

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

APRIL 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Parish Meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Community Centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall at 7.30p.m.

**1). Present were:-**

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor D. Pimble
Councillor L. von Elbing	Councillor B. Apps
Councillor J. Allen	Councillor L. Serjeant
Councillor D. Jacques	Councillor P. Baskerville
Borough Councillor F. Chapman	
PC K. Green	PCSO D. Lutwyche
Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)	5 members of the public

**Apologies were received from:-** Councillors Starkey, Delanchy, Jones, Mullee, Dodkins, Garner and Amos, together with Borough Councillor J. Pert and County Councillor H. Butter. Mr J. Day (Croxton Methodist Church), Mrs B. Roe (St Paul's, Croxton), Mr J. Baldry (Eccleshall Neighbourhood Watch) and Mr M. Hazell (Eccleshall Allotments Association).

**2). Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012** – The minutes, which had been previously ratified by the Council were presented to the meeting and copies were attached to the agendas.

**3). Police:-** PCSO Lutwyche explained about the new policing strategy that was in operation and involved 16 officers locally. Six of the Officers were Local Neighbourhood Officers and Ten Local Police Officers. The local Officers would check problems in the area on a daily basis and update the Citizens Toolkit making officers more aware of local offenders. The new way of working would be linked in with integrated offender management.

The Officers would sign on and be briefed in Stafford and the Officers in Eccleshall would not be released until the next shift personnel had arrived.

The local Neighbourhood Officers were thanked for attending the meeting.

**4). Presentation – Neighbourhood Plan:-** Councillor Pimble reported that the Government's Localism Bill and amendments to the planning system would allow for a new tier of the Planning system – Neighbourhood Planning. Following on from the public meeting held on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 five Councillors and ten residents had formed a steering group to become involved in the preparation of a Plan for Eccleshall Parish. The group had met on two occasions and an Officer from Urban Vision had attended the last meeting to advise on Consultation and Community Engagement.

An application had been submitted to Stafford Borough Council to designate the whole of the Parish as the area to be covered by the Plan. The Borough Council had sent letter sent to every household in the Parish and the consultation period would end on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

A questionnaire had been prepared, designed to identify issues to be addressed and the level of detail, copies of which were available at the meeting and could be downloaded from the Parish Council website. A copy would be included in the Parish Council Newsletter for June which would be in the form of an insert and could be removed for completion. Anyone interested was welcome to join the group.

A Neighbourhood Plan could not contradict any elements within the Local Plan. In addition to specifying locations for housing and other development a plan could tackle infrastructure concerns by proposing road improvements, suggesting footpath and cycle networks, specifying design and density of housing and safeguarding sites from development that are valued as open space.

The proposed plan would be subject to a referendum and would require a 50% + majority of voters of the neighbourhood to come into force.

The Government estimated the costs of producing a plan could be between £17,000 and £63,000 and it could take between one to two years to complete. A scheme of grant support was to be launched on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and advice and support was available from 'Locality' a Nationwide Network of Community Led Organisations.

Councillor Baskerville queried how the Borough Council intended to manage planning applications that were submitted prior to the adoption of the new Plan for Stafford Borough in 2014. Councillor Chapman indicated that Mr Manders, Head of Planning and Regeneration, was confident that planning applications for undesirable development could be successfully challenged and refused.

**5). Chairman's welcome and report:-** The Chairman welcomed those present. Councillor Dale presented an overview of the Council's activities throughout the year.

It was noted that the precept would remain unchanged for a third year. The amount of concurrent allowance received from Stafford Borough Council would also remain unchanged and Council Tax Benefit was to be replaced by a local Council Tax Support Scheme. The scheme meant that funding from the Government to help eligible households with Council Tax Payment would be paid in the form of grants and the Borough Council had agreed to pass this onto Parishes resulting in a slight reduction in the amount of Council Tax being collected locally.

Following a public meeting regarding proposals to install items of play equipment on land at Bishops Court, the proposals had been withdrawn to enable the Council to consider other options and land availability with a view to putting forward alternative proposals.

The Parish Council's Newsletter to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee had been a great success, with copies being sent all over the UK and some as far as America. Prizes had been presented to the pupils of Bishop Lonsdale School whose poems had been published in the newsletter.

A Housing Needs survey identified a need for 36 homes for rent / shared ownership in the Parish. Mr Lancaster, a Rural Housing Enabler, had identified potential locations for the homes and made recommendations to the Parish Council. A feasibility study into the availability of sites was being conducted, which entailed approaching landowners and liaising with Stafford Borough Council.

The Chairman referred to the refurbishment of Castle Street, which was a huge improvement to the conservation area and the approach to the town. There was a temporary guard rail on the corner outside The George and this would be replaced in due course by decorative bespoke railings depicting a coach and horses and the Parish Crest.

The Parish Council had presented a canvas photograph of Eccleshall to Mr Carruthers who had moved abroad, to thank him for 20 years of dedicated service as a First Responder in the community.

It was noted that Henry Butter was retiring from Office as County Councillor after many years of working closely with the Parish Council and assisting with local projects and funding for local groups.

The Chairman concluded by thanking the Councillors for their commitment and enthusiasm over the last twelve months.

**6). Clerks report and accounts:-** Mrs. Heelis presented the receipts and payments accounts which had been adopted by the Council and audited by the Independent Internal Auditor. The Clerk referred to the Accounts and indicated that some unusual payment had been made during the year, including a grant towards the refurbishment of Castle Street, repairs to the roof at the Community Centre and the commemorative newsletter. Other grants had been made to Holy Trinity Parish Rooms, YoYo Youth Club, Offley Hay Village Hall and Neighbourhood Watch. After considerable research a substantial saving had been made by finding an alternative supplier for the Christmas Trees.

Mrs Heelis indicated that copies of The Financial Notes, which included details of the Council's assets, were on display together with the report from the Independent Internal Auditor. No questions were raised regarding the Council's Accounts.

#### **7). Reports from Borough / County Councillors:-**

**Councillor F. Chapman** – Councillor Chapman reported on a lengthy meeting of the Borough Council on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 when it had been decided to oppose HS2 proposals. The Cabinet was to consider whether it would be expedient for the Council to join the group of local authorities actively challenging the project.

Councillor Chapman referred to the success of the Castle Street refurbishment project and indicated that he was hopeful that the residents of Selwyn Count would succeed with an application under the

Community Initiative Scheme of Stafford and Rural Homes to have the signs and railings repainted. It was noted that there was scope for other SARH residents to apply for funding towards various enhancement schemes.

Thanks were expressed to Councillor Chapman for his involvement with the scheme.

Councillor referred to a letter received from the Clerk concerning issues with the appalling condition of rural roads around the Croxton area and indicated that he would assist where possible.

**8). Reports from Council Committees:-** Reports were received from the Planning, Traffic Management, Policy and Resources and Enhancements Committees. Copies were available of reports from all the Council Committees.

**There followed an interval, during which refreshments were served.**

**9). Reports from Organisations in the Parish:-**

The Clerk read reports submitted from the Allotments Association, Eccleshall Neighbourhood Watch and St Paul's Church, Croxton

Reports were received from the following organisations:- Offley Hay Village Hall, Eccleshall in Bloom, Holy Trinity Parish Rooms, Eccleshall Neighbourhood Watch, Broughton Parish Rooms, Eccleshall British Legion, Croxton Independent Methodist Church and Eccleshall Community Centre.

**10). Any matters of Local or Topical Interest:-** There were no matters raised.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending what had been a very interesting and worthwhile meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm.