**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 27th June 2022**

**at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. D. Woodward (Chaiman), A. Aird, B. Irving, R. Musgrave, H. Thompson, R. Thompson, G. Winrow

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

1. **Apologies:** Cllr A. Martin-Wells – accepted.
2. **Public Forum:** No members of public present.
3. **Police Report:** No apologies or report received.

1. **Improving Broadband Connectivity:** Helen Ryder and colleague, ?? of Hartlepower, gave a brief presentation on ‘Get Connected’, a voluntary and community sector (VCS) project, which aims to improve broadband connectivity for people within Hartlepool Borough. They explained what they were able to do and provide, together with an idea of costs. They fully understood the issues faced by residents who, as a result of poor BT and other mainstream providers, could either not get access to the internet at all or, if they had access this was extremely slow. The project’s aim was to provide alternative technology which might even result in cheaper broadband for those currently without a good service.

They went on to discuss other areas of work Hartlepower was involved in, which address wider issues, such as reducing carbon emissions, improving energy saving, cutting food costs and using CCTV to improve safety. They expressed a willingness to help the rural communities take advantage of what was available and to return to talk with those residents wishing to move forward on reducing waste and carbon emissions, and also reducing their cost of living. Councillors asked a great many questions and it became clear that there was real potential for improving the lives of many residents of the parish, not just those who live withing the village itself. As a result, it was **agreed** that the Clerk should meet with Hartlepower to explore further what was available and to identify the key information needed by the Hartlepower team, whilst Councillors would begin to identify lines of sight for point-to-point transmission of broadband signals around the parish and, once the information needed was obtained from Hartlepower, to draft a flyer/questionnaire to be circulated to every household within the parish. **Actions:** **All** tostart identifying lines of sight; Clerk to arrange meeting with Hartlepower team.

1. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
2. **Minutes of 11th May** **2022:** Cllr Musgrave proposed, with Cllr Aird seconding, acceptance of the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting and Cllr R. Thompson proposed, with Cllr Irving seconding, acceptance of the Minutes of the ordinary meeting which followed it; all being in agreement, it was **resolved** to accept both sets of minutes as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising*: (a) Village Wall:*** The Clerk informed that the wall had now been repaired and the resident whose garden the wall abutted was very satisfied with the result. No invoice received as yet.

***(b) Environment Agency:*** The Clerk read out the response received from the Environment Agency to her complaint about lack of action regarding the smell of raw sewage at the bottom of Church Bank, which she had earlier circulated. Councillors expressed dismay at the response, which indicated this was not a priority issue for them, and requested the response should be forwarded to Jill Mortimer MP, who had taken an interest. ***(c) Microsoft 365:*** Cllr Woodward explained his research had indicated various levels of subscription most of which included the Office Suite, Teams and One Drive, starting with an Individual/Home version at £59 per year, though to a Business option at £7.90 per person per month. He had still to investigate whether there was a version specifically for the public sector, which he would do and bring the complete information to the July meeting, ready for Councillors to make a fully informed decision. ***(d) Church Bank/Stones***: The Clerk reported that the bank had been cleared and the stones painted as requested. Cllr Irving noted that the bank was again covered with dead plant material. The Chairman noted he had received several requests for the remaining stones around the green to be painted white so they were more easily seen in poor light. Cllr Irving strongly opposed this, but several Councillors agreed the stones needed painting. Councillor Woodward put the issue to the vote, resulting in 4 in favour of painting, 1 against and 2 abstaining. It was therefore **resolved** to paint the stones white by majority decision. Cllr Woodward noted that more residents had shown willing to help with village activities and suggested a list of volunteers be developed, using ‘WhatsApp’ to contact them when any action was needed.

**Actions:** Cllrs Aird and Winrow to paint stones.

1. **Ward Councillors’ Reports**: The Clerk reported no reports had been received.
2. **Chairman’s Report**: The Chairman reported he was still getting up to speed; In July he would be attending a meeting of Parish Council Chairmen and the next Parish Liaison meeting.
3. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr Woodward informed the SAC had held a debrief meeting on the Jubilee events the previous Friday, which identified lessons to be learned for the future, especially in relation to the Bouncy Castle on Sunday, but recognised the events had been very successful in terms of the numbers of residents who had participated and the feedback received. There was currently a balance of approximately £200 in the kitty. The SAC was already planning events for the rest of the year including:
* Garage sale – 14th August
* Gig on the Green – 10th September
* Christmas Fayre – 18 November
* Carols around the Tree – Christmas Eve
* Children’s Christmas party – 27th December.

He proposed that a donation bucket be placed on the bar at the McOrville to raise funds for village events, if the landlord was willing; all **agreed**.

Cllr Woodward then raised an issue that had arisen at the Cuppa ‘N cake sessions – whether dogs should be allowed. The SAC members had thought the WI had a No Dogs policy, but apparently this was not the case, and several residents were not able to attend the sessions without their dogs. After a brief discussion it was **agreed** to trial the attendance of well-behaved dogs on leads, with a view to ascertaining the impact on attendance.

**Action:** SAC to promote the ‘Dogs Allowed’ agreement.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report**: Cllr Irving’s written report had been circulated in advance.

