

ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held Monday 29th July 2024, 7pm at

Elwick WI Hall

Present: Cllrs D. Woodward, H. Thompson, A. Oliver, R. Thompson, B. Irving, A. Aird.

In Attendance: Clerk, One Resident.

Cllr H. Thompson and Cllr R. Thompson both advised everyone present they declared interested in a planning application to be tabled later in the meeting. The Clerk advised the agenda had been amended to accommodate this and therefore planning application ref H/2024/0146 would be discussed at the end of the meeting once Cllr H. Thompson and Cllr. R. Thompson had left the meeting.

1. **The Public Forum:** A resident asked the Parish Council if there was any update on the resident parking. Cllr D. Woodward advised the Parish Council are now in possession of resident parking signs. The Parish Council still need to establish locations to display them, potential locations ideas were discussed including the flower tubs on the Village Green, or if the Parish Council approach the dairy to see if one could be put on the end of their building as the signs cannot be attached to the street lights. All councillors agreed to get the signs displayed as soon as possible on the flower beds already situated on the Village Green. Councillors also discussed residents need to use driveways, garages where possible and other residents and visitors to the Village need to be mindful not to park across driveways or property entrances blocking access.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr G. Hewitt, Cllr Andrew-Martin Wells..
3. **Police Report:** No police report received.
4. **Minutes of 27th June Meeting:** Approval of the Minutes as an accurate record, was proposed by Cllr D. Woodward, with Cllr H. Thompson seconding. The meeting then resolved to accept the minutes, and the Chairman signed the Minutes.
5. **Matters Arising: (i) Parish Liaison Meeting held 24.07.24:** Cllr R. Thompson confirmed he attended the Parish Liaison meeting held on the 24th July 2024 at Hartlepool Civic Centre along with the Chair persons from neighbouring Parishes. The meeting was led by Brenda Harrison, Leader HBC, who was very welcoming, open and keen to work with the Parish Councils. During the meeting the focus was on strategic issues including: speeding, fly tipping, antisocial behaviour and rural crime and he had given an example of the recent anti-social behaviour within the Village. The meeting briefly touched on services the Parishes may be able to assist HBC on as part of the concurrent. The industrialising of Hart Village was also discussed. A update for the bypass was provided by Denise McGuckin (MD of HBC). HBC is currently negotiating with nine land owners, if all landowners are in agreement work could start in 2026, if compulsory purchase is required it may take up to three years before work commences. The funding for the bypass is being provided by the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the developers. Speeding on the Sheraton flyover and on the A179 road was discussed, however councillors advised their concern was more the stationary traffic on this road along with the traffic lights and lack of signage, the Councillors were informed the traffic lights on this road system were the responsibility of Durham County Council, Denis McGuckin is to contact The Highway agency regarding the lack of signage as this falls under their remit. A representative from Wynyard Hartlepool Parish Council was present who discussed a bus service provided by TVCA they currently have in running every half an hour from Wynyard Hartlepool into Billingham and Norton, they are looking into expanding

