

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a remote meeting of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors R Briggs, O Edwards, G Hendry, M Wilson and P Wilson.

20/28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr R Kemp.

20/29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20/30 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

20/31 POLICE REPORT

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that several complaints regarding quad bikes over the heaps and along the railway tracks had been received. This was being tackled by Operation Endurance. Councillor Wilson also made the Council aware that Police had warned that a particularly dangerous batch of heroin had been in circulation in the area following the death of two males (Bearpark and Ushaw Moor). Police were urging users not to risk their life by taking illicit substances and asked for people to seek medical attention should they think it necessary.

20/32 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Parish Council listened to representations from a community worker based in Nevilles Cross and Bearpark who were looking at ways how to:

- 1) reach, encourage and/ or care for those who are isolated?
- 2) continue helping bring the community together?

Projects since Covid had included community 'Christmas packs', which were distributed from the church field to 200 homes, for people to use and display in their windows. Other ideas discussed included telephone buddy systems, pen pal letters activity pack from church, Easter, Music in the streets, remembrance poppies (including different ways of making them and a possible poppy cascade from the pit wheel) and an easter egg trail.

Councillors thanked the community worker for attending the meeting and it was agreed to explore some initiatives for the village, along with other volunteers and groups, which the community worker would help facilitate.

20/33 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor M Wilson provided an update in relation to the County Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. In other news:

- Work was scheduled to start on Durham Bus Station in February and would take around 18 months to complete;
- Chinese New Year events with school children would be held online; and
- Key workers were currently receiving vaccinations at County Hall.

20/34 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.

20/35 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21

The Clerk provided the Council with a summary of expenditure for the current financial year. In view of the relatively healthy level of reserve and current balance and mindful of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Parish Council were unanimous in their agreement not to increase the precept for 2021/22. The Parish Council would continue to lobby on behalf of residents in the community as it always strived to do so. The Parish Council would also look at cost effective ways better the local environment wherever possible and refresh any assets moving forward as and when restrictions permitted. A number of projects were planned some of which would be funded through the use of earmarked reserves.

Resolved

That the Council agree a 0% increase in the budget and precept 2021/22.

20/36 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council considered the following planning applications:

Ref. No: DM/21/00149/FPA

Erection of timber built carport to the north of 5 Lodge Farm Open for comment icon
The Byre 5 Lodge Farm Bearpark Durham DH7 7EA

Ref. No: DM/20/03770/FPA

Erection of close boarded timber fence above brick wall to side (Part Retrospective)
Ushaw Lodge 4 Edmund Court Bearpark Bishops Meadows Durham DH7 7TF

Ref. No: DM/20/03711/VOC

Application to vary wording of conditions 2 (Approved Plans and Documents), 3 (Site Investigations and Risk Assessment), 11 (Demolition Method Statement), 13 (Landscaping Scheme) and 14 (Archaeological Work) and to remove condition 15

(Garage) of planning permission DM/15/02819/FPA for erection of 5 no. dwellinghouses.

Whitehouse Farm Bearpark Durham DH7 7DW

Ref. No: DM/20/03710/FPA

Retrospective application for the erection of a double garage.

Whitehouse Farm Bearpark Durham DH7 7DW

Ref. No: DRC/20/00414

Discharge of conditions 3, 4 and 5 pursuant to planning approval DM/20/02383/FPA
Busy Bears Nursery Auton Stile Bearpark Durham DH7 7AA

Resolved

That all of the applications be noted.

20/37 CLERKS REPORT

(i) Bearpark Colliery Interpretation Boards

Since the last meeting, the Clerk reported that feedback through social media had attracted much interest and been very positive. The Clerk had received confirmation from Durham County Council that a planning application would need to be submitted to site the boards. Consent would be required from Durham County Council as the boards were proposed to be situated on their land. The Clerk had contacted DCC on 14 December seeking permission but was still awaiting a response. The final design of the boards had been delayed due to COVID19 issues affecting the company procured to produce the boards.

(ii) Parish Planters 2021

The Clerk informed the Council that the contract for the summer and winter/spring planting for the planters was coming to an end. Given that the Parish Council were pleased with the work carried out in 2020 the Clerk had taken the opportunity to seek a renewed quotation the supply of summer and winter annual plants and daily maintenance to the eight planters located at the village gateway, the chicane, Aged Miners Homes, Woodland Road, Village Gateway and Bishops Meadow Estate.

Should the Parish Council wish to proceed, plants would be planted mid/late-May, and winter plants early/mid-September. Payment to be made in full in October. Total cost was £1500. In addition a quote had been sought for grass cutting from the same contractor. This was priced at £720. 16 cuts within the year week commencing 22nd March, every fortnight until week commencing 18th October.

Resolved

That the quotation for works be accepted and that notice to the current grass cutting contractors be given.

(iii) Support for residents

The Clerk informed the Council that the free festive lunch offer carried out in conjunction with Truly Scrumptious to provide local residents, in need with a free

festive lunch was held for one-day only a couple of weeks before Christmas. Twelve meals had been provided. The Parish Council received many other requests from neighbouring villages including Ushaw Moor and New Brancepeth, however, the budget for this purpose was strictly limited to residents of Bearpark.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

(iv) Draft Licence to Occupy Land at Bearpark Allotments

The Clerk informed the Council that in response to an enquiry to Durham County Council regarding additional allotment land at Bearpark, a draft licence to occupy some additional land next to the current allotment access had been provided for consideration. Councillor Wright explained that the terms of the licence would not be acceptable. Under the draft agreement the Parish Council would not be able to sub-let to anyone wishing to use the land as an allotment and the term was not long enough. There would also need to be considerable outlay to erect a fence around the land concerned and soil tests would need to be carried out.

Resolved

That the Parish Council feedback comments to Durham County Council however, it was an enquiry that was unlikely to be pursued.

20/38 VILLAGE MATTERS

(i) Noticeboard at Bishops Meadows Estate

Councillor M Wilson confirmed that she has spoken to Durham County Council regarding the re-siting of the noticeboard.

Resolved

That the request be noted.

(ii) Signage to Beaurepaire

The Clerk reported that the matter was ongoing and being carried out in conjunction with the interpretation boards for Bearpark Colliery as part of a wider initiative, including way-marking, local walks and sites of interest. Spring would provide a good opportunity to identify the most suitable locations. Correspondence had been received from the Dream charity regarding their preferred locations.

Resolved

That the matter be noted.

(iii) Christmas Events 2020

The Clerk advised the Council the Christmas Tree lights switch on had proved to be a success given the restrictions. Councillor Briggs has advertised the event on Facebook and streamed the tree light switch on our Facebook page. Three representatives from the Aged Miners switched the lights on, socially distanced and Councillor M Wilson said a few words, as did the Aged Miners. A token of appreciation was given to the Aged Miners for the displays they had provided at their homes throughout the year.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

(iv) Snow Angels Scheme

The Clerk informed the Council that a lack of volunteers and the lack of quotes by contractors had meant that the scheme could not go ahead.

20/39 ANY ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by Councillor M Wright, **Seconded** by Councillor G Hendry that Cllr R Briggs be appointed as Chair for the remaining months up to the local elections.

20/40 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place remotely on Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 7 p.m.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.