

ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Public Meeting held at 6:30pm Wednesday 30th April 2025 at Elwick WI Hall

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

In Attendance: M. Davies - Clerk, V. Wilson (Head Teacher @ St Peters School), Rev'd J. Burbury (Rev'd @ St Peters Church), N. Connor (Playing Field Committee Chair), M. Ireland (Social Activities Committee Chair), M. Storey (Police Crime Commissioner), PCSO S. Thompson (Cleveland Police) and 12 residents.

- 1. Chairmans introduction:** Cllr. D. Woodward, welcomed everyone present and introduced all Parish Councillors, The Clerk and attending speakers. Apologies were received from Cllr Aird and Cllr Oliver.
- 2. Finance Reports:** The Clerk made available to all present the actual against budget report, bank reconciliation with details of expenditure during the 2024/2025 financial year. Residents were invited to ask the speak to The Clerk with any questions they may have.
- 3. St Peters Church – Rev'd J. Burbury:** Rev'd Burbury explained the difficulties faced by the church, one being the access to the Church. The church currently has 5 trustees which is the minimum requirement for the church. Due to the declining members of the church they are now looking towards the church becoming a festival church. Whereby the church will support the school with festival events and it will hold services for special occasions such as baptism's, weddings and funerals etc. The Church is now using reserved funds to operate. They continue to hold the fish and chip suppers in the Elwick W.I Hall. Rev' d Burbury also advised she has approximately 18 months of service before she retires in 2026.
- 4. St Peters School – V. Wilson (Headteacher):** Mrs Wilson advised the school is currently fully subscribed with Children waiting for placements. They are able to provide and are achieving a good reputation for SEN children and vulnerable children. The school have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which works close with the school. In the last year funds raised, have been able to adapt a storage room in the school into a "Rainbow Room" which is used by children when they need it occasionally or when children need space to think etc. This year the school has worked hard at trying to give something back to the community, recently they were approached by the Parish Council to help decorate some planters for the village in North Lane and plant them up etc. They are currently collecting donations for the local charity shops. In a upcoming community work the children will be making and decorating pots to deliver to patients at Alice House Hospice. The Children also collect food goods in which they donate to the food bank
- 5. Police Crime commissioner – M. Storey & PCSO S. Thompson:** Mike introduced himself and gave residents a brief outline of his background. He advised those present he will take up and try to assist with issues raised by the Parish. As part of his commitment to the area the issue of speeding vehicles was raised and in the near future the community will see safety and speed cameras in the village, the first few sessions will begin with speeds being monitored through the village and those caught exceeding the speed limit will be sent a letter advising them, they will then progress to the speed camera, drivers of speeding vehicles will then been fined. A resident expressed to Mike the main issues of speeding in the village take place between 7:30am and 8:30am then 4:30pm to 5:30pm, he advised he would pass this information onto the relevant teams to address. PCSO Thompson expressed the importance of residents reporting any unusual, suspicious, concerning issues or any intelligence information to 101, so officers can be deployed in the target area's. He also advised for anyone who wished to report anything confidential they could do so via Crime Stoppers and they would remain anonymous.
- 6. Elwick Young Farmers:** Cllr Hewitt read out a statement received from Lucy Appleton on behalf of The Elwick Young Farmers, who sent their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting due to a county competition they were participating in. Elwick YFC reported they have had a great year to date, with members representing the club at county, area and national competitions. Some of Elwick YFC achievements include successfully winning the most efficient club trophy in the county last year which is a great achievement for the club. Members have also recently won the county cookery competition and have qualified to represent at the national finals in Malvern. Their competition year is now drawing to a close with their rally day in May,. Elwick YFC have recently gained a number of junior members showing a promising future for the club. Elwick YFC hopes to continue its growth in both strength and numbers. Meetings recently have included stock judging practices, pancake making and Easter egg decorating. Moving into summer, meetings we will become more outdoor based, they also have some joint meetings with neighbouring YFC clubs planned. Elwick YFC meet on Tuesday nights at 7.30, location varies based upon activity. If anyone would like any further information on the club or is interested in joining, they ask for you to get in touch, their details are available in the W.I or contact Elwick PC Clerk for Lucy's email address.
- 7. Elwick Parish Council - Cllr D. Woodward:** – Cllr Woodward discussed the recent and ongoing improvements being carried out in the village including the land by the Greenlea substation following residents concern of restricted visibility caused by the overgrowth of vegetation etc. The Parish Council continue to work with the council to keep on top of the road sweeping and drain cleaning in the Village which was an issue raised by residents at last year's public annual meeting. Cllr Woodward expressed he would encourage residents to reach out and contact the Parish Council Clerk or Councillors if they have any concerns or issues that the Parish Council may be able to assist with. The Clerk has recently been in discussion with HBC over the drains as last year there was a reported concern that vegetation was growing out of many drains causing blockages, currently HBC will be concentrating on drains located on The Green, North Lane and

