

Elwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 26th October at Elwick WI Hall

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

In attendance: Ward Cllr B. Loynes, PCSO C. Jones, Mrs. M West (Clerk)

Cllr. Loynes was warmly welcomed back following her long illness.

1. Apologies: None

2. Public Forum: **a.** Mr. Keshore Debnath, landlord of The McOrville Inn, expressed concerns in regard to the letter received from the Parish Council requesting him to limit the number of tables to 3, and to only have these on the green between April and October, and to the removal of signs from the roadside and green. He felt that these requests would be detrimental to the development of his business, which he has worked so hard to make a success of. He remarked that the Parish Council's own Bye-laws were being regularly flouted by the Parish Council itself – as (Memorial) benches had been placed around the green, notices about fetes were placed, and cars were allowed to park on it (annual Vintage Car Rally). He felt that what he was doing was no different and asked that Councillors consider allowing him to have 5 tables throughout the year, and to allow the notice board promoting his Beer Garden to be placed on the roadside between April and October. Councillors agreed to consider the matter further, but did not revoke the original request. **Action:** All Councillors to consider Mr. Debnath's request.

b. Mr. Nick Watson raised concerns about the level of dog fouling in the Ghyll, particularly around the bench – an area he maintains on behalf of the village, and where he is constantly finding dog waste. He noted that a sign had recently been placed requesting dog walkers to be responsible and collect and dispose of dog waste, but this was still being ignored. The Clerk reported that the matter had been raised with the Dog Wardens who were unable to do much unless the specific dog owners causing the problem could be identified. Cllr Loynes reported that Greatham had had a similar problem and had resolved it by having an anti-dog waste stencil sprayed onto the road surface. This was a positive suggestion welcomed by all and Cllr Loynes offered to follow this up with Council officers. **Action:** Cllr. Loynes to request anti-dog waste stencil for the Ghyll.

c. Mr. Watson then requested permission for The Friends of Elwick School to hold a Christmas Fair on the green, on Saturday 28 November between 2 and 4.00pm. This year would be different as, instead of a marquee, he had negotiated with the Borough Council to use 16 market stalls, which they would place around the green at 10.00 am and remove by 5.30 pm on the Saturday itself. He planned to ask residents along the western end of the Green if they would mind if the road was closed for the event, to allow the steam train to use it, as this was safer than running it in front of the pubs. The Clerk noted that a completed Village Green Booking Form and an up-to-date insurance certificate were required. Subject to these being received, Councillors unanimously agreed to allow the event. **Action:** Clerk to provide Mr. Watson with booking form asap.

d. Mr. Alan Cooke raised concerns about the lack of refuse collection at his house, Amerston Hill, and explained that all attempts to resolve the issue had been met with evasion and lies by an officer of the Council, giving specific details. Cllr. Loynes reported that she had discussed the issue with the CEO of HBC, who had agreed to investigate the issue. Cllr Loynes also agreed to report the officer in question. Cllr. Hutchinson noted that other outlying premises now had their refuse collected by a transit van, though the householders were required to put it into white plastic bags, which were not really fit for the purpose, being too thin. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to ensure that refuse collection is reinstated at Amerston Hall.

e. PCSO C. Jones reported that, although there had been little problem of crime within the villages, there had been increasing incidents of damage on farms caused by quad bikes, 4x4s and off-road motorcycles being used illegally smashing gates, churning up crops etc. Some farmers had been helped with the installation of special gates, which allow horses through but not bikes. She requested that anyone noticing such activity contact the police on **07525 410614**, a 24-hour line.

3. Declarations of interest: None

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th September 2015: Following an amendment to item 4.f. ('judicious' changed to 'judicial'), the minutes were agreed and signed.

5. Matters Arising:

a) **Church Bank Steps:** The Clerk reported that the refurbishment of the steps was delayed due to a piece of handrail having been damaged before being placed in situ and having to be remade. The final payment for the work would not be made until the work was completed, although the cheque had been drawn.

b) **Wildlife Garden:** The Clerk informed that the final maintenance visit had been undertaken and bulbs planted.

c) **Manor Close land/sign:** The sign has still not been replaced by the Borough Council. Cllr. Hall had attempted to place a temporary sign, produced by the Clerk, but had found nowhere to fix it. Cllr Loynes informed that the sign had been ordered and wished to check the wording required. It was agreed that the wording on the temporary sign was appropriate. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to organise sign and have it installed.

d) **Filters for lights around the green / wild flowers:** Cllr Martin-Wells had responded that filters would not be possible due to new regulations, but had not clarified what these were. It was explained to Cllr Loynes that the request was to have filter acetates placed inside the glass to provide the traditional warm glow appreciated by villagers. Cllr Loynes agreed to look into the matter. Cllr. Loynes then reported that the wild flower seeding had been much applauded by Hartlepool residents and, although very expensive, had actually released staff and equipment to mow other, non-seeded, grass verges more frequently. The Council's Horticultural Operations Officer had informed her that the Council were investigating the possibility of having their own staff trained in the use of the specialist machinery. Parish Councillors restated their wish to be included in the scheme next year. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to investigate further the use of filters within the conservation area, and to request that the villages be included in next year's wild flower project.

