

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

January 23rd, 2013

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on January 23rd, 2013 at Eccleshall Community Centre, at 7.30pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

1/13). Present were:-	Councillor G. Dale (Chairman)	Councillor B. Delanchy
	Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor B. Apps
	Councillor P. Mullee	Councillor D. Jacques
	Councillor P. Jones	Councillor L. von Elbing
	Councillor G. Garner	Councillor E. Amos
	Councillor M. Starkey	Mr J. Lancaster – Rural Housing Enabler
	2 members of the public	Ms C. Riley – Housing Plus
	Ms S. Wyke – Independent living & Neighbourhood Services	
	Borough Councillor J. Pert	Mr G. Piper - Gist
	Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk).	Ms C. Hardy - Gist

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Pimble, Allen, Dodkins and Serjeant together with Borough Councillor Chapman and County Councillor Butter.

2/13). Councillor Dispensation requests:- The Clerk had received requests from all the Councillors present to be granted a dispensation to enable them to discuss and vote on matters relating to the setting of the budget and precept. It was resolved to grant the dispensations by a unanimous vote of the Council.

3/13). Public Participation:- The members of the public present did not wish to raise any matters with the Council.

4/13). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on November 21st, 2012:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

5/13). Mr J. Lancaster – Rural Housing Enabler:- Mr Lancaster had concluded an appraisal of potential sites for affordable homes in Eccleshall and presented his findings and recommendations to the Council. The report had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

An independent survey of potential sites had identified 10 sites within and adjacent to the Rural Development Boundary where the 36 homes could be accommodated on one or more of the sites. The criteria involved in identifying the sites included conformity to the requirements of the Borough Council planners in terms of location, services and safe access, minimum impact on neighbouring residential development and the availability of a willing landowner prepared to sell at exception site land values.

Mr Lancaster referred to the Borough Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which showed that all sites with the exception of Site 1 (parking area and garages site on The Burgage) had been submitted for consideration for inclusion in the SHLAA as sites for open market residential development and as such landowner expectations may preclude availability of these sites.

The recommended sites were Sites 1, 2 and 3 (land to the rear of The Burgage outside the RDB) or any combination of these sites and Site 8 (Cross Butts). The Housing Association could approach the Borough Council Planners and landowners and commission a feasibility study to be undertaken by an architect, at no cost to the Parish. This would identify whether there was merit in pursuing any of these schemes and would be followed by a public consultation.

There followed some discussion about the desirability of developing some homes within the Burgage site and providing alternative car parking spaces and garaging for the residents. The Environment Agency had indicated to Mr Lancaster that the land to the rear of the garages was some distance from the floodable area. It was agreed to put the matter on the Planning Committee agenda on February 6th, 2013 for further discussion regarding the sites identified and which to put forward for a feasibility study.

Councillor Jacques expressed concern that the Study would be prejudicial to the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, it was generally considered that once the RDB had been removed land values would make certain areas unavailable for affordable homes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lancaster for producing a comprehensive and excellent report and indicated that the Clerk would contact him after further discussion had taken place.

- 6/13). Mr G. Piper – Gist:-** Mr Piper thanked the Council for the invitation to attend the Council meeting and expressed disappointment at the 'Get Gist out of our Town' Signs that has appeared around Eccleshall over the last few months.

Mr Piper explained how the Company was keen to be involved in the Community and had supplied wood for the Scout Bonfire and to provide heating for the elderly. Gist employed over 200 people from the ST21 postcode, with over 15 of those living in Eccleshall and the workforce contributed to the local economy by patronising shops and pubs in the town. Work was sub-contracted to other companies on Raleigh Hall Estate and a fleet of lorries was hired from a Company at Cold Meece. There were some 33 units based at Raleigh Hall and twice as many trailers.

Councillors indicated that residents had expressed concern about the volume of lorries, especially during the night. Mr Piper explained that there were approximately 110 vehicle movements per day and that studies had been undertaken into safety, number and noise of vehicles, details of which could be passed to Mrs Heelis.

Not all the vehicles went through Eccleshall as some travelled north to Junction 15 of the M6. Alternative routes to avoid the town had been explored but would result in additional mileage, fuels costs and an increased carbon footprint.

Councillors commented that the vehicles did not appear to exceed speed limits and were well driven. Mr Piper advised that they were fitted with tracking systems and speed was monitored.

Complaints should be made in writing to the Head Office at Rosewood, Basingstoke or the depot at Raleigh Hall. Mr Piper stressed that the Company was looking to support local groups and Mrs Heelis was asked to include an item in the next Parish Council Newsletter.

