

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

April 21st 2010

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on April 21st 2010, at Broughton Parish Rooms, at 7.30pm.

40/10). Present were:-

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor D. Pimble (Vice–Chair)
Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor J. Pert
Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor B. Apps
Councillor J. Allen	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor M. Starkey	Councillor P. Allsop
Councillor J. Jones	Councillor E. Amos
Councillor L. von Elbing	Councillor P. Jones
3 members of the public	
Borough / County Councillor H. Butter	P.C. K. Green
Mrs. C. Heelis (Clerk)	PCSO Lutwyche

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Holl and Borough Councillor F. Chapman.

The meeting opened with prayers.

41/10). Public Participation:-

Eccleshall Eagles Junior Football Club:- The Clerk had received a letter from the Chairman of the Club seeking a letter of support from the Parish Council to assist with grant applications for a project to create a permanent base for the club. Councillor Pert expressed an interest in this matter and together with Mr. D. Higgs and Mr. N. Hawkins explained that the Club had 161 affiliated members and teams covering nine age groups from the of 6 – 16. The Club currently played at facilities throughout much of Staffordshire and lacked a central facility.

The Club had been conducted investigations with local landowners with regard to the acquisition of land and a letter of support from the Parish Council would add weight and credence to funding applications. The pitches used by Stone Dominoes at Yarnfield were not available to the club and pitches at Alleynes and Sir Graham Balfour were fully utilised by the secondary schools. Councillors recognised the achievements of the Club and the opportunities provided for young people. Mrs. Heelis was asked to write a letter affirming support in principle for the aspirations of the club.

42/10). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on March 17th 2010:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

43/10). Police:- PCSO Lutwyche reported that there had been 29 incidents in the Parish since the last Council meeting, 5 of which were of note. P.C. Green referred to surgeries held in Eccleshall library recently, which although advertised, had been poorly attended. It was noted that there were both Immediate Response Officers and Neighbourhood Policing Officers based at Eccleshall Police Station and consequently it was not always the same officer that was called to attend incidents in the Parish.

Councillor Pert referred to a site meeting at Walton Bends in September 2009 when it was proposed that quarterly meetings were held between the Police and First Responders to identify key issues associated with road accidents in the Parish. The Council and the Police were in favour of such meetings taking place together with a further site meeting at Walton Bends with Officers of the County Council.

Councillor Garner indicated that at a recent Police Surgery he had been advised that PCSO Anderson was unlikely to be replaced. At a recent Neighbourhood Watch meeting it had been agreed to write to local MPs to express concern about the level of policing in the Parish. P.C. Green indicated that he disagreed with these concerns as there had been an increase in the number of Police Officers working shifts in the area.

44/10). Reports from Borough Councillors:- Councillor Butter reported that he continued to pursue a resolution to the drainage problems on Footpath 13 with the County Council.

45/10). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management:- Councillor Pert advised members that a meeting with Mr. Mitchell from the Highways Department was scheduled for April 30th. The Headteacher from Bishops Lonsdale School had enquired about a bin for dog waste by the school but the Borough Council had replied that they no longer provided separate bins for dog waste. Councillor Pert had also approached the Headteacher regarding a poster competition to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Councillors Pert and von Elbing had met with Slindon Residents when several matters had been raised that would be discussed with Mr. Mitchell. An email had been received from the Business Focus Group concerning parking at the Co-op together a copy of a letter from Neighbourhood Watch to Steve Allen about parking enforcement, these matters would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on May 5th.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Dale reported the following:-

- The Pictorial Meadow on the Eyeswells had been dug and sown.
- The Washpits had been cut by mistake, for which Trent Grounds Maintenance had apologised profusely.
- The Clerk had been sent a memory stick by Hawkins Clock Company to re-programme the Pillar Clock chimes.

Councillor Amos reported that a resident had requested that the small step into the toilet cubicles was highlighted with tape or paint as the flooring was all in the same tile and the step was hard to define.

