

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of
Elsdon Parish Council held in the Village Hall
on Thursday 10 May, 2018**

Present: Councillors Simmance, Maddison, Morgan, Graham and Renton. Clerk Martin Chilvers.
Cllr France, Paul Cowie

Apologies: There were no apologies from Parish Councillors.

Election of Officers for 2018-19

Cllr Simmance was nominated for Chair by Cllr Graham and seconded by Cllr Renton

Cllr Graham was nominated for Vice Chairman by Cllr Maddison and seconded by Cllr Morgan

Summary of the year's activity and questions (Chair Cllr Simmance):

For this year's Chair's report I have blocked items under subject headings.

ROADS

The chief item to have featured this year and preoccupied us at most meetings has been issues about the roads around Elsdon.

1. After much discussion with Neil Snowden and other officers from NCC, new signage at the entrances to the village has been installed, with the 30mph signs upgraded and moved further out of the village. There are also additional signs warning drivers about the lack of footpaths. Feedback has been very positive from many residents and we hope that this has improved road safety within the village. We are still waiting for roundels and other road markings to be painted, to complete the project.
2. Whilst it is recognised and appreciated that NCC has done a considerable amount of pothole filling on all the approach roads into Elsdon, much of this is a temporary measure and that more long-lasting remedies are urgently required. We will continue to campaign for improvements to the surfaces on all the roads.
3. There have been issues regarding ownership of verges and drainage work, especially on the Gibbet Road. This is still unresolved but it is hoped that progress can be made before next winter.
4. The Starmyres (Elsdon East) Bridge, a listed structure, has been repaired and it is encouraging to see the burn flowing well through both arches, as was originally intended.
5. The Mill Bridge, also a listed structure, has also undergone some much needed repair work.
6. Potential problems at the Knightside (Elsdon South) Bridge have been highlighted. As it is now in NCC's system, it is hoped that, if there are any serious developments, these will be remedied.
7. Through the welcome intervention of our County Councillor, Steven Bridgett, the village car park and the access road from the corner of the B6341 to the gate at the beginning of the road to East Nook and Hudspeth have now been resurfaced. To date, the road markings have not yet been painted but it is hoped that these, along with the markings at the village entrances as mentioned earlier, will be done in the very near future.
8. We have purchased a street sign to indicate Crawford Close, to replace the one that went missing some while ago. This will aid courier deliveries.
9. It has been noted that the some poles holding road signs are in a parlous state and one, giving advance warning of the weight limits on both Elsdon East and Elsdon South bridges, has recently fallen; this has been reported to NCC and, until it is renewed, we will continue to pursue the matter.
10. The issue of Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) in Elsdon has recently come to the PC's attention. This is still under discussion and the outcome of the consultation will no doubt be reported in the coming months.

RAY WIND FARM COMMUNITY FUND

Chairman:Date:

Elsdonpc/minutes/Annual051018

After a number of increasingly frustrating and fruitless meetings over many months, the Chair decided to stand down from his role representing the PC on the Ray Wind Farm Fund Steering Group after it had changed into a Community Interest Company (CIC). Resident Paul Cowie has offered to represent the PC in place of the Chair. We fully expect him to be able to provide the strong voice on the CIC to ensure that Elsdon receives its fair share of the Community Fund.

It is appreciated that our Clerk, Martin Chilvers, is also on the CIC and, whilst there as Otterburn PC's representative, is still able to keep us regularly updated.

The process to get the Community Fund up and running had stalled for a number of reasons but finally, after nearly two years of negotiations, that portion of the Fund made available through the Community Foundation is now operational. Applications have been made from Elsdon for funding from the first round of grant awards and it is hoped that these will be wholly successful.

At the time of writing, that portion of the Community Fund only available directly from the CIC is not yet on stream. When it is, it will enable larger projects in Elsdon and local business enterprises to benefit.

VISITORS

We welcomed four visitors to PC meetings this year. These were:

1. Clare Elliott, who came to talk about the Tour of Britain cycle race, which came through Elsdon in September
2. Katie Scott, from the Save Rothbury Hospital Beds campaign. We were able to lend our support to the campaign to keep the 12 beds in Rothbury Hospital open. The campaign is still ongoing.
3. Jane Mann, from the Bailiffgate Museum in Alnwick, who explained how part of their HLF funding application would include outreach exhibitions within the old Alnwick District Council area, under the heading "Out Of Town Museum".
4. Sam Kellie, from the First and Last Brewery, about the plans to open a microbrewery in garage space behind the Bird in Bush.

