

## ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 at Eccleshall Community Centre at 7.30p.m. This meeting was followed by a meeting of Planning Committee.

**87/11). Present Were:-**

Councillor G. Dale (Chairman)	Councillor D. Pimble (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor B. Delanchy	Councillor J. Allen
Councillor B. Apps	Councillor P. Baskerville
Councillor G. Garner	Councillor M. Dodkins
Councillor P. Allsop	Councillor M. Starkey
Councillor P. Mullee	Councillor D. Jacques
County Councillor H. Butter	Borough Councillor J. Pert
Mrs C. Heelis - Clerk	2 members of the public
Jessica Wilkes-Mellor	Kirsty and Imogen Graham
Isobel Young	

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Amos, von Elbing, Jones and Borough Councillor F. Chapman.

*The meeting opened with prayers.*

**88/11). Public Participation:-** The members of the public did not wish to address the meeting

**89/11). Presentation by Jessica Wilkes-Mellor – Youth activities during the summer:-** Jessica told the meeting that the drop in at the library was becoming increasingly popular, with 20 young people attending the session the previous week and it was hoped that it would be possible to run the drop in weekly in the future. Members of the local community were sought to form a management committee and interest expressed by a local music/singing teacher had been welcomed. Isobel Young together with Kirsty and Imogen Graham explained the activities they had participated in during the summer including a visit to Harper Adams University and a residential weekend at Beaudesert Camp Site, where they had taken part in raft building, archery and team building activities. A celebration event was planned for September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at Offley Hay Village Hall, Councillors were invited to attend. Jessica explained that several projects were under consideration for the young people in Eccleshall including food hygiene training and a doodle wall.

The Councillors thanked Jessica for her dedication and enthusiasm, which had led to improved opportunities for the young people of the Parish. Members were invited to visit the Fire Station on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 6pm when the Councillor Dale would present a cheque on behalf of the Parish Council.

**90/11). To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011:-** The minutes, which had been previously circulated were agreed and signed.

**91/11). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:**

**County Councillor H. Butter:-** Grants from the Local Community Fund had been made recently to Bishop Lonsdale School, Eccleshall Pre-school, Offley Hay Village Hall and the Parish Council for web site design. Councillor Butter indicated that he was not supportive of the campaign to highlight issues with the volume of traffic using the A519 as he was of the opinion that there were far more dangerous stretches of road in the County.

**Borough Councillor J. Pert:-** Councillor Pert referred to the proposed Stafford Area Improvements at Norton Bridge Railway and the developer's scoping report which could be accessed on the internet. Additional vehicles connected with the improvements would have some impact on Eccleshall.

Councillor Pert welcomed the instigation by Stafford Borough Council of a scheme to improve Castle Street and encouraged people to participate in the latest consultation Local Development Framework consultation.

## 92/11). Committee Reports:-

**Traffic Management Committee:-** It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 following the meeting of the Planning Committee. The Clerk advised that the next visit of the Neighbourhood Highway Team was scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup> for 5 days and suggestions were sought of works requiring attention.

**Enhancements:-** Councillor Dale reported that he had painted the damaged area on the Notice Board in the High Street. A meeting had been held with a representative from West Coast Network Services regarding the clearing of branches from power lines at Elford Common and it had been agreed that some of the Hazelnut trees around the pool would be coppiced. The arisings would be chipped and spread around the trees. Councillor Dale referred to tree branches on the Picnic Site and the Clerk was asked to establish whether these could be moved by the County Council. The next meeting of the Enhancements Committee would be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

### **Policy and Resources:-**

**Allotment Rents:-** Councillor Allen reported that members had considered papers detailing the history of rent increases since 1998. Historically a minimal rent increase had been applied every three years. It was noted that twelve months' notice was required to increase the rents, which were paid twelve months in advance and that senior citizens paid half price. The Council accepted a recommendation from the Committee for increase to the annual rent of 30p per garden rood with effect from April 2013.

**Web Site:-** The Clerk had conducted a survey into various providers and the committee recommend that ExtraMile Communications were contracted to develop a site at a cost of £695. All were in agreement and it was noted that Councillor Butter had agreed to fund 50% of the cost from the Local Community Fund.

**Clerk's Contract and Annual Appraisal:-** The Council agreed to the addition of the following functions to the Clerk's Job Description

- To update the Parish Council website on a regular basis
- To prepare quarterly newsletters and arrange publication and distribution
- Prepare and update footpaths leaflets and other publications
- Prepare and submit an application for reaccreditation of Quality Status every 4 years

**Grant request – Royal British Legion:-** The Eccleshall Royal British Legion had requested a grant of £75 to pay for the Stone Scouts Band for the Remembrance Day Parade. The Council agreed to fund this expense using powers conferred by the Local Government Act 1972 Section 137.

