

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

March 17th 2010

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on March 17th 2010, at Eccleshall Community Centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall at 7.30pm.

27/10). Present were:-

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor D. Pimble (Vice–Chair)
Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor J. Pert
Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor B. Apps
Councillor J. Allen	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor M. Starkey	Councillor P. Allsop
Councillor Holl,	Councillor E. Amos
Councillor L. von Elbing	1 member of the press
Borough Councillor F. Chapman	4 members of the public
Borough / County Councillor H. Butter	Squadron Leader Neil Hope
Mrs. C. Heelis (Clerk)	Commander Warren James

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors J. Jones and P. Jones, P.C. K. Green and PCSO Lutwyche.

The meeting opened with prayers.

28/10). Commander Warren James and Squadron Leader Neil Hope – RAF Shawbury:- The Officers had been invited to attend the meeting following a complaint from a member of the public concerning numerous low flying helicopters hovering over the town using searchlights.

Commander James explained about the training activities that took place from Shawbury where there were 1000 trainee pilots, helicopter crews, air traffic and operations staff and numerous support and contract services. There were 117,000 aircraft movements per year from Shawbury and low level and night time flying were a vital part of the training.

The type of helicopters used was due to change and the Commander indicated that Parish Councillors would be invited to view the new aircraft and determine whether they made more or less noise. The trainees were encouraged to become involved in the local communities and charitable works and any suggestions for projects would be welcomed. Helicopters were also available to bring to Festivals or fund raising events.

Mr. Brys, who had initially raised the issue, asked why it was necessary for the helicopters to hover over the town with searchlights on.

Commander James indicated that he would investigate the complaints to ascertain whether the helicopters were from the base, it was possible that they were police helicopters, although many exercises involved the base at Swynnerton. Complaints could be submitted on the website where details of flying were also publicised.

Air Traffic could be controlled from a radius of 40miles from the Shawbury base and positions of aircraft noted. The helicopters used lights during the daytime to ensure visibility by other aircraft and also birds. It was noted that helicopters were used locally by the Police in connection with Drake Hall Prison and there was also the occasional private helicopter and Air Ambulance.

The Officers were thanked for a very interesting and informative presentation.

29/10). Public Participation:- None of the members of the public present wished to raise any matters.

30/10). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on February 17th, 2010:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

31/10). Police:- The Clerk read a report detailing two incidents of note in the Parish since the last meeting. In accordance with the Council resolution of February 17th 2010, letters had been sent to members of the Police Authority. An acknowledgement had been received from Inspector Mark Dean indicating that the correspondence had been forwarded for the attention of Chief Superintendent Baker, who would ensure that direct contact was made to address the issues raised.

32/10). Reports from Borough Councillors:-

County / Borough Councillor H. Butter:- Councillor Butter asked members to consider projects, which may be eligible for funding through the Local Community Fund from April 2010.

A report that the Housing allocation for Stafford Borough had been greatly reduced was welcomed by the Parish Council.

Borough Councillor F. Chapman:- Councillor Chapman reported that he had investigated complaints regarding the 432 bus service and the matters had subsequently been resolved. Further representations were being made to Arriva with a view to extending the service to Stafford Railway Station.

Councillor Chapman stated that he shared the Parish Councils' concerns with regard to the Section 106 agreement in respect of the development at 30, Castle Street. He had taken the matter up with the Borough Council members for Planning and Leisure and was awaiting replies.

Councillor I. Jennings:- The Clerk indicated that following the last Council meeting several emails had been sent to Councillor Jennings, but no response had been received to date. Councillors remained concerned that Councillor Jennings appeared to have no interest in matters affecting Eccleshall Parish and was unable to represent the community adequately if he was unaware of items of concern. It was proposed to write to Councillor M. Heenan and the Stone Conservative Association to express the disquiet of the Parish Council in this matter and the fact that this disregard for local constituents disadvantaged the local electorate. The motion was passed by 12 votes to 1.

