**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 25th October 2021**

**at Elwick WI Hall**

*(Social Distancing was observed throughout)*

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

Cllr R. Thompson from 7.48pm.

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk, PCSOs Jones and Hestor, one resident.

1. **Apologies:** Ward Cllr Loynes
2. **Public Forum:** (1) Barbara Hind, VCS Officer**:** Ms. Hind was not present to make her presentation**. (ii)** The resident present asked that the possibility of the erection of sound barriers, along the section of A19 running beside the village, be investigated, with a view to requesting the funding from the Red Gap Community Fund. Councillors recognised that noise levels had increased considerably since the new tunnel under the Tyne had opened and it was noted that such barriers exist further up the A19 beside Peterlee.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Woodward - Item 17. Cllrs H & R Thompson Items 6(a) and 7.
4. **Police Report:**  PCSO Jones mentioned the recent break-in at a house in North Lane and noted that there have been quite a lot of burglaries and attempted burglaries over the last few weeks. She requested that residents keep all door and windows locked. A pick-up was stolen from Brierton. Anyone with information about men, usually seen in a black BMW and asking to buy land or dogs, to please obtain the license number and inform the police immediately. The Chairman reported that she had heard of three people doing some building scams; PCSO Jones agreed to inform Trading Standards about this. The Chairman thanked them for their attendance.

*The police officers and resident left the meeting.*

1. **Minutes of 28th September 2021**: Two amendments were requested: In Item 7 - Cllr Woodward’s name was misspelt and in Item 11, the wording in the note on the proposed Children’s Christmas party should read: ‘with different entertainment’. With these amendments made, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.
2. **Matters Arising: (a) Church Bank** – Cllr H. Thompson informed that two quotes had now been received, with a further due on Thursday, for the tarmacadaming of the footpath from top to bottom. The work would be completed within the next two weeks. Cllr Irving noted that the footpath at the east end of the village was also now deteriorating.

**(b) Village greens protection -** Cllr Hutchinson reported no further progress.

**(c) Parish Plan & Website -** Cllr Williamson tabled a paper on the Parish Plan, which proposed that SMART outcomes be identified, and each item to be identified as a short, medium or long-term objective; he further suggested the Plan be broken down onto quarterly actions. Cllr Williamson then referred to the current website which he felt was difficult to read, had too much information and needed to be more user friendly, with targeted key features, for example ‘Events’. He also felt the website should be linked to social media. He had developed an example and agreed to forward a link to his proposed website upgrade. Cllr Woodward raised concern about being too ambitious about events, over 90% of villagers are not interested in helping to run events or do things – it is always the same few who volunteer and their time/availability and willingness was not limitless. He agreed however that a financial target should be set for each event. These issues need to be taken on board and help to structure the Parish Plan. **Action:** Clerk to draft revised Parish Plan for next meeting.

*Cllr R. Thompson joined the meeting.*

**(d) Rights of Way-** The Clerk reported that Chris Scaife, HBC Access & Rights of Way Officer, had raised several questions that would need to be answered before he could ascertain whether a Right of Way existed across the Playing Field. The most important of these was: ‘Did the PC have evidence of villagers using this route for a minimum of 20 years?’ After a brief discussion it was **agreed** to ask villagers for any evidence they may have of such usage.

**(e) Trees -** The Clerk reported she had received a quote from the tree surgeon, via Affordable Landscapes, in the sum of £3.000; this would encompass the felling of one dead Ash tree and the pruning of a large Sycamore on Church Bank, the latter being a danger to the road, and also the pollarding/crown reduction of the Horse Chestnut on the north east side of the green. John Pearson had agreed to reduce by 30%, the two sycamores behind The Walk, himself as this would cost considerably less. The quote was accepted and it was further **agreed** that the Horse Chestnut be removed completely, as recommended by the tree surgeon, and the site used to plant a tree of a different species in honour of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

**(f) Bus Shelter –** A quote had been received from SoniCreations, for the treatment of the woodwork above the front of the bus shelter, in the sum of £90.00. To clean, sand and stain each bench £50.00 with extra work required separately costed. Slat repair £25.99, Arm replacement £30.00 and Support replacement £25.00. It was **agreed** to accept the quote, with the Maintenance Committee having oversight of the order in which benches were to be treated over the next year.

