



*The Council of the  
Parish of Esh*

The Miners Institute, Church Street, Langley Park, Durham, DH7 9TZ  
0191 3736687

Clerk : Leeanne Owens  
Chairman : Cllr Joseph Thompson

**The Council of the Parish of Esh Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on**

**Wednesday 08<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at Ushaw College.**

**Meeting commenced at 6:10pm**

**Ordinary Meeting of the Council**

**1. Record of attendance**

Cllr. George Hawxwell, Cllr. Linda Bushell, Cllr. John Duddy, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. Ruth Hughes, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Jillian Crumbie.

**2. Apologies for absence**

**Resolved** by Council to accept apologies of absence from the following members:

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Cllr. Joe Thompson (Chair) | Personal Commitments |
| Cllr. Mike McGaun          | Work Commitments     |
| Cllr. Ian Dowson           | Personal Commitments |
| Cllr. Louise Dudden        | Personal Commitments |

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

**4. Minutes from the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

The Clerk confirmed that following a conversation with Mazars they have asked that it be recorded that the Full Audit was agreed at this meeting.

**Resolved** That the minutes be reflected to say that the full audit was agreed at this meeting.

### **Minutes from the previous meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Cllr. Hughes noted that she and Cllr. Bushell do not agree to item 12 where the payment of £2,500.00 has been made to Quebec and District Village Hall Association.

Cllr. Wardman confirmed that as per the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 it has been agreed for the Clerk to send the minutes of previous meetings to Councillors, 14 days after the meeting for amendments to avoid lengthy debates on the minutes at meetings. Cllr. Wardman proposed that we accept the minutes of the last meeting and move on. All Councillors except from Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell were in favour of the suggestion by Cllr. Wardman.

**Resolved** That the minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be agreed as a true record.

### **5. County Councillors Report**

County Councillor Bev Coult was absent from the meeting and at the time of the meeting the Clerk did not have sight of County Councillor Coult's report. The Clerk agreed to share this with Councillors as soon as this was received.

**Resolved** That the Clerk share the report from County Councillor Bev Coult as soon as this is received.

### **6. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest**

A member of the public present expressed concerns over the retrospective planning application to the works at the graveyard at Quebec. It was noted that this is an agenda item, and this will be discussed when we reach this point on the agenda.

Another member of the public present at the meeting confirmed that they sent a letter to the Clerk raising concerns over comments made about his business at the last Parish Council Meeting by another member of the public, present at the last meeting. The member of the public has asked that his concerns be dealt with by the HR Committee.

A further member of the public raised concerns over the retrospective planning application in relation to the works at Quebec. It was highlighted again that this item is on the agenda for discussion and will be discussed when we reach this agenda point. In addition, and to assist this member of the public further, Cllr. Hughes advised that a PACT meeting is to be held at the Miners Institute on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> December from 11-12 noon and this meeting may enable the concerns raised, to be addressed further.

**Resolved** That the information and concerns raised from the public be noted. In addition, the HR Committee will address the concerns raised via the letter received from the member of the public.

### **7. Clerks Report**

The Clerk presented her report to Councillors which included the quotations she has received for the fencing at Esh Village Green. For this work the Clerk received 3 quotations. Quote A was received

from LME for £4,330.00, Quote B was received from Burnell Fencing for £4,039.55 and Quote C was received from Deerness Fencing for £4,719.41.

Following a lengthy discussion Cllr. Wardman confirmed that although the quotation from Deerness Fencing is slightly more than the other quotations received, she felt that it was important for the Parish to use different contractors to strengthen the portfolio of contractors the Parish uses, therefore Cllr. Wardman moved that because of this we accept the quotation from Deerness Fencing and this was seconded by Cllr. Hughes.

**Resolved** That the Parish accept the quotation from Deerness Fencing and that the Clerk contacts Deerness Fencing to authorise this work.

### **8. Planning Applications Received – DM/21/02890/FRA**

Cllr Moat provided Councillors with an update on the retrospective planning application at Quebec and provided Councillors with the history of this case which was clarified with photographs of the area before the planning application took place and after the planning application was approved.

Cllr. Moat said that she would like to ask the Parish Council to write to the Planning Team at Durham County Council to advise that the Parish strongly object to this retrospective planning application.

Cllr. Simpson explained that we have the authority to ask the Council to refuse this application and ask that the walls that interfere with the Cemetery Wall be reinstated using the same quality grade stone to match the remainder of the wall and that this all be done at the expense of the applicant. Cllr. Hughes seconded Cllr. Simpson's proposal.

**Resolved** That the Clerk prepares a letter on behalf of the Parish advising that the Parish strongly object to this retrospective planning application and also ask that Durham County Council refuse this retrospective planning application.

### **9. Christmas Update**

Cllr. Wardman provided an update on the preparations that are underway for Christmas, which included events such as planned coffee mornings, the Christmas fayre and the Santa sleigh ride.

Cllr. Moat discussed the Santa sleigh ride and mentioned that last year the Parish purchased 250 selection boxes for this event, however Cllr. Moat explained that unfortunately these did not cover a third of the Parish area and suggested that this year the Parish look to buy 1000 selection boxes for this event.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was:

**Resolved** That the Clerk orders 1000 selection boxes for the Santa sleigh ride and any surplus selection boxes be donated to local community groups.

## **10. HR**

It was noted that the HR Committee have not had the chance to meet as yet as a whole to look at different HR Policies and Procedures, therefore it was suggested that this item be brought back to a future meeting.

**Resolved** That this item be deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council.

## **11. Budget Forecast 2022/2023**

The Clerk provided an update on the budget preparation she is making for the Financial year 2022-2023. It was noted that any budget that is ringfenced for the next financial year can be carried forward.

It was suggested by Cllr. Crumbie that to enable particularly new Councillors to make informed decisions about the budget that they are provided with budget information from previous years.

As part of the budget training costs were discussed and a discussion took place regarding the response from the Monitoring Officer which followed an investigation due to a number of complaints that were made by different Councillors. As part of the response from the Monitoring Officer a number of courses were highlighted for all Councillors to attend.

A lengthy discussion ensued and Cllr. Crumbie asked if a Councillor has already attended the suggested training then do, they need to do this again as there were various misconceptions from this from Councillors. It was also noted that if a Councillor was not part of the complaint then they did not receive the response.

Following discussions Cllr. Crumbie suggested that this discussion be brought to a close, this was seconded by Cllr. Simpson.

**Resolved** That the Clerk continues to work on the budget information and provide Councillors with the budget information from previous financial years.

**Resolved** That the Clerk clarifies if all Councillors need to attend the suggested training, even if they have done the said courses previously.

**Resolved** That the Clerk provide all Councillors with a copy of the report from the Monitoring Officer.

## **12. Payments to make and bank reconciliation**

The Clerk presented Councillors with a list of payments that are due to be made and also provided up to date bank statements. Cllr. Hughes did query the payment of £2,500.00 that was made to Quebec Village Hall, however the minutes of the last meeting where this item was discussed have been approved and the Clerk confirmed that this payment was agreed at the last meeting.

**Resolved** That the information be noted.

### **13. Asset Register**

The Clerk provided Councillors with an updated asset register and various items on this were discussed. Cllr. Bushell stated that the walkie talkies showing on the Asset Register need to be removed as they were given to the Parish from Equal 2.

In past meetings the tractor has been discussed in detail as the location of the tractor remains unknown. At the last meeting it was agreed that the parish raise these concerns with the Police. Following the last meeting Cllr. Bushell advised that the Police have visited her home to enquire about the location of the tractor and Cllr. Bushell provided Councillors with an update following this visit. Cllr. Bushell confirmed that the Police are satisfied that the tractor is safe and secure and they are happy with the paperwork Cllr. Bushell was able to show them in relation to the ownership of the tractor. Cllr. Crumbie confirmed that this information does need to come back to a future meeting to enable this matter to be discussed and closed. Cllr. Hughes confirmed that in her opinion it was Cllr. Dowson who contacted the Police then Cllr. Dowson needs to feedback any information to the Parish.

**Resolved** That the Clerk continues to work on the asset register removing and adding items accordingly.

**Resolved** That Cllr. Dowson provides the Parish with an update on the tractor following his concerns lodged with the Police.

### **14. Date of next Ordinary Meeting**

The next Ordinary meeting of the Council is to take place on Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 6pm at the Miners Institute.

**Meeting closed at 7:35pm**

**CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD**

**CHAIR .....**

**DATE .....**