**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 30th January 2023 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. Woodward, Aird, Irving, Musgrave, H. Thompson, Winrow and R. Thompson (from7.28pm)

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

1. **Public Forum:**  No members of the public present.
2. **Apologies:** Ward Cllr A. Martin-Wells
3. **Police Report:** No report received from the police. The Clerk informed she had attended the latest Rural Crime Forum, held on Wednesday 25th January, and noted that:
* The police were seeking to recruit Special Constables, for a Rural Crime Team.
* The public are encouraged to report any crime; the police cannot improve when they don’t know what is happening. If at all possible, please note vehicle registrations.
* The Cleveland Police Search team are seeking rural venues in which to train, e. g farms, barns, or other agricultural buildings. When undertaking such training, they use marked vehicles, so the police presence is noted. If the team note any damage, such as cut fences, etc, they will inform the landowner.
* The Force is purchasing more drones, which have already proved useful in offenders; these work 24 hours, as they have thermal imaging. Poachers beware.
* The Cleveland Force is working with 8 other Forces across the North of England, exchanging information. There is now a ‘2 offences and you’re out’ system in place for ASB, e. g. poaching, hare coursing, etc. A police warning letter, issued by any one of these Forces will be notified to all Forces. A second offence in any of the 9 areas will automatically now lead to court.
1. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
2. **Minutes of 28th November:** Cllr H. Thompson noted the date for the January meeting, recorded in the minutes was incorrect, as it should state 30th, not 23rd. The draft Minutes were duly altered, and Cllr H. Thompson proposed, with Cllr Irving seconding, the approval of the Minutes as an accurate record. The meeting then **resolved to accept**, and the Chairman signed the amended 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) ***School involvement –*** the Clerk informed that she had met with the Head of School, Mrs Wilson, who was keen for Years 5 and 6 children to be involved with helping the village; they had agreed that the children would help with Wildlife Garden maintenance, including planting bulbs donated to the and agreed the children would perform a Maypole Dance.

(iii*) Lawful Development* – the Clerk informed that she had now received the Lawful Development Certificate for the reinstallation of a K6 telephone Box on the green, to act as a free book exchange.

1. **Parish Charter:** The Clerk spoke to the draft Charter which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She had been a member of the Working Party which had developed the Charter, in her capacity as Clerk to Hart PC, along with Cllr R. Thompson of Elwick PC, Cllr Jim Wilson, Chair of Headland PC and Cllr Lyn Noble, Chair of Dalton Piercy PC. The W/P had also included Cllr Shane Moore, Leader of HBC, Neil Wilson, HBC Assistant Solicitor and Cllr Mike Young (the latter had only attended the first meeting. The document produced covered how the different levels of government would work together in the future, to avoid the issues which had led to the Vote of No Confidence in April 2019. The process now was that the Draft Charter was being taken to all parish councils within the Borough and the HBC Constitution Committee for approval or to identify any amendments required. Should all PCs and the Constitution Committee agree the wording, then it would go to a Full Council meeting, for endorsement, ideally before mid- March, when purdah would come into force. The Clerk noted that many of the concerns raised by the parishes had been addressed and actions implemented immediately, as the W/P discussions progressed over the last few months. Cllr Moore had been constructive and willing to listen, and had actively sought solutions, to overcome perceived barriers in the way HBC currently worked, in order to ensure the PC voice was not only heard, but listened to and acted upon, wherever it was legally possible. She recommended the draft Charter to the Parish Council.

*Cllr R. Thompson joined the meeting at this point.*

Councillors unanimously voted to approve the draft Charter without amendment. Cllr R. Thompson proposed the Vote of No Confidence be formally withdrawn once the Charter had been signed by all parties. The Clerk suggested this could be done at an official event at the Civic Centre, attended by HBC Councillors, all parish councils and senior HBC Officers, with the media present; the suggestion was endorsed by the meeting. **Action**: Clerk to inform HBC of the decision.

