

## ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm Monday 31st March 2025 at Elwick WI Hall

**Present:** Cllrs D. Woodward, R. Thompson, H. Thompson, Irving, Oliver, Hewitt.

**In Attendance:** M. Davies - Clerk, Mrs Wilson – Head Teacher at St Peters School, 2 resident.

1. **Public Forum:** A resident asked about the ongoing concerns regarding the slip road from the A19 onto North Lane. The Councillors explained the safety concerns raised by residents regarding the vehicles, especially HGV's that had reportedly been using the farm entrance located on the slip road in an unsafe manner, due to them exiting the site on occasions by driving over the public footpath and not observing other motorists using the slip road and the exiting slip road which comes out of North Lane onto the A19. The Parish Council reported resident's concerns to Auto Link. Auto Link visited the property but cannot assist further currently. Residents are asked to report any unsafe activity going forward. The resident advised he was more than happy to assist the Parish Council should any future issues be raised by residents or other motorists, if they could contact him in the first instance to try and resolve any issues in a timely manner. The resident explained this was an agricultural access for the farm when the access via The Paddock is not suitable. Measures are now in place to prevent HGV's from being parked near the gate, as the gate is open prior to the vehicles arriving. There is potential scope of a new access point once the bypass is in place.

*One Resident Left the meeting at 19:07*

Another resident advised there is not sufficient "Resident Parking Signs" along The Green. Cllr D. Woodward acknowledged this and advised the Parish Council will be looking into additional signage in the near future.

2. **Declarations of interest:** None to record.
3. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Aird.
4. **Police Report:** No Report Received
5. **St Peters Primary School:** Following the Parish Council Meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February Mrs Wilson (Head Teacher) from St Peters Primary School thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to discuss potential ideas for future Section 106 Monies. Whilst St Peters School acknowledges its lack in parking facilities this is not a viable idea for potential Section 106 Monies with the limited land available to facilitate a car parking area. The School is very keen and passionate about creating a safe outdoor learning facility to enhance pupils independence and encourage the students to build a resilience, through the benefits outdoor learning can provide. The idea of a forest school / outdoor class room would encourage pupils to spend more time outside and promote wellbeing. Currently every available space within the school is in use. To start the funding on a project of this nature approximately £15000 would be required. Any potential funding for the project would be ringfenced for the projects development. Mrs Wilson advised whilst the School is part of the Northern Lights Trust, St Peters maintains its own reserves and funds its own projects. A facility of this nature would also enable the school to enhance its marketability to potential new families / pupils coming into the Village or those who are already residents in the Village. Cllrs present all agreed this is a project the Parish Council would like to support St Peters School with. Cllr D. Woodward asked to Mrs Wilson if the School would be interested in involvement with future events etc to potentially support the school, Mrs Wilson advised this was something the school would be interested in going forward.

*Mrs Wilson left the meeting at 19:34*

6. **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025:** Approval of the Minutes as an accurate record, was proposed by Cllr R. Thompson, with Cllr Irving seconding. The meeting then resolved to accept the minutes, and the Chairman signed the Minutes.
7. **Matters Arising:** (i) **Section 106 Monies:** Please refer to point 5. St Peters School. Councillors also discussed on of the elements within the Section 106 Monies is "Coaching within Schools" this could be Tennis, Judo or Netball etc. Councillors also discussed the requirement for more accessible equipment within the playing field. Cllr D. Woodward asked Councillors to keep thinking of potential ideas to discuss at future meetings. (ii) **Emergency Planning:** The Clerk asked following the recent power cut which affected the Village, would the Parish Council consider putting an emergency plan in place. Cllrs agreed the Clerk is to contact the Emergency planning team to see if they would be available to attend a future Parish Council meeting or the Annual Parish meeting to establish an emergency plan within the community. (iii) **Red Gap Funding – Potential Idea's:** The Clerk advised the closing date for Red Gap funding is 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025. Cllr D. Woodward advised he would speak to the W.I to see if they would be open to the Parish Council assisting them in looking into a new heating source for the W.I Hall. Cllr D. Woodward also suggested it may be advantageous to look into an additional defibrillator within the Village in the North Lane area, near the Church or in the Manor Close area. The Clerk advised she would inform the Playing Field Committee as funding is required to replace the pieces of equipment which are coming to the end of their life. (iv) **Annual Parish Meeting – Date to be confirmed:** Councillors all agreed the

8. **Chairman's Report:** (i) Cllr D. Woodward advised he has been keeping an eye on the planning application details for North Farm on HBC website and a number of objections have been raised from residents. It also appears there are objections or reservations from Heritage and Open Spaces regarding the retention of some of the existing building and from HBC Engineering Consultancy regarding the water management planning and the groundwater levels. The response from Traffic and Transport is disappointing in that it fails to refer in any way to the site entry and exit. National Highways formally recommends adding the condition that the house's should not be occupied until the bypass and junction with the A19 is completed. Cllr Woodward has raised the matter of lack of recommendations of proper consultation on applications such as North Lane by HBC to the agenda for the upcoming Parish Liaison Meeting in April. Cllr Woodward feels it is important to engage constructively with Lovell Homes to shape the development to meet the needs of the village and be sympathetic to the area. (ii) Cllr Woodward advised he had spent some time with John Pearson of Affordable Landscapes whilst they were completing the play field works. The removal of the wooden surround make the space much more accessible, and the extra two benches are also welcome. Cllr D Woodward suggested for the next round of improvements the Playing Field Committee and Parish Council should look at the possibility of additional swings to accommodate younger, older and those with additional needs i.e. full support swings. (iii) Cllr Woodward reminded everyone present that we will not be having elections for the Parish Councils this year, but elections are scheduled to take place in 2026. Cllr Woodward advised it important the Parish Council look to attract people who will be interested in taking part in activities and possibly standing next year. He would like us to remain open to people joining committees and groups and welcoming new ideas for the Parish Council.
9. **Ward Councillor's report:** No report received.
10. **Playing Field Committee Report:** The Clerk advised the playing field committee have not held any meeting since the last Parish Council meeting. Regarding the successful funding bid for two pieces of adventure trail, the Clerk submitted the required documentation to Grantscape and approval for the works to proceed had been granted with a deadline of works to be completed in May 2025. The Children from St Peters originally selected two pieces of equipment, however due to a change in ROSPA regulations, the play equipment company have advised one of the pieces is not suitable and have supplied three alternative pieces. The Playing Field committee have contacted the Junior Leadership Team to select one of the alternative pieces. Once the children have made their selection work will commence as soon as possible.
11. **Social Activities Committee Report:** (i) The Chair, Minna Ireland advised since the last Parish Council meeting the SAC last held a meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> March. The Annual Easter Egg hunt will take place on Easter Monday (21.04.25) between 2pm & 4pm and will be based in the W.I Hall. Tickets are priced at £1 each and this will include free entry into the raffle as well as a easter treat for each child. Children will be allocated a numbered egg to search for around the Village Green, which when returned to the hall, will be exchanged for a chocolate Easter egg. On the day Crafts will be available, along with refreshments for children and accompanying adults. It is hoped a couple of Bantam hens maybe available for a name the chicken competition. (ii) VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Celebrations, committee members have agreed this will take place on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 rather than over the previous Bank Holiday Weekend. It is planned for the Cuppa and Cake that week be rescheduled to the Thursday, so the event will start at 2pm and will end with the lighting of the beacon at 9:30pm in accordance with the national event. The committee are inviting residents and others in the town who have photographs or other memorabilia of the time, to lend them to us to display in the W.I hall. St Peters School will be asking each child to make a triangular pendant to create bunting, their artist in residence will be working with their Art Club members to create items to commemorate the event for display in the W.I Hall. Residents will be invited to bring a picnic to the Village Green at 5pm and dress appropriately for the period. Bob Dunkley has kindly agreed to bring his American WWII military vehicles for 5:30pm. It is also hoped for a singalong of war time songs. Other activities maybe added. (iii) The new PC cupboard has now been installed in the W.I Hall. (iv) The next SAC Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at Rudby House. (v) Cllr Woodward advised the film licence will be expiring in April 2026, it was unanimously agreed the licence is to be renewed in April.  
*One Resident left the meeting at 20:38*
12. **Village Maintenance Group Report:** (i) No report received (ii) **Bus Shelter repairs:** Cllr R. Thompson advised he is still to purchase a suitable paint but will source this as soon as possible. (iii) **Village Green Grass / ground damage following unauthorised bonfire:** The Clerk advised John Pearson had confirmed someone has spread grass seed on the burnt area, unfortunately a lot of the debris still remains and due to the significant damage this area of the green needs to be re-turfed. Cllr A. Oliver advised he has been unable to speak to the Landlords of the pubs and due to Cllr A. Airds absence this evening it is not confirmed if he has spoken to the shop. The Clerk is to obtain a quote from Affordable Landscapes and draft a letter to the pubs and shop advising of the damage, cost and ask for a resolution to cover the cost. Going forward the Clerk is to draft a letter to be sent out to the pubs and shop in September 2026 advising bonfires are not permitted on the Village Green and therefore those responsible will be required to rectify any damage in a timely manner in the future. (iv) **Embankment on North Lane:** The Clerk advised following a discussion with John Pearson from Affordable Landscapes only one of the sleepers at the base of the embankment is beyond repair, his recommendation is to replace the one sleeper. It was unanimously agreed the Clerk is to contact Affordable Landscapes and arrange for this work to be carried out as soon as possible.

