

Bearpark Parish Council

At a meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 19 April 2023** at **7.00 p.m.** held at **Beaurepaire Community Hub.**

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

Councillors I Cummings, O Edwards, J Thompson and P Wilson.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Kemp and County Councillor D Nicholls.

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 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Police Report

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that problems persisted at the Colliery Road Play Area in terms of vandalism and anti-social behavior to the point where play equipment was being fixed on a morning and then damaged again on the afternoon. Neighbourhood Wardens and Police had engaged with kids in the area, however, the problems remained. There was a worry that Durham County Council would remove play equipment if problems persisted, indeed the current climbing frame for younger children was to be replaced with a metal frame which would not be as attractive as the current equipment.

5. Representations from the Public

There were no representations from the public.

6. County Council Report

Councillor M Wilson provided a brief report to the Council as follows:

- Bishop Auckland Food Festival was being held the coming weekend. The festival attracted 30,000 visitors last year and provided good income generation for the area;
- Durham Cathedral would be illuminated red white and blue for the Kings Coronation between 5-8 May; and
- Numerous events were taking place in Durham City with one of the main events being the Sparks – Dance Troupe over the Coronation weekend.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

The Clerk explained that the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement was for the council to publicly report on its arrangements for ensuring business had been conducted in accordance with the law, regulations and proper practices and that public money was being safeguarded and properly accounted for. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return was made up of three parts. The first part was the Annual Internal Audit Report which had been completed by the internal auditor. Sections one and two required completion and approval by the authority (with Section 1, Annual Governance Statement to be approved, before approval of Section 2, Accounting Statements). Section 3 would be completed by the external auditor and returned to the authority.

Section One - 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.

In the previous year the Council did not meet the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to provide electors with a period of 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July, to inspect the accounts which had been an oversight due to a delay in publishing the AGAR and the associated changed which was required to the public rights period. Since that time the Council had ensured that appropriate checks were in place to ensure that the public rights period is checked and that the dates accord with those set out in the associated regulations.

Resolved

That the Council agree to assertions and the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

Section Two - The Clerk informed the Council that Section 2 of the AGAR was 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 2022/23, a bank reconciliation and an explanation of variances, which the Clerk summarised for the Council.

Resolved

That the accounting statements for 2022/23 be approved.

8. Coronation Event

The Clerk updated the Council in relation to the Coronation Event taking place at the Hub on Bank Holiday Monday 8 May. The timings had been confirmed for 11am-3pm. This event had been planned in conjunction with Beaurepaire Community Hub, with financial contributions from the Parish Council for the Facepainter and a couple of small fairground rides. Kings and queens fancy dress through the ages would also take place with the Parish Council providing vouchers for Best King and Best Queen.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

9. Request for Financial Assistance

The Clerk informed the Council that one request had been received for financial assistance from Bearpark Community Football Club. The Clerk informed the Council that representatives of the Club were unable to be present owing to work commitments and had discussed the request with the Clerk. The football club were seeking £1000 to be spent on end of season trophies, FA first aid course and updated DBS checks, rain jackets, training equipment comprising poles and weights, match balls, replacement socks and shorts, first aid kit replacements and water bottle replacements. The Football Club had revised their initial request following discussions with the Clerk who advised that the initial request were more revenue and ongoing fees which should look to be paid for out of fundraising and fees, for examples pitch fees, league fees, FA affiliation. The Clerk also advised that in a future year, the Parish Council may look to sponsor for the football team. The Clerk also advised that he had advised the football club to step up their fundraising activities and generate more income to ensure they could be self sufficient.

Resolved

The Parish Council agree to support the project and make a contribution of £1000.

10. Report of the Clerk

The Clerk provided the Council with an update, which included:

- The Council had held its first litter pick of the year on Sunday 2 April at 10.30 a.m. which disappointingly only attracted 4 volunteers. It was agreed that the next litter pick be arranged for a later Sunday in May due to the additional bank holiday.

Resolved

That the Clerks report be noted and actions agreed, where appropriate.

11. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for consideration.

12. Community Emergency plan update

Councillor M Wilson and I Cummings informed the Council that there was no further update since the previous meeting. The Clerk informed the Council that it was necessary to start pulling elements of the plan together to reflect the work that Councillors Cummings and Wilson had carried out to date, for example an inventory of the emergency packs would be required.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

13. Village Matters

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that she was looking to create a footpath from Eastside Avenue with possible funding from the AAP towns and villages fund

and the parish council. It was proposed to hold a site visit with DCC to scope the cost. In the meantime Councillor M Wilson would approach the AAP in relation to funding.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 May 2023.