**EAST COTTINGWITH PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held remotely by Zoom videoconferencing at**

**8.00pm on Wednesday 25th November 2020**

**Note: Due to the Coronavirus pandemic emergency, and Government advice on holding public meetings, members of the public and the press were given direct access to the meeting and the opportunity to take part.**

**Present:** Councillors P. Rhodes (Chairman), N.Hobbs (Vice-Chairman),D. Griffith, S. Ashton,

C. Cornmell, P. Shervington, C. Stevens

**In Attendance:** D. Cornmell (Parish Clerk),L. Hammond (Ward Councillor), P. Bellotti (Director East Riding of Yorkshire Council), Councillor N. Cooper (Chairman Melbourne Parish Council), Councillor J. Henley (Chairman Seaton Ross Parish Council)

**Members of the Public**: 4

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited them to ask questions or offer observations when invited to do so.

1. **HAGG BRIDGE**

In addressing the meeting, the Chairman expressed his grave concern at the continued closure of the road at Hagg Bridge and the serious implications it was having on the lives of parishioners and businesses in the area. The meeting had been called to consider the response of the county council to representations made by East Cottingwith parish council, following the news that there was to be a further delay in completing bridge repairs, lasting up to February next year.

Ward Councillor Hammond indicated that he, too, shared the concerns of those parish councils in his Ward that were affected by the road closure. He had taken the matter up with the Leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC), details of which had been circulated to parish councils and the public, via social media. He introduced Paul Bellotti, Director, ERYC, and asked that he update the meeting on the position thus far.

Mr Bellotti offered a sincere apology, on behalf of the county council, for the serious disruption being caused to the lives of people in the area as a result of the road closure at Hagg Bridge. He went on to address the meeting, answering questions from members of the public and councillors:

* The projected lifespan of the bridge, after repair, was 120 years
* Defects had been detected in some of the concrete which compromised the projected lifespan
* Some parts of the concrete met the required specification whilst other parts did not
* A chemical process could be applied to rectify some of the defects, other parts would need to be replaced
* Laboratory tests were awaited before an action plan could be drawn up
* Remedial work would be undertaken as soon as possible and hopefully the road would be re-opened by February, or sooner – no firm date could be given
* The costs incurred for the additional work would be met by the contractor and not the public purse
* No compensation would be paid to businesses affected by the road closure nor to parishioners, by way of a reduction in council tax
* It was not feasible to re-open the bridge in the short term and carry out repairs later
* There was a penalty clause in the contract but it was hoped to arrive at a satisfactory outcome without invoking it – difficulty in attracting contractors to major infrastructure schemes in the area was cited
* A feasibility study ruled out provision of a temporary bridge, on the grounds of cost, both earlier and at present

Ward Councillor Hammond confirmed that scheduled repairs to other roads in the area would not be affected as a result of the Hagg Bridge scheme.

Whilst national policy prevented the payment of compensation to businesses and council tax payers, he was to make representations to the Leader of ERYC in an attempt to secure some type of funding for local projects in the parishes affected by the road closure.

The Vice-Chairman raised the issue of flooding at the bridge. On two recent visits there was standing water on the section of the bridge being repaired. Also, the alignment of the vehicle restraint system seemed an issue. Mr Bellotti was not aware of this and would take the matter up with the Principal Engineer.

In bringing the meeting to a close, the Chairman thanked Mr Bellotti for updating the meeting and addressing the concerns raised. He sought an assurance that East Cottingwith would be notified, as soon as the latest laboratory tests were known and an action plan prepared. In the past, communications from the county council had been found to be wanting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.12pm.