13. **Finance:** Finance reports were supplied by the Clerk. The Statement of Financial transactions 1st February 2025 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 tabled below:

<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Grantscape – Dog walk funding	2550.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2550.00</b>

<b>PAYMENTS:</b>	
M Davies – February 25 Salary	419.10
M Davies Reimburse – Seeds & trays & printer paper	59.45
M Davies Reimburse – <del>Netwise</del> (.gov emails) & Craigs timber	310.40
Bank Service Charge - January	6.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>794.95</b>

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

<b>PAYMENTS PENDING – Awaiting approval</b>	
Elwick W.I Hall – Hire Charges September – March 25	120.00
D. Woodward Reimburse – Printer Subscription charges Jan – March 25	35.97
Affordable Landscapes – Greenlea work, Remove Play Equipment, Playing field works	5736.00
M. Davies – Reimburse Materials for planters and Internet / Phone Feb & March	68.70
M. Davies – Clerk Salary March 2025	419.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6379.77</b>

Councillors present unanimously approved the payments awaiting approval. The Clerk also presented Councillors with an actual against budget report and advised the Parish Council is waiting for one invoice to come in. Once this invoice is received work can commence to complete the year end for 2024/2025 and the accounts can be submitted to the previously agreed internal auditor – Mr Tom Atkinson of WM Fortune and Sons.

14. **Correspondence:** (i) The Clerk advised, as recent work commenced on Greenlea, a concerned resident emailed over concerns of potential wildlife in the area especially potential hibernating wildlife and whether a nature impact assessment had been carried out. The Clerk advised during the works John Pearson From Affordable Landscapes had spoken with the resident and believed he had addressed any concerns. The Clerk emailed the resident back to assure them, this project within the Village was not initiated for the aesthetics of the Village, although the aesthetics had to be taken into consideration. The issue regarding overgrowth in this area has been on the agenda for numerous months following residents and motorist increasing concern of the lack of visibility the vegetation has caused. Safety being our main concern, as this area of the village is used by a large number of pedestrians especially children being on the main school route. This area in years gone by was planted and maintained by residents of the village and unfortunately in recent years this area has not been attended by the small group of dedicated volunteers, we always welcome new volunteers. Therefore the Parish Council along with volunteers have had many attempts to try and control the overgrowth, however these have proved ineffective and we still had a safety concern. The Parish Council discussed the concerns and instructed three qualified landscapers to assess and provide recommendations to resolve resident's concerns to reduce the risk of any incidents etc. During the contractors visual survey of the area as two of the contractors had multiple visits to the site, had any one of these contractors suggested further investigations were required, during the months in 2024 and 2025 when this was under discussion by the Parish Council relevant action based on the professionals advice would have been taken. The work was carried out sensitively by professional landscape contractors, who were aware work was to cease immediately if any protective species were found. They would also act accordingly should any unprotected species be found hibernating in the vicinity. The Parish Council were keen to carry out the work at a time to have minimal impact on any resident fauna. We have upcoming projects and again we will welcome any new volunteers that may be able to help as we encourage village resident's input and participation. We are in the process of working with the School on another project to encourage insects, bees and etc into our village particular in the North Lane area, hopefully this project will be a success and resident's will see the results in the future. (ii) The Clerk advised following recent damage on Church Bank which appears to have been caused by a vehicle, she contacted HBC to establish if there was anything they may be able to assist with i.e.: collapsible bollards. Peter Frost on behalf of HBC advised unfortunately there is not much they can do to assist in this instance, if they were to install bollards they would be liable to be hit and become a further maintenance issue. (iii) The Clerk advised an email had been received from a residents regarding a safety concern on North Lane, the hedge on the end of The Green Island on North Lane is overgrown, when this greens up in the summer months it is a health and safety issue as visibility is affected. The suggestion from the resident was if the hedge at the end could be taken out or maintained all year round. Following the residents email The Clerk contacted HBC to firstly establish as we are close the bird nesting season etc if the hedge could be coppiced and if the hedge could be maintained but secondly to establish who the responsibility of this part of the hedge belongs too. Scott Watson from HBC confirmed this was not something that would fall into his remit, however after he checked the GIS it appears to belong to HBC, therefore he has passed the details to his colleague from Highways who may be able to help given the visibility splay concerns. The Clerk advised despite chasing the issue with HBC Highways she has not received a response to date, however it is also apparent work has been carried out on the hedge as it looks freshly cut and cutting are on the side. The Clerk has contacted HBC to see if they have attended the area but again to date no response has been received, so it is unclear who has trimmed the hedge back. (iv) Following the last