Mrs. Heelis was asked to stress that Councillors Butter and Chapman regularly attended meetings, made representations on behalf of the Parish Council and pursued matters of concern.

33/10). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- A meeting with Mr. C. Mitchell was scheduled for April 30th with the next meeting of the Committee arranged for May 5th 2010 following the meeting of the Planning Committee. Councillor Pert indicated that he and Councillor von Elbing planned to meet with Slindon residents in April.

Local Transport Plan: Councillor Pert reported that the latest document concerned Strategic Environmental Assessment and was available for comments via the County Council website. A draft submission had been prepared and copies were available for members who wished to be involved. Authority to finalise and submit a response from the Parish Council was delegated to Councillors Pert, von Elbing, Starkey and the Clerk.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Dale referred to the minutes from the meeting of the Committee on March 3rd 2010, which had been circulated to members.

The Committee had noted that problems with Dog Fouling had increased particularly on the Eyeswells Footpath. It was resolved that Councillor Pert would approach the Headteacher at Bishop Lonsdale School with a view to organising a poster competition amongst the pupils to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets. The Council would judge the entries with a small prize to be presented at a Council Meeting provided from Section 137 finance.

Adopt a BT telephone kiosk:- BT had simplified the procedure to adopt a kiosk and the Clerk continued to seek further information from BT and other Parish Councils. It was noted that the Kiosk on 'The Star' car park at Copmere was on private land and therefore, could only be adopted by the landowner. Councillor Allsop agreed to pass the details onto the Landlord. Further consideration of this matter was deferred to the next meeting of the Enhancements Committee on June 2nd 2010.

Toilet Area:- Groundwork had finished the work and cleared the site. Overall the workmanship was of a good standard and the appearance of the site was improved. Following concerns raised at the meeting Councillor Dale had inspected the paved area from the Indian Restaurant to the newly laid path and proposed that all that was required was a clean up.

Elford Pool:- Three quotations had been received to dredge/clean out the pool, which ranged from £5,400 to £7,500.00. It was noted that any work could not be started until later in the year due to spawning and nesting seasons and further advice would be sought from the Environment Agency if the Council decided to proceed.

Jackson and Pugh had undertaken one day's work clearing the trees and vegetation to the north side of the pool at a cost of £300 and two further days had been ordered in accordance with the resolution of the Council on January 20th 2010 to incur costs of up to £1000.00. This action was ratified by the Council.

In order to determine whether to clear out the pool and restock with fish or leave it in its present condition and concentrate on clearing the vegetation, it was agreed to arrange for a survey to be undertaken at a cost of £450.00. The report would state conclusively whether Greater Crested Newts were present or not and would also provide an annotated habitat map including features of interest, short report including site description and general recommendations for future reference. The Clerk was asked to clarify how long the survey would remain pertinent for.

Notice Board and seat:- Both items had been installed by the Highways Authority and positive feedback had been received. Any material for display on the notice board should be passed to the Clerk, Councillor Dale or Councillor P. Jones as key holders. Councillor Apps proposed that the finials and bands were painted gold however, it was decided that this could create additional maintenance work and this suggestion could be reconsidered when the paint faded.

Street Watch:- The Borough Council had removed rubbish from the Royal Oak Car Park and boarded up the entrance from the High Street. Punch Taverns had failed to respond to correspondence regarding the condition of the site since the premises had been closed and would be invoiced by the Borough Council for the work.

Pictorial Meadow:- Members were requested to join a working party to prepare the ground and sow seeds on April 13th at 10am. Councillor Apps volunteered to treat the area with weedkiller prior to this date.

Grassed Area – Horsefair:- The area was becoming an eyesore with vehicles parking on the grass. It was proposed to use railway sleepers to raise the area to prevent access and sow seeds to enhance the site. Councillor Pimble agreed to draw up a scheme which could be presented to Mr. Mitchell for approval.

Newsletters:- Mrs. Heelis indicated that the cost of producing the quarterly newsletters in colour would be £258 as opposed to £230 for black and white. The Council resolved that future publications would be printed in colour.

