

Elwick Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 25 November 2013 at Elwick School

Present: Cllrs. C. Banks (in the Chair), P. Hutchinson, J. Londesbrough, R. Musgrave, L. Parks, H. Thompson and R. Thompson

Also present: Ward Cllr. B. Loynes, Mrs. West (Parish Clerk).

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. **Public Forum:** No members of the public present.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
4. **Minutes of 29 October 2013:** Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - a. (5) **Car Parking near McOrville:** Cllr. Loynes apologised for the November. Cllr Loynes met with 2 officers, the pub landlords and shop owner and the officers are now considering possible solutions. The Chairman noted that the main problem was one of lack of enforcement of the parking restrictions already in situ.
 - b. (5 & 7v) **Flooding:** Cllr. Loynes reported that Borough Engineers have undertaken some remedial work in North Close and North Lane. Officers are now investigating the problem of 'run off' from the fields to the North of the village and Northumbria Water has agreed to clean the gullies and culverts. Cllr. Musgrave reported that the beck on Church Bank now has a 'brick island' caused by debris brought down by the flooding. **Action:** Cllr. Loynes agreed to notify engineers of this additional problem.
 - c. (5) **Stones on the Green:** Cllr. R. Thompson has placed three new stones but suggested repositioning to provide better protection for the Green. **Action:** Cllr. Hutchinson to assist Cllr. Thompson reposition the stones.
 - d. (5) **Spotted Cow:** The Conservation Officer has replied that the colour scheme is not a problem in her view. Councillors were unanimous in their disagreement and the Clerk asked to write to the Brewery expressing the Parish Council's views on this and the new pub sign. **Action:** Clerk to write to Marstons Brewery.
 - e. (6) **Bus service:** Paul's Travel has been unable to give an indication of the level of financial support required to ensure the service for 2014/15. The Chairman has agreed to meet with Ward Councillors to discuss possible support, though Cllr. Loynes believed that this would be dependent on West Park being included in the route.
 - f. (7.i) **Skips:** dates for 2014 have been agreed as 10 February, 9 June and 13 October.
 - g. (7.v) **Church Bank:** Work to the road is to go ahead, at a cost of £40K; the road will be closed for 4 weeks.
 - h. (7.iii) **School sign:** This has now been reversed. It was also noted that the 20 MPH zone signs had now been erected and Cllr. Loynes reported that the road roundels would be done shortly.
 - i. (12) **Play equipment maintenance:** The Clerk reported that the Borough Council includes the equipment on its regular maintenance schedule. Cllr. Parks reported on comments about a lack of play equipment for the Under 5s. The Chairman also noted that ivy had encroached over one of the litter bins on the Playing Field. **Agreed:** Village Maintenance Group to cut the ivy and investigate possible new play equipment, suitable for Under 5s.
 - j. (15b) **Steps on Church Bank:** Mark White had quoted £270 to undertake the task of levelling the path towards the top end and inserting two new steps. This was **agreed**. **Action:** Cllr. H. Thompson to instruct Mark White to carry out the work as agreed.

k. (5k) **Trees on the East end of Green:** Application for a 20% reduction to the crowns of the two trees has been submitted and acknowledged. Provided no objections are received, the work can commence after 26 December. **Action:** Clerk to seek tenders from tree surgeons.

6 Village Maintenance Group:

Cllr. H. Thompson reported that the group had identified several issues including: benches in need of maintenance, moss on footpaths, stones missing from the Green, uneven stones in pavements, soil encroaching on the cinder path on Church Bank and the site beside the electricity sub-station on North Lane in need of tidying. The Chair requested the group produce a schedule of work. Cllr. R. Thompson was thanked for clearing the Church Bank paths of leaves again. The Chairman reported that owner of the lorry had agreed to pay for the reinstatement of the Green near the Forge, damaged by one of his vehicles. It was **agreed** that a more sustainable, conservation-friendly solution to vehicle damage to corners of the Green was needed.

Actions: Chair to discuss the damage to the Green with the Conservation Officer. Cllr. Loynes to request Jon Wright to attend to the moss and uneven pavements. Village Maintenance Group to produce a schedule of work.

