**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 19th July 2021**

**at Elwick WI Hall**

*(Social Distancing was observed throughout)*

**Present:**Cllrs. H. Thompson, P. Hutchinson, B. Irving, R. Musgrave, R. Thompson and A. Williamson

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Woodward.
2. **Public Forum:** No members of public present.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
4. **Minutes of 28th June 2021**: The Chairman noted that Meryl had been misspelt, with an ‘i’ instead of a ‘y’. This being amended, Cllr Hutchinson proposed, with Cllr B. Irving seconding, the acceptance of these minutes. It was unanimously **resolved** to accept these as a true record.

1. **Police Report:** No report received.
2. **Matters Arising: (a) Grants -** The Clerk reported that Grantscape had not been willing to accept any applications from parish councils for laptop computers, deeming these to be the tools required for a Clerk and thus to be met from the Precept. Accordingly, EPC had withdrawn this application. Notification of the success or otherwise of the other applications would be received by the end of July.

**(b) Church Bank** - The Clerk reported that John Pearson had said the large branch overhanging the road on Church Bank was too large a job for him, and would probably require the road to be closed. He had, however, contacted the tree surgeon who employed his son, for advice and was awaiting his response.

**(c) Village Greens Protection** – The Chairman reported that she had contacted the Bishop Middleham Quarry, but was not allowed to speak to the owner in person. The only option given was to apply for the staff monthly lottery. Councillors felt this to be inappropriate, as staff donated to support charities in their own area. It was agreed unanimously, to proceed with the purchase of as many large stones as could be obtained and transported to a maximum of £300. Cllr Hutchinson agreed to organise this, to have the stones delivered to him and to then liaise with John Pearson as to their collection for installation around the greens.

**(d) The ‘Greening of Elwick’:** The topic had been broached at the Annual Parish Meeting and had met with general support. It was therefore agreed to go ahead with three trial areas – a part of The Walk green, the circular bed on the north side of the green and a triangle on the top green at the east end of the village. These would be delineated, and grass cutting stopped for the remainder of the season, to allow the grass to grow and provide cover for wildlife and insects. Affordable landscapes to be informed.

**Actions:** Cllr Hutchinson to order stones, Clerk to organise marking out and signage for ‘green’ areas.

1. **Annual Parish Meeting:** The consensus was that it was a good night, with attendance higher than expected, given the clash with the Football World Cup Semi-Final. Around 35 residents had attended; the Stagecoach representative had been reassuring, and the new marquee had proved a hit. However, there were no suggestions for the next 5-year Parish Plan.

Councillors discussed what they would wish to see in the plan – probably similar to the last one, but to include:

* + - * The ‘greening’ of Elwick
      * Completion of the Wildlife Garden renovation
      * A digital map of Elwick produced
      * New, larger stones installed around the main village greens to prevent damage to the greens
      * Refurbishment of benches around the village
      * CCTV at the Playing Field car park
      * Continued tree and greens maintenance
      * The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrated
      * A traditional red telephone box reinstated on the green to be used as a book exchange
      * Regular coffee mornings and evening social gatherings initiated to bring people together
      * The play area maintained and refurbished as necessary, a new bench and picnic table
      * installed
      * The fence to the Playing Field reinforced and the sign installed.

**Action:** Clerk to draft 5-year Parish Plan and circulate for comment.

1. **The Queen’s platinum Jubilee:** The Clerk noted that this was to be a four-day Bank Holiday, 2-5 June 2022 and asked how Councillors would wish to celebrate it. After a brief discussion, the option of purchasing bone china mugs for every household was declined. It was felt a huge party on the village green with a special cake, was more inclusive. It was agreed to have this as an agenda item on every agenda until June 2022.

**Action:** Clerk to add as an item to future Agendas.

1. **Ward Councillor’s Report:** The Clerk informed that no report had been received.
2. **Chairman’s Report:** (circulated in advance). Before she began her report, Cllr Hutchinson expressed a “Big Thank You” on behalf of all who had attended her garden party for Jill Mortimer, MP.

