

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at Broughton Parish Rooms at 7.30p.m. This meeting was followed by a meeting of Planning Committee.

**76/11). Present Were:-**

Councillor D. Pimble (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor P. Baskerville
Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor J. Allen
Councillor L. von Elbing	Councillor B. Apps
Councillor G. Garner	Councillor M. Dodkins
Councillor P. Allsop	Councillor M. Starkey
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor P. Mullee
County Councillor H. Butter	Borough Councillor F. Chapman
Mrs C. Heelis - Clerk	1 member of the public
Jessica Wilkes-Mellor	Euan McRobie

Apologies were received from Councillors Dale, Jones, Jacques and Borough Councillor Pert  
In the absence of Councillor G. Dale, Councillor D. Pimble took the Chair.

*The meeting opened with prayers.*

**77/11). Public Participation:-** Mr Ranson referred to the Eccleshall column in the Staffordshire Newsletter where it was reported that the Council had agreed to return to the 'first past the post' voting system for future election of officers and co-options. Also grants of £300 had been awarded to The First Responders and the local student Firefighter Scheme, these reports were factually incorrect as the items had not been ratified by the Council.

Mr Ranson also referred to the fact that Mr R. Lee had been allowed to speak at the June Council meeting in excess of the time limit of 3 minutes stipulated in Standing Orders.

**78/11). Presentation, Youth activities – Jessica Wilkes-Mellor, Us2 Youth Support Worker and Euan McRobie:-** Jessica reported that Youth Drop in sessions at Eccleshall library were very successful and reaching the maximum capacity for the upstairs venue of 25. An alternative venue was being sought. Euan spoke on behalf of the young people and welcomed the new drop-in, which was the first youth club in Eccleshall for 8 years.

Eighteen young people were signed up for the Summer scheme, which included training and support to become youth leaders and ambassadors in the community. Planned activities included Circus Skills, a weekend residential on Cannock Chase, a barbecue and junior Masterchef competition. Jessica continued to work with the young people and establish needs and their suggestions for the Bishops Court open space, which were a goal post and somewhere to sit. The youth club needed support, a management committee and a treasurer in order to become sustainable. A celebration barbecue was planned in September at Offley Hay Village Hall when Councillors would be welcome.

Jessica was asked to report back to the Council meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup> and also submit a report and photographs for inclusion in the September Parish Council Newsletter. Councillor Dodkins proposed a vote of thanks to Jessica for her enthusiasm and hard work and this was reinforced by the Council.

**79/11). To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011:-** The minutes had been circulated with the agendas and were approved with the following amendments/additions:-

**Bishop Lonsdale School:-** Councillor Chapman indicated what he considered to be an inaccuracy in the minutes. 64/11 stated that Councillor Chapman had advised the Council that the school would move regardless of the development. An amendment was agreed to the effect that Councillor Chapman had always maintained that the planning application had to fall or stand on its merits and that the move of the school to a single site was not dependent on its success.

**Parking – Stone Road:-** At the request of Councillor Dodkins it was agreed to add that some Councillors had expressed concern about safety issues arising from vehicles parked on Stone Road.

It was noted that the cones had now been removed and cars were parked outside the Police Station / toilets as previously.

**80/11). Reports from Borough / County Councillors:-** Councillor Chapman indicated that an opportunity had recently arisen to fulfil a shared ambition of local councillors and residents for the refurbishment of Castle Street through joint funding and partnership working. A scheme was being prepared supported by Councillors Butter, Jones and Pert and funding opportunities were being explored with the County and Borough Councils. In addition residents of Selwyn Court and Castle Street had submitted a petition and funding application to Stafford and Rural Homes. The Council welcomed these proposals and indicated support for such a scheme. It was agreed that Mr R. Gatensbury would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Planning Committee to present the proposals and assist the Parish Council with an application for Leader Funding.

**Councillor Butter:-** Councillor Butter reported that he had received several applications for funding from the Local Community Fund, including applications from the Community Centre Association towards the cost of fencing and the Clerk towards the costs of a new web site. Councillor Butter indicated that he was pleased to see that the kerbing at Mere Rise had finally been completed.

Councillor Allsop queried whether the Councillors had any further information about the future of local bus services. The members responded that the County Council was not obliged to maintain the services and it really was a case of use the buses or lose them.

**81/11) Committee Reports:-**

**Traffic Management Committee:-** Councillors Dodkins and von Elbing had attended a meeting with Slindon Residents regarding the speed of traffic through the village and a report would be presented to the next meeting of the committee on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Councillor Dale had received complaints from a number of people who had parked in the High Street for a time, moved off and returned later in the day to a different location and been booked. Councillor Chapman indicated that he had received the same complaints and taken the matter up with the joint parking board through the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Frances Beatty.

