**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 27th February 2023 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. Woodward, Aird, Hewitt (formerly Winrow), Irving, H. Thompson and R. Thompson

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk, John Wilson and colleague, Transmission Investment, PCSO (7985) Mark Say (from 7.15pm) and a resident.

**Public Forum:** The Chairman invited Mr. Wilson to give his presentation.

John Wilson introduced himself, Development Manager for Transmission Investment, and his lady colleague. The company has submitted a planning application to HBC for the construction and operation of Synchronous Compensators at Whelley Hill Farm, Hart, on the south side of the A179, near to Hart Moor Substation. A slide presentation was accompanied by handouts of the site layout. Mr Wilson explained the National Grid had to improve the supply of electricity from non-carbonised sources – wind, solar and wave energy. These were being developed rapidly, but could not provide the regular supply needed, as they were dependent on weather. A synchronous converter kept the supply spinning by stabilising the input from these alternative energy sources. His company had won the contract to provide 3 of the 10 required for various locations around England and Wales. There were to be two compensators built in two buildings, 9m tall and 40m long, on the site of the current farm buildings. It was hoped to start building later this year, subject to planning approval, with the aim of being operational by 2025.

Mr Wilson responded to questions from Councillors which elicited the following information:

* Hartmoor is a strategic substation for north-east England; the site at East Boldon was not an option as it had no spare bays available.
* A BESS would still be required to store the energy produced by solar farms and wind turbines, until it was needed;
* The plan was to paint the buildings pale grey – this could be changed to a darker colour, if preferred, to help them blend into the landscape better.
* There would be minimal noise generated. The voltage to be produced was unknown by the presenters, but the information would be forwarded. Cabling would be buried 1-2 m underground.
* A traffic assessment had been undertaken and they would comply with any conditions required by HBC to minimise traffic disruption.
* They were very aware of the concerns about the industrialisation of the rural area around Hart, but there was no alternative, as Hartmoor substation was so critical to the delivery of electricity across the north-east.
* They had taken into consideration the request of villagers at Hart, for some sort of Community Fund/pay-back scheme.

The Chairman thanked them for their presentation and willingness to answer questions.

*The Transmission Investment representatives left the meeting at 7.53pm*

The resident asked about progress on the By-pass – he was informed at nothing new had been heard from HBC but that a meeting was soon to be held between the Parish Council and HBC.

*The resident left the meeting at 8.02pm*

1. **Apologies:** None received
2. **Police Report:** ThePCSO Say, then gave the crime statistics in Rural West ward, which were very low compared to other areas of Hartlepool. He then went on to explain Anti-Social Behaviour, particularly by young people which was often driven by social media. He noted the increasing use of drones by Cleveland police, which provided 24hour coverage. He felt he was not qualified to answer a question about the legality of the use of CCTV by private householders to cover public areas but noted that HBC would have a view on this.

The Chairman thanked him for his attendance.

*The PCSO left at 8.43pm*

1. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
2. **Minutes of 30th January 2023:** Cllr H. Thompson proposed, with Cllr Aird seconding, the approval of the Minutes as an accurate record. The meeting then **resolved to accept**, and the Chairman signed the Minutes.
3. **Matters Arising:** (i) ***Community Power Act*** – the Chairman noted that he had nothing to report, as he was still waiting to have a talk with Ward Cllr Young who is the HBC lead on this issue.

(ii) ***Defibrillator Battery*** – Cllr Woodward reported that he had checked the battery which was made in 2021. He will check to see if it needs replacing but noted a new set of pads was required. (iii) ***Personnel*** – The Clerk informed that 6 information packs had been requested to date, on the Parish Clerk vacancies.

**Action:** Clerk to purchase new defibrillator pads and battery.

1. **Ward Councillors’ Report**: No report received this month.

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1. **Chairman’s Report**: The Chairman’s report covered:

* He had been away and then locked down with COVID.
* He had collected the feedback that we received from residents and businesses regarding the closure of Coal Lane and Village Road and forwarded it to Keiran Bostock at HBC, also copying in Andrew Martin-Wells.
* He had requested a meeting with the impacted residents, HBC and National Highways. Kieran Bostock had agreed to organise a date for an update for us on the plans for the bypass.
* He had emailed concerns regarding the roadworks and traffic lights on Elwick Road at High Tunstall. Concerns he had raised were a) The planned 12-week duration and lack of urgency to finish the work on the main route between the village and the town. b) the length of the roadworks where, on failure of the lights, traffic is unable to see if it was clear to proceed and c) the set up at the top, where the traffic light is badly placed with very little room to pull back over into the lane when going up, and a poorly visible and dangerous road sign there at night.

*Councillors asked what would happen should an Emergency Vehicle need to get to the A19?*

* He had emailed Councillor Young to request information on the Community Powers Act campaign ad was awaiting a reply.
* Chantry Cottage have resubmitted amended plans addressing our concern with a design for a wall mounted canopy porch that looks acceptable and not too different form the original design. It is good that the owner has been prepared to work with us on this, and the Clerk has submitted a response to the planning application consultation as appropriate.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson reported sadly the Race Night planned for 25th February had been cancelled due to lack of support.

