

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a remote meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 18 November 2020 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors R Briggs, O Edwards, G Hendry, R Kemp, M Wilson and P Wilson.

20/28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

20/29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

20/30 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

20/31 POLICE REPORT

Some issues raised locally, essentially relating to drunken youths. Lots of youths gathering in open spaces behind McColls. Police had been called and attended to the issues raised.

20/20 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No representations had been received.

20/32 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor M Wilson provided an update in relation to the County Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. A virtual food festival would be running to 24 December to make up for the loss of the Bishop Auckland, Seaham and Durham Food Festivals. Lumiere would return to County Durham in 2021. Durham County Council were awarded a place in the government's Top 100 Apprenticeships Employers list in recognition of its work to create apprenticeship opportunities for residents. The council currently had 259 apprentices working in a wide range of roles across its services and schools, including catering, accounting, construction and business administration.

20/33 FINANCE REPORT

The Council considered the monthly financial report which detailed the current bank balances, payments made since the last meeting and payments to be made.

20/34 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council considered the following planning applications:

DM/20/02779/FPA - Partial demolition of agricultural building and erection of holiday let - Stotgate Farm Crossgate Moor Durham DH1 4TJ

Resolved

That the application be noted.

20/35 CLERKS REPORT

(i) Bearpark Colliery Interpretation Boards

The Clerk informed the Council that two companies had been approached with a view to providing interpretation boards to remember Bearpark Colliery. There were no physical features of the site remaining and the only indicator of the location was the Bearpark Colliery sign at the junction of colliery road. Councillor M Wilson would be funding more than 50% of the project through her Neighbourhood Budget but would be looking for the Parish Council to fund the remaining amount. The Clerk had posted information on all social media channels which had attracted much interest. There had been many positive comments received and the consultation remained ongoing. The Clerk would be seeking consent from Durham County Council to have the boards installed on their land. A pre-planning permission enquiry would also need to be submitted. Examples of the interpretation boards and a coal tub planter were shown to the Council. An estimated cost had been provided from one company that had met the Council's requirements.

Parish Councillors spoke in favour of the proposal and were encouraged by the initial designs.

Resolved

That the Council agree to support the project.

(ii) Support for residents

The Clerk reported that Ushaw Moor Baptist Church were offering short term help to those who needed help the most during the coronavirus pandemic. They were providing a food box consisting of fresh meat and fruit. Those with longer term needs were being referred to the County Durham Foodbank. Councillor O Edwards explained a little more about the scheme to the Council and explained that Bearpark residents could utilise the scheme should they need some urgent assistance.

Any requests for support for residents could also be directed to the County Durham Community Hubs operated by Durham County Council.

The Clerk informed the Council that the Parish Council were no longer able to provide support through its volunteers. However, the scheme had operated very well earlier during the initial lockdown.

The DERIC project was currently not operating as the owner was shielding. The Clerk had spoken to the project leader in depth about joint working over the Christmas period.

The Clerk was currently working with Truly Scrumptious to provide local residents, in need with a free festive lunch which would be for one-day only a couple of weeks before Christmas.

Resolved

That the Council

- (i) note the sources of help available to residents; and
- (ii) agree to any expenditure incurred for the free festive lunch offer.

20/36 VILLAGE MATTERS

(i) Covid 19 Business Relief Grant

Councillor M Wright informed the Council that the scheme for business rate relief had re-started and qualifying businesses could claim again. Councillors were encouraged to make businesses aware that they could claim again through Durham County Council.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

(ii) Noticeboard at Bishops Meadows Estate

Councillor G Hendry referred to the noticeboard at Bishops Meadow estate and queried if there was a better place for it to be relocated to. It was felt that the noticeboard was currently in a dangerous position for anyone who wished to view the board. It was felt it would be better relocated on the same piece of land as the seat and planter.

Resolved

Councillor M Wilson would speak to Durham County Council who installed the board at her request.

(iii) Signage to Beaurepaire

Councillor P Wilson asked if it would be possible for the Parish Council to consider signage to point to Beaurepaire from the railway walk.

Resolved

That any possible signage be considered in conjunction with the interpretation boards for Bearpark Colliery as part of a wider initiative, including way-marking, local walks and sites of interest.

(iv) Christmas Events 2020

The Clerk advised the Council that any events that encouraged social gatherings should not take place this year. It was a difficult decision for the Council to make, however, all local Councils were faced with the same issue. The unpredictability of coronavirus restrictions meant that it was an impossible task to arrange any events.

The Council Christmas Tree Light switch on would be streamed live on Facebook with representatives of the Aged Miners Homes who had been invited to switch them. Councillor R Briggs offered to promote the event on social media in the lead up to the lights switch-on. Councillor Briggs also offered to film the lights switch on for the Facebook live event.

Councillors had asked if a mobile Santa Claus would be a feasible idea. The Clerk and Councillor M Wright felt that a mobile Santa would encourage people to congregate and encourage crowds to form, and in light of the current pandemic could not be something the Parish Council could support.

Resolved

- (i) That all of the information be noted;
 - (ii) That expenditure incurred for advertising the Facebook posts be
- (vi) reimbursed to Cllr R Briggs on provision of receipts.

Snow Angels Scheme

The Clerk informed the Council of the proposed snow angels scheme which would keep access to estate roads as clear as possible for those relying on essential food and medical deliveries etc. during the pandemic. However, the scheme could only operate if enough volunteers came forward. Currently, only two people had volunteered. The idea of the scheme would be to supply volunteers with a snow shovel and salt to assist with snow clearing in the vicinity of their home/street. During previous winters, certain areas of the village had become difficult to commute following sustained periods of inclement winter weather.

Resolved

- (i) That the information be noted;
- (ii) That the Clerk be authorised to make any relevant purchases should sufficient volunteers come forward.

20/37 ANY ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Chair informed the Council that it was with greatest regret that it was his intention to step down as Chair of the Parish Council, a decision which he hadn't taken lightly. The Chair informed the Council that he would participate in meetings as time permitted, upto the local elections in May and also explained that it was a good opportunity should anyone wish to put themselves forward as Chair to gain an understanding of the role.

20/38 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place remotely on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 7 p.m.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.