We are grateful to all of them for giving up the time to speak to the PC.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In response to CAN's survey on transport needs in Redesdale we have requested a trial period for running the early morning Otterburn to Newcastle bus through Elsdon. Sadly it probably will not happen. It appears that we have to prove a need before there can be a trial but, in reality, we cannot prove a need **unless** there is a trial.

PINFOLD

An application for the start of improvements to the Pinfold was made by the PC and has been approved by the National Park. The membrane, pea gravel and picnic table and benches will be installed by EPIC within the near future.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Several enthusiastic members of the community have made applications for grant funding for various projects in the village. These projects include resurfacing the Village Hall car park, re-roofing the Village Hall, renovating the back room of the Village Hall, replacing the staging at the Village Hall and providing warm seating at the Church.

Some of these applications are ongoing but, as a PC, we are grateful to those individuals who willingly give of their time in their efforts to make noticeable improvements to the quality of life in Elsdon.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Chief among these were the Annual Fete on August Bank Holiday Monday and the Bonfire & Fireworks evening on 5 November.

Risk Assessments are now in place for both events and are ready to be updated annually.

Other events included the Big Lunch, held in June on the Green for the first time, the Tour of Britain Cycle Race, in September, the Tea Set, Film Club and performances in the Church. Whilst not

specifically under the auspices of the PC, I feel it is worth recognising the enthusiasm of the volunteers from the Church, from the Village Hall, from EPIC and from the community at large, without whom little of this would happen.

MISCELLANY

- After maintaining the annual precept at the same level for several years, it was decided to request a small increase, from £1500 to £1525, for the new financial year.
- The PC has dealt with 11 planning applications during the year and was able to approve all after some discussion.
- The PC has made donations to the Great North Air Ambulance and to Community Action Northumberland, both of which organisations do exceptional work in the local area.
- There has been the issue of dog mess around the village, on the Green, on the Mote Hills, on the south exit from the village and across various fields. We have put up a few additional signs in an attempt to remind dog owners of their responsibilities.
- There have been more meetings about the Revitalising Redesdale project and the HLF bid. Thanks to Cllr Peter Morgan for being the PC's representative and for keeping us up to date on the project's progress.
- The Inspired Futures project, to improve St Cuthbert's Church by installing running water and heating and by making it more of a community building, continues with regular meetings and it is hoped that this will start to bear fruit in the near future. Thanks to Cllr Keith Maddison and to his fellow churchwarden Beryl Charlton for being so dedicated to this cause over such a long period of time.
- I regret the loss of the annual visit of our local MP. I do understand that there are security issues, especially in the light of events in London and elsewhere in the past couple of years, but I feel that the community is more disenfranchised as a consequence. I hope that annual visits will resume in the future.

FINALLY

- It is with regret that we note the recent departure of Peter and Mari Mander from our community. Both have been such enthusiastic contributors to Elsdon projects and events; we will miss them immensely and wish them many happy years of retirement.
- On a sad note, we marked the passing of Roger Bolam, long-term clerk of the PC, who died suddenly in July. Our condolences were sent to his widow Ann and their three sons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I cannot finish without thanking Cllrs Sue Bolam from Harbottle and Chris France from Hepple for their contributions to meetings. They have kept us informed about National Park matters and have given much-needed advice and support on several occasions.

I also wish to thank my fellow councillors for their work during the year, to vice-chair Cllr Keith Maddison, the fount of all knowledge about the Village Green, and to Cllrs Glen Graham, Peter Morgan and David Renton for being the eyes and ears of the PC in the village. Without their support, my role would be impossible.

Last but not least, I wish to thank our clerk Martin Chilvers most wholeheartedly; without his efficiency and dedication to his position we would be unable to function properly and as successfully as I believe we do.

Financial Report:

The Clerk provided an update on the Parish Council finances. Opening balance on 1 April, 2017 was £3,962 and closing balance on 31 March, 2018 was £3,915. Income was £1,638 that included £1,500 precept as well as £138 wayleave from Northern Powergrid. Expenditure during the year totalled £1,685 including £750 Clerk salary, £180 room hire, £280 Insurance and £100 donations (£50 to both

Community Action Northumberland and Great North Air Ambulance). There was also a payment of £156 for a replacement road sign.

Reports from County Councillor and questions: Cllr Bridgett was not in attendance.

Any other business:

Cllr Morgan highlighted that the matter of the Rothbury Hospital had been referred for an Independent Review

Meeting closed at 7.25pm