has a volunteer who is interested in doing a newsletter for the Parish. The majority of Councillors agree that this is a good idea and wanted to know how often the Parish would publish the newsletter. Cllr. Hawxwell said when we had a newsletter in the past it was published quarterly.

Cllr. Wardman advised that in addition to the newsletter the Parish also needs to consider other publicity, such as websites. It was suggested that the Parish looks at setting up another Facebook page. Cllr. Wardman did advise that we need to set out clear rules and regulations for the Facebook page as we have to be careful how the information is managed, therefore it was suggested that the Facebook page is an information page only

Resolved That Cllr Hawxwell moves forward with the idea of producing a quarterly newsletter and ascertains both costs and details of how we will publish the newsletter and bring the information back to the next meeting. In addition, Cllr Duddy takes responsibility for setting up a Facebook page for information only, for the Parish.

11. Bank Signatories

Councillors discussed the current bank signatories and how we can move forward with the banking. Cllr Simpson confirmed that he wants to be removed as a bank signatory. It was also highlighted that an ex-Parish Councillor needs to be removed from the bank.

It was suggested that the new Chair, Vice Chair and the Clerk are to become signatories and 12 Councillors were in favour of this.

Resolved That the Chair, Vice Chair and the Clerk become the new bank signatories and complete the necessary paperwork to enable this change. In addition, the current bank signatories are to sign the paperwork to remove themselves as bank signatories.

12. Asset Register

The Clerk shared the current asset register with Councillors. Cllr. Dowson queried why the green tractor is not on the asset register. It was confirmed from Cllr. Bushell that the tractor has never been a parish asset and she proceeded to read out a letter to Councillors from a former member of the Environment Group. The letter detailed who owned the tractor and the fact that the tractor is now stored in the lock up which is rented out to Cllr. Eric Bushell. It was confirmed that The Environment Group are no longer in

existence. Cllr. Dowson said he is going to contact the Area Action Partnership to ask for details of the funding routes for the tractor and also do a Freedom of Information request via DCC.

Cllr. McGaun asked if the tractor is a public asset can it not then be gifted to the Parish, however Cllr. Bushell confirmed that there was a group who were interested in taking the tractor, however due to Covid the group were never able to start their project.

Cllr. Moat asked if Cllr. Bushell could share the letter from the Environment Group with Councillors, however Cllr. Bushell said she would prefer to speak with the member of staff from the previous Environment Group first, before sharing the information. When asked if she would share the letter with the Chair, Cllr. Bushell said she was prepared to do this.

It was discussed that various other items appear to be missing from the asset register and Cllr. McGaun stated that his understanding is that on the asset register a depreciation column needs to be listed against items as the original cost of equipment does depreciate through time. It was agreed that the asset register needs to be updated. Cllr. Bushell did state that some items in the kitchen do not belong to the Parish, they belong to the CIC, therefore these should not be put on the asset register.

During discussions about the asset register details of items stored in the lockup were also discussed. In addition, the state of repairs to the lock up were also discussed, however it was confirmed that the lock up is to be scheduled as an agenda item for the next meeting to enable further discussions to take place.

Resolved That Cllr. Dowson speaks to the AAP Team to establish the funding routes for the tractor and to DCC to put in a FOI request for the tractor. That the missing items are added onto the asset register and the format of the asset register be looked at.

13. Payments to make and Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk presented the Councillors with a list of payments that have been made since the last meeting and payments that are due to be made. Cllr. Dowson stated that he would like a list of all payments made between the 6th – 21st May as at this time there were no Parish Councillors in place, therefore with the exception of existing direct debits no payments should have been made during this period. It was noted that this query is been dealt with by a current complaint that has been lodged with Democratic Services.

Cllr. McGaun queried some payments on the bank statement provided and said these are not very clear and this is something that the auditors may pick up as we need to be accountable and transparent as a Parish Council for any money we spend. The Parish are currently going through an audit and the Councillors asked if the Clerk could find out the cost of the internal and external audit.