Mr Piper and Ms Hardy were thanked for attending the meeting.

- 7/13). Reports from Borough Councillors:-**

Councillor P. Jones – reported that he had attended a meeting of the Joint Traffic Committee, when an item on the agenda had been Civil Enforcement Officers. Councillor Jones had been assured that problems with vehicles being booked after parking for a short time and returning later in the day would not reoccur unless the tyre valves were in the same position.

Mrs Heelis commented that Mr Allen had agreed to write an article for inclusion in the March Parish Council Newsletter.

Councillor Jones had passed a paper containing advice regarding snow clearance to the Clerk.

The Borough Council was offering a free health and safety check and consultancy to local businesses, which Councillor Jones would bring to the attention of traders in Eccleshall.

Councillor J. Pert – referred to the presentation given by Mr Lancaster and indicated that the Borough Council had not yet identified sites suitable for development and this was part of the Neighbourhood Planning exercise. Affordable homes had been developed at Monks Walk in Gnosall and Councillors were encouraged to visit the site.

Councillor Pert reported that Stafford Borough had announced that no increase was proposed to the precept for 2013/14. Members were asked to become involved in the consultation regarding proposals for Westbridge Park in Stone, which would have an impact on the town centre, leisure and retail services. Councillor Dale commented that it was possible that an exhibition regarding the proposals would be available at Eccleshall Community Centre

- 8/13). Committee Reports:-**

Traffic Management:- Councillor von Elbing indicated that there had been no meeting and the date of the next meeting had been changed to April 3rd, 2013 following the Planning Committee.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Dale referred to the minutes of a meeting held on December 5th, 2013, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda.

- **Trees:-** The Chairman and the Clerk were to meet with a contractor regarding the removal of a tree on the Eyewells Footpath and also the felling of the tree at Croxton Play area on Monday January 28th, 2013 and quotes would be obtained for the consideration of the Council. A meeting was also arranged with Mr Latham from County Highways regarding the possibility of installing wooden posts along the front of The Washpits to prevent vehicular access.
- **Bishops Court:-** A public meeting was to be held on February 27th, 2013 at the Community Centre commencing at 7.30pm. The Clerk had been asked to display all the quotes and designs that had been received, together with dimensions where possible and Matt Higginbottom from PPL had offered to attend.

Mrs Heelis had received two letters from Bill Cash MP seeking information about the proposals on behalf of an Eccleshall resident and copies of the letters and responses submitted had been circulated to members

- **Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust:-** The Deed of Dedication had been checked by the solicitor and deemed to be appropriate and copies of had been circulated to members. It was resolved to accept and sign the Deed with an amendment to the name from Queen Elizabeth II Field, Jubilee Playing Field to Queen Elizabeth II Field, Jubilee Recreation Area.

The next meeting would be held on March 6th, 2013 following the Planning Committee. There were no questions and the minutes of the meeting were adopted by the Council.

Policy and Resources:-

Precept 2013/14:- At a meeting held on January 9th, 2013 committee members had discussed the precept for 2013/14 and copies of the papers had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee had recommended an unchanged precept of £48,700 was levied as per the attached spreadsheet and all were in favour. (The precept had not been increased since April 2011).

The Borough Council had advised that the concurrent functions allowance would remain the same at £3733.00 and that the Council Tax Benefit was to be replaced by a Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Funding from the Government to help eligible households with Council Tax Payments would be paid in the form of grants and the Borough Council had agreed to pass this onto Parishes. This meant that the amount of precept requested would be reduced by a proportionate amount of the government grant and therefore the Council Tax collected from residents would be slightly reduced. (For a Band D property the reduction would be 0.30p)

Mrs Heelis referred to an underspend in the current budget for the computer and was authorised to order a replacement fax, scanner, copier and printer together with a telephone, at an estimated cost of £250.

The Committee had also discussed the granting of dispensations for parish councillors to enable them to discuss and vote on matters relating to the precept, hence the item dealt with at the beginning of the meeting.

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee were adopted by the Council.

Footpaths Committee:- There had been no meeting of the Committee.

9/13). Liaison Representatives:-

There were no reports to receive from Bishops Lonsdale School, Young People, or the Community Centre.

Allotments Association:- Councillor Starkey reported that the AGM had been held on December 5th, 2012 and the Officers were unchanged. Following the purchase of the welfare cabin plot holders were able to obtain keys to the facility for £5. A generator had been installed to provide power and a skip was to be hired to remove rubbish from the site.

Ecclian Society:- Councillor Jones thanked volunteers who helped to remove the Christmas trees. There was to be a meeting of the Management Committee on February 5th, 2013.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor von Elbing reported that there was nothing to report and a meeting of the committee which should have taken place last week had been postponed due to the snow and ice.

Tourism Bureau:- Councillor Jones indicated that he had attended an interesting meeting held at Wolverhampton Race Track in December.

Business Focus Group:- Councillor Jones reported that the Businesses were running a Totally Locally Campaign to encourage residents to shop locally and a newsletter would be distributed to households shortly.

Communities Mean Business:- Councillor von Elbing advised the meeting that an application from Eccleshall Cricket Club / Youth Club had been considered at the December meeting when the group had been awarded funds to purchase equipment for the new building.

Eccleshall Guide:- The latest Guide was currently being printed.

- 10/13). Neighbourhood Plan:-** Approximately 60 residents had attended the public meeting on January 9th, 2013 and notes from the meeting had been circulated to members. Fifteen members of the public had expressed an interest in being involved in the preparation of a Plan, some as individuals others as representatives of local groups.

The Council resolved to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish or Town. Councillors were asked to contact Mrs Heelis if they would like to form a working party together with a group of selected community representatives to assist in the process. The group would report to the Parish Council.

One of the first steps would be to identify the area for submission to the Borough Council for designation. Councillor Delanchy had contacted 'Locality', a network of community-led organisations who had recommended that the whole of the Parish was included otherwise the exercise may have to be repeated for each settlement. Having a specific boundary around Eccleshall would exclude other villages, whereas if the whole parish was designated details specific to the town and each settlement could be included as necessary. It was agreed that this would be a matter for further discussion.

Mrs Heelis indicated that copies of a 'Roadmap Guide to producing Neighbourhood Plans' had been obtained from 'Locality'.

- 11/13). Affordable Housing:-** This matter had already been discussed.

- 12/13). Castle Street Enhancement Scheme:-** It was noted that the cherry trees had been removed but no other work had been carried out due to the snow and ice.

- 13/13). Clerk's report and correspondence:-**

Drake Hall Prison – Community Engagement:- Following a talk given to the Parish Council in July by Mr P. Newton, Prison Governor, the Clerk had circulated copies of a document identifying the types of work that the women could get involved with in the community and the various facilities available for potential use by community groups. Members were asked to consider viable projects for engagement within the Community.

Old Fire Pump:- Mrs Heelis referred to an email from David Steele, Eccleshall Fire Station Manager. Mr Steele referred to proposals for the refurbishment of the Fire Station and the feasibility of utilising the front area for a cadet firefighter scheme, which would involve the relocation of the old pump. The Clerk was asked to reply that the Council would give the matter some consideration, although it was hard to see where the equipment could be housed but as an important traditional piece of the heritage of Eccleshall it would be preferable if it remained in the town.

Civic Amenity Visits:- Mrs Heelis reported that the visit of the lorry scheduled for Saturday January 19th had been cancelled due to severe weather and would be re-arranged for February 16th, 2013.

It was resolved to request visits for 2013/14 as previously on a bi-monthly basis from 9 – 11am.

Network Rail: An application for a Development Consent Order in respect of the planned improvements to the West Coast Main Line at Norton Bridge had been submitted to the Secretary of State and details were available in Eccleshall Library. The deadline for the submission of comments was February 22nd, 2013 and it was agreed to place the item on the agenda of the Planning Committee on February 6th, 2013.

Parish Council Crest:- The Clerk had received a letter from the Ecclesian Society requesting permission to use the Crest over the Reeds Rains Estate Agents premises on the corner of Stafford Street and High Street. There were **no objections** to the use of the crest in this location.

14/13). Chairman's Report:- There was no report to receive.

15/13). Accounts:- Mrs Heelis reported that Councillor Jones had conducted an interim internal audit and found everything to be satisfactory. The Clerk referred to the account details circulated and the list of payments made since the last meeting, these had all been authorised at Planning Committee meetings with the exception of the following:-

A.S. Electrical Services – tree lights – <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	300.00
Woods Christmas Tree Farm - <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	1394.00
Creative Copy 'n' Colour Newsletters - LGA 1972 s.142	258.00

The above payments were authorised, together with the following payments for January:-

Salaries and associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2214.26
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	76.85

16/13). Items / Date and venue for next meeting:- February 20th, 2013, Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm.