

## **Bearpark Parish Council**

At a meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 15 September 2021** at **7.00 p.m.**

**Present:**                   **Councillor M Wilson in the Chair**

Councillors N Anderson, I Cummings, O Edwards, R Kemp, C Gallagher, J Peart and J Thompson.

County Councillor Dan Nicholls was also in attendance.

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

There were no apologies for absence.

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

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

### **3. Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### **4. Police Report**

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that she had met with representatives from the Police and there were no issues currently affecting the village.

### **6. Representations from the Public**

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

### **7. County Council Report**

Councillor D Nicholls provided the report to the Council as follows:

- Coronavirus pandemic latest statistics for the last seven day period indicated 421 cases per 100,000
- There has been a large rise in hospital administrations, particularly in A&E with a 33% increase
- There was still a lot of uncertainty around the DCC HQ, DLI Museum and Aykley Heads site
- John Hewitt had been appointed Chief Executive of Durham County Council. This would be formally ratified at the full Council in September
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was to continue and was due to be agreed by the County Council in October

- Cabinet had considered its long-term financial plan update
- DCC were discussing plans for their mineral waste development plan
- More legislation coming out within the next four years regarding the collection of food waste
- The Council were due to decide on their leisure transformation plan

## **8. Finance Report**

The Clerk provided a copy of the latest accounting records which included all payments for approval, payments made since the last meeting and a bank reconciliation. The Clerk informed the Council that some elected members would need to become signatories on the account as there was only one remained elected signatory and the Council required a minimum of two signatories, in line with its mandate. Councillor J Thompson indicated that he would be a signatory and would complete the relevant paperwork.

### **Resolved**

That the accounting statements be agreed.

## **9. Planning Applications**

The Council noted the following planning application:

- (i) **DM/21/01520/FPA - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 148no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom two-storey dwellings with associated works at land to the rear of the old Chapel, Colliery Road, Bearpark DH7 7AU**

The Clerk informed the Council that the application was ongoing with comments still awaited from some of the statutory services and the Council had previously deferred making any representations on the application until the full impact of the potential development had been understood. Since the previous meeting, some Councillors had met with a representative of Gleasons on-site. There were aspects of the development yet to be commented upon by statutory consultees. However, the Council were of the view that whilst there were elements of the development to be cautious about, it was accepted that the land was earmarked for housing in the County Durham Plan. Each application was considered on its own merits and the application presented was for less houses than previous, and were more affordable homes. Colliery Road would see additional traffic and there were concerns about vehicle parking outside the Primary School which would need to be addressed. There were also concerns expressed around capacity at local health services. The developer had reassured Councillors regarding SUDS and biodiversity measures as part of the discussion on site. The Council would also provide comments to Durham County Council to improve the flow of traffic at Toll House Road to potentially allow more vehicles to pass through the lights at peak periods.

### **Resolved**

That a response be provided to the application.

- (ii) **DM/21/02198/FPA - Construction of 3 new detached dwellings with integral on-site parking and Garages with shared site access from Auton Stile road on land opposite Aldin Grange House, Aldin Grange Terrace, Bearpark**

The Clerk informed the Council that the application had recently been posted on-line. Initial concerns from the Clerk centered around the impact on the adjacent greenbelt, the difficulty of the proposed access (and how this may conflict with the Colliery Road development) and the fact that the land was not identified in the Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment. The Council felt that there were reasons to be cautious and felt that the scale of the development was not commensurate with the buildings around it. There were concerns around access and egress from the site given the junction with Colliery Road. The Council also felt that the application had to be considered on its own merits. Concerns were raised about the environmental damage and the mature oak tree on the boundary.

**Resolved**

That a response be provided to the application.

**11. Report of the Clerk**

The Clerk provided the Council with an update regarding correspondence received which included:

- Annual meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils – 9 October
- Smaller Local Councils forum meeting
- Additional equipment at Bearpark Colliery Play area - update

**Resolved**

- (i) That the update be noted; and
- (ii) That any required follow-up reports be considered at the next meeting.

**13. Village Matters**

**Village Remembrance**

Councillor R Kemp informed the Council that there would likely be around 800 poppies knitted for the village display of remembrance. Councillor Cummings explained that these would need to be ready by mid-late October so they could be prepared by the artist for display. In addition to this Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that she would speak to school in terms of creating some poppies for display on the parish land. Councillor M Wilson had also spoken to the vicar who would undertake a small service at the pit wheel on 11 November.

**Resolved**

- (i) That the update be noted;
- (ii) That the Clerk be authorized to purchase two remembrance figures at £175 each for the parish land along with a wreath for the village remembrance service; and

- (iii) That any costs associated with the pit wheel display be reimbursed to the artist.

**13. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 20 October 2021 at Bearpark and District Workingmens Club.