this service to run into Sedgefield and Hartlepool. As part of the Parish Charter the Parish Councillors present asked if a full list of staff within HBC and contact details could be made available, it was advised in the first instance, Parish Councils should approach directors or assistant directors and if unsuccessful matters to be escalated to Denise McGuckin. The lack of attendance from ward Councillors at Parish Council meeting was also brought up. Brenda Harrison was keen to encourage the attendance of a representative from the Parish Councils to attend the HBC Committee meetings, the five strategic committees are; Finance Services, Children's Services, Adult Services, Regeneration and Growth (planning) and Neighbourhood Services. It was also advised the constitution minutes will be published and provided before the next Parish Liaison meeting. Overall Cllr R. Thompson found the meeting informative and very promising for the Parish Councils. It was noted that the Clerk for Wynyard Hartlepool Parish Council was present for the second time even though, previously Clerks have been barred from attending these meetings. Cllr D. Woodward to query whether all Clerks are now allowed to attend these meetings. **(ii) Red Gap potential idea's for future submission:** Councillors discussed that ideas are required by the closing date of the 6th November 2024, £36,000 is unallocated. Cllr. D. Woodward suggested potential playing equipment for the James Greives Memorial Playing field, as some of the equipment is nearing the end of its lifespan and needs removing and replacing. The Playing Field Committee have a meeting on the 30th July 2024 where they are to discuss this further and report back to the Parish Council. Another suggestion made by Cllr D. Woodward was a more efficient heating source for the W.I Hall, this would not only support the W.I but it would also benefit the community with a more economic building within the Village. Cllr D. Woodward is to identify possible heating options and approach the W.I to see if this is something they may like to consider. Cllr H. Thompson suggested a replacement bench for the one outside the W.I hall which is now beyond repair. Cllr. A. Oliver advised he would continue to look into a sign for the village that would echo the Parish notice board on the Village Green, whilst depicting the age of the Village, possibly referring to Robert The Bruce and how he gifted the Village to his niece. Cllr D. Woodward brought to the Councillors attention recently residents have reported Children knocking on doors, running away and disturbing residents, as a result of this, a resident in the Village has offered to look into setting up a youth club. Cllr D. Woodward suggested the Red Gap funding may be able to help fund a Village Youth Club, which could be ran and organised by volunteers in the Village. **(iii) Enviromena potential idea's for funding:** The Clerk advised as per the last Parish Council Meeting, Lee Adams from Enviromea was looking to attend this evening meeting. Prior to the agenda being produced he sent his apologies and asked he could reschedule and attend the Parish Council meeting to be held in September as the planning submitted to HBC has not been validated to date. He asked if Councillors could during this period could continue to think and discuss potential projects Enviromea could fund within the Village. Cllr D. Woodward suggested money was required to regenerate the playing field and may be money could be ringfenced for the Playing field and its equipment along with improved security for the playing field. Councillors were all asked to think of potential idea's ready to discuss with Lee when he attends the next meeting.

6. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr D. Woodward discussed the recent arson attack on the Village bus shelter on the Village Green. Cllr D. Woodward met with a Police Constable who was provided with the video and photographs of the individuals who are suspected of being responsible for the incident. The suspected individuals involved have been identified and this information is potentially going to be passed by the police to their school for the matter to be looked into. All the Councillors expressed their thanks to the individuals in the Spotted Cow on the evening of the incident who assisted and dealt with the fire promptly and prevented the incident from being potentially worse. Cllr R. Thompson suggested the Parish Council speak with the Spotted Cow to reimburse them the cost of the fire extinguisher used on the night, Cllr D. Woodward advised he would speak to them regarding this. Cllr D. Woodward advised on the evening of the arson attack

he did speak to the Spotted Cow and asked them to provide the people who assisted with the fire a couple of drinks. Thanks were also expressed to Julian Fawcett who the following day began work to restore and repair the bush shelter bench. The bus shelter now does require painting to repair the damaged paint work. It was suggested the original paint was purchased from Charles Dickens in the past when it has been painted. (ii) Residents have been discussing in the Village the idea of setting up a youth club within the village, as a couple of local children have been reported to be disturbing residents knocking on doors and running away, the Chair suggested this maybe something the Parish Council may want to think about supporting the residents / community with. The Clerk advised after speaking to the Parish Council insurance provider this is something we may be able to consider as it has been advised the Parish Council could run a club which provides activities for the children including crafts, table tennis with a film in the background etc. We would however require volunteers with DBS checks, first aiders. We would also need to look into the rent costs for the W.I hall to accommodate the club. (iii) Cllr. D. Woodward asked to note there seems to be an increase in number of vehicle incidents on Worset Lane, with speeding and collisions. The passing places still appear to be in a bad state of repair. Cllr. H. Thompson advised that she would speak to Cllr. John Littlefair from Hart Parish Council as he is looking into the passing points. (iv) It has been noted that residents/visitors to the Village are having barbeques on the Village Playing Field, all councillors agreed this needs to be monitored and the Parish Council may need to look into a sign to deter fires on the playing field. (v) Cllr D.Woodward suggested to the Parish Council, we look into installing a bench if possible made from a sleeper which could be set into the embankment half way up Church Bank, to allow people to stop and rest, all councillors agreed this was something to look into.

7. **Ward Councillor's Report:** No Report Received. Cllr. Andrew Martin Wells did email the Clerk and Cllr D.Woodward prior to the Parish Council meeting to ask if there was any issues the Parish Council would like him to look into and address. The Parish Councillors all discussed and asked the Clerk to contact the Ward Councillors to see if any of them would be available to attend one of the Cuppa and Cake events held in the Elwick W.I hall on a Tuesday afternoon, to speak to residents, as Cuppa and Cake is one of the Villages successful community events well supported by the Village residents, this may give residents the opportunity to express any concerns or issues in person to our Ward Councillors.
8. **Playing Equipment and Playing Field Equipment Committee Report:** (i) Cllr D Woodward advised Parish Councillors there had been no further meetings held by the Playing Equipment and Playing Field Committee since their last meeting on the 11th June 2024, the next scheduled meeting is to be held on 30th July 2024 at 6pm at the James Greives Memorial Playing Field. Following on from the last meeting the committee had they are in the process of forming new ideas and are hoping to consult children and families within the Village to create a Playing field with equipment which suits the needs/requirements of the Village.
9. **Social Activities Committee Report:** (i) The Scarecrow competition was successful judged by MP Jonathan Brash with 11 entries in total, a slight improvement from previous years. 1st Prize was awarded to Emily Potts – Heading for Home. 2nd Prize to Sophie, Scarlett and Sebastian Lavelle – Amazing Archer and Race Ready, 3rd Prize to Elizabeth, Abigail, Sydney and William Lavelle – Taking the plunge. The Committee have raised concerns regarding the storage of straw in the bus shelter for future competitions and Cllr R. Thompson advised he would arrange for the removal of the straw that was left from the Green as soon as possible. The Committee have also agreed that the scarecrow competitions are only to be held in future if they are running alongside another event within the village. (ii) The Elwick Family Olympics Event - Unfortunately the event was postponed from the 14th July due to bad weather and rearranged for the 21st July.

On 17th July, as the weather forecast for the 21st July was also not looking very good, and with the accumulation of other factors including both Jonathan Brash MP and Rising Stars not being available, the Ice Cream Van not being able to attend along with a reduction in the number of volunteers available on the day, it was agreed the event be cancelled. Cllr B. Irving suggested we consider turning next year's Easter Event into a Family Fun day / sports event where Children are awarded an egg instead of medals. (iii) The raffle is still being held and tickets are still available to purchase from The Coppers of Elwick Shop and The Spotted Cow, the raffle will now be drawn on Saturday 7th September during the Gig on The Green event. (iv) Focus is now on The Gig on The Green Event to be held on Saturday 7th September from 2pm which is currently in planning with two bands in attendance, craft stalls, craft for Children, bouncy castle, tombola, raffle and Ice Cream Van. The Committee will not be providing refreshments for this event. (v) Events which are to be looked into after the Gig on The Green are; a Christmas event, popcorn nights and an amateur dramatics group. Cllr D.Woodward asked if the committee would add to the agenda for the next meeting the possibility of a Halloween party.

10. **Village Maintenance Group Report:** (i) Cllr A. Oliver advised nothing to report. (ii) The Clerk advised correspondence had been received from Hartlepool Borough Council to advise the road sweeper has not attended the Village due to staff sickness and holidays, staff permitting the road sweeper will hopefully be back in the Village mid to late August. (iii) Cllr B. Irving raised concern about the chicane by the school, due to overgrown trees and vegetation the road sign is not visible. The Clerk advised she would contact the school via email (although they are on holiday) to see if someone was monitoring the emails and also contact Hartlepool Borough Council. (iv) Cllr H.Thompson brought to the attention of the Parish Council the drain opposite the bus shelter has vegetation growing out of it and is clearly blocked. The clerk advised she would contact Hartlepool Borough council. (v) Cllr D.Woodward advised the road on Church bank was closed for BT Openreach whilst they carried out work, workers confirmed to Cllr D.Woodward they were unsuccessful in the scheduled work as the routes they required for the cables etc were blocked. (vi) The bottom part of the drain pipe on the substation on Greenlea is broken, Cllr A. Oliver advised he would have a look at it. (vii) The bench outside the W.I hall is no longer in a state of repair, councillors discussed there is another carved bench in storage we may be able to use as a replacement. Cllr H. Thompson reminded councillors the bench is a memorial bench, so the plaque will need to be removed and reinstated onto the replacement bench. (vi) Cllr D.Woodward advised the Councillors he has now set up a Maintenance Whatsapp group for the Parish Councillors, this is to enable Councillors to take photographs of any damage or issues within the Village etc and share it with the other members of the Parish Council.

11. **Finance:** Finance reports supplied by Clerk. The Statement of Financial transactions 24th 2024 to 26th June 2024 tabled below:

RECEIPTS:	
Nil	0.00
TOTAL	0.00

PAYMENTS:	
M Davies Expenses – Amazon Barrier Mesh for Fun day	27.99
M Davies Clerks Salary – June 2024	419.10
M Davies Expenses – Paper & Parking	11.20
TOTAL	458.29

The Financial reports were unanimously approved.

Cllr R. Thompson requested for the next Parish Council meeting, Councillors are to be presented with a actual against budget report. The Clerk advised this would be prepared for the next meeting. The Clerk listed (as tabled below) all the invoices/payments pending payment, all councillors approved. Cheques were signed by Cllr D.Woodward and Cllr H. Thompson.

Cheques / payments to be approved

PAYMENTS:	
Affordable Landscapes Ref invoice K515 – Grass cutting	890.40
Wm Fortune & Son – Internal audit	96.00
Julian Fawcett – Repairs to bus shelter bench Labour and Materials	77.63
P S Lavelle Joinery Services – Replacement Key for Comp Cab, Replacement locks supplied and fitted with keys for Parish notice board	45.00
M Davies – Internet and Phone reimbursement 1 st Feb – 31 st July	120.00
M Davies – Clerks Salary July 2024	419.10
Spanglefish Internet Hosting and Domain	108.00
TOTAL	1756.13

The Clerk also advised that she is still trying to contact HMRC regarding the 2022/2023 VAT reclaim which does not appear to have been credited to the Parish Council bank account last year after it was claimed.

The Clerk is to also chase up with Unity Trust, the change of address form the previous Clerk, as bank statements are still going to the wrong address despite the forms and required documentation being completed and returned to the bank.

12. **Correspondence: (i)** The Clerk advised as per the Parish Council Meeting on the 27th June 2024, she had contacted Mr T Atkinson of Wm Fortune & Son to enquire if there was a report to be received as part of the internal audit. Mr Atkinson confirmed there was no additional report to be received as his answers to the questions as part of the external auditors report was his report. The answers he provided are to confirm he carried out certain work and give assurances.
13. **Matters of concern: (i)** Cllr B. Irving advised the Big Village Clean up morning had not taken place for a little while now and suggested a date be proposed for the next clean up. All Councillors present agreed the next clean up event would be Saturday 3rd August at 10am, everyone agreed the volunteers are to focus on the overgrown shrub on the green and the cobbles in the same area for this clean up. **(ii)** Cllr A. Aird raised concern over the fences, which are down in the Ghyll. It was agreed by all the fence needs removing completely and not to be replaced as it potentially will be knocked down by the horses down there, Cllr D.Woodward advised he would contact Chris Scafe to ask if the fence can be removed. **(iii)** Cllr A. Aird also advised there appears to be a lot of broken glass down in the Ghyll which could be a concern for wildlife and animals.

Planning applications: (i) Reference H/2024/0071 – Notification of a planning application: Proposed replacement of existing timber windows to the front elevation with PVCu windows and respective replacement boundary wall to the front. Location: 26 The Green, Elwick, Hartlepool. TS2 73EF.

All Parish Councillors discussed and agreed the Parish Council objects in principle to retrospective planning applications, particularly as this is a conservation area and it is widely known that planning permission is required. The Parish Council has no objection to the replacement of existing timber windows with UPVC, providing these are in keeping with the style of the building. However, based on the feedback and complaints communicated to Parish Councillors from residents within the Village, "the PC has to reflect the strong objections that have been aired " in regards to the replacement boundary wall which is not only higher than the original wall which it replaced but has been built in a style that is not in keeping with either the house or the Village/Conservation area.

Cllr R. Thompson and Cllr H. Thompson both left the meeting at 21:31 prior to Councillors discussing the next item.

(ii) Reference H/2024/0146 – Notification of a planning application: Restoration of Iron railings to front, installation of new steel gates (removal of existing gates), removal of concrete steps to front door and installation of new stone steps (proposed). Erection of double garage, erection of log store with slate roof and new nursery garden with greenhouse and planting areas (retrospective). **Location:** Holmlea, 14 The Green, Elwick, Hartlepool. TS27 3ED. All Parish Councillors discussed and agreed, the Parish Council objects in principle to retrospective planning applications, particularly as this is a conservation area and it is widely known that planning permission is required. There is some local anger with the development of the garage on the land that requires a higher level of consideration as this is covered by Article 4. As a Parish Council all councillors agreed they do support the remainder of the application in particular the restoration of the railings to the front of this listed building which would bring back the original appearance and the repositioning of the gate further up the drive as this will improve access and remove the need to park on the Village Green.

17. Date of next meeting: 30th September 2024, 7pm at Elwick W.I Hall

Meeting concluded at 9:39 pm