**Tasks completed:**

* Exterior of bus shelter painted
* Stones around village green painted
* Two large dislodged stones repositioned
* Limestone wall outside No. 6 The Green repaired
* Zip Wire seat replaced
* Waste bin at playing Field replaced in wooded frame

**Tasks not yet completed:**

***Playing Field:***

* Bench to be installed – EPC
* Entrance fence to be repaired & stained
* Notice at entrance gate to be attached to fence – EPC
* Boards around soft fall area need attention

***Wildlife Garden:***

* Pond needs stocking with water plants and rocks – EPC
* General tidying-up needed and some shrubs not yet planted- EPC

***General Village:***

* Church Bank needs tidying - EPC
* Pavements in Manor Close in very poor state – HBC
* Pavements in North Lane in poor state, especially from Hillcrest towards A19
* Partial road collapse on main road through village opposite Holmlea – HBC
* Limestone wall outside No 6 The Green to be repaired – EPC
* Brass plaque missing from new bench in North Lane – HBC
* Street light outside WI Hall permanently on - HBC

The Clerk was requested to chase HBC regarding the missing plaque. Cllr Woodward agreed to put up the Playing Field sign as well as the CCTV signs and it was **agreed** that a working party be set up to deal with other outstanding issues at the Playing Field. Cllr Irving reported that she had found a dead hedgehog in the pond at the Wildlife Garden – she had been extremely upset as she had been asking for a ramp to be built in the pond for quite some time to prevent such incidents. Cllr Woodward proposed a separate meeting with Cllr Irving to u other Wildlife Garden issues. **Actions**: All – working party to deal with outstanding Playing Field issues; Cllrs Irving and Woodward to meet to discuss Wildlife Garden issues.

*Cllr Musgrave left the meeting at 9.16pm*

1. **Financial Reports**: **(a) Annual Governance Statement -** The Clerk read out the various statements regarding the governance of the Council’s finances, to which Councillors were required to respond Yes/No. All statements received a positive response and the form was completed accordingly and the Chairman signed it.

**(b) Accounting Statements 2021-22 –** the Clerk reminded Councillors that they had approved the Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation, along with the Annual Accounts at the Annual PC meeting on 11th May. The accounts had now been through the Internal Audit; Peter Olsen had agreed the figures were all correct, raised no concerns and had completed and signed the Internal Auditor’s Report. She then presented the Accounting Statements and Explanation of Differences as included with the AGAR and requested Councillors approval of these; it was so **resolved.** The Chairman signed the Accounting Statements.

**(c) Notice of Public Rights –** The Clerk requested Councillors confirm she had the correct number of days (30) covered by the dates inserted in the notice to be placed on the Noticeboard and website.

Cllrs Winrow and R. Thompson confirmed these were correct.

The AGAR now being complete the Clerk stated this would be forwarded by email to the External Auditors (Mazars) the next day, and also be placed on the PC website.

1. The **Financial Reports**, covering transactionssince the May meeting had been circulated in advance; these were **accepted.**
2. **Red Gap Applications:** The Clerk reported that she had submitted applications for two projects, the Red Telephone Kiosk Book Exchange and a Gardening Tool Kit for the Wildlife Garden. She had since submitted an outline Planning Application to HBC, requesting advice regarding the Kiosk.She had recently received a response form a Planning Officer, stating that the Council had two options available to them – the first to go through the One Stop Shop – requiring payment of a fee – as it was possible that we could be eligible for Permitted Development under part 12 of the GPDO, or alternatively, apply for a Lawful Development Certificate, which would not require a submission to the One Stop Shop. However, if we still wished to submit a full Planning Application, we would be required to provide more detailed information. It was **agreed** that an application for permitted development be made - the Clerk tasked with identifying the best option to obtain a quick decision.

**Action:** Clerk to apply for Permitted Development.

1. **Correspondence**: (i) HBC Planning Training 13 July – Cllrs H and R. Thompson and Woodward, as well as the Clerk to attend; (ii) The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Beacons Pageantmaster - Certificate of Grateful Recognition - noted with appreciation. **Action:** Clerk to forward to HBC names for Planning Training session.
2. **Planning Applications**:

**H/2022/0189 – 21, North Lane -** – Erection of a single and two-storey rear extension, installation of bay window and erection of a porch extension to front elevation and fixed canopy to the rear garden. Support – improvement to family home.

**H/2022/ 0181 – Wynyard** 1400 homes – although no longer part of Elwick parish, Councillors were aware that this development would endanger even more mature trees at Wynyard and were deeply concerned that more ancient woodlands would be lost forever. Clerk requested to make comment accordingly, asking for protection for the trees, particularly the ancient woodland.

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

**Cllr Aird** – had received complaints about overflowing bins and resulting smell at rear of Spotted Cow – agreed this was private property and therefore not PC business. Residents concerned should raise with landlords and/or HBC environmental team.

**Cllrs Aird and Winrow** – concerns about state of Public Right of way from Elwick to Hart which is badly overgrown; the route is not clear at the Hart end and the farmer has complained about walkers crossing the field – it needs better signage. **Action:** Clerk to pass information to Chris Scaife, Countryside Access Officer.

**The Chairman** noted that the social mediawas going well, with lots of interest via the Facebook page “Elwick Village” and the village was also now on TikTok. He noted that another picnic table at the Playing Field would be beneficial; Cllr R. Thompson reminded the bench purchased some time ago was still in the shed awaiting installation.

1. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 25th July 2022 at Elwick WI Hall.

*Meeting closed 9.56pm.*