

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

January 18th, 2012

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on January 18th, 2012, at Eccleshall Community Centre at 7.00pm, this meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

1/12). Present were:-

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor J. Allen
Councillor L. von Elbing.	Councillor M. Starkey
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor D. Jacques
Councillor B. Apps	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor P. Mullee	Councillor B. Delanchy
Councillor P. Jones	
County Councillor H. Butter	Borough Councillor J. Pert
10 members of the public	Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)

The meeting opened with prayers

Apologies were received from Councillors Pimble, Baskerville and Dodkins together with Borough Councillor F. Chapman.

2/12). Vacancy – Horsley Ward:- It was noted that Katie Lunn and Catherine Gregory had withdrawn their candidature prior to the meeting. Presentations were received from Mr D. Holder, Mr W. Jeffels, Mr L. Jones and Mr L. Serjeant. Each applicant answered questions from Councillors about whether they had attended Council meetings in the past, what they considered might be the major concerns of residents in the Horsley Ward, which they would be representing and why they wished to join the Parish Council. A vote was undertaken and Mr L. Serjeant was duly elected to represent the Horsley Ward.

Councillor Serjeant signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was welcomed to the Parish Council.

Councillor Dale thanked Mr Holder, Mr Jeffels and Mr Jones for their interest in the Parish Council and commented that the standard of the candidates had been very high and he hoped that the applicants would not be discouraged from standing again in the future.

3/12). Public Participation:- Gill Fox reported that the drop in session at the library was continuing to operate on a weekly basis. The young people had been working hard to devise a project for a skate ramp area in Eccleshall. Letters had been sent to the residents of Bishops Court, adjoining the open space by Mrs Gibson, explaining that the young people would like a safe well lit area to play and asking if residents considered that lighting, seating fencing and raised borders would be desirable. The letter had indicated that the parents and children wished to work together with the residents and put forward their findings to the Parish Council.

Jack Harvey and Ben Young presented ideas developed by the young people, who had visited skate board parks in Market Drayton and Gnosall. Designs were based on equipment supplied by Urban Ramps UK and prices ranged from approximately £9,000 for a basic unit to £70,000 for a more complex layout. A layout plan was presented for Bishops Court with a skate park no more than 2 metres in height, leaving space for the addition of a further park or shelter area. The boys stated that there was nowhere to go after school, they got told off for playing on the streets and they were too old to use the equipment on the Beech Road play area. The girls had been involved and were keen on skate board ramps but would also like basketball facilities and a youth shelter.

Councillors responded that the problem remained of where such a facility could go, Elford Heath was too far out of town and the land at the rear of the Community Centre was not available. Members thanked the young people for their constructive and interesting presentation and urged them not to be too down hearted as possibilities were being explored by the Parish Council. Councillor von Elbing indicated that funds were still available for such projects from Communities Mean Business.

Emma Smith added that volunteers were required for the drop in sessions if any members could spare some time.

4/12). To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on November 16th, 2011:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

5/12). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-

Borough Councillor Jones reported that he had visited the play area on Beech Road following the last Council meeting and was informed that the site was regularly inspected by the Borough Council. Jim Arnold Sport and Leisure Manager had advised that two play areas would be included in the development at the rear of the Community Centre.

Cllr. Jones had spoken to Mr P. Gammon concerning parking restrictions in Eccleshall and expressed concern at the method of enforcement by noting the position of tyre valves. Cllr Jones indicated that he continued to monitor planning applications relating to Eccleshall Parish.

County Councillor Butter commented on the excellent refurbishment of The Royal Oak and the fine which had been incurred for proceeding with work prior to the granting of planning permission. Cllr Butter also congratulated the Parish Council on the number of applicants who had stood for the vacancy on the Horsley Ward.

Borough Councillor Pert reported that he had recently attended a planning seminar concerning the reorganisation of the Planning Department, which it was hoped would lead to speedier decisions. Cllr Pert indicated that although he was disappointed that Jessica Wilkes-Mellor had been required to move onto assist young people in another area, he hoped that the good work she had started would continue.