Watering:- Tenders for the Watering contract during 2010 had been sent to Mr. Parton and Stafford Borough Council. The Clerk reported that Mr. Parton had indicated that he would not submit a tender on this occasion as he was unable to undertake the work as cost effectively as the Borough Council. Mr. Parton had stated that he would be happy to tender for the contract in the future if the Borough Council was unable to undertake the watering.

The minutes of the Enhancements Committee were adopted by the Council

Policy and Resources Committee:- The next meeting would be held on April 7th 2010 following the meeting of the Planning Committee.

Footpaths:- Councillor Allen reported that the four kissing gates had been installed on 'The Leys' footpath and many favourable comments had been received. Mrs Heelis read a letter of thanks from the landowner, Mrs. C. Carter. The application forms for funding under the Community Paths Initiative scheme during 2010/11 had been received and Councillor Allen was investigating a possible project.

34/10). Liaison Representatives:- There were no reports to receive from the Tourism Bureau, Eccleshall Festival, Young Peoples' Champion, or Business Focus Group

Allotments Association:- Councillor Apps reported that he had attended a meeting of the association on March 9th 2010. Road scrapings were being sought for the roadways and it was suggested that if any roadworks were being undertaken locally the gang could be asked if the scrapings could be deposited at the Allotments site. Some allotment holders were still keen to have sheds or a brick shelter to store the rotavator and strimmer, although there was a clause on the tenancy agreement to the effect that no sheds or other structures were to be erected on the site

and only storage containers no more than 3' in height were permitted. Councillor Pimble stressed that the permitted development rights had been removed by the Borough Council when planning permission for the site was granted, thereby requiring the submission of a planning application for the erection of any buildings. It was stated that the Association should apply formally to the Parish Council regarding such matters. Councillors remained concerned about possible vandalism and the appearance of the site if the erection of sheds was allowed.

Ecclian Society:- Councillor Baskerville reported that the Society was looking for residents to open their gardens during the annual open garden event.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor Allsop reported that he had suggested that a grant application be submitted to the Parish Council as the committee was considering making an access from the car park onto the grassed area, for use by the Caravan Club.

Farmers' Market:- Councillor Allsop reported that the next market on March 27th would have an Easter theme and would include an energy saving exhibition and an owl show.

First Responders:- Further to concerns raised on January 20th regarding the extension to the area covered by the Eccleshall First Responders, Councillor Garner reported that he had established that the purpose of the proposed extension was a way of providing a backup response. Responders within 8 minutes of an incident would be contacted in the first instance, however, if there was no-one on duty the next area would be contacted. There was one person interested in undergoing training at present but there were currently no available courses.

Slindon Village Hall:- Residents had requested a meeting with Councillors Pert and von Elbing with regard to speed monitoring.

Communities Mean Business:- Councillor von Elbing reported that she had been unable to attend the last meeting, but suggested that the project at Elford Pool may qualify for funding through the scheme.

Eccleshall Community Centre:- It was noted that the fence had been refurbished by Frosts and work had commenced to lay the base for the conservatory. Councillor Dale requested payment of the £11,721.00, which the Council had previously agreed to pay towards the project. All were in favour.

Councillor Dale reported that the Pre-school had approached the Association requesting permission to apply for planning permission to install safety surfacing on the outdoor play area and cover it with a wooden canopy, the project would be funded by entirely the Pre-school. The Parish Council, as owners of the building, had no objections and it was agreed to enquire whether the Parish Council could make the planning application to secure the 50% reduction in cost.

Bishop Lonsdale School:- Councillor Pert reported that plans for a single site school were progressing slowly. A new Headteacher, Mr. C. Middleton, had been appointed and would be in post from the Autumn term.

35/10). Clerk's report and correspondence:- The following correspondence was reported:-

William Cash, MP had written enquiring if the Parish Council would like him to make any representations on any specific matters.

