

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL – January 19th, 2011

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on January 19th, 2011 at Eccleshall Community Centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall at 7.30pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

1/11). Present were:-	Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor D. Pimble (Vice-Chair)
	Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor J. Allen
	Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor L. von Elbing
	Councillor E. Amos	Councillor J. Pert
	Councillor B. Apps	Councillor P. Jones
	Councillor A. Holl.	Councillor P. Allsop
	Councillor G. Garner	Councillor M. Starkey
	Mrs. C. Heelis (Clerk)	Borough/County Councillor H. Butter
	3 members of the public	PCSO L. Bromley

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor J. Jones together with Borough Councillor F. Chapman.

The meeting opened with prayers

2/11). Public Participation:- None of the members of the public present wished to address the Council.

3/11). To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on November 17th, 2010:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

4/11). Police:- PCSO Louisa Bromley updated the Council on incidents in the Parish since the last Council meeting. Louisa indicated that she had requested a grit bin for Eccleshall High Street as the pavements were treacherous in the bad weather and was working with Jessica Wilkes-Mellor on youth projects around the area and the improvement of local facilities. A survey had been devised to gauge the views of young people and posters had been displayed around the town. PCSO Bromley referred to a letter from Erin Softley stating that there was nothing for young people to do in Eccleshall and no youth club or other entertainment.

It was noted that the school had erected a shelter and wooden play equipment on the south site during the Christmas break and the youths had been congregating there at night. The Police continued to patrol the area in the evenings. Councillor Dale indicated that the Council had been considering purchasing a grit bin and Louisa was invited to attend the meeting of the Enhancements Committee on February 23rd, when this matter would be discussed.

5/11). Reports from Borough Councillors:- Councillor Butter commented on the gritting situation during the recent cold weather and had requested that the pavements in Eccleshall were gritted and also the road at Charnes, where a milk tanker had got stuck. However, the Highways had indicated that this road was not a priority.

Councillor Butter referred to the budget reductions being implemented by the County Council and indicated that he was hopeful that Eccleshall Library could be safeguarded. The Local Members Initiative Scheme was due to recommence following the elections in May.

Councillor Chapman had been in contact with Mr. C. Soutar, Head of Integrated Transport and Planning concerning the future of the bus services between Eccleshall and Stafford. It appeared that the service would almost certainly continue without a break and it was possible that it may still be operated by Arriva. However, it was unlikely that there would be a service after 6pm. This subject had been discussed at Parish Council meetings in Woodseaves and Creswell where residents had been advised to write to Mr. Soutar, Head of Integrated Transport and Planning, Staffordshire County Council and Bill Cash MP indicating how often they use the service and how important it is.

Mrs. Heelis was asked to write to Mr. Soutar, with copies to Mr. M. Maryon, the Cabinet member and Bill Cash MP expressing surprise that the community could lose this important service, which would increase the isolation of the rural community. Details were to be displayed on the notice boards, web site and the bus shelters advising residents who to write to.

6/11). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- Councillor von Elbing reported that a meeting would be held with Officers from the Highways Department on Friday January 28th, and the next meeting of the committee would be held on February 2nd, 2011. A list of works for the next visit of the Neighbourhood Highway Team scheduled for February 7th had been received from Mr. Latham and Councillors were requested to advise Mrs. Heelis of any additional items. It was proposed to ask Mr. Latham if the prioritised list could be submitted on February 3rd, following the Committee meeting. Councillor Delanchy advised members to consider the length of time certain works would take when prioritising the list as siding out pavements, would leave little time for other tasks.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Dale referred to the minutes from the meeting of the Committee held on December 1st, 2010, which had been circulated with the agenda.

- It was agreed to meet at Elford Common on Tuesday January 25th at 10am to consider an annual maintenance programme with regard to the willow trees around the pond and various improvements to the spring and surrounding area, suggested by Mr. Haslam.
- The County Council had been requested to add the verge from Johnson Hall to the Welcome Sign on Newport Road to the urban grass cutting schedule, as this was an important entrance into the town and the seat had been unusable last summer due to long grass. Councillor Delanchy sought clarification of the area in question.
- Councillor Dale was authorised to liaise with Mr. Sanders, from the Allotments Association who had offered advice on tree pruning on The Eyeswells.
- Mrs. Heelis was authorised to incur expenditure associated with the eradication of moles from Croxton Playing Field and the fenced play area, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The minutes of the Enhancements Committee were adopted by the Council. The next meeting of the Committee would be held on February 23rd, 2011 at 7.30pm when items on the agenda would include the Land at Bishops Court, Gritting and the Allotments.

