

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at Offley Hay Village Hall, this meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee.

**98/11). Present were:-**

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor Pimble
Councillor L. von Elbing.	Councillor J. Allen
Councillor M. Starkey	Councillor E. Amos
Councillor B. Apps	Councillor P. Baskerville
Councillor P. Mullee	Councillor D. Jacques
Councillor P. Jones	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor M. Dodkins	County Councillor H. Butter
1 member of the public	Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk)

No apologies had been received

**99/11). Public Participation:-** None

**100/11). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011:-** The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

Councillor Baskerville referred to the fact that although the Council had agreed to add additional items to the Clerk's Job Description, there had been no discussion about any corresponding increase to Mrs Heelis' remuneration. Councillor Pimble commented that the Clerk's workload would increase further with funding applications in connection with the proposed improvements to Castle Street and the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. It was resolved that the payment of overtime be approved subject to a meeting of the Staffing Committee to consider a method of monitoring overtime worked in connection with these and other matters.

**101/11). Vacancy Horsley Ward:-** Mrs Heelis reported that the Borough Council had provided the necessary notices and these would be displayed with immediate effect. Unless ten electors wrote to Mr I. Thompson to request an election before November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the Council would be able to advertise and fill the vacancy by co-option.

**102/11). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-**

County Councillor H. Butter reported that the Highways had been re-filling grit bins and replenishing grit piles on rural roads and a meeting was scheduled next week with Mr C. Mitchell to discuss local highways issues. Grants from the Local Community Fund had been made to Offley Hay Village Hall, Eccleshall Pre-School, Student Firefighters and Broughton Parish Rooms.

Borough Councillor P. Jones reported that he had participated in a Litter Pick on Monday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 along with several residents as part of the 'Love where you Live' Campaign. Councillor Jones had attended the Planning Forum together with Councillor Pimble and Mrs Heelis and was representing his constituencies in issues associated with the Local Development Framework and the Localism Bill.

**103/11). Committee Reports:-**

**Traffic Management Committee:-**

- **Walton Bends:-** It was noted that there had been no further accidents since the surface dressing had been carried out. Mr Mitchell indicated that the surface should last for up to seven years and would continue to be monitored.
- **Slindon:-** No communication had been received from the residents since a statement issued in July, indicating that the residents wished to express concern and disappointment that none of the safety concerns raised had been addressed and residents proposed to commence the preparation and costing of a road safety management plan for the village, which would be submitted to the Council.
- **Wetwood:-** The Speed Limit Review had indicated that the existing limit was acceptable. Councillor Butter reported that additional signage had been erected to highlight the junction.

- **Neighbourhood Highway Teams:-** The next visit was scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The committee proposed that clearing the weeds in the High Street should be the priority with any remaining time allocated to the clearing of vegetation and encroaching hedge from The Highfields to Arnhill Cross Roads in Croxton. All were in agreement.
- **Ginger Lane:-** Following a request from Councillor Jacques the Clerk had contacted Mr Mitchell to seek information about the situation.
- **Parking – Stone Road:-** Members considered that ‘No Parking’ cones used to facilitate the turning of large vehicles using Stone Road as a diversion whilst the road from Cold Meece was being reconstructed, had aggravated the parking situation on Stone Road by moving the vehicles up as far as Hartlands Road. It was important to save parking spaces for the businesses in the town and enhance the vibrancy of the local economy, not create additional problems with further restrictions. Double yellow lines elsewhere in the town were not enforced and would be unlikely to prevent those visiting the Animal Feed Business from parking. The committee recommended that this matter could be removed from the agenda and the motion was passed with 12 votes in favour and 1 abstention. Councillor Dale would pass this information onto the Neighbourhood Watch at a meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011.
- **Parking – High Street:-** Mr Mitchell indicated that he was aware of the issues with drivers being booked in Eccleshall High Street who had parked for a time, moved off and returned later in the day to a different location. Mrs Heelis was asked to write to Steve Allen suggesting a change to the system to enable Officers to enforce in a fair and correct way, perhaps by reducing the number of visits to Eccleshall whilst increasing the length of their stay. Councillor Jones reported that he had discussed the matter with Mrs F. Beatty, the Cabinet Member and requested information regarding the rules and regulations to clarify the situation.
- **Grit bins / Gritting:-** Councillor Dale asked whether the Parish Council could act as a back-up for the County Council and undertake gritting when the teams were unable to treat all the relevant areas. Mr Mitchell had responded that it would not be possible to communicate with Parish Councils to co-ordinate gritting. Either the Parish Council agreed to take on the responsibility or the County would continue to carry out gritting in accordance with the time available. This matter would be discussed at the meeting of Enhancement Committee on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Mrs Heelis was asked to write to MP W. Cash to seek clarification about whether shopkeepers could be liable for injuries sustained by someone falling on a pavement they had gritted.
- **Lay-by – Swynnerton Road:-** Councillor Garner commented that the surface of the lay-by was a disgrace and unfit for purpose and suggested that Parking signs were erected. Members had agreed to inspect the lay-by and Councillor Pimble advised that ‘P’ signs were already installed.
- **A519:-** Councillor Garner had requested the collection of additional data on the A519 to ascertain whether the improvements at the junction with Cross Butts and Green Lane and visits of the Speed Camera Van had reduced vehicle speeds. Mr Mitchell agreed to approach Mr Knowles to see if a count could be arranged, which would record the speed and type of vehicles using the route.
- **Local Transport Plan / Transport Issues:-** Councillor Jacques referred to problems with lorries being directed along inappropriate rural roads by the use of Satellite Navigation technology in particular on the road through Bishops Offley. It was agreed to raise this matter again with Mr Mitchell, who had advised in the past that all appropriate signage was in place.