**Benches / Seats:-** A letter had been received from Stafford Borough Council asking whether the Parish Council would be interested in any benches, which were surplus to requirements and being offered free of charge. It was noted that the benches were still in situ in Stafford and Councillor Dale and Mrs Heelis were authorised to visit the Nursery at Riverway in due course to assess the types and condition of the benches being offered.

**National Minimum Wage:-** It was agreed to increase the Handyman's remuneration from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 from £5.93 per hour to £6.08 in accordance with the National Minimum Wage.

**Liaison Representatives:-** The committee suggested that the liaison representatives should be reviewed periodically and proposed that representations from the Communities Mean Business and Eccleshall First Responders were no longer required and the Tourism Bureau and Farmers' Market would be kept under review. However, Councillor von Elbing had proposed that it may be advisable to retain the reports from Communities Mean Business in light of the application for funding towards the Castle Street improvements and this was agreed. Councillor Jacques commented that he would appreciate an opportunity to consider the withdrawal of the First Responder representation and it was agreed to review this at the next meeting.

**Bishop Lonsdale School:-** The school had requested £100 funding towards trips to the National Arboretum at Alrewas and the House of Commons / Imperial War Museum. It was agreed to assist the School on this occasion using powers conferred by the LG (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19.

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee were adopted by the Council.

**Footpaths Committee:-** Councillor Allen referred to the updating of the footpaths leaflets and Favourite Walks Booklet and asked for volunteers to walk and check the routes.

**92/11). Castle Street Enhancements:-** Following the meeting of the Planning Committee held on September 7<sup>th</sup>, the when Mr Gatensbury had given a presentation regarding proposals for a scheme to enhance Castle Street, those present resolved by 11 votes to 1 (Councillor Delanchy abstained) to proceed as follows:-

1. Work in partnership with the County and Borough Councils to agree a scheme.
2. Complete and submit an application for funding through the Communities Mean Business Project, in partnership with the Borough Council.
3. Consult with local people, community groups and businesses to demonstrate support for the scheme.
4. Consider making a contribution towards certain elements of the scheme, for example street furniture.

**93/11). Localism Bill:-** Councillor Pimble indicated that from the conflicting information that was available regarding the Localism Bill it was unclear whether it was advisable to wait for the Bill to be to become law and rely on the emerging local plan to guard against unpopular development or to act now to create a Neighbourhood Plan. Recent information from the Department for Communities and Local Government indicated that Parish Councils could request the Local Authority to make an application for a grant of up to £20,000 from the Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners Scheme. This would enable an enthusiastic group to undertake the project with the guidance of the local planning authority.

The Clerk had contacted Mr P. Windmill at Stafford Borough Council and he was undertaking an investigation into this matter and had indicated that Eccleshall was a united and well run Parish Council, which had previously demonstrated competence by producing a similar document and would be an excellent choice as the first Parish to work with on a Neighbourhood Plan. The closing date for applications was November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should pursue the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors Pimble, Dale, Baskerville, Apps and Mrs Heelis were authorised to undertake further research into production of a Neighbourhood Plan and continue dialogue with the Borough Council regarding funding.

**94/11). Liaison Representatives:-**

**Allotments:-** Councillor Starkey reported that split up 4 large plots to help meet the demand for allotments. A skip had been hired and members were seeking quotations to repair the fencing to the left of the site. 90 people had visited the allotments during the open Gardens Competition and plot holders were planning a sale of produce to raise funds.

**Ecclian Society:-** The Society now had a membership of 163 households. Members were advised of the dates to remove baskets and mangers and erect Christmas Trees. Switch on of the lights was planned for November 28<sup>th</sup> to coincide with a Business Focus Group event on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Details of two seats at Elford Heath and The Eyeswells Footpath being donated by the Society had been passed to the Clerk.

**Offley Hay Village Hall:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that a Ploughmans Lunch had raised over £200 and quotes had been received for the patio. It was planned to install bookshelves in the corridor with books available for borrowing. The offer to advertise on the Parish Council Notice Board had been gratefully taken up by various groups.

**Bishop Lonsdale School:-** Councillor Dodkins reiterated an invitation from the Headteacher for Councillors to attend Friday afternoon assemblies. The Council welcomed the opportunity to improve relationships with the school through the liaison representative.

**Community Centre:-** Councillor Dale reported that grass had been sown outside the conservatory and the area would be fenced. Funding applications for improvements to the building had been submitted to Communities Mean Business and the Environmental Fund.

**Farmers' Market:-** Councillor Allsop reported that the Market on Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup>, would be held under the former stable area of The Royal Oak, allowing additional stall holders to attend.

**First Responders:-** Councillor Jacques indicated that the new vehicle was expected to be in commission next month.

**Communities Mean Business:-** Councillor Dodkins reported that the funding from the European Union had been significantly reduced. However, grants already allocated included funding of firefighting equipment for the young people in Eccleshall.

There were no reports to receive from Slindon Village Hall, Business Focus Group or Tourism Bureau.

**95/11). Clerk's Report and Correspondence:-** The Clerk reported receipt of the following:-

**SPCA Annual Report & Accounts**, Notification of AGM & Conference November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the County Buildings from 10am. It was agreed that Councillor Allen would represent the Council on this occasion and the Council resolved to fund the £10 attendance fee.

**Infrastructure Planning Commission - Scoping Report, Norton Bridge Railway.** Members were advised that this document could be viewed online. [www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure](http://www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure).

**Allotments Association** – A letter of thanks had been received for the support and funding of recent planning application thanks were also expressed to Cllr. Pimble for his assistance

**West Coast Network Services** – The clerk had liaised with the Chairman regarding Tree & vegetation clearance at Elford.

**Community Council of Staffordshire** – Annual Accounts and notice of AGM September 28<sup>th</sup>, Stoweby-Chartley Village Hall 7.30pm – Councillor Dodkins indicated that she was attending this meeting and would report back to the Council.

**Sponsored Police Vehicle** – a letter received from Chief Inspector Paul Trevor indicated that when the sponsored vehicle came to the end of its operational life it was replaced by a Ford Focus, which remained at Eccleshall for use by the PCSO's.

Staffordshire County Council had advised the Clerk that the **County Council's Legal Service Unit** was able to provide Legal Services to Parish Councils

**Staffordshire Playing Fields Association** – AGM October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 2pm Rugeley Leisure Centre

**Parish Forum** – September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Stafford Gatehouse, 7pm

**Observational Documentary** – Steve Parsons of James Grant Media Management had requested permission to attend a Council meeting with a view to the production of a documentary to illustrate that a sense of community spirit exists in many communities. Member had no objections to this proposal.

**Royal Horticultural Society** – a letter had been received detailing the benefits of involvement in the RHS Britain in Bloom.

**Watering:-** Retrospective authorisation was granted for an additional week's watering, which had been requested in consultation with Eccleshall in Bloom at a cost of an extra £255.20.

**Christmas Trees:-** The clerk was authorised to seek quotations for the Christmas Trees.

**Eccleshall Cricket Club:-** Mrs Heelis indicated that Mr Marshall from Eccleshall Cricket Club had requested a grant of £500 towards the cost of a new scoreboard. The Council indicated that the request would be considered upon receipt of the completed application form and accompanying documents.

**Benches – Elford Heath and Eyeswells Footpath:-** Details of a proposal to install rustic oak benches on Elford Heath and The Eyeswells Footpath had been received from the Ecclian Society. The benches proposed were an oak log with a flat upper surface and would require no regular maintenance. The Council welcomed these proposal sand thanks were extended to the Ecclian Society.

**Croxton Play Area:-** It was resolved to request Trent Grounds Maintenance to undertake a day's work as in previous years, clearing the undergrowth and trimming trees on the field surrounding the play area at a cost of £360.

**Chairman's Report:-** Councillor Dale reported that he had attended the Battle of Britain Service on Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**The Civic Service** was to be held at St. Paul's Church Croxton on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. The Clerk was asked to issue the usual invitations to the Mayor and Mayoress of Stafford and Stone together with community groups.

**96/11). Accounts:-** Copies of the Accounts had been circulated and retrospective authorisation was granted for the following cheques issued since the July Meeting.

Audit Commission – <i>Accounts and Audit Regs. 1996</i>	480.00
Trent Grounds Maintenance – <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	133.20
B.T. Telephone Bill – <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	114.31
D. J. Chell – service footpath equipment – <i>concurrent allowance</i>	208.31
D. Smith – Footpaths Maintenance – <i>HA 1980 s.143</i>	29.65
Staffordshire Playing Fields Assoc – annual subscription – <i>LGA 1972 s.137</i>	15.00
Trent Grounds Maintenance – <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	133.20

It was noted that £30 had been received from Staffordshire County Council as reimbursement for the installation of fingerposts in the Parish.

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following accounts:-

Salaries and associated costs - <i>LGA 1972 s. 112</i>	2196.36
Expenses - <i>Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963</i>	66.63
Creative Copy 'n' Colour - <i>LGA 1972 s.142</i>	258.00
D. Smith - Footpaths Maintenance - <i>HA 1980 s.143</i>	17.79
SPCA Training - <i>LGA 1972 s.111</i>	60.00
Parton Agriplant Ltd. Hedgecutting - <i>Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10</i>	198.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

**97/11). Items / Date and Venue for next meeting:-** October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Offley Hay Village Hall 7.30pm.