6/12). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- The next meeting of the Committee would be held on February 1st, 2012 following the meeting of the Planning Committee and members would meet with Mr C. Mitchell on January 15th.

Enhancements Committee:- The next meeting would be held on February 22nd, 2012 at 7.30pm. Councillor Dale reported that he has visited the Riverway Nursery with Mrs Heelis and selected 2 benches for the Parish. Sites were yet to be agreed and permission obtained from the Highways Department. Councillor Dale welcomed an offer from Councillor Mullee to collect the benches.

Policy and Resources:- Councillor Allen referred to minutes of the meeting held on January 4th, 2012, which had been circulated. It was noted that Councillor Garner had been elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

- **Castle Street Refurbishment:-** it was noted that the Borough and County Councils had earmarked funding towards the scheme. The County Council had agreed to chase up the statutory undertakers to ascertain what services were in the area and to draw up a revised scheme. Several grant sources were being investigated, but the bid to SARH had been unsuccessful and Communities Mean Business funding was doubtful as the scheme failed to meet certain criteria. The Parish Council had been asked to formalise an amount of funding towards the project.

The Clerk advised that Section 137 available in 2012/13 amounted to £23,700 and that estimated balances at March 31st, 2012, were £52,750. It was resolved to earmark £10,000 from reserves as a contribution towards the scheme, but that this amount would be subject to further negotiations with the County and Borough Councils as to the design of the scheme. It was considered that given the need for parking spaces in this location, the contribution should only be made available if the Parish Council was satisfied that the design reflected the needs of the community.

- **Precept 2012/13:-** Spreadsheets had been circulated detailing spending during 2011/12 and the estimated level of reserves at March 31st, 2012 together with a budget recommendation for 2012/13. It was noted that the concurrent allowance for 2012 /13 was to be reduced by Stafford Borough Council from £4632 to £3733.

It was resolved that no increase should be applied to the precept for 2012/13 and a precept of £48,700 be levied. It was noted that it was uncertain whether the Borough Council would

contribute the £2500 as previously towards the cost of watering, but it was proposed that any shortfall should be met from balances

Civic Amenity Visits- It was noted that the cost of a **three hour** visit was to increase in 2012 from £87.08 to £125.00 excluding VAT. The Council resolved to request a bi-monthly **two hour** visit at a cost of £83.35. (Every third visit was free of charge).

Insurance:- The documents had been received for the renewal of the insurance policy. Zurich had increased the Public Liability cover from £5million to £10million and the Fidelity Guarantee from £80,000 to £100,000 at no additional cost. The premium for 2012/13 was £2,369.39 (a slight decrease from 2011/12) however if the Council agreed to a 5 year agreement the premium for 2012/13 would be reduced to £2123.14. (This could be subject to slight increases during the 5 year term for any index linking applied or new items covered). The Council resolved to enter into a 5 year long term agreement with Zurich

Councillor Allen thanked the Clerk for her assistance with the preparation of the budget and the Minutes of the meeting were adopted by the Council.

Footpaths Committee:- Councillor Allen reported that the two new kissing gates had been installed on Footpath 119. The Council had agreed to pay 1/3rd of the cost amounting to £310 from the Milwood Homes Fund, leaving a total of £615.68 available.

7/12). Liaison Representatives:-

Allotments Association:- Councillor Starkey reported that the roadway had been repaired and it was agreed that the last person through the gate should assume responsibility for closing it. The Association was having issues with Mares Tail in the compost and repairs were needed to the rabbit proof fencing. Funds had been depleted during the last twelve months due to increased water costs and insurance charges. At the AGM held in November the Officers were re-elected. Grants and other funding sources were being investigated to enable the Association to proceed with the toilets/shelter and store on the site and additional levies were being applied to Allotment Holders to help to establish a fund. There was currently a waiting list of 12 for the plots.

There was no report to receive from the Eccelian Society.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor von Elbing reported that bookings were buoyant and funds in place to install the new patio when the weather improved.

Tourism Bureau:- Councillor Jones reported that a tour had been arranged of the new County Council Offices. The next meeting was at Staffordshire Showground.

