**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 24th April 2023 at Elwick WI Hall**

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

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk, Karel Simpson (Police Volunteer Co-ordinator), M. Jackson, Dalton Piercy resident

1. **Public Forum:** No members of Elwick present. Mr. Jackson, from Dalton Piercy, stated he had 1,000 hedging whips in his back garden, which he was willing to donate to EPC if they are appropriate. If the PC would inform him of when they were required, he would dig them up the night before. The Chairman noted that the PC was working with the school on a project to plant a hedge in the Playing Field to create a walkway for dog-walkers, in which every child in the school would be given the opportunity to plant whips. Mr Jackson suggested that this would be best left until the autumn, however, he also had 12 orchard trees belonging to DPPC, which school children from Dalton could plant in The Batts Orchard, with permission from DPPC. Mr. Jackson was thanked for his offer, which would be taken into consideration. **Action:** Clerk to discuss with Head Teacher.

*Mr. Jackson left the meeting at 7.15pm.*

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs Aird and Hewitt and Ward Cllr Martin-Wells, PC Ben Hayes.
2. **Police Report:** Mr. Simpson explained his role was to gather information; as a volunteer he had no police powers. The Chairman informed him of the damage to the new gates on the Playing Field by youths with bicycles, which damage had already been reported to the police. The lady resident who had seen the youths, had sensibly not confronted them, but had identified them from CCTV coverage taken at the dairy a short while earlier – this could be made available to the police. Mr. Simpson asked if it would be possible to provide contact details for all parish councils in the Cleveland Police Constabulary area; the Clerk agreed to forward the Clerk details to PC Hayes and Mapplebeck.

The Chairman expressed appreciation for his attendance. **Action:** Clerk to forward Clerks’ details as requested.

*Mr Simpson left the meeting at 7.30pm*

1. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.
2. **Co-option of new Councillor:** The Clerk informed she had received two written applications. Following a brief discussion, it was **agreed** the Clerk should extend an invitation to each candidate to an informal meeting with the Personnel Committee, to be held at the Village Teashop, ideally before the May meeting. **Action**: Clerk to invite candidates to an informal meeting with members of Personnel Committee as agreed once the availability of members had been ascertained.
3. **Minutes of 27th March 2023:** Cllr R. Thomson proposed with Cllr H. Thompson seconding, the approval of the Minutes as an accurate record. The meeting then **resolved to accept**, and the Chairman signed the Minutes.
4. **Matters Arising:** (i) ***Community Power Act*** – still no progress on this. Cllr Woodward proposed this item be dropped from future agendas, as there was clearly no appetite for this at HBC. **Agreed unanimously.**

(ii) ***Village Green repair*** – The Chairman reported that the green had now been repaired, paid for personally by Mr. Cooper. Councillors expressed their appreciation.

(iii) ***Armed Forces Covenant*** – the Clerk informed that she had signed the Covenant on behalf of the parish Council, as requested.

(iv) ***Kiosk*** – Cllr R. Thompson noted that a deposit had now been paid on a K6 original kiosk, and it was hoped to have this in situ very soon.

(v) ***Clerk vacancy*** – Cllr R. Thompson noted that an advert for a Parish Clerk for Elwick had been placed in the local free paper, Hartlepool Life.

(vi) ***Elwick Park*** – Cllr Woodward noted that Duchy Homes were still advertising their development at Elwick Park as being in Elwick, and that Barret Homes were doing the same with their development at Elwick Gardens. Councillors were extremely annoyed that private companies were taking advantage of the taxpayers of Elwick parish, who paid a precept to keep the village looking so good. All **agreed** the Advertising Standards Association should be informed of this gross misrepresentation. **Action:** Clerk to write to the ASA.

(vii) ***Road works at High Tunstall*** – the Chairman expressed concern that the roadworks had still not been completed, and it was now over the 12 weeks these were supposed to take.

**7. Ward Councillors’ Report**: No report received this month, apparently due to purdah stopping HBC activity.

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

* Residents had contacted him with concerns about the by-pass being withdrawn; this information had been incorrect; if fact, now HBC Councillors had agreed to support a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of the land, a new application would shortly be submitted for full planning approval.
* HBC are still planning to close the access to the A19 southbound carriageway from Village Road, and the access to the A19 northbound carriageway from Coal Lane.
* His appreciation to Cllr Aird for working with Mr. Cooper to have the village green repaired.
* The damage at the Playing Field caused by 4 youths forcing the gates beyond the stops. He had managed to rectify the damage to both gats and had retrieved the rubbish bins and aluminium barriers from the beck where they had been thrown.
* He was still endeavouring to find the source of the bad smell which seems to come from the western side of the stream.
* Still no applications, or even expressions of interest, in the Clerk’s position.

Councillors agreed the smell was probably emanating from an overfull septic tank or cess pit whenever the residents(s) used their toilet, as it was spasmodic. Cllr Woodward **agreed** to ask all property holders on the western side of Village Road to check their systems, as none of them were on mains sewage. It was also **agreed** to have the By-pass as a standing item on future agendas. **Actions**: Cllr Woodward to speak to property holders on western side of Village Road about their sewage disposal systems; Clerk to put By-Pass update as a standing item on future agendas.

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

* the **Easter Egg Hunt** on Monday 10th April had gone ahead, despite the inclement weather. Sadly, some Eggs had been stolen so, in future, no real Easter Eggs would be put out. 33 children had taken part and thanks were expressed to Cllr Irving for hosting tea in Mr. McGregor’s Garden.
* **The Coronation Garden Party, *Sunday 7th May*** – the event was to start at 2.00pm.

Flyers had been circulated, the event promoted in Village Life and on the Elwick Village Facebook page – advertised for Elwick residents and their families only. The programme had been agreed and residents asked to bring their own picnic. Marquees will be erected on Saturday. Tea/coffee and a Coronation cake will be provided.

Councillors then discussed the Clerk’s suggestion that a small glass of ‘bubbly’ should be provided for the Loyal Toast, as we had the extra funding available from the Lottery. This was **agreed**, and the Cllrs Thompson agreed to investigate the best value options for providing up to 200 small glasses of ‘fizz’. It was then suggested that we invite one, or both, the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of Durham, living in the parish, to make the Toast and to cut the cake; this was **agreed**, and Cllr H. Thompson agreed to contact them immediately. It was also **agreed** that the Clerk should purchase 200 small Union Flag paper cups for the Toast, and that Cllr Woodward would check out the PA system before Friday.

Another meeting of the SAC was to be arranged in the week before the event to finalise plans**. Actions**: Cllr H. Thompson to contact Deputy Lord Lieutenants, the Cllrs. Thompson to investigate best value for the ‘Bubbly’ and purchase sufficient for 200 small servings; Cllr Woodward to test the PA system and the Clerk to order 200 small Union Flage paper cups.

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

**Tasks Completed:** Dislodged stone replaced.

**No other tasks had been completed.**

A resident’s concern about an uncut hedge opposite 12, North Lane to be forwarded to Kieran Bostock at HBC, as this is on HBC land.

**11. Trees**: The Clerk reported the best value for the pruning of the trees on Church Bank had come in at £3,500 plus VAT, but also required was the closure of the road whilst the work was being done, as the tree contractor would be hiring in a crane. HBC had agreed to make no charge for permission to close the road but required that a recognised traffic management company be used to liaise with National Highways and erect the necessary signage and barriers. She had contacted Sunbelt, the company used by HBC and they had, that day, given a verbal quote of £300, which was to be followed up in writing. Councillors **agreed** to accept the quotes and the Clerk requested to implement the works as soon as possible, to ensure the safety of residents and vehicular traffic. **Action**: Clerk to implement contracts.

**12. Financial Reports**: The Financial Reports were tabled; these included a Financial Transactions report and Actual against Budget report to 31st March and an Actual against Budget report from 1-24th April)

**Receipts: £**  **Payments: £**

Grantscape (Wildlife Garden Tools Project) 118.24 D. Woodward (deposit on Bouncy Castle) 90.00

National Lottery (Coronation grant) 500.00 I. Butler (Deposit on Kiosk) 2,500.00

HBC (Precept, Concurrent & LCTSS grant) 16,048.00

**Total: 16,666.24 Total: 2,590.00**

The Financial Reports were unanimously **approved.**

The Clerk raised concern that there appeared to be no concrete foundation in situ for the kiosk, this was confirmed by Cllrs Irving and H. Thompson. It was **agreed** to ask Affordable Landscapes to install a 4” thick base, with holes inserted for the bolts which would hold the kiosk in place. A plywood former would be needed to ensure the correct size, dimensions to be obtained from Mr. Butler.

**Actions:** Clerk to contract Affordable Landscapes and to obtain the exact dimensions of the kiosk.

**13. Annual Parish Meeting:** It was **resolved** to hold the Annual meeting of Electors on 24th May at the WI hall, with Wine & Cheese, Coffee & cake. Invitations to be sent to all village organisations, the police, rural Crime officers and Deputy Lord Lieutenants. Annual report of the Parish Council to be prepared. **Action:** Clerk to organise Annual Parish meeting, issue invitations etc.

**14. Training Opportunities:** Nonew training opportunities – Chairmanship and Civility & Respect training already mentioned previously.

**15. Correspondence**: (i) ***HBC Parish Charter*** – signed copy received; noted.

**16. Planning Applications:**

**H/2023/0071** – Old School House, Village Road, Elwick – resubmission of H/2020/0095 – only change seems to be the windows in the rear extension. After some discussion this was put to the vote with 3 in favour of acceptance and 1 abstention. Support.

**H/2023/0096 –** Land South of Elwick Road, High Tunstall**.** An application by Duchy Homes to vary condition 1 to allow for house type substitutions and associated amendments.

Councillors were unanimous in their continuing **strong objection** to this development, especially as it was being advertised as being in Elwick! It was felt that HBC, in allowing developers to promote their house sales in this way, should be asked why had we not been informed of the boundary change, and would we see the precept base increased next year?

**Action**: Clerk to write to HBC Managing Director expressing Councillors concerns.

**17. Matters of Concern to Councillors**: None raised.

**18. Date of next Meeting:** 7.00pm, Monday 22nd May 2023 at Elwick WI Hall.

**NB:** This will be the Annual PC meeting.

*Meeting closed 9.03pm.*