



*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 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on
Wednesday 14th September 2022 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. John Duddy, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Linda Bushell, Cllr. Ross Lardner (From Co-option Item)

1 member of the public was present at the meeting

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Louise Dudden	Personal Commitments
Councillor Mike Quinn	Personal Commitments
Councillor Edwin Simpson	Health reasons
Councillor Ruth Hughes	Holiday Commitments
Councillor Karenza Passmore	Work Commitments
Councillor Jillian Crumbie	Personal Commitments

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

4. Election for Parish Council Vacancy on the 8th September 2022

The Clerk explained that Cllr. Karenza Passmore was elected as a Parish Councillor following the uncontested election on the 8th September 2022. Although absent from the meeting due to working commitments, the Clerk advised that she would ask Cllr. Passmore to complete the necessary paperwork to formally accept her position as a Parish Councillor at a suitable point.

Resolved That the update be noted and Cllr's welcome Cllr. Passmore when in attendance at a future Parish Council meeting.

5. Co-option Request

Discussions took place in relation to the Co-option request received from Ross Lardner. Cllr. Wardman feels that Ross has demonstrated his ongoing commitment to the Parish Council as he has been in attendance as a member of the public at a lot of meetings.

Following a discussion Cllr. Wardman proposed that we agree to Co-opt Ross to the Parish Council and Cllr. Duddy seconded this. Following this discussion, a vote took place and Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Moat, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Duddy agreed by a show of hands to Co-opt Ross Lardner as a Parish Councillor.

Resolved To Co-opt Ross Lardner to the Parish Council. Ross agreed to complete his paperwork accepting his position as Parish Councillor and joined the meeting at this point.

6. Minutes from the Ordinary Meeting on the 13th July 2022

Cllr. Wardman moved that we accept the minutes from the meeting on the 13th July 2022 and Chair Councillor Joe Thompson seconded this. Following a discussion, all Councillors present at the meeting agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a true record, however Cllr. Bushell did not agree to the recording of the minutes.

Following a discussion, with the exception of Cllr. Bushell, it was:

Resolved That the minutes from the meeting held on the 13th July 2022 be agreed as a true record.

7. County Councillors Report

County Councillor Coult presented her report to the meeting which included key events since her last attendance at the Parish meeting. During her report County Councillor Coult asked 2 questions of the Parish Council. Her first question was following her attendance at a recent Warm Spaces Event, County Councillor Coult asked if the Parish Council would be willing to utilise some space at The Miners Hall for a Warm Spaces location. Parish Councillors in attendance agreed that they would support this important piece of work. Off the back of this discussion, Councillor Hawxwell discussed the Warm Spaces campaign further and he suggested that the Parish create a small Sub-Committee so they can look at ideas for this campaign. Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Duddy, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Lardner and Cllr. Moat agreed to be part of this committee. In addition, Cllr. Hawxwell agreed that he will liaise with County Councillor Coult over this area of work.

County Councillor Coult's further question to the Parish was to see if the Parish would like to see illuminated poppies attached to the street lighting throughout the village and other Parish areas. She explained that she and County Councillor Simpson would fund this, however the Parish would need to complete the application to the

AAP Team to access this funding. The Parish Council were in agreement of this, and the Clerk agreed to complete the funding application.

Following her update County Councillor Coult agreed to share her report with the Clerk who will then share the report with Councillors.

Resolved That the report from County Councillor Coult be noted.

Resolved That the Parish Council work on their Strategy to support the Warm Spaces campaign and that Cllr. Hawxwell feeds back any progress to County Councillor Coult;

Resolved That the Parish supports the opportunity for illuminated poppies to be displayed around the village and other Parish areas and that the Clerk completes the necessary Grant Form requested to enable this project to be funded.

8. Report from PCSO Paige Hart

Councillors in attendance were in receipt of a report from PCSO Paige Hart. In PCSO Hart's absence from the meeting Councillors agreed to accept the report and asked the Clerk to ask if PCSO Hart or a colleague are able to attend the next Parish Council meeting.

Resolved That the report from PCSO Paige Hart be accepted;

Resolved That the Clerk liaises with PCSO Hart to invite her or a colleague to the next Parish Council meeting.

9. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest

Due to the only member of public been Co-opted as a Parish Councillor, there were no members of public present at the meeting.