Policy and Resources:-

Precept 2011/12:- Notification had been received from Stafford Borough Council that the Concurrent Functions Allowance was to be reduced from £5815 to £4632. Councillor Pimble suggested that the precept was increased by £1200 to account for this shortfall and allow for additional pressures that could arise from the Localism Bill. An increase would also counteract inflation, which was currently 3% and it was possible that Parish Councils could be subject to capping in the future and may be required to absorb works which would no longer be undertaken by the principal authorities.

It was noted that approximately £4,000 had been spent from the Milwood Homes Fund during 2010, which had reduced the amount of spending from the precept. After some discussion, during which some members expressed opposition to any increase, Councillor Allen proposed that a precept of **£48,700.00** was levied and Councillor Pimble seconded the proposal. The motion was carried by 7 votes to 6 with 1 abstention.

Request for funding from Eccleshall First Responders:- It was agreed to pay the £255.00 remaining in the grant budget for the current financial year to the First Responders and indicate that a further application for funding could be submitted in April.

Footpaths Committee:- There was no report to receive.

7/11). Liaison Representatives:- There was no report to receive from the Ecclian Society.

Allotments Association:- Councillor Starkey reported that there had been no changes to the Officers at the AGM held on November 30th. The committee had discussed matters relating to Open Gardens, sub-letting of plots and the fact that the rotovator/strimmer tended not to be used owing to a lack of storage facilities on site. The Association intended to repair the roadway in March utilising finance from reserves.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor von Elbing indicated that a meeting was to be held shortly.

First Responders:- Councillor Garner reported that the AGM had been held on December 6th, 2010 but due to an oversight he had not received an invitation and was unaware of the meeting. The members

had been invited to speak about the work of the First Responders to several local groups and this was enhancing the profile of the group. The First Responders were looking for a base in Eccleshall for use when on duty and suggestions would be welcomed, Councillor Garner had proposed that an approach was made to the Fire Station but it seemed unlikely that it would be possible to use facilities there. It was noted that at a recent meeting of the Ambulance Service it was stated that an application for Foundation Status would not affect the First Responders, who would continue to operate as normal.

Tourism Bureau:- Councillor P. Jones reported that the AGM was to be held next week and that the Mr. Geoff Elkin was standing down as Secretary.

Farmers' Market:- Councillor Allsop indicated that the next Market would be held on January 22nd and expressed thanks to Joules' Brewery for allowing access to The Royal Oak to provide the stall holders with electricity.

Business Focus Group:- Councillor P. Jones reported that the next meeting was to be held at The George Inn on January 21st, 2011. The group was planning an Explore Eccleshall Treasure Hunt and Busking Bonanza during the week commencing June 19th, 2011.

Community Centre: Councillor Dale stated that an application was being completed for funding from Communities Mean Business which would enable various improvements to be undertaken, including double glazing to the front of the building.

Young People:- Councillor Holl referred to Posters which had been displayed around the town encouraging young people to complete a questionnaire about facilities in Eccleshall, the survey also covered transport arrangements used to access activities outside Eccleshall. Mrs. Heelis was asked to write and thank Erin Softley for her letter and include a copy of the questionnaire. Councillor Amos enquired whether the student Firefighter scheme had proved a success – no-one present had any information. Councillor Dale indicated that he had agreed to a request from Jessica Wilkes-Mellor for the use of the Community Centre car park during February half term for a climbing wall.

8/11). Request from Allotments Association to build a shelter/store and toilets on site:- Following the last meeting Mrs. Heelis had written to Mr. Hazell requesting further details regarding the proposed structure. Mr. Hazell had responded by email to the effect that the Association was not in a position to provide the details requested. It was recognised that more detailed information would eventually be required to enable the Parish Council to consider the application fully and also for the submission of a Planning Application. However, the Committee was hopeful that the Parish Council would be able to indicate whether such a proposal would receive support, which would encourage the production of a detailed proposal.

After some discussion the Chairman proposed that the matter was referred to the Enhancements Committee for consideration. The motion was carried with 2 votes against and 3 abstentions.

9/11). Clerks report and correspondence:-

Civic Amenity Visits 2011/12:- It was noted that the cost of the visits would increase slightly to £104.50 with every third visit being free. The Council resolved to request bi-monthly visits on a Saturday morning from 9am – 12 noon opposite the Methodist Church on Stone Road, as previously.

Bus services – This matter had already been discussed.

