**ELWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Annual Meeting held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at Elwick WI Hall**

**Present:**Cllrs. A. Aird, B. Irving, R. Musgrave, R. Thompson, D. Woodward

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, G. Winrow (GW)

*The outgoing Chairman, being unable to attend due to isolating under Covid rules, Vice-Chairman R. Musgrave took the chair and welcomed everyone. She then read out a statement submitted by Cllr H. Thompson:*

*“*I am so sorry I cannot be with you tonight to say, in person, a very big thank you to all of you for supporting Elwick Parish Council so well, and for supporting me as Chair for the past four years.

It certainly has not been an easy time for Elwick PC. With numbers growing rapidly in the area, Wynyard matters took a much greater part in our Parish than in the past, and we had some long, late meetings. Diane and Liz brought a good understanding of Wynyard and were a loss when they both left us, but thankfully the links are still there and I wish Wynyard Hartlepool well as it becomes a stand-alone Parish Council this month.

The Vote of no Confidence in HBC was not taken lightly last year and I have very much appreciated your support, as the rural parish chairs tried, and are still trying, to navigate a path to greater liaison and understanding between Local and Borough Councils.

Thank you, Ruth, for stepping in as Vice Chair after Liz left the Parish Council. Thank you to all of you on Maintenance, Personnel and Social Activities committees, and that includes a thank you to the volunteers, Margaret, Marion and Sylvie who joined the SAC. We lose Alex Williamson this year and thank him for his contribution, and also Peter who has given so much to the Parish Council including his long term as Chairman – we shall certainly miss him on the Council. And thank you so much Minna for all your hard work as clerk, for keeping me right at all times, and especially for all the extra work generated for you by that vote of no confidence!

Finally, I am pleased to welcome Alex Aird as a member of Elwick Parish Council, and also to welcome in our new Chairman who will have my full support for the future.”

*All those elected completed their ‘Declaration of Acceptance of Office as an Elected member’ forms, which were countersigned by the Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council.*

1. **Election of Chairman:** The Clerk reported having received three nominations for Chairman, (AA, BI, RM) all for the same individual, Cllr Woodward. There being no other nominations, and Cllr. Woodward being willing to accept, and being unanimously supported, Cllr Woodward was elected as Chairman. Cllr Wooward signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

*Cllr Woodward took the Chair.*

1. **Election of Vice-Chair:** The Clerk reported having received only one indication of willingness to take this role, from Cllr. R. Thompson. No other nominations being put forward, Cllr Irving proposed with Cllr Musgrave seconding, that Cllr R. Thompson be elected as Vice-Chairman; being unanimously supported, Cllr R. Thompson was elected as Vice-Chairman and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman.
2. **Casual Vacancy:** The Clerk informed that, as only 6 people stood for election and therefore were deemed automatically elected, the Parish Council must now decide if it wishes to fill the remaining vacancy. The options are: (a) decision not to co-opt; (b) decision to co-opt immediately or (c) decision to advertise the vacancy. GW was asked to leave the meeting for this Item, which she did. The Chairman noted that the election had been well advertised and there had been ample time for anyone to make known an interest in joining the PC; three people had spoken to him before the election, one had submitted a nomination and had been elected (AA), another had missed the deadline due to work commitments but was still interested in joining the PC and the third had stated they were not yet ready to take on this responsibility. He proposed therefore that option (a) be discounted and also option (c). Cllr R. Thompson expressed concern that Option (c) was being discounted, but all other Councillors the proposal to discount option (c). This being agreed, the Clerk read out he application for co-option submitted by G. Winrow. Cllr Aird proposed, with Cllr Woodward seconding, that G. Winrow be co-opted. A **unanimous decision** was then made to co-opt G. Winrow as a member of Elwick Parish Council.

Cllr Winrow was recalled to the meeting and congratulated; she signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office as a Co-Opted member.

1. **Declaration of Interest:** All Councillors were requested to complete the Register of Interests Form immediately.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr H. Thompson.
3. **Election of Sub-Committees:**
4. **Personnel Committee –** in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Vice-Chairman of the Council automatically becomes Chairman of this sub-committee. Cllrs Musgrave and Winrow agreed to join him.
5. **Social Activities Committee:** Cllrs Aird, Irving, R. Thompson, Winrow and Woodward all wished to join this Committee; Cllr R. Thompson stated that Cllr H. Thompson would also wish to be considered. It was unanimously agreed that all be appointed, with Cllr Woodward acting as Chairman. *(NB: Several residents are co-opted to serve on this committee).*

 **(c) Village Maintenance Committee:** Cllrs Aird and Irving volunteered, and Cllr R. Thompson proposed Cllr H. Thompson. All agreed thatCllr Irving be Chair.

**NB:** Chairman and Vice-Chairman may attend meetings of any sub-committee, ex-officio.

1. **Banking Arrangements:** There being no concerns it was **resolved** to remain with the Unity Trust Bank and retain all Councillors as the signatories. (NB: The Clerk has refused to be a signatory). The two new Cllrs to be added to the mandate ASAP. It was noted that, at their own request, Cllrs H and R Thompson did not both sign a cheque, another signatory always being asked to countersign any cheque signed by either one of them.

**Action:** Clerk to amend mandate

1. **Assets Register:** The list of Assets as at 31st March was **noted.**
2. **Risk Register:** The Risk Register was presented by the Clerk. She noted that assets at the Playing Field were still a High risk due to theft and vandalism. The Risk Register was **approved**.
3. **Insurance cover**: The Clerk reminded Councillors that the PC had entered into a 3-year contract with BHIB two years earlier. She had submitted the updated Assets Register to them, on which the quote for insurance was based. It was **resolved** that BHIB be appointed as insurance providers to the Parish Council for the period 2022-2023, at a premium of **£608.64.**
4. **Annual Accounts:** The Clerk informed that the Internal Audit had yet to be undertaken as Mr. Olsen had been out of the country; he would be undertaking the Internal Audit on his return later that month. She therefore proposed that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return be postponed to the June meeting, which still provided time for submission before the 30th June deadline. The proposal was **unanimously supported**.
5. The Clerk presented the Receipts & Payments Account 2021-2022, and Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022. It was **resolved** to accept the Accounts, subject to a clear Internal Audit report.
6. It was **resolved** the Clerk be the Responsible Financial Officer for the year 2022-2023.
7. **Appointment of Internal Auditor:** Cllr R. Thompson proposed, with Cllr Musgrave seconding, that Peter Olsen be reappointed as Internal Auditor.All being in agreement, it was **resolved** to appoint Mr. Olsen as Internal Auditor for the 2022-2023 period, at the same remuneration as at present. (£75.00).

*This last item concluding the business, the Chairman closed the Annual Meeting at 7.55pm.*