Policy and Resources Committee:-

Accounts 2009/10 & Precept 2010/11:- Copies of the Accounts at March 31st 2010 and spreadsheets of the Precept and Concurrent Expenditure had been circulated with the minutes and showed a final balance of £46,864.92. The Council accepted the accounts and resolved the following:-

- Unspent finance in respect of Grants (£390) and Traffic Management (£685) would be carried forward for expenditure under those headings in the new financial year.
- Finance remaining from the Enhancements budget (£924.29) would be carried forward to the new financial year and used to pay Jackson & Pugh for work at Elford Common.
- Finance allocated to the purchase of a new computer and repairs to the pillar clock would be transferred to reserves and earmarked for expenditure on those items.

Standing Orders:- Copies of new draft standing Orders had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Starkey asked the Council to consider including a clause to read "Copies (or summaries) of the quotations shall be distributed to all members of the council for review five days before the next meeting when offers and specifications shall be debated". The Council resolved that it was unnecessary to include this clause as quotations were generally considered by the appropriate committees and a recommendation was made to council. To discuss quotations in Council meetings would be a retrograde step and very time consuming. Members had the opportunity to defer any matter for further discussion when committee minutes were reported to Council for ratification.

Councillor Starkey indicated that he had raised this matter as he had considered that there had been insufficient time to consider the quotations received for the notice board in the High Street. Councillor Dale asked if any other member had felt that the decision had been rushed – no other member agreed that this was the case and the Chairman suggested that Councillor Starkey joined the Enhancements Committee to ensure that he was involved in future discussions.

The Standing Orders were accepted as drafted.

Financial Regulations:- The Council resolved that the Financial Regulations remained adequate and appropriate and should be reprinted to indicate that they had been reviewed in April 2010.

Members Allowances:- Details of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2010/11 had been received from Stafford Borough Council. The Council resolved that in accordance with previous policies, allowances would not normally be paid to members. However, in cases where a member

was required to travel outside the Parish on Parish Business, the payment of appropriate subsistence would be considered.

Footpaths Committee:- Councillor Allen reported that he had liaised with the County Council Rights of Way and Councillor Butter concerning a project to replace three stiles with kissing gates on Bridlepath 1 & 2 and Footpaths 3. The route would join with Footpaths 8 & 9 to form a circular route with increased access for less able walkers. A quotation had been received from Mr. Greenaway to undertake the works for a cost of £1,040.00 with a cost of a further £40 required to print a leaflet of the route. Councillor Butter had agreed to fund 1/3 of the cost from the Local Community Fund and the County Council would fund 1/3 from the Community Paths Initiative. The Parish Council resolved to pay £360.00 from the Milwood Homes Fund (£5551.08 remaining).

46/10). Liaison Representatives:-

Allotments Association:- The next meeting was scheduled for May 4th 2010.

Ecclian Society:- Councillor Jones reported that the baskets would be erected on June 6th 2010.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor Allsop reported that a meeting was to be held before the end of April. Funding had been requested from the Local Community Fund toward redecoration costs.

Farmers' Market:- The next market would be held on April 24th when there would be a record number of stalls.

First Responders:- Councillor Garner reported that the Responders had definitely decided to replace the vehicle and a Promise Auction was to be held at the Community Centre to raise funds. There were two potential recruits who were awaiting training.

Tourism Bureau:- Councillor P. Jones reported that the annual membership was due for payment and agreed to forward the documents to the Clerk.

Business Focus Group:- Councillor P. Jones indicated that a meeting earlier in the week had been attended by 25 business representatives and the group was looking for a larger venue.

Eccleshall Community Centre:- Councillor Dale indicated that the building work on the new conservatory was now completed and decoration and furnishing would take place shortly.

Festival:- Councillor P. Jones reported that 50 stalls had been booked and in addition a talent competition was planned on 'The Crown Surgery' car park.

