

**MEETING OF EASINGTON VILLAGE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 1800 Hrs ON MONDAY 11th DECEMBER 2023**

Present: Cllr W Day (Vice Chair)
Councillors: S Gibbins, A Lumsden, J Lee, R Parker, A Childs

Staff: Mr P Moore (Clerk to Council)
Mrs H Hall

In Attendance: Cllr A Surtees – Durham County Council

EVPC 23/24/113 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received:

Cllr L Morton

RESOLVED that the information given be NOTED

EVPC 23/24/114 **Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda**

Cllr Day declared an interest in an item on the Agenda (Planning – Sunderland Road development) and would therefore take no part in this discussion and would relinquish the chair to Cllr Lee at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED: that the information given be NOTED

EVPC 23/24/115 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

RESOLVED: that the information given be NOTED.

EVPC 23/24/116 **Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 13 November 2023 –**
to consider for approval.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record, and as such were signed by the Chair.

EVPC/23/24/117 **Minutes of the Cemetery and Grounds Sub Committee Meeting held on 15 November 2023 –** to consider for approval.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record, and as such were signed by the Chair.

EVPC/23/24/118 **Minutes of the Events Management Sub Committee Meeting held on 09 November 2023 –** to consider for approval.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record, and as such were signed by the Chair.

WJD

EVPC/23/24/119 **Police Report**

- a. A Police Report was received covering crime statistics and Anti-Social behaviour in the period 14 November to 11 December 2023.

Burglary – 1

- 23/11/2023 – North View – Residential burglary, numerous items taken. Ongoing investigation.

Theft and Handling – 1

- 19/11/2023 – Theft from local store, known suspect.

Criminal Damage – 0

Anti-social behaviour – 1

- 08/12/2023 – The Green Seat – Youths causing anti-social behaviour.

Vehicle Crime – 0

The next PACT will be held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 6pm at a new location - **The Parish Rooms, Crawl Road, SR83LP**. Officers will be present to speak to the public regarding any concerns or questions they may have.

- b. **RESOLVED:** that the information received be NOTED.

EVPC/23/24/120 **Report from Durham County Councillors**

Cllr Angela Surtees gave a comprehensive report covering a number of topics.

- C of E School Crossing back out for advert - if you are able to share the advert for the job please do
- C of E broken railings being chased up
- Concerns about Hall Walks speeding
- Traffic Report - looking to implement traffic calming for Loaning Burn as suggested in the report - making enquiries about road markings and calming measures to slow down Stockton road - Install the yellow crosshatch markings at the wonky crossroads
- Green Seat CCTV, should be getting resolved now the funding has been confirmed
- Youth funding for Colliery youth provision has been given from PCC for another year
- Report given about the new proposed boundary review for county council wards
- Closed churchyard headstone inspection conducted at St Marys

RESOLVED: that the information received be NOTED.

WAD

Member Reports – Attendance at Meetings and Events on Behalf of The Paris Council

- a. CDALC Small Councils Forum (23 Nov 23). This was attended by Cllr Lumsden and the Parish Clerk who gave an account of items of interest to Council, in particular:
 - (1) In the approach to Elections 2025 and as we have one Councillor vacancy a suggestion for Council to hold a series of informal 'Meet the Councillor' sessions at Seaton Holme.
 - (2) For Councils to develop a suitable disaster response plan for local emergencies such as storm relief, power cuts or other emergencies that may affect residents. This will be a longer term item that will be developed over the next year or so and tie in with DCC resilience plans.

RESOLVED that the information as given be NOTED.

Financial Matters

A. Monthly Report – November 2023

- a. Bank Balances at 30/11/23
RESOLVED that the Bank Balances be APPROVED
- b. Income and Expenditure report to 30/11/23
RESOLVED that the report be APPROVED
- c. Bank Transfers to 30/11/23
RESOLVED that the Transfers be APPROVED
- d. Invoices for endorsement of Payment
RESOLVED that the Invoices for payment be APPROVED
- e. Income Received
RESOLVED that the report be APPROVED
- f. Bank reconciliation at 30/11/23
RESOLVED that the report be APPROVED

The Clerk pointed out that the November staff wages were larger than normal due to the back-dated pay agreement. This unexpectedly large payment had resulted in the need to make a manual transfer of £8K to cover the costs and avoid an overdraft fee.

B. Public Sector Deposit Fund – to consider a deposit of £25,000.

The Clerk gave details of how the PSDF account was already showing returns of around 5% but that the total amount held in the Barclays deposit Account was still above the FSA recommended level of £85,000 and thus a further transfer of £25K to the PSDF would alleviate this problem and increase the total funds attracting a good return rate.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to prepare the transfer paperwork and transfer a further £25K into the PSDF account at the earliest opportunity.

C. Internal Audit Mon 13 Nov 23 – to consider the report.

The Clerk gave details of how an interim internal audit had been requested by himself on takeover of post. This was completed on 13 November and the report gives full assurance that all internal controls and procedures are in order and robust. The next audit will take place at the routine end of year audit followed by external audit as mandated.

The Clerk also noted that one further measure that could be instigated is for the end of month accounts to be routinely checked and signed by at least one Councillor on rotation each month. This will give the office staff and Councillors a further layer of assurance.

RESOLVED: That the information as given be ACCEPTED.

D. Precept 2024 / 25 – to consider the precept for the following year.

Details of the precept planning tool and implications of the increase of the tax-base for Easington Village had been sent to all Councillors in advance of the meeting. The basic details are:

EVPC do NOT receive anything through the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). Those councils that do will be reduced by 50% over 3 years.

EVPC Current tax base is: 874.9 Households

2024 / 25 increase to: 924.4 Households (increase of 49.5)

Current Precept Band D properties are £180.00 per year X 49.5 = £8910 increase to EVPC.

Therefore, it is suggested that there is no need to increase the precept in 2024/25, however Council may wish to bear in mind the Clerk's Briefing Note on capital works which will be required in the next 3-5 years (boilers and window frames).

(Minute Item: EVPC/23/24/125)

These must be paid for somehow and it might be prudent to slightly increase the precept either now or in 2025/26 in order to accrue the funds (and grants) to help pay for these projects further down the line. EVPC must respond to DCC by 19 January 2024.

RESOLVED: That there would be no increase in the Precept for 2024/25 (remaining at £180 per Band D household) and that the information provided by the Clerk be NOTED.

EVPC/23/24/123 **Planning Applications**

Cllr Day relinquished the Chair of the meeting to Cllr Lee and took no part in the following item having previously declared an interest in one particular planning matter.

- a. **Planning Applications** – Council considered the following applications:

DM/23/03549/FPA
Easington CE Primary School
Single storey extension to east side of school

RESOLVED: No objection

DM/23/03617/FPA
Adderstone Living (Sunderland Road, Easington Village)
Construction of 59 dwellings and associated works

RESOLVED: Objection. An objection will be made on the basis that there is no additional infrastructure planned as part of this development (school places, doctor / dentist surgery capability, road traffic alleviation measures, shops, chemist etc) and that a recent planning consultation held as Seaton Holme had ignored resident please for these measures to be included in any future developments.

DM/23/03608/FPA
Durham County Council
Hackworth road, NW Industrial estate
Erection of 4 x 6KW wind turbines tip heights up to 19m

RESOLVED: Objection. An objection will be made on the basis that these wind turbines will represent a significant danger to aviation at nearby Shotton Airfield (aircraft and parachutists), and that Shotton Airfield and the parachute activities taking place there are protected and recognised by Sport England as a site of specific sporting interest.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk lodge objections where appropriate and that the information given be NOTED.

- b. **Planning Refusals** – None to report
- c. **Planning Applications Withdrawn** – None to report
- d. **Planning Appeals / Objections** – None to report
- e. **Other Planning Matters** – None to report

Cllr Lee relinquished the Chair of the meeting back to Cllr Day.

EVPC/23/24/124 **Parish Council Website Update-** to consider for approval.

The Clerk gave details of the new website and populating the content. This will be an on-going task. All Councillors have now been issued their .Gov.UK email addresses and should start to use them as soon as possible. The clerk will send all Councillors test messages shortly. The

intention being that the transfer to completely using .GOV.UK email only will be in place by 01 April 2024.

RESOLVED that the information as given be NOTED.

EVPC/23/24/125 **Long-Term Planning for Capital Works at Seaton Holme** – to consider for approval.

The Clerk outlined the details of a briefing note circulated to all Councillors regarding the need to plan long-term for the replacement of wooden sash-type window frames and five individual gas boilers located within Seaton Holme. This is a long-term issue and Councillors are aware that both of these tasks, as well as the routine maintenance of Seaton Holme as a Grade 1 listed building, need careful consideration, finance and planning going forward.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk will continue to gather evidence and that the information as received be NOTED.

EVPC/23/24/126 **Proposal to Purchase 10 x Round Tables and Coverings-** to consider for approval.

RESOLVED: that 10 x round tables and coverings are purchased with an allocated budget of £700.

EVPC/23/24/127 **80th Anniversary of D-Day Commemorations 2024** – to consider any Council involvement.

RESOLVED: that this item will be considered at the next meeting of the Events Management Sub Committee to be held on 25 January 2024.

EVPC/23/24/128 **Report From Clerk** – a verbal update on items not covered elsewhere.

1. **Budget 2024** This will be prepared in the next month or so and will be presented to Council January or February.
2. **IT Upgrade** This is ongoing and first stage is complete with 'Guest' and 'Staff' separation of wi-fi access. Telephones and internet now both use the internal system that is already built into the building and now on the SOGEA network (fibre optics). Both of these make Council communications more secure and tamper-proof and it is hoped might attract training events to use Seaton Holme. The next stage is transfer of data from ITC to Document Solutions, and handover of Office 365 Licences and new PC for Admin desk.
3. **Forthcoming meetings:**

Council	Mon 08 January 2024
C&G	Wed 17 January 2024
Events Management	Thu 25 January 2024

Staff will be standing down at 1200 hrs on Friday 22 December 2023 and return on Tuesday 2nd January 2024

It was **RESOLVED**: that the information as received be NOTED.

EVPC/23/24/129

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Monday 08th January 2024 at 1800 Hrs in the Burn Room, Seaton Holme.

RESOLVED: that the information given be NOTED

EVPC/23/24/130

Exclusion of the Press and Public – In accordance with Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

None required – no members of press or public present.

EVPC/23/24/131

Council Public Accountability and Personal Security

The recent publication of the new Council website which has Councillors contact details and photographs. One Councillor raised concerns about her personal security. Councillors are mindful that a balance must be struck between being accessible to the electorate and their own personal security but that a Councillor photograph should not be published if that increased the perceived risk.

The website should only contain the most basic contact details for each Councillor, although the Notice of Pecuniary should remain unredacted as this also appears on DCC website.

RESOLVED: that the website contact details will be redacted to show only Councillor basic contact details.

EVPC/23/24/132

A Matter of Council Finance

A situation has arisen whereby a tenant has been found to be in breach of the tenancy contract by subletting facilities without approval of Council. Calculated back to 01 April 2023 this results in a bill of £3960. Council have repeatedly impressed on the tenant that they want to work with the tenant to come to an amicable and mutually satisfactory arrangement for the arrears to be paid over a period of time. The tenant has sub-divided the room that was rented into several smaller rooms with the addition of stud walls, fixtures and fittings.

The tenant has since stated that they want to terminate the contract and has stopped paying rent as of 01 December making the total debt to be currently £4560. This will increase by £600 per month over the 4-month termination period to a potential total debt of £6360.

The contract states that the premises must be returned to their original condition as found at the start of the contract if Council approve this. The tenant was invited to a meeting with Council on Monday 11 December but had to cancel due to illness.

RESOLVED: that:

1. The tenant is invited to a further meeting on Monday 18 December 23.
2. The tenant is notified that no alterations are to be made to the structure, fixtures or fittings of the rooms concerned.
3. Investigate lodging a Claim through the Small Claims Court

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

Chairman *WSD*

Date *8/1/24*

Distribution / Publication:

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