

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Eccleshall Community Centre, this meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

**13/15). Present were:-**

Councillor G. Dale (Chairman)	Councillor B. Delanchy
Councillor L. Taylor-Potts	Councillor P. Mullee
Councillor M. Starkey	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor M. Dodkins	Councillor J. Allen
Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor R. Langford
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor L. Serjeant
Councillor D. Jacques	1 member of the press
Borough/County Councillor F. Chapman	
Borough Councillor J. Pert	4 members of the public
Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)	

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Pimble and Jones.

**14/15). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations:-** There were no requests to receive.

**15/15). Emma Crout – Streetscene:-** Unfortunately, Emma was unable to attend.

**16/15). Public Participation:-**

Mr Ranson of 34, Badgers Croft made the following requests:-

- For Standing Orders to be put on the Parish Council website. The reasons given were for transparency and openness.
- For Committee minutes to be available on the website. Mrs Heelis commented that no decisions were made at Committee Meetings and all the salient points were included on the Parish Council Minutes when the committee report was received.
- Mr Ranson asked that all recipients of grants throughout the year were reminded of their obligation to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in April to indicate how the funds had been spent.

These matters were referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Mrs B. Roe from Croxton indicated that as a resident of Croxton for 50 years she had seen many families come and go and felt that it was important that the play area was retained for the use by local residents. Mrs Roe considered the play area an asset to families in Croxton and outlying areas and indicated that it was used by parents, grandparents, carers, and children especially in the summer months when people took a picnic to the site.

The Chairman indicated that the Parish Council was seeking information on the level of use of the site and that it was refreshing to hear the views of Mrs Roe.

**17/15). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015:-** The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

**18/15). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-**

Councillor Chapman reported as follows:-

- The budgets set by the Borough Council and Police and Crime Commission were unchanged from 2014/15 and the County Council had applied a small increase.
- Discussions were ongoing with the NatWest Bank in an effort to retain banking facilities in Eccleshall. It was possible that a mobile service would be available one day a week.
- Residents had approached Councillor Chapman regarding the siting and provision of bus stops on the Newport Road close to the junction with Green Lane. The local bus services were mostly commercial operations, however, the County Council was responsible for installing signs and hardstandings. Mr Mitchell had indicated that as there were no recognised bus stops on Newport Road, drivers had historically stopped on a grace and favour basis. It would be expensive to provide the required facilities in terms of footways, hardstandings, flag, pole and possible street lighting improvements. The County Council was not aware of any previous requests for a formal stop in this location.

- Councillor Chapman indicated that he was liaising with Network Rail regarding the traffic lights on the B5026 which defaulted to red on the main road even when the access road was gated off. This seemed unnecessary and dangerous as some local drivers ignored the red light.
- Councillor Baskerville referred to a reduction in the number of Borough Councillors for the Ward from 3 to 2 effective from May 2015 and also the fact that Councillor Jones as Mayor elect may not be in a position to represent the area effectively.

**Councillor Pert** indicated that the relocation of the Fire Tender was a fantastic project and welcomed the news that there would be no increase to the precept.

**Croxton Play Area:-** Councillor Pert expressed disappointment at the suggestions to move the Play Equipment and felt that the area **was** used by locals residents. The purchase of the equipment had been funded mostly by grants and some local fundraising and although some maintenance was required the cost of moving the items was likely to be prohibitive due to depreciation and the cost of installation and safety surfacing. The Field was used for local events such as the Well Dressing.

**NatWest Bank:-** Councillor Pert reported that despite letters, petitions and meetings the Bank was still expected to close on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The ATM facility would remain and a mobile service was proposed one day a week. The loss of the Bank would be extremely detrimental to the town and the Borough Councillors were commended for their efforts.