1. **Village Road resurfacing:** The Clerk reported that she had received a written complaint and several verbal negative comments, about the extending of the resurfacing of the road over the frontage of Holmlea. The emailed letter had been forwarded to all Councillors in advance of the meeting and all who had complained had been invited to attend this meeting. The Cllrs Thompson declared an Interest in the matter, but stated they had not requested the tarmac be extended in front of their house and, although the contractor had asked he be allowed to taper the tarmac across their road edge, they had not expected this to go right across their frontage. Cllr R. Thompson had not been present whilst the tarmac was being laid and was adamant that he would not have allowed it if he had been. The Clerk noted the Parish Council had not authorised this extra work, nor had paid for it. Cllr R. Thompson wished it put on record that he refuted any suggestion that this had been done at his request, and asked that anyone who had concerns should come to the next Parish Council meeting and state these publicly. With the Cllrs Thompson excluded, Cllr Irving reported the outer edge of the tarmac in front of Holmlea required reinforcing as it was above the level of the grass and she had almost fallen, so it was clearly a safety issue. All other councillors being in agreement, it was **resolved** to reinforce the edge of the new tarmac. **Action**: Maintenance Committee to arrange reinforcement.
2. **Queen Elizabeth ll Platinum Jubilee**: Cllr Musgrave reported she had provisionally booked Robinsons to provide a Hog Roast at the Jubilee event on 2 June 2022. Cllr Musgrave was warmly thanked.
3. **Ward Councillors’ Reports**: The Clerk reported no reports received.
4. **Chairman’s Report**: The Chairman reported as follows:

* As she had said earlier, under the police report, she had been disturbed to hear reports of shoddy and over-priced roofing/building work being carried out in the village over the last couple of weeks.
* Our parish Clerk received a letter from the Spotted Cow regarding the use of their car park by people using the W.I. Hall. This was sent in error to Elwick PC and so was put through the letterbox of WI President Sylvia Jobson. She had also delivered a letter to the spotted Cow explaining that all hall bookings and administration were the W.I.’s responsibility.
* An e-mail signed by the five parish Chairmen (Including Headland) has been sent to HBC Council Leader, the Managing Director and the Borough Solicitor. Parish Liaison meetings were to be reinstated on a monthly basis. The previous meeting was 17th August, so we have suggested that a meeting be organised and the Charter between the Borough Council and Parish Councils discussed. We await a reply.
* Another issue that was of growing concern, was the lack of parking for social events, which had been brought up at the last SAC Meeting. It had been suggested that we ask if vehicles could be parked at North Farm, but what was really needed for the longer term was a piece of land for a new community/parish hall and car park.
* HBC has undertaken some work around the village in the last few weeks, including the resurfacing of part of the pavement and the alterations to the north and south corners of the green triangle in North Lane and this was much appreciated.

Several Councillors noted that some of the worst affected pavements had not been resurfaced, nor the camber of the pavement in North Lane where it meets the Hartlepool Road, which is dangerous for anyone in a wheelchair.

After some discussion it was **agreed** that the Draft Charter be sent to all three Ward Councillors. Cllr Woodward requested a copy be sent to him as he could not remember receiving the earlier copy.

**Action:** Clerk to send draft Charter to Rural West Ward Councillors.

1. **Red Gap Projects:** The Clerk reported that the Tipi Carousel was due to be installed the following week.
2. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson tabled the notes of the latest SAC meeting and gave huge thanks to Cllr Woodward for his ‘Cuppa ‘N Cake’ proposal. He reported that:

