

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

October 21st, 2015

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on October 21st, 2015, at Offley Hay Village Hall at 7.30pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee at 9pm.

- 126/15). Present were:-**
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| Councillor D. Pimble (Chairman) | Councillor G. Garner |
| Councillor C. Marshall | Councillor E. Amos |
| Councillor M. Starkey | Councillor R. Langford |
| Councillor B. Delanchy | Councillor D. Jacques |
| Councillor D. Dyer | Councillor P. Jones |
| Councillor L. Taylor-Potts | Borough Councillor J. Pert |
| Approximately 35 residents | County Councillor Chapman. |
| Mrs C. Heelis (Clerk) | |

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Mullee, Baskerville and Davies.

A one minute silence was held in memory of Councillor Mary Dodkins, who had sadly passed away on October 13th, 2015.

The meeting opened with prayers

- 127/15). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations:-** There were no requests to receive.

128/15). Public Participation:-

Mrs V. Cooper reported that the Pre-School had announced it was to close on November 13th, 2015 due to financial difficulties. This news had come as a shock to parents. The Pre-School had been in operation for some time and various improvements had been undertaken to the Community Centre facility through Fund Raising. The Pre-School was the only facility to offer care throughout the school holidays and Bishop Lonsdale School closed at lunch time and so was not an option for parents in full time employment. The Pre-School was run as a charity by a committee and employed 9 people. Mrs Cooper was seeking support from the Parish Council and referred to a meeting which had been called by parents on October 22nd, 2015. Councillor Marshall agreed to attend the meeting and liaise with the Parents and Parish Council.

Mr M. Tomkinson, Chairman of High Offley Parish Council indicated that a Parish Council meeting held two weeks ago had been well attended and residents expressed strong objections to the Solar Panels proposed at Well Lane. There had been a call for a public meeting to be held with the developer. A meeting had been arranged with Mr W. Cash MP tomorrow evening at Eccleshall Church Rooms commencing at 7pm.

Councillor Pimble indicated that the Parish Council was unaware of this meeting. Mrs S. Celecia indicated that she had visited Eccleshall to erect posters and raise awareness of the proposed development with local residents. Mr. S. Harris stated that the meeting would be advertised in the press tomorrow.

Councillor Pimble thanked the residents for attending the meeting and indicated that they were welcome to stay and listen to the discussion of the application at the Planning Committee Meeting, which would probably start around 9pm.

- 129/15). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on September 23rd, 2015:-** The minutes, which had been previously circulated were agreed and signed.

- 130/15). Vacancy on the Council:-** Mrs Heelis had advised the Borough Council of the Casual Vacancy which had arisen on the Council. Notices were erected on October 19th, 2015 stating that unless an election to fill the vacancy was requested by ten electors for the Parish before Friday November 6th, 2015 the Parish Council would be able to co-opt a person to represent the Slindon Ward. The Clerk suggested that if no election was called the vacancy could be advertised with a view to co-option taking place at the Council Meeting on January 20th, 2016.

131/15). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-

County Councillor F. Chapman reported that he had established that all the local rural bus services were supported by the County Council as they were not commercially viable. The current contracts covered a 5 year period.

The Staffordshire Alliance who was carrying out the Norton Bridge Rail improvements had indicated that the project was a year ahead of schedule and upon completion the compounds would be returned to agricultural land. Councillor Pimble commented that the Site Manager Mr Clarke had recently given a talk to a local group and indicated he would be happy to make a presentation to the Parish Council. Mr Clarke was to be thanked for his offer but it was agreed that by the next Council meeting the Stone Road would be almost re-opened. An open day was planned on November 7th, 2015 when a unique automated track laying train would be on site.

Councillor Chapman referred to the planned enhancement of the area around the Toilets on Stone Road and indicated that this may be an opportunity for the toilets to be refurbished, or knocked down and replaced with a more modern facility.

Borough Councillor J. Pert indicated that he had 'called in' amended planning applications for Mill Farm, Cross Butts and Church View and that the application for the 10 self-build houses on Green Lane had been withdrawn from the system. Progress with the Neighbourhood Plan and the Settlement Boundary identified was proving helpful in restricting developments.

