

ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm Wednesday 11th December 2024 at Elwick WI Hall

Present: Cllrs R. Thompson, H. Thompson, Irving.

In Attendance: M. Davies - Clerk, 1 resident, PCSO Yasmin Calvert

1. **Public Forum:** (i) A resident expressed their ongoing concerns regarding the gated entrance of land situated on the A19, just off the slip road coming into North Lane. Since the last Parish Council meeting it has been observed that signage has been damaged on the highway as a result of the activity in the area. The Clerk advised everyone present of another residents email raising safety concerns after witnessing a near miss involving a HGV exiting the gateway and a car using the slip road . PCSO Yasmin Calvert (YC) advised she had been informed of the concerns of residents and after speaking to her supervisor she had been advised this was an issue for the Local Highways department, as there is very little the Police can assist with unless they witness an illegal manoeuvre. Since YC was made aware of the issue, a speed watch, in an attempt to capture illegal manoeuvres was set up in North Lane, however the gateway in question was not in view and no activity was monitored. The Clerk advised following the last meeting she had contacted Peter Frost (HBC Highways) via email to advise of the concerns but no feedback had been received back to date. YC advised she had been advised by Peter Frost there was nothing that could be done except for the signage to be reviewed in the area. Cllr R. Thompson brought to YC attention the gateway in question was never granted planning permission as from memory it was believed an application for the use of the gateway, was rejected and the Parish Council supported the decision at the time. YC advised with this information she will now contact planning to confirm this and she will also contact Peter Frost to attend the Village to view the area or ask if he can attend a future PC meeting and escalate the concerns. Councillors also asked YC why a speed watch was set up in North Lane with no view of the area of concern, YC advised she will now escalate this to the traffic department and ask for their assistance in monitoring it. YC confirmed due to the resident's and Parish Councils concern she will be speaking to her sergeant this evening to arrange for a Police officer(s) to attend the property to speak to the owner regarding the concerns. The Clerk is also to contact Peter Frost for feedback and contact National Highways to establish if this is something they can assist with. Parish Councillors all present expressed to YC their extreme concern on the matter and the urgency to act on the issue as this is a great concern and needs to be taken seriously before an incident occurs due to the ongoing activity on the area.

Resident left the meeting at 19:28

2. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. D. Woodward, G. Hewitt. A. Aird, A. Oliver.
3. **Police Report:** PCSO Yasmin Calvert (YC) advised the main issue was as per the Public Forum the ongoing issue on the A19. YC advised that she had checked the police report and no reports of anti-social or criminal damage had been recorded within the Elwick Parish.

Yasmin Calvert left the meeting at 19:39

4. **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held 6th November 2023:** Approval of the Minutes as an accurate record, was proposed by Cllr B. Irving, with Cllr H. Thompson seconding. The meeting then resolved to accept the minutes, and the Vice Chairman (acting Chair) signed the Minutes.
5. **Matters Arising: (i) Vehicle activity on the A19 slip road, into North Lane:** See public Forum.
6. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr D. Woodward forwarded his apologies and advised of the following via his emailed Chairmans report; (i) Cllr D Woodward advised he attended the December Parish Council Liaison meeting on Monday 9th December, which was also well attended by other PC Chairs, as well as Brenda Harrison (Leader of the Council), representatives from Democratic Services, Neighbourhood and Finance, along with Denise McGuckin the CEO of HBC. The meeting gave those present an overview of council finances. HBC expressed financial pressures, with a projected gap of around £10 million in 2025/26. Some of this will be met from

