

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of
Elsdon Parish Council held
on Thursday 11 May, 2023
at Elsdon Village Hall**

Present: Councillors Simmance, Stuchfield, Brownlee and Renton. Clerk Martin Chilvers & Cllr Bolam, Billy & Carol Lewins, Joan Thompson, Annie Gregory, Simon Etheridge, Neil Bird, Geoff Rickelton Mandy Buck.

Apologies: There were apologies from Cllr Bell.

Election of Officers for 2023-24

Cllr Stuchfield was nominated for Chair by Cllr Simmance and seconded by Cllr Renton
Cllr Simmance was nominated for Vice Chair by Cllr Renton and seconded by Cllr Stuchfield

Summary of the year's activity and question – Chair:

This is my first report as Chair of Elsdon Parish Council summarising the activity over the past 12 months.

GENERAL ORGANISATION AND FINANCE

- Following the resignation of Glen Graham due to work commitments we had the pleasure of welcoming Jeni Brownlee who was co-opted on to the Parish Council in June 2022.
- Glen continues to assist with the management of the Parish Council Facebook that has helped with the communications across the community.
- The Councillors have considered six planning applications during the past 12 months.
- The Parish Council agreed to make a donation to the Great North Air Ambulance
- Dr Paul Cowie has represented the Parish Council on the Ray Windfarm CIC and thanks are expressed to him for his time spent and for providing valuable progress and news from the CIC.
- Martin Chilvers agreed to represent the Parish Council on the Revitalising Redesdale Steering Group and the Chair in respect of the Community Heritage Fund decisions. Whilst that project has now completed the legacy is now being managed to ensure the great work and positive impact continues across Redesdale.
- The Parish Council has received grants during the year of £2,000 and £41 from Revitalising Redesdale for a new tree seat and a plate for the bull stone respectively. Additionally £500 was received from Northumberland County Council (NCC) for a tree and plaque to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Ray Windfunds have recently provided a grant of £8,640 for the installation of a solar powered speed indicator device just beyond the Larkes on the B6341.
- Following the slight increase the previous year, to meet the registration costs of the village green registration, the Councillors were able to reduce the precept for 2023-24 to £1,800.

ROADS

- A speed survey was undertaken by NCC in September 2022 that confirmed what many local residents knew that there are many speeding drivers entering the village from the west on the B6341. Subsequently a successful grant was been submitted to Ray Windfunds for a speed indicator device that will assist in the highlighting drivers speed entering the village as well as capturing valuable data that it is hoped will support additional assistance from NCC and the Police to combat the excessive speed of some drivers.
- The Police have visited Elsdon once so far to monitor the speed of traffic and is hoped this will become a regular visit.

- Road surface markings have been put in the car park to assist with safe parking as well as allow people to access the bottle bank.
- At the request of the Parish Council NCC have replaced broken and missing road signs around the village.
- Repairs have been made at the Starmyers bridge that it is hoped will ease the regular flooding at the road there plus relief the pressure on the bridge arches during heavy rain.
- The Parish Council are working with the Climate Change team at NCC in the hope that an EV charging point will be installed at the car park. NCC has declined the first request based on cost of the connection but the Parish Council will continue to work the NCC in the hope of a successful outcome.
- Pot holes have been a continued frustration and annoyance to local residents. Whilst there has been some success with hole being filled, this is continual work in reporting incidents to NCC. The Parish Council are encouraging all residents who are impacted by pot holes to report them to NCC via the link on the Parish Council website.

Village Green

- The village green has been the responsibility and in the ownership of the Parish Council for many years. During the past year the Parish Council has now had the area registered at Land Registry to formalise matters.
- The bonfire and firework display was again held on 5 November. This event received excellent feedback and was well attended. Thanks go to those that helped with the event.
- A hornbeam tree was purchased and planted in the village green together with a plaque to mark Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee.
- A new tree seat was built and installed replacing the old seat at the tree near Crawford Cottages.
- Tree maintenance was carried out on a couple of trees near the church that required some attention.
- Thanks go to Glen Graham for arranging the purchase of the brass plate placed at the bull stone.
- The six oak plant tubs were looking great during the summer as local residents took responsibility for individual tubs. At Christmas the tubs were used to host Christmas trees with their separate battery operated decoration lights.
- A section of the village green as been put aside for wild-flower 'meadow' that it is hoped in years to come with provide a burst of colour as well as be wildlife friendly.
- Easement across the village green has been provided to two properties requesting the formal status and this is presently been completed by legal representation.
- A review and work has begun of the pinfold to make it more accessible and able to provide dark sky events. NCC has provided a baffle on a nearby street light to reduce light pollution at events.

VISITORS

The Parish Council welcomed Jackie Sewell (owner of the Bird in Bush pub and B&B) to the February Parish Council meeting to discuss how to work together and host events that benefit the community.

MISCELLANY

- After many years of attempting to have a green waste collection from the village, Elsdon was chosen to trial a 'hot compost' unit for individuals applying. It is hoped this will be a successful project and NCC who are organising the trial will roll-out the units to all residents wishing to participate and avoid the need of a 40 mile round journey to dispose of green waste.
- On behalf of the village hall the Parish Council prepared a successful grant application to Northern Powergrid for the village green to prepare for long power outages such as that occurred with storm Arwen. Mr Lewins is now making arrangements for the work to be carried out with the installation of a generator.

- An emergency event plan is being drawn together so that the community will be as well prepared as it can be in the event of future emergencies.
- The defibrillator has been moved from Checkgate to the external wall at the Bird in Bush pub.
- The Chair represented the Parish at the Remembrance service in Otterburn.
- Cllr Brownlee represented the Parish Council at the Town, Parish and Community Council Committee.

THANKS

- My thanks as ever go to my fellow Councillors, for their dedication and support over the past 12 months and assisting me in my first year as Chair, with particular thanks to Cllr Simmance for his continued guidance and experience.
- I would also like to thank Cllrs Steven Bridgett and Sue Bolam for giving their support to the work of the Parish Council and to the community as a whole, using their invaluable knowledge and experience to advise us.

Financial Report:

The Clerk provided an update on the Parish Council finances. Opening balance on 1 April, 2022 was £3,458 and closing balance on 31 March, 2023 was £1,946.

The precept was increased from £1,525 to £2,000 for one year to help meet the costs of registering the village green. It has for 2023-24 been reduced to £1,800. Additional income for the year included £2,000 Revitalising Redesdale grant for the tree seat and also from the same source £41 for the bull stone plate. £500 was received from NCC to help purchase a tree and plaque to remember the Queens jubilee. £782 was received from HMRC for VAT reclaim and £138 way-leave from Northern Powergrid.

Expenditure during the year totalled £7,025 including £3,145 + VAT for the new tree seat, £972 + VAT for the costs of registering the village green and £70 + VAT for tree maintenance on the village green. Additional costs included £1,000, Clerk’s salary, £448 Parish Insurance premium, £100 Great North Air Ambulance and £96 + VAT for a St John’s Ambulance for the firework / bonfire event, half of which was paid by the firework committee from income at then event.

Review and agreement of the Parish Council Standing Orders, Risk Assessment, Code of Conduct and Safe Guarding policy

The Councillors all agreed to adopt the four papers as they were presented.

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

Any other business:

There were no other matters raised.

Meeting closed at 7.15pm