



*The Council of the
Parish of Esh*

The Miners Institute, Church Street, Langley Park, Durham, DH7 9TZ
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Clerk : Leeanne Owens
Chairman : Cllr Joseph Thompson

**The Council of the Parish of Esh Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on
Wednesday 9th March at The Miners Hall, Langley Park.**

Meeting commenced at 6:00pm

Ordinary Meeting of the Council

1. Record of attendance

Chair 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. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Louise Dudden, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Jillian Crumbie

2 members of staff from the Neighbourhood Warden Team, Durham County Council were present for part of the meeting.

3 members of the public were present at the meeting

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

2. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Bev Coult – Work Commitments.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Linda Bushell declared an interest in item 10.

Cllr. Ruth Hughes declared an interest in item 10.

Cllr. Ian Dowson declared an interest in item 17.

4. Election for Parish Council vacancy 7th April 2022

The Clerk discussed the possibility of the upcoming election for a Parish Councillor vacancy for the Langley Park ward, following the resignation of former Councillor Mike McGaun. If the Election goes ahead on the 7th April the Elections Team have asked if the Parish would like poll cards for the election.

Following a discussion, it was:

Resolved That the Parish are happy for poll cards as part of the election process and that the Clerk advises the Election Team of the Parish Councils wishes, following this meeting.

5. Minutes from the previous meetings held on the 9th February 2022

Cllr. Wardman moved that we move the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate and true record. Cllr. Simpson seconded this.

Resolved That the minutes from the meeting on the 9th February 2022 be agreed as a true record.

6. County Councillors Report

County Councillor Coult was absent from the meeting, however via the Clerk County Cllr. Coult asked 2 questions of the Parish:

- 1 What preparation do the Parish have in place for the Platinum Jubilee and
- 2 Would the Parish contribute any funds towards an event for the Platinum Jubilee

In answer to County Councillor Coult's questions it was:

Resolved That the Clerk is to liaise with the AAP Team in relation to Funding.

Resolved That the Clerk liaises with County Councillor Coult to see what plans she has in place for the Platinum Jubilee and ask how the Parish can be involved and as a way of funding allow County Councillor Coult the use of the Miners Hall free of charge.

Resolved That Cllr. Crumbie will liaise with a contact she has to look at some ideas for the Platinum Jubilee and feed these back to Councillors for discussion.

7. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest

The members of the public present at the meeting did not wish to raise anything at the meeting.

8. Clerks Report

The Clerk presented a verbal report to Councillors and discussed a range of things which included training for Councillors.

Following the Clerks report, it was;

Resolved That the Clerks report be noted;

Resolved That the Clerk books Councillors who have requested training onto the necessary training courses.

9. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for discussion at the meeting.

10. Standing Order 7a – Motion to rescind the agreement between the Parish Council and The Group @ The Tute dated 4th May 2021

As part of the agenda the CIC was discussed in detail. The majority of Councillors present at the meeting agreed that the initial vote for the CIC to run the Miners Hall was not done in the correct manner and is therefore not legal.

It was noted that if the Parish Council does not have a copy of the agreement from the CIC to run the Miners Hall and it has not been signed under Standing Order 23 then the document is not legal.

To move this item forward Councillors took a vote to rescind the vote for the CIC to run the Miners Hall. Following the vote by a show of hands, the following Councillors were in favour of the vote been rescinded from the CIC. Chair Cllr. Joe thompson, Vice Chair Cllr. George Hawxwell, Cllr. Jillian Crumbie, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. John Duddy, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Ian Dowson, Cllr. Louise Dudden and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson.

Councillor Ruth Hughes and Cllr. Linda Bushell both declared an interest in this item and abstained from voting.

Resolved That the Miners Hall will be run by Parish Councillors on a volunteer basis with the CIC having no involvement with running the Miners Hall.

11. Flower Baskets

The Clerk advised Councillors that this item was on the agenda for information only as it was highlighted that an SLA is already in place for the hanging baskets.

Resolved That the information be noted.

12. Inspection of Play Parks

The Clerk discussed the inspection of the Play Parks and following discussions Councillors were in agreement that the Play Parks should be inspected weekly, and the reports be sent to the Clerk for auditing purposes.

Concerns were raised over the condition of the Skate Park at Sir Bobby Robson Play Area and the SLA we have in place for this was discussed.

Two members of staff from the Neighbourhood Warden Team were present at the meeting and the Clerk did ask as part of their remit if they could carry out patrols of the Play Areas whilst on duty. The Neighbourhood Wardens highlighted that they were happy to carry out patrols, however inspecting the Play Areas is not part of their remit.

Following the discussions raised about the Play Parks, it was:

Resolved That weekly inspections of the play areas be carried out by Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson and the reports be sent to the Clerk for auditing purposes;

Resolved That the Clerk writes to the contractor who the Parish Council have the SLA with to maintain the Skate Park at Sir Bobby Robson Play Area, to establish if this contractor is still able to carry out the maintenance work required. The Clerk is to allow the contractor 2 weeks to respond. If no response is received, this item is to be brought to the next meeting of the Parish for Councillors to consider this SLA going forward.

