**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm Monday 29th January 2024 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs Woodward, R. Thompson, H. Thompson, Oliver, Hewitt, Irving and Aird (From 7:15pm)

**In Attendance:** M. Davies, Clerk, 1 resident

1. **Public Forum:** A resident requested the Parish Council undertake a consultation on the introduction of resident only parking, from Home Farm down to The Ghyll, as it was increasingly difficult for residents of those houses to park near their homes due to the number of vehicles being parked without consideration for those without drives or garages.

The resident left the meeting at 7.05pm

1. **Apologies:** PC Ben Hayes.
2. **Parish Council Clerk Appointment**: It was unanimously agreed to confirm the appointment of Marrieanne Davies to the position of Parish Clerk.
3. **Police Report:** PC Ben Hayes unable to attend, no report received.
4. **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held 11th December 2023**: The meeting resolved to accept the minutes as a true record and the meeting chair signed the minutes.
5. **Matters Arising:** **(i) Kiosk shelving complete:** it was confirmed shelving in the kiosk was complete. Photographs of the completed shelving, generator and battery purchase will be submitted by Cllr Woodward to Grantscape for the Red Gap Funding. It was advised some graffiti is present on the back of the kiosk, along with a piece of loose glass on the front door – Cllr Woodward advised he would look at the glass and removal of the graffiti if possible or alternatively purchase some colour matched paint to paint the kiosk. Cllrs H. Thompson and Irving advised they will be attending kiosk to clean it as it already full of books. Cllr Woodward suggested the kiosk be monitored for dampness. (ii) **Bypass update:** See Chairman’s report. (iii) **Playing field:** discussion took place on the possible scope and structure of a Volunteer group. Cllr Woodward advised he plans to hold a meeting with those who have shown an interest, with a view to the volunteers keeping an eye on the area, and reviewing what needs to be done on the site; this will need to be a Parish Council subcommittee, with Terms of Reference, and will need two parish councillors to be members. All Parish councillors **agreed** on a subcommittee, for a meeting to be held in the pub whereby at least two parish councillors would be in attendance and then report back to Parish Council.
6. **North Farm Development Proposal:** See Chairman’s report.

* **Ward Councillor’s report:** No Ward Councillor’s report received. Cllr Woodward had suggested a Ward surgery be held at Elwick WI hall. An item of concern was the Tees Flex service; last February a further 18 months’ of funding had been confirmed, which would last only until August 2024; capacity is being taken up by workers at Amazon, but the service is to facilitate workers in the area.

