

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

March 19th, 2014

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on March 19th, 2014 at Eccleshall Community Centre, at 7.30pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

26/14). Present were:-

Councillor G. Dale (Chairman)	Councillor D. Pimble
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor P. Baskerville
Councillor L. Serjeant	Councillor B. Apps
Councillor M. Dodkins	Councillor G. Garner
Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)	2 members of the public
1 member of the press	

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors von Elbing, Jones, Delanchy, Mullee, Jacques, Starkey and Allen together with Borough Councillors Chapman and Pert.

27/14). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations: There were no requests to receive.

28/14). Public Participation:- The members of the public present did not wish address the meeting.

29/14). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on February 19th, 2014:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

30/14). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-

Mrs Heelis referred to a report from Councillor Chapman indicating he had discussed the following highways matters within the Parish with Chris Mitchell:-

1. It was planned to insert some oak posts in the grass verge and bank adjoining the Green at the top of Kerry Lane to prevent further damage. When this had been done then the verge could be repaired by the Neighbourhood Highways Team.
2. It was proposed to replace white plastic 'posts' in Castle Street protecting the grass verge, with oak posts in keeping with the conservation area.
3. Methods of protecting the grass verge in Church Street were being investigated and it had been suggested that plastic mesh could be into the grass. This had been requested previously but the County Council had been opposed to the proposals.
4. A loose inspection cover in Castle Street, which made a considerable noise when hit by traffic, would be repaired.
5. The condition of the road surface in Castle Street and Stafford Street had been discussed. Mr Mitchell indicated that funds for the extensive refurbishments required were not available and regular patching of potholes would be undertaken as necessary. This was not considered to be satisfactory and Councillor Chapman had undertaken to press for more substantial resurfacing of both Streets.

Councillor Chapman reminded members that funding would be available from the 1st April from the Local Community Fund to support community projects and asked that applicants contacted him to discuss their projects before submitting an application.

It was noted that Councillor Chapman was invited to attend the meetings that members of the Traffic Management Committee held with Mr Mitchell, but the County Councillor also had separate meetings with the Officer to bring forward matters in his Ward and prioritise projects through the Divisional Highways Programme.

31/14). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- Councillor Serjeant referred to the minutes from the meeting of the Traffic Management Committee held on March 5th, 2014, which had been previously circulated.

Parking Castle Street:- PCSO Lutwyche had attended the meeting to raise concerns about parking issues on Castle Street outside the cottages next to 'The Smithy'. Vehicles were parking and obstructing the flow of traffic, causing traffic to back up to the roundabout and creating issues with buses stopping at the bus stop. The Committee agreed to monitor parking issues on Castle Street together with similar problems reported on Gaol Butts.

High Street:- The Committee had discussed parking issues in the High Street and problems with HGV's trying to pass. It was considered that the issues would be reduced if parking bays were painted on the carriageway, as was the case in other areas. Councillor Apps had photographed examples of poor parking, which exacerbated problems in the High Street. It was resolved to write to Mr Mitchell enclosing some of the photographic evidence.

Traffic Monitoring- The Clerk had received quotations to undertake traffic surveys from the Highway Data Team at the County Council and also the results of surveys carried out in recent years.

Proposed access – Development rear of Eccleshall Community Centre:- Bishop Lonsdale School had been approached regarding concerns about the proposed roundabout on Shaw's Lane, however, an email had been received from the Headteacher indicating that the school had made their representations to Taylor Wimpey through the appropriate channels. It was agreed to write to the Highways Department requesting the imposition of Traffic Regulation Orders to prevent inappropriate parking and potential obstruction at school drop off / pick up times.

Stafford Street and Castle Street:- Although the roundabouts had been painted, the road surface had deteriorated significantly. It was agreed to write to Mr Mitchell requesting resurfacing to be undertaken without delay due to the condition of the road surface and enquiring whether different materials could be used to raise and define the roundabouts. The letter was to be copied to Councillor Chapman.

Raleigh Hall:- The Local Plan indicated that Highways improvements would be required to facilitate the expansion of Raleigh Hall and referred to a roundabout on the A519. It was proposed to write to the Future Planning Team at the County Council to establish what the nature of the comments were submitted by the Highways and how many additional lorries would be needed to justify the construction of a roundabout on the A519.

The minutes of the Traffic Management Committee were adopted by the Council.

Enhancements Committee:- The next meeting of the Committee would be held on April 2nd, 2014 following the Planning Committee Meeting.

Policy and Resources Committee – There was nothing to report

Footpaths Committee:- Mrs Heelis reported that the Rights of Way Office was seeking quotes to address flooding issues on Footpath 15 between Usulwall Close and Blackbird Cottage and outstanding repairs to a gate on Footpath 8/9 were to be investigated.

32/14). Liaison Representatives:- There were no reports to receive from the Business Focus Group, Tourism Bureau or Allotments Association.