Slindon Village Hall:- Councillor von Elbing had nothing to report other than the recent meeting with residents and a full report would be given to the meeting of the Traffic Management Committee.

Bishop Lonsdale School:- Councillor Pert indicated that he was awaiting a response from the Headteacher regarding a poster competition to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Communities Mean business:- There was no report to receive.

47/10). Elford Pool and survey:- Councillors Dale and Baskerville had met Mr. D. Haslam from Staffordshire Ecological Services on Monday April 12th. A report prepared by Mr. Haslam would be circulated to Councillors. The recommendations appeared less drastic than expected and included the introduction of silt and aquatic plants, which could be provided free of charge by Mr. Haslam, the inspection of trees, scraping of the spring area, creation of a shallow pond with boardwalk and an informal surfaced path. The matter would be discussed further at a subsequent meeting of the Enhancements Committee to allow members an opportunity to consider the report.

Councillor Dale reported that local residents were being encouraged to remove piles of wood from the site as children had been throwing the wood back into the pool.

48/10). Proposed Inclined Plane – Norbury:- Following emails received from Andrea Evans, Chairman of Norbury Parish Council, Councillors Pimble and Allsop had attended a meeting on April 15th to seek information about the proposals and report to the Council. The Canal Trust was proposing to construct an inclined plane 800m beyond Norbury Junction to take boats from the Shropshire Canal down to the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal below, with a new alignment back to the original route at the bottom. The scheme included a new access road from the A519 at the High Bridge to run parallel to the canal up to Norbury junction. There would be two new canal basins at the Junction, lots of car parking and ancillary facilities amounting to a total cost of around £23million.

The Council agreed that although the proposals would have a massive impact on Norbury Junction and the canal beyond, it was hard to envisage any impact on Eccleshall other than additional traffic

on the A519. As the Parish Council had not been directly consulted by the Trust it was agreed to note the matter and take no further action at the present time.

49/10). Clerk's report and correspondence:-

Police:- Mr. Ian Parry, Deputy Leader of Staffordshire County Council had responded to the concerns of the Parish Council indicating that he welcomed measures being introduced by the new Chief Constable to include a 2 year commitment to staying in place for Community Police Officers to ensure continuity of service and a pledge that Community Officers would not be withdrawn from their community duties to support other policing activities. These changes would affect and help to improve the focus and quality of policing in rural communities.

Chief Superintendent Nick Baker had replied that the PCSO vacancy would be filled during the next recruitment of PCSO's. The Parish Council was advised that P.C. K. Green had held several surgeries to allow the community increased opportunity to raise their concerns. The Superintendent also stated that links with Parish Councils were important and Inspector Humphries and his team were committed to policing in Eccleshall.

Hedge – Drake Hall Prison:- The Governor of the prison had replied that the hedge could not be allowed to grow to soften the impact of the metal fence for reasons of security, health and safety and maintenance. When planning permission was applied for the impact of the fence on the surroundings was considered and the fence was painted green as a result.

Royal Oak Car Park:- Mrs. Heelis had written to Mr. Dingle as requested at the last Council meeting and an email had subsequently been received from Mr. Dingle expressing disappointment at the response. Mr. Dingle stated that the Council seemed pleased to see the car park used to make up for the shortfall in parking facilities in the town whilst not appearing to consider the tidiness of the area to be of any concern.

Councillor I. Jennings:- A email had been received from Cllr. Jennings indicating that as a Borough Councillor he was under no obligation to attend Parish Council meetings, but was in attendance at Borough Council meetings to represent the people who elected him to the Borough Council. Cllr. Jennings added that he found it hard to believe that the Parish Council had difficulty contacting him and that he had numerous telephone conversations and exchanged emails with individual Parish Councillors.