* **Easter Egg Hunt** – Monday 10th April – Charge of £1.00 per child to go towards cost of the chocolate Eggs which will be hidden around the village. Theme this year is Peter Rabbit, and refreshments will be available for families in Mr.McGregor’s garden (alias Rudby House) afterwards.
* **The Coronation Weekend** – ***Saturday 6th May*** – Live bands/music in the pubs, Lighting of the Beacon at 9.00pm. ***Sunday 7th May*** – **Coronation Garden Party** on the green; Bouncy castle and Mini Assault Course booked, and the GT Silver Band, Rising Stars and Elwick School have agreed to provide the entertainment. Residents to be asked to bring a picnic, we will provide tea and cake. The Clerk has applied to the National Lottery for a grant towards the costs. The King and Queen Consort expected to attend ‘figuratively speaking.
* Possibility of **‘Film Nights’** and a **‘Garage Sale’** to be discussed at the next meeting on 21st March.

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

**Tasks Completed:**

* New kissing gate installed at Playing Field leading to the ghyll.
* Notice attached to the fence at entrance to Playing Field; the sign has been reinforced by Jamie Thompson.

**Tasks not yet completed** **by EPC:**

***Playing Field:***

* New bench to be installed.
* Missing boards around soft fall area to be replaced.
* End of climbing log rotting and needs maintenance.
* Wildflower meadow needs raking; shrubs need tidying and buddleia pruned.
* Four flower tubs to be moved – one from Manor Close and three around the green. *Andrew Sturrock agreed to do this.*
* Path at east end of the green in need of maintenance.

**Tasks not yet completed by HBC:**

* Fencing on the path down to the ghyll in need of repair. *Chris Scaife has advised will be done in new financial year.*
* The ramp across the beck in the ghyll is broken. *Chris Scaife has advised will be done in new financial year.*
* Pavement around the corner of The Green with North Lane in a very bad state, proving hardous to elderly villagers. *Kieron Bostock advised of this.*

It was noted the last streetlight in North Lane going towards the A19 is not working. A picnic table is to be purchased for the Playing Field. It was **agreed** to hold the first Litter Pick of the year on Saturday 4th March between 10.00am and noon.

**Actions:** Cllr Hewitt to post Litter Pick on Facebook; Clerk to order picnic table, inform HBC of streetlight issue and produce poster for the Litter Pick.

1. **Financial Reports**: The Financial Reports had been circulated in advance.

**Receipts: £**  **Payments: £**

Grantscape (Tool Bank) 445.95 G.S. Bell (Fencing) Ltd (Playing Field fence) 300.00

**Total: 445.95 Total: 300.00**

The Financial Reports were unanimously approved.

1. **Training:** The Clerkhad previously circulated information about a free training day on Civility & Respect, to be held at Newton Aycliffe on Thursday 9th March. She reminded Councillors they had committed to undertaking such training when they signed the Civility & Respect Pledge. As she had already booked a place for herself, she could provide transport for up to four Councillors. Cllr Irving agreed to attend. Other Cllr stated they would prefer to undertake the on-line training offered via NALC. **Actions:** Clerk and Cllr Irving to attend 9th March; Clerk to circulate NALC information on on-line offer to all Councillors.
2. **Correspondence**: (i) Letter from Tony Hanson, HBC regarding a resident’s complaint about the traffic calming structures installed on the village green – noted that some of the information was incorrect and Chairman to inform Mr. Hanson accordingly. (ii) Government request for nominations for the 2024 New Year Honours List – noted.
3. **Planning Applications:**

**H/2023/0041 & H/2023/0470 –** Installation of Synchronous Compensators at Whelly Hill Farm **– Object** – increasing industrialisation of green area, not in Local Plan, not in Rural Plan, impact on neighbouring village and rural community.

**H/2022/0475** – Chantry Cottage – **No Objection**

**H/2022/0181 –** land north of A689 Wynyard Park Estate – **Comment:** concerns about increasing volume of traffic on A689, lack of secondary education provision or community facilities.

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

*Cllr H. Thompson* raised concern tht the village green had still not been repaired following the illegal bonfire on 5th November 2022. Parrish Councillors were very annoyed the area had not been re-turfed. Cllr Aird and Woodward to discuss with publicans.

*Cllr Irving* – village looking very untidy, especially the flower tubs – dog dirt had been found in some of these; Complaints received about rubbish left on Parish Council’s land – the cobbled area alongside the drive to Nos 5 & 6 The Green. Cllr Woodward to have a word with the householder concerned.

**Actions:** Cllrs Aird & Woodward to discuss repairs to village green with publicans; Cllr Woodward to raise concern with householder.

It was noted with relief that the Tees Flex bus service was to continue for a further 18 months.

1. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 27th March 2023 at Elwick WI Hall.

Cllr Woodward tendered his apologies in advance, as he would be out of the country.

*Meeting closed 10.12pm.*