**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00 pm on Monday 24th May 2021**

**at Elwick WI Hall**

*(Social Distancing was observed throughout)*

**Present:**Cllrs. H. Thompson, B. Irving, P. Hutchinson, R. Musgrave, R. Thompson and D. Woodward

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

1. **Apologies:** Ward CllrsLoynes, Stokell & Young, PCSO Jones. The Clerk read out emails received form the Ward Cllrs.
2. **Public Forum:** No members of public present.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs, H. & R. Thompson in Item 6b – Church Bank
4. **Minutes of Meeting 26th April 2021**: Cllr Musgrave proposed, with Cllr R. Thompson seconding, the acceptance of these minutes. It was unanimously **resolved** to accept these as a true record.

1. **Police Report:** The Clerk read out the report submitted by PCSO Jones as follows: 1 report of concern for safety, theft from a farm building, suspicious circumstances surrounding a person in a car, incidents of poachers/trespassers on land. The Clerk also reported that the offer of the loan of a police CCTV camera for the Playing Field had now been withdrawn due to lack of ASB in Elwick. This last was met with dismay, the Parish Council having been waiting for 9 months for the camera, offered as a result of thefts of equipment from the Playing Field. The Chairman noted that she had been informed of a noisy motorbike being driven up and down Martindale and Manor Close in the evenings, doing wheelies.
2. **Matters Arising: (a) Red Gap Grants -** The Clerk reported that she had now submitted 4 applications to Red Gap and 1 to Awards for All; the company supplying the refurbished red telephone box could not provide one before February 2023 and therefore it was premature to apply for the funding of this. Cllr. Woodward noted that he had seen refurbished telephone boxes available for sale on Facebook.

**(b) Church Bank** – the Clerk noted that HBC had informed her the tree overhanging the road was on village green land and therefore it was a PC responsibility. The Clerk was requested to contact Meryl Gardens to remove the overhanging branch. Cllr R. Thompson informed that his sons had agreed to install 3 drainage channels across the footpath, spaced from the top, but due to a national shortage of materials had been unable to complete this work as yet. Having inspected the footpath the previous day, he believed the zigzag channel in the path had been caused by a combination of cycles and excessive rain; to address this, the use of a resin bonding or similar was being investigated. Cllr Woodward noted that a resident was having problems navigating the bottom end of the footpath with her guide dog, due to excessive growth on the bank. The Clerk was asked to arrange for the edge of the bank to be cut back, leaving sufficient cover for wildlife. **Action:** Clerk to contact Meryl Gardens in regard to the tree and Affordable Landscapes in regard to the bank growth.

**(c) Digital Mapping –** the Clerk noted that a refresher date was planned in early July, but beforehand, teach PC had been requested by Pear Technology to identify a range of the assets they wished to place on their digital map, on a physical map. Cllrs H. & R. Thompson agreed to do this in the next week. **Action:** Cllrs Thompson to plot assets on map.

**(d) Village Greens Protection** – Cllr Hutchinson informed that, as Hart Quarry was now closed, he had contacted Bishop Midddleham Quarry, who could supply a load of 10-12 large stones for £300. The Clerk informed that Affordable Landscapes had quoted £350 for the installation of the stones with a digger. **Action:** Clerk to ascertain whether Henry Sturrick could obtain the stone at discount.

**(e) PAYE issue** – The Clerk reported that the issue had finally been resolved, and PAYE Tools was once again available for use.

**(f) Tees Flex Bus Service** – The Clerk reported that no reply had been received to date, to her April letter, but that she had heard that regular users had been sent a questionnaire. Cllr Irving confirmed this was the case. The Chairman reported a case of a resident being unable to book the bus to get her guide dog to/from the vet; as a result, having taken a taxi to the vet, she had then been unable to find a taxi to get her home, so had approached the Hartlepool Stagecoach office, who were unable to get through to a driver, but the man in the office had kindly run her home in his own car. Apparently, several other residents had been unable to book a bus back from town – the telephone being constantly engaged. It was also noted that some drivers refused to take passengers into Tees Bay Retail Park, dropping them off outside the new Aldi, on the wrong side of the busy road, leaving them a long walk. The Clerk was requested to write again to Ben Houchen about these issues, and also to write to Stagecoach Head Office in appreciation of the exemplary behaviour of the Hartlepool office staff member and inviting them to the Annual Parish Meeting, to discuss the scheme and how it is progressing. **Action:** Clerk to write letters as requested.

**(g) Wynyard Neighbour Consultations in Planning Applications** – The Clerk read the response received from Jim Ferguson, HBC Chief Planning Officer, in which he stated that it was often difficult to identify neighbours to consult due to the rapid expansion of the developments at Wynyard.

1. **Ward Councillor’s Report:** The Clerk informed that no report had been received.
2. **Chairman’s Report:** (Circulated in advance). The Chairman reported as follows:

* She had sent a letter in to Wynyard Magazine for the attention of Wynyard, Hartlepool, residents to be included in the next issue. It was a heartfelt thank you to Councillor Liz Hurst for all her hard work supporting Wynyard, and also an invitation to come to an Elwick PC meeting to gain insight into how PCs are run in preparation for a stand-alone Wynyard PC.
* The Manor Close parking issue. There is no movement as yet on the development of the three parking spaces. We are trying to confirm that EPC does actually own this land after the Council sent a very indistinct map of land in its ownership which seemed to indicate that this piece was HBC's!
* One of the Survey replies complained about traffic coming out of The Paddock onto Manor Close at speed. The road markings where the roads join are badly worn and need repainting.
* Elwick Parish Council has now received from the leader of the Council, Cllr Shane Moore, a reply to the four Parish Councils' letter notifying of the ‘No Confidence’ vote. There are many anomalies, wrong information, his being unaware of some of our complaints (what are our Cllrs for, if not to bring awareness of communities' needs to the Council?). The four PCs will consider this reply and respond in due course.
* The Chairs, Vice-chairs and Clerks have a Teams meeting with Durham County Council's Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, later this week to discuss how DCC works with its Parish Councils.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson reported that there had been no meetings of the Committee since the last PC meeting and no date had yet been set for the next. Cllr Woodward suggested that now was the time to start planning for events to be held once restrictions were eased and Cllr R. Thompson agreed to convene a meeting within the next 2 weeks.

**Action:** Cllr R. Thompson to convene meeting of Social Activities Committee.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report**: (circulated in advance).

**Tasks completed:**

* New large waste bin installed on green opposite the shop
* Missing nuts & bolts on Church Bank railings replaced and patches of missing paint treated
* It was reported that the public footpath in the ghyll had been repaired, however it is still in a very poor state - photographic evidence taken 22 May 2021

**Tasks still to be completed:**

* Stones round greens to be painted - EPC
* Several potholes in Manor Close - HBC
* Road in front of garages in Martindale in bad state, breaking up and unsafe to walk on - HBC.
* School sign on post outside No 16 North Lane missing - HBC.
* All footpaths in village in bad state, section outside No.24 North Lane is particularly bad – HBC.
* Top half of footpath on Church Bank needs repairing; it has a deep zig zag gully running down it and is unsafe to walk on. The bottom section of left-hand side boarding has been removed - EPC.
* Fence at entrance to Playing Field needs treating with wood stain - EPC.
* Two sections of boarding around soft play area have been removed - EPC.
* Several benches around the village need cleaning and staining - EPC.
* Interior of bus shelter to be painted - EPC.
* Corner of land in middle of North Lane still not repaired - HBC.

**New tasks:**

* ‘’No Horses” signs missing from top & bottom of Church Bank footpath need replacing – EPC.
* Clearing of stones/rubble from planting areas in Wildlife Garden and trees, shrubs & perennials planted – EPC.

Councillor Irving was thanked for her report. Cllr Hutchinson reported that he sent a request to all the Elwick Young Farmers for volunteers to paint the stones around the village greens but none had responded. It was agreed that the poor quality of the repair to the public footpath in the ghyll be reported to HBC; also, to ask how frequently the bins in the Playing Field were emptied. Cllr Woodward noted that the Playing Field was very popular and was in use almost every day, which resulted in larger amounts of waste for the bins. The Clerk agreed to find someone to deal with those benches in need of attention.

**Action:** Clerk to write to HBC regarding the public footpath repair & the frequency of bin emptying, and to arrange for the benches to be treated.

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

**Receipts: £ Payments: £**

**0.00** R. Thompson (repayment for shelving for storage shed) 180.88

HBC (Playing Field litter bin emptying) 116.36

Affordable Landscapes (grass cutting) 361.20

Affordable Landscapes (repair to wall at electricity sub-station) 420.00

**Total: 1,078.44**

The Clerk reported that she now had a Charles Dickens discount card for Parish Council use.

1. **Correspondence:** (a) Card of thanks from former Cllr Hurst – noted; (b) Request from a resident for the cobbles in the walkway to The Walk be cleared of weeds and the trees pruned **– Agreed.** (c) Request from a journalist for PC’s view on the bypass – noted.
2. **Planning Applications**:

**H/2021/0191 –** Outline planning for a **Bypass for Elwick village** – *postponed until after the public meeting arranged for 6.00pm Wednesday 26th May, when the views of residents would be sought.*

**H/2021/0203 – Poppy Cottage, 2, Musgrave Gardens, Wynyard –** *No Objection, but noted that neighbours not on consultee list again.*

**H/2021/0204 – Land north of Wynyard Park –** Councillors looked very carefully at the plans for this ECO home before concluding that the land on which it was proposed to build was woodland, within which was a public footpath.Much of the woodland around Wynyard Park had already been removed, to the detriment of wildlife and the well-being of residents, as had been mentioned at several meetings by Cllr Hurst, herself a Wynyard Park resident. Allowing even a single dwelling to be built here would open the floodgates, and soon there would be no woodland of any size around this once wooded area. ***STRONG OBJECTION.***

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**: None raised.
2. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 28th June at Elwick WI Hall.

*There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.*