North Close. Cllr Woodward discussed the recent planning applications which had been submitted to HBC, namely High Barnes Farm Solar Farm and the Housing Development at North Farm. Whilst the Parish Council are not involved in any of the planning decisions etc Cllr Woodward invited residents to contact the Parish Council with any concerns, questions etc that they may be able to help direct to the developers or HBC. Cllr Woodward also discussed the recent announcement of proposed plans relating to Clay Pool Battery Storage Farm, whilst this is predominantly in the Sheraton Parish and County Durham a small section of land involved in the proposed plans does belong in the Elwick Parish as well as cabling which would involve the Hartlepool catchment. Planning permission as far as the Parish Council is aware has not been submitted as of yet, but is believed this will be submitted within the next few weeks. Cllr Woodward acknowledged the Parish Council were aware of the recent Facebook post relating to land North of Elwick Village been advertised for potential housing developments but the Parish Council had no further information at this time. Cllr Woodward advised those present that the Parish Elections are due to take place in 2026 and welcomed anyone who may be interested to get in touch and reminded everyone present that residents are always welcome to attend any of the Parish Council meetings now scheduled to be held on the last Thursday of each month from June (exception of August and December, when no Parish Council meetings are held).

8. **Playing Field Committee – N. Connor:** Natalie discussed the main issues faced by the playing committee which are maintenance issues, vandalism etc and how the committee are trying to establish a future vision for the playing field. Recently work has been completed on the dog walk funded by the Red Gap fund in 2023. Funding was awarded in early 2025 to obtain two new pieces of adventure trail to replace two pieces of trail which had come to the end of their life span. The Junior Leadership team kindly coordinated a vote within the school to select the new pieces of equipment they would like to see and hopefully these will be installed very soon, ideally prior to the may half term. The committee are looking to source future funding with an ambition to submit an application to replace the current swings and seesaw which are currently on site, again the existing pieces are now nearing the end of their life span and need addressing before this time. Natalie expressed the ambition of the committee to engage with new volunteers with a vision of creating a Friends of Elwick Playing Field Group. Looking into the future the committee would like to look into hosting consultation events, fundraising events in the playing field to get an idea of what residents would like to see in the area and potential a view to create an area fenced off for dog owners to be able to enjoy the facilities.
9. **Social Activity Committee (SAC) – M. Ireland:** The SAC is a group made up of both Parish Councillor's and residents who volunteer their time. Minna advised of the SAC successful cuppa and cake afternoons which have proved very popular within the village, held every Tuesday between 2pm & 4:30pm, this is a free session but donations are welcomed to support the ongoing cuppa and cake sessions and other events etc. Fresh homemade cakes are provided by volunteers who are on a rota. Recently the SAC held their annual Easter Egg hunt, which was well attended. The next planned event in the diary is the VE day memorial day on Thursday 8th May. The SAC will not be hosting a Gig on the Green this year but the SAC are looking at upcoming events which include a family sports day, the annual Christmas Fayre and children's Christmas party. Minna expressed a need to encourage new members to the committee, to help with new ideas and future events etc as well as volunteers that may be able to help with baking for the cuppa and cake sessions. If anyone is interested to join the committee or further information please contact Minna, any of the SAC committee members or the Parish Clerk.
10. **Matters of concerns open to residents and councillors:** (i) One resident enquired about the broken bench outside the W.I Hall, the resident was advised this was a matter noted at the last Parish Council meeting and plans were in order to replace the bench with one the Parish Council have in storage. (ii) One resident raised concern of recent works carried out on the road coming into the Village from Hartlepool, the contractors who have carried out the work have left barriers in the hedge back, The Clerk is to contact HBC to ask if they can be removed or if they can contact the owners of the barriers. (iii) Concerns were raised by a resident over the bonfire held in November 2024, which has left an noticeable mark on The Green, the resident was advised the Clerk is in the process of obtaining a quote to rectify the damage and the Parish Council are going to reach out to the pubs and shop to discuss further. (iv) Concern was raised by one resident over the lack of notification of the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Woodward explained this year the Parish Council did not carry out a leaflet drop however the meeting date was confirmed and noted in the Parish Council Minutes on the 31st March. The meeting was also advertised in the first available Village life magazine along with being advertised in the Parish notice board and the Village Facebook Page. Next year the Parish Council is to consider carrying out a leaflet drop as an additional way to advertise the event. (v) A resident raised concern over the new planters being located in North Lane as to whom will water them during the summer, The Clerk advised the planters were being located on this section of the Green following residents concern of the damage being caused by vehicles parking on it, she would reach out to residents to see if there are any volunteers that may help water the planters especially during the holiday periods. (vi) Cllr Irving asked Mrs Wilson if there was any update on when the school would be able to maintain the wildlife garden located in Greenlea. Mrs Wilson explained at the moment whilst the Parish Council kindly supplied tools, these are not suitable for the children based on their size, the school are currently trying to look at funding to purchase suitable equipment.
11. **Chair Summary:** Cllr Woodward, thanked everyone for attending and to contact the Parish Council if they had any concerns or comments they would like to be discussed at future meetings. Cllr Woodward also drew the attention of those present to the suggestion forms located on each table and welcomed residents to complete the forms and hand to The Clerk, these will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Woodward closed the meeting at 8:25pm and invited those present to stay for refreshments.