#### 19/15). Committee Reports:-

**Traffic Management Committee:-** Councillor Taylor-Potts reported on a meeting of the Traffic Management Committee held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and a meeting with Mr C. Mitchell, Community Highway Liaison Manager on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

- **Stafford Street:-** The reconstruction of the carriageway and resurfacing of Stafford Street and around the two mini roundabouts was now programmed to be undertaken during 2015/16. It was hoped to keep disruption to a minimum by keeping one lane of the carriageway open where possible and undertaking evening and weekend working.  
It was noted that Development Control was aware of concerns regarding drainage issues and regular meetings were held with statutory undertakers and works programmers to co-ordinate carriageway repairs. Although a review of the highway drainage system would be carried out, Severn Trent had advised that there were no improvements or upgrade works programmed in the vicinity and a planned survey was abandoned and did not take place.
- **Flooding problems (Sytych Lane)** - Mrs Heelis raised issues with flooding on Sytych Lane, Slindon reported by a local resident. Mr Mitchell stressed the importance of individuals being encouraged to contact the Highways Hotline which was manned 24/7 to report issues. Feedback would then be received and the complainant would be able to monitor the situation. Information and contact details would be included in the March Parish Council Newsletter.  
Councillor Langford indicated that the hotline was considered ineffective and caused frustration locally. Despite calls to the contact centre requesting the provision of supplies of grit on lanes around Croxton, delivery had taken almost 12 weeks. It was agreed to monitor the effectiveness of the new system, which was being trialled
- **Raleigh Hall:-** It was noted that formal planning application for a new access off the A519 had been submitted by Raleigh Hall Properties but that the application was yet to be validated by Stafford Borough. A Travel Plan and Transport Assessment should be included in any application.
- **Ownership of and responsibility for 'blue brick' areas in the High Street:-** The consensus seemed to be that the blue brick areas were owned by the frontages and not County Highways. However, the area under the arches of The Crown Surgery and The Oak were owned by the frontages, but the pavement areas retained highway status. Therefore, permission was not required for any stalls to be placed on these frontages providing permission was obtained from the landlord / owner and the pavement was not obstructed.  
If the Parish Council agreed to a seat being located in front of The Star Café and the owners of the premises were agreeable, the Neighbourhood Highway Team would be able to install the seat. The matter was being considered by the Enhancements Committee.
- **Croxton – grass verge opposite The Well B5026:-** The group who organised The Well Dressing wished to maintain this area and have wooden posts installed to prevent vehicular access. Shortly after the Parish Council had arranged for the area to be tidied up a load of soil had been dumped on the grass. It was uncertain whether the Farmer was responsible or County

Highways who had been working in the vicinity. It was agreed to request the Neighbourhood Highway Team to install wooden posts around the area to prevent vehicular access.

- **Neighbourhood Plan:-** Mr Mitchell had commented on the Draft Plan and made several recommendations. The comments were to be submitted in writing and would be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group after the closing date for the submission of comments.
- **Parking and Adopt a Trader:-** In October 2015 the Parish Council had been advised that 4 vehicles with permits to park on the Police Post Car Park as part of the Adopt a Trader Scheme could no longer use the facility due to insurance issues. The car park was now coned off and it was agreed to monitor the situation.
- **Bus stops:-** The request for a bus stop on Stafford Road by the junction with Green Lane remained on the list and Councillor Chapman was able to prioritise the issue along with other local concerns. Other correspondence regarding the provision of a bus stop on the Newport Road had been reported by Councillor Chapman earlier in the meeting. Councillor Garner indicated that he had been approached by a resident of Caroline Court regarding problems with the location of a new bus stop on Green Lane close to the junction with Caroline Court. The Number 23 bus service was hourly and a bus was often parked for 5 – 10 minutes restricting visibility from Caroline Court and causing a hazard for vehicles turning off the Newport Road. Mrs Heelis was asked to contact Mr Mitchell about these concerns.
- **Five Year Plan and priorities for next 12 months:-** It was agreed to remove Walton Bends from the Plan as there appeared to be no cost effective solution. The committee proposed to add the continuation of the footpath on Chester Road from Eccleshall to Pershall to the 5 year Plan. Mr Mitchell had suggested a cycle or multi use route may be an alternative way to achieve this aspiration? It was agreed that it would be helpful to have more detail regarding each of the issues and desired outcomes itemised on the Plan and Councillor Serjeant had agreed to draft a revised paper for circulation prior to the next meeting. Councillors with any suggestion were requested to contact Councillor Serjeant.
- **Neighbourhood Highway Team:-** Mr Mitchell requested dates of events when any tidying/weeding would be required beforehand to enable him to programme the visits of the NHT.

The next meeting with Mr Mitchell would be held on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 followed by the next Committee Meeting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

The minutes of the Traffic Management Committee were adopted by the Council.