Business Focus Group:- Councillor Jones reported That the AGM would be held at The Royal Oak on February 6th, 2012. Following several recent burglaries in the town the local constable had visited the shops and spoken with the shopkeepers.

Community Centre:- Councillor Dale reported that the front of the building was to be double glazed during February. The Centre had experienced problems with fly tipping and broken windows, however, bookings continued to increase. The Clerk was asked to record a vote of thanks for the work and time expended by Councillor Dale to ensure the success of the Centre.

Community Means Business:- The Clerk was asked to circulate copies of a report illustrating the projects facilitated by funding from the Development Programme.

Young People:- Councillor Dodkins had submitted a report indicating that the newly formed Youth Steering Group met in December, when a committee was formed and a constitution discussed. The aim of the group was to provide premises and staff for a meeting place for the youth of Eccleshall and plans for a permanent site were well underway. The group planned to hold a meeting for volunteers and requested that an article was included in the March Parish Newsletter. A committee of young people was also being formed with liaison planned between the two groups to address the youngster needs.

Bishop Lonsdale School:- Councillor Dodkins had also reported that years 4,5 and 6 had visited the National Memorial Arboretum in the Autumn term, funded externally through donations. The pupils had

held a non-uniform day in support of Combat Stress and raised £135.00. In December the School Choir had sung carols to the residents of John Pershall Court and also outside The Royal Oak, on December 16th, 2012 local senior citizens were invited to lunch. This term two Reading Workshops were planned for parents and on February 6th there would be an Early Years Open Morning aimed at parents of local children due to commence Nursery and Reception classes in September 2012.

8/12). Clerk's Report and Correspondence:- Mrs Heelis reported that details of the Best Kept Village Competition 2012 had been received from the Community Council of Staffordshire and information of Local Events and Festivals was requested for inclusion in the Staffordshire Diary.

The Clerk had received complaints about gravel on the pavement on the Newport Road by The Eagle Car Park and had asked Mr Bailey from Stafford Borough Council to clear the pavement and take enforcement action, as this was a recurring issue.

Concerns received from Mr Simkin of Astage Farmhouse, Arn Hill concerning drainage and pot holes had been referred to the Highways Department, together with concerns raised by Mrs T. Thatcher of 7, Browns Bridge regarding pot holes on Rock Lane.

Mrs Heelis and several Councillors had been contacted by residents of Bishops Court following receipt of letters from representatives of the young people about proposals for the open space. The residents had been assured that it was the intention of the Parish Council to protect the land from development and maintain the area as public open space. However, the Council has been researching the possibility of installing some small items of equipment on the area to enhance the site. Once information had been compiled a consultation event would be arranged for local residents and young people to have their say about the proposals, which were intended to be very low key.

9/12). Chairman's report:- Councillor Dale reported that he had attended the Mayor's Ball and a Carol Service at Drake Hall Prison. Thanks were extended to the Ecclesian Society for providing 170 cups of Punch for the Carols Around the Tree and to the ladies who had served the refreshments in the Church Rooms. The usual Band was no longer able to attend the event and Councillor Dale asked if anyone had any ideas for alternative musicians, Councillor von Elbing suggested The Sir Graham Balfour High School Band. The Carols in 2012 would be held on December 17th.

10/12). Accounts:- Details of the accounts had been circulated and the Council accepted the payments made since the last meeting. Mrs Heelis advised that interest of £9.05 and Wayleaves amounting to £30.69 had been received. An application for a VAT refund for £1874.54 had been submitted. Authorisation was requested for payment of the following:-

Salaries & associated costs - LGA 1972 s. 112	2196.36
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	106.95
Eccleshall Guide LGA 1072 s.142	110.00
Zurich Municipal – Council Insurance policy – LGA 1972 s.111	2123.14
Trent Grounds Maintenance - Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10	378.00
D. Greenaway - new kissing gates - PC 1/3rd of cost from Milwood Homes	1116.00
Stafford Borough - Civic Amenity visits - concurrent allowance	209.00
A.S. Electrical Services – tree lights – Concurrent Allowance	108.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

11/12). Items/Date and Venue for next meeting:- February 15th, 2012, Eccleshall Community Centre, 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.35pm.