- The application for the Solar Farm would affect residents of Adbaston and High Offley Parishes as well as Eccleshall and residents were encourage to write individual letters of objection to the Borough Council. Due to the large scale of the proposed development the application would not be determined for 13 weeks.
- Councillor Pert indicated that he was pleased that the mobile bank continued to be attended by approximately 40 people each visit.
- Negotiations were ongoing with the Parish Council, Ecclian Society and County Council with regard to the improvements to the area around the Public Conveniences. The aim was to reduce the maintenance requirements of the site.
- Councillor Pert was facilitating meetings with the Leisure Department and developers with a view to ensuring that play and recreational facilities were provided as part of the new developments or through Section 106 funding elsewhere in the Parish.
- A defibrillator had been installed at Croxton Garage, thanks to the First Responders, Croxton and Broughton Jubilee Fund and Councillor Chapman.
- Councillor Pert reported that a Curry Night was to be held at the London House on November 23rd, 2015 to raise funds for Women's Aid.

Councillor P. Jones reported that the Borough Council had passed a motion to accept refugees.

132/15). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- Councillor Taylor-Potts reported on a meeting of the committee held on October 7th, 2015. The committee had considered a report from a meeting with Mr R. Rayson, Community Highway Liaison Manager. Mr Rayson had confirmed that the Neighbourhood Highway Team could undertake the siding out of pavements and tidy up overhanging hedge branches. However, landowners were responsible for hedge cutting and although reminder letters were sent out in certain circumstances this was a costly exercise. Obscured signs were often noted by the inspector or could be reported directly to the contact centre.

VAS Signs and speed cameras:- Councillors had commented on the average speed cameras that had been erected through Woodseaves and queried why Eccleshall had not benefitted from similar devices. Mr Rayson indicated that the devices were very costly and had been commissioned through the Road Safety Partnership. With regard to VAS signs these tended to be educational and the effect became diluted if the signs were prolific. Fixed speed cameras were now replaced by mobile speed enforcement.

Councillor Garner referred to the VAS sign on the Stafford Road and indicated that when the voluntary group had been operational the sign had noticeably helped to slow traffic down on the approach to Eccleshall. Councillors considered that a similar sign would be beneficial on the Newport Road and Mr Rayson suggested that a feasibility study could be undertaken from the DHP

fund. Alternatively gateway features may help to reduce the speed of traffic and Mr Rayson had been requested to provide some options and suggestions for gateway features for consideration.

The next meeting with Mr Rayson was arranged for January 21st, 2016 at Eccleshall Community Centre, 4.30pm

The minutes of the meeting were adopted by the Council.

Enhancement and Preservation Committee:- In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the committee Councillor Pimble presented the minutes from the meeting held on October 14th, 2015.

Grass verge by Boughey's Well, Croxton:- Councillor Langford had circulated photographs of the area and described how, despite the reseeding and fencing off of the verge in 2013 it was now overgrown and an eyesore. An application for an extension to an existing licence to allow residents to maintain the area had not been granted. Posts had been removed and the surface had been damaged by cattle and tractors.

Proposals to install posts around the area had not been implemented because the farmer had objected that he would not be able to access the hedge to cut it. Councillor Langford proposed that a line of heavy duty posts were installed from the telegraph pole at the back of the site towards the road. This would prevent tractors and cattle crossing the land but would enable the parking of cars for people wishing to use the play area opposite.

It was agreed to contact Mr Latham at the Highways and request the following:-

- a) An indication of the current position of the licence application
- b) The cutting of the grass on the whole area, not just the 1 metre swathe to reduce the vegetation to a manageable height.
- c) The installation of heavy duty posts.

A response from the County Council had indicated that a decision regarding a Licence agreement was pending, further to legal enquiries.

Mr Latham had replied as follows:-

- The Farmer was travelling across the diagonal of the verge with his tractor presumably due to limited visibility to the right of the junction and was entitled to do so as it was part of the Public Highway established in Common Law as 'a defined route over which the public at large can pass and repass as frequently as they wish, without hindrance and without charge'. The erection of bollards at right angles to the road could therefore, be deemed an obstruction.
- There would be no problem erecting bollards in a similar configuration to the verge opposite if the full width of the way behind was kept clear. However, the full co-operation and agreement of the farmer that he would use only the rear of the verge for his passage would need to be obtained.
- Mr Latham would try to have the verge cut as far back as possible.

Risk Assessments and Asset surveys:- Various assets were allocated to members for monitoring purposes. It was agreed that reports on the condition of items would be forwarded to the Clerk to enable a schedule of works to be prepared.

