

Elwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 30th November at Elwick School

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

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

1. Apologies: Cllr. H. Thompson - accepted

2. Public Forum: Mr. Sacha Bedding had intended to be at the meeting to discuss his concerns in the Public Forum, but was unable to make it due to work commitments. He had therefore sent a letter to Cllr. R. Thompson, copied to the Clerk, which was read to all present. He raised several concerns related to children and the Wildlife Garden, and had assumed, wrongly, that the Parish Council was responsible for some of the actions which had caused him concern. Some of the statements made in his letter were deemed by Councillors to be libellous and they asked that Mr. Beddings immediately withdraw these and apologise. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should write to Mr. Beddings, recognising his concerns but rebutting any involvement by the Parish Council, giving a brief history of the development Wildlife Garden, the Parish Council's recent and on-going investment in it and the actions actually taken in regard to the vandalism observed by some local residents. **Action:** Clerk & Cllr. R. Thompson to draft letter and circulate to other Councillors before delivery to Mr. Beddings,

3. Declarations of interest: None

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th October 2015: The Clerk had already noted a couple of amendments and had corrected the draft minutes before the meeting. The minutes were agreed and signed.

5. Matters Arising:

a) **Computer Club /Wildlife Garden (Awards for All):** The Clerk informed Councillors that:

i) the Computer Club had closed for the holiday season and would open again on 12th January; there were currently 10 members, though a couple of these only attended irregularly. Two new residents have intimated they wished to join in January.

ii) The school were planning a series of 14 weekly IT evening sessions for adults commencing in January; the Clerk had arranged to liaise with the organiser to ensure that these complemented rather than conflicted with what is already on offer in the village.

iii) The Wildlife Arts project has gone well, although only 8 children had fully participated; a Bug Hotel was almost complete, and the bench carving too was almost done. However, the bench still needed to be put together, sanded and sealed before being installed, which could not be completed before Christmas. The Clerk asked for permission to request an extension of the time scale of the A4A grant for this reason. It was **agreed** that an extension could be sought but that it should be concluded before the end of the financial year. **Action:** Clerk to seek an extension of the A4A grant.

b) **Manor Close land/sign:** Two signs were now in place on the wall and fence facing into Manor Close. However, it was noted that a car continued to be parked on the land, and Councillors asked what could be done to enforce the restriction. Cllr Loynes agreed to investigate enforcement powers. The Clerk was asked to contact the Borough Solicitor to raise the general question of Parish Council enforcement of Bye Laws. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to investigate parking enforcement; Clerk to contact the Borough Solicitor.

c) **Anti-dog waste stencil:** Cllr Loynes informed that this had been enacted. Cllr Hall informed that the stencil was not yet in fact in situ, but that dog walkers had responded well to the signs placed along the Ghyll by the Parish Council, and that the amount of dog waste was much reduced. Cllr Loynes agreed to request the stencil be painted immediately. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to speak to relevant officer.

d) **Refuse Collections:** Cllr. Hutchinson informed that refuse had still not been collected from Amerston Hill and asked why, some 20 weeks since the issue was raised, the situation had not been resolved. Cllr Loynes responded that she was still trying to arrange a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Borough Council to discuss this and the very poor way in which Council officers had handled the complaint. Cllr Hutchinson noted that the last two regular meetings between the Leader of the Council and Parish Council Chairs had been cancelled at short notice, thus giving no opportunity to raise such concerns directly. Councillors **requested** that a meeting be arranged as a priority. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to organise meeting with Chief Executive.

e. **Filters for lights around the green:** Cllr Loynes informed that filters would not be allowed in the lights, but that the lamp posts around the green were to be painted by the Borough Council. It was noted that there are still lights off - at the entrance to the Ghyll and on The Terrace. **Action:** Cllrs Loynes to request immediate action.

f. **Bye Laws:** The Clerk informed that she was having difficulty in identifying anyone who could provide advice. The Borough Solicitor's office had suggested that Tony McNab, one of the solicitors, may be able to help but he was on annual leave at present.

g. **Clerk's Appraisal:** No action to date.

6. **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman reported that he had replaced an oak flower tub that had been destroyed by a van trying to enter The Walk through the pedestrian access. The said vehicle had also damaged the garden wall of 6, The Green in trying to turn, and the householders were now pursuing restitution, having obtained the registration of the van. Councillors **agreed** that the Clerk should seek restitution in the amount of £50 from the company responsible. **Action:** Clerk to invoice the company.

7. **Ward Councillor's Report:** Cllr Loynes informed that the restoration of the graveyard wall was almost complete and that officers had agreed to inspect the pavements in Martindale Close and North Lane. Cllr. Musgrave raised concerns about the Beck at the foot of Church Bank, which appeared to be backing up again since the heavy rains, and queried whether something might be blocking the new culvert under the road. **Action:** Cllr Loynes to request an urgent inspection by the Highways team.

8. **Village Maintenance report:** Cllr Irving noted that drains in North Lane and around the Green are becoming blocked with leaves, leading to flooding. Cllr Loynes agreed to request action. Cllr Hall reported that a tree had fallen in the Playing Field and another in North Lane. It was **agreed** that John Musgrave be invited to remove these in exchange for the wood. Cllr Thompson reported that leaves on the Cinder path and on Church bank steps needed removing; in previous years he had done this himself, but was unable to now due to family illness. He suggested that the Parish Council purchase a couple of plastic rakes which were very effective. It was **agreed** that Cllr Irving should obtain 2 such rakes. **Actions:** Cllr Loynes to request action on dig waste stencil; Cllr Musgrave to invite Mr. Musgrave to remove trees; Cllr Irving to purchase 2 plastic rakes.

9. **Use of Village Green:** The Chairman asked if Councillors wished to reconsider the decision made about the public houses using the village green for tables in the summer months, in the light of the objection from the landlord of the McOrville. There followed a long discussion on the proposal, viz: 'To allow each pub to have up to three tables during the months of April to October'.

Cllr Waugh proposed an amendment: 'To allow up to five tables in the summer and three in the winter months', said proposal being seconded by Cllr Irving.

Cllr Thompson proposed an alternative amendment: 'To allow three tables throughout the year', but this amendment was not seconded.

The first amendment was put to the vote – 3 in favour, 3 against. The Chairman used his casting vote to

maintain the status quo and thus the amendment was **lost**.

Cllr Thompson then proposed his amendment again, this time seconded by Cllr Hutchinson. The amendment was put to the vote, with 3 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. The amendment was thus **carried**.

The substantive proposition was therefore amended to read: 'The two public houses be allowed to place up to three tables each on the village green throughout the year for use by customers' and put to the vote.

Those in favour - 4, those against - 1, with 1 abstention. The motion was therefore **carried**. The issue of the signs on the green was also discussed and all **agreed** that the signs should only be placed on the roadside during the months of April to October.

The Clerk was asked to write to the public houses informing them of this decision. **Action:** Clerk to write, conveying this decision, to the landlords and owner of the shop.

10. Community Right to Bid applications: The Clerk informed Councillors of the outcome of a meeting held with the officer at the Borough Council, which she had attended along with the Chairman of Greatham Parish Council, Cllr. H. Thompson being unable to attend. Both Parish Councils have been unable to get their applications approved to date; the lack of clarity as to why this was the case being the reason for the meeting. It had become clear very quickly that neither PC had been provided with full and appropriate feedback, and the substantive issue in all cases was a need for further evidence of community support/use of the particular properties. The Clerk would now work with Cllr H. Thompson to provide the required further evidence before resubmitting in due course. **Action:** Cllr H. Thompson and the Clerk to redraft the CR2Bid applications.

11. Village Design Statement: The Clerk reported that she had received the draft Statement drawn up by Newcastle University; Cllr H. Thompson had agreed that this needed some minor refinements, before being presented to the people of Elwick for consideration and adoption. If adopted it would then become part of the Rural Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that this work be undertaken jointly by Cllr H. Thompson and the Clerk, and that a public consultation meeting be held in February to present the final version for consideration/adoption. **Action:** Cllr H. Thompson and the Clerk to finalise the draft Elwick Village Design Statement and organise a public meeting in February 2016.

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

Income:	£	Expenditure:	£
		Broadband Line	23.94
Way-leaves	<u>15.00</u>	Bus	616.00
		Grass Cutting	303.60
		Clerk's salary (Oct-Dec)	<u>375.00</u>
Total	15.00	Total	1,318.54

13. Budget Proposals 2016/17: The Clerk presented an initial draft budget for consideration. The final budget and decision on the Precept demand will be made at the January meeting.

16. Matters of concern to Councillors: (Taken at this point as Cllr, Loynes needed to leave at 9.00pm). Cllr Hall raised concerns about cars parking with the bonnets overhanging the pavement in North Lane, making it very difficult for wheelchairs and pushchairs to pass by. It was noted that the land the cars were parked on was not a layby, but land owned by the households facing the road. Cllr Loynes agreed to ask officers if anything could be done about this.

Cllrs Hall and Loynes left the meeting at 9.06 pm.

14. Correspondence:

(a) Further guidance from NALC on the Transparency Fund – noted

(b) Invitation to the Limestone landscapes Book Launch, 10-12 noon, Thursday 17 December – noted.

15. Planning Applications:

H/2015/0367: Wyndlee, amended plans – no objections raised

H/2015/03/0421: Elwick Hall, new Stallion Block and house to be built in the Hall grounds. Councillors welcomed the prospect of new employment in the rural area, design appeared to be of a very high standard and felt the siting of the new buildings should not impact negatively on neighbours, therefore Councillors happy to support the application. There was some concern about the access to the site by heavy vehicles, especially during the construction period, and it was hoped that planners would require all vehicles to approach the site from the a19 rather than via the village.

17. Date of Next Meeting: 25th January 2016 at Elwick School.

The Chairman wished everyone a very happy Christmas.