The Chairman reported as follows:

* The Parish meeting held on 7th July was well-attended – our two new Cllrs, Alex and Dave were introduced and volunteers thanked for their sterling efforts to support those in most need throughout the pandemic. We were pleased to welcome a representative from Stagecoach who took questions regarding the shortcomings of the Tees-flex on-demand bus service with buses missed as they came too early, or keeping people waiting far too long so that ongoing travel was not possible – generally being unreliable. Problems were put down mainly to Covid-19 and we were told that the bus used for vaccination purposes would be back in the Hartlepool rural area very soon and people back to working as pre-Covid. Village organisations informed us of how they had managed through the pandemic to keep in touch with members and St Peter's Church made us aware of great worries for the future of our churches, exacerbated and brought forward by the pandemic.

Thanks to Minna for fronting this event and organising the refreshments, and to Dave and Alex for erecting the new marquee which served the occasion well. Special thanks to Marion Watts for delivering nearly all the letters.

* What a beautiful sunny afternoon we had on the 8th July when the four rural parish councils met our new MP, Jill Mortimer, in our garden for a chat over a cuppa and a cake. It was a very relaxed, pleasant event as we got to know an intelligent, decisive lady who I'm sure we all felt would be an asset to Hartlepool Borough. Many thanks to everyone for coming and to all those who made cakes and scones and helped on the day – you made it very easy for the hosts!
* On the 14th July the five Parish Council Chairs which included Headland's Chairman, met to discuss the draft Hartlepool Parish Councils' Charter that we shall be presenting to the Leader, Shane Moore, and Managing Director, Denise McGuckin at a meeting mid-August. A Parish Clerk will also be in attendance. It is a Charter based on Communication, Co-operation and Consultation and includes a section on how it should be monitored for compliance. We believe it to be fair to both Parishes and Borough Council and have sent the draft to Cllr Moore for perusal before we meet.
* The latest worry regarding the Elwick bypass is the proposition to close Coal Lane where it joins the A19. As well as the Parish Council's objection to this, a residents' petition has been organised to be sent to Highways England explaining how seriously this would affect householders, and especially farms with deliveries and collections.
* On Saturday 10th July, a large tree had fallen onto the road in North Lane, blocking it. Fortunately, Cllr R. Thompson attended with his son, Jamie and cut the tree back so that traffic could move again, before the police and Highways England staff arrived on the scene. They contacted HBC who came some 45 minutes later and cleared the rest of the tree away.
* Kit Lofthouse, Chairman of Wynyard PC (Stockton), had contacted her with a request that the funds EPC had ring-fenced for a planning application for a community centre for Wynyard, be ‘vired’ to pay for trees to be planted around Wynyard, but only on the land south of the A689. She had stated that the community centre was scheduled to be built and would not require planning permission. After some discussion, Cllr Hutchinson proposed, with Cllr R. Thompson seconding, that EPC pass the monies over to the new Wynyard PC (Hartlepool), when it was elected in May 2022; the motion was carried unanimously.

**Action:** Clerk to write to Mrs Lofthouse with the Parish Council’s decision.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson reported that he had planned to call a meeting the next week, on Wednesday 28th, however, he and Hilary would now be away. Cllr Woodward had agreed to convene a meeting in his place, for 7.00pm on Thursday 29th July, at the Cow Shed, (behind the Spotted Cow), if Councillors were in agreement. All concurred, and Cllr R. Thompson agreed to contact Cllr Woodward immediately to confirm this, and pass on contact details for other members of the group. The Clerk noted that she too would be away.

**Action:** Cllr R. Thompson to contact Cllr Woodward regarding arrangements for a Social Activities Committee meeting 29th July.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report**: (tabled).

**Tasks completed:**

* Shrubs blocking the footpath at the east end of the village have been cut back and some weeds removed; the land belongs to HBC.
* Rubbish outside Holly House has been removed and the cobbled area has been sprayed with weedkiller.
* Two coats of white paint have been applied to the top half of the interior of the bus shelter.
* Missing sign in North Lane replaced.

**Tasks not yet completed:**

* Potholes in Manor Close – HBC
* Road in front of garages in Martindale – HBC.
* All footpaths in village in bad state, section outside No.24 North Lane is particularly bad – HBC.
* Corner of land in middle of North Lane still not repaired – HBC.
* Footpath down Church Bank still not repaired; section of boarding is missing – EPC.
* Bus shelter needs painting with red masonry paint – inside lower half and exterior – EPC
* Fence at entrance to Playing Field needs to be stained; notice board and bench to be installed – EPC.
* Benches around village need sanding and staining – EPC
* Tree to be removed from Wildlife Garden and Crab Apple planted – EPC
* Oak tree to be planted in Playing Field – EPC.

Cllr Irving noted that she had, that morning, observed 2 HBC vans on the driveway beside Holly House, and heard a lot of banging, but she had not as yet ascertained what was being done. She further informed that the red masonry paint for the bus shelter was now in her shed, and that she had filled in the holes in the walls and she and the Clerk had completed the repainting of the interior upper walls that afternoon.

Cllr R. Thompson agreed to reinforce the fence at the entrance to the Playing Field before installing the Notice. The Clerk informed that John Pearson had agreed to, the following week: lift the trees on the greens to 6’; to remove the rubble and the tree in the Wildlife Garden, including its stump, and to cover the space with topsoil; to provide grass to cover the pond liner and to plant the Crab Apple tree, and that Cllr Irving had agreed to supervise, as the Clerk would not be available. She further informed that she had asked Dave Lewis if he would be willing to make and install a bench for the bus shelter and to do the benches around the village; she was currently awaiting a costing from him. Cllr Wiliamson agreed to accompany Cllr Irving on a site visit to the Playing Field, to identify an appropriate place for the donated Oak tree.

Cllr R. Thompson informed that his garden designer had admired the Wildlife Garden but felt the fence around the pond was too prominent and detracted from the shape of the pond; he had suggested that the fence be painted matt black. Some Councillors disagreed with this suggestion, and it was agreed to defer any decision until the pond had been planted. The Clerk informed that she had received a complaint about dogs on leads using the Wildlife Garden as a toilet. She had therefore produced a ‘No dogs allowed’ sign, which she would place on the notice board if Councillors agreed. Unanimous agreement was immediately given.

**Actions:** Cllr R. Thompson to reinforce the fence at the Playing Field entrance and to erect the Notice, Cllrs Irving and Williamson to identify where the Oak tree is to be planted, Clerk to post No Dogs on notice board at Wildlife Garden.

1. **Financial Reports**: (circulated in advance). The Clerk presented the reports which were accepted.

**Receipts: £ Payments: £**

**0** Affordable Landscapes (grass cutting) 1,950.00

D.M. Ireland (salary April-June) 878.40

HMRC (PAYE) 219.60

David Gross (Carving on bench) 50.00

**3,098.00**

1. **Correspondence:** The Clerk informed that the only correspondence had been the complaint about the dogs using the Wildlife Garden as a latrine – noted.
2. **Planning Applications**:

**H/2021/0115 -** Land off Coniscliffe Road (Mayfair Gardens) – not in the parish.

**H/2021/0282** – Land North of Duchy Homes, Wynyard Park Estate – No Objection

**H/2021/0246** – 18, Wellington Gardens, Wynyard – No Objection

**H/2014/0405** – Land between A689 and Brierton Lane South West Extension. It was noted that this proposal would bring the town right to Dalton Back Lane and would back onto the development at High Tunstall Farm, the two developments together would bring the town to the boundaries of both Dalton Piercy and Elwick parishes. Councillors agreed to review the application carefully and to email their comments to the Clerk by 6th August.

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**:

* Cllrs Musgrave and Hutchinson informed the petition to Highways England being raised by residents of Coal Lane in regard to the lack of direct access to/from Elwick was now in circulation.
* Cllr Williamson raised concern again about the dangers posed by vehicles parking in North Lane to drop off or pick up children from the school; many of these vehicles were causing an obstruction to other traffic using the road, and both children and parents were crossing the road between cars, with no clear line of sight. It was agreed that the school be asked to raise the awareness of parents to the issue at the start of the new school year in September, and the police be asked to monitor the situation at school start and close times.

1. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 27th September at Elwick WI Hall.

*There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.22pm, wishing all a Happy Holiday.*