SPCA meeting January 27th, Stone Town Council 7pm – Members were advised that the issue of rural bus services would be discussed at the meeting together with the proposals of Network Rail. All Councillors were welcome to attend.

Dennis Joyner had emailed the Clerk regarding bus services and the proposals that bus passes would only be valid after 9.30am with effect from April 1st. Under the current bus timetable the 432 bus into Stafford left Eccleshall at 9.20am but was scheduled to leave Great Bridgeford at 9.30am implying that passengers could pay from Eccleshall to Great Bridgeford, then get off the bus and immediately back on, using a bus pass. Mr. Joyner asked the Parish Council to write to the County Council asking if this bus could be exempt from the 'watershed' rule. It was agreed to leave this matter in abeyance pending the awarding of the contract to operate a bus service between Eccleshall and Stafford and any changes to the timetable.

A letter had been received from Mr & Mrs. Godfrey, Church Farm, Cotes Heath expressing concern at the treacherous state of the pavements in Eccleshall High Street during the bad weather. Mrs. Heelis had acknowledged receipt of the correspondence advising that the Parish Council was in discussion with Staffordshire County Council with a view to avoiding such problems in the future

An email had been received from John Baldry, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Watch Committee, regarding parking problems on Stone Road. The County Council had responded that the Local Parking Committee had previously agreed a 5 year programme of new, or changes to, parking related traffic regulation orders. This concern had not been previously considered by the committee but would be investigated and prioritised against existing commitments. This matter was referred to the Traffic Management Committee for further consideration.

The Royal British Legion was encouraging individuals and groups to hold Poppy Parties over the weekend of 10th – 12th June 2011 in celebration of The Royal British Legion's 90th Birthday.

Staffordshire Office of the Lieutenancy was encouraging support and participation in celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee 2012 by co-ordinating the lighting of 2012 beacons throughout the UK.

Mayors Charity Appeal 2010/11 – Curry Buffet evening, Ashiana. Monday February 21st, 2011 7pm £17.50 per head

Diocese of Lichfield – Croxton National School – An endowment order had been made whereby the assets consisting of £69,595.88 would be divided into two funds – The Croxton National School Fund comprising eleven-fourteenths of the assets (these would be held by the Diocesan Board) and Croxton Religious Education Fund comprising three-fourteenths of the assets. The minister and churchwardens of Croxton Parish were appointed as the trustees of the Croxton Religious Education Fund and could apply the income and capital for educational purposes related to the Parish in connection with the provision of religious education.

A request for funding had been received from Marie Curie Cancer Care. This was outside the Parish and in accordance with Council Policy would not be supported.

The following documents had been received:-

Stafford Borough Council's Homeless Strategy

Community Council of Staffordshire – Details of Best Kept Village Competition & entries for diary of village festival and events.

Affordable Rural Housing – A Practical Guide for Parish Councils from the Rural Housing Alliance.

Notice of the first consultation stage of the Electoral Review of Staffordshire until February 21st, 2011.

The review aimed to ensure that every County Councillor represented the same number of electors and could be viewed at www.lgbce.org.uk

Following the Local Council event at the County showground on October 4th, 2010 the County Council had established an email account on an internet based email system for use by all local councils. Mrs. Heelis had set up an account for Eccleshall Parish Council and email accounts could be added for all Councillors, and pointed to existing email addresses.

10/11). Chairman's Report:- There was no report to receive from Councillor Dale

11/12). Accounts:- Retrospective authorisation was granted for the following accounts paid since the last meeting:-

Land Registry - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9</i>	50.00
SLCC Membership – <i>LGA 1972 s.143</i>	168.00
E-on Street lighting & maintenance – <i>Parish Councils Act 1957 s.3</i>	104.21
Creative Copy 'n' Colour - <i>LGA 1972 s.142</i>	258.00
Data Protection	35.00
A.S. Electrical Services – tree lights – <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	264.37
Fosters Breathing Space (Christmas Trees) – <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	2084.46
Eccleshall Guide <i>LGA 1072 s.142</i>	105.00

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following accounts:-

Salaries and Associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2180.24
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	88.94
Trent Grounds Maintenance - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	423.00
Zurich Municipal – Council Insurance policy – <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	2382.09
R. Gamson - purchase of open space - Bishops Ct - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s9</i>	993.74
A.S. Electrical Services – remove tree lights – <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	108.00
Stafford Borough - Civic Amenity visits - <i>concurrent allowance</i>	201.95

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

12/12). Items/date and venue for next meeting:- February 16th, 2011 Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm