

Bearpark Parish Council

At a meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 17 January, 2024** at **7:00pm** at **Beaurepaire Community Hub**.

Present: Cllr M Wilson (Chair) Cllr I Cummings Cllr O Edwards
Cllr J Peart Cllr P Wilson
Cllr J Thompson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Cllr N Anderson Cllr R Kemp
Cllr J Thompson

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Overgrown Vegetation at Cook Avenue – had been re-reported by the Clerk.

Resolved

That the Clerk report back when a response had been received.

Flagpole – confirmation had been received that planning permission would be required to the cost of £353. Clerk had almost completed application form but was awaiting some advice from the Planning Team at DCC.

Resolved

That the Clerk report back when more information available.

Listed Sign – confirmation had been received that planning permission was not required unless any iron works repairs were needed.

Resolved

That Cllr I Cummings would assess the sign and report back if anything other than painting required.

Remembering Bearpark – the Corporate Property and Land team at DCC had responded to the Clerk to advise that a license would have to be granted before a planning permission application could be submitted.

Resolved

That the Clerk follow this up and Cllr M Wilson contact the AAP Co-ordinator to help speed up the process.

Electricity Bill – an application had been made to switch to direct debit payments but no confirmation had been received as yet.

Resolved

That the Clerk report back when confirmation had been received.

Emergency Plan Leaflets – Had been printed and a distributor had picked up the leaflets for distribution.

Allotments – The previously circulated tenancy agreement was approved.

Resolved

That the Clerk circulate to all current allotment holders.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

Heritage 100 Walk – A response had been received from Keiron to advise that no assistance would be required to research and write the story and that the money would be raised elsewhere. A springtime walk would be arranged to advertise the walk.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

Poppies – decoration had been removed.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

4. Police Report

Cllr M Wilson attended the most recent PACT meeting and advised that there had been further reports of off-road bikes. Police who were in attendance advised that signs were to be erected in problem areas which stated no off-road bikes were permitted and this meant that if any were seen in these areas, police would be able to seize the bikes.

There had been one report of problem parking around the GP Surgery.

Resolved

That the information be noted

5. Representations from the Public

A representation had been received with regard to a property on North View which was believed to house some ex-offenders who had been caught shoplifting.

Resolved

The Clerk had advised the member of the public to report any instances of shoplifting to the police. Cllr M Wilson would make some enquiries at DCC to find out who was responsible for housing these residents so that a complaint could be made.

6. County Councillors Report

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

- The North East has been chosen to pilot a project which will see the region work towards more healthy and sustainable food for its residents. Good Food Local is a project run by Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, with funding from Impact on Urban Health. Sustain has been working with local authorities in London for over 10 years to track data relating to the availability of healthy and sustainable food and wants to roll the scheme out nationwide.

- Applications are now open for two Independent Person Posts on DCC's Audit Committee, which advises the council and its Cabinet on audit and governance issues.
- The new Durham Bus Station opened to the public on Sunday 7 January. The facility, which is located on the site of the former bus station on North Road, will be a modern transport hub that offers a safe and welcoming space for residents and visitors alike. The new bus station has been designed to increase the overall space for passengers and has improved facilities including segregated toilets, a Changing Places toilet, improved information displays and upgraded seating in the passenger waiting area.

Resolved

That the information be noted

7. Report of the Clerk

The Clerk provided an update to the Council as follows:

- The following training sessions would be provided by NALC:
 - How local councils can benefit from the levelling up agenda – 31 January, 12:00-13:15
 - New Councillor Training – 27 February 18:00-20:00
- Backdated pay has not yet been sent to the previous Clerk as unsure how to pay HMRC for this.
- CDALC have asked for nominations for this year's Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.
- A finance report was circulated detailing all recent and upcoming expenditure.

Resolved

That the information be noted. That the Clerk nominate Cllr O Edwards plus guest for attendance at the Royal Garden Party. That all costs be and approved.

8. Planning Applications

Details of two planning applications were circulated. There were no objections.

Resolved

That the information be noted

9. Requests for Financial Assistance

A request for a donation had been received from the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Resolved

That the Clerk arrange for a donation of £200

10. Village Matters

Planter Maintenance and Grass Cutting – The Clerk advised that DK Horticulture had offered a 3 year contract at a fixed price of £1900.

Resolved

That the contract be accepted

11. Budget and Precept 2024/2025

The Clerk circulated a budget forecast which showed the projected spend over the next financial year. This included a prediction of increase in expenditure by 5%, 7.5% and 10%. Each showed that a higher amount was due to be spent that was previously asked for in the parish precept.

Council were reminded that the LCTRS grant had reduced by 50% and that this would be stopped altogether in 2025/2026.

Resolved

That the parish precept be increased by 7.5% due to the planned spend in the next financial year and the rise in ongoing costs. This would mean an increase of £2.16 per year in Band A properties.

12. Co-option of Parish Councillors

An expression of interest was received by Ms J Baker, the Clerk read out the application statement.

Resolved

That Ms Baker be co-opted onto the council and that the Clerk make the necessary arrangements.

13. Any Other Business

Banner Group – Cllr I Cummings informed council of the progress of the Banner Group and thanked everyone for their ongoing support

Resolved

That the information be noted

40th Anniversary of the Colliery Closure – A celebration event would be organised by the Banner Group for Saturday 6 April.

A service would be organised by the council for Sunday 14 April. Bearpark and Esh Colliery Band had been booked to play at St Edmunds Church.

Resolved

That Cllr I Cummings make the arrangements for 6 April. That Cllr M Wilson liaise with the Vicar of St Edmunds Church to make arrangements for the service on 14 April.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on **Wednesday 21 February 7:00pm at Beaurepaire Community Hub.**

Signed  (Chair of Bearpark Parish Council)

Date 