#### **Enhancements Committee:-**

- **Fire Tender:-** Councillor Dale commented on the success of the project and suggested that a lectern detailing the information and history of the Fire Tender would complete the exhibition. The Enhancements Committee would liaise with the Co-op and the retired Fire Fighters who had been instrumental in the refurbishment of the tender. Councillor Jacques stated there was an old hand pump at Sugnall Hall, which may fit into the exhibition and would arrange for a photograph to be supplied.
- **Croxton Play Area:-** The Enhancements Committee would consider the wording of an article to be included in a local magazine to raise awareness of the area and establish the level of use.
- **Pictorial Meadow:-** It was agreed to continue with the Pictorial Meadow on the Eyeswells Footpath. Last year the display was poor and it was thought that it had been generally a bad year compounded by shade from the trees. Work was currently being carried out on the area to reduce the number of trees together with some pruning and raising of crowns.
- **Pillar Clock:-** Repairs had been undertaken by Hawkins, the four faces were all correct and the clock was chiming.
- **Village Sign;-** The sign had been removed ready for collection and shipping to Norfolk for refurbishment. Retrospective authorisation was granted for the acceptance of a quotation from Peter Eaton to repaint the wooden post and brackets before the sign was reinstalled. The quotation of £80 included labour and materials.

**Policy and Resources Committee:-** No meeting had been held.

**Footpaths Committee:-** No meeting had been held.

**20/15). Liaison Representatives:-** There were no reports to receive from the Tourism Bureau or Offley Hay Village Hall.

**Allotments Association:-** Councillor Starkey reported that the Association had hired a skip and the secretary had reported on feedback regarding the formation of working parties and a social committee. A couple of plot boundaries were being checked and there were currently 10 people on the waiting list for an allotment. Guidance was being sought from the insurers regarding the use of the rotavator and other equipment. Quotations were being obtained for improvements to the drainage system following flooding of plots 16 and 24.

**Ecclian Society:-** It was reported that Mr Bertram was convalescing at home following an operation. The Ecclian Dinner was booked for February 28<sup>th</sup>. The wooden troughs outside John Pershall Court had been replaced by 6 smaller stone troughs. One of the wooden troughs had been relocated to The Burgage. The following dates were noted:-

- March, Ecclian newsletter to be delivered to all houses in the town.
- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – final walk of the season
- June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015, erection of flower baskets and mangers.
- 13 & 14<sup>th</sup> June – Open Gardens weekend.

**Community Centre Association:-** Councillor Dale reported that following the success of a Tea Dance last month two further Dances had been arranged. Eight Community Dances were booked for 2015 and four artistes had already been booked in 2016. The very popular Zumba classes had returned.

**Young People:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that the Youth Club subs were being increased from 50p to £1 as the youngsters were choosing to spend their money at the Co-op rather than in the Club Tuck shop.

**Visit to Drake Hall Prison:-** Councillor Starkey had represented the Council at the opening of the new Family Unit on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Simon Hughes, the Minister of State for Justice had opened the new unit, which was located outside the perimeter fence to allow women to adjust to life in open conditions with their families and work during the day.

**Bishops Lonsdale School:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that the school was holding a Social, Moral and Cultural Themed week from February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 and a Mothering Sunday Lunch on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### 21/15). **Clerk's report and correspondence:-**

**Elections:-** The Clerk indicated that nomination packs for those wishing to stand for the Parish Council at the elections in May would be available from March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Papers were to be hand delivered to the Borough Council between March 23<sup>rd</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>. Mrs Heelis was able to collect packs for anyone who was unable to pick them up personally and any members who wished to have their packs collected should contact the Clerk. Further details would be available in the March, Parish Council Newsletter.

**Speedgun:-** Loggerheads Parish Council had found the gun unsuitable and returned it to Mrs Heelis.

**Allotments Survey:-** A survey had been received from Stafford Borough Council asking if there were areas of the Parish where there would be a demand for a new allotment site and enquiring about current provision. Mrs Heelis was asked to complete and return the form.

**Community Clean Up Walk:-** The Borough Council was organising a Walking Festival from May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 and also holding a Community Clean up Walk the same week. Community groups were being asked to complete a litter survey for analysis to identify litter hotspots and fly tipping sites. Litter pickers and collection bags would be provided and anything collected would be taken away. Equipment was to be gifted to the parish for future projects. Further information was available from Mrs Heelis.

