

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of Bearpark Parish Council held on **Wednesday 15 January 2020** at 7.00 p.m. at Beaurepaire Community Hall.

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors O Edwards, G Hendry, J Peart, M Wilson and P Wilson.

19/81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Anderson, M Chard, R Kemp and K Milburn.

19/82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

19/83 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were **Moved** by Councillor M Wilson, **Seconded** by Councillor G Hendry and agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19/84 POLICE REPORT

Councillor M Wilson informed the Council that a PACT meeting was held last week. Issues of anti-social behaviour in Ushaw Moor had been reported at a multi-use games area. In Bearpark, there had been complaints about youth at the 'heaps' between Xmas and New Year.

19/85 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no representations from the public.

19/86 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor M Wilson provided an update as follows:

- Proposals had been released which would see leisure facilities upgraded across County Durham. £62.8m would be spent across the County and would be subject to consultation;
- Council staff and Councillors had made donations of gifts and toys to Salvation Army as part of the Christmas appeal;
- Annual xmas jumper day held within the Council had raised around £1000; and
- Plans were due to be released regarding Durham Bus Station redevelopment. Residents were encouraged to comment on the new plans

which would be released on Friday 17th January. Councillor M Wright expressed his disappointment at loss of the bike shop nearby and would await to see what the retail offer will be. It was hoped that there a secure bike area would be incorporated into the redevelopment plans.

19/87 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Clerk welcomed representatives from the DERIC Youth and Older Peoples Project who were attending the meeting following requests from the Parish Council. The project had submitted a request for financial assistance some months ago.

The project representatives informed the Council that the request for funding was solely for youth club of Bearpark. The youth club could not sustain its activities by obtaining money off young people for the service as they simply cannot afford it. Outreach work had been carried out in both Bearpark and Ushaw Moor. The group were striving to get everyone together – parish councillors, PCSO's and so on.

Other funding bids had been made to carry out mental health work with young people, although this area of work would have include kids from other areas because of the Durham and Mid-Durham Area Action Partnership split.

The project were looking to sustain the luncheon group for over 50's held on Wednesday's. Attendees were from all around the area and numbers ranged between 12 and 30 through the doors but tended to fluctuate due to the weather. Funding would keep the youth club going on a Saturday. Core group around 12, but could get upto 30. Those attending were really committed. During holiday times it was difficult to obtain funding. Young people carried out key funds by starting off at stage one £250 and so on etc. the project cover all aspects of the application but all of the work was carried out by the young people. All the project as for is £1.00 for attendance. Work planned for 6 weeks included dishes from around the world. Work around culture and food hygiene certificates would be learnt as part of the process. The activities helped with confidence building as many kids came from poor backgrounds. Attendees came from Bearpark and Langley Park. Age groups ranged from 8 to 16 with a ratio of three youth workers. The group at Bearpark had been running for two years. The older the kids were meant that they wanted to be more involved in other ways.

Outreach work was taking place via detached work. The project were trying to make contact with other kids throughout the village in this way. They get a group of kids in the centre. The group offers a relaxed informal environment where they can congregate together, use the internet etc. It was not unusual for these kids to go to different schools but the projects aim was that they wanted them to mix together. The project was learning individuals to take ownership of matters. Funding was also being sought for this area of work. The project were also looking at issues such as mental health, including possible project work with DCBC. All of the projects work was reported back to a board of trustees.

The representatives then left the meeting following their presentation.

Councillor M Wilson explained the importance of engagement and how much of a crucial aspect this was concerning young people. The project was based in Bearpark and open to people in Bearpark. Whilst it did bring some kids from other areas (such as Langley Park), Councillor Wilson explained that one of the other councillors from the neighbouring electoral division funded their travel costs. Councillor Wilson also highlighted that without the project being based at the communal hall in Bearpark, those kids from Bearpark who did attend probably wouldn't. Councillor G Hendry explained that she had attended on the open days previously and was encouraged by the projects and its aims and objectives. She also spoke highly of the enthusiasm of those involved in running the project and more importantly the enthusiasm of the kids involved. Councillor Hendry thought it could only be good for Bearpark and the surrounding area that this facility and particularly the youth club continued to operate. Councillors M Wright and O Edwards referred to 'measurable' activities and were encouraged about the wider learning and ownership issues. The Clerk explained that it would be good for the parish council to work more with the group as the year progressed, particularly with initiatives that gave them a sense of ownership.

Moved by Councillor O Edwards, **Seconded** by Councillor G Hendry and

Resolved

That the group be offered a grant of £1000.

19/88 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
BACS	HMRC	PAYE (January)	107.37
SO	M Turnbull	Clerks Salary (January)	429.48
BACS	Npower	Electricity	19.83
BACS	Bearpark Community Assoc	Room Hire	65.00

19/89 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21

The Clerk provided the Council with a breakdown of income and expenditure since April 2019 and highlighted, that similarly to previous years, the Council had set a budget in previous years to ensure an adequate level of earmarked reserve was held for election costs, insurance excess and an increasing number assets. This had been set in accordance with audit and accounting guidance. Historically, the Parish Council had kept any precept increases to a minimum and held a generally high, if not too high level of reserve. The Clerk explained that in 2019/20 the Council increased its precept by 94p per month (at Band D) an increase of 42.83%. The increase was set to meet a short to medium term commitment to financially support Bearpark Community Centre, which was going through a period of uncertainty. Councillors were unanimous in their support for the increase, given the situation regarding Bearpark Community Centre. There was also a strong desire from the Parish Council and local residents to install a Christmas Tree in the village, something which the Parish Council had never undertaken. A number of areas in

the village had also been tidied up, with money provided for planters, plants and additional grass cutting works. Supporting such issues and bringing projects, such as the Christmas Tree project and lights had taken a significant proportion of the Council's reserves and indeed its operational budget, hence the increase in precept.

All other administrative costs had been kept to a minimum, where possible and the Council had been fairly prudent in other areas of administration.

The Clerk informed the Council that whilst an increase of the same level would not be required for 2020/21, it would be counter-productive to set a standstill budget for the financial year ahead. The level of earmarked reserve would be reinstated moving into the financial year. However, the Council had again, by way of its emerging action plan, identified a number of projects they wished to work on throughout the new financial year. As in previous years, some of the projects would need funding from additional sources.

In setting the budget for 2020/21 the Parish Council discussed financial support for Bearpark Primary School and the desire of the school to hold more age appropriate trips and support more cultural experiences where specific year groups could be targeted. The School Culture Fund would be to spend throughout the year. The Chair suggested that £1500 be set aside for cultural events throughout the year, based on one off expenditure. Councillor Hendry Seconded the proposal.

The Council also acknowledged that if it wished to avoid the situation regarding unkept planters in the village in the forthcoming year, it would need to spend additional monies to ensure that the planters were planted up and maintained properly. Volunteer support in the village was lacking and the Council admitted it had made mistakes previously in the use of volunteers. All Councillors felt that it was important to keep the village as clean and tidy as possible. This would be supplemented by way of village walkabouts and a regular litterpick programme which would be undertaken by the Parish Council. It was felt that the village gateways were key and it would be nice to make them aesthetically pleasing from either side of the village.

Moved by Councillor M Wright and **Seconded** by Councillor O Edwards and

Resolved

It was unanimously agreed that the Council set a precept of £23,773, which at Band D was a charge of £43.18 per year, a 15% increase from the previous year. This would result in a cash increase of £3,273 from 2019/20 (an increase of 47p per month/12p per week).

19/90 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Clerk informed the Council that there were no applications for consideration.

19/91 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk informed the Council that there was nothing to report.

19/92 PARISH COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

The Clerk informed the Council that the plan needed to be updated and would be prepared for the meeting in February.

19/93 VILLAGE MATTERS

There were no matters of significance to raise.

19/94 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Wednesday 19 February 2020 at 7.00 p.m. at Bearpark Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.