1. **Defibrillator:** The Clerk informed she had receiveda legal document from HBC, transferring ownership of the defibrillator, situated on the wall of The Spotted Cow, to Elwick Parish Council, if Councillors agreed. After a brief discussion, covering likely on-going costs of maintaining the machine, Councillors resolved to accept ownership. It was noted that a new battery was probably required. **Actions:** Clerk to sign the agreement as the Proper Officer of the Parish Council; Cllr Woodward to check the date on the battery and inform the Clerk if replacement was required.
2. **Red Gap projects:** The Clerk informed that she had purchased the tools for the Wildlife Garden, though instead of a cultivator, she had purchased an extra set of hand tools, as she felt these would be more useful. The Council now owned, 2 x Border Forks, 2 x Border Spades, 2 each of Hand Trowels, Hand Forks and Bulb Trowels, a pair each of large and small Secateurs, a garden Rake and a Stihl Battery-driven Strimmer. There was a balance of approximately £144 remaining, which Grantscape had agreed could be spent on further tools – she proposed Safety equipment for users of the strimmer, and a tool rack. This proposal was **unanimously endorsed**. The Clerk informed that now the Permitted Development Certificate had been received, she could progress the Free Book Exchange project. Three quotes were required for the Kiosk, before she could sign the funding contract, but she had so far only received two, and would be grateful if any Councillor could identify another firm from whom to request a quote. Cllr H. Thompson informed she had already passed on a quote from O’Briens and had asked them to obtain a quote from another firm. Cllr Woodward suggested ‘X2 Connect’ might have kiosks available. It was agreed the Clerk should seek a quote and also discuss with Mr. Nick Turnbull, the possibility of him undertaking any sand blasting/respraying required. As the matter was now urgent, the Chairman was granted the power to make the decision as to which quote to accept, and to report back to the February meeting. **Actions:** Cllr Woodward to make decision on way forward with kiosk; Cllr H. Thompson to inform O’Briens we were still awaiting a third quote; Clerk to purchase extra equipment for Tool Bank, obtain third quote, sign contract and discuss options with Mr. Turnbull.
3. **Tree Survey:** The Clerk informed she had received a formal quote from the HBC Arboriculturist in the sum of £945.79. This compared favourably with the only previous quote she had received from a firm in Durham, of £1,000 per day x 2 days. Councillors **resolved** to accept the quote from HBC. The Clerk also noted she had requested Affordable Landscapes to undertake the tree works on Church Bank, for which planning permission had been obtained; John had informed he could not do it and had offered to speak to the tree surgeon we had used before, but she had not heard further on this. **Action**: Clerk to inform HBC and also request Affordable landscapes to pass on the contact details fort he tree surgeon.
4. **Ward Councillors’ Reports**: The Clerk noted Cllr Andrew Martin-Wells had emailed as follows:

“The proposed brown bin charge was discussed at F&P on Monday and it will be going to the full Council this week. Members from Neighbourhood Services requested that we review the fees for both the initial and subsequent bins. It will be going before Members at Council with a  proposal to charge £32 for the first license and £20 for subsequent ones up to a maximum of 4 per household.
Bypass wise, Kieron will try and get the scheme before informal policy chairs asap and from there will run the scheme past ward members and the chair of Elwick PC prior to it going live with the planning application.”

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1. **Chairman’s Report**: The Chairman report covered:
* ***Parish Liaison Meeting***: This had been a constructive meeting, mainly focussed on progress of the Parish Charter; it had been agreed to add in the ability of a PC to request an application within the remit of Planning Officers could be taken to Planning Committee.
* ***A19 Access proposals***: He had called a public meeting in early December, held at Elwick WI Hall, to present to residents the proposed closure of the Elwick Village Road to the A19 and to make Coal Lane entry only from the A19. Over 70 residents had attended. A petition, requesting the closure of Coal Lane be reconsidered, co-ordinated by Mrs. Musgrave and signed by almost 300 residents and businesses that will be affected, has since been sent to the Minister of Highways. He had spoken with Kieran Bostock, HBC, who had informed the previous outline planning application was to be cancelled and a new submission made. All who responded to the first application will be asked to respond to the new application.
* ***Further question over Benknowle Lane***: A resident had raised concern that the gap at Benknowle Lane was to be closed; He had spoken with Kieran Bostock who knew nothing of such a proposal, but would contact Highways England to check.
* ***Visit of Ward Councillor***: He and the Clerk had a good meeting with Cllr Andrew Martin-Wells, and took him around the village to see the areas of concern. This included the A19 access, pavements, and By-pass, as well as the parking issues.
* ***Housing Developments***: Two developments on the edge of town, Elwick Park and Elwick Gardens are being advertised as being in Elwick. This is misleading and given the substantial inconvenience caused by the closure of the A19 gaps that was a condition of the commencement of building, and the subsequent extra miles need by all residents when accessing the A19, seems quite presumptuous.

