

Bearpark Parish Council

At a meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 19 June, 7:00pm** at **Beaurepaire Community Hub**.

Present: Cllr M Wilson (Chair) Cllr N Anderson Cllr J Baker
 Cllr J Thompson Cllr P Wilson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Cllr I Cummings, Cllr O Edwards and
Cllr J Peart

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr J Baker declared that she was a member of Bearpark Banner Group and she would leave the meeting when the request for financial assistance was to be discussed.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Police Report

Cllr M Wilson advised that there was nothing further to report until after the next PACT meeting which was due to take place the following week.

5. County Councillors Report

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

- DCC officially opened The Story on Friday 14 June. Combining five important collections, it offers visitors access to ancient documents and archaeological finds, records of bravery, and stories of life-changing events. This includes six miles of archives charting 900 years of County Durham's history and the entire Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection, which has been reunited with the DLI Archive for the first time since 1998. A free, interactive exhibition space lifts the lid on the stories within these collections, and an exciting programme of activities will offer new ways for people to discover and learn more about the people and events that shaped the county. And, as the new home of the County Registration Service, The Story provides a place for current and future generations to make their own milestones - be that registering a birth or getting married in one of the venue's magnificent ceremony rooms.
- Cllr Liz Brown begins her term as Mayor of Durham for 2024/25, having served as a local councillor since 2017 and as a parish councillor since 2018. For her chosen charities, Cllr Brown will be raising money for Feeding Families, which offers support to people experiencing food poverty, and animal rescue charity Stray Aid.
- A new grass maintenance scheme had been established to help contribute to the preservation of the environment.

Resolved

That the information be noted

6. Report of the Clerk

The Clerk provided an update to the Council as follows:

- **Updates on actions from the previous meeting**
 - **Donation to Bearpark Community Football Club** – no information as yet on the new girls team, will update when possible.
 - **Former Community Centre**- Cllr M Wilson has met with officers at DCC but no further progress has been made. A further meeting was scheduled for July. The Clerk is awaiting a response to enquiries made. Updates will be provided when available.
 - **Overgrown vegetation at Cook Avenue** – Enforcement letters have been sent but as it is now nesting season, works cannot commence until end of August/September. Further updates will be provided when possible.
 - **Listed sign** – A response was received in relation to a quote but a figure has not yet been provided. Once a quote has been agreed, the Clerk will investigate funding possibilities.
 - **Register of Interests** – Cllr J Peart and Cllr J Thompson outstanding.
 - **Interpretation Boards** – No response from the Planning Team at DCC as yet. Clerk is still investigating.
 - **Insurance** – A 3 year agreement had been opted into last year and this automatically renewed on 11 June.
 - **Flagpole** – The Planning Team at DCC have advised that permission is not required. The application fee will be refunded (less a service charge) and the Clerk will now proceed with installation.
 - **Noticeboard** – was not repaired before recent accident which damaged the noticeboard beyond repair. Clerk is now seeking an insurance claim and council agreed to replace like for like. Updates to be provided when available.
 - **Summer Fair** – had been another successful event. Clerk to add next year's fair to the agenda for next month so that a date can be agreed early and arrangements can be made.
 - **Land to the North of the cricket ground** – DCC confirmed they were not reviewing this pitch as there is an ongoing asset transfer request with the cricket club, unfortunately this is proving difficult as the site is a CISWO site. Cllr I Cummings to contact Cricket Club to advise.
- **Training Opportunities**
 - NALC - Unleashing the power of local councils to tackle the climate emergency - 26 June, 12.00-13.15
- **Christmas Lights**

DCC have been in touch to arrange delivery of Christmas lights for storage. Clerk to enquire with DK Horticulture if they could store.
- **Finance Report**

The Clerk circulated a report which detailed all recent and upcoming expenditure.