Parking:- The Clerk read an email from Mrs. Wason on behalf of the Business Focus Group expressing concern that since the Co-op moved to Stone Road there has been a significant drop in footfall in the High Street. Mrs. Wason indicated that it had been her understanding when planning permission for the Co-op was agreed that parking would be free and that supermarkets in other towns free parking for 2 hours was provided. Mrs. Heelis was asked to reply stating that as far as the Parish Council was aware there had been no formal agreement that parking would be free.

Mrs. Heelis referred to a copy of a letter from Neighbourhood Watch to Mr. Allen concerning inappropriate parking in the town, which had already been referred to the Traffic Management Committee and a copy of a letter concerning the level of Policing in Eccleshall, which had been noted earlier in the meeting.

Festival:- Members agreed that it was inappropriate for the Parish Council to place an advertisement in the Festival programme however, Cllr. Jones was advise that a funding could be applied for in the usual manner towards specific equipment or items in addition to the cost of the insurance, which the Council had previously agreed to cover.

Give it a Grow:- Mill Farm Composting were inviting people to have a tour of the compost production site during annual Compost Awareness Week from May 2nd – May 8th. The Council was asked for feedback regarding suitable times to conduct a visit and it was agreed to request tours on the Tuesday and Friday evenings for interested members and partners.

Watering Contract 2010:- A tender had been received from Stafford Borough Council for a cost of £3,720 to water the 50 baskets and 50 mangers, 4 days a week for 15 weeks. The Parish Council resolved to accept this quotation, which remained unchanged from last year.

50/10). Chairman's Report:- Councillor Dale stated that he had been invited to attend the opening of Sugnall Garden Centre and had received invitations to the Stafford Mayor's Civic Service and Annual Council Meeting.

It was noted that following the attendance at the March meeting of Commander Warren James and Squadron Leader Neil Hope from RAF Shawbury, exaggerated reports had appeared in both local and National Press implicating the Royal Princes in noise disturbances. Mrs. Heelis had written to Commander James thanking him for attending the meeting and expressing regret for any resultant embarrassment or difficulties. The Station Commander had replied that he shared the disappointment of Councillors with the local (and national press) and that he appreciated the concern and continued support of the Parish Council.

The Clerk was congratulated on her recent appointment as Chairman of the Staffordshire Branch of The Society of Local Council Clerks'.

51/10). Accounts:-

Accounts 2009/10 – The accounts had already been approved during the Policy and Resources Committee report. Copies of the Summary Receipts and Payments Account were also circulated, there were no questions and the Council approved the statement, which was signed by the Chairman. Cllr. J. Jones was had inspected the accounts and the books had been taken to Mrs. J. Hill, the Independent Internal Auditor on April 21st.

Mrs. Heelis reported that between the Council meeting on March 17th and the end of the financial year, One cheque for the sum of £125.00 had been written, as a re-issue of an undelivered cheque to Offley Hay Village Hall, which had subsequently been stopped, retrospective approval was granted for this action.

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following accounts:-

D. Smith - Footpaths - HA 1980 s.143	34.80
Salaries and associated costs - LGA 1972 s. 112	2180.24
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	61.05
Annual subscription - CPRE - s.137	50.00
Annual subscription - Community Council - LGA 1972 s. 111	22.00
SPCA Subscription - LGA 1972 s.111	592.00
Standing Orders- LGA 1972 s.111	26.30
Eccleshall in Bloom Baskets x 4 Concurrent Allowance	120.00
Subscription Local Council Review LGA 1972 s.111	13.50

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

52/10). Land at rear of Eccleshall Community Centre:-

Mrs. Heelis reported that she had received a copy of the minutes of a meeting of the Eccleshall PCC as Administrative Trustees of land at Bishop Lonsdale School, North Site. Copies were to be made available to the Councillors who regularly met with Jamie McDonald and any other member, upon request.

53/10). Items/Date and venue for next meeting – Annual Parish Meeting – April 28th 2010, Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm. Parish Council AGM, May 19th 2010, Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9pm.