Discussions ensued regarding the amount of money in each bank account we hold as Cllr. Hawxwell confirmed that his understanding is that there should only be £75,000 in anyone bank account.

The list of payments presented by the Clerk are shown below:

Payee	Goods/Services	Net	VAT	Total	Payment Date
Npower Business Solutions	Electricity usage for the period 1st May 2021 - 31st May 2021 for the feeder pillar for the Village Xmas Tree	£ 31.85	£ 1.59	£ 33.44	13.07.2021
Npower Business Solutions	Electricity usage for the period 1st April 2021 - 30th April for the feeder pillar for the Village Xmas Tree	£ 30.82	£ 1.54	£ 32.36	13.07.2021
Total Gas and Power	Electricity usage from the 31st May 2021 - 30th June 2021 The Miners Institute	£ 135.28	£ 6.76	£ 142.04	20.07.2021
Total Gas and Power	Electricity usage from the 4th April 2021 - 3rd July 2021 for Garden Avenue, Langley Park	£ 71.39	£ 3.57	£ 74.96	26.07.2021
L & S Services	Monthly Park Checks	£ 120.00	£ -	£ 120.00	
L & S Services	Monthly Bench Grass Strim/Litter picking	£ 225.00	£ -	£ 225.00	
L & S Services	Grass cut in all parks (5 hours)	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	
L & S Services	Jet Wash in all parks (5 hours)	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	
				Total	£ 827.80

Resolved That the Clerk establishes the costs of both the internal and external audit. The Clerk is to establish the maximum amount of money to be held in each bank account.

14. Code of Conduct

Councillors were presented with the new code of conduct which they have been asked to adopt by CDALC.

Resolved That the Clerk brings this item back to the next meeting for consideration by Councillors.

15. Supervision of the Clerk

Cllr. Hughes read out some information to Councillors on the supervision of the Clerk and what things need to be considered. Cllr. Hughes said she thinks that it is important for the Clerk to have supervisions and to make the Clerk feel comfortable she might prefer to pick who does her supervisions.

The majority of Councillors feel that it is important for the Clerk to have supervisions so that not only her training needs are met but her health and wellbeing needs are met, however the majority of Councillors don't feel that the Clerk should choose who does her supervisions.

The Clerk advised Councillors that she does have some good contacts with some other Clerks she knows and they have suggested various training sites to look at. Cllr. Hawxwell also provided the Clerk with some detail of a Clerk he knows who can offer some mentoring support to the Clerk.

Resolved That the Clerk speaks with some other Clerks to establish what happens in relation to their supervisions. That Cllr. Hawxwell provides Councillors with further details of the mentoring support he is aware of.

16. Ongoing Maintenance Programme at the Miners Institute

The Clerk has various photographs which Cllr. Bushell provided to her about various areas in the Miners Hall which require attention.

Resolved That the Clerk sends details of the areas of concern within the Miners Hall to the Chair, so these repairs can be addressed.

17. Review and nomination of Committees 2021/2022

The Clerk presented Councillors with a list of past committees the Parish has had. Various suggestions were discussed such as an Allotments Committee, Finance Committee, Environmental Committee and a HR Committee.

Cllr. Hughes moved that we have a HR Committee and Cllr. McGaun seconded this. Cllr. Moat suggested that if we have a HR Committee then do, we need a Grievance Committee, however Cllr. McGaun said we don't need to have a Grievance Committee as we should not be aware of who the grievance is about and this is dealt with outside of the Council.

After consideration it was;

Resolved That a HR Committee is to be set up and Councillors Mike McGaun, Jillian Crumbie, Ollie Moat, Joe Thompson and John Duddy were nominated as the responsible Councillors on this committee.

18. Date and Time of the Next Ordinary Meeting – Tuesday the 14th September 2021, 7pm at The Miners Institute, Langley Park

Meeting closed at 21:30pm

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE