

Minutes of the meeting of Elsdon Parish Council on Thursday 14 January, 2021

Due to the social distancing restriction imposed due to Coronavirus this meeting was conducted via video link between the recorded attendees.

Present: Councillors, Simmance (Chair), Graham, Morgan, Stuchfield and Renton. Clerk - Martin Chilvers. Cllr France

1. Apologies: There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest: None were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Ordinary meeting: The minutes of the meeting had previously been shared with the Councillors and were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising

- a) Ray Wind update – The Clerk advised that there had not been much activity during the Christmas period however reminded those attending that the Covid Hardship fund was still available for local businesses to apply.
- b) Brown Tourist signs and replacing other road signage – The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Richard McKenzie (NCC) advising he was seeking an update from Area Office on the progress of this project but there had been no further update since.
- c) Revitalising Redesdale – Cllr Morgan advised that there was nothing to report this month.
- d) Cabinet and frame for church – The Chair advised due to the current lockdown restrictions he was unable to meet with Jo Scott to discuss the funding application for this matter.
- e) Replacement of notice board near Pinfold – Whilst the good news was that the noticeboard had been installed the bad news was that the external beading had come away in a couple of locations and the locking mechanism was very tight. The Clerk advised he had received acknowledgement from the company that this would be attended to as soon as possible.
- f) Future use of the bus shelter – There was discussion on what could be done to improve the look and increase appropriate future use of the bus shelter. Following discussion it was agreed the Clerk would look to get a quote for 1) glazing the two front windows as well as replace the side window, 2) creation of a bench and installation on the back wall of the shelter. Cllr Graham agreed to look to purchase netting to prevent birds nesting in the shelter. He also agreed to investigate possible solar lighting for the shelter and purchase of paint for the woodwork on the building. Cllrs Renton and Stuchfield offered to assist with the work including the cleaning of the floor in the shelter. It was agreed by all that there should be no door fitted to the shelter. It was believed the roof was still in good condition but Cllr Stuchfield agreed to investigate at the weekend. It was noted that the old noticeboard required repairs and the Clerk was asked to obtain a quote for the work before a decision was made on the noticeboard for the shelter. It was agreed to consider a possible library and a tethering rail on the back external wall at a later date but a decision was made not to include leaflets due to the possible risk of littering.

5. Finance:

- a) Setting the 2021-22 precept – After discussion all Councillors were in agreement to leave the precept at the present figure of £1,525 for the next financial year.
- b) Reimbursement of purchase of stamps to Clerk – It was agreed to reimburse the sum of £16.92.

Additionally the Clerk advised a VAT reclaim of £998.12 had been credited to the Parish Council bank account.

6. Planning:

- a) There were no applications to consider this month.

7. New business:

- a) Honorary Freeman recognition – Following discussion there was agreement to proceed with this matter and the Clerk was asked to seek quotes for the work. Meantime it was agreed the Councillors would review a template provided and agree on the words.
- b) May local elections – The Clerk provided details as known at this time in respect of the key dates and actions for the May local elections due to be held on 6 May, 2021.
- c) Repair of old noticeboard – This matter was covered under agenda item 4f and it was agreed the Clerk would get a quote on the cost of the repairs before any further action was taken.

8. Any other business:

- a) Cllr Stuchfield asked whether Ray Windfarm Covid Hardship fund was able to support struggling individuals as well as businesses. The Clerk advised that whilst the CIC had investigated this during the first lockdown unfortunately Vattenfall had not allowed grants to be made to individuals. There was discussion as to how the Parish Council could assist any parishioners requiring any type of assistance during the pandemic.
- b) Cllr France highlighted that Northumberland National Park Authority would also be looking in May for Parish Councillors to serve on the authority especially this year as it was believed a number of the present board would be retiring. He asked that if anyone was interested or wanted more information to contact him.
- c) The Chair highlighted the overflowing litter bin at the lay-by near Ottercops. Cllr Renton advised the person who normally emptied this had been off sick recently but was due back the following Monday. It was noted that the bin was often overflowing but it was agreed to monitor the situation for a while before considering options to resolve the problem.
- d) The Chair highlighted that the crash barrier just beyond the aforementioned lay-by was damaged. It was noted this was a result of the accident the previous Friday and it was agreed to monitor to ensure NCC Highways department repaired this as soon as possible.
- e) The Chair highlighted that the footpath sign pointing towards 'The Haining' on the B6341 had collapsed and was rotten. It was noted that this was in the parish of Otterburn and the Clerk advised he would contact NCC in respect of repairs.
- f) The Chair highlighted that there were some particular bad locations on the B6341 that were often icy in cold weather and made worse with water flowing off adjacent fields. Reference was made to the stretch of road that runs alongside Guilders Cleugh wood where water came off the field across the road after rainfall or snow melt. It was noted that the ditches along this section appeared to be in need of clearing.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting will be on 11 February, 2021 starting at 7.00pm via video link.

Meeting closed at 8.20