Parish Council Meeting the Clerk reached out to HBC (Chris Scaife) regarding the dog fouling and litter in The Ghyll. Chris Scaife emailed back to confirm he had visited the site and has installed some new signage to try and encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets. **(v)** The Clerk advised email confirmation has been received from HP Instant Ink to advise the monthly subscription charge will increase from the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025 from £11.99 to £13.49. Councillors unanimously agreed this was acceptable. **(vi)** The Clerk advised following a conversation with John Pearson from Affordable Landscapes the grass cutting fee from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 will be increasing by 5%, the Clerk advised she has asked John to confirm his price increases in writing to the Parish Council.

**15. Matters of Concern to Councillors:** **(i)** Cllr A. Oliver asked if going forward we could find out who was carrying out road works etc in the village, as they unfortunately on many occasions seem to be leaving a mess behind. The Clerk advised there is a weekly traffic management report, if works in the village are scheduled she will advise councillors, however if emergency works are carried out this is not always on the report. **(ii)** Concern was raised over the drains in the village as they appear to be blocked the Clerk is to contact HBC to arrange for these to be cleaned out as soon as possible. **(iii)** Cllr B. Irving asked if there was a plan to replace the bench outside the W.I Hall. Cllr R. Thompson advised he will reattempt to remove the brackets ready for the bench which is in the Parish Council Storage Shed to be installed in its place. **(iii)** The Clerk advised of repeated reports of a vehicle coming into the village causing near misses, the Clerk advised she has urged residents to report the incidents as they happen, but she has also contacted the police to report the issue, however they have advised they require residents to report the incidents via 101 to enable them to assign officers to look into the issues. The Clerk did speak to PC Steven Harris who advised he would call into the Village to see if he could have a walk around the Village speak to residents etc, attend a Cuppa and Cake session and try to obtain details of the issues involving the reported car.

*Cllr G. Hewitt Left the meeting at 21:02*

**16. Planning applications:** **(i) H/2024/0180** – Notification of a Planning Application. Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic (solar) farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure. Location: High Barnes Farm, Coal Lane, Elwick, Hartlepool. TS27 3HD. Councillors unanimously agreed the Parish Council continue to support this application.

**(ii) H/2024/0340** – Notification of a Planning Application. Demolition of two existing dwellings, erection of two replacement dwellings and one agricultural workers dwelling together with associated garden and car parking. Location: Low Stotfold Farm, Trunk Road A19, Hartlepool. TS27 3HQ. Councillors unanimously agreed the Parish Council continue to support this application.

**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.

**16. Confidential Matters of Concerns of Councillors** - Confidential matters only, recorded separately.

**16. Date of next meeting:** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 7pm at Elwick WI Hall.

Meeting concluded at 21:24