

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Broughton Parish Rooms, at 7.30pm, this meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

**41/13). Present were:-** Councillor G. Dale (Chairman)                      Councillor D. Pimble  
Councillor B. Apps    Councillor P. Mullee  
Councillor P. Baskerville    Councillor P. Jones  
Councillor J. Allen    Councillor G. Garner  
Councillor L. Serjeant    Councillor E. Amos  
Councillor M. Dodkins    Councillor D. Jacques  
Councillor B. Delanchy    County Councillor H. Butter  
Borough Councillor J. Pert.    Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)  
10 members of the public

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors von Elbing and Starkey together with Borough Councillor Chapman.

*The meeting opened with prayers*

### **42/13). Public Participation:-**

**Mr J. Day – Speed of Traffic** – Mr Day spoke on behalf of residents of Croxton, especially the older members of the community, to highlight problems with the speed of traffic through the village. The Community Speedwatch was no longer operating and traffic speeds were steadily increasing. The Parish Council was asked to request that 'Kill Your Speed' signs were erected. Councillor Dale affirmed that this problem would be raised with Chris Mitchell at the next meeting in June.

**Mrs Langford – Condition of rural roads;-** Mrs Langford referred to the appalling state of the road surface at Windmill Lane and Woodwall Green Lane. The road surface on Windmill Lane collapsed in December when a tree blew over into an adjacent Marl pit taking half the road with it. The Council put some rubble down a few days later, which has since sunk. No further action had been taken, leaving the road unstable and forcing vehicles onto the grass verge.

The surface on Woodwall Green Lane from The Cattery to Rose Cottage had been regularly flooded to a depth of over one foot. With virtually no drainage the water was unable to run off the flat lane and remained trapped between the two hedge banks. Residents, including the elderly and young children, had been forced to wade through silt and stagnant water. The Highways had pushed away the water and carried out some patching of pot holes but this had raised the level of the road surface in front of the drain hole leading to the soak away and so the water remained trapped and continued to present a serious health hazard. A proper drainage solution was needed as a matter of urgency.

Further up this lane towards Woodwall Green water from a pond regularly overflowed freezing on the road surface and causing massive pot holes. Frequent reports had been submitted to the Highways Hotline but three weeks later no repairs had been undertaken.

Mrs Langford indicated that residents were having huge repair bills for damage caused to vehicles as a result of the pot holes on the local roads. A log of emails and contact with Highways which had been compiled was circulated to members together with photographic evidence of the issues. The Parish Council was asked to support the local residents and ensure that these issues were addressed without delay.

During the wintery weather at the end of March, Windmill Lane remained impassable eight days after the snow fall. Inappropriate equipment was sent out to tackle the snow drifts which were five feet high in some places. The area was considerably higher than Eccleshall and Mrs Langford expressed concern that emergency services would have been unable to reach properties in the area and asked the Parish Council to urge the Highways to ensure that arrangements were in place to ensure that the lanes were cleared automatically following heavy snowfall.

Mr Tuck indicated that he had sustained extensive damage to his vehicle and recently counted in excess of 40 pot holes between his property and Croxton village. Councillors were invited to drive the affected lanes and experience the issues. It was also noted that the recent closure of the B5026 at Croxton Bank

had resulted in excess of one hundred vehicles of all types morning and evening using Windmill Lane, which had exacerbated the problems.

Councillors sympathised with the residents and indicated that they were appalled by the description of the recent events and road conditions. Mrs Heelis was asked to write to Mr Maryon, Mr W. Cash MP, Chris Mitchell and James Bailey about these issues, including a copy of the log and photographs presented by Mrs Langford. The matter would also be discussed with Mr Mitchell at the meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

**43/13). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations:-** There were no requests to consider.

**44/13). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 –** The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

**45/13). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-**

**County Councillor H. Butter** indicated that this would be the last meeting he would attend as a County Councillor and that he had enjoyed working with the Parish Council. Councillor Dale thanked Councillor Butter for the work he had done in the Parish over the years and the Council extended their very best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement. The Parish Council was thanked for the donation made to the upkeep of the churchyard at Broughton.

**Councillor P. Jones** reported that he had attended a meeting of Adbaston Parish Council when Mr Watson had given a talk about the First Responders and he would attend the opening of the new County Court on Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Councillor J. Pert** – Indicated that he had personal experience of the poor condition of local roads and had suffered damage to his vehicle. He stated that the lanes were significantly sub-standard and it was important to pressurise the County Council to address the issues. There were systemic problems with the Highways Hotline and failure to record issues raised. Councillor Pert referred to the consultation concerning the improvements proposed by Network Rail at Norton Bridge and encouraged people to get involved in the process. Councillor Pert reported that he had attended the opening of the new pavilion at Eccleshall Cricket Club.

