

## **Bearpark Parish Council**

At a meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 15 January** at **7:00pm** at **Beaurepaire Community Hub**.

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr M Wilson (Chair)	Cllr J Baker	Cllr D Cliff
	Cllr I Cummings	Cllr O Edwards	Cllr J Thompson
	Cllr J Turnock	Cllr P Wilson	

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from: Cllr David Turnbull

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

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

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 November were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. Co-option of Parish Councillors**

David Turnbull had now returned his signed forms and was now co-opted onto the Council. John Turnock and David Cliff attended the meeting requesting to be co-opted onto the Council. Both had provided statements advising of their suitability to the role.

### **Resolved**

That David Cliff and John Turnock be co-opted onto the Council. Both signed their acceptance form straight away and so could take part in the rest of the meeting.

### **5. Police Report**

Cllr M Wilson advised that there had been a PACT meeting on Tuesday 7 January. There had been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour. It appeared to be two youths in particular causing problems. They had been spoken to as well as their parents by Police Officers and advised accordingly.

Off road bikes were causing problems again.

There had been reports from staff at Morrisons Daily regarding anti-social behaviour. Cllr Wilson informed the Council that there would be a Blue Light event held on 27<sup>th</sup> July at the recreation ground to include Police, Fire and potentially Believe Housing which would aim to educate youths and hopefully reduce unwanted behaviour.

No response had been received from Durham Constabulary regarding attendance at meetings by a Police Inspector. The Clerk had contacted the local Inspector direct but was still awaiting a response.

### **Resolved**

The Clerk to re-circulate information on Facebook page regarding how to report off-road bikes. The Clerk to contact Morrisons Daily Organisation and request that they

repair their security lights and CCTV. The Clerk to keep chasing a response from Durham Constabulary. The Clerk to request the Neighbourhood Warden to increase patrols near to Morrisons Daily. The Clerk to request continuation of the extra Neighbourhood Warden Patrols.

## **6. County Councillors Report**

Cllr M Wilson provided an update to the Council as follows:

- DCC have launched a consultation asking for views on key issues around housing, as part of a comprehensive review of its housing allocations policy. People can take part in the consultation by visiting the new consultation and engagement platform, Let's Talk County Durham, by 12 March 2025. Printed copies of the surveys can also be found at our libraries and customer access points.
- Bishop Auckland Town Hall's annual Open Art Exhibition showcases a wide range of mediums and subjects including paintings, photography, textiles, jewellery, and sculptures selected by a panel of artists and curators. Bishop Auckland Town Hall Gallery is open from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday. Entry is free and the works will remain on display in the gallery until Saturday 15 February.
- A new fleet of tractors is proving an invaluable resource during the current cold snap, helping DCC to clear snow and spread salt on paths leading to medical centres and pharmacies, as well as in busy areas such as town centres. The aim is to reduce slips and falls, protect older and vulnerable people, reduce pressure on health and care services and avoid hospital admissions.

## **Resolved**

That the information be noted

## **7. Report of the Clerk**

The Clerk provided an update to the Council as follows:

### **a) Update on actions of previous meeting:**

- **Damaged Noticeboard** - there had been a delay on repair but this would commence within the next week.
- **Flagpole** – The initial dig for the flagpole had taken place and installation would be carried out on Monday 20 January.
- **Remembering Bearpark** – The Interpretation boards had been delivered and the coal tub was now ready for delivery. DK Horticulture would be installing the concrete base within the next few weeks at which point The Clerk would arrange delivery of the coal tub. Funding for the project has now been deposited into the council account and outstanding invoices will be paid ASAP.
- **Christmas events** – both events had gone well. There was a slight mix up with the timings for the face painter for which the Clerk apologised, but this did not seem to affect the event. The Clerk had researched the cost of a portable PA system and found them to be priced within the region of £135.00 – £300.00.
- **Authorisation of Payments** – the Clerk had applied for Cllr I Cummings to be added to the list of possible authorisers.

- **Royal Garden Party** – Cllr I Cummings and his guest would be nominated for attendance at this year's Royal Garden Party.
- **Community Garden** – The Clerk to post on Facebook page requesting volunteers.

**b) Training Opportunities**

- **NALC** – Navigating Rural Realities, 29 January, online.
- **CDALC** – Town and Parish Council Elections Briefing, 18 February, County Hall. The Clerk requested that they attend this at a cost of £20.

**c) Gov.uk domain and email addresses**

Hugo Fox had contacted the Clerk to advise that a gov.uk domain was now available for free. This had been applied for and would be up and running within six weeks. Gov.uk email addresses were available to all councillors at a cost of 24.99 per month. It was decided to delay these until after the elections in May.

**d) Bank account interest rate**

The interest rate for the instant access account was reducing from 2.6% to 2.5%

**e) External audit fee**

The external auditor's invoice had been received to the amount of £252.00

**f) Finance report**

The Clerk circulated a report which detailed all recent and upcoming expenditure. There was also a late request for financial assistance which had been submitted from St John's Church, Neville's Cross to the amount of £145.00 for transport of Bearpark Primary children to the church for a theatre performance.

**Resolved**

That the information be noted, relevant action taken by the Clerk and that all costs be approved by the Council. That the request for financial assistance be approved.

**8. Planning Applications**

Details of recent planning applications had been circulated.

The following comments were made on application DM/24/03257/FPA:

- Concerns over increase in traffic on an already busy road with a dangerous junction.
- Increased pressure on local amenities
- Loss of recreation land
- Not enough low cost/rented accommodation
- Removal of layby and footpath would reduce parking spaces and cause issues for pedestrians.
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There were no comments on any other applications.

**Resolved**

That the information be noted and that the Clerk make the above objections to application DM/24/03257/FPA.

## **9. Allotments**

There had been reports of dog fouling, youths accessing the allotments unsupervised and those with poultry not having the correct registration.

### **Resolved**

That a letter be sent to all allotment holders reminding them to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement. That regular inspections be arranged to check on this.

## **10. Budget and Precept 2025/26**

A discussion was held regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the precept requirement from DCC. Possible projects for the ensuing year include continuation of extra Neighbourhood Warden patrols, improvement to play equipment, expansion of the allotment site and maintenance of the recreation ground. The Clerk reminded Council that there could be possible election costs to consider in May.

### **Resolved**

That the precept be increased by 7.5% which would mean an increase for residents of Band D properties of £3.53 per year.

## **11. Recreation Ground**

Cllr I Cummings had circulated notes of a meeting held between the Parish Council, the Cricket Club and the Football Club. It had been confirmed that the current lease on the land was temporary. A discussion was held regarding the Parish Council taking over the lease. Cllr M Wilson had contact DCC to ask an officer to attend the meeting to discuss this. Drainage in the area was still an issue.

### **Resolved**

That the Clerk contact DCC to ask about the Parish Council taking on the lease and if a drainage survey could be carried out.

## **12. Anti-social Behaviour**

This had been discussed earlier in the meeting during the Police Report.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on **Wednesday 19 February 7:00pm** at **Beaurepaire Community Hub**.

**Signed..... (Chair)**

**Date.....**