Councillors expressed considerable annoyance that the developers were trying to ‘pass off’ their developments as being in Elwick, when they were not even within the parish. The Clerk was requested to inform the both developers and HBC that this was grossly misleading and unacceptable. **Action:** Clerk to write to Duchy Estates and HBC Trading Standards and Planning Departments.

At this point, Cllr Musgrave tendered her resignation, which she stated was a direct result of the lack of support from neighbours and businesses on Coal Lane, despite her 12 years of representing their concerns to the Parish Council and ensuring a petition was sent to the Minister for highways at Westminster.

All present expressed their dismay and sadness at her decision but recognised why she had made it.

The Chairman stated he had informed Kieran Bostock that HBC and Highways England would need to make a JOINT presentation to EPC and residents as soon as the planning application for the By-pass goes in.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr Woodward reported that the Committee had discussed at length what Christmas activities had gone well and where improvements can be made. These have been recorded and will be used when planning for next Christmas. Three events are in planning at present:
* **Race Night** – Saturday 25th February at the WI Hall. Promotion via Facebook and fliers, to be started as soon as possible. 8 races - Race Sponsors £30 each; horse ownership £3.00 per horse.
* **Easter Egg Hunt** – Easter Monday, with the theme of Peter Rabbit.
* **The Coronation** – Saturday 6th May – we will be asking the shop and pubs to work together to put on entertainments following the coronation. 2.00pm. Sunday 7th May - **Coronation Tea Party** on the green; the GT Silver Band, Rising Stars and Elwick School have already agreed to provide the entertainment. Residents to be asked to bring a picnic, we will provide tea and cake.

He noted that in the minutes of March 2018, it was recorded the Elwick Village Association had decided to close and had agreed to pass their assets to the Parish Council, on the proviso the PC would set up a Social Activities Committee to take over the running of events, in particular the annual Children’s Christmas party. The EVA had not yet closed, though the SAC had been set up, and he understood that EVA funds had now been spent and that the Council, through its SAC, would have to fund the Children’s Party. He requested the formal closure of the EVA be expedited, which request was supported by several other Councillors. Cllr R. Thompson agreed to progress the formal closure and presentation of the accounts of the EVA. Finally, Cllr Woodard explained he would need to stand down from the SAC as it was having too great an impact on his family time; he would attend the next SAC meeting to agree how to progress.

**Action:** Cllr R. Thompson to initiate closure of EVA as agreed.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report:** Cllr Irving tabled her report, stating that although a few tasks had been completed, viz:thePlaying Field gate had been replaced; ivy dumped in Manor Close removed and the overhanging branch near bus shelter cut back, no other tasks previously identified had been, which was extremely disappointing. The Clerk informed that HBC would be undertaking the repairs to the fencing in the Ghyll and repair of the bridge in the next financial year, as there was no money left in the current year’s budget, and that Andrew Sturrock had promised to move the flower tubs, and had been reminded several times. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain the second Kissing gate and request the invoice for both as soon as possible, though the gate would not be installed until April. **Action:** Clerk to request Affordable Landscapes liaise with Chris Scaife about collection of the gate and request an invoice for the two gates from HBC.

1. **Financial Reports**: The Financial Reports had been circulated in advance; Cllr R. Thompson asked for clarification on several figures and being content with the response, Cllr H. Thompson proposed , with Cllr Woodward seconding, the acceptance of the financial reports. It was so **resolved**.

**Receipts: £**  **Payments: £**

0.00 Pear Technology (digital mapping support) 120.00

Affordable Landscapes (work at Playing Field) 1,896.00

D.M. Ireland (salary & backpay) 1,115.28

HMRC (PAYE) 278.82

Bank charges 18.00

Sam Turner & Sons (Wildlife Garden Tools) 499.53

**Total: 00.00 Total: 3,927.63**

On the recommendation of the Clerk, Councillors agreed to proceed with obtaining a gov.uk email address for the Parish Council, and that once this was secured, all Councillors would then use this for PC business.

1. **Correspondence**: Email from Alastair Gordon, Founder of the ‘Parish.UK Network’, introducing the Network, whose aim was to be a ‘one stop shop’ on the internet for the public to gain collated information on any parish at one place. He invited the Council to confirm the information currently in the public domain, together with bank account details. Councillors **declined** the invitation.
2. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson, Chair of the Committee, reported that, as the Clerk had advised the Council she wished to retire at the end of March (and also from the two other Clerkships she held), and Dalton Piercy’s Clerk had recently resigned, there had been a suggestion that all four parish councils, being very similar rural parishes, share a common advert for a new Clerk. He had recently attended a meeting at Thorpe Thewles with representatives of all the parishes to discuss this, and a draft advert had been developed, which had since been constructively amended by the Elwick Clerk. It was hoped the recruitment process would begin shortly, and he requested the Council’s approval for this joint approach. This was unanimously **agreed**. Councillors also **agreed** to pay one quarter of the cost of advertising the post.

As Cllr Musgrave had been a member of the Personnel Sub-Committee, along with Cllr Winrow, a replacement was urgently needed; Cllr Aird volunteered, and was immediately appointed.

1. **Planning Applications**:

**H/2022/0424** -Sunrise Cottage, A19 Trunk Road – ***No Objection***

**H/2022/0294** -26, The Green – ***Support*** as this will remove several vehicles from roadside parking

**H/2022/0463** – 8, North Close – ***No Objection***

**H/2022/0428 –** Lane House, The Ghyll – ***No Objection, but support the Aboriculturist’s comments on protecting the trees to the side of the property.***

**H/2022/0475 –** Chantry Cottage, The Green – This application was identical to the earlier application that had been refused by HBC. Councillors were divide on the request for uPVC replacement windows, with some adamant the Conservation Status was paramount, whilst others felt that the right choice of uPVC design would be acceptable, as it required far less maintenance than wood and was also energy efficient. This view prevailed, and it was agreed that, whilst the Parish Council would always prefer wooden window frames were replaced with wooden window frames, on properties within the Conservation Area, ***No Objection would be raised to this element of the application, providing only that the replacement window frames had a slim profile and the design was in keeping wit the cottage.*** The other element of the application was for the installation of a porch to the front of the property. The Clerk advised that the Registered Village Green abutted the front wall of the house, and any constructions on the green were prohibited; Chantry Cottage was sent a Wayleave demand every year, confirming that the property only had pedestrian access from the house across the village green. Councillors unanimously agreed to **strongly object** to the erection of a porch. Cllr Woodward suggested an alternative to a porch would be a canopy attached to the cottage walls, which would provide similar protection from the weather, and showed Councillors an example he had found on the internet. He requested they consider speaking with the owner before submitting their response, to see if agreement could be reached on this alternative, rather than simply objecting. It was unanimously **agreed** to request a site visit, though this would need to take place before Friday. **Action:** Clerk to request a meeting with the owner before Friday, when the Council’s comments on the application would be submitted.

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**:
* Cllr H. Thompson raised concern that the site of the illegal bonfire on the village green, had still not been restored. The Chairman agreed to deal with this as a matter of urgency.
* Cllr Aird raised concern, on behalf of a resident in Greenlea, who wished to have a street light moved to allow him to create more parking space on his own frontage. The resident had applied to HBC requesting the streetlight be re-sited but had received no response. Cllr Aird noted that, as parking in Greenlea was extremely contentious, with most properties having several vehicles, and insufficient space to park them all, he supported this resident’s solution to his own parking problem. He asked if anyone had a contact in HBC who might be able to help; the Clerk offered her assistance, requesting the resident contact her himself.
* Cllr Aird further concern about general parking in the village. He noted that many properties had drives and/or garages, and that most residents made full use of these; however, there were some who also had these facilities, who still parked at the roadside in front of their property, selfishly preventing others who had no such facilities, from using this space. The Clerk noted that all roads in the village, except for The Ghyll, were public roads, and no-one had a right to claim the road outside their home for their sole use. It was **agreed** that an article be placed in the next issue of Village Life requesting those with a drive or garage to please use it, as others were not so fortunate.
* Cllr Irving raised concern about the high level of litter,, both on the outskirts and within the village itself. It was suggested she re-start the monthly Litter Picks, on the first Saturday of each month, with the first to take place on Saturday 4th March, between 10.00am and noon.

**Action:** Chair to investigate responsibility for restoration of the village green; Cllr Aird to suggest the resident contact the Clerk; Cllr Irving to publicise Litter Picks; Clerk to draft article on parking.

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

Cllr Aird tendered his apologies in advance, as he would be at work.

*Meeting closed 10.10pm.*