ELDON PARISH COUNCIL

ORDINARY MEETING

Community Centre	**Tuesday**	**Time: 7.00 p.m.**
Eldon	**29th November 2022**	

Present:

Councillors John Gibson (**in the Chair**), Paul Henry, Diane Pennington and Toni Wallace.

Tom Bolton – Parish Clerk

County Councillors Matt Johnson and Shirley Quinn.

76/22 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Graham Scott (illness) and Samantha Townsend.

RESOLVED:

That the absence of Councillor Scott be approved.

D77/22 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Councillors Pennington and Wallace declared interests in relation to Agenda Item 8 (Eldon Community Partnership) and Item 13 (Christmas Events 2022 and Village Fete 2023).

D78/22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

D79/22 APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications.

D80/22 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk provided an update on developments linked to anti-social behaviour in Eldon, including the Parish Council's involvement in the joint project bid from the Towns and Villages Fund. No statistics had been provided by the police for the meeting and there was no representation.

The Clerk further reported that, in line with the previous wishes of the Council, he had sought a response from the local MP in relation to the Parish Council's request for a meeting. He had spoken that day with a Constituency Office member of Ms Davison's staff about the lack of a reply and had been advised that the MP was going to write to the Police Crime and Victim Commissioner. The Clerk had made the point that the purpose of the Council's original letter was to seek a meeting with the MP and the Council was willing to fit around her schedule. The Constituency member of staff said he would pursue the request.

RESOLVED:

1. That the position regarding the letter to the local MP be noted and a response be awaited.
2. That the police be asked for an update on local crime statistics for the next Parish Council meeting.

D81/22 QUESTIONS – TO DEAL WITH ANY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions.

D82/22 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES OR FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(a) Outside Bodies/Meetings

There was nothing to report.

(b) County Councillors

The Council received an update from County Councillor Quinn about a recent GRT meeting (which the Parish Council had been unable to attend). The meeting had been attended by representatives from a Yorkshire local authority who were aware of the County Council's best practice in relation to GRT matters. Councillor Quinn also referred to the forthcoming consultations on County Council internal boundaries including a proposed reduction in members, and to revised parliamentary boundaries.

RESOLVED:

That the issues be noted.

D83/22 ELDON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Information was provided about recent and forthcoming events at the Community Centre, including a proposed Halloween disco and Christmas disco as well as a Christmas lunch for older people within Eldon Parish. An application for a grant towards new tables and chairs and electrical equipment had also been made to the AAP for funding from the local members budget.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

D84/22 BISHOP AUCKLAND AND SHILDON AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

There was nothing to report.

D85/22 CORRESPONDENCE/DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

The Parish Council considered correspondence/documents received since the last meeting as follows (including updates/actions):

(a) **CDALC AGM – 8th October 2022** – the Clerk had represented the Parish Council at the meeting in Durham.
(b) **County Durham Community Foundation Warm Spaces Fund** – To consider advertising on the Parish Council website the availability of the Community Centre on

Wednesday mornings/lunchtimes for tea/coffee and the Community Partnership to explore funding for provision.

(c) **Request for meeting with Dehenna Davison, MP** – See Minute D80/22 above for update.
(d) **County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust new integrated electronic patient** record – To note.
(e) **Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for County Durham** – To note, copies available for any members who wish to see the Strategy.
(f) **DCC Tree Week** – No application to be made.
(g) **NALC and CDALC Affiliation Fees for 2023-2024** – Increase to 17.71p per elector from current 7.49p to be noted and approved.
(h) **Wheels2Work County Durham Scheme** – To advertise on Parish Council website and noticeboard.
(i) **Boundary Commission Electoral Review of Durham County Council** – Parish Council to submit views that three County Council members for its electoral division should be maintained.
(j) **Boundary Commission Revised Proposals for New Parliamentary Constituencies** – Proposal for Parish Council area to be retained in Bishop Auckland Constituency to be supported.
(k) **Durham County Council consultation on Budget Proposals for 2023 to 2024** – To be noted.
(l) **Letter of thanks from Great North Air Ambulance for donation** – To be noted.
(m) **Letter from Pensions Regulator about re-enrolment and re-declaration** – Clerk to action.
(n) **DCC Minerals Plan Final Consultation Waste Allocations** – Parish Council to support the proposals in line with previous consultation responses.

RESOLVED:

That the correspondence be noted and the actions be approved.

D86/22 TOWN AND VILLAGES FUND – ELDON LANE AND ELDON JOINT PROJECT BID

The Clerk advised that he had been informed by the APP support officer that the joint bid had passed the initial appraisal and would now go forward for full consideration by the AAP. In relation to the security cage provision for the solar powered light battery cases, the Chairman advised that he hoped to arrange for a fabricator to look at potential solutions.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted, arrangements be made for a specialist provider to inspect the battery cases and provide a quote and Standing Orders be suspended if appropriate.

D87/22 ELDON GATEWAY ISSUES

The Clerk referred to the previous update on Gateway issues and advised that a payment of £4689.35 net of the Council's excess (and VAT) had now been paid into the Parish Council's bank account. The insurer would pursue recovery from the third party and if successful, the excess would be repaid to the Council. In addition, the Council had also asked the insurers and recovery agents if the costs of removal of the damaged Gateway stone to the Community Centre grounds could be recovered. The Community Partnership would need to agree to cover the insurance for the re-sited original damaged stone in its grounds.

The Clerk also referred to the repaired Gateway seats which had now been put back on site and to the birdsmouth fencing repaired and recharged by the County Council.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

D88/22 CHRISTMAS 2022 AND VILLAGE FETE 2023

The Clerk advised that an order had now been placed for the Christmas tree at a total cost of £520. In relation to the village fete in 2023, the booking of Mr Twister (Darren Bonas) had now been confirmed with a deposit of £50.

RESOLVED:

That the order with the previous contractor for the erection (and subsequent dismantling) of a Christmas tree in December 2022 at a cost of £520 be approved; and the retainer payment to Darren Bonas in the sum of £50 be likewise approved.

D89/22 PARISH PLAN

There was nothing to report.

D90/22 GRANT APPLICATIONS

There were no applications.

D91/22 ST. MARK'S CHURCH, ELDON

The Clerk reported that Councillors Toni Wallace and Diane Pennington had represented the Council at the recent Remembrance Service at St. Mark's Church. A letter had also been received from the Church inviting the Council to the Community Carol Service on 14th December between 6.30 and 7.30 p.m.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted and Councillor Scott be asked if he wishes to attend the Carol Service.

D92/22 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023 TO 2024

The Clerk advised that the final letter about the Tax Base, Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant Allocation Scheme and Request for Precept had now been received from the County Council.

There had been amendments from the initial notification, the net result of which would mean that the Council would be £187.20 better off with the revisions to the tax base and LCTRS grant if the same Band D Tax rate was maintained. However, the Clerk referred to inflationary pressures on the budget (including the Clerks salary award of 2022 to 2023 and potential increase in 2023 to 2024) and to advice from CDALC about making sufficient budgetary provision in the coming financial year calculations (5% for salaries and 11% for other items).

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted and the Clerk prepare a budget report with options for consideration at the next meeting on 10th January 2023.

D93/22 LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The Council considered the following issues:

(a) Condition of Unadopted Road at rear of Office Row.
(b) Dropped gully and condition of footpath at Office Row
(c) Correspondence with Durham County Council about DoitOnline Reports System.
(d) Parish Council Noticeboard.

The Clerk referred to the difficulties in persuading the County Council that the unadopted road at the rear of Office Row fell within its ownership and it had proved necessary to obtain a Title Plan from the Land Registry which showed that the whole of the adopted road up to the garden boundaries of Office Row was indeed DCC owned.

The Clerk said he would write to the relevant officers at the County Council to advise of this.

In relation to the Noticeboard, the Clerk advised that the refund of £294.70 from the Noticeboard Company Cumbria Ltd. which had previously been promised had not arrived. It was suggested that in the first instance an email be sent to the Company asking for the refund. In the event that the money was not forthcoming, further action for recovery would need to be considered.

RESOLVED:

1. That the issues be noted and reported to the County Council.
2. That an initial email be sent to Noticeboard Company Cumbria Ltd. asking for a refund within 14 days.

D94/22 CLERKS PAY AWARD 2022 TO 2023

The Clerk advised that agreement had now been reached on the pay award for Clerks and it had been agreed that the rate for Scale 12 had been increased from £11.73 to £12.73 per hour, backdated to 1st April, 2022. The Clerk advised that the Council had previously agreed that this Scale point had been agreed by the Parish Council, but offered to leave the meeting during consideration of this issue.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Clerk be invited to remain in the meeting.
2. The pay increase at Scale 12 be approved and backdated to 1st April 2022.

D95/22 ANY QUESTIONS FOR THE CLERK OR CHAIRMAN

There were no questions.

D96/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is on **Tuesday 10th January 2023** at 7.00 p.m.

D97/22 VOUCHERS, INVOICES, INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND ACCOUNTS

The Clerk circulated details of income and expenditure to date **(for copy see file)**, together with a schedule of invoices paid for approval and the bank reconciliation.

RESOLVED:

That the information noted and all of the expenditure to date on the schedules be approved.

D98/22 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining confidential item which relates to personnel issues.

D99/22 VACANCY FOR PARISH CLERK

The Clerk circulated details of applications which had been received from applicants for the impending Parish Clerk vacancy at Eldon.

RESOLVED:

1. That references be taken up for all applicants with a view to an initial sift prior to a final shortlist and interviews in January 2023
2. That all five members of the Parish Council be members of the Appointment Panel.