This matter was referred to the Traffic Management Committee for consideration together with the fact that cars stopping to pick up/drop off relatives outside John Pershall Court were also being booked.

**Enhancements Committee:-** There had been no meeting of the Committee, however, Councillor Dale asked members to visit the Picnic Site in order to consider whether a fallen tree should remain as a feature or be removed.

**Policy and Resources Committee:-** Councillor Allen referred to minutes of the meeting held on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, which had been circulated with the agenda.

- **Councils Insurances and Deeds:-** A paper detailing the land/property owned by the Parish Council and insurance policies relating to the Council and the Community Centre had been circulated with the minutes for information and was adopted by the Council.
- **Community Centre Insurance:-** the committee had been authorised to consider the renewal premium for the Policy which was due by July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The total amount due for one year was £1,727.02. The Committee resolved to accept an offer to secure the same rate of £1,451.18 for a 5 year term, saving a total of approximately £1,379.00 over the period. (The premium would still be subject to an annual increase due to index linking of the buildings sum insured).
- **Internal Audit Controls –** The committee reviewed the internal audit controls and recommended to the Council that the existing controls remained adequate.
- **Review of Allotment Rents:-** It was reported that the Allotment Rents had been reviewed in 2008 and an increase in rents had been applied from April 2010. Historically rents had been increased every three years and twelve months' notice was required by the Association. It was agreed to include the matter on the agenda for the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to enable the members to consider applying an increase from April 2013 in accordance with previous practice.

- **Voting on appointments:-** Following recent co-options the committee had considered Standing Orders, which indicated that the single transferable vote would be used to vote on appointments. The Committee recommended an amendment to 12 (a) of the Council's Standing Orders, however, it was noted that the recommendation contained in the minutes was incorrect and should read as follows:-

Where more than 2 people have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council the 'first past the post' system will be used by voting for one candidate only with a cross (X). The successful candidate being the one with the most votes.

It was noted that to amend Standing Orders two thirds of the Council were required to vote in favour of the proposal and the motion was carried by 11 votes to 1.

- **Request from Mr E. Ranson to display Standing Orders on the web site:-** The Committee had considered the Council's Publication Scheme which had been agreed in 2009 and could be viewed on the Council website. The scheme indicated that copies of the Standing Orders were available on application to the Clerk for a cost of 10p per sheet for photocopying. The Committee recommended to the Council that no changes to the scheme were required and the motion was passed with one vote against and two abstentions.
  - **Web Site provider:-** Several quotes had been obtained for the development of a new site, which could be regularly updated by the clerk through a Content Management System. Councillor Butter had agreed to fund 50% of the set up fees from his Local Community Fund. The Clerk had circulated copies of a spreadsheet to allow members to make a comparison of the providers available and the matter would be discussed by the Committee at the next meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011.
  - **Clerk's Contract and Annual Appraisal:-** Councillor Allen proposed to recommend to the Council that a review was unnecessary at this time and that no further action was taken, however, the Clerk indicated concern that her Contract had not been reviewed since 2005 and additional responsibilities were undertaken that should be added to the Job Description. Mrs Heelis also wished members to note that no salary increase had been applied since a 1.25% increase in April 2009. It was agreed that Clerk should attend a meeting with Councillor Allen and Councillor Allsop to consider these issues and if necessary the matter would be referred to the Staffing Committee.
  - **Grant requests:-** The Committee had considered two grant requests each of £500. It was noted that if both requests were acceded to there would be very little left from the grant allocation of £1250 for the year 2011/12. As it was only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the way into the new financial year other requests may be received and there was nothing to prevent groups applying for a second sum of money at a later date.
- Eccleshall First Responders:-** The group was seeking funding of £490 towards the purchase of a uniform and personal protection wear for a new member. A grant of £300 was agreed for this purpose.
- Local Student Firefighter Scheme:-** Funding of £500 was being sought to enable the Club to continue. It was resolved to contribute a grant of £300 towards this scheme.
- **Code of Conduct:-** The Localism Bill which was expected to receive royal assent in late 2011 sought to repeal the Code of Conduct and provide options for Councils to either revise their existing codes, adopt a new code, or withdraw the existing code without replacing it. A Legal Briefing from NALC contained recommendations on the aforementioned options and it was agreed to include this item on a future committee agenda when the relevant statutory provisions came into force.

**The Council adopted the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee with the aforementioned amendment.**

**Footpaths Committee:-** Councillor Allen proposed to call a meeting of the Committee with a view to undertaking an audit of the Footpath leaflets to ensure that the details remained correct. The leaflets had been printed in 1997 and were in need of a revamp.

The Council was advised that Footpath 120 near to Yew Tree Farm was subject to a diversion, which had been agreed by the Rights of Way Officer and the details had been passed to the Clerk to be placed on file.

**82/11). Liaison Representatives:-** There were no reports to receive from the Allotments Association, Slindon Residents, Business Focus Group, Tourism Bureau, First Responders, Communities Mean Business or Offley Hay Village Hall. A report had already been received from the Young People.

**Ecclian Society:-** Councillor Baskerville submitted the following report:-

- The change-over of the baskets and mangers was complete. Special thanks to all those who helped.
- The Open Gardens event brought over 300 visitors to the town.
- The 2012 Eccleshall calendar was drafted and would be available towards the end of October.
- The Christmas lights were scheduled to be put up on Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup> with the switch on taking place on Monday 28<sup>th</sup>. This would ensure that the Town was lit for the Business Focus Group event.
- A replacement trough for outside John Pershall Court had been ordered
- The Ecclian members B.B.Q was to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> August
- Seats for Elford Heath and the Eyeswells were being investigated and when proposals are ready they would be put before the Council.
- A meeting was to be held with a an Officer from Stafford Borough Council who was responsible for Historic Buildings with regard to the Crest the Society proposed to display above Reeds Rains.

Members were advised of the following plans for 2012

- Eccleshall Festival June 16<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> with Open Gardens June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Hanging Baskets and mangers erected 3<sup>rd</sup> June.
- Union Jacks would be erected to mark the Queen's Diamond jubilee in the brackets and pipes that hold the Christmas Trees the preceding week, these would be funded by the Ecclian Society.

**Farmers' Market:-** Councillor Allsop reported that the next market would be held on Saturday July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The market would continue to operate as previously when the Royal Oak was opened.

**Community Centre:-** Councillor Dale's written report thanked Councillor Mullee for reporting children on the roof and the incidents had been reported to the Police, in addition to two broken windows and an external door, which had been forced open. The new curtains had been installed in the Jubilee Room.

**Bishop Lonsdale School:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that she had met with the Headteacher. Mr Middleton had indicated that the school had nothing to do with and would not benefit from the planning application for 82 dwellings. The school would not be moving to a single site in September, as had been previously reported. There had been a 60% increase in vandalism recently and the school would like to install lighting on the South Site. Councillors were invited to attend assemblies at the school on Friday afternoons at 2.30pm.

**83/11). Clerks Report and Correspondence:-**

**The Royal Oak –** Members were invited to attend a Trade Night on Wednesday July 27<sup>th</sup> between 5.30pm and 10pm

**St. John's Ambulance Community Transport]-** A report from Councillor Jacques on the launch of a new community transport minibus had been circulated to members.

**Parish Council Newsletter:-** Mrs Heelis requested photographs and articles for inclusion in the September newsletter.

**Offley Hay Village Hall:-** An email had been received from Jane Dunbill indicating that user groups at the hall would like to locate a notice board below the existing board at the village hall to advertise events. It was stated that the offer to use the Parish Council notice board was appreciated but there was insufficient room and the Chairperson of the Village Hall Committee refused to consider the views

of the various groups. It was agreed that the Parish Council had no jurisdiction in this matter and the Council resolved to take no further action as this was an internal issue for the Village Hall Committee to settle.

**Electoral Review of Staffordshire:-** The Clerk referred to the draft recommendations from the Boundary Commission, which included the extension of the Eccleshall Ward. The document could be viewed on the website [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

**84/11). Accounts:-** Authorisation was requested for payment of the following accounts:-

Salaries & associated costs - LGA 1972 s. 112	2196.36
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	56.40
Salaries and associated costs - August - LGA 1972 s. 112	2196.36
SPCA Training - LGA 1972 s.111	115.00
Stafford Borough - Civic Amenity visits - concurrent allowance	104.50

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

**Audit 2010/11:-** The audit had been completed by the Audit Commission and no matters were reported to bring to the attention of the Council.

The Clerk was authorised to pay any invoices received prior to the September meeting in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

**85/11). Chairman's Report:-** Councillor Pimble read a report from Councillor Dale apologising for his absence and indicating that this was the first meeting he had missed since joining the Council in 1994.

Councillor Dale also referred to the fact that details of recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee had been reported to the grant applicants and also appeared in the press as having been agreed by the Council. It was incorrect and imprudent to publicise these items until they had had been ratified at the Council meeting. Mrs Heelis was asked to email Councillor Jones to this effect.

**86/11). Items/Date and venue for next meeting:-** September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

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