* Platinum Jubilee - activity suggestions discussed.
* Easter Egg Hunt - planning deferred until the new year
* Garage Sale - proposed, possibly for May
* ‘Cuppa ‘N Cake’ - sessions proposed by Cllr Woodward started on Tuesday 19th and are already proving a hit. The WI are charging us £10 per hour for the use of the hall. It had been agreed that at least 4 people were needed to help at each session, 2 to serve refreshments and 2 to socialise. A rota for cake baking and helpers was to be developed by Cllr Woodward. Volunteers were to be paid the cost of cake ingredients. Table games and old village photos to be available.
* The Christmas Fayre - agreed for Friday 26th November. Piped music outside shop – possibly live music in pubs later. Christmas themed tombola. Mulled wine, roast chestnuts, tea/coffee and hot chocolate to be provided. Number of craft and food stalls to be invited as well as local businesses. Kevin to be asked if Spotted Cow would have a Santa Grotto in the Cow Shed. Event to be advertised in Village Life and with a Flyer.
* Carols around the tree - to start at 6.30pm on Christmas Eve if Rev. Janet agrees. Minna & Barbara to install nativity in bus shelter. Ruth & Barbara to make floral decorations. Still need suitable transport for Santa.
* Children’s Christmas Party – Wednesday 29th December 2.00-5.00pm. Entertainment and children’s teas to be supplied by SAC. Mince pies & mulled wine for adults. Short Christmas DVDs ordered by Dave. John Hall has agreed to be Santa. Selection Boxes to be purchased.
* Other possible events for future: Fete + gig on the green; Proms in the Playing Field; Fund-raiser in and for the church, maybe classical music; Movie Night in the hall; Theatrical performances in the hall.
* Next meeting 7.00pm, 10th November.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report**: Cllr Irving spoke to her report, circulated in advance:

**Tasks completed:**

* Stump and rubble removed from Wildlife Garden
* Corner of triangle in North Lane repaired.

**Tasks not yet completed:**

* Pavements in North Lane to be repaired week commencing 25 October – HBC
* Footpath down Church Bank in URGENT need of repair. Footpath at east end of village green starting to deteriorate – EPC
* Awaiting estimate for sanding & staining exterior woodwork on bus shelter – EPC
* Exterior of bus shelter to be painted – EPC
* Awaiting estimate for sanding, staining and repairing benches; 2 already completed – EPC
* Fence at entrance to Playing Field needs wood staining; notice board & bench to be installed – EPC
* Oak tree to be planted in Playing Field – EPC
* Crab Apple tree to be planted in Wildlife Garden – EPC
* Playing Field fence repair – in hand – EPC
* Bark to be removed from Soft Fall area of Playing Field – EPC
* New carousel installed in Playing Field – EPC
* New soft-fall surface to be installed in Playing Field – EPC.

Estimates for bus shelter woodwork and benches now received and approved.

After a brief discussion the following **Actions** were **agreed**: Clerk to requestJohn Pearson to dig the hole for the Oak tree in the Playing Field and to strim the growth on Church Bank next week, both above and below the path, in order the tarmac could be laid. A Working Party to convene between 10.00am -12.00pm and again 2.00-4.00pm on Sunday to plant the Wildlife Garden. Cllr R. Thompson to provide rocks for the interior of the pond. Clerk to inform Rob Daley of inactive street light on Church bank.

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

**Receipts: £ Payments: £**

**0** D. M. Ireland (salary July-September) 878.40

HMRC (PAYE) 219.60

Affordable Landscapes (2 cuts) 780.00

D,M. Ireland (reimbursement for First Aid Kit & wood stain) 32.38

**TOTAL 1,910.38**

The Clerk confirmed that unrestricted funds in the bank at the date of the formal announcement, would be allocated on a proportionate basis related to the number of households, in the new Elwick and Wynyard Parish Councils

1. **Correspondence:** Letter from the daughter of residents regarding the road resurfacing. Clerk to respond that the Parish Council note her concerns.
2. **Bonfire:** The Parish Council has not received any request for, nor does it give permission for, a bonfire on the village green.It was further noted that any organisers or participants would not be covered by the Parish Council’s insurance as any such bonfire and/or accompanying fireworks were illegal.
3. **Planning Applications**: Cllr Woodward declared an Interest in Application H/2021/0443

**H/2021/0443 –** Hazel Bank Cottage, Elwick – tree works – ***Support***

**H/2021/0449** – Close Farm Lodge – no agricultural use known in last 20 years.

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**: None raised.
2. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 29th November at Elwick WI Hall.

*Meeting closed 10.15pm.*