**46/13). Committee Reports:-**

**Traffic Management Committee:-** In the absence of Councillor von Elbing, Councillor Dale presented the minutes from a meeting held on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

- **Expansion of Raleigh Hall** – At a meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Mr Mitchell had indicated that he was unaware of proposals to construct a new roundabout on the A519 to facilitate expansion of Raleigh Hall and the County Council would have to consider the benefits opposed to the costs involved. It would only be possible to object through the planning process due to the overload of traffic through Eccleshall and potential mitigation measures would have to be formulated. Councillor Pimble stated that more details were required regarding the additional number of lorries anticipated and it was agreed to discuss this matter further with Mr Mitchell at the meeting in June. Councillor Jones volunteered to make enquiries at the Borough Council Planning Department.
- **Condition of rural roads / flooding** – The committee proposed to compile a list of roads affected by flooding and members were asked to advise Mrs Heelis of the details. It was noted that pot holes on Shaws Lane had been patched but Councillor Apps indicated that a repaired drain by the Allotments was still flooding. Councillor Delanchy commented that this was a result of the high water table and it was noted that there was a similar problem on Kerry Lane.

It was noted that the road surface around both mini roundabouts was in a dreadful state and in need of attention.

Councillor Jacques also referred to the condition of Byways at Brockton and Pershall that were not maintained and it was suggested that this matter was also raised with Mr Mitchell in June.

Councillor Jacques had indicated that he did not accept that no action could be taken to prevent traffic using inappropriate rural roads and was invited to attend the next meeting with Chris Mitchell on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to discuss the matter.

Councillor Garner had reported a road sign on the Newport Road which had been incorrectly erected to the Highways Hotline.

- **Neighbourhood Highway Team:-** The team would install wooden posts on the Washpits to prevent vehicular access on the next visit. Other matters requiring attention included reinstatement of the grass verge on Stone Road opposite Badgers Croft and the verge between Holy Trinity Church and Kerry Lane. Overgrown hedges on the A519 from Cross Butts to Johnson Hall. Clearing the footway on the Stafford Road from Claremont Garage to Hillside and between the church and the entrance to the Cricket Club.
- **Dog Fouling:-** Councillor Dodkins had referred to increasing problems with dog fouling around the town and the Clerk had included an item on the Parish Council website. Mr Baldry from Neighbourhood Watch requested regular visits from the dog warden and on Saturday 6th April conducted a surgery outside the library with the police to highlight the problem of dog fouling in Eccleshall. Leaflets and free poop bags were handed to dog owners in an effort to enlighten all dog owners of their legal responsibility to clear up after their animals. The dog warden had visited Eccleshall and was able to supply large posters and banners, as well as 'A' Boards. Mr Allen and his team had also offered to attend meetings or other events to highlight the problem. It was agreed that the issue of dog fouling was a matter for discussion by the Traffic Management Committee rather than the Enhancements Committee.
- **The Highfields, Croxton -** Councillor Jacques referred to the condition of the lane at the back of The Highfields and asked if anything could be done to assist with getting the road resurfaced. Some of the properties, which had been owned by SARH were now privately owned and the lane was not adopted. The Clerk indicated that an attempt to get work done had been made in the past and letters sent to the residents however, not all had been prepared to pay a proportion of the cost and nothing had been done. Councillor Delanchy periodically arranged for recycled material to be delivered and distributed to fill the pot holes. It was proposed to amend the minutes of the Committee to indicate that the recommendation had been that letters were sent to the residents to ask if they would like a meeting to discuss the condition of the road and this was agreed by the Council.

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 following the meeting of the Planning Committee.

The minutes of the Committee were adopted by the Council.

**There were no reports to receive from the Enhancements, Policy and Resources or Footpaths Committees.**

**47/13). Liaison Representatives:-** There were no reports to receive from Bishop Lonsdale School or Communities Mean Business.

**Allotments Association:-** The next meeting would be held on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

**Ecclian Society:-** Councillor Jones reported that four new oak posts to hold flower mangers had been incorporated into Castle Street. The Planning Application for the Crest on the Reeds Rains corner was to be submitted shortly and requests for sponsorship of the baskets would be sent out soon.

**First Responders:-** Councillor Jacques reported that there were now two First Responders with two more undergoing advanced training and a further two had started training.

**Offley Hay Village Hall:-** Councillor Dodkins reported the bookings were up and remained steady.

**Tourism:-** Councillor Jones reported that the group continued to hold meetings around the County, the last one had been held at Aston Marina and the meeting in April would be held at Weston Hall.

**Business Group:-** Councillor Jones indicated that the group was trying out a new style of meetings moving around business premises in the town and the last meeting had been held at Lex and Co. The group was sponsoring the Busking Bonanza in Eccleshall on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.

**Community Centre:-** Councillor Dale indicated that one of the boilers had failed and needed to be replaced at a cost of between six and seven thousand pounds.

**Young People:-** Councillor Dodkins indicated that the young people had attended the opening of the Cricket Club pavilion and rates for hiring out the venue were under consideration. On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May the young people would be holding an open meeting at The Youth Activity Hub at the Cricket Ground from 7.00pm to 9.00pm and everyone was welcome. The Youth Club would meet at the new venue every Thursday night.

