

Elwick Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held at 6.30 pm on Monday 24 November 2014 at Elwick School

Present: Cllrs. J. Hall, P. Hutchinson (in the Chair), B. Irving, R. Musgrave, H. Thompson, R. Thompson and A. Waugh

In Attendance: PCSO C. Jones, Mrs. West (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence: Ward Cllr. B. Loynes

2. Public Forum: No members of the public present

3. Declarations of Interest: Cllrs Hall for item 14a – Planning H/2014/0503 - Whelley Hill Farm

4. Minutes: The Minutes of 27 October were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising:

- a) **Church Bank:** Noted that the shuttering along the Cinder path had been completed; several positive comments had been received from villagers.
- b) **Trees:** Noted that the work on trees around the village was to be undertaken this week, however the tree outside No 10 North Lane had not been included. **Action:** Clerk to ask tree surgeon to add the pruning of this tree to his contract.
- c) **Community Right to Bid:** Still in progress
- d) **Computer Club/Wildlife garden bid:** The Clerk reported on a meeting held with a BIG Lottery representative, and outlined the proposal put to him. His response was encouraging. **Action:** Clerk to invite the school to participate in the refurbishment of the Wildlife garden, perhaps through the carving/construction of a bench, under the supervision of a specialist wood carver and designing signs; Clerk to submit bid.

PCSO Jones was invited to make her report at this point. She reported an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the Hartlepool area during the months of September & October and explained the actions being taken by the police in response. She invited anyone concerned about possible or actual crimes/anti-social behaviour seen, to contact her immediately on: **0725 410614**.

- 6. Chairman's Report:** (i) The Chairman reported on a constructive Parish Liaison meeting held with the Leader of the Borough Council recently; he felt these could be a very useful channel for raising issues.
- (ii) The Chairman reported on a meeting held with Dalton Parish Council, at their invitation, to discuss the issue of rural transport with Alastair Smith, HBC Assistant Director Neighbourhoods. Only one of the DP Councillors had been in attendance and the Clerk had sent his father to record the meeting. Mr. Smith had made it very clear that there would be no bus service for Elwick and Dalton as the bus companies would not run through the villages as it was not financially viable; the Council itself had no funds available to help either. Mr. Smith suggested several alternatives that could be explored, but all these would cost money.
- (iii) The tree roots at Village farm will be dealt with as soon as the map of services is made available. **Action:** Clerk to request map from BT etc.
- (iv) The Jubilee tree would be moved to its new site shortly and the tree staked – it was noted that a plaque should be placed by the tree. **Action:** Clerk to organise the plaque.

7. Ward Councillor's report: None provided.

PCSO Jones left the meeting.

8. Policies:

(a) Policies and Procedures had been reviewed by the Clerk and updated in accordance with changes to legislation and good practice. Councillors **approved** the amendments to the following:

Code of Conduct; Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures; Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Risk Management Policy; Equalities & Diversity Policy.

(b) Councillors discussed, **accepted and adopted** without amendment the new Health & Safety Policy and Safety Inspection Form drafted by the Clerk. Further, Councillors **accepted** the revised Risk Assessment Report.

(c) Delegated authority – Chairman and Vice-Chairman – following a discussion it was **agreed** that:

(i) Chairman and Vice-Chairman should both attend the Parish Liaison meetings if available and

(ii) the Chairman should have authority to spend up to £100 on village matters between meetings, in accordance with the revised Financial Regulations.

Cllr. H. Thompson stated that, with all the policies and procedures developed over the last two years, that the Parish Council should seek authority to use The General Power of Competence, which is recognition status awarded to an effective Parish Council. The Clerk noted that this could only be awarded to a Council where the Clerk had achieved the Professional Clerk's qualification, CiLCA.

9. Village Maintenance Group:

(a) The draft Terms of Reference produced by the Clerk were **adopted** without amendment.

(b) Cllr Hall reported that a Parish Council working party had cleared the cobbled area at the entrance to The Walk; it had been a great team effort and he thanked all who took part. He noted that the area would still need to be sprayed with a very strong weed-killer in the spring. Cllr. Hall then reported that the steps up to the church need clearing of leaves again, and sand or grit spreading on them to make them less slippery in wet or frosty weather. It was also **agreed** that signs be placed at the top and bottom of the steps, asking those using them to take extra care in wet or frosty weather. **Action:** Clerk to request HBC to provide winter grit and to liaise with Cllr Hall on delivery date/time; Clerk to make signs. Cllrs Hall and Irving also reported that pot-holes on Church bank were in urgent need of attention. **Action:** Clerk to advise the relevant Borough Council officer.

10. Financial Report: The Clerk presented reports on financial transactions completed since the last meeting and the comparison of Actual to Budget report, with a projection to the end of the year. Both reports were **accepted**.

Receipts £		Payments	£
	0.00	Bus Service	575.00
		Grass cutting	600.00
		Wildlife Leaflets reprint	<u>18.00</u>
		Total	1,193.00

The Clerk informed that she had been notified that the Litter Initiative with the school – to produce anti-litter posters for the Playing Field, would cost considerably more than at first proposed. The workshop with the school had now taken place, and the Council now needed authority to go ahead with production of the signs or banners. It was noted that the Council would now require a design fee on top of the production costs of the signs/banner. After discussion, it was **agreed** that three poster signs only would be required and that the design costs would be met. Councillors requested sight of the artwork before production. **Action:** Clerk to contact the relevant officer with the decision and request.

The Clerk then reported that she had registered to undertake the CiLCA qualification and had personally paid the initial fee of £250. Cllr H. Thompson proposed that the Parish Council pay all the necessary fees for the qualification, the motion was seconded by Cllr Irving and unanimously **agreed**.

11. Budget and precept proposals 2015/16: The Clerk presented figures for the 2015/15 Budget for discussion. It was clear from the projections that some hard decisions would have to be made at the

January meeting, when the budget had to be finalised, in particular the issue of on-going support for a bus service.

12. Village Design Statement: The Clerk proposed that a meeting be called for all those villagers interested to discuss what key design elements should be required for any future housing development. It was **agreed** that such a meeting would be appropriate and further **agreed** that the meeting take place in mid-February, allowing time for an announcement in Village Life.

13. Correspondence: All dealt with under previous items.

14. Planning:

H/2014/0503 – Whelly Hill Farm - **Agreed** that a site visit should be made before decision made. Councillors to organise.

H/2014/0510 – 5, Sheepdene , Wynyard – no objections

H/2014/0531 & H/2014/0532 – Low Newton Hazard Farmstead, Wynyard – no objections.

15. Matters of Concern to Councillors:

(i) Cllr. H. Thompson presented a verbal complaint received from Mr. John Gilhespie, Threeways, in regard to the new street lighting. Councillors agreed that many villagers were upset by the new lighting, but that the Parish Council could do little to change this as the Borough Council was adamant that the savings in cost and reduction of light pollution over-ride any other considerations. **Action:** Clerk to write to Mr Gilhespie explaining this.

16. Date of Next meeting: 7.00 pm, Monday 26th January 2015 at Elwick School.