

## Elwick Parish Council

### Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Elwick WI hall

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

**In Attendance:** Ward Cllrs. B. Loynes and G. Morris, Mrs. M. West (Parish Clerk)

Before the formal meeting commenced, former Chairman Chris Banks demonstrated the outline Parish Council website he has been developing. This was warmly received and Mr. Banks was commended for all his hard work on the website development to date. Mr. Banks invited Councillors to consider what further should be added to the website information; he was asked to add the Wildlife Garden and reciprocal links with any organisation given a 'hot link' to our site. The Clerk was asked to write to all Village organisations inviting them to look at the website and identify what they would like to have on about their own organisation. Mr. Banks was invited to stay for the discussion on a website policy. **Action:** Clerk to write to village organisations.

**1. Apologies:** PC. K. Robinson, CPSO C. Jones

**2. Public Forum:** No members of the public present.

**3. Declarations of Interest:** None made.

**4. Minutes of meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015:** Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Matters arising:**

(a) **A4A Grant – Computer Club/Wildlife Garden:** The Clerk informed Councillors of the challenge in obtaining a broadband line to the WI hall; this is due to BT's unwillingness to contract directly with the Parish Council. Alternatives have been investigated and a company identified who are willing to contract with the Parish Council, and will provide the service at a lower cost than BT. It was therefore **agreed** that the Clerk should proceed to organise the installation of a broadband service with the identified provider. The purchase of equipment was proving equally fraught and the Clerk presented a table of companies invited to tender, with their responses, none of which fully met the requirements. The Clerk had contacted Hartlepool FE College who had proved extremely helpful, providing information on appropriate equipment together with the name of their own e-supplier, as well as an offer to find a tutor. It was **agreed** that the Clerk be authorised to purchase the equipment and software using this internet supplier, if this proved the most cost-effective method of achieving the required result. The Clerk informed that the school were keen to support the Wildlife Garden Arts Project, and had agreed to host a children's Wildlife Group as an 'after school' activity to which all children in the parish would be invited, irrespective of attendance at the school, subject to parental attendance. The wood carver and designer had both agreed to provide their services, with dates for workshops to be arranged later, probably in June. **Action:** The Clerk to progress the projects as identified.

(b) **Church Bank:** No further progress.

(c) **Bus service:** The Clerk reported that the funding promised by Rural West Ward Councillors was now in the bank, however nothing had as yet been confirmed by the Ward Councillors for Hart Parish nor by Dalton Piercy Parish Council and, without these assurances, she was unwilling to issue a contract to Paul's Travel for the continuation of the bus service, as to do so would leave Elwick Parish Council responsible for making up any shortfall in funds. Cllr Loynes agreed to follow this up immediately and the Clerk was requested to keep Paul's Travel informed of the reason for the delay. **Actions:** Cllr. Loynes to contact Hart Ward Councillors and Dalton Piercy Parish Council; Clerk to inform Paul's Travel of reasons for delay in issuing of contract.

(d) **Visit of Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland:** This has been rearranged for 27<sup>th</sup> April.

(e) **Defibrillator:** This is now progressing, with the Borough Council agreeing to pay for the installation of an

electricity line to the agreed site on the Spotted Cow.

**6. Website Policies:** The draft policies had been previously circulated to Parish Councillors and Mr. Banks. The Clerk outlined the key policy issues she felt needed to be discussed – commercial advertising and protection of children and vulnerable adults, before detailed discussion of wording could be agreed. Mr. Banks then outlined his own concerns about the policies, believing them to be over prescriptive in their present format; he could see no reason for refusing commercial advertising and felt that the Council's own Safeguarding Policy was sufficient. Following a long discussion, it was agreed that:

- (a) Mr. Chris Banks be appointed Webmaster until further notice;
- (b) For the time being at least, no commercial advertising will be allowed, except that included in Village Life. This page to carry a Disclaimer to the effect that "The Parish Council does not endorse any of the businesses advertising in Village Life, nor any opinions expressed within it" the possibility of underwriting of Village life donations was discussed but Councillors felt this to be unnecessary.
- (c) A small sub-group of 2/3 Parish Councillors to be appointed to oversee the website.
- (d) The issue of who owns the domain name needs to be resolved.
- (e) The Clerk to meet with Mr. Banks to revise the Draft policies and circulate the revision to Parish Councillors in advance of the next meeting at which the policies will be finalised.

**7. Chairman's Report:** (i) The chair reported that the tree guard for the Jubilee Tree was now in place. (ii) A number of large stones on the green had been replaced and the Wildlife Garden rubbish cleared. (iii) At a meeting with the Leader of the Borough Council, HBC officer Mike Blair had agreed to sort out the unsightly fence replacement at the bottom of Church Bank. (iv) The CEO of HBC had stated that the graveyard wall was not the responsibility of the Borough Council; this was disputed as the graveyard had been closed for many years and responsibility for it passed to the Borough Council, on whose behalf we undertake the mowing of same. It was **agreed** that the Clerk identify the date at which the graveyard was passed to the Borough Council and the Chairman would then take this matter up again with the Leader.

**Actions:** Clerk to inform Chairman of date, Chairman to take up issue again with HBC's Leader. (v) The Highways Agency were undertaking test boring surveys in respect of a potential flyover at Elwick.

**8. Ward Councillor's Report:**

- (a) The street sign for The Paddock should have now been replaced. She was informed that this had not been done, and was no longer required as the sign in question was rotten and best removed altogether; however, the road sign, as seen from the northern approach to The Paddock, needed re-siting as it was not visible until almost on the turning.
- (b) Potholes at both the top of the village and at the entrance to Manor Close should have been filled in – again Councillors reported that although some had been done, others had not and new ones had appeared, at the top of Church Bank in particular.
- (c) The street light in Manor Close had been repaired;
- (d) All fly tipping reported to date had been cleared. A request was made that the income from charges for vans using the tip be identified and balanced against the costs of clearing up fly-tipping; there was a clear correlation between the introduction of charges for vans (which are deemed as commercial) and the increase in fly-tipping; it was further noted that cars had been seen delivering building material waste to the tip as this 'got around' the charges.
- (e) It was brought to Ward Councillors' attention that the 20mph flashing sign at the southern entrance to the village from the A19 had not yet been replaced, nor had the lamp post.
- (f) Cllr. Loynes provided 2 x 'high-visibility jackets' and 'litter-pickers' on loan from the Borough Council.
- (g) Cllr Morris reported that the Planning Inspector had rejected the Appeal on Quarry Farm and that, as a result, 81 new homes would be built, with the only access onto Elwick Road; this would have an immediate impact on the village. Cllr. Hall expressed the view that it would exacerbate the already difficult issue of speeding traffic through the village, and called for an immediate review of traffic calming measures within the village. Cllr. R. Thompson felt that the decision to approve was perverse in the light of the evidence provided to the Inspector on the amount of traffic already using the road. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should write to the Minister on this matter. **Action:** Clerk to write to Rt. Hon.

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

- (h) It was noted that the issue of parking on pavements around the village was worsening, with cars parking on both sides of the road leading to Greenlea, opposite the school and on the access roads across the village green; this was causing great difficulty for children and elderly people wishing to walk to school or the shop/PO.

**9. Village Maintenance Group Report:** (i) the 'Medical Parking Only' sign was **still** missing from the designated site in Manor Close. (ii) The play equipment on the Playing Field had now been repaired by Parish Councillors. (iii) Church Bank, the Playing Field and the Ghyll were now being regularly litter-picked by Group members. (iv) The broken bench is to be repaired. (v) The base of a 'coconut shy' is still lying on the green, some months after an event organised by the Friends of Elwick School. Cllr. H. Thompson agreed to have a word with the Chairman of the 'Friends'. (vi) Turf needs to be placed around the concrete bollards now these have settled in. (vii) A letter is to be sent to all those who 'adopted' a flower tub, thanking them and asking if they would continue; Clerk to type and produce copies for circulation by Cllr Irving. The new tubs will need to be prepared before being put into use (rubbed down and painted), all Councillors requested to help. Planting will take place once the daffodils have died down. **Actions:** Cllr B. Loynes to raise issue of 'medical parking only; notice ; Cllr H. Thompson to speak with Chairman of Friends of Elwick School; Clerk to produce letters for Flower tub adopters; Chairman to liaise with Cllr Hall regarding placement of turf; Cllr Irving to organise date for preparation of tubs soon after Easter.

**10. Wildlife Garden:** The Clerk reported that work on the 2-year refurbishment of the Wildlife Garden had commenced, with a small team of village volunteers, and later the Countryside Warden Volunteer team, starting the process of clearing the ground. The Countryside Wardens had agreed to come again, but needed a skip or flat-bed truck to be available for all the garden waste they would be producing. The refurbishment would require considerable hard labour as well as the purchase of plants and materials, therefore the Clerk proposed that a budget of £500 be made available for each of the next 2 years. This was unanimously **agreed**. **Action:** Cllr. Loynes to request skip or similar be available on request.

**11. Hartlepool Rural Plan:** The latest draft had been circulated to all Parish Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the draft document had passed both the Borough Council's Regeneration and Planning Sub-Committees without comment.

**12. Village Design Statement:** It was noted that apart from Councillors and professional planners, only 9 villagers had attended the consultation session. Work on a draft design statement for Elwick is now under way and will form part of the Village Plan Consultation process.

**13. 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**.

Income:	£	Expenditure:	£
Reparation for damage to the green	150.00	Bus Service	575.00
		Clerk's salary ( Jan – March)	375.00
		Administration	210.96
		Flower tubs	210.00
		Room hire	<u>20.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>150.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,390.96</b>

#### 14 Correspondence:

- (a) BDL re: External Audit - noted
- (b) Mr. John Gilhespy – request for permission to place a seat on village green in remembrance of his wife, Ann. Councillors noted the number of seats already on the green and suggested the possibility of seat around the Horse Chestnut tree instead. **Action:** Clerk to discuss with Mr. Gilhespy.
- (c) CPSO Jones had submitted an e-report to the effect that only one incident had been recorded in the

last 28 days, a road collision in which no-one was hurt. 5 vehicles have been taken from poachers and people who use vehicles to damage farmers' crops. Members of the public are requested to continue to report any suspicious activity.

**15. Planning:** No applications

**16. Matters of concern to Councillors:**

Several Councillors expressed concern in regard to works undertaken by a number of householders in recent years, which put at risk the standards required for the ongoing status of Conservation Area to continue.

**17. Date of Next meeting:** 7.00 pm Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, at the school.

Cllr. R. Musgrave gave her apologies in advance.

In the light of the Spring Bank Holiday, the following meeting will take place on Monday 1 June.

Meeting closed at 9.37 pm.