

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Jan 17th, 2018

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on Jan 17th, 2018, at Eccleshall Community Centre, at 7.30pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee at 10.05pm.

01/18). Present were:-

Councillor G. Garner (Chairman)	Councillor P. Baskerville
Councillor P. Jones	Councillor J. Leather
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor P. Alcock
Councillor R. Langford	Councillor A. Le Monnier
Councillor J. Jones	Councillor T. Price
Councillor C. Marshall	Councillor B. Delanchy
Councillor D. Jacques	Mrs S.J. Worden (Clerk)
Borough and County Councillor Pert.	

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors P. Mullee.

The meeting opened with prayers

02/18). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations:- There were no requests to receive.

03/18). To discuss the changes to the Parish Bus Services – Mr Chris Almond, D&G Buses:-

Mr Almond outlined the decision of the County Council to adopt option one of the bus consultation proposals, which allowed for the retention of the highest number of bus services for Eccleshall and Staffordshire as a whole. Bus service 14 will be retained, but subsidies will be removed from services 12, 13 and 15.

D&G are in negotiation with the Department of Transport to extend funding for service 13a for a further twelve months, which would extend the service until the end of March 2019. This is the route that includes the critical 07.50 commuter service. Funding is being considered due to the service running via Norton Bridge, which acts as a rail replacement service to Norton Bridge station. Mr. Almond is expecting a decision by the end of the month and will advise the Parish Council accordingly. Cllr Pert asked what plans could be made to retain the key commuter journey post March 2019. It was noted that if the route generated around £10,000 in earnings per year, surely it is a profitable route to continue. At present, Mr. Almond did not see how this could continue, as the other journeys made by service 13a during the day operated at a loss, and overall, the cost of keeping a bus running to provide the service would not be profitable. Using the bus just for one journey a day was also not profitable as annual running costs for the bus would still grossly exceed £10,000. At that peak time, all buses were otherwise in use for other key journeys and could not be redirected.

Mr. Almond advised that they would be able to provide a Saturday service that would help support the loss of the No. 15 service that runs through most of the outlying villages in the Parish, if the Parish were able to fund the service. The proposed route could run from Loggerheads to Stafford, and would cover Fair Oak, Wetwood, Croxton, Sugnall, Copmere End and Bishops Offley, before travelling on via Norbury and Gnosall to Stafford. Alternative routes could also be offered, including a journey that ends in Loggerheads, if passengers would prefer to access onward bus services to Newcastle-under-Lyme. The cost would be £180 a day, £9,360 per annum. The Council **resolved** to refer the proposal to the Traffic Management Committee agenda for consideration on February 7th 2018.

04/18). Public Participation:- There was one member of the press present.

05/18). To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Nov 15th, 2017:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated were agreed and signed.

06/18). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-

County Councillor Pert provided a report on the following:

- Cllr Pert had reported the pothole on Shaw's Lane, fault no. 4102863.
- The County Council have launched the consultation process for the future shape of the library services that are currently still managed and delivered by the County Council, which includes Eccleshall. The deadline for submission of responses is the 1st April,

and there will be an opportunity to attend a drop-in consultation event in Eccleshall library on the 6th March, between 3 and 6pm. A consultation on the mobile library service is being held on the 18th January at Standon, from 10.15-11.30am.

- Cllr Pert highlighted the issue of the severe potholes on the A519, which have been reported extensively. Some have been repaired, but the road is prone to potholes due to the HGV traffic using the route. Cllr Pert has asked the County Council to survey the cost of pothole repairs against the cost of resurfacing.
- The unofficial result of the annual rough sleeper count in Stafford Borough has shown a reduction of over 50%, down from 15 to 7.
- Eccleshall Youth Club is being visited by Police Crime Commissioner on the 18th January. There have been a number of recent activities including a trip to Crewe skate park and The Eagle Inn has started to run activities for young people on Wednesday evenings.
- There will be a launch of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme on 6th February 2018, at Eccleshall Library, 6pm.
- Veolia will be the new provider for refuse collection services in the Borough from 5th February, although all the people, routes, and collection days will remain unaltered at present. If any changes are to be made this will be at a later date and plenty of advance notice will be provided. It was noted that in Stafford Borough, none of the rubbish went to landfill. None recycled items were processed at the waste to energy plant at Four Ashes, where waste is incinerated to generate electricity for around 67,000 houses in Staffordshire. Recycling rates still hold at 55% for the county, so there is still need to improve resident understanding of what can be recycled.
- Cllr Pert noted the ongoing health deficit in the economy of 157 million pounds. There have been improvements to the executive team structures dealing with health, which will help with moving forward and addressing the issues.

Cllr P. Jones had no updates to report.

07/18). **Committee Reports:-**

Traffic Management Committee:- Cllr P. Jones advised that the next meeting will be held on February 7th 2018.

Enhancements Committee:- Councillor Baskerville presented a report from the meeting held on January 3rd, 2018:

- **Assets:-** Following a review of the seats listed as requiring maintenance, the committee requested authorisation for Mr. Sheard to clean and varnish the seats at Green Lane, Raleigh Hall, Stone Road, The Old Vicarage and by the former NatWest Bank. The Council **resolved** to proceed with commissioning of the work.
- **Croxton Play Area:-** Following a comparison of repair costs for the wetpour surface, the Committee recommended purchase of materials for £72, for volunteer councillors to effect the repairs. The Council **resolved** to accept the proposal and requested the Clerk to order the necessary supplies.
- **Pillar Clock:-** It has been noted that the chimes have stopped chiming again. It is suspected that there may have been further ingress of water, but this is pending investigation. It was noted that if the clock needs sealing to prevent further water ingress, this could prove expensive, as it would include hire of a cherry picker, on top of any labour costs. The sample gilding that had been applied to an area of the clock appears to be more resilient than the previous paint. The committee recommended that a quote for repainting of the gilding be obtained from Mr. Eaton. The Council **resolved** to approve this course of action.
- **Trees at Elford Common:-** Cllrs Garner, Baskerville and the Clerk met with Western Power's contractor, Ground Control, on 10th January. Western