**48/13). Watering Contract:-** Mrs Heelis reported that a meeting would be held with Jane Wright from HMP Drake Hall on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 2.30pm. The meeting had been arranged to discuss the possibilities of

the women assisting with watering, the upkeep of the garden at the rear of Eccleshall library, refurbishment of seats in the Parish and footpath work. It was proposed that the women were invited to undertake some jobs in the community and perhaps watering of the baskets and mangers on a Sunday in order to demonstrate ability to deliver services and reliability. Other factors could be discussed with Jane Wright and reported to the Council at the May Meeting. All were in agreement with this course of action.

It was agreed to accept a quotation from Stafford Borough Council of £4352.00 for 64 days watering over 16 weeks. It was noted that in previous years the Borough Council had provided a grant of £2500.00 towards these costs.

**49/13). Neighbourhood Plan:-** Councillor Pimble reported that the group had met again on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 when Hannah Barter from Urban Vision, (an organisation based in Stoke who have been given Government Funding to assist in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans) had advised the group on methods of consultation and community engagement.

- Following the meeting Mr Osbourne a Croxton resident had sent a letter to 100 local households to explain about the Neighbourhood Planning Process.
- An initial Vision and Aims Document had been produced.
- A questionnaire had been prepared and it was proposed to take copies to the Annual Parish Meeting when Councillor Pimble would present an update on the work to date and how the public could become involved.
- There would be an item included in the June Parish Council Newsletter.
- The next meeting was to be held at the Community Centre at 2pm on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.
- Government Grants of up to £7000 were to be made available from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and it was intended to submit an application.

Councillor Pimble indicated that it had not been specifically confirmed at the meeting held on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 that the Clerk would be able to claim overtime payments for undertaking work associated with the Neighbourhood Plan in addition to £1000 being earmarked for other costs incurred. The Council was in agreement that this arrangement was acceptable.

**50/13). Parish Council Newsletter June 2013:-** The Clerk requested items for the June Newsletter.

**51/13). Tree – Bishops Court:-** An assessment had been undertaken by N&J Tree Services and a report issued. The report recommended that some pruning and a climbing inspection was undertaken in July. The report was referred to the Enhancements Committee for consideration.

**Eccleshall Cricket Club:-** Mr Marshall had invited all Councillors to take a tour around the new pavilion and hoped to attend the Council Meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to arrange a convenient date and extend an invitation to the Council to hold a meeting at the Pavilion free of charge during the winter months. The Club was exploring the possibility of having a notice board in the High Street and had approached the Football Club with a suggestion that the Clubs could share a board.

An application for funding of £200 had been received from the Cricket Club to help fund new benches around the ground. The application was referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

**Old Fire Engine:-** The Clerk reported that a response had been received from the Co-op indicating a willingness to consider and discuss the proposals to locate the Fire Engine under the arches to the front of the building. The future of the equipment remained uncertain and it was understood that there were groups within the Fire Service who considered that the Fire Engine should remain at the Station. The Clerk was asked to continue to liaise with the Co-op until further information was available.

**52/13). Chairman's Report:-** Councillor Dale reported that he had been invited to the Borough Council Civic Mayor making ceremony. Councillor Pimble had attended the opening of the Parish Rooms and thanks had been extended to the Parish Council for their donation towards the refurbishments.

**53/13). Accounts:-**

**Receipts and Payments and Audit Return 2012/13:-** Copies of the Accounting and Governance Statements had been circulated together with the Receipts and Payments Summary, Income and Expenditure details for 2012/13, Financial Risk Assessment and Internal Audit Controls.

- 2012/13- The Clerk reported that the accounts had been audited by both the internal auditor and the independent auditor and there were no matters to be addressed.
- Copies of the Summary Receipts and Payments Statement and Audit Return had been circulated and the accounts for 2012/13 were approved by the Council.
- The Annual Governance Statement was considered by the Council and members agreed all matters had been adequately complied with.

Councillor Jacques asked if details of the Councils' Assets and Liabilities were available and Mrs Heelis referred to the information on the accounting statement regarding total fixed assets, the amount being mainly the insurance value of the Community Centre. The details as submitted to the auditor could be circulated.

Councillor Pimble indicated that letters seeking tenders for the Railings had been sent out and a report would be submitted to the Council on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It was hoped that a contribution would be available from the County Council Local Community Fund, following the election in May.

Authorisation was sought for payment of the following accounts:-

Salaries and associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2230.16
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	85.69
Additional Chairman's Allowance 2012/13 - <i>LGA 1972 ss. 15 (5)</i>	54.62
Annual subscription - CPRE - <i>s.137</i>	50.00
Annual subscription - Community Council - <i>LGA 1972 s. 111</i>	22.00
SPCA Subscription - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	577.00
Trent Grounds Maintenance - hedge BC - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s. 10</i>	162.00
N & J Tree Services - Inspect tree BC - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s. 10</i>	120.00
Subscription Local Council Review - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	16.00
Stafford Tourism Bureau – <i>LGA 1972 s.144</i>	27.50
R. Gamson - Work for QE II Fields in Trust - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s. 10</i>	246.00
Mrs. J. Hill Internal Audit - <i>Accounts &amp; Audit Regs. 2003</i>	40.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

**54/13). Items/Date and Venue for next meeting:-** AGM May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm.