

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

September 19th, 2012

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on September 19th, 2012 at Eccleshall Community Centre at 7.30p.m. This meeting was followed by a meeting of Planning Committee.

108/12). Present Were:-

Councillor G. Dale (Chair)	Councillor D. Pimble
Councillor P. Baskerville	Councillor P. Jones
Councillor J. Allen	Councillor P. Mullee
Councillor M. Dodkins	Councillor L. Serjeant
Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor G. Garner
Councillor D. Jacques	Councillor M. Starkey
Councillor E. Amos	Borough Councillor J. Pert
April Lewis - Youth & Community Development Worker	
7 members of the public	Mrs C. Heelis – Clerk

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Apps and von Elbing, together with County Councillor H. Butter.

The meeting opened with prayers.

109/12). Public Participation:- Mr A. Wood of 25, Hartlands Road addressed the Council with regard to the proposals for the enhancement of Bishops Court Open Space and referred to the concerns of local residents. Mr Wood thanked the members for undertaking a democratic consultation through the newsletter and a planned public meeting and indicated that he would look forward to a comprehensive debate on the proposals.

Mr D. Wright of 10, Bishops Court sought confirmation of the planned procedure with a consultation period ending on October 12th, followed by further consideration of the scheme at the Enhancements committee on December 5th, 2012 and a public meeting at the end of 2012 or early 2013 preceding further debate of the matter by the Parish Council. Councillor Dale confirmed these details as correct. Mr Wright queried whether the Parish Council was satisfied that adequate details about the height of equipment and the area to be grass matted had been provided to inform a debate? Councillor Dale replied that further information would be provided during the consultation period and all the comments received would be taken into consideration. A large grassed area for football and cricket would remain.

110/12). April Lewis- Youth and Community Development Worker:- April introduced herself and indicated that she had been in post since July and the post was funded until May 2013. The Youth Club required more volunteers and a training package was being developed. The young people had been involved in the garden project at the rear of Eccleshall Library and re-decorating at Offley Hay Village Hall. A vision statement was being prepared for the Yoyo Youth Club using best practices from other youth provisions. The Youth Club hoped to move to new premises in 2013.

111/12). To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on July 18th, 2012:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

112/12). Reports from Borough Councillors:-

Councillor Chapman reported that he would be standing as representative of the Eccleshall Ward in the next County Council elections. Cllr Chapman was currently Chair of the Police and Crime Committee and the Police and Crime Police Authority would cease to exist on November 22nd, 2012. There were two candidates for the election of the new Police and Crime Commissioner in November, the successful candidate would have far reaching powers.

Councillor Pert reported that Councillor Stan Lovatt had passed away on September 16th, 2012 and the funeral would be held at Chebsey Church on September 26th, 2012 at 11am. Mr Lovatt had been Chairman of Chebsey Parish Council for many years and also been very involved with the Parish Councils' Association.

Funding was still available for anyone struggling to pay heating bills and they should be advised to contact the Citizens Advice Bureau. The mobile skate park had visited Eccleshall during the summer holidays and over the two days 29 young people had used the facility. Councillor Pert reported the theft

of two goal posts from the Eccleshall Eagles at Pershall Park and replacement set had kindly been donated. The Football and Rugby Clubs had secured grants from the Borough Council Jubilee Fund.

Councillor Jones indicated that he was a member of the Audit Committee at Stafford Borough Council and had attended scrutiny training sessions. Councillor Jones referred to the application for an extended chimney at the Saint Gobain factory on Raleigh Hall Industrial Estate but was unaware of the timescale for implementation of the alterations.

113/12). Committee Reports.

Traffic Management:- The Clerk reported that the next visit of the Neighbourhood Highway Team was scheduled for November 2nd, 2012 for 5 days. Members were asked to contact the Clerk with any suggestions of work required. There were tasks outstanding from the last visit and weeds in the High Street, Stone Road and Castle Street required attention.

Mrs Heelis had received a telephone call from Mr G. Piper at Gist concerning professional signs which had appeared around Eccleshall 'Get Gist out of our town' and requesting a meeting with Councillors. It was agreed to report the matter to the Highways and arrange a meeting with Mr Piper.

Cllr Chapman referred to the strength of feeling in Eccleshall with regard to the large volumes of HGV's passing through the town. Although in the short term there was little that could be done the traffic was destroying the fabric of the rural roads and members should also be mindful of possible expansion of the Industrial Estate. Councillor Pimble commented that members hoped the Borough Councillors would strongly oppose any expansion of the site, which could lead to larger volumes of HGV's and an increase in the size of vehicles.

Councillor Pimble referred to the ever increasing number of inappropriately placed 'A' Boards in the town. Although letters had recently been distributed to businesses there had been no reduction in the numbers or consideration given to their placement. Councillor Jones indicated that he would raise the matter with the Highway Authority and the Clerk was asked to write to the Business Group to request that action be taken to reduce the number of boards and ensure that they were not causing an obstruction.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Dale referred to the minutes of the committee meeting held on September 5th, 2012.

- **Picnic Site** - It was noted that BT had excavated part of a grass bund at the Picnic Site to access an inspection chamber, but that the area had been left in a tidy condition. The Chairman indicated that he had checked the site and the soil bank was stable. Councillor Mullee reported that he had sown grass seed on the bank.
- **Eyeswells Footpath:-** The area where the pictorial meadow was needed strimming and treating with weedkiller to prevent the weeds from seeding. An adjoining landowner had asked for a tree overhanging her garden to be pruned. Councillors Pimble, Baskerville and Dale offered to visit the site to assess whether severe pruning could be undertaken by Councillors or professional treatment was required and would report back to the next committee meeting.

Councillor Amos reported excessive dog fouling on the footpath from Usulwall Close to Blackbird Cottage. The problem was also prevalent in other areas of the town, although the majority of dog owners acted responsibly and cleared up after their pets. Mrs Heelis had reported the issue to the Borough Council and arranged a meeting with Mr Bailey to assess whether additional bins could be installed.

- **Croxton Play Area:-** The committee recommended that Trent Grounds Maintenance undertook the annual clearing of the undergrowth in the wooded area and remove lower branches of trees and any overhanging the play area. The cost for 1 days work was £360. All were in favour. The information regarding drainage and the stream on the boundary of the playing field was noted.
Ash Tree:- The Clerk had obtained two quotations and it seemed as though the removal of the tree would cost in excess of £1000 as it would require the power to be shut down and traffic management. The Clerk had enquired whether the Neighbourhood Highway Team might be able to assist with traffic management, but Mr Latham had indicated that no assistance could be provided in this instance. This matter would be considered further by the Enhancements committee.
- **Toilet area:-** Mrs Heelis had requested that the bushes on the site were trimmed.

- **Elford Common and Pool:-** Councillors Pimble and Baskerville had offered to check the tree by the dew pond and trim as necessary. Councillor Garner queried whether the vegetation around the pool needed to be cut back again and Councillors Dale, Baskerville and Pimble agreed to check.
- **Castle Street Enhancements:-** Councillor Pimble reported that Councillor Chapman continued to investigate funding sources and he and Mrs Heelis had met with Guy Pryer from Highways on September 18th, 2012. Mr Pryer had discussed the design and revised scheme and agreed to cost alternative materials to replace the blue bricks to establish if savings could be made together with replacement street lights and improvements to the railings and ramps outside Selwyn Court. Metal railings may not be financially viable other than round the area in front of the George and as no response had been received to the competition for the design it was agreed that suggested designs could be considered by the Enhancements Committee in December to enable costs to be obtained. Mrs Slater had indicated that she was happy with the proposals to enhance the area providing the seats and tables could still be placed outside The George. Councillor Serjeant referred to the dreadful condition of the BT exchange site and the fact that the wheelie bins were overflowing and had not been emptied. Mrs Heelis was asked to write to BT to request that the site be tidied up.
- **Benches / Seats:-** The Chairman reported that the seat at Copmere by the Jacobs Ladder had been stolen. Mrs Heelis had reported the theft to the Police and would submit an insurance claim.
- **Pillar Clock:-** Peter the Painter had done an excellent job painting the clock as well as the seat at the crossroads. It was agreed to accept a quotation from Peter Eaton to paint the Bus Stop Sign on Castle Street at a cost of £30.
- **Land at Bishops Court:** The Clerk had circulated a précis of objections to the proposals received from local residents. At the Council meeting held on July 18th a public meeting had been requested and an opportunity to see the proposals in detail. Comments indicated opposition to the youth shelter in particular and expressed concern that the proposed facilities were for a small minority and not the whole community.

The proposals had been published in the September Newsletter and details were also available on the web site. The date for receipt of comments had been extended to October 12th, 2012. It was agreed that the matter be discussed again at the next meeting of the Enhancement Committee with a view to arranging a Public Meeting towards the end of 2012 or early 2013.

- **Southwell Estate and Beech Road:-** Councillor Pert was thanked for arranging for additional equipment to be installed at the Beech Road site. Councillor Dale reported that designs for possible equipment on The Southwell Estate had been devised by several manufacturers. Proposals included a slide, climbing frame, swings, skate ramps, a shelter and a cableway built into the grass bank. It was hoped that the young people would submit their comments through April Lewis and by responding to the consultation in the newsletter. This would enable the Council to consider a broad strategy for the provision of facilities in Eccleshall. The Clerk was asked to liaise with SARH to ascertain whether the types of equipment proposed would be acceptable.
- **Christmas Trees:-** Councillor Baskerville and the Clerk had visited Woods Christmas Tree Farm in Solihull. The trees appeared to be good quality and could be delivered and the large one placed and fixed in the pipe in the churchyard. Early indications were that the price would be substantially cheaper than in previous years and Mrs Heelis was awaiting a quotation from Fosters for comparison.
- **Civic Service:-** The Civic Service would be held at St. Chad's Church, Slindon on October 21st, 2012 at 11.30am. The Rev. James Graham had agreed to produce a draft programme for the service and the Council would pay for printing as in previous years. The Chairman asked for a volunteer to read the second reading.
- **The Burgage:-** Councillor Pimble proposed that the Parish Council investigated the possibility of undertaking some tree planting on the grass along Stone Road in front of the Burgage. Councillor Jones had agreed to consult local residents and it would be necessary to approach SARH for permission. The large grassed area was unattractive and it was agreed that some trees may be beneficial. It was resolved to put the item on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

The minutes of the Enhancements Committee were adopted by the Council.

Policy and Resources Committee:-

- **Code of Conduct and Interest Forms:-** The Clerk had circulated copies of the new Code of Conduct adopted by Stafford Borough Council and a New Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms and guidance notes were being drafted. Once the documentation had been received a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee would be called to consider the documents and make recommendations to the Council.
- **Quality Status Re-accreditation due November 2012:-** The Council agreed that the appropriate documents should be collated and prepared to apply for re-accreditation at a cost of £117.50.
- **Grant requests:- Royal British Legion – Band for Remembrance Day:-** It was resolved to pay £70 to the Legion to fund the band for the parade.
- **Parish Rooms – Refurbishments:-** The Parochial Church Council and Parish Room Management committee of Holy Trinity Church had applied for funding of £1000.00 towards refurbishments. It was noted that the project would be funded by a grant of £1000 from Local Community Fund, £6500 from the Parish Room Account and £1500 from donations. In addition the Committee had applied to the Staffordshire Environmental Fund for a grant of £11,392, which would be reduced by £1000 if this amount was secured from the Parish Council. The Clerk had received a copy of the audited accounts since the Policy and Resources meeting however, the Council agreed to defer determination of the application until the outcome of the application to Staffordshire Environmental Fund was known. A decision was expected at the end of September. If the fund was to pay the total amount requested this would negate the need for funding from the Parish, but consideration would be given to the provision of a small amount of funding if there was a shortfall in the amount required to complete the planned refurbishments.
- **Clerk's Contract and Annual Appraisal:-** It was agreed that a review was unnecessary at this time and that no further action was taken.
- **Handyman's Remuneration:-** It was agreed that the Handyman's remuneration should be increased in line with the National Minimum Wage from £6.08 per hour to £6.19 with effect from October 1st, 2012.

The date of the next meeting was to be arranged. The Council adopted the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Footpaths Committee:- Footpath 20:- Councillor Allen reported receipt of complaints from walkers that the footpath was severely overgrown. The Ranger had inspected the footpath and the undergrowth had been cleared.

114/12). Liaison Representatives:-

Allotments Association:- Councillor Starkey reported that preparations for the shelter/store were in hand.

Ecclian Society:- The baskets were to be removed on September 30th, any volunteers would be welcome. The first walk of the new season would be on October 28th meeting at the cross roads at 10am. The Calendar for 2013 would be available shortly and the AGM was to be held at The Kings Arms on November 28th, 2012.

Offley Hay Village Hall:- Councillor Dodkins reported that bookings were good and redecoration had been completed. New curtains had been purchased with a grant from the Jubilee Fund and the committee was looking to buy a new double cooker for the kitchen.