**Date of next meeting:-** The next meeting was arranged for February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

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

**Enhancements Committee:-** Councillor Dale reported that the benches had been removed from the picnic site and the seats donated by the Eccles Society were in-situ on the Eyeswells Footpath and Elford Heath. The next meeting of the Committee would be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**Policy and Resources** – The next meeting would be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> following the meeting of the Planning Committee.

**Footpaths Committee:-** Walk leaflets and walks from the booklet had been assigned to various volunteers to check the routes and text.

**104/11). Liaison Representatives:-** There was no report to receive from the Allotments Association.

- **Ecclian Society:-** Councillor Jones reported that the Christmas tree would be erected on November 27<sup>th</sup> with the switch on of the Christmas lights on Monday November 28<sup>th</sup>. The Society would provide Punch at the annual Carols around the Parish Council Christmas Tree on December 19<sup>th</sup> and the trees would be removed on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.  
The Ecclian Society Calendar for 2012 was available from members or the Chemist and 60 flags, poles and finials had been ordered for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations next year.
- **Offley Hay Village Hall:-** Councillor von Elbing reported that the boiler was currently out of use but the necessary parts had been ordered. Bookings were buoyant and finance was being raised for the patio.
- **Tourism Bureau:-** Councillor Jones indicated that he had attended several meetings and the Bureau was updating the website. Eccleshall events were publicised and the Clerk was asked to provide copies of the new walk leaflets to the Bureau when they were available.
- **Bishop Lonsdale School:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that the Friday afternoon assemblies had been discontinued at the request of parents. A Remembrance Service was planned at the school with representatives from the Forces in attendance.
- **Community Centre:-** Councillor Dale indicated that the Association had received grant from the Environmental Fund for £17,500 towards planned improvements.
- **Business Focus Group:-** Councillor Jones indicated that the next group meeting would be held on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and the late night Christmas shopping event on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.
- **Young People:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that Jessica Wilkes-Mellor was liaising with the scouts to ascertain whether a Youth Club it may be possible to hold a Youth Club in the planned new scout hut and the Friday evening drop-ins at the Library were proving very popular.
- **Communities Mean Business:-** Councillor von Elbing had been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Local Action Group and the next meeting would be held towards the end of November.
- **Eccleshall First Responders:-** Councillor Jacques indicated that further to previous discussions he considered it would be unfortunate not to have the opportunity to report matters of interest to the Council. It was agreed that liaison representatives should contact the Clerk by telephone or email to advise whether they had anything to report to the Council.
- **Community Council of Staffordshire:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that she had attended the AGM but there was nothing of note to report.