6. Chairman's Report: The Chairman had nothing to report.

7. Ward Councillor's Report: Cllr Loynes thanked everyone for their good wishes and flowers received whilst she had been ill. Much of what she had intended to report had already been covered, however she did wish to report that no Brown Bin collection would be made from the end of November until April 2016.

8. Village Maintenance report: A lively debate ensued about the effectiveness of the anti-litter notices at the Playing Field.

9. Policies and Procedures: It was felt that no amendments were required at this time. The Clerk asked whether it would be appropriate, given the earlier discussion, to investigate the possibility of updating the Bye-laws. This was **agreed** by all. Cllr. H. Thompson informed that the Clerk had requested a formal appraisal of her work be undertaken. It was **agreed** that she should draft a questionnaire to be completed by all Councillors, and then undertake the Appraisal, which would give the Clerk the opportunity to identify her training/development needs. **Actions:** Cllr H. Thompson to draft Appraisal questionnaire and circulate to colleagues; Clerk to investigate updating of Bye-laws.

10. Schedule of Work Proposals for 2016/17: Cllr. Hall requested that the lampposts around the green be painted and the pavements along North Lane to the A19 be repaired properly. Cllrs Thompson would wish to see the road across the village green near their house restored in line with the recommendations of the previous Conservation Officer, and the paving flags outside Martindale Close made even as they were in a hazardous state. Cllr Waugh proposed the holding of a May Village event with a maypole, sports for the children etc. The Clerk agreed to investigate costings of these before budget discussions at the November meeting. **Action:** Clerk to cost activities.

11. Financial Report: The Clerk presented the reports, which were accepted.

| Income: | £ | Expenditure: | £ |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| Donation towards Church Bank steps | 10,000.00 | Broadband Line | 25.45 |
| Way-leaves | 35.00 | Bus | 616.00 |

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| Interest | <u>15.88</u> | General Maintenance | 715.00 |
| Total | 10,050.88 | Grass Cutting & strimming | 1,060.80 |
| | | Major works | 5,500.00 |
| | | Room Hire | 20.00 |
| | | Skip Hire | 312.00 |
| | | Wildlife Garden maintenance | <u>100.00</u> |
| | | Total | 8,349.25 |

The External Auditors Report was presented and their comments noted.

12. Correspondence:

(a) Baxketh Ltd: a request that villagers note that skips should only be filled to the marked load line, as the drivers could not by law, take the skip away if it were overfull. Also, to note that mattresses incur an extra charge, and that carpets, fridges, freezers and roofing felt are not accepted at all. Councillors were concerned that this information had not been made available before and wondered whether it was any longer viable to provide the skip service, if so much is unacceptable to the company. The Clerk was requested to query the reasons for this and to check if other companies have the same rules. **Action:** Clerk to write to Baxketh and make enquiries of other firms.

13. Planning Applications:

- H/2015/0332: Concern expressed about number of trees needing to be felled in order to build houses
- H/2015/0417: not in Elwick parish – no comment
- H/2015/0390: not in Elwick parish – no comment
- H/2015/0367: no objections but concerns about parking
- H/2015/0399: already refused by Council

14. Matters of Concern to Councillors: Cllr Hutchinson queried why the retrospective planning application granted for work at Crookfoot Farm had not been brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Councillors were very concerned that they had not been notified of this application, especially given the planning history of this property.

Cllr Hall reported that horses had been getting into the Playing Field through a small gate at the bottom, and churning up the ground and leaving dung piles; the gate needs a spring or metal loop to ensure that it remains closed. **Action:** Clerk to organise appropriate repair.

Several Councillors commented on the poor paving around the Notice Board and wanted it replaced by a better quality and larger slabs. The Clerk reported that she had already asked that this be done. **Action:** Clerk to ensure paving is more appropriate to the site.

The Clerk reported that Mr. A. Sturrock had requested that long speed humps be introduced on the road at the top and bottom of ends of the green as the volume and speed of traffic were becoming intolerable. Councillors agreed that, as requests to the Borough Council and Police for speed humps had met with resistance, the Clerk should write to Highways England. **Action:** Clerk to write to Highways England.

It was noted that no application had been made to hold a **BONFIRE**, and that **NO PERMISSION** is granted.

7. Date of Next Meeting: 30th November 2015 at Elwick School.