Department for children, Schools and Families – A letter and Order had been received regarding the enabling of assets from the Former Croxton National school, amounting to £69,595.88 held in a deposit fund of the Central Board of finance of the Church of England, to be applied for the benefit of schools of the same denomination within the state system of Education. The Clerk was asked to write to the Secretary of State requesting that the finance be spent in Eccleshall to assist Bishop Lonsdale School to be developed as a single site.

Royal Oak car park:- A letter had been received from Mr. G. Dingle, 9, Chatsworth Mews concerning the state of the Royal Oak car park and suggesting that a barrier was erected across the entrance to prevent illicit use. Members agreed that the Parish Council had no powers to erect a barrier on private land and the car park provided useful parking space for people working in the town. Councillors considered that if a barrier was erected it could lead to increased vandalism and misuse. The Clerk was asked to write to Mr. Dingle and suggest that he contact Punch Taverns directly about the car park. It was noted that the Borough Council had written to Punch Taverns on several occasions without receiving any response.

Bishop Lonsdale CE (VC) Primary School:- Members were again advised that the term of office for a Local Authority Governor was due to end on May 5th 2010. The Council did not wish to submit a nomination to be considered for appointment.

Eccleshall Cricket Club:- A letter had been received from Mr. C. Marshall seeking support for an application from the Cricket Club for funding from 'Communities Mean Business' towards a new

pavilion. Mrs Heelis was asked to write in support of the application, which would be of benefit to the community, with the proviso that the pavilion could also be used as a youth club.

Volunteers were sought to assist Councillor Garner and the Clerk to fix 30mph stickers on wheelie bins on Newport Road on Friday 19th and 26th of March.

The Clerk requested Committee Chairman to submit reports for the Parish Meeting on April 28th 2010. The format of the meeting would remain unchanged.

Croxton Play Area:- The safety inspection and risk assessment had been undertaken by Wicksteed Leisure. The report, which identified three low risk issues connected with the fencing and monitoring of tree growth on access pathways, together with one medium risk issue associated with the gate, was referred to the Enhancements Committee for consideration.

36/10). Chairman's Report:- Councillor Dale indicated that he had overspent the Chairman's allowance for 2009/10 by £83.66. It was agreed to pay this amount from the budget allocated for contingencies. The Chairman had been invited to attend the Stone Civic Dinner on April 24th 2010.

37/10). Accounts:- Copies of the accounts had been circulated, Mrs. Heelis referred to the sum of £660.00, which had been received from Staffordshire County Council for the purchase of three kissing gates on The Leys footpath.

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following:-

Salaries and associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2158.29
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	53.04
D. Greenaway - kissing gates - <i>Milwood Homes Fund (part funded by CC & Com Fund</i>	1692.00
Broxap - <i>Seat Parish Councils Act 1957 ss. 2 & 3</i>	680.32
Creative Copy 'n' Colour Newsletters - <i>LGA 1972 s.142</i>	230.00
Creative Copy 'n' Colour Footpaths Leaflets - <i>LGA 1972 s.142</i>	114.00
Jackson & Pugh - Grasscutting - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	636.85
Wicksteed Leisure	83.43
Chairman's Allowance - <i>LGA 1972 ss. 15(5)</i>	83.66
Eccleshall Community Centre - Hall Hire - <i>LG Misc Provisions Act 1978 s.19</i>	11721.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

The Council resolved that the £279.00 for the seat purchased from Broxap would be vired from unspent finance allocated for watering in the 2009/10 budget. £300.00 had been received towards the seat from the Local Community Fund.

The Clerk was authorised to pay any further invoices received prior to March 31st 2010 in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

38/10). Land at rear of Eccleshall Community Centre:- A meeting had been held with Mr. MacDonald on February 26th 2010. A draft site layout and scheme were being prepared and would be available for public consultation in due course, with a view to a planning application being submitted in June/July. A date for a further meeting would be arranged subject to the availability of draft plans.

39/10). Items/Date and venue for the next meeting:- April 21st 2010 Broughton Parish Rooms, 7.30pm.

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