

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EASINGTON VILLAGE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillor L Morton (Chair)
Councillors L Birkett, W Day, S Laws, J Lee, A Lumsden, E Marriot and A Robson

Staff: Mr S Wardle (Interim Clerk) & Mrs K Hall (Admin Assistant)

Representatives: Cllr A Surtees (DCC) S Thompson & H Couzins (Police)

EVPC 22/23/121 **Apologies for Absence**
No apologies for absence were received

RESOLVED that the information given, be NOTED

EVPC 22/23/122 **Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda**
Councillor J Lee declared an interest in item 22/23/129(c) in view of her position and capacity as an allotment holder as the item related to allotment maintenance.

RESOLVED: that the declarations be received and NOTED.

EVPC 22/23/123 **Public Participation**
Elizabeth Lee outlined details of the continuing problems with ASB at the green hut which had been raised by Jack Lee on many previous occasions. The Interim Clerk read out the email received from Mr Lee detailing the many incidents of ASB at this location
The Police had suggested using anti-vandal paint with appropriate signage however this was not considered viable due to its location adjacent to a walkway and would not be above the minimum 2.1m height above a highway. The use of CCTV was also not considered viable and would most likely be dealt with by Neighbourhood Wardens. A suggestion by Cllr A Robson to improve lighting by installing LED lights would possibly help. County Councillor Surtees advised she would follow up on the suggestions put forward and reminded everyone the importance of reporting all incidents to the Police so the area would be prioritised.
The Parish Council would look at providing a more secure bin.

RESOLVED: that the information given, be NOTED and further developments awaited.

EVPC 22/23/124 **Minutes of the last Meeting held on 10th October, 2022, and Staffing Committee held on 30th November 2022**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the above meetings be confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman.

EVPC 22/23/125

Matters Arising

The Interim Clerk advised that “matters arising” should not be included as a general agenda item and that any items requiring progress reports should be included as a specific agenda item or covered in a progress report.

RESOLVED: that the information given, be NOTED.

EVPC 22/23/126

Police Matters

The Police representatives provided a report on incidents and crime statistics since their last report. They confirmed that both high visibility and plain clothes patrols had been undertaken and that the next PACT meeting was on 26 November and online PACT would be held on 7th December. Incidents involving residents from Kings Mews had been investigated and appropriate action taken however many of the issues that had arisen were from visitors and not tenants themselves.

County Councillor Surtees reported that a meeting had been held with MySpace and the Police to address some of the problems and explained that MySpace were considering the inclusion of a new tenancy clause to assist with any problem areas.

The Police confirmed that a lot less incidents had been reported than several years ago however any tenant that had caused an issue had received a visit from the Police.

The results of the recent speed cameras on Hall Walks and Stockton Road had resulted in numerous penalty tickets being issued.

The Police would provide and circulate a leaflet/poster to provide details of how the community should report incidents.

RESOLVED that the information given, be received, and NOTED

EVPC 22/23/127

Report of the County Councillor

County Councillor Angela Surtees provided Members with a detailed report including:

- Various costed Highways & Traffic Management options totalling £32k
- Current Boundary & County Division electoral review by Boundary Commission – reduce County Councillors from 129 – 85/98
- £55m of anticipated cuts to DCC budget which would almost certainly impact on frontline services

Members raised a number of issues to be considered by DCC including the long running issue of a BT telegraph pole actually located in Seaton Close footpath adjacent to the former lay-by.

RESOLVED that the information given, be NOTED and further developments be awaited.

EVPC 22/23/128

Seaton Holme – Bar Rights

RESOLVED that the bar rights arrangement for Seaton Holme currently held with Michael Bloomfield be extended for a further year on existing terms and conditions.

Cemetery and Grounds

a) Report of the Cemetery Superintendent

Members considered the Cemetery Superintendent's report which had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED that the information given, be NOTED

b) Allotments

The Interim Clerk gave an update on allotment tenant management issues and in particular reference to the remaining Notice to Quit that had been issued in relation to allotment SR39A. Following a meeting with the allotment holder and taking into consideration their appeal, he had agreed to renew the allotment tenancy and that the arrangement would be monitored going forward to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions.

RESOLVED that the information given be NOTED

Councillor Mrs J Lee declared an interest in item 22/23/129(c) below in her capacity as an allotment holder as it related to allotment matters

c) Allotment Maintenance

The Interim Clerk reported on details received from Mr Devine regarding overall maintenance of the allotment site at Sunderland Road, which highlighted concerns with perimeter fencing, access tracks and internal roads and unworked allotment plots.

RESOLVED that the information given be NOTED and that the Cemetery & Grounds Sub Committee consider the introduction of a formal allotment management and maintenance programme for the Councils allotment sites.

d) Summer Bedding – 2023 – Hanging Baskets

The Administration Assistant requested guidance to order appropriate bedding plants compost and plants for the 14 hanging baskets from an appropriate source as the Councils previous supplier no longer provided these items.

RESOLVED that the Interim Clerk be authorised to progress the orders as referred to above and to obtain best value from a suitable supplier.

e) Playground Bench Seat Damage

The Administration Assistant outlined that the Police had confirmed that the wooden bench inside the play area had been damaged and the wooden boards removed and discarded nearby. The boards had been retained by the Police and would be collected and the bench repaired.

RESOLVED that the information given be NOTED

FINANCIAL MATTERS**a) Bank Balances as at 31.10.2022**

The Administration Officer & Interim Clerk reported that the bank balances as at 31.10.22 were £8,903.25 in the Current Account and £155,466.65 in the Savings Account totalling £164,369.90

RESOLVED: that the information given, be NOTED

b) Income and Expenditure Report to 31.10.22

The Clerk updated Members on the Council's income and expenditure to 31.10.22.

RESOLVED that the information given, be NOTED.

c) Bank Transfers

The Clerk informed Members that the Transfers for October were as follows:

	Current – Savings	Savings - Current
October 2022	£953.26	£9978.46

RESOLVED that the Transfers be NOTED and ENDORSED.

d) Invoices for Endorsement of Payment

RESOLVED: that the invoices for payment, together with payments of donations/petty cash/payroll, for October; details of which had been printed and circulated to each Member (a copy of which is appended to the minutes) be ENDORSED;

e) Income Received

RESOLVED: that the income received for October; details of which had been printed and circulated to each Member (a copy of which is appended to the minutes) be NOTED.

f) Request for Financial Assistance Pro Forma

The Interim Clerk circulated proposed revised pro-forma to be used for all future requests for financial assistance and to be utilised in conjunction with the Councils existing Grants & Donations Policy

RESOLVED that the Request for Financial Assistance Application Form as circulated be AGREED.

g) Budget Arrangements 2023/24

RESOLVED that the next Meeting of the Parish Council be solely dedicated to consideration of the Council's Budget and that Members give due consideration to future projects and plans to the meeting.

FURTHER RESOLVED that a review of Fees and Charges be considered at the next meeting as part of the budget process.

EVPC 22/23/131

Planning Matters – Applications, Refusals, Approvals, Withdrawals and Appeals

RESOLVED that the schedule of planning matters (applications, refusals, approvals, withdrawals, and appeals) a copy of which had been included on the agenda and circulated to all Members be RECEIVED and NOTED.

EVPC 22/23/132

Members reports of their Attendance at Meetings and Events on Behalf of the Parish Council

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Remembrance Day to lay the Councils wreath.

RESOLVED: that the information given be NOTED.

EVPC 22/23/133

Progress Report of the Interim Clerk

- a) **Staffing Resources** – to be dealt with after exclusion of press and public
- b) **Recruitment of Clerk and Interim Clerk Position** – to be dealt with after exclusion of press and public
- c) **Christmas Tree Lighting Event**- Suggestion to invite School to a small scale tree lighting switch on event on a date to be confirmed with a selection box for each child to be provided.
- d) **Review of Fees & Charges** – dealt with under Financial Matters (Budget)
- e) **Allotment Rents** – rents continued to be collected and a progress report would be provided in due course.
- f) **Fire Alarm System Upgrade** – awaiting response from Subco Fire Systems Ltd on outstanding proposal to install new central battery unit at Seaton Holme (£5280+vat)
- g) **2022-23 National Salary Award** – pay award agreed (8-9% + 1 additional day holiday had been implemented and backdated to 1 April 2022 and would be applied on November's payroll
- h) **Complaint - Accumulation of leaves at Essyn Court** – to note the action taken by the Interim Clerk in this matter

EVPC 22/23/134

Correspondence

- NALC – National Employers Salary Award Agreement 2022-23
- Invitation to Haswell & District Mencap - Christmas Nativity Service – Durham Cathedral 17 December 2022

EVPC 22/23/135

Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve information prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

HR Issues (Exempt Item)

The Interim Clerk provided Members with a current position report regarding the recruitment of a Clerk.

In an attempt to progress matters quickly he asked if he could be granted delegated authority to negotiate an offer of employment to the successful applicant following the interviews held on 3 November in liaison with Mr D Leask of NEREO and the Chairman.

Members were reminded that his position was interim and was initially expected to be for 2/3 weeks however the continuing delay in the recruitment process had changed matters. The Council were reminded that as his hours were limited, only core priorities were being addressed. He would continue to assist the Council on a week-to-week basis up until end of December and would review the position thereafter.

The need to ensure the Council 's establishment was fit for purpose particularly with current budget and cost of living pressures was becoming more prevalent. Accordingly, it was outlined that any future structural review should be considered once a new Clerk was in position to ensure their input into the process.

RESOLVED that: -

- a) the information given, be NOTED
- b) the Interims Clerk's update be RECEIVED
- c) the Interim Clerk be granted delegated authority to negotiate and determine the offer of employment with the successful applicant

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for Monday 12th December 2022 at 6.00 pm

RESOLVED: that the information given, be NOTED.

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

Chairman

Date