10. Clerks Report

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

As part of her report the Clerk also highlighted the issues raised from two concerned Councillors in relation to the bouquet of flowers bought to a Councillor due to the sad death of her partner Councillor Dowson and the Parish Council's proposal to buy a memorial bench in Councillor Dowson's honour. The Clerk has had clarification that public money cannot be used for this purpose, and it was clarified that the money for the flowers has now been reimbursed. In addition, the Parish Council are not in a position to purchase a memorial bench. Cllr. Hawxwell, who also does work at the Wetlands, confirmed that a generous benefactor gave the money for the memorial bench

Following the Clerks report, it was;

Resolved That the Clerks report be noted.

11. Planning Applications

The Clerk explained that she does get inundated with Planning information, however upon checking there did not appear to be any planning information received for the Parish area. County Councillor Coult who was

present at the meeting also advised that she wasn't aware of any ongoing planning applications for the Parish area.

Resolved That the information be noted.

12. Mazars External Finance Audit

This was presented to Council as the report from Mazars for the accounts relating to financial year 2021-2022 has been completed. Cllr. Bushell stated that it was a very damning report and made reference to the number of recommendations made, which the Clerk did try and address. The Clerk explained that some of the recommendations made, had not been mentioned to her in the past, however she will work through these to address these going forward.

The Clerk did highlight that she was not aware that the accounts had to have an internal audit before going to Mazars and highlighted that she thought the internal audit was when the accounts were presented to Heywoods who are the Parish Councils accountants.

It was suggested that the Clerk liaises with David Walker or any other internal auditors available who may be able to offer advice in relation to an internal audit.

Following a discussion, it was:

Resolved That the Parish accepts the external audit report from Mazars;

Resolved That the Clerk liaises with David Walker in relation to the internal audit and updates Councillors.

13. DBS Checks for Councillors

This item was discussed in detail, and it was noted that this has been brought to meetings on a number of occasions. County Councillor Coult was of the opinion that Councillors do not need DBS checks unless they are spending time along with a child or vulnerable adult. Councillors agreed that further to a recent incident and the fact that a member of the public has highlighted the need for Councillors to DBS checked that this is a good idea.

The Clerk did present Councillors with pricing information she has received for the DBS checks and County Councillor Coult did advise that she thinks that DBS checks can be done for free, and she agreed to send the Clerk details of another Clerk who may be able to advise.

Following a discussion, the following Councillors; Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Moat, Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Bushell, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson and Cllr. Duddy agreed by a show of hands that they agree to DBS checks been carried out on them, however Cllr. Bushell will only support this if the DBS check is a Level 4.

Resolved: That the Clerk continues to explore the options for Councillors to receive DBS checks.

14. Policies and Procedures due for renewal

Due to the absence of some Councillors who were allocated Policies and Procedures to look at and make amendments to, it was agreed that this item be brought back to the next meeting for discussion.

Resolved: That this item be brought back to the next meeting for discussion.

15. Rospa Reports

Cllr. Bushell raised concerns that although completed on the 22nd June 2022 the Rospa reports were not presented to the Parish Council meeting in July 2022. The Clerk apologised for this; however, she reassured Councillors that park checks are completed weekly every Sunday by the Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson and it be recorded that the Chair has already fixed a lot of the issues raised.

Cllr. Bushell highlighted two major concerns one of which was the issue with a finger entrapment. It was noted that this is a manufacturing fault. Cllr. Bushell also raised a concern that the correct equipment is not been used to repair the concerns and she was concerned that this may invalidate our insurance and make us liable if anything does happen.

As part of the discussion, Cllr. Moat said that Durham Spray Paints want to work with the children in the village and the Parish Council to get involved in a scheme to paint the skate park at Sir Bobby Robson Play Area. Cllr. Bushell highlighted that there was £700 outstanding to the Parish from them as work not been carried out, possibly from 2019, therefore this needs investigating.

It was also highlighted as part of the discussions that Sir Bobby Robson Play Park and Quebec Play Park are coming to the end of their life, and this does need to be considered at some point in the near future.

Following further discussions, it was;

Resolved That the Clerk liaises with the Insurance company to ask if the Parish are using parts that are the same specification as highlighted in the Rospa Report to repair park equipment, will our insurance be valid;

Resolved That the Clerk look at the accounts to establish what payments Durham Spray Paints have received in the past.

16. Update for Proposals for a new Play Park

Cllr. Bushell explained that she was not present at the meeting where it was decided that the original land at the Old Recreation Ground was no longer suitable for the proposed new Play Park and the Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson explained that concerns about the ground not been suitable. The Chair did explain that the field at the top of the Old Recreation Ground appears to be a more suitable area and in addition it is easily accessible and only a drop kerb would be needed for further access.

County Councillor Coult who was present at the meeting explained that she and County Councillor Simpson do have some funding to support the addition of a new Play Park, however time is of the essence to get this project underway if the Parish wish to access any of this funding. County Councillor Coult also explained that as part of the Parish being able to access this funding the Parish Council need to demonstrate that they have completed a thorough consultation process.

The Clerk did ask if our current parks are nearing the end of their life, could some funding not be ringfenced for these and it was highlighted that this could be looked at.

Discussions ensued on proposed areas for the potential new Play Park and Cllr. Moat suggested that the Parish Council look at a subcommittee to focus on parks and that this be brought back to the next appropriate meeting for discussion. It was also highlighted that the Parish liaise with Cllr. Quinn to see what feedback he received when he suggested a parks subgroup in the past.

Resolved That the Sub Committee to focus on Parks be scheduled to go on the agenda for the next appropriate Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council and that the Councillors also ask Cllr. Quinn if he received any feedback in the past when he tried to organise this.

17. Funding Requests from Bearpark & Esh Colliery Band & Langley Park Youth Project

The Parish Council discussed the first funding request they received from Bearpark & Esh Colliery Band. A query was raised that the request was for £200 when this fund can fund up to £300.00.

Cllr. Wardman proposed that the application from Bearpark & Esh Colliery Band be approved and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson seconded this; however, the Clerk is to establish the exact amount of funding required.

The second application from Langley Park Youth Project was discussed and both Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Moat did highlight that they did have some reservations as Cllr. Bushell highlighted that they are a charity and Cllr. Moat highlighted that they have a healthy bank account.

Following a discussion Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson proposed that we accept this application and Cllr. Wardman seconded this. A vote was then taken, and the following Councillors supported this application by a show of hands;

Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Duddy and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson.

Cllr. Moat agreed to the funding request but would still like some further advice and Cllr. Bushell did not note on the application, stating that she would like further advice on the Charitable status.

Resolved That the application for funding from Bearpark & Esh Colliery Band be approved, however the Clerk is to establish if this is for £200.00 or £300.00, however that it be noted that the Parish are happy to approve the application for the full amount of £300.00 as long as supporting evidence be provided, if this was a typing error on the form.

Resolved That the application for funding from Langley Park Youth Project be approved, however the issues around their charitable status be explored.

18. Tree Survey of Parish Land

Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson asked for this item to be brought to the Parish for discussion and advised that he would like to see a yearly survey of all trees of Parish Council land. The Chair explained that quotations can be provided by LME and OJM, however the Clerk highlighted that if the works exceed £1,000.00 then a further quotation will be needed.

Following a discussion, it was;

Resolved That LME, OJM and Arborline be contacted to provide quotations for a tree survey of all trees on Parish Land. When requesting the quotations the Clerk is to establish what Arborline charge on a day rate and for a tree survey. It was noted that LME and OJM have provided this information in the past.

19. Preparations for Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Events

Discussions took place around Remembrance Sunday, and it was agreed that the Parish Council will do the same format as last year which all Councillors present at the meeting were happy with.

In preparation for Christmas, it was highlighted that the Parish create a Christmas working group like they did last year and following discussions it was agreed that Cllr. Lardner, Cllr. Moat, Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Duddy and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson be part of this working group with the agreement that any decisions are brought to full Council for ratification.

Resolved That the Clerk orders a further 2 wreaths for Remembrance Sunday;

Resolved That the Cllr's highlighted continue to work together to look at preparations for Christmas events, however that any decisions are brought to full Council for ratification.

20. 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. Cllr. Moat noted that the increase in the cost of electricity for the Garage, which the Clerk said she would look into.

Resolved That the payments are authorised by the Council; however, the Clerk is to look at the increase in electricity use at the Garage and ensure this is based on accurate meter readings.

21. Further Money Claim Received

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

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

Resolved That the update be noted.

22. Update from Money Claim Court Appearance 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.

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

Resolved That the update be noted.

23. Outstanding Payment to Previous SLA Holder

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

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

Resolved That the update be noted.

24. Update on Complaints received to the Clerk

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

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

Resolved That the update be noted.

25. Date and Time of next meeting - Wednesday 12th October 2022, The Miners Hall, Langley Park.

Meeting closed at 8:06pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE