

Eccleshall Parish Neighbourhood Plan group

March 5th, 2013 Eccleshall Community Centre 7.30pm.

The fifteen people who had expressed an interest in being involved with a Neighbourhood had been invited to attend this initial meeting to establish a way forward. Councillor Pimble had been elected Chairman at a meeting of the by the five Parish Councillors nominated to form the group.

Present were:

Councillor D. Pimble (Chair)	Councillor G. Dale (Parish Council Chairman)	Mr P. Thompson
Councillor J. Allen	Mr J. Baldry (Neighbourhood Watch)	Councillor L. Serjeant
Mrs C. Hyland	Mr P. Bertram (Ecclian Society)	Mr K. Weston
Mr J. Leather	Mrs C. Heelis (Parish Council Clerk)	

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor B. Apps	Mr C. Marshall (Eccleshall Cricket Club)	Mr R. Maxwell
Mrs J. Peters	Mrs J. Baker (Historical Society)	Mrs S. Clowes
Mr P. Snape		

Ms S. Adamson had indicated that unfortunately she was no longer able to participate in the group.

- 1). Introductions:-** Everyone introduced themselves and gave a brief resume of how long they had resided in Eccleshall and their interest in a Neighbourhood Plan. A general theme was the desire to preserve the historic character and fabric of the parish whilst enabling some degree of growth to maintain existing services and the vitality of the community.
- 2). Purpose of the meeting and current position:-** Councillor Pimble indicated that the Parish Council was required to lead the process in areas where a Parish Council existed, but that a Neighbourhood Forum could be established in areas where there was no Parish Council. An application had been made to Stafford Borough Council to designate the **whole** of the Parish as the Neighbourhood Area for approval and they would undertake a formal consultation for a six week period.

The Parish Council had originally applied to be Front Runners but Stafford Borough had refused to make any application, in comparison to East Staffordshire where there were 10 successful applications. A grant of £25,000 had been available to successful applicants.

Copies of Guides to producing a Plan were available. A CPRE document identified 8 steps to prepare a plan. 1. Getting started. 2. Identifying the issues. 3. Develop a vision and objectives. 4. General options. 5. Draft the Neighbourhood Plan. 6. Consultation and submission. 7. Independent examination. 8. Referendum and adoption.

It was noted that the Plan would have to conform to the strategic policies detailed in the Borough Local Plan and a referendum required a majority of votes (over 50% of those voting) in favour of the Plan for it to succeed and become a statutory document.

- 3). Local Plan Development Strategy:-** Eccleshall is identified in the Local Plan as being a Key Service Village, having sufficient available land to accommodate future growth, as identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. 'Eccleshall has a historic centre designated by a conservation area, with a significant level of services and facilities for a relatively small population, as well as having Raleigh Hall recognised Industrial Estate nearby'.

Councillor Pimble stated that the plan proposed the expansion of Raleigh Hall by 6 hectares. It was also understood that the proposal included the construction of a roundabout on the A519. The meeting agreed that infrastructure was a major issue in relation to development and the cost of a roundabout may be better spent on other road improvements in the area to help accommodate the increased volume of traffic.

- 4). Stafford Borough Policies:-** The main policies contained in the Local Plan were:-
 - Economy
 - Transport
 - Communities
 - Environment
 - Infrastructure

- 5). Issues and themes for inclusion in the Plan:-** It was noted that the Rural Developments Boundaries around Eccleshall and Croxton would cease to exist from the end of April when the Local Plan 2001 would cease to be relevant. The new plan for Stafford Borough was currently being prepared for submission to the Secretary of State in Spring 2013. Without an agreed document in place developers would be able to submit

planning applications and even if the application was refused at Borough level the applications could be approved on appeal under the established National Planning Policy Framework with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Concern was expressed that this could lead to extensive development and that the infrastructure was inadequate. The Borough Council had recently written to local landowners to establish whether land for development was still available.

Mr Leather commented that the creation of a bypass would in itself create a new boundary where all the area between the bypass and the town would become developed.

The Local Plan stated: "In due course it is intended that development allocations for specific sites will be identified within settlement boundaries through the Neighbourhood Planning Process, or through the preparation of the Site Specific Policies and Allocations document".

Mrs Hyland referred to the Affordable Homes Survey and was advised that details were available in Eccleshall Library. A feasibility study was currently being carried out on three sites – one on the Burgage and two areas on land adjoining the Burgage.

Mr Bertram indicated that there were almost 500 registered businesses in Eccleshall and they should be encouraged and accommodated.

It was proposed that existing documentation could be of use and leaflets published by the Ecclesian Society were cited along with the Town Design Statement, as these already contained much of the background detail that would be required.

The group considered that specific aspects and concerns should be consulted upon, for instance whether the Doctors had capacity for additional patients.

Councillor Pimble stated that it was important to identify strengths and positive features in the Parish as well as negative aspects that required improvement those things not available that the Parish would like.

6). Key Groups:-

- Ecclesian Society
- Historical Society
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Cricket Club and other sports groups
- Business Group
- School
- Police
- Professional members of the community Doctors, Opticians
- NFU and Young Farmers

Mrs Heelis was asked to contact Alexandra Murray from Sugnall and Mr Osbourne from Croxton, who had expressed an interest in becoming involved at the public meeting, to ascertain whether they still wished to represent their areas on the group.

7).Community Engagement:- The Plan was required to be a genuine community document and extensive consultation was needed.

8). The Way Forward:- The document would require an introduction, reasoning and specific policies. It was agreed to compile a list of topics for possible inclusion in the document, which would be circulated and members could contact the Clerk to add items. The list could then be allocated to smaller groups for discussion.

The SPCA area committee proposed forming a Neighbourhood Plan support group. Mrs Heelis was asked to express an interest in being involved in the group for the purpose of discussion and exchanging information.

It was proposed to meet again in 3 - 4 weeks time and Councillor Pimble closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

TOPICS

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| Economy | Transport |
| • Employment | Infrastructure |
| Housing | Communities |
| • Design | Sustainability |
| Environment | |
| • Open space, sport and recreation | |