reserves, with additional cost savings planned. This did leave around £4 million remaining, but the council is confident from the Autumn statement that there will be funding available to plug that gap. The following two years show a decreasing gap, and it is recognised that funding from reserves is unsustainable and will be reduced. Cost savings are planned in contracts and back office areas, with the hope not to impact front line services. There was some discussion that there is the impression that the villages are the first to feel cuts, however it was suggested that the whole town does suffer equally, as can be seen from driving around. While there are many pressures, Child Care provision is going to be a significant drain on council resources in the 2025/26 year, but it is hoped that Government will bring in changes by the private sector for emergency child placement. **(ii)** There was discussion on speeding in the villages and the measures that could be taken, including speed bumps (approximately £15,000 a set), however with an overall budget for traffic calming of approx. £200,000, there will be little funding for many of these. **(iii)** Cllr D. Woodward advised he has been looking around at signage in the villages and feel particularly down Church Bank to the playing field where cars speed down on a morning, we could improve the signage. Keiron Bostock at HBC has said we can work directly with them if we want or install additional 20 mph, and children playing signs. **(iv)** A brief update on the bypass is that, an agreement has been made with two landowners, but the agent representing the others is not coming to an agreement, so the council is in the process of launching compulsory purchase orders on the land. It has been suggested that the current planned completion date for the bypass is Dec 2028. **(v)** There was a discussion regarding Section 106 monies from developments that is aimed at providing or improving local infrastructure etc. It is important that we communicate our current needs and wants in this area, and there are two ways that we need to do this. Firstly, the Rural Plan group is in the process of updating the desired use for section 106 monies, so Cllr Woodward strongly proposes that we bring this into our agenda for our first meeting in 2025, and invite representatives from the Rural Plan group to discuss our priorities. The second suggestion is that for all responses that we submit through the planning system for developments, whether we support them or not, we should clearly state what improvements we would look to find through section 106 monies if the that if the development were to go ahead. So from this, EPC need to review our list of priorities, and particularly remove those that are no longer relevant, while deciding what we should be looking for going forward. **(vi)** Cllr D. Woodward advised EPC have now responded to residents request for support to indicate preferred parking for residents, but we need to stress that this is not enforceable. There have been some complaints about residents treating the road along the south side of the Green as private parking and obstructing what is a public highway with little concern for others. While ultimately obstruction of a public highway is a matter for police, EPC should take the opportunity to point out the problem to the residents. **(vii)** EPC have received comments from residents relating to an abandoned car left on the Green with no MOT, HBC have this matter in hand and the owner is going to be asked to move it.

7. **Ward Councillor's report:** No Ward Councillor's report received. The clerk advised that Cllr. Andrew Martin Wells had reported no new issues and sent his apologies.
8. **Playing Field Committee Report:** The Clerk advised since the last Parish Council Meeting no further meeting had taken place for the Playing Field Committee. The Committee are currently waiting for a date for work to commence on the dog walk from OJM Landscaping. An application for funding has been submitted to Grantscape for two new pieces of trail equipment and we are awaiting to see if we have been successful in our bid.
9. **Social Activities Committee Report:** Cllr H. Thompson provided an update on behalf of the Social Activities Committee. **(i) Christmas Fayre** - At the last meeting this was reviewed, it was a well-supported event and a large volume of people attended the event. H&S does need to be reviewed as there was an issue with overcrowding. 53 Children in total visited Santa. All stall holders reported they were pleased with the evening and it was believed the earlier date helped with the increased footfall. The event was advertised locally along with other social platforms. It has been suggested by the SAC the 2x LED battens used in the Cow Shed in the Spotted Cow are donated to them so they have lighting in the shed. All Councillors present unanimously agreed the 2x LED Battens were to be donated to The Spotted Cow for them to use in the Cow Shed. Jamie Thompson is still in invoice the committee for the cable and fitting of the lights and to date the current profit from the event is £531.16. **(ii) Polaris the Snow Bear, Theatre night** – Overall this event had mixed reviews, thanks were expressed to Cllr R. Thompson for his help on the day preparing for the evening. Potentially for future events it has been suggested other local amateur theatrical groups are contacted. Overall the event made a financial loss

and the figure is to be confirmed. **(iii) Carols around the tree 24.12.24** – Carols around the tree will take place on Christmas eve at 6pm. Mulled wine and juice will be available with minced pies and jam tarts. It has been agreed Santa will not be present for this event this year. **(iv) Children’s Christmas Party 28.12.24** – This event will be held Saturday 28th December 2024 from 2pm to 4pm. The Entertainer and W.I Hall has been booked. A soft toy fox will be raffled. Grazing platters will be available for the children. Tickets will be available for children living or visiting relatives during the festive period. Tickets are £1.00 each including a raffle ticket. Cllr H. Thompson is going to contact Zoe Woodward to see if she will be the point of contact for ticket purchases. The Clerk is to do 230 flyers advertising the Carols around the tree and the children’s Christmas party.

10. **Village Maintenance Group Report:** **(i)** No Village maintenance report received. **(ii)** Cllr D. Woodward advised via email he has not had chance to look at the book exchange to establish where the water is getting in, but with the upcoming weather it was agreed as an emergency temporary repair a sheet of Perspex is installed to protect the books etc inside, Cllr H. Thompson advised she would arrange this. **(iii)** The bus shelter repainting following the fire is still pending, Cllr D. Woodward suggested via email, EPC try to get a party of volunteers together. It was agreed by all this would need to be looked at once the weather improves. It was agreed the interior of the bus shelter needs to be painted with a weather shield paint which needs to be purchased. **(iv)** The Clerk, advised regarding the overgrowth at Greenlea around the sub-station, since the last meeting Affordable Landscapes have confirmed their price will remain the same of £450.00 plus VAT to completely remove all the vegetation / stones etc and treat with weed killer. Cllrs present discussed this and raised concern of what to do with the area cosmetically once it is clear. All Councillors present agreed unanimously this was to be reviewed after the new year. **(v)** Cllr R. Thompson advised since the last meeting the tree branch resting on the Parish Council storage shed has now been attended too and the issue has now been resolved.

11. **Finance:** Finance reports were supplied by the Clerk. The Statement of Financial transactions 30th September 2024 to 30th October 2024 tabled below:

RECEIPTS:	
NIL	0.00
TOTAL	0.00

PAYMENTS:	
Affordable Landscapes Ref inv K869 – Grass Cutting	445.20
Greatham Community Association – Rural Plan Meeting	20.00
M. Davies – Expenses, Microsoft & McAfee Subscription, gifts for xmas fayre	165.98
Bank Service Charge – September	5.40
M. Davies – Clerk Salary November 2024	419.10
TOTAL	1055.68

The Financial reports were unanimously approved. **(ii)** The Clerk advised Councillors of pending payments as listed below;

PAYMENTS PENDING – Awaiting approval	
Pear Technology Subscription – Nov 24 to Oct 25	132.00
Forvis Mazars – External Audit for financial year ending 31.03.24	252.00
TOTAL	384.00

Councillors present unanimously approved the payments awaiting approval and cheques were signed by Cllr R. Thompson and Cllr. B Irving. **(ii)** The Clerk presented all Councillors present, with an actual against budget report to date for the financial year 24 / 25. **(iii)** The Clerk advised the Parish Council received the Precept application documents for 2025/2026 on the 6th December and the documentation required completion and submission by the 6th January 2025. Due to the Council Tax base being reduced, Parish Councillors present unanimously agreed to limit the increase in precept to an absolute minimum of 1%. The Clerk is to contact HBC to confirm the increase and complete the required documentation prior to the 6th January 2025.

12. **Correspondence:** **(i)** The Clerk reminded Parish Councillors present of the email received from a resident regarding the A19 Slip road as per the Public Forum. **(ii)** The Clerk advised at the last Parish Council meeting it was queried if two Parish Councillors could share the representative role for the Adult and Community Based Services Committee. Angela Armstrong has confirmed after she has spoken to the director of the legal, governance and HR the role can be shared if that works for the Parish Council but only one Parish Councillor could represent at any one meeting. Administratively it would be clearer if one of them is nominated as the Parish Council Representative and the other as their substitute member. This would make no difference to their participation / status at the meeting but it would be clearer within the membership of the committee.

13. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:** **(i)** None

14. **Planning applications:** **(i) H/2024/0359 – Notification of a planning application.** Erection of a pitched roof over the existing annex: Location: The Old Mill, Trunk Road A19. Hartlepool. – After discussion amongst the Parish Councillors present, it was unanimously agreed that this application is to be reviewed further. Cllr H. Thompson and Cllr R. Thompson will review this and report back to the Parish Council. **(ii) H2020/0180 – Notification of a planning application.** Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic (solar) farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure, engineering works, access and landscaping. Location: High Barnes Farm, Coal Lane, Elwick. Hartlepool. TS27 3HD. – Parish Councillors present all expressed their continued support.

15. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC:** The Parish Council may at any point pass a resolution that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) the public and the press shall be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business if publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted e.g. Employment matters, terms of commercial tenders and negotiations for contracts for legal proceedings, preparation or advice.

Confidential Matters of Concerns of Councillors - Confidential matters only,

16. **Date of next meeting:** Monday 27th January 2024, 7pm at Elwick WI Hall.

Meeting concluded at 21:57pm.