

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

APRIL 27th, 2016

The Parish Meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on Wednesday April 27th, 2016 at the Community Centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall at 7.30p.m.

1). Present were:-

Councillor D. Pimble (Chair)	Councillor L.Taylor-Potts
Councillor G. Garner	Councillor P. Mullee
Councillor C. Marshall	Councillor E. Amos
Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor M. Starkey
Councillor B. Davies	Councillor J. Leather
County Councillor F. Chapman	Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)
12 members of the public	

Apologies were received from:- Councillors Jones, Jacques, Langford and Delanchy, together with Borough Councillor Pert. Mr G. Dale (Eccleshall Community Centre) and Mrs B. Roe (St Paul's, Croxton).

2). Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on April 29th, 2015 – The minutes, which had been previously ratified by the Council were presented to the meeting and copies were attached to the agendas.

3). Chairman's welcome and report:- Councillor Pimble welcomed those present and presented an overview of the Council's activities throughout the year.

Councillor Pimble explained that in his first year as Chairman of the Parish Council several events had happened to determine the future of Eccleshall. Most of these events would be dealt with by the sub-committees of the council and their chair persons, who would report later in the meeting.

At the elections in May 2015 the Parish Council welcomed Becky Davies, Chris Marshall and Dave Dyer as new members of the council. This followed the decisions of Cllrs Dale, who had held the Chair for almost 20 years and transformed the way the council operates, and John Allen, who was Vice-Chair for many years and did a sterling job in ensuring the promotion of the public footpaths throughout the Parish, not to stand. Cllr Luke Serjeant also decided not to stand.

During the year, following the sad death of Cllr Mary Dodkins, John Leather, was co-opted as the ward member for Slindon.

Councillor Pimble referred to the housing developments taking place or proposed in the town. Work had already started on the Bovis site off the Stafford Road and the Taylor Wimpey site on Shaws Lane behind the Community Centre. Other development was likely off Cross Butts. These new houses were not without controversy but were in line with Central Government's strategy for additional houses and the Borough Council's requirement to find development sites across the borough.

They also accorded with the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan which would go to referendum on the 5th May. Work to produce the Plan began in January 2013 and had involved a considerable amount of work by Councillor Pimble, the clerk and members of a steering group established by the Parish Council to help produce the plan. This Parish Council was one of the first in the borough to commence preparation of a plan and so had to investigate all the requirements in detail. This led to the preparation of the draft plan in April 2015, which was submitted to the Borough Council for comments. It was then referred to an independent examiner to check that its contents complied with planning law. Modifications had to be carried out to the plan at this stage and the final document was eventually approved by officers of the Borough Council in December 2015. The plan had then to receive approval from the Borough Council's Cabinet before a date of 5th May was fixed to coincide with the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In conclusion, the chairman thanked the clerk, Christine Heelis, for continuing to provide support and information, which was essential to the proper running of the council. Councillor Pimble also thanked Vice-Chairman, Graham Garner, who has been a great support and assisted in attending meetings and taking the chair on occasion.

5). 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. It was stated that the balance at March 31st, 2016 was less than the previous year and this was mainly due to a bill of almost £5000 for the elections held in May 2015. No questions were raised regarding the Council's Accounts.

6). Reports from County Councillor Chapman:- Councillor Chapman reported that this would be his last year as County Councillor as he would not be standing for the position in 2017. Reference was made to the Council Tax and increased precepts of the Fire Authority and County Council. It was noted that the Local Community Fund had been decreased and also the amount of finance available to Ward Members through the Divisional Highways Programme. Councillor Chapman reported that the visits of the Neighbourhood Highway Team had been reduced and were expected to be cut altogether in future years. It was anticipated that more general work would be undertaken by community groups in the future.

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

9). Reports from Organisations in the Parish:-

Mrs Heelis read a report submitted from Eccleshall Community Centre and St. Paul's Church, Croxton.

Reports were received from the following organisations:- Eccleshall Allotments Association, Offley Hay Village Hall, Eccleshall in Bloom, St. Peter's Church Broughton, Broughton Parish Rooms, Croxton Independent Methodist Church, Slindon PCC, Eccleshall Cricket Club, Broughton Tennis Club, Eccleshall Methodist Church, 3rd, Eccleshall Guides and Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives.

10). Any matters of Local or Topical Interest:- Mr R. Biggs queried whether Taylor Wimpey would be carrying out any improvements to Footpath 13 from Shaws Lane to The Washpits as part of the development as it was in a terrible state.. The Chairman replied that the matter had not been discussed with the developer. The path had been resurfaced some years ago with loose stone, but this has been washed away over time. The properties adjoining the footpath owned the path to the rear of their properties and the landowners permission would have to be sought to carry out any work.

Councillor Starkey asked whether anyone volunteering to undertake minor works such as clearing gullies and siding out footpaths would be covered by insurance. It was noted that the Parish Council's insurance covered a number of volunteers carrying out such work on behalf of the Parish Council.

The feeling of the meeting was that shopkeepers and property owners should ensure that their frontages were cleaned and residents should be made aware that the precept may have to be increased to cover works that would no longer be carried out by the Highways Authority.

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 8.55pm.

Refreshments were served following the meeting.