

Minutes of Special Meeting of Elwick Parish Council held 13 July 2015

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

In attendance: Mrs. M West (Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the Special Meeting called to discuss two items for urgent decision which had implications for the annual budget.

1. Apologies: Cllrs H Thompson, R Thompson

2. Declarations of Interest: It was noted that Cllrs H & R Thompson had both declared a familial interest in the discussion on the letting of the contract for Church Bank steps and had therefore chosen not to be present.

3. Church Bank Steps: The Clerk informed that invitations to tender had been sent to 4 local building contractors as well as the Borough Council, of these only two had responded. Each of the respondents had met at the site with the Clerk and either the Chair or Vice-Chair for a specific briefing as to what was required and to provide opportunity for any clarification required. As a result, two formal tenders had been received, tender A in the amount of £14,500 (no VAT) and tender B in the amount of £22,564.10 + VAT.

Councillors were concerned that the difference between the two was considerable, though after some reflection thought this might be due to tender B having been provided by a large civil engineering company with many fixed overheads, whilst Tender A was from a small local builder. A further concern was the capability of the latter to fulfil the requirements. The Clerk assured members that she had checked that the supplier in question had appropriate insurances in place and had an excellent reputation, both for timeliness and the quality of his work.

The Clerk gave information on the availability of funding for the work; this could include a contribution of £10,000 from a local businessman, subject to his approval of the tender. If this were not forthcoming, the work could still go ahead, although it would considerably deplete the Council's reserves. In order that the matter could proceed swiftly, a meeting had been arranged with said businessman for later that day, at which both tenders would be presented, together with the Council's preference.

Following further discussions it was **unanimously agreed** to offer the work to the provider of Tender A, subject to completion within 3 weeks of start, copies of insurance certificates being provided and a penalty clause of £200 should the work not be completed within the agreed time scale, excepting unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather. The Chairman, Vice-Chair and Clerk agreed to attend the meeting with the local businessman to discuss potential funding. **Actions:** Chair, Vice Chair & Clerk to attend meeting; Clerk to issue contract.

4. Wildlife Garden: Cllr Irving tabled the tender she had received for the refurbishment of the Wildlife Garden, in the amount of £900. The tender covered the clearance of overgrowth and bamboo, removal and/or re-siting of several trees, installation of a pond and replanting of the garden, where necessary, with appropriate species, following the plan outlined by HBC Ecologist, Ian Bond.

Following a brief discussion, it was **unanimously agreed** to accept the tender. The Clerk was asked to request an annual maintenance programme from the supplier, together with costings for this. **Action:** Clerk to issue contract and obtain quote for annual maintenance programme.