13. DBS Checks for Parish Councillors

Cllr. Dudden asked that this item be brought to the meeting for discussion as both Cllr. Dudden and Cllr. Dowson feel that all Councillors should have a DBS check.

Following a lengthy discussion regarding this, with Councillors having varied opinions, it was:

Resolved That the Clerk speaks with CDALC to see if having a DBS check is a requirement for a Parish Councillor and bring this back to a future meeting.

14. Review of the Clerks Workload

Cllr. Simpson asked that this item be brought to the meeting for discussion as he felt that the Clerk's workload does need to be monitored. Councillors at the meeting were in agreement that the Clerk should be paid for any additional hours worked each week.

Discussions took place around the Clerks workload and there was a suggestion that the Parish Council look to employ another person to work with the Clerk, Cllr. Ruth Hughes also suggested that monthly supervisions with the Clerk could be beneficial.

Following a discussion, it was;

Resolved That the HR Committee have a discussion around the Clerks Workload and bring this back to a future meeting of the Parish Council for discussion.

15. Keys for the Miners Hall for Key Groups Using the Venue

Due to the number of people using the Miners Hall advice has been sought from the Insurance Company if the insurance would be affected if the Parish were to give allocated groups using the Miners Hall keys for room bookings, however the Clerk has advised that she has not been able to get clarification from the insurance company for this.

Current Councillors who volunteer at the Miners Hall said they are happy to continue opening and closing the Miners Hall for meetings, however Cllr. Simpson advised that it might be best practice to look at a policy for keyholders in the future.

Resolved That the current Parish Councillors volunteering at the Miners Hall continue to be present to open and close the Miners Hall following meetings.

16. Inspections of Small Holdings

One of the Neighbourhood Wardens present at the meeting advised Councillors that he has been on site at the small holding where we are having issues and he advised that a lot of waste is on this land and if anyone has any information that may assist the Neighbourhood Wardens team, he would be grateful.

It was clarified that if the waste from this land has to be cleared the Parish Council may be liable for the costs. It was noted that following further inspections from the Neighbourhood Wardens the fencing that allows access to the small holdings is also unsecure as this can be removed.

Cllr. Crumbie said she is also happy to carry out quarterly inspections of the small holdings with another nominated Councillor going forward.

Following a discussion, it was;

Resolved That the Clerk is to send a letter to the current occupier of the small holding where the concerns are being raised stating that the small holding is not been used for the purpose it should be and that this area needs to be brought up to an acceptable standard or the Parish Council will not be in a position to renew the agreement. The Clerk is to allow the tenant of this small holding 1 month to rectify the issues;

Resolved That the Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson is to meet with the Neighbourhood Warden to inspect the areas of concern and look at the fencing repairs to the entrance of the small holdings that were highlighted.

17. Service Level Agreement – Grass Cutting

The Clerk presented the quotations she has received from 2 contractors for grass cutting. Cllr. Hughes queried one of the quotations and said this was predated before the last meeting of the Parish Council, however it was confirmed by Cllr. Crumbie that the decision to look for alternative quotes for grass cutting was discussed before Christmas.

Following a lengthy discussion Cllr. Simpson proposed that the Parish move with the quote from OGM for Grass cutting which is £3,100.00 per annum and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson seconded this. It was noted that Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell disagree with the quotations received.

It was highlighted that the Parish have gone with the new quotation from OGM due to the previous issues the Parish have experienced in relation to grass cutting from their previous contractor not fulfilling the Service Level Agreement and part of the precept paid by the village contributes to this service therefore it is important that the grass cutting is maintained, and residents and the Parish Council are happy with the service received

Resolved That the Clerk contact OGM to advise that the Parish Council wish to accept their quote for Grass Cutting, however the Clerk is to establish if the grass cutting includes the Sir Bobby Robson Play Area.

18. New Parish Email System

The Clerk advised that due to ongoing problems and the fact that she has not been shown how to use the current email infrastructure in the depth needed she has looked to alternative providers to provide a brand-new email system to the Parish Council. It was noted from Cllr. Bushell that 3 quotations need to be sought, however the Clerk advised that anything under £1,000.00 only requires 1 quotation and option 1 on the quotation meets this criteria as the cost is £966.96 per annum.

Cllr. Dowson proposed that the Parish Council move with the quotation received from Data Enterprise and Solutions Ltd and Cllr. Moat seconded this.

Resolved That the Clerk contacts Data Enterprise and Solutions Ltd to accept the quotation received.

19. Payments to make and bank reconciliation

The Clerk presented a list of payments to Councillors that are due for payment which are shown on a separate sheet.

Resolved That the payments are authorised by the Council.

20. Money Claim from a Previous Contractor

This item was discussed as private and confidential and the members of the public present at the meeting were asked to leave the meeting.

The meeting was originally suspended at 7:45pm as Cllr. Bushell continued to record the meeting despite this item been discussed as private and confidential. Following queries from all other Councillors present at the meeting, Cllr. Bushell agreed to terminate the recording of the meeting and the meeting reconvened.

An update was provided to Councillors and Councillors made a clear decision in relation to this item.

Resolved That the update be noted.

21. Date and Time of the next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday the 13th April 2022 from 6pm at The Miners Hall, Langley Park.

Meeting closed at 8:15pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE