



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 Draft Minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting of the Council followed by the Annual Meeting held on**

**Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at The Miners Hall, Langley Park.**

**Meeting commenced at 6:00pm**

**Annual Assembly of the Council followed by the Annual Meeting**

**1. Apologies of absence**

There were no apologies of absence.

**2. Chairman's Report**

The Chair provided a report at the meeting which highlighted some key areas over the last year. The report also detailed some challenges the Parish Council have faced in the last year.

**Resolved** That the Chairman's Report be noted.

**Annual General Meeting**

**1. Election of Chair and Acceptance of Office**

Proposed members for the Chair was Cllr. Joseph Thompson as proposed by Cllr. Dudden. Following a vote by full Council, Cllr. Simpson, Cllr. Moat, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Crumbie, Cllr Duddy, Cllr. Quinn, Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Passmore, Cllr. Lardner, Cllr. Hawxwell, Cllr. Dudden voted that Cllr. Joe Thompson be elected Chair and it was **resolved that Cllr. Joseph Thompson will Chair the Council for the coming year.** Cllr. Joseph Thompson signed the acceptance of office witnessed by the Clerk.

Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes abstained from voting.

**2. Election of Vice Chair and Acceptance of Office**

Proposed members for Vice Chair was Cllr. Ollie Moat as proposed by Cllr. Dudden. Following a vote by full Council, Cllr. Simpson, Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Crumbie, Cllr Duddy, Cllr. Quinn,

Cllr. Wardman, Cllr. Lardner, Cllr. Passmore, Cllr. Dudden and Cllr. Hawxwell voted that Cllr. Ollie Moat be elected vice Chair and it was **resolved that Cllr. Moat will be vice chair for the coming year**. Cllr. Moat signed the acceptance of office witnessed by the Clerk.

Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes abstained from voting.

### **3. Record of attendance**

Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson, Cllr. George Hawxwell, Cllr. John Duddy, Cllr. Ollie Moat, Cllr. Allison Wardman, Cllr. Kathryn Thompson, Cllr. Edwin Simpson, Cllr. Mike Quinn, Cllr. Linda Bushell, Cllr Ruth Hughes, Cllr Jillian Crumbie, Cllr. Karenza Passmore, Cllr. Ross Lardner, Cllr. Louise Dudden.

There were 4 members of the public present at the meeting.

County Councillor Coult

Clerk: Leeanne Owens

### **4. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies of absence.

### **5. Declarations of interest**

Cllr. Linda Bushell declared an interest in Item 14.

Cllr. Ruth Hughes declared an interest in Item 14.

Cllr. Jillian Crumbie declared an interest in Item 18.

### **6. Minutes of Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and Minutes of the previous Ordinary meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Vice Chair Cllr. Moat proposed that the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 be agreed as a true record. Cllr. Dudden seconded this.

Cllr. Kathryn Thompson proposed that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be agreed as a true record. Vice Chair, Cllr. Moat seconded this.

**Resolved** That the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 be agreed as a true record.

**Resolved** That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be agreed as a true record.

### **7. County Councillors Report**

County Councillors Coult presented her report at the meeting which included some key areas. County Councillor Coult advised that she has shared her report with the Clerk who will send this to Councillors for their information.

**Resolved** That the report from County Councillor Coult be noted;

**Resolved** That the Clerk send County Councillor Coult's report to Councillors for their information.

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

The Clerk discussed a text she has received from Durham City Youth Team about using the field at the Recreation Ground for an event. All Councillors present at the meeting advised that they have no issues with this request.

A member of the public present at the meeting discussed the local gym they volunteer at and advised that they will be looking for some potential funding from the Parish Council to enable some works to be completed. The Clerk advised that she has had a conversation with this member of the public prior to the meeting and advised them what paperwork and supporting information would be needed to enable the Parish Council to consider any funding and it was agreed that if received in time, this request for funding will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

A member of the public present at the meeting raised concerns that on a recent walk a car went past her in the street and the people in the vehicle spat at her. It was noted that such issues need to be either reported to the Police or to the Neighbourhood Wardens using the online Do It Online form via Durham County Council's website.

The Clerk advised that she has received an email from a member of the public who has asked if they can use a metal detector at Esh Village green. They advised that they will repair any holes in the green as a result of their activity. After discussion Councillors were in agreement that the Parish Council could not allow this request due to the damage that could potentially be caused and agreed if they allowed this activity a precedent would be set for allowing further requests.

**Resolved** That the updates from the public members be noted;

**Resolved** That the funding request in relation to the Gym be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting if the appropriate paperwork is completed;

**Resolved** That the Clerk contacts the resident with the request to use the Metal Detector at Esh Village Green to advise that the Parish Council cannot agree to this, explaining the reasons why.

## **9. Clerks Report**

The Clerk presented her report to Councillors which included an update on the website with work commencing on this very shortly.

The report also highlighted training for Councillors with Cllr. Passmore expressing an interest in the New Councillor Training and Clerk's training to enable her to support the Clerk. Cllr. Wardman also expressed an interest in attending the Engaging With Your Community Training.

**Resolved** That the Clerks report be noted;

**Resolved** That the Clerk book Cllr. Passmore and Cllr. Wardman on the training requested.

## **10. Planning Applications Received – DM/23/00974/TPO – Tarves, Esh, Durham, DH7 9QP**

The planning application received was discussed in detail and it was noted that the Parish Council have no objections with the planning application received.

**Resolved** That the planning application received be noted and it be noted that the Parish Council have no objections in relation to the planning application received.

#### **11. Annual Rent for the Miners Hall**

The Clerk discussed the Annual Rent for the Miners Hall which has increased significantly. The Clerk explained to Councillors how the rent increase had been calculated based on the information received from CISWO. Councillors were in agreement that a further explanation was needed and the calculations received from CISWO do not agree to the proposed new rent.

**Resolved** That the Clerk liaise with CISWO for further information in relation to the rental increase and bring this information back to the next meeting.

#### **12. Previous Motion Agreed at Last Meeting following recent decision notice**

Cllr. Passmore explained that having sought advice on her previous motion at the last meeting in relation to Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes having no contribution at Parish Council meetings and following the advice sought from the Clerk she confirmed that she rescinds this previous motion and publicly apologised to both Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushel regarding this.

**Resolved** That the update from Cllr. Passmore be noted.

#### **13. Decision on the publication of the recent Decision Notice**

The Clerk advised that following the recent Decision Notice from the Monitoring Officer in relation to a serious of complaints made about the Parish Council from Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes the Clerk had been asked as a Parish Council if we are able to publish this decision notice. The Clerk advised that the advice she has received from CDALC and the Monitoring Officer is that the Parish Council are legally entitled to publish this decision notice, however the advice is what will the Parish Council gain from this and what is the reasoning for wanting the decision notice to be published. Having considered this information carefully the Clerk advised Councillors that in her opinion to enable the Parish Council to move forward she feels that it is not in the interest of the Parish Council to publish this decision notice, however after discussion amongst Councillors Cllr. Wardman advised that in her opinion despite the complaints made against Councillors by Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes, she feels that the public need to be aware of what the Council have still managed to achieve and therefore Cllr. Wardman proposed that the decision notice is published and Cllr. Duddy seconded this.

Following a vote all councillors present at the meeting agreed by a show of hands that the Decision Notice be published.

**Resolved** That the recent Decision Notice be published, however that it be noted that the Clerk did advise against this.

#### **14. Update on Money Claim**

As Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes declared an interest in this item and the update was in relation to their claim against the Parish Council, both Councillors were asked to leave the meeting whilst a discussion took place.

The Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson and the Vice Chair Cllr. Moat provided an update on the money claim against the Parish Council by Cllr. Bushell and Cllr. Hughes for items they are claiming for on behalf of the CIC. It was noted that the Court Case was dismissed by the Judge as Cllr. Hughes and Cllr. Bushell failed to attend the court hearing.

Cllr Simpson asked does this prevent these Councillors putting in a further claim. The Chair Cllr. Joe Thompson advised that unfortunately they can still put in other claims if they wish.

**Resolved** That the update be noted.

## **15. A Community Building**

The Vice Chair Cllr. Moat provided an update on the Church the Parish Council are looking to purchase and advised that the Parish Council are currently the highest bidder for the Church after offering a further £20,000 for the Church due to the original offer being rejected, however Cllr. Moat advised that we are awaiting confirmation that our revised offer has been accepted. Once we know the position in relation to the Community Building this will be shared with Councillors.

A question was raised on whether or not the new building will be restricted to a certain age group, however it was confirmed that it is run for the community.

**Resolved** That the update be noted.

## **16. Email Correspondence Received**

The Clerk discussed the emails sent to councillors prior to the meeting. These were noted by Council.

**Resolved** That the emails received be noted.

## **17. Emergency Plan**

Cllr. Passmore provided an update on this advised that Cllr. Wardman is in the process of checking the emergency plan and once checked it can then come back to full Council for approval.

**Resolved** That the finalized emergency plan be brought back to the next meeting for full Council approval.

## **18. Small Holdings**

Cllr. Crumbie provided an update on all of the small holdings for Councillors attention.

The amendments needed to the small holding at Bridgeway was discussed and the Clerk confirmed that the necessary amendments would be made to the tenancy agreement and issued accordingly to the tenant.

It was also noted that the fencing for the small holding at 41-45 Earl of Durham Site needs to be erected. It was noted that there is a lot of Anti-Social behaviour at this area and this needs addressing.

Cllr. Crumbie provided a further update on the ongoing issues at one of the small holdings and explained that a lot of work is needed to bring the small holding in line with the standards we set out in the Tenancy Agreement. It was explained that a grace period was given to the tenant to rectify the issues identified, however the tenant has still not done any of the work required. Following a further meeting with the tenant

the required work was still not done. Cllr. Crumbie advised that following a further conversation with the tenant the tenant has advised that they do not wish to keep the small holding.

The small holding in question is now back in the possession of the Parish Council and the Parish Council are now aware that the small holding is in a terrible state and the findings discovered were unimaginable. Pictures of the condition of the small holding were circulated to Councillors for their attention.

Cllr. Crumbie advised that due to her involvement with this particular small holding she is now unfortunately receiving a lot of negative comments and hostility from the Allotments Association who do not know the full account of what has happened.

County Councillor Coult advised that she is going to send some Communication out to the Allotments Association advising these tenants if they have any queries, these need to be directed to the Chair.

Cllr. Crumbie mentioned the precept that all residents of the village pay and said that the small holding is going to cost a lot of money to put right and it is not fair that a proportion of precept money is going to have to be used to pay for this.

To move this issue forward Cllr. Passmore suggested that we extract the minutes of when this small holding has been discussed and send the pictures that were taken of how the small holding looked when the Parish Council took this back and send this information to the Allotments Association. It was also suggested from the Clerk that Cllr. Crumbie is recompensated for all costs she has spent on the small holding which includes buying feed for the poultry left by the old tenant. Cllr. Passmore also advised that we need to start looking at costs for clearing the small holding.

Following further discussions Cllr. Hughes moved that the Parish Council move Cllr. Passmores motion to extract the minutes where the small holding was discussed and the photographs taken of the small holding when back in the Council's possession and send this information to County Cllr. Coult who will forward this to the Allotments Association.

**Resolved** That the Clerk extract the minutes where the small holding with the concerns was discussed and the photographs taken of the small holding when back in the Council's possession and send this information to County Cllr. Coult who will forward this to the Allotments Association;

**Resolved** That the Clerk seeks quotations to have the small holding cleared and bring these back to the Council for consideration;

**Resolved** That Cllr. Crumbie be thanked for her update and the care she has taken in looking after the wildlife left at the small holding.

## **19. Funding request from Esh Leaves Womens Institute**

Councillors were provided with paperwork for the funding application prior to the meeting and it was noted that this funding request was for £300 for activities for the recent Coronation of the King.

Following a discussion Cllr. Kathryn Thompson proposed that the application be approved. Cllr. Moat seconded Cllr. Kathryn Thompsons proposal.

**Resolved** That the application from Esh Leaves Womens Institute for £300 for activities spent on the Coronation be approved.

## **20. Update from Councillor Passmore following her meeting with the Vicar**

Cllr. Passmore provided a verbal update following her meeting with the Vicar which came about as a result of the Friday Coffee mornings which are held at the Miners Hall each week. Cllr. Passmore's report was noted.

**Resolved** That the report from Cllr. Passmore be noted.

## **21. Quebec Village Notice Board**

The Clerk advised that she has received an email from Quebec Village Hall to ask if they are able to utilise the notice board the Parish Council has at Quebec as their notice board is too far back and they have noted that our notice board is not been used to its full potential. Cllr. Moat advised that the Parish notice board was not used in a while as it was leaking in, however since being fixed it is being used now by the Parish Council.

Following a discussion Councillors unanimously agreed that the Village Hall can't have sole access to the notice board, however it was noted that the Parish Council will happily put any information for the Village Hall in the notice board if this is given to the Parish Council.

**Resolved** That the Clerk notifies the Village Hall that they can't utilise the Parish notice board, however the Clerk is to advise that the Parish Council are happy to display notices for Quebec Village Hall if these are received.

## **22. Schedule of future meetings from June 2023 – May 2024**

The Clerk presented the list of scheduled Council meetings for the period June 2023 – May 2024. Cllr. Simpson proposed that we approve the scheduled meetings and Chair. Cllr. Joe Thompson seconded this.

**Resolved** That the scheduled meetings from June 2023 – May 2024 be approved by the Council.

## **23. 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.

## **24. Councillors Code of Conduct**

This was discussed as private and confidential and all Parish Councillors were updated accordingly.

**Resolved** That the update be noted.

## **25. Date of next ordinary meeting – Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 6pm at the Miners Hall.**

Meeting closed at 7:30pm