Resolved

That the information be noted, that all costs be approved and relevant action taken by the Clerk.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Review

- **Internal Audit Report**

An Internal Audit was carried out by Lucy Gladders and the report was circulated. The only recommendation was to create a new Asset Register which the Clerk had already completed (to be discussed later on the agenda)

- **Annual Governance Statement**

The annual governance statement was completed, agreed and signed by the Chair.

- **Accounting Statement**

The accounting statement had been prepared by the Clerk and presented to Council. This was agreed and signed by the Chair.

- **Bank Reconciliation**

The bank reconciliation had been prepared by the Clerk and was presented to Council. This was agreed.

- **Explanation of Variances**

The explanation of variances had been prepared by the Clerk and was presented to Council. This was agreed.

- **Notice of Electors' Rights**

The notice of electors' rights had been prepared by the Clerk and was presented to Council. This was agreed. The Clerk would publish this on the website on 20 June.

Resolved

That the Clerk publish the appropriate documents and submit for external audit.

8. Approval of Key Documents

- **Asset Register**

The Clerk had created a new asset register as the previous one was unable to be recovered. It was highlighted that a number of benches and the listed sign had been missed of the register. The Clerk would make these changes and publish the new register.

- **Emergency Plan**

The Clerk had produced the Emergency Plan and this was agreed with the addition of instructions as to who to contact to use the snow shovels/battery operated radios. The Clerk would make these amendments and publish the plan.

- **Grant Giving Policy and Application Form**

The Clerk had produced a Grant Giving Policy and Application Form. These were agreed and would be used going forward for any applications for financial assistance.

9. Allotments

Letters detailing charges for 2024/25 had been sent along with new tenancy agreements. The Clerk was monitoring the return of signed agreements and payments and will update once all had been received.

The Expression of Interest for additional land to create more allotments had been passed to a named officer at DCC. Updates would be provided as and when available.

A letter regarding flytipping had been sent to all allotment holders. It was discussed and concluded that this had likely not been an allotment holder. The situation had improved for the time being and would be monitored.

The Clerk and Cllr N Anderson would meet to discuss the waiting list as a further enquiry had been received.

The Northern Region of the National Allotment Society have sent an invite to all allotment holders in the region to take part in National Allotments Week. Cllr N Anderson would share this and get in touch if anyone requested more information.

Resolved

That the information be noted, and relevant action taken by the Clerk

10. Community Garden

Cllr M Wilson advised that the Community Garden had recently been vandalised. Bearpark Primary School have agreed to try to restore the garden but would need help with costs.

Resolved

That financial assistance would be considered following an application from the School.

11. Parish Funded Neighbourhood Warden

The Council reconsidered the possibility of extra Neighbourhood Warden presence to deter anti-social behaviour and off-road biking.

Resolved

That the Clerk make the necessary arrangements to take this forward.

12. Play Area

Cllr M Wilson advised that she had set aside some of her County Council Neighbourhood Budget to pay for replacement equipment at the play area near to the school. She had been concerned that the amount wouldn't be enough to cover the cost and asked if Council would consider meeting the shortfall which may be up to £2000.

Resolved

That the Council contribute the shortfall of £2000 if necessary.

13. Requests for Financial Assistance

• Bearpark Miners Banner Group

The Banner Group requested funding to contribute towards a new banner as the old one is irreparable and too damaged to use in future.

Cllr J Baker left the meeting

Resolved

That Council contribute £2500 towards the cost of a new banner.

Cllr J Baker rejoined the meeting

- **DERIC Youth Project**

A request was made for £607 to install the new defibrillator at Beaurepaire Communal Hall.

Resolved

That Council contribute the full £607.

- **Mayor of Durham**

A request had been received from the new Mayor of Durham, Cllr Liz Brown for a contribution towards her two chosen charities Feeding Families and Stray Aid.

Resolved

That a contribution of £50 be made.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on **Wednesday 17 July, 7:00pm** at **Beaurepaire Community Hub**.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....