



*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 12th October 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. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Linda Bushell, Cllr. Ruth Hughes, Cllr. Jillian Crumble, Cllr. Karenza Passmore, Cllr. Louise Dudden, Cllr Ross Lardner, Cllr. Mike Quinn.

1 member of the public was present at the meeting

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Allison Wardman

Personal Commitments

Councillor Edwin Simpson

Personal Commitments

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Moat declared an interest in Item 13.

4. Minutes from the Ordinary Meeting on the 14th September 2022

Cllr. Crumble advised that she did give her apologies for this meeting and asked that her apologies for absence be noted in the minutes.

Cllr Hawxwell asked for an amendment to Item 10 to read 'Cllr. Hawxwell, who also does work at the Wetlands, confirmed that a generous benefactor gave the money for the memorial bench.

Following these amendments all Councillors in attendance of the meeting with the exception of Councillor Bushell and Councillor Hughes who was not in attendance at the last meeting, agreed that the minutes be agreed as a true record.

Resolved That the requested amendments to the minutes be made and once made the minutes from the meeting held on the 14th September 2022, be agreed as a true record.

5. County Councillors Report

In the absence of County Councillor Coult the Clerk read out County Councillor Coult's report, which included key events since her last attendance at the Parish meeting. The Clerk also agreed to share the report with Councillors.

Resolved That the report from County Councillor Coult be noted.

6. Opportunity for the public to raise matters of interest

The Clerk read out a statement from a member of the public who raised concerns over the turning circle at Hall Road in Old Esh. The information was read out to Councillors for full consideration.

Following a discussion, it was;

Resolved That the information from the member of the public be noted;

Resolved That the Clerk forwards to the concerns raised to EVRA and also sends the link to Councillors with details of the petition which the member of the public has started.

7. Chairmans Position

Following concerns raised over the Chairmans position the Chair explained that he asked for this item to be on the agenda.

Cllr. Hughes asked if she was able to read out a statement she has prepared in relation to this item. As part of her report Cllr. Hughes highlighted concerns she has over the disclosure of confidential information which she feels could only have been leaked by Councillors. Cllr. Hughes also advised that over the last 20 years the Council have been subject of 1 court appearance, however of late there has been 1 court appearance against the Parish Council which the previous contractor won and there are at least 2 other court cases pending. Cllr. Hughes also raised concerns that personal information was leaked about the previous Clerk. In addition to these concerns Cllr. Hughes also mentioned that the parish Council have been non-compliant with FOI and Data Protection requests.

Cllr. Hughes asked what was the Chair's position in relation to training. The Chair confirmed that he has done all training that he is required to do.

The discussion over the Chair's position became quite volatile and both Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell both stated that they wish for the Chair to step down in his position.

Following a discussion all other Councillors present at the meeting were asked to take a vote and the following Councillors agreed by a show of hands that they wished for the Chair to remain in his position: Cllr. Hawxwell,

Cllr. Moat, Cllr. Passmore, Cllr. Duddy, Cllr. Lardner, Cllr. Crumbie, Cllr. Quinn, Cllr. Dudden and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson.

Both Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell abstained from the vote and made their intentions clear that they wish for the Chair to step down.

Resolved That the Chair remain in his position.

8. Clerks work in progress

The Clerk presented a verbal report to Councillors and discussed a range of things which included training for Councillors. The Clerk also discussed a Risk Management report she is looking at for the accounts and she mentioned that she has also been in touch with Gordon Fletcher to ask if he can complete an internal report for the accounts before they are presented to Mazars. The cost for this work is £150.00 and Gordon would look to complete this report in April/May.

Following the Clerks report, it was;

Resolved That the Clerks report be noted;

Resolved That Councillors are happy for the internal report to be completed by Gordon Fletcher for a cost of £150.00

Resolved That the Clerk prepare a Risk Management Assessment and bring this to the next Council meeting for approval.

9. Planning Applications – DM/22/02090/FPA – 8 Durham Street, Langley Park, DM/22/02696/FPA – Land at Langley Park North Industrial Estate and DM/22/02780/TPO – 21 Willow Park, Langley Park

In relation to the Planning Applications received Cllr. Hughes mentioned that a resident contacted her in relation to the planning application for Willow Park and Cllr. Hughes then spoke to County Councillor Coult in relation to this. This was also discussed in County Councillor Coult's report and was shared with Councillors.

Following discussions in relation to the planning applications received it was;

Resolved That the Planning Applications be noted and Parish Council are happy with the planning applications received.

10. Policies and Procedures due for Renewal

This item was discussed and it was suggested that a Sub Committee to focus solely on the Policies and Procedures due for renewal be set up. Following a discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Passmore, Cllr. Moat and Cllr Quinn be part of the Sub Committee to look at the Policies and Procedures due for renewal and it was agreed that the Sub Committee would present their amendments to the next Parish Council meeting.

The Clerk advised that she has received amendments from Cllr. Simpson on the Standing Orders and she also has amendments for the Financial Policies. The Clerk agreed to send these amendments to the Sub Committee.

Resolved That Cllr. Passmore, Cllr Moat and Cllr Quinn be part of the Policies and Procedures Sub Committee and look at all Policies and Procedures and present these to the next Parish Council meeting.

Resolved That the Clerk sends the Standing Orders and Financial Policies to the Sub Committee for them to look at and then present these at the next Parish Council meeting.

11. Update from Sub Committee Groups on Warm Hubs and Christmas Preparations

Cllr Hawxwell provided an update on the Warm Hubs initiative the Parish Council have agreed to be a part of. Cllr. Hawxwell advised that he has been present at 2 meetings and following these meetings a rough plan has been devised and it is proposed that the Warm Hubs will be available at The Miners Hall on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 10:30-5:30pm. It was explained that these are the initial times, and they will be reviewed. Cllr. Hawxwell explained that the libraries are introducing Warm Hubs on a Tuesday and Thursday.

Cllr. Hawxwell explained that as part of being a warm hub the Parish Council will be providing members of the public toast and hot drinks and the warm hubs are scheduled to start at the end of October/beginning of November and are scheduled to finish at the end of March. The Warm Hubs will be run on a volunteer basis and the Parish Council will have access to a volunteer bank who they can access if needed to assist them in rolling out the Warm Hubs initiative. Cllr Hawxwell advised that he is to attend a further meeting to discuss the Warm Hubs on the 9th November and following this meeting he will feedback any information with the Parish Council.

Cllr. Hawxwell advised that to assist with the Warm Hubs scheme the Parish Council do need to offer some funding for this scheme. Cllr. Hawxwell has initially asked if the parish can offer £2,000.00 to assist the warm hubs scheme.

It was asked if the Parish could work with Crescent Homecare to work with residents who are house bound and offer assistance through the warm hubs scheme. Further discussions took place over the warm hub's initiative, and it was advised that some people may not want to address themselves as needing support therefore the Parish Council need to think about different activities they can offer as part of the warm hubs scheme and ideas were discussed. It was noted that County Councillor Coult has also suggested working with community spirit to collect hats, scarves and gloves and keep these for people who need these items.

Following Cllr. Hawxwell's initial request for funding it was:

Resolved That the Parish Council initially ring fence £2,000 for the Warm Hubs initiative with Councillors in agreement that this amount is reviewed every 2 months.

Christmas Preparations

Cllr. Moat provided an update in relation to the preparations for Christmas and confirmed that the Christmas trees have been ordered from Blackburn Farm. Cllr. Hughes did ask if a reasonable cost could be negotiated.

It was noted that the Christmas light switch on will take place on the 1st weekend in December and the Village Fayre will take place on the 10th December at the local school. As part of this fayre the Brassband has been booked. As part of the Christmas lights being switched on Cllr. Quinn did ask if the Parish can consider these timings, as England have a football match scheduled for this day and to ensure this is well attended it will be best to time the light switch on so it does not coincide with the football match.

Further preparations for Christmas were discussed and it was confirmed that Santa and his elves will be scheduled to deliver selection boxes in Langley Park on the 17th December and Old Esh and Wilkes Hill on the 18th December. Cllr. Moat confirmed that she is also looking to visit the old peoples home and deliver some hampers.

Further preparations for Christmas will be discussed and advertised nearer the time.

Following further discussions, it was;

Resolved That the preparations for Christmas be noted.

12. Old Rec Works

A discussion took place on the works at the Old Recreation Site and The Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson advised that all Tree Laurels at the site need to be taken out. Quotations have been sought for this work as discussed at the last meeting and The Chair confirmed that it may be best to put the contractors on a day rate for this work. Following the quotations received from both OJM and Arborline, Parish Councillors agreed to the quotation from OJM for £550.00 per day for 2 days work at a total of £1100.00.

The Chair. Cllr Joe Thompson also discussed the lack of benches at the Old Recreation site and recommended that 2 benches that are sited in the football pitch could be relocated and that a further 4 benches need to be purchased. All Councillors present at the meeting agreed to the Chair's recommendations and they agreed by a show of hands.

In addition, it was highlighted that Moles are causing problems at the Old Recreation Ground, Old Esh, Sir Bobby Robson Play Area and Quebec Play Area. Following a discussion Councillors were in agreement that the Clerk was to obtain quotations from a suitably qualified Pest Control Company to provide options on how to eradicate this issue.

Resolved That OJM be appointed to complete the work to remove the Laurel Trees at the Old Recreation Ground;

Resolved That 2 benches be relocated from the football pitch to a suitable area of the Old Recreation Ground and that a further 4 benches be purchased;

Resolved That the Clerk makes contact with a Pest Control Company to request a quotation for the eradication of moles in the Old Recreation Ground, Old Esh, Sir Bobby Robson Play Area and Quebec Play Area and provide Councillors with an update once received.

13. DH7 – Future use of the Snooker Room

As Cllr. Moat declared an interest in this item, she did not take part in the voting for this item, however she remained at the meeting for any questions Councillors had.

Councillors did ask if the use of the room was working for the DH7 group and Cllr. Moat confirmed that it was. Cllr. Hughes did ask for clarification on the sole use of the room which Cllr. Moat was able to answer. Cllr. Bushell also asked the cost for the use of the room, and it was clarified that DH7 pay £250 per month which was initially for 2 evenings per week, however they have also been holding a craft club on a Sunday as a trial and they pay extra for this use.

Cllr. Passmore asked if the DH7 group are a not-for-profit group. Cllr. Moat clarified that this is the case.

Cllr. Hughes advised that because the Parish Council are going to be taking part in the Warm Hubs initiative, all the Parish Council are left with in terms of room availability is the Main Hall, however it was confirmed that the Parish room can be used and is used when needed. Cllr. Hughes advised that she would like to see a copy of the Constitution and Accounts for the DH7 group before making a decision on their future use of the snooker room. Cllr. Moat did confirm that she was able to send this information and was happy to do so after March 2023 when this is to be reviewed again, however noted that the Clerk does have a copy of the constitution. Following discussions Cllr. Hughes confirmed that she would like this item deferred to the next meeting, however with the exception of Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell all other Councillors disagreed with deferring this to the next meeting.

A vote was taken, and the following Councillors agreed to the DH7 group continuing to have sole use of the snooker room until March 2023 and agreed to review this then. Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Dudden, Cllr. Passmore, Cllr. Duddy, Cllr. Lardner, Cllr. Quinn, Cllr. Crumbie and Cllr. Kathryn Thompson.

Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell did not take part in the vote.

Resolved That the DH7 continue to use the snooker room until March 2023 at which point the Parish Council will then revisit this decision;

Resolved That the Clerk contacts CISWO in relation to the DH7 group having Sole use of the Snooker Room and have a licence agreement drawn up.

14. 2025 Closure of Langley Park Colliery

Resolved That this item to be noted.

15. Funding Request from Langley Park Football Club £300.00

Councillors discussed the funding request received from Langley Park Football Club for £300.

Following a discussion, it was;

Resolved That the application be agreed, and the Clerk makes the necessary arrangements to pay The Football Club £300.00.

16. Elections Act 2025

Cllr. Quinn asked for this item to be on the agenda, and he provided an update. Cllr. Quinn advised that DCC will be introducing photo ID for anyone wishing to vote from 2025. DCC will facilitate this and Cllr. Quinn asked if the Parish Council will be happy for the Parish to have forms available in the Parish office when this act comes into place to help with this process.

Resolved That the Parish Council will ensure the necessary forms are available for the Elections Act 2025 when these are issued at the time.

17. Payments made 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. Bushell queried the payment for the bench strim from OJM and advised that she could not find on previous minutes where this was agreed. It was noted that this was discussed at the meeting on the 9th March 2022, however only the grass cutting quotation is noted. Councillors in attendance at the meeting asked that it be recorded that the quotation for the bench strim for £900.00 was discussed at the meeting on the 9th March 2022 and that this be noted at this meeting.

In addition, the Clerk was asked to note that OJM are doing a good job with the grass cutting contract and Councillors have no objections with the invoices received.

Resolved That the payments detailed are authorised by the Council;

Resolved That it be noted that the quotation from OJM for the bench strimming work for £900 was agreed at the meeting on the 9th March 2022, however this was not detailed in these minutes.

18. Income Received

Cllr. Moat noted that the funding given to the Durham City Youth Project for £300 will be returned to the Parish Council as their meeting has been cancelled.

Cllr. Hughes advised that if DH7 hold any further sessions that are outside of their agreement for £250.00 per month, these need to be noted and the additional amount needs to be noted separately. Cllr. Hughes also highlighted that the income in relation to the DH7 group needs to be more detailed.

Cllr. Hughes also advised that the cost of room bookings needs to be looked at due to the increased costs in utilities, however the Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson did advise that he does not want to increase costs too much as it has been noted to him that people like to use the Miners Hall as a venue as the costs are low. Cllr. Passmore said we need to review the charge we offer for room bookings at a later date and take into account the energy rise.

Cllr. Passmore also explained that queries in relation to the DH7 group need to be addressed to the DH7 group directly and not to Cllr. Moat in her position as Councillor.

Resolved That the income report be noted.

19. Complaint 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.

20. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 9th November 2022, The Miners Hall, Langley Park. – Cllr. Passmore noted her apologies for the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 8:12pm.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE