**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00pm on Monday 22nd May 2023 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. Woodward, Aird, Irving, Oliver, H. Thompson and R. Thompson

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

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcoming newly co-opted Councillor, Tony Oliver.

1. **Public Forum:** No members of the public present.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Hewitt and Karel Simpson, Police Volunteer
3. **Police Report:** No report had been received. The Clerk informed that she had attended the recent Rural Crime Forum held in Redcar and had noted the Force was now recruiting a team of Special Constables, with full police powers, to act as a dedicated Rural Crime team.She also noted that her emails to PCSO Calvert had bounced back. Cllr H. Thompson reminded that the police had promised in March to send crime statistics specifically for Elwick parish, yet these had not yet been received. **Action**: Police to provide crime & Anti-social behaviour statistics for Elwick parish.
4. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
5. **Minutes of 24th April 2023:** Cllr H. Thomson 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 Minutes.
6. **Matters Arising:** (i) (***Kiosk*** – Clerk reported that the concrete base was to be installed the next day, and the kiosk delivered by the end of the week.

(ii) ***Clerk vacancy*** – Cllr R. Thompson noted that the advert for a Parish Clerk for Elwick had been placed in the local free paper, Hartlepool Life, but had received no response. It was agreed that word of the vacancy needed to be spread further, especially in the village, therefore it was **agreed** the advert should be put on the Village Facebook page. **Actions:** Clerk to forward the advert to Cllrs Aird, Hewitt and Woodward. Cllr Hewitt to place on village Facebook page.

(iii) ***Elwick Park*** – The Clerk informed of the response (previously circulated) from the Managing Director of HBC, who was unable to do anything about the advertising of the development, though the sympathised with Elwick residents. No response as yet from the ASA. Cllr Aird noted the very dangerous state of the road beside the development, where a raised manhole cover was causing traffic to drive on the wrong side of the road to avoid it, he had damaged one of his tyres by hitting this. **Action:** Clerk to put in a complaint about the state of the road.

(iv) ***Trees on Church Bank*** – The Clerk informed that the works had been completed. Cllr Woodward informed that he had notified villagers of the availability of the wood via the village Facebook page; he was especially grateful to Garry and Kevin, who had spent over five hours cutting it up into manageable pieces for villagers to collect.

7**. Tree Survey:** The Arboriculturist was requesting dates when the PC would wish the survey to be undertaken. Cllr Woodward expressed a wish to be present and, as he would be out of the country for much of June, agreed to forward his diary to the Clerk, so that she could agree dates.

 **Actions:**Cllr Woodward to forward his diary, Clerk to arrange dates with Scott Watson at HBC.

**8. By-pass progress:** Cllr Woodward stated he had heard nothing from HBC since the Council had agreed to move forward with Compulsory Purchase of the land. he proposed this be a key item at the next Parrish Liaison Meeting, with a request that all those residents directly affected by the by-pass should be invited to a meeting with HBC Officers to discuss concerns.

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

 10**. Chairman’s Report:** Cllr Woodward’s report covered:

* The need to clarify the border between PC land and Mr. Fleming’s property, in order to agree a management plan for the trees. It is unclear as to exactly how much of the bank is a PC responsibility, and how much is in private ownership. All agreed that the PC should work with Mr. Fleming to clarify responsibilities.
* The benches around the village were in need of treatment, as at least two were broken. It was agreed the Maintenance Committee should inspect all the benches, where possible identifying who had donated each, and agreeing what work each required and bring this to the next meeting. It was accepted that some may be beyond repair, in which case, the moratorium on new benches might be reconsidered.

**Action**: Maintenance Committee to carry out bench inspection and report to June meeting.

* The possibility of having a permanent plug fitted to the lamp post on the green had been put to Rob Daley, who had explained this was not possible as the wrought iron lamp posts fractured when drilled; however, the one outside the shop had already been drilled and a cable was already installed. **Action:** Clerk to inform Rob Daley of this and request he reconsider.

**11. Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr R. Thompson reported:

* **The Coronation -** the weekend had been a great success, with the beacon lit on the Saturday evening, thanks to Mr. Smithson and Mr. J. Thompson, who had installed a permanent socket on the triangle for the beacon post; however, it was recommended that in future, the beacon be tested before the event, to ensure it lit first time – it was suggested this could be an annual new Year’s Eve event. The Garden Party on the green had proved another success; the 2 Deputy Lord Lieutenants of County Durham had made the Loyal Toast and read out a letter from His Majesty, which was much appreciated. The fizz had proved popular and the cake even more so. Everyone appreciated the efforts of the GT Silver Band, the Rising Stars and children of St. Peter’s School in providing wonderful entertainment. We had been extraordinarily lucky with the weather, and the rain had held off until almost close of play. The marquees had been left in situ until they had at least partially dried out, a week later. Warm thanks were expressed to all who had volunteered, especially those who had erected and dismantled the marquees, which was a hard job.
* The next planned event was to be the Summer Fete/Gig on the Green, which was to take place on Saturday 9th September. Two acts had already been booked, ‘Red Sky’’ and ‘Phoenix’. The idea of a Garage Sale in July was also being considered. Councillors **agreed** this should be taken to the Parish Meeting, on Wednesday, to gauge support.
* Cllr Thompson noted the marquee raising and dismantling, as well as the moving of tables and chairs was hard work, and more younger people were needed to volunteer their help, as the majority of the SAC volunteers were now no longer as fit as they were.

Cllr Woodard noted he had purchased 9 colour coded storage boxes at £5.00 each, into which the marquees were now stored. It was **unanimously agreed** he should be reimbursed for these. He also proposed the purchase of covers for the two speakers of the PA system, which would allow them to be stored out of the very large box they were currently in. This too was **agreed**.

**Actions:** Cllr R. Thompson to raise the idea of a Garage Sale at the Annual Parish Meeting; Cllr Woodward to provide the Clerk with a receipt for the boxes and speaker covers, in order that he could be reimbursed.

12. **Village Maintenance Group Report:** Cllr Irving spoke to her report:

**Tasks Completed:**

* Two flower tubs re-located; two damaged ones removed.
* Trees on Church Bank cut back.

**Tasks Awaiting:**

***Playing Field*:**

* Bench to be installed - EPC
* Missing boards around soft fall area to be replaced - EPC
* End of climbing log is rotten and needs attention - EPC

***Wildlife Garden:***

* General maintenance, plants needed for pond, all budleja to be pruned ASAP -EPC
* Path at east end of green to be resurfaced - EPC

***General:***

* Fencing on path down to the ghyll to be repaired – HBC
* Ramp over stream in ghyll to be repaired – HBC
* Pavement on corner of The Green and North Lane in very bad state – HBC
* Bollard on green opposite The Forge has broken and needs to be removed/replaced – EPC

Cllr Woodward **agreed** to contact the supplier about the climbing log. The school to be asked to start work in the Wildlife Garden – children to research what type of pond plants should be purchased and up to £100 made available for this. Affordable Landscapes to be asked to spray with weedkiller, the whole path at the east end of the village green and the cobbled areas, and to remove the damaged concrete bollard. A part of the hedge in North Lane, that belonged to the Borough Council had still not been cut, HBC to be asked again to deal with this. Cllr Aird raised concern about the

damaged fence in the ghyll, which was now spread around, with nails sticking out of parts and was a safety hazard for children and dogs; he queried whether it would be simpler just to have it removed, rather then replaced. Also of concern was the lack of grass cutting of the verges outside the village boundary, where the long grass was now a traffic hazard. **Actions:** Cllr Woodward to contact supplier; Clerk to speak to school Head Teacher about wildlife garden, John Pearson about spraying and bollard removal, Chris Scaife about the fence in the ghyll and Kieran Bostock about the hedge.

**13. Financial Reports**: The Financial Reports were tabled.

**Receipts: £**  **Payments: £**

0.00D. Woodward (Balance on Bouncy Castle) 160.00

 Paula O’Dell (Donation to Rising Stars) 50.00

 G. Winrow (Coronation event expenses) 58.44

 **Total: 268.44**

The Financial Reports were unanimously **approved.**

**14. Red Gap Applications:** The Clerk noted that the closing date for applications was 24th May and no decision had yet been made as to what she was to apply for. After a brief discussion, it was **agreed** to apply for:

 (i) A generator to supply emergency power /power for larger equipment at events

(ii) A battery bank for the PA System, to make it more flexible in use.

(iii) A fence in the Playing Field to create a dog walk between the two kissing gates, and ideally,

(iv) A walkway to the ghyll from the Playing Field.

**Actions**: Cllrs R. Thompson and Woodward to provide Clerk with details of the equipment to be requested, as a matter of urgency. Clerk to write and submit applications.

**15. Correspondence:** HBC quoting price for litter bin emptying at the Playing Field; the Clerk noted it appeared to be for only 6 Months, when she had specifically requested the bins be emptied throughout the year. **Action:** Clerk to investigate and obtain quote for 12 months.

**16. Planning Applications:**

**H/2022/0470** – Land adjacent to Hartmoor Substation - **Strongly Object –** increasing industrialisation of the rural area.

**H/2023/0069** – The Old Mill – **Support**

**H/2023.0110** – 25, The Green **– Support**

**H/2022/0181 –** Land to north of A689, Wynyard Park **– Object** – traffic issues/road infrastructure.

**17. Annual Parish Newsletter:** The Clerk, having previously circulated a draft requested comments and suggested amendments; the only two amendments proposed were the addition of the Energy Forum and the wording of the paragraph on the Kiosk, changing ‘installed’ to ‘purchased’. The Clerk was complimented on the report.

**18. Matters of Concern to Councillors**: None raised. Cllr H. Thompson asked if anyone else had read the very complimentary article about Elwick in the Evening Gazette of 7th May; several Councillors and the Clerk had done so, and Cllr Woodward offered to circulate it to those who had not yet seen it.

**19. Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 26th June 2023 at Elwick WI Hall.

**NB:** This will be the current Clerk’s last meeting and Councillors will have to decide on how parish work is to be undertaken, and parish documents stored, until a new Clerk can be appointed.

*Meeting closed 9.58pm.*