Ecclian Society:- The next walk was on Sunday 23rd, March. The March Ecclian Newsletter had been delivered to the whole town and volunteers were being sought to participate in the Open Gardens on June 14th and 15th, 2014.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor Dodkins reported that bookings were good with the venue being virtually full during the week.

Bishop Lonsdale School: - Councillor Dodkins reported that the Florist, Sean Hirst had been liaising with the School to provide something special for Mums on Mother's Day.

Community Centre:- Councillor Dale indicated that the guttering had been checked and cleaned with several broken downpipes being replaced.

Young People:- Emma had returned from her visit to Japan where she had met with local children. It was suggested that Emma was invited to give a talk about the visit at the Parish Meeting.

Communities Mean Business:- Councillor Dodkins indicated that at a recent meeting held at Stowe the committee had discussed past and future finances. From 2015 the funding source would be DEFRA and projects were expected to be farming based.

33/14). Neighbourhood Plan:- Councillor Pimble reported that there would be a meeting of the group on Thursday March 20th, 2014 at 6pm. Raj Bains the Neighbourhood Planning Officer with Stafford

Borough Council, had agreed to attend to advise on formulating the Policies to be contained in the Plan. The group would be advised that proposals had been received from two developers for the land off Cross Butts and land off Stafford Road / Badgers Croft, which may impact on the Plan. Developments could help to meet the aspirations of the Community and these would be reflected in the plan objectives. It was expected that the Borough Council would be attending a future meeting to assist with the identification of new settlement boundaries.

Councillor Pimble indicated that the funding received from Locality had been used and it was proposed to apply for a further grant up to the limit of £7000 towards surveys and printing costs. Councillor Pimble referred to the £2000 included in the 2014/15 and proposed that £1000 was earmarked to fund the additional hours worked by the Clerk on the Neighbourhood Plan. All were in favour.

34/14). Clerk's Report and Correspondence:-

Old Fire Pump:- Despite the efforts of both the Clerk and Chairman, no response had been received from the Co-op with regard to proposals to relocate the equipment under the Arches of the store on Stafford Street. The Clerk had again written to the Managing Director and was awaiting a reply.

Offer of a defibrillator:- The Chairman had been contacted by the Rotary Cub offering to donate a defibrillator to the Community Centre. Mrs Heelis had received an email claiming that the Chairman had refused the offer, however, this was not the case as Councillor Dale had indicated that the offer would be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Community Centre Association for consideration.

The Community Council of Staffordshire's Good Neighbour Scheme:- Councillor Dodkins referred to details of the scheme, which had distributed to members. The scheme involved organising a group of volunteers to assist people in the community requiring support and help, including assistance with transport, gardening or running general errands. The Community Council had secured funding to support pilot scheme but this due to end in June 2014. The Council was asked to register an interest in establishing a scheme to enable new funding to be secured. It was agreed to include the item on the agenda for the next meeting to enable members to consider the information provided.

Watering Contract:- The Clerk requested permission to invite Stafford Borough Council to tender for the watering contract for 2014. Enquiries had been made with the Governor of Drake Hall previously and it had been determined that the Prison could not be undertake the watering. Members were unaware of anyone else who may be able / willing to undertake the work as cost effectively as the Borough.

A motion to suspend Standing Orders with regard to obtaining three tenders for the contract could not be taken as there were less than ten members of the Parish Council present. The Clerk was authorised to approach Stafford Borough Council and it was agreed to put the motion to waive Standing Orders with regard to this contract, to the next Council Meeting.

35/14). Chairman's Report:- There was no report to receive.

36/14). Clerk's Report:-

Level of Council reserves:- In order to clarify concerns regarding the level of Council reserves raised by Councillor Pert at the last meeting, Mrs Heelis had circulated an extract from the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils' Guide. The following guidance was noted:-

- Whenever a council's year-end general reserve is significantly higher than the annual precept, an explanation should be provided to the Auditor.
The balance at March 31st, 2013 had been £44,406.86 – as opposed to the precept for 2012/13 of £48700.00.
- It is generally accepted that general (ie un-earmarked) reserves usually lie within the range of three to twelve months gross expenditure.
The gross expenditure for 2012/13 had been £69,218.28

The Clerk referred to the following accounts, which had been paid since the last meeting:-

Jacksons of Eccleshall - grasscutting - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s10</i>	984.00
TGM - trimming of shrubs picnic site- <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s. 10</i>	32.40

Retrospective authorisation was granted.

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following accounts:-

Salaries & associated costs - LGA 1972 s. 112	2412,75
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	118.42
Creative Copy 'n' Colour - Newsletters NP Update, leaflets - LGA 1972 s.142	602.00
D.Smith - Footpaths - H'ways 1980 s143	6.31
Japhlin - LGA 1972 s.111	139.20

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

37/14). Items, date and venue for next meeting:- April 16th, 2014, Broughton Parish Rooms 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.05pm.