

At a meeting of the Dene Valley Parish Council held at the Dene Valley Community Partnership One Stop Shop, High Street, Eldon Lane on **Monday 8 April 2024** at **6.30 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor K Beal in the Chair

Councillors I Bourne, T Bird, J Clark, J Moore and J Nicholson.

Clerk Ian Croft

Also in attendance

Renate Coleman

John Oliver

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Public Participation

There were no Members of the Public in attendance at the commencement of the meeting.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that Renate Coleman and John Oliver were in attendance as they both lived locally and had expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council as Councillors. Members discussed the merits of the applications and:

Resolved:

That Renate Coleman and John Oliver be co-opted as Members onto the Parish Council.

The Clerk informed the meeting that all allotment rent letters for 2024/25 had been sent.

5. Police Update

Councillor Bird reported that although the area was very quiet at the moment, there had been two assaults of children/young people in Spencer Street. The police were investigating both attacks. Councillor Nicholson considered there must be some factor which sparked the violence and wondered why the victims were being picked out.

Councillor Bird reported that levels of ASB in the area had dropped. Councillor Beal reported that a quad bike and motorbike were performing donuts in Wesley Street and Randolph Street. Councillor Nicholson mentioned that Kate Ward had mentioned moving the current CCTV camera and/or installing a dummy camera and Councillor Nicholson understood that extra funding was available for target hardening of areas experiencing ASB.

Councillor Beal referred to the use of CCTV cameras in the area. Councillor Nicholson replied that under Towns and Villages funding both Dene Valley and Eldon Parishes got one camera each. However, DCC then decided there would be no more cameras because the lighting poles they were attached to needed stress testing. However, the chapel had already indicated they would be happy for a camera to be attached to their building. The area needed a second active camera.

Councillor Beal asked the cost of the provision of a camera. Councillor Bird replied he would ask Kate Ward for the global cost of a camera in principle. Any camera would need to be linked to Newton Aycliffe Police Station.

Councillor Oliver asked whether any work took place in local schools to discuss what was happening in the area. Councillor Nicholson replied that she believed Neighbourhood Watch visited schools.

6. Play Areas

Councillor Nicholson referred to the quote for the Randolph Street Play Area which had been provided by Wicksteed and had been circulated to all Members. The quote contained quite competitive prices and Councillor Nicholson had forwarded it to James at DCC for his thoughts on it. Councillor Nicholson had emailed all three County Councillors seeking contributions from their Neighbourhood Budgets towards any proposed project and was hopeful that AAP money would also be available. Councillor Nicholson reported that she had met with the Wicksteed representative who was very knowledgeable and knew the area. Councillor Nicholson had spoken to some mothers in the area who were very much on board with the project and had suggested perhaps some public engagement on it going forwards.

Councillor Nicholson informed the meeting that she was expecting a quote to be sent from Wicksteed for the Randolph Street Play Area and would email this around to all Members when it was received.

Councillor Oliver enquired about maintenance of play areas. Councillor Beal replied that the Parish Council Play Areas received an annual safety inspection by a third party company adding that the Parish would be considering an SLA with DCC for this going forwards.

The meeting was supportive of the documentation supplied by Wicksteed and were minded to accept the proposal, subject to further discussions and the asset transfer being completed.

Councillor Oliver reported that PPG operated a Colourful Communities Project and suggested that the Parish may wish to consider putting forwards a project for the painting of railings at Play Areas or any other community areas which needed decorating.

7. Planning Issues

Councillor Clark circulated details of planning applications which had been received or determined in the Dene Valley Parish and surrounding areas since the last meeting (for copy see file of Minutes)

8. Footpaths

Councillor Moore reported that the footpath at Shepherds Bridge was blocked off but there was no advance signage to advise of this.

Councillor Beal reported that the hedge overhanging the footpath from Gurney Valley to Close House had still not been trimmed back.

9. Allotments

Councillor Bourne reported one tenant on the Close House allotment site who would be giving up their tenancy and there was also one empty plot near the bottom of the site.

Councillor Nicholson reported that she rented a field next to the Close House allotment site which had its fencing erected incorrectly some time ago. The area of land currently used for parking on the Close House allotment site should be contained within the field and the fencing would be moved in the future, which would remove this area for parking.

10. Finance Update

The Clerk provided the meeting with details of income and expenditure for the since the last meeting. The Chairman agreed the balances and signed the accounts and bank statements.

11. Any Other Business

Councillor Bird referred to a proposed Dene Valley Community Fun Day to be held on the Dene Valley Recreation Park. It was hoped to get police, Fire and Rescue and St Johns Ambulance to attend the event and also three bouncy castles for the event. The cost of the event was estimated at £1,500. Councillor Beal asked whether any match funding had been raised to date.

Councillor Nicholson reported that she knew of a bouncy castle provider who would provide a bouncy castle for free for community events, and agreed to provide details to Councillor Bird.

Councillor Beal suggested that Councillor Bird investigate other sources of funding for the event and bring costings to the next meeting. The Parish Council agreed in principle to donate up to £500 towards the event if further costings and funding details were made available.

Councillor Oliver suggested that the Parish Council should have its own facebook page and agreed to create this. The Clerk agreed to send Councillor Oliver the Council's logo.

Councillor Nicholson reported that she had been invited to look at the former Surestart building with a view to possibly using it as a community building. Councillors Beal, Bird and Oliver volunteered to attend with Councillor Nicholson if she let them know when the visit was to take place.

The meeting finished at 8.10 p.m. Next meeting – 13 May 2024.

Signed
Chairman of the meeting held on 15 May 2024