

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a **meeting** of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 19 June 2019 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors N Anderson, M Chard, G Hendry, R Kemp, K Milburn, J Peart and M Wilson.

19/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor D Bell and Councillor O Edwards and P Wilson.

19/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

19/18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2019 were **Moved** by Councillor M Wilson, **Seconded** by Councillor G Hendry and agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19/19 POLICE REPORT

There were no representatives from the Police present and no report had been provided. Councillor M Wilson reported that no issues of concern were raised at the recent PACT meeting. However, the Police would be trialling a mobile PACT. Bearpark included would be included. It was hoped that the trial would engage and involve local people. The events would be advertised.

19/20 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present and no representations had been received.

19/21 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor M Wilson provided an update as follows:

- DCC were holding 6-week consultation on proposals for the new Durham History Centre which would include the archives and registry office. Everyone was encouraged to get involved in the consultation;
- A campaign was due to be launched to help people targeted by scams. As part of the campaign an advice line would be available to make more aware of scams;

- Dying to be cool assemblies were being held in schools for a successive year. This would alert children to the dangers of river safety and cold water shock; and
- Durham County Council were seeking volunteers for Lumiere 2019.

19/22 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Councillors R Kemp, K Milburn and M Wilson informed the Council that they wished to make a donation of £20 each from their individual Councillor budgets to Bearpark Primary School towards refreshments a Cycling Event at Bearpark Primary School.

Resolved

That the donation be agreed.

19/23 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2019/20

The Clerk informed the Council that Bearpark Parish Council had an annual turnover of less than £25,000 and had to provide a certificate of exemption to the external auditor.

The Council was still required to have an internal audit and a fully complete a return. This then needed to be placed on the Council website in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities required the following information to be published by the 1 July of each year.

- All items of expenditure above £100;
- End of year accounts, annual governance statement, and internal audit report (as contained in the annual return);
- A copy of the bank reconciliation for the relevant financial year;
- An explanation of any significant variances (e.g. more than 10-15%, in line with proper practices) in the statement of accounts for the relevant year and previous year;
- An explanation of any differences between “balances carried forward” and “total cash and short term investment” if applicable;
- A list of councillor or member responsibilities; and
- Details of public land and building assets owned by the parish council.

The mandatory code also required other information to be published more frequently than annually. The Clerk also informed the Council that it's asset register needed to be updated in 2019/20.

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION

Resolved

That the Council having confirmed it met the qualifying criteria, as set out in Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review and that the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and the Chair of the Council be authorised to sign the certificate of

exemption for submission to the external auditor and for publication on the Parish Council website.

ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Resolved

That the Council note the report of the internal auditor which had been carried out in accordance with the authority's needs and planned coverage.

SECTION ONE - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018/19

The Council then considered the annual governance statement for 2018/19. The Clerk explained that the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement was for the council to publicly report on its arrangements for ensuring business was being conducted in accordance with the law, regulations and proper practices and that public money was being safeguarded and properly accounted for. The return contained a number of statements, known as assertions, to which the Council had to review and agree to. Appropriate evidence was required to support a 'Yes' answer.

Resolved

That the Council agree to the seven assertions and the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.

SECTION TWO - ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2018/2019

The Clerk informed the Council that Section 2 of the AGAR was essentially the statement of accounts in the form of a summary of income and expenditure account and a statement of balances. This was presented to the Council for approval, together with details of income and expenditure for 2018/19, a bank reconciliation and an explanation of variances, which the Clerk summarised for the Council.

Resolved

That the accounting statements for 2018/19 be approved.

19/24 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.

Payment	Supplier	Description	Amount
BACS	AA Landscapes	Grass cutting	350.00
BACS	HMRC	PAYE (Period 3)	107.37
SO	M Turnbull	Clerks Salary (June)	429.48
BACS	Came and Company	Insurance	397.13
BACS	L Gladders	Internal Audit	100.00
BACS	Northern Powergrid	Electricity Charges	47.97
SO	Unity Trust	Service Charge	18.00
BACS	Bearpark Primary School	Donation for Cycle Event	60.00

19/25 CLERKS REPORT

The Council noted a report of the Clerk which detailed the following:

- County Durham Environment Awards
- Parish Council Vacancy
- Bearpark Primary School – Invitation to Cycle Event
- WRAGG bulletin
- County Durham Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting
- Durham City – Civic Appointments
- Rural Services Network North East Regional Seminar
- Register of Interests updates

Resolved

That the information and any actions taken be noted.

19/26 LAND AT COOK AVENUE

The Clerk informed the Council that at its meeting in April 2019, the Council gave approval to proceed with negotiations to purchase land at Cook Avenue. Since then operational difficulties had been identified concerning the grass cutting of the proposed formal right of way. An amendment had been put forward by the landowner following a recent site visit, which would see the creation of gate between 3-5 Beaurepaire which the Parish Council would be responsible for installing and meeting the cost of. The estimated cost for the gate was £1091.40. The work would be subject to consultation and agreement with those residents affected.

Resolved

That the Council agree to the additional cost associated with the installation of the gate, dependent on the outcome of further consultation with local residents.

19/27 PARISH COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

The Clerk informed the Council that the action plan had been updated since the previous meeting and summarised the updates which included:

Ref	Notes
GFA 1	The Annual Governance and Accountability return had now been signed off. The necessary certificate would be emailed to the external auditor and supporting documentation would be made available on the Parish Council website
ENV 1	The Clerk had met with Asset Management regarding the lease of land to the front and rear of the Community Centre, which would not include the hardstanding areas, due to the associated maintenance and liability costs. Heads of Terms were now awaited
ENV 4	No further progress had been regarding the allotment site. The Chair had agreed to measure the plot sizes. Once carried out it was proposed to convene a meeting to discuss the next steps

- ENV 5 The Clerk and Chair would be meeting with the Headteacher of Bearpark Primary School on 1 July to discuss ideas for the community garden area
- ENV 7 The Chair was currently in discussion with the landowner and awaiting the outcome of resident consultation
- HWB 2 The Dementia Friends awareness session had been held prior to the meeting. Expressions of interest to be sent to those Councillors who attended to scope interest in progressing to work towards making Bearpark a Dementia Friendly Community
- EV 1 An update was provided in relation to the Armed Forces Day Funday taking place on 6 July 2019

Resolved

That the update be noted.

19/28 VILLAGE MATTERS

(i) Village Noticeboards

Councillor M Chard informed the Council that she had received representations from residents regarding a lack of information about parish council matters in the village noticeboards. For example, the lack of attendance from members of the public at parish council meetings indicated that people were not aware of what was happening in the village. The Clerk informed Councillor Chard that he was in agreement with the comments made and felt that more could be done, however, assistance was a key factor. The Clerk explained that there was always a willingness to improve such issues for the benefit of the village, however, Councillors had to realise that the contracted hours of the Clerk were fully utilised each week and in many cases the Clerk was working over the contracted hours, without pay. The additional workload associated with producing summaries, newsletters, leaflets, consultation documents etc took a large proportion of time and effort. The Clerk also explained that the noticeboards were simply not big enough to accommodate a full set of minutes, however, agendas were placed in the parish noticeboard by the Vice-Chair. Summaries had been produced previously as a trial and no feedback had been received.

Resolved

That the representations be noted and the Council give some future consideration regarding a more sustainable long-term solution.

(ii) Dog Fouling

Councillor Kemp reported that Colliery Road was still experiencing large amounts of dog fouling. Councillor Anderson added that it was also a huge problem around the 'heaps', however, there were no bins around the area which meant that people were bagging dog waste, but disposing of the bag around the area because there was no bins located in or around about the heaps.

Resolved

That the dog fouling be reported and investigations be made as to whether the installation of bins in the heaps would be feasible.

(iii) St Edmund's Church

Councillor Kemp reported that St. Edmunds Church was still operational and there had been an increase in activities which was pleasing to note. 5-6 christenings were booked and a recent service had been conducted by the Bishop of Jarrow.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

19/28 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Wednesday 17 July 2019 at 7.00 p.m. at Ushaw.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.