1. **Chairman’s report:**

* **Elwick Bypass Planning Application Approval:** Cllr Woodward was in attendance of the planning committee meeting of HBC ON Wednesday January 10th, whereby the application for the Elwick bypass was passed with only two councillors voting against. The application as covered is for the design of the bypass and grade separate junction. The Subsequent closure of Coal Lane exit and Church Bank will need to be handled via a separate process. HBC provided a proposal that they believe will allow access for larger vehicles, but these proposals do not fully address the concerns of the local businesses.
* **North Farm Development:** Residents had been alarmed by the appearance of a large sign advertising 46 Executive homes on the North Farm site “Coming soon”. After speaking with the agent, Cllr Woodward emailed the agent to request the immediate removal of the sign, along with details of the previously approved outline application, Rural Neighbourhood Plan and Village Design Statement. Also contacted HBC who were going to contact the agent through the Enforcement Team.
* **Playing Field and Play equipment:** There are signs of depredation to some of the older items of playing equipment at the playing field, which were highlighted in the 2023 Annual Inspection report. This has been discussed with Affordable Landscapes, various solutions were suggested: (a) The older part of the adventure trail will need replacing (we should look to Red Gap funding for this). (b) Some of the uprights also need replacing – we need to investigate how to do this. (c) A soft fall mat is needed inside the tower. (d) The wood surrounding the play area is degraded; Affordable Landscapes propose the removal of the debris and the laying of blocks in the ground to provide a better border between the new solid mulch and the grass, with sleepers at the back where the earth needs to be supported. (e) See-saw needs to be lowered. (f) We have two picnic benches waiting to be installed, Affordable Landscapes are aware and will install at the earliest opportunity. Other thoughts are, could we or should we replace the swing basket with normal swings that can be used by older children (8yrs to 14 years approx.) as no swings are available for them and should we look at something for Children / adults with additional needs?
* **Tree Works in Village following Tree Survey:** Affordable Landscapes have carried out the tree works as per the survey, for future reference we should have put in for planning prior to the work being carried out.
* **Path at Top of the Green:** After discussing the options a more cost effective way will be to use road planings, this will also result in neater, cleaner and more durable surface, this is also not a permanent surface unlike tarmac, the quote is approximately £1200 as opposed to £4000. Affordable Landscapes have advised due to the weather, work can commence quite quickly. Cllr Woodward proposed the works go ahead and all councillors agreed for the work to be carried out.
* **AED Cabinet:** Recommendations have been made that the AED Cabinet should be heated to maintain the condition of the battery, Cllr Woodward and Parish Clerk to look into this and investigate if there is any funding for this.
* **Memorial Benches within the Village:** We need to map out and understand which benches were donated, and in whose memory.
* **Flooding on road from the Village:** Since the gate was widened at North Farm, flooding on the road out of the village is currently bad or worse than it has ever been. It was a hazard with the ice and has been particularly bad with all the rain. HBC Traffic and drainage are looking into this matter.

1. **Social Activities Committee Report**:

* **Carols around the Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve:** The bus shelter was very nicely decorated with mulled wine and mince pies served at 5:30pm, which went down well with the crowd. Carols commenced at 6pm. Overall a very well supported evening. Unfortunately the PA system did not work for the event but it was discovered after the event another lead was required to connect to the speaker. Very few children came out to see Santa and Mrs Claus as they toured the village (perhaps because the miniature horses were not available this year) It was suggested that maybe we should invite Santa only to our next Christmas Fayre? Very generous donations were kindly received and collected for the Children’s Society.
* **The Children’s Christmas Party:** held on the 28th December. Due to the lack of uptake on tickets for this event it was very nearly cancelled but after a flyer was distributed around the school, interest did improve and 39 children attended the event. The Children’s entertainer was excellent and caught the children’s attention straight away. Unfortunately a lot of food was wasted again, so next year we may need to change the format with platters of finger foods instead of the traditional party tea. Santa (Sacha Bedding) was in attendance and Elizabeth Lavelle, our elf assisted him with giving out selection boxes. The PA System was in working order and a great asset for the event and helped with the party organisation.
* **Future events to note:** Easter Egg Hunt – Easter Monday 1st April 2024 and the Gig on the Green/Fete – Saturday 7th September 2024. Cllr D Woodward proposed we approach the pubs within the village for their input relating to the Gig on the Green. It was also proposed by Cllr D Woodward the Gig is scheduled for approximately May. Other suggested events proposed included: Teddy Bears’ picnic, play in the WI hall, cinema night, Big BBQ (bring your own food and drinks) Game of football formed by 2x teams in the village. Cllr Aird advised he would look into possible acts, via Hartlepool College etc for an open mic night.

1. **Village Maintenance Group Report:**

* **Tasks Completed:** Several trees on the green and Church bank have been trimmed (Also see Chairman’s report).
* **Tasks Awaiting:** (i) Path at the East end of the Village to be resurfaced– See Chairman’s report. (ii) Fencing down to the Ghyll is still down, dangerous and needs to be removed, also ramp over the stream. (iii) Playing field, See chairman’s report. (iv) Wildlife Garden~~s~~, the school is planning to take over the maintenance as a project for the children. (v) Pavements, on the corner of the green and North Lane are in a bad state of repair. (vi) Bollard, next to the forge needs to be removed – it was noted that the bollard had been removed 29.01.24, this is to be confirmed. (vii) Shelving in the Kiosk, shelving is required for the jigsaws. (viii) Litter, large amounts of litter around the village, particularly at the bottom of the church steps, possibly start a regular Litter Picks again. It was agreed by all councillors to reinstate the litter picks, renamed “Village Tidy up”, the first one to be carried out on Saturday 17th February then 1st Saturday of each month. Clerk to contact Veolia to establish if they could assist in the removal of waste collected. Cllr Hewitt to advertise via the Village Social media page. Young Farmers to be asked if they can assist in the painting of tubs and stones on the village green.

1. **Finance:** Finance reports supplied by Cllr R. Thompson. The Statement of Financial transactions 31st October 23 to 28th January 2024 tabled below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | PAYMENTS £ |
| A Oliver – Kiosk plywood & playing field rope | 50.15 |
| Hart Industrial Tools – Honda 7KW Generator | 4474.80 |
| D A Woodward – Dell Laptop for Clerk | 765.36 |
| R J Thompson – Jackery Solar Generator, case and cables | 2760.99 |
| D A Woodward – HP Printer for Clerk | 134.39 |
| Affordable Landscapes – Grass Cutting | 1713.60 |
|  |  |
| **TOTAL** | **9899.29** |

Cllr R. Thompson advised the payments for the Generator and Battery are to be claimed back as per the Red Gap funding. The Financial reports were unanimously approved.

13. **Budget:** Cllr R. Thompson, presented the Budget summary. It was advised that he was awaiting the bank statements for January and W.I invoices were potentially running behind. Wayleaves are to be looked into and reminders sent when due to residents concerned. Budget summary, the precept is not increasing as last year she precept increase was 4% but due to an error within HBC it was increased by 10%, hence the reason for no increase this year. The documents have been submitted to HBC and they have acknowledged receipt.

14. **Correspondence:**

(a) Correspondence received from former Parish Clerk advising outstanding issues since retirement of in June 2023 – Cllr R. Thompson and Clerk to action. (b) Email regarding “Request to support a key research Project on Vaccine Confidence in TeesValley – Information to be put on Noticeboard, website, and in W.I Hall. Clerk to action. (c) Walk and Talk, Community Encouragement Trust – to promote the benefits of walking and the mental health of those in surrounding areas. Cllr Woodward had already replied and invited the Trust to attend the next Parish Council meeting in February; he advised they had accepted the invitation.

15. **Planning applications:** The Planning application for erection of Solar Forecourt on the A179 to Hartlepool, near the A19 (not within Elwick Parish) – All councillors in agreement to align response with the Rural Plan.

16. **Matters of concern:**

(i) Parking issues for resident on the Green; following various feedback, Cllr Woodward to call a meeting for residents. (ii) Private Parking on Green – Residents need reminding this is a public road and not to be blocked by private parking – investigation required to establish status of roads. (iii) White pick up vehicle parked outside the Spotted Cow, this has been unoccupied or moved since before early November, the vehicle is Taxed and insured. (iv) Martindale House – Hartlepool Borough Council to check enforcement on higher tax. (v) Generator and Power bank; both need to be added onto the insurance. Should it be required, now we have this resource of this equipment, should a contingency plan be put in place, possibly to power the W.I Hall, in the event of power failure within the village due to storms etc, this would enable people to keep warm, need to raise prospect with W.I, Spotted Cow, McCorville, Coopers of Elwick Tea Rooms. Also look into possible storage of Jerry Cans to fuel the equipment in the event of an emergency. (vi) Gig on the Green – Look into the possibility of GT Silver band to attend (Cllr Thompson). (vii) Parish Liaison meeting 5th February 2024 – Cllr Woodward advised he would be unable to attend, Cllr R. Thompson to attend.

17. **Date of next meeting:** Monday 26th February 2024, 7pm at Elwick WI Hall.

Meeting concluded at 9:29pm.