Business Focus Group:- Councillor Jones indicated that the Group would be making a presentation of a plaque, flowers and a picture to Mr and Mrs Pace on their retirement from the Post Office at The Royal Oak at 6pm on October 1st, 2012.

Community Centre:- Councillor Dale reported that double glazing was to be installed on the windows to the side of the building and the ladies and disabled toilets at no cost to the Parish Council. The toilets were to be re-decorated and would be warmer and more pleasant.

Young People:- Councillor Dodkins reported that a management meeting would be held the following week.

Communities Mean Business:- Councillor Dodkins reported although the funding organisation was to cease it was hoped that the operating period could be extended. Staffordshire was one of the highest performing Counties.

There were no reports to receive from the Tourism Bureau or Bishop Lonsdale School.

115/12). Housing Needs Survey:- Following the presentation at the Planning Committee meeting on September 5th, by John Lancaster it was agreed to proceed with the process to achieve a small scheme of affordable housing by:-

- Accepting the findings of the report
- Engaging with the Borough Council, Housing Plus and Stafford and Rural Homes to explore the potential for programming such a scheme and funding by the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Exploring potential locations with Housing Plus and the availability of any sites the Parish Council may think appropriate.

Mrs Heelis was asked to advise Mr Lancaster and Mr Ward from SBC accordingly.

Cllr Pimble proposed that a sub-committee could be formed to put forward suggestions and ideas and it was agreed to see how other areas had developed schemes in their area and identified suitable sites.

116/12). Clerk's report and correspondence:- Mrs Heelis reported the following:-

Staffordshire Playing Fields AGM October 17th, 2012 Stafford Football Club, Riverway 2pm.

Community Council AGM September 24th, 2012 Abbots Bromley Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Stafford Parish Council Association AGM November 3rd, 2012. County Buildings 10am It was agreed to pay for Councillor Allen to attend at a cost of £10 for lunch.

New bus timetables for Service 490 operated by Bennets Travel. Copies were also displayed on the Notice Board and available from the Library.

Stafford Borough Council Parish Forum - September 27th, 2012 Civic Centre 7pm. Councillors Jones, Pimble and the Clerk were to attend.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service was trying to recruit retained firefighters.

Street Lighting – Energy Conservation Initiative:- Further details of the scheme had been received from Staffordshire County Council indicating that under the Localism agenda Parish Councils could request the introduction of part night street lights when supported by the community. This matter was referred to the Traffic Management Committee for consideration.

Oak Tree:- The Historical Society was to plant an Oak Tree at Bishop Lonsdale School on September 27th, 2012 at 2pm. Councillors Pimble and Jones wished to attend.

Retirement of the Postmaster:- Mrs Heelis reported that several residents had asked whether the Parish Council would be giving a party or a gift to Mr and Mrs Pace on their retirement from the Post Office. It was agreed that it was not appropriate for the Parish Council to organise a leaving gift but Mrs Heelis was asked to send a card. The Business Group was making a presentation to mark 26 years of service to the community.

117/12). Chairman's Report:- Cllr Dale reported that he had been invited to attend the Stafford Mayoral Ball and the Remembrance Concert at Newport Town Council as well as Stone Town Council Trafalgar Dinner.

118/12). Accounts:- Copies of the accounts had been circulated.

The Clerk referred to the following accounts paid since last meeting

Peter Eaton. Redecoration of seat at crossroads – LGA 1972 ss.2&3	40.00
Trent Grounds Maintenance – Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10	133.20
Creative Copy 'n' Colour – Gift for Mr R. Carruthers – Chairman's Allowance	27.00
B.T. Telephone Bill – LGA 1972 s.111	122.49
Mrs J. Hill Internal Audit – Accounts & Audit Regs. 2003	50.00
P. Baskerville – travel outside the parish – LGA 1972 s.111	60.50
Trent Grounds Maintenance – Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10	175.20
<i>The accounts paid previously were duly authorised together with the following accounts for payment:-</i>	
C. Heelis - Salary LGA 1972 s. 112	2214.26
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	62.27
Creative Copy 'n' Colour June Newsletter - LGA 1972 s.142	258.00
Eccleshall Guide LGA 1072 s.142	115.00
SPCA AGM - LGA 1972 s.111	10.00
Staffordshire Playing Fields Assoc - annual subscription - LGA 1972 s.137	15.00
Royal British Legion	70.00
Parton Agriplant – Hedgecutting – Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10	210.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

119/12) Date and Venue for next meeting:- October 17th, 2012 Offley Hay Village Hall 7.30pm.

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