**105/11). Clerk's Report and correspondence:-**

**Grant request – Eccleshall Cricket Club:-** The Clerk reported that an application form had been received requesting funding of £500 towards the purchase of a new scoreboard. This matter was referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

**Kissing Gates Johnson Hall Estate:-** The Clerk was authorised to order the supply and installation of two gates from Greenaway Timber Products at a cost of £930 upon receipt of funding from the Community Paths Initiative. Councillor Butter had contributed 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the cost and the Parish Council had previously agreed to fund the remaining 1/3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Well Dressing Festival, Croxton:-** Broughton Women's Institute had written to seek support for the restoration of seven historic wells, creation of a heritage trail and a well dressing event in July 2012. The project would involve the local Historical Society, three local schools, Community Choir, Croxton Garden Guild Churches and Young Peoples activity groups and an application for funding was being submitted to the Communities Mean Business Programme. It was hoped that the well dressing would become an annual event and the restoration of the fabric of the wells and their surrounds would be of good quality and last for many years. Mrs Heelis was asked to write and indicate the support of the Parish Council for this project, which was welcomed by members as the wells had sadly fallen into disrepair since the Parish Council had ceased to maintain them when no local involvement had been forthcoming.

**Castle Street enhancement project:-** The Clerk reported that meetings had been held with Mary Timmis from Stafford Borough Council and Sara Green from Communities Mean Business. Letters had been sent to local businesses, groups and residents seeking to demonstrate support for the scheme. Residents of

Selwyn Court had also received letters asking whether they owned a car and requesting their comments on the proposals and the existing trees.

**106/11). Chairman's Report:-** Councillor Dale reported that he had presented the cheque from the Parish Council to the Student Firefighters, when the young people had demonstrated some of the skills they were learning. Together with other Councillors he had attended an event at Offley Hay Village Hall in celebration of the Summer Skills Challenge, which the young people had participated in during the summer.

Councillor Dale had also attended the Funeral of Mrs M. Thomson on Monday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and the Chairman reminded members of the Civic Service on Sunday October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11am.

**107/11). Accounts:-** The Clerk reported that the second half of the precept and concurrent allowance had been paid together with a small amount of interest on the Reserve Account and a grant of £350 from the Local Community Fund towards the cost of the Website. Details of the accounts had been circulated and authorisation was requested for payment of the following:-

Salaries and associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2196.36
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	61.15
Chairman's Allowance - <i>LGA 1972 ss. 15 (5)</i>	200.00
Stafford Borough - Civic Amenity visits - <i>concurrent allowance</i>	104.50

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

**Computer maintenance:-** The Council resolved to renew the maintenance support for November 2011 to October 2012 at a slightly increased cost of £35.94 per month inclusive of VAT.

**Christmas Trees:-** The Forestry Commission had quoted £3000 to supply the 62 5ft trees as opposed to a quote of £2403 from Fosters Breathing Space. Another quote had been sought but the supplier was unable to trim the stems to the required diameter. Fosters had submitted a further quote upon request to supply 62 4ft – 4.5ft trees at a cost of £2155 plus VAT. The Council agreed to accept this quotation.

It was agreed that due to the large increase in the cost of the trees extensive research into alternative suppliers and artificial trees would be undertaken in the New Year.

**Installation of lights on the tree in the Churchyard:-** Mr Scattergood had indicated that he would install and remove the lights for £315 as previously, although he had stated that it had been noted last year that some work was required to the terminals and this could be undertaken for a small additional cost. It was agreed to proceed and thank Mr Scattergood for his assistance. The raised platform to enable installation of the lights would again be supplied free of charge from Traction Equipment.

**Licence:-** Councillor Baskerville referred to the paperwork that had been completed in previous years in order to comply with County Council requirements. Last year although the paperwork had been submitted, no licence had been issued and it was considered to be unnecessary to obtain a licence as the trees were not on Highway property or connected to street lighting columns. The Clerk had sought clarification of this on several occasions, but received no response and it was agreed to disregard any communication unless an explanation was provided as to why a licence was required.

Councillor Baskerville confirmed that a sample of the brackets would be stress checked in the usual manner by himself and Mr T. Leather.

**108/11). Items / Date and venue for the next meeting:-** November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm.