

## ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 October 2018 at Elwick WI Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. P. Hutchinson (Chair), D. Atkins, E. Hurst, B. Irving, R. Musgrave, H. Thompson

**In Attendance:** Mrs. M. West, Clerk

**1. Apologies:** None received

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

**3. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Hutchinson, Item 14.

**4. Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018:** Item 7. Replace 'horses' with 'a tree'; Item 9 – insert 'Cllrs Hurst and Atkins were concerned at the likely timescale.' With these amendments, Cllr H. Thompson proposed and Cllr Hurst seconded acceptance of the minutes. It was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record and they were signed by the Chairman.

**5. Matters Arising:**

**(a) Playing Field** – The new sign, installed by Cllr R. Thomson only a few days earlier had already been smashed off and taken away. The sign cost £69 of ratepayers' money, and all Councillors were extremely upset at this vandalism. It is to be reported to the police. After a brief discussion it was **resolved** to replace the sign, after consulting HBC engineers about how to make it stronger and less susceptible to vandalism. It was further **resolved** that the Clerk should write a piece for Village Life, and also highlight the theft of the sign on the notice board and website.

The zip wire platform has now been installed and Cllr Irving reported that it is excellent, though the wire itself needs tightening. The bridge over the culvert is in need of urgent repair – the Clerk stated that Affordable Landscapes had been asked some months ago to provide a quote for the work but that this had not yet been received. She was requested to pursue this and also to request the cutting back of growth around the bench near the zip wire.

**(b) Various trees:** The Clerk informed that the ash tree behind the garages in Manor Close had been reported to the HBC Arboriculturist, Derek Wardle, who will take any necessary action to ensure that it is made safe as it is beside a public highway.

**(c) Youth Focus:** Cllrs Atkins and Hurst had revised the questionnaire. Cllr Atkins proposed that the volunteer sheet should first be circulated on its own, as it would not be fair to raise the expectations of young people should it prove difficult to recruit volunteers to run a youth club. It was **resolved** to ask Youth Focus to print the revised sheet and circulate it. **Action:** Clerk to forward revised version to Youth Focus.

**(d) Fence at Wildlife Garden:** The Clerk reported that the Land Registry cannot identify the ownership of a boundary fence, but said the common view is that whichever side the posts are on, that landowner owns the fence. It was noted that Yuill's owned the land originally. Cllr Irving volunteered to see where the posts were situated. **Action:** Cllr Irving to look at fence.

**(e) Church Bank fence:** The Clerk reported the response from Sarah Scarr, HBC Conservation Officer, in regard to the Parish Council's preferred option, which was to state that Highways Engineers believed the estate fencing she had proposed met all H&S legislative requirements, though would not meet those of RoSPA, which were guidance only. The Clerk proposed that the PC's Insurance company be consulted before any decision was made; this proposal was unanimously supported. **Action:** Clerk to discuss with Zurich.

**6. Rural Plan Referendum Update:** Cllr H. Thompson reported that the Rural Plan had been supported by an overwhelming majority, 330 votes in favour, with 75 against, in a 19.2% turnout. This was a high turnout of voters for a Neighbourhood Plan, and she wished to put on record the thanks of the Rural Plan Working Group. She further reported that MR. & Mrs. Perry had been very grateful for the support of both the Parish Council and Rural Plan Group in their Appeal against the Planning Committee's refusal of planning permission. Cllr. Thompson then

asked if the PC wished to continue to be involved in the monitoring of the Rural Plan, if so, then a new representative was needed as Minna now represented Hart Parish on the Rural plan Group. There was unanimous support for continued representation and it was **resolved** that Cllrs Musgrave and H. Thompson represent Elwick PC.