Woodland Trust offer of free trees:

Following discussion, it was **agreed** to plant a pack of native, ornamental trees on the western fence of Playing Field, subject to the approval of Mr. Grieves. **Action:** Clerk to seek the agreement Mr Grieves, and to contact the Woodland Trust.

7. **Chairman's Report: (a)** Manor Close – the grass outside No 21, formerly the warden's house, was in need of cutting. The present occupier was willing to maintain the grass once it had been shortened to a more manageable length. **Agreed:** Chair to request BGS to undertake this, as a 'one off' at the Parish Council's expense.

(b) The problem tree in Manor Close has now been cut down by the Borough Council.

(c) Water running off the field adjacent to Elwick House is again causing problems for drivers when it freezes. Mike Blair has been contacted and will investigate.

8. **Rural Plan:** The Chair updated colleagues on recent developments regarding the Rural Plan and the possible implications of HBC withdrawing its Local Development Plan.

9. **Financial Report:** The Clerk presented a statement of transactions undertaken since the last meeting as follows:

Receipts	£	Payments	£
Reimbursement of Rural Plan expenses	<u>132.00</u>	Grass Cutting	600.00
		Bus Service	430.00
		External Audit	120.00
		NALC (book)	<u>55.99</u>
			<u>1,205.99</u>

The report was accepted.

10. Budget/Precept 2014/15:

The Clerk presented a revised budget for 2014/15. Including continued support for a bus service, this projected a deficit of over £2,000. Even with a modest increase in costs for maintaining the village assets, a deficit is likely. After some discussion, and looking at various alternatives, Cllr. Musgrave proposed an increase to the Precept of 2%, seconded by Cllr. H. Thompson this was **unanimously agreed**.

11. **Correspondence:** Letters received from:

- a) AON Insurance re: Snow Clearance, Salting & Gritting – **agreed** not to undertake such activities
- b) Village Atlas Group re: request to use Village Green on Monday 5 May 2014 for a celebration event at the end of the Limestone Landscapes Project (Village Atlas) – **unanimously agreed**
- c) Hartlepool Borough Council re: Police and Crime Commissioner / Deputy Chief-Constable Presentation at 6.00 pm on Thursday 5 December in the Council Chamber – noted.
- d) Hartlepool Borough Council re: Statement of Withdrawal of Local Development Plan – noted.
- e) Ron Watts re: Commons Registration Act 1965 – noted
- f) TVRCC re: Rural Economic Strategy event – noted.
- g) Durham and Cleveland Training Group re: Training on Freedom of Information Act, full day event, 27 March 2014. Cost £27 pp. **Agreed** Clerk to attend and Councillors asked to consider attending also.

12. Ward Councillor's Report:

Cllr. Loynes reported on items not covered elsewhere. 50 copies of 'Hartbeat' had been delivered to the shop for collection by those living outside the village, trimming of the hedge opposite Elwick Rise was being examined by officers and that Mike Blair was looking again into the options for a mirror on Church Bank. Cllr Loynes was asked to raise the issue of a mobile home visible from the A19, raised at an earlier meeting.

13. Planning:

H/2013/0546 – Spotted Cow: retrospective application for the new sign and lighting. Councillors noted that many villagers have expressed concerns that the sign it is too modern in its design and not in keeping with a traditional, rural village pub and that lighting will only make this, and the drab appearance of the pub, worse.

H/2013/0555 – Red Gap Farm: No Comment

H/2013/0565 – Pruning of Trees on Elwick Village Green – fully support our own application.

14. AOB:

- (i) The Clerk expressed concern that the Parish Council website was not up-to-date and was difficult to maintain. It was **agreed** that the Clerk investigate the costs of having a professionally designed and maintained website and that Cllr. H. Thompson investigate possible sources of funding,
- (ii) Discussion took place regarding the Bonfire. It was agreed that this be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- (iii) Cllr. Musgrave reported that Steve Mailen had observed many dog walkers not cleaning up after their dogs at night; and that he had provided a notice to be placed on the Parish Notice Board. **Agreed.**

15. Date of Next meeting: 7.00 pm Monday 27 January at Elwick School.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.