**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 28th November 2022 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. Woodward, Aird (from 8.02pm), Irving, H. Thompson

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

1. **Public Forum:**  A resident of Coal Lane raised considerable concern about the proposed closure of the access to the A19 from this road when the by-pass opens, which will have a detrimental impact on the many businesses along it; also affected are businesses and the church at the west end of Village Road on the Elwick village side of the A19. He presented a petition to Highways England signed by 90 residents. Having explained the issues, and following a brief discussion, the Chairman proposed that a public meeting be held as soon as possible, for all residents and businesses likely to be impacted by the closure, at which all the issues could be identified as well as the extra distances each would have to travel; this would then be followed by a further meeting with HBC Councillors and officers, in order that the issues could be fully explored before the plans for the By-pass were submitted to the Planning Committee. All present concurred with this, and it was agreed to hold the first public meeting on Wednesday 14th December from 6.00 -8.00pm. **Action**: Clerk to book WI Hall; resident to inform those residents and businesses affected on west side of A19 and EPC to inform village residents and businesses.

*The resident left the meeting at 7.32pm*

1. **Apologies:** Parish Cllrs Musgrave, R. Thompson and Winrow;Ward Cllr A. Martin-Wells – who asked to be kept informed of any issues arising.
2. **Police Report:** No report or response from the police received.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
4. **Minutes of 28th October 022:** Cllr Thompson proposed, with Cllr Irving seconding, the acceptance of the Minutes as a true record of the meeting. All being in agreement, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.
5. **Matters Arising*: (a) Playing Field*** - to be covered under Chairman’s report.

 ***(b) Warm Hubs*** – The Clerk informed that she had not made applications for funding for warm hubs in Elwick, as what the Parish Council was doing did not meet the full criteria to be named as such.

1. **Ward Councillors’ Reports**: The Clerk noted no reports had been received, though Cllr Andrew Martin-Wells had requested to be kept informed of any issues.
2. **Chairman’s Report**: The Chairman had circulated a written report just prior to the meeting. His report covered:
3. **Playing Field Gate** – We have had a kissing gate installed at the entrance, thanks to Chris Scaife who had loaned it to us, pending a formal request. Additionally, the Affordable Landscapes team have installed a new fence and surface at the entrance to tidy the area – the original wooden fence was rotten. The landowner has agreed that we may apply for a Permissive Right of Way along the beck, close off the broken wooden gate at the side of the field, replacing it with a wire fence to match the rest, and open the pedestrian gate at the bottom of the field once this is done. Later we hope to do some work to create a good footpath with bridges over the beck where needed.
4. **The McOrville** have made an oral request to erect a temporary Christmas Tree on the Green in front of the pub. I feel it would be a good focal point as people drive through and an opportunity to develop a good relationship with the new owner.
5. **Involvement from Years 5 and 6 school children.** I have received an email requestfrom the school to say that years 5 and 6 pupils are keen to do something to help the village around littering. Does the Parish Council need any help, even if it is not to do with litter?
6. **Ward Councillor –** I had planned to meet with Cllr Young last week but, unfortunately, he cancelled due to illness.
7. **Discussions on Elwick By-pass and Coal Lane** – covered earlier in the meeting.

Councillors noted the information on the Playing Field with thanks to the Chairman and Clerk for dealing with this issue so quickly.

The Clerk noted concern regarding the oral request from the McOrville; the Parish Council had a policy and procedure for dealing with requests for use of the green and to date she had not received an application, even though the McOrville had been made aware of the procedure. All such applications had to be made well in advance, in order that the matter could be published on the agenda, and residents given the opportunity to express their views.

*Cllr Aird joined the meeting at 8.02pm*

Following discussion, it was clear the proposal did not have unanimous support. As this was the last meeting of the year, it was now too late for the pub to seek permission for the temporary erection of a Christmas Tree.

It was proposed the school be asked if the children would like to maintain the Wildlife Garden.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr Woodward reported that the Christmas Fayre had been successful; a substantial sum had been raised towards village events, although we need to rethink the placement of stalls next year. Cllr Irving passed the Clerk £10, a late donation from a resident who had been unable to attend. The next events included the carols around the tree and Children’s Christmas Party.
2. Village Maintenance Group Report: Cllr Irving tabled her report and spoke to it:

**Tasks completed:**

* New gate installed at Playing Field
* Oak tree on Playing Field given a wire cage – though still needs a stake
* Wildflower meadow partially cut.

**Tasks not yet completed:**

* Boarding around soft play area to be repaired - EPC
* New bench to be installed - EPC
* Notice to be installed at entrance – EPC
* Meadow in Wildlife Garden to be cut back further and raked off; buddlejas to be pruned – EPC
* Four flower tubs on the green and Manor Close to be removed - EPC
* Fencing on the path down to the ghyll is still down - HBC
* Ramp across the beck in the ghyll is still broken and covered in weeds & nettles – HBC
* Pavement around the corner of The Green with North Lane in a very bad state – HBC
* Ivy dumped in Manor Close still not removed
* Branch of tree near bus shelter overhanging pavement needs cutting back - EPC
1. **Financial Reports**: The Financial Reports had been circulated in advance; these were **accepted.**

**Receipts: £**  **Payments: £**

Wayleaves 55.00

**Total: 55.00 Total: 0.00**

Councillors noted the NJC agreement for 2022/23; it was **resolved** the Clerk should be paid at this rate, backdated to 1st April 2022.

1. **Budget proposals 2023/24:** The Clerk presented the expected outturn as at 31st March 2023, with the caveat that as the cost of living was still rising, these figures were subject to change. She then talked through a draft 2023-24 budget, with no village improvements or precept included, checking that Councillors agreed with her thoughts on how much each was likely to increase – particularly as at present the cost-of-living index was still rising and already at 11.1%. All figures were agreed. The Clerk then presented costings for the village improvements suggested previously by Councillors and the impact of an increase in the Precept through a range from 1-6%. After a thorough discussion, it was agreed that the works on the Playing Field and the purchase of two picnic benches be implemented immediately. Other items to be included in the budget for 2023-24 included: the book kiosk; CCTV camera for the Playing Field; a full tree survey; an electricity feeder pillar for the village green; the resurfacing of the east village green footpath and spare parts for the marquees. Councillors were concerned to keep the Precept as low as possible, and it was agreed to limit the increase to 4%, and to implement village improvements as funds allowed.
2. **Correspondence**: None received
3. **Planning Applications**: No applications received.
4. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**:

Cllr H. Thompson raised concern about the site of the illegal bonfire on the village green, which is a mess; she enquired as to whose responsibility it was to repair the damage? The Chairman agreed to request the landlords of the pubs to deal with this.

1. **Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 23rd January 2023 at Elwick WI Hall.

*Meeting closed 9.30pm.*