Croxton Playing Field:- Councillor Marshall had sanded the posts and trimmed the overhanging branches. The safety matting had been assessed and was not considered a trip hazard. However, the inspection by Wicksteed was due shortly and this would be checked along with the equipment.

Seating:-

- 1) An expression of Interest had been submitted to Broughton and Croxton Jubilee Fund for a grant of £250 towards the purchase of seating for the playing field.
- 2) The grant would need to be match funded by the Parish Council and this matter was referred to the Policy and Resources committee for consideration.
- 3) The type of seating would be discussed at a later date if the application was successful.

Toilet Area:- As reported previously by Councillor Pert the Borough Council was proposing to renovate the area around the toilets on Stone Road, primarily to reduce maintenance costs. The Horse Chestnut trees had bacterial canker and at least two of them would have to be removed. It was proposed to remove the privet bushes and the laurel hedge to the east of the site. The area

would be levelled and turfed and the fencing along Stone Road would remain to prevent parking. It had been suggested that trees could be planted to replace the Horse Chestnuts and a Norwegian Spruce planted to the rear of the telephone box with a power supply provided. The Clerk was asked to include an item in the December Council Newsletter to explain the removal of the trees.

Seat Newport Road:- Councillor Taylor-Potts had indicated that several resident had requested the provision of a seat on Newport Road at the junction with The Crescent. The committee proposed to review all the seats in the Parish and assess whether they were used.

New Developments – This item was included on the Parish Council agenda.

Community Action:- Six Volunteers had taken part in a litter pick on October 17th, 2015. Another date was planned on December 5th, 2015 when it was intended to tackle litter and weeds on Stafford Street and Castle Street. Councillor Chapman reiterated that if landowners / businesses took care of their own frontages it would make a huge difference.

The next meeting of the Committee was arranged for January 6th, 2016.

The minutes of the meeting were adopted by the Council.

Policy and Resources Committee:- The next meeting was arranged for December 2nd, 2015 following the meeting of the Planning Committee.

Footpaths Committee:- The next meeting was scheduled to take place on November 4th, 2015 preceding the Planning Committee Meeting at 6.30pm.

133/15). Liaison Representatives:- There were no reports to receive from the Allotments Association, Young People or Community Centre Association.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor Taylor-Potts reported that a full committee with a new Chair and Treasurer had been appointed.

Business Group:- Councillor Jones reported that the next meeting would be held on November 5th, 2015 at the Belgian Beer Bar.

Tourism Bureau:- Councillor Jones reported that a meeting had been held at Stafford Gatehouse and referred members to the Visit Stafford Website for information of events across the Borough.

Ecclian Society:- Councillor Jones reported that the baskets had been removed and the date for the Christmas lights switch on was November 30th, 2015 at 4.30pm.

Slindon Residents:- Representation of the Slindon residents was held in abeyance pending the appointment of a new councillor to represent the Ward.

134/15). New Developments:- Councillor Pimble reported that Mrs Heelis and himself had attended a meeting with an Officer from the Borough Council Leisure Services and representatives of Bovis Homes. It had been previously proposed to distribute pieces of play equipment throughout the open space, which could have been problematic from a dog fouling point of view and also for parents with small children. The equipment for the under 12's had now been located together in one area, enclosed by a hedge. The MUGA was to be full size. This would mean that unless Taylor Wimpey included provision for teenagers and the under 12's onsite all the facilities would be at one end of the town.

With regard to the transfer of the Open Space on Badgers Croft Councillor Pimble indicated that Bovis Homes had agreed to pay reasonable legal costs and would provide a draft covenant for the approval of the Parish Council. The document would include restrictions to ensure the land remained as open space and future maintenance would be transferred to a management company.

Councillor Pimble referred to a design for the proposed roundabout off Stafford Road forwarded by Bovis and indicated that the design precluded the installation of a feature such as The Eagle, which had been tabled at the last Planning Committee Meeting. Councillor Delanchy stated that the design was wholly inappropriate for the location consisting of roundabout with a radius of 14metres, a tarmacadam running surface 4.8 metres wide and a paved area of modular material 7.2m wide, which would be constantly overridden by vehicles. The block paving would move and be a continuous maintenance issue. The centre 4m diameter of the roundabout would have chevrons and lighting on.

Letters had been sent to Simon Hawe and Richard Harris, Senior Engineers, Staffordshire Highways and Bovis with copies of the letter to Frank Chapman and Thomas Nunn at Rodgers Leask (Civil Engineers) to indicate surprise at the large area of modular material proposed for the roundabout, which would be a maintenance issue and state that the Council would prefer to have a

wider carriageway of around 7m of black tarmac around the perimeter with a raised area in the centre to enable a feature to be located. No responses had been received to date.

Councillor Pimble referred to the amended plans for the development, which were on the following agenda for the Planning Committee. It was noted that the two storey houses abutting Badgers Croft which had initially been at the southern end of the development had been moved lower down. This was contrary to the outline planning permission which had been granted. It was agreed to **object** to this amendment and request that the houses were returned to their original position as 49, Badgers Croft did not face the new development but the houses further down the road did face the site.

Taylor Wimpey had been advised that 10 responses have been received from the 17 letters sent out, of which only 4 were formal objections, therefore the Parish Council believed that the incorporation of a pedestrian link through to St Chads Road would be an improvement to the scheme. The width of the pedestrian access must preclude any future use as a vehicular access and a link to the Public Footpath to the west of the site at this location is not required.

Taylor Wimpey had requested suggestions towards possible schemes that the Company could contribute towards. This matter would be discussed further at a future meeting, but improvements to the Toilets, Public Footpath 13, additional car parking, tree planting and enhancement of the Cross Butts/Newport Road junction were mentioned.

- 135/15). Neighbourhood Plan:-** Councillor Pimble referred to the report submitted by Mr McGurk the examiner and the proposed modifications to the Plan. The Steering Group had agreed that the amendments suggested regarding the Green Space did not meet the requirements/ aspirations for Sites 3 and 5 to be developed as open space accessible to the public. It was resolved to advise Stafford Borough Council that the recommendation to delete the Policy was unacceptable and enter into further negotiations regarding the re-wording and acceptance of the Policy.

This action may require further consultation, but it was unclear what stages of the process would have to be revisited. It was considered that the Settlement Boundary had now been established and developers and owners of the land adjacent to the River Sow were in acceptance of the creation of the publicly accessible open space but as yet its inclusion in the Plan was not a Policy

- 136/15). Clerk's Report and Correspondence:- Mrs Heelis reported receipt of the following:-**
- An application for a grant from Broughton Tennis Club for the renovation of two grass courts – this matter was referred to the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - Further correspondence from Broughton Parish Rooms in addition to the funding application received last month. Mrs Bridgwood indicated that a quote of £3,680 had now been obtained for the repainting and repairs to the outside paintwork. This matter was already on the agenda for the Policy and Resources Committee and Mrs Heelis had suggested other sources of funding that may be applicable.
 - An email had been received from Mrs Llewellyn enquiring if a banner advertising Slimming World could be erected on the railings at the bottom of the Southwell Estate as there was already a poster there advertising Slimming World. It was thought that the railings were in the ownership of Stafford and Rural Homes and Councillor Pert offered to make enquiries regarding this request. Councillor Pimble commented that banners and posters should be removed after the event and cited some that had remain up for a considerable period of time.
 - An email had been received from Mr G. Clark regarding the parking of tractors and other vehicles on pavements around School Road and Eagle Crescent. The Clerk had passed these comments on to the Police who had agreed to investigate and speak to the owners of the vehicles as necessary.

- 137/15). Chairman's Report:-** Councillor Pimble had nothing further to report.

- 138/15). Accounts:-** It was noted that the second half of the precept had been received together with a grant of £475 towards the Christmas illuminations.

Retrospective authorisation was granted for payment of the following accounts:-

Shelley Signs - Fire tender display & lectern - LGA 1972 s. 137

1380.00

Stafford Borough Council - Watering - <i>Concurrent Allowance</i>	5364.00
TGM Grass and Hedgecutting - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s. 10</i>	665.40
Authorisation was requested for payment of the following:-	
Salaries & associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2336.94
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	81.68
Stafford Borough - Civic Amenity visits - <i>concurrent allowance</i>	105.00
D. Smith – Footpaths maintenance - <i>HA 1980 s.143</i>	6.70

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

Computer Maintenance:- It was agreed to renew the standing order for the annual maintenance contract with Japhlin Computers at a cost of £36.66 per month. The annual charge of £439.91 remained unchanged from 2012/13.

139/15). Date and venue for the next meeting:- November 18th, 2015, Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9pm.