

ELDON PARISH COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

**Eldon Community Centre
Eldon**

**Tuesday
6th September 2022**

Time 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor John Gibson **in the Chair**

Councillors Diane Pennington, Paul Henry, Graham Scott and Toni Wallace.

Tom Bolton – Parish Clerk.

D48/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from County Councillors Shirley Quinn and Samantha Townsend.

D49/22 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

D50/22 APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no applications for dispensations.

D51/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

D52/22 GATEWAY ACCIDENT AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

The Clerk outlined the background to the recent accident at Eldon Gateway which had resulted in damage to fencing and the Gateway Village Entrance Feature Stone and provided an update on progress with the Council's insurers, the police and notification to Eldon Estates. A quotation had been received for repair of the entrance feature in excess of £4,000 and the broken stone had been removed from the Gateway and securely sited within the Community Centre grounds, although the removal to clear the Gateway site had required specialist lifting equipment for which the Parish Council had funded the charge. Quotations had also been obtained for replacement of the damaged fencing. There was some concern about whether the Gateway Stone should simply be replaced with a new stone feature and the Clerk undertook to raise this with the Council's insurers.

The Clerk advised that the Council had previously undertaken to maintain those elements of the Gateway project which had been undertaken under the auspices of the Eldon Community Partnership but neither the land, trees, or the black tarmac footpath traversing the site were the responsibility of the Parish Council. The land and trees were part of Eldon Estate and the local agent had been advised of the accident and of issues with the path, some of which were linked to tree root heave. Research had shown that the path first appeared on OS maps in the period 1960-69, and there was evidence that reclamation works in the area in about 1984 carried out by the County Council had likely resulted in this and other paths in the area being made up with tarmac. However, the separate bound gravel path on the Gateway area and the short "yellow brick road" path had been part of the Gateway project and it was proposed that these should be part of the Council's assets. This would be raised with the Council's insurers. The replacement costs for the fencing following

the accident, with the current increased cost of wood, also meant that it would be prudent to review the replacement costs for fencing on the Council's Assets Schedule, and to subsequently review the level of insurance cover. A report on the Assets list would be brought to the Council at a future meeting

Following an inspection of the Gateway site, it had also been agreed as a matter of urgency with the Chairman that the two stainless steel framed seats with a number of damaged slats should be removed by the Council's gate and fencing contractor for full refurbishment with new hardwood slats at a maximum cost of £500 per seat. The contractors who had previously serviced the solar powered lighting on the Gateway had also been asked to carry out an inspection into the currently malfunctioning lights.

RESOLVED:

1. That the information be noted.
2. The actions of the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman to date be confirmed and approved, including expenditure for removal of the damaged stone, repairs of the seats and inspection of the solar lights.
3. The Clerk seek the insurers views about replacement of the Gateway stone instead of repairs and the quotes for replacement of damaged fencing be progressed.
4. The Clerk prepare revised Assets lists including for additional and increased value items and reassess insurance cover levels for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.
5. That approval and the necessary delegations be given to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to progress any necessary works or actions in connection with the Gateway and that Standing Orders and/or Financial Regulations be suspended as necessary because of the need to progress replacement and repairs as soon as practicable.

D53/23 RESIGNATION OF CLERK

The Council considered a letter from the Clerk to the Chairman indicating his intention to retire at the end of 2022, together with a draft advert and job description **(for copy see file of minutes)** for a new Clerk. In relation to the advertising of the post, the Clerk advised that it was proposed to place the advert in the local free press and also to pass it to CDALC for circulation amongst Parish Councils across the County.

RESOLVED:

1. That the resignation be accepted.
2. The advert and job description be approved and published as suggested by the Clerk.

D54/24 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL OR LAND ISSUES

(a) Towns and Villages Fund

The Clerk gave an update on progress of a bid for a joint project with Eldon Lane for funding towards environmental improvements and measures to combat anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED:

1. That progress be noted and the current proposals be approved.
2. That the previous proposals of the Council for static CCTV to monitor the Youth Shelter area be no longer pursued.
3. The removal of the Youth Shelter be pursued as part of the bid.

(b) Anti-Social Behaviour in Eldon

The Council considered a draft letter inviting the local Member of Parliament Dehenna Davison to discuss the current issues about anti-social behaviour, and particularly off road motorbike and quad bikes with the Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

That the invitation letter be sent to the local MP.

(c) Planning Application No. DM/22/02280/OUT

The Clerk reported a consultation by Durham County Council on Application No. DM/22/02280/OUT for outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for 2 No. bungalows on land north of Pasture Row, Eldon details of which had been circulated previously to members.

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council has no objections in principle to the development, but that the proposal affects public right of way No. 15 which crosses the field from south to north and exits onto the main road by a stile next to the gateway proposed as the entrance to the development. The public footpath should either be accommodated within the development area or diverted with a replacement stile.