

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of Bearpark Parish Council held on **Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 7.00 p.m. at Bearpark Community Centre.**

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors G Hendry, M Wilson and P Wilson.

19/107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Kemp.

19/108 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

19/109 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19/110 POLICE REPORT

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that she had attended a recent meeting of the Police and Communities Together (PACT). The majority of issues being reported by the Police had been occurring in nearby Ushaw Moor. There were no matters specific to Bearpark. In nearby Ushaw Moor, due to the significant concerns expressed by local people extra police patrols were taking place and off-licences were reminded of their responsibilities regarding the sale of alcohol to those who could be under-age. In one particularly unsavoury incident had seen a can thrown in the face of a Neighbourhood Warden. A local play area had been subject to significant amount of vandalism. The Police had stated that the type of behaviour seen would not be tolerated.

19/111 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The Clerk informed the Council that the matter raised at the previous meeting regarding a number of trees that had been felled in late 2019 and reported that a Tree Preservation Order had been made permanent on the remaining trees, given their significant impact on the local environment and their significant skyline features. The temporary order which came into force on 13 November 2019 had now been made permanent. The resident had asked if the Parish Council would support his view on the significance of the trees and support any proposed permanent order.

19/112 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor M Wilson provided an update as follows:

- A community hub was in the process of being set up. County Durham Together would provide support and assistance to those who needed help the most during the Coronavirus pandemic;
- All County Council buildings including libraries, leisure centres and council offices had been closed. Council staff had been instructed to work from home until further notice and in line with government guidance;
- The Sacriston Fyndoune site of Durham Community Business College was to close as the two sites (Ushaw Moor and Sacriston) could no longer be sustained; and
- Bearpark Community Centre would be eligible to apply for a grant from Durham County Council due to its closure during the Coronavirus pandemic. Details had been passed onto the Community Association.

19/113 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There were no requests for financial assistance for consideration.

19/114 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
SO	M Turnbull	Clerks Salary (March)	429.48

19/115 COVID-19 EMERGENCY POWERS

The Council considered a report of the Clerk which sought approval of delegated powers for the Clerk to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the event that it is unable to meet during the Coronavirus pandemic. The powers were legislated for under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved

That the Clerk be given delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council to do anything expedient and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the Council and to deal with any mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable. All decisions made to be recorded and published on the Council's website.

19/116 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Clerk informed the Council that there was one application for consideration as follows:

DM/20/01228/FPA - St Edmunds Church Hall, Auton Stile, Bearpark, DH7 7AA

The application, if approved would see the conversion of the existing Church Hall to a residential bungalow with detached double garage to front elevation. The Clerk informed the Council that the application would be live on the planning portal in the coming weeks. The Council had no comments to make at the present time but would await to see more detailed plans.

19/117 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk informed the Council that the coming months would prove to be an extremely uncertain time for the county and indeed the country and the world given the current scenario regarding the pandemic. All up and coming events would be cancelled, including the up and coming litter pick to coincide with the Big Spring Clean campaign which had also been cancelled. The Parish Council would be unable to hold any events for the foreseeable future and it was unlikely that any events would be able to be held until 2021.

Parish Council meetings would not be able to take place. Current legislation did not allow for the holding of remote or virtual meetings. However, it was understood that emergency legislation to permit holding remote meetings would follow in due course. It was also understood that requirements for the Council to hold an annual meeting and annual meeting of parishioners would be dropped and legislated for over the coming months.

19/118 PARISH COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

The Clerk informed the Council that the action plan needed a complete refresh, however, it would be parked until such time that it could be reviewed.

19/119 VILLAGE MATTERS (including COVID-19 response)

(i) Volunteering Scheme

The Clerk informed the Council that a register of volunteers was being compiled of volunteers who had put themselves forward to assist residents of Bearpark who needed help the most during the coronavirus pandemic. The volunteers had offered assistance to those most 'at risk' around the following categories:

- Shopping for vulnerable people
- Dog walking
- Delivering a newspaper
- Posting mail
- Friendly chat
- Food preparation advice
- Signposting to support agencies

All volunteers would be following advice issued by Public Health England and the UK Government. Strict instructions would apply for exchange of cash and exchange of shopping. The offer would be specific to Bearpark

(ii) Emergency Planning

Further to the previous meeting the Clerk had enquired to the County Council Civil Contingencies Unit in terms of what the parish could do to assist in the event of an emergency situation affecting the parish. The Unit had responded to the Clerk and explained that as an extra level of resilience, parish councils could develop and maintain their own emergency plans for their communities if required or wanted. If there was a desire to produce an emergency plan it was vitally important that members of the community would be incorporated to ensure the plan was as effective as it could be. For example, Lanchester had an emergency plan held and kept up to date by the parish council but community members are included as contacts.

A “6 step guide” had been produced to provide an idea of what would be included in the plan and how the Parish Council could go about doing it. The six steps were as follows:

1. Get together and organise the work
2. Know your risks
3. Identify skills, resources and key facilities
4. Keep in touch
5. Activate plan and take control
6. Test your plan

Support would be available to set up any plan and identify risks, places of safety etc. and to get the plan up and running and help with the training and exercising needed to complement it. It would then be the responsibility of the parish council to keep contact details etc up to date.

The Chair felt that the information provided was extremely useful. However, given the current circumstances, such an aspiration would have to be shelved given the role of the local resilience forum during the coronavirus pandemic.

It was hoped to resurrect the idea in the future.

19/120 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Given the circumstance it was unknown as to when the date of the next parish meeting could take place.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.