**Chairman’s Report Elwick Parish Council Meeting Monday July 25th**

Apologies for not being present, as I had to take the opportunity to a very long overdue trip to Ireland at short notice to see my family.

I wanted to report out on a couple of actions and issues from the last month, and mention a couple of other things that we can perhaps start to look at. As we will not be having a meeting in August, I would hope we could put a small list of things to raise now that we could perhaps make some progress on over the summer away from formal PC meetings.

The main items for me to report on are as follows.

* Parish Liaison Meeting with HBC
* Planning Process Training
* Waste Collection Issues on North Lane
* Planning Applications on Village Green

**Parish Liaison Meeting with HBC**

This was my first liaison meeting, attended by Chairs from Elwick, Greatham, Dalton, and Headland PCs, with apologies from Wynyard and Hart.

From the Borough Council we had Denise, Shane, Neil Wilson (?) Asst. Solicitor and Joan Stevens.

Key items for us

**Charter -** Agreement to have 3 representatives for the PCs on the Charter Group – 2 Rural and 1 Urban PC, with the representatives from HBC to be Shane Moore and Mike Young. Dates for first meeting TBD – targeting August.

**Bypass -** We had hoped to have a detailed update on the bypass, but the necessary officers were on vacation so Denise provided a short update – The project will be brought to a full planning application in September, after a fair bit of discussion with Highways England.

Briefly, we were advised that the final proposal will be similar to one of the earlier proposals, but there had been an increased focus on road safety.

We have agreed that it would be good for us to meeting with the planning team for a detailed update on this prior to then, and this is with Denise to arrange. I think basically, an informal update, before inviting Kieron and the team to formal present what is proposed to the PC prior to the planning application submission.

**Section 106** – A bit of limited discussion here, on the Parish’ input to this matter. We basically agreed it would be good for the PCs to have input on the needs when setting these. This however would require a policy change with HBC which would need to be looked into. Possibly, there may be a statutory requirement to introduce CIL (community Investment levy) but we didn’t really get into what this would mean.

**The Elwick Road Safety Scheme** - was raised (it was prioritized over a number of other areas). As I understand t was being managed by neighbourhood services (?) We are waiting for the final paperwork and details to be sent out to us.

**Councillor Portal** – Access is to be given to the Parish Councils ( I think already in place) and I asked to also be trained to access it. Basically, it is similar to the current online issue reporting scheme from the council, but more detailed focus. As I understand Clerks and Chairs will access a single account per Parish.

**Issues of Concern to Individuals Parishes** – We each raised current issues.

Sewage smell at the playing fields, and request for support from HBC to work with the environment agency on this. Also, would like the engineering dept to see if they have any old paper schemes of sewage network in the village.

**Crime** – Lack of resources and action on rural crime, and what would be our forum to better address out concerns. We did have a discussion about the issues of CCTV and legalities, which would need a lot of looking into

**Energy Efficiency** – We mentioned that as a Parish we will be looking into supporting residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and would appreciate support If there are any Council funded schemes. This is something we need to work on as a PC I think and highlight what may be needed by who (income levels, eligibility etc. )

**Planning Process Training**

Minna and I attended a very informative 2 hour training session with the HBC Planning group delivered by Jim Ferguson and Helen Williams

We were taken through the planning application review and approval process by Jim, and then given a very interesting session on planning policy by Helen, on how it is defined, taking in national guidelines and target, the local plan and the rural plan. It was really valuable just to get time with the planning officers, understand the processes, and considerations there, and

Parish Council’s role in the planning process is a key item in the Charter discussions that will be held separately, however we were told that one area that the officer would really welcome our involvement is input into how section 106 money is to be targeted.

I separately had a quick chat with Kieran Bostock about the bypass and we agreed I will try and arrange to get together with him for an update. It was suggested that the almost finalised plan is close to the earlier plans that were discussed.

**Waste Collection Issues on North Lane**

Having been made aware of the letter from HBC to the residents on North Lane regarding parking and waste collection, we received an email from Alex Williamson outlining the issue and focusing on it being mainly down to the positioning of the boulder.

I had a good chat with Darren from Waste Services about this and he is quite clear that it is basically the dogleg in the (narrow) road and cars parked on the street at that point that are causing the difficulty of the waste lorry to reverse down the street. We discussed the presence of the boulder, and he basically said that that is not the core issue, and moving it would basically mean that when the cars are parked there, they would simply be driving over the grass again, which prior complaints about led us to install the boulder in the first place. Also, the large tree trunk at the bottom was deliberately put in place for similar reasons.

I admit, I have only been able to talk to a couple of residents so far, but they expressed that the simple solution is to change the parking habits at the top of the street on the Fridays of the waste collection i.e. move the car / pickup in question, and also perhaps for residents to pull their cars in onto the curb (I am not sure this is actually supposed to be legal) on bin days.

The other concern in Alex’ letter regarding Fire Service access, while similar, needs to be considered seriously, and I feel warrants a little further investigation. Perhaps we can request someone to visit and advise whether an appliance park on the main North Lane (literally 4-5 metres further from the houses) is workable.

A longer term solution could be the removal of the boulder, and widening of the road at the dogleg with subsequent laying of tarmac and moving the kerbstones. This is I believe HBC property so would be down to the highways dept to plan and action.

Could I request Minna, if you could – to contact the Fire Service and see if at some point they would have time to visit the site, and review access, and particularly whether siting the appliance eon the main North Lane is sufficiently close enough to access the houses through the hedge / trees. I would say, it is about 4/5 metres further.

**Planning Applications on Village Green**

A resident has expressed concern at the number of new planning applications for houses on the Green and plans to install uPVC double glazing. When other residents have been previously refused permission to upgrade windows due to the Conservation Area concerns, it was suggested that the Parish Council, within it’s limited influence on this should have a position.

I have not had much time to give much thought to this, but I have been keeping an eye on the increasing number of applications for work on houses in the village, and also took some time to have a quick chat with Sarah Scarr at the council to get a better understanding of the approach.

She did emphasise that each case is made on it’s own merits, but there is a focus, where an installed window system is part of the original fabric of the house, there is a strong preference for this to be retained, repaired where possible, and replaced with similar.

There would be a focus on what is actually currently in place – is it original – is the house sufficiently of heritage concern to mandate that any replacement would be to move it back to something more traditional etc. I asked in regard to insulation and double glazing and interestingly, there are some studies on the cost benefit, in relation other things such as loft insulation etc. and that secondary glazing can have large impact, as well as other features such as shutters – I imagine heavy curtains also would be here.

Bottom line is – each case will be taken on merit, with a strong focus on the suitability for the conservation area, but also this would be impacted by the type and age of building, and the windows currently in place.

To add my personal opinion, in our position, I feel we should be supportive of residents wanting to make improvements, particularly in relation to improving the cost of heat their homes, so helping to explore options sympathetic to the conservation area is something we could work on and try and make information available for our residents.

Pointed to it by Sarah, I did spend some time on the Historic England Website and found a substantial amount of information regarding energy efficiency on older and historic buildings, as well as guidance eon windows etc. I have collected links to a lot of this information and I think that this would be a good resource as we hope work together will villagers on helping them to make improvements.

**SAC Chairman’s Report**

I do not have the minutes form the last meeting, but I would like to summarise the key activities coming up.

**Bring and Buy Sale, Aug 14th** – At the WI Hall (already booked), simply with the idea of residents to bring items to sell on for a small table fee.

This will be publicized on Facebook and by Leaflets as soon as possible after the Charity Night at the Mac (Sat, July 23rd).

**Gig on The Green – 10th September** (although possibly 17th).

Keeping the simple formula that has worked, Gig, supplemented by usual bouncy castle, children’s activities and craft stalls.

Key items to be resolved as a priority – Stalls - Barbara has been working with stall holders and has good interest. We need to confirm details and booking of acts – Propose SAC meeting week of Aug

Music Acts – Had some good ideas – need to follow up on availability of acts discussed

Propose we work on these two items asap, and have an SAC meeting the week Aug 15th to confirm / finalise plans.

**Christmas Fayre, 18th Nov** - Ideally to repeat the success of last year. For both this an the Gig, there has been discussion on clashing with the commercially run Elwick Craft Fayre at the WI Hall. This is taking some thought.

**Christmas Carols, 24th Dec** – As usual, would like to further improve communication and cooperation with

**Children’s Christmas Part, 28th Dec** – Planning to commence after the Gig on the Green.

Propose SAC Meeting 16th August to finalise the above.

**Matters of interest to councillors**

**Community Stakeholder Forum** – I would like to organize a meeting / forum to bring all the stakeholders associated with the Parish – PC, Church, School, Young Farmers, WI, possibly business owners, together to be able to get a common understanding of the aims of each group and how we can improve communication and working together to achieve these.

**Volunteers** – With the newer members on the PC having been seen actively doing things like painting bus shelter / stones, there have been a number of people that have commented that they would like to help, and I think we need to use this momentum to try and set up groups to help around the village. As a start, I would like to try putting together a group to get together and agree to manage the wildlife garden. Chatting with Gemma, she already has people in mind who are keen to get involved.

**Energy Efficiency Support** – We discussed this with the residents at the annual Parish Meeting and proposed we would put together a group with them to work on this. After the excellent visit from Hartlepower, I would like us to look at setting a date to be able to get people back together to present them information on how they can make energy savings, and hopefully start some little project groups. Ideas such as running informal EPC type reviews of houses to highlight where some gains could be made, donations of LED lights that may have been replaced by smart lights, so we could build a pool for people who maybe don’t have the money to buy them.

**Community Power Act** - Hartlepool Council voted on a motion to support a nationwide campaign for more community involvement in running local services – in time, I would like to work with them to understand how the PC would fit in with this – for reference – Community Power Act and #wearerighthere.