**Community Paths Initiative 2015/16 –** Bids were invited under the initiative to improve the local rights of way network. The deadline for bids was May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Bishop Lonsdale School:-** Following the last meeting a letter had been sent to Mr Middleton expressing concern that Councillor Dodkins was no longer a Governor at the school. Despite the fact that the school website indicated that the Governing Body included a Local Authority representative this appeared not to be the case. Councillor Dodkins had provided valuable feedback on events at the school and reported regularly to the Parish Council Meetings, facilitating dialogue and communication between the Parish Council and school. Mr Middleton responded that the School was in the final stages of appointing a Local Authority Governor following a skills audit and needs analysis to help identify individuals with the specific skills needed. Mrs Dodkins was thanked for the time she gave to the school and the Headteacher undertook to email school newsletters and continue to invite Parish Council representatives to school events and functions.

**Newsletter:-** Mrs Heelis circulated copies of the draft newsletter for March 2015 and asked for comments by the end of the week.

**Fire Tender:-** The Clerk reported receipt of an invoice from Mr Cartwright for the fabrication of a stand for the Bell. Mrs Heelis had discussed this matter with the Fire Service and they had agreed fund this

work. Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the project and Mrs Heelis was asked to write letters of thanks.

**Grass Cutting Tenders 2015/16 and 2016/17:-** Three tenders had been received, which Mrs Heelis had opened in the presence of the Chairman and recorded the details for the consideration of the Council. The members considered the information circulated and It was unanimously agreed that the contracts be awarded as follows:-

**Jacksons** – Elford Heath, Triangle Kerry Lane and Offley Hay Village Hall

**TGM** – Badgers Croft, Washpits, Picnic Site, Pump Site, Eyeswells Footpath, Croxton Playing Field and Bishops Court.

**22/15). Chairman’s Report:-** Councillor Dale indicated that he had served as a Parish Councillor for 21 years, 17 of those as Chairman and he would not be standing for election in May.

**23/15). Accounts:-** Mrs Heelis reported receipt of the following:-

- Royal Mail refund 100.00
- VAT refund 1599.81
- Interest 5.88

Accounts paid since the last meeting:-

Malcolm Gray – photocopying – <i>Neighbourhood Plan Funding</i>	88.43
Wicksteed – repairs Croxton - <i>Play Area Public Health Act 1875 s.164</i>	597.60
Peter Jones website Domain name - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	97.02
Zurich additional premium for Fire Tender cover - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	84.25

Authorisation was sought for payment of the following:-

Salaries & associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2320.05
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	44.18
Holy Trinity - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	195.00
Holy Trinity - Floodlighting Contribution - <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	150.00
Broughton C of E - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	135.00
Croxton C of E - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	135.00
Croxton Methodist - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	85.00
Slindon PCC - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	135.00
Eccleshall Methodist - Churchyard maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	85.00
Broughton Parish Rooms - Grounds maintenance - <i>Section 137</i>	55.00
Eccleshall Community Centre - Hall Hire - <i>LGA 1972 s.134</i>	750.00
Offley Hay Village Hall - Hall Hire - <i>LGA 1972 s.134</i>	125.00
Broughton Parish Rooms - Hire - <i>LGA Act 1972 s.134</i>	125.00
B.T. Telephone Bill - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	143.06
D. Jacques - storage of footpath materials & use of Pump Site - <i>Concurrent</i>	5.00
Creative Copy 'n' Colour - Footpaths Leaflets - <i>LGA 1972 s.142</i>	492.00
Broughton WI Grant for Well Dressing - <i>Section 137</i>	100.00
Hawkins Clock Company - repairs - <i>Parish Council Act 1957 s. 2</i>	784.20
Vale UK - Housing for Fire Tender - <i>Section 137</i>	5000.00
Community Development Foundation - <i>unspent NP Funding</i>	1744.00
Pictorial Meadows Seeds – <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	59.33

**All were in favour and the cheques were signed.**

**24/15). Neighbourhood Plan:-** Mrs Heelis reported that some comments had been received and these were being recorded for consideration by the Neighbourhood Plan Group after the deadline for submission of comments of February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**25/15). Items/Date and venue for next meeting:-** March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Eccleshall Community Centre, 7.30pm. There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.