- 7. Local Government Boundary Commission Recommendations:** The Clerk noted that the recommendations gave the worst possible outcome for the rural community, as they split the rural area into three separate wards, with Hart remaining within a mostly urban ward, Greatham being moved to a new, mostly urban ward with The Fens, leaving Elwick, Dalton Piercy and Wynyard making the third ward. After a brief discussion it was **resolved** to oppose the recommendations on the basis that they (a) would break up a rural community which has just voted overwhelmingly to support a Rural Plan, which identified the many economic, educational, historical and social links between the villages, and (b) did not take sufficiently into account, the potential growth of Wynyard. It was further agreed that Cllr R. Thompson and the Clerk should draw up the response letter. **Action:** Cllr. R. Thompson and Clerk to write letter to Boundary Commissioners.
- 8. Chairman's Report:** Cllr. Hutchinson stated that he would be helping to replace the 4 tubs at the west end of the village green.
- 9. Ward Councillors' Reports:** No Ward Councillors present and no report received.
- 10. Wynyard Report:** The two Councillors from Wynyard stated they had nothing to report.
- 11. Village Maintenance Group Report:** Cllr Irving spoke to her report circulated earlier:  
**Tasks completed:**
  - Italian Alders in The Walk removed
  - Large Christmas Tree removed
  - Platform for zip-wire installed
  - Sanding and sealing of benches in Wildlife garden, repair of bench near shop and bench at Martindale Close sanded and stained
  - New notice for Playing Field installed **but now missing!****Tasks still waiting:**
  - Stones around the green to be painted
  - Complete clearing of edges of remaining greens
  - Zip wire needs raising
  - Street lights on Church Bank still on during the day
  - Manor Close road sign still not replaced
  - New benches to be installed in Playing Field and North Lane – in hand
  - Several benches need repair, opposite No 26, opposite Potter's Farm and at top of North Lane.
  - Large bench in Martindale Close needs sanding and staining, Jack Smurthwaite's bench on Green needs staining.
  - 'No Parking on Village Green' signs to be cleaned/replaced
  - Blocked drain on Church Bank still not cleared
  - Railings down Church Bank further damaged
  - Pavements in North Lane in urgent need of repair
  - Trees around bench in Playing Field need trimming back
  - Grass growing through cobbles in Martindale
  - Large tree behind garages behind Manor Close; reported to Thirteen but may belong to Potter's Farm.
  - The crash barrier at Pudding Poke has still not been installed.

It was agreed to consult residents living close to the area in The Walk, as to what sort of tree should be planted to replace the alders, and to leave the painting of the stones until the spring, when they should be painted a light stone colour rather than white. It was further agreed to ask Mick Hutchinson to undertake the work on all the benches identified and also to stain John

Gillespie's bench to match the others on the green. Cllr Irving reported that she had been trying to contact the NE Ambulance Service at Newcastle to arrange some training in the use of the defibrillator, to no avail. The Clerk offered to provide an alternative contact. Finally, it was noted that the village shop was now up for sale, but concern was expressed that the estate agents were advertising it as if it could be made into a residential dwelling, which would not be allowed under both the Local and Rural plan guidelines. The Clerk had contacted them with this information.

Cllrs Irving and Musgrave were thanked for their report.

- 12. Social Activities Sub-Committee:** Cllr H. Thompson reported that a Christmas party for the children of the village was to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> December, funded by the Village Association. Mulled wine and mince pies would be available for those attending the Carols Around the Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve, served from the bus shelter, and it may be possible to borrow the Round Table Santa Trailer if we can provide safe garaging for it over the holiday period. The Next meeting of the Committee was to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

- 13. Financial Report:** The Clerk presented the monthly reports, which it was **resolved** to accept.

Receipts:	£	Payments	£	
	0.00	D.M. Ireland (3 months' salary + back pay)	566.64	
		HMRC (PAYE)	141.66	
		D.M. Ireland (Playing Field sign £69/Flower tub comp £33.97)	102.97	
		Petty Cash (postage/stationery/keys/gift)	46.04	
		Bank Service charge	18.00	
		Wynyard CE Primary school (room hire)	15.00	
		Mazars LLP (External Audit)	288.00	
		Affordable landscapes (grass and trees)	1,320.00	
		MKM Building Supplies (benches and zip wire platform)	1,080.00	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,578.31</b>	<b>–</b>

- 14. External Audit:** The Clerk reported the completion of the External Audit and read out the Auditor's report. Councillors **resolved** to accept the report.

- 15. Correspondence:** (a) Letter from Mike Hill MP in regard to the closure of the mail box and indicating the action he was taking on our behalf; (b) Great North Air Ambulance – request for donation – declined but agreed to ask Social Affairs Committee to organise a fund-raising event for them; (c) Step TV – noted. It was agreed that the MP should be thanked and invited to attend a Parish Council meeting, if he was able to. **Action:** Clerk to extend invitation and dates of meetings.

**16. Planning Applications:**

**H/2018/0403** – No Objection

**H/2018/0407** – No Objection

**H/2018/0408** – No Objection

**H/2018/0415** – No Objection

- 17. Matters of Concern to Councillors:** The Chairman noted that no application had been received for the holding of a bonfire on the green on 5 November, and no permission was granted to do so. Councillors were sad to record the death of Doris Morell.

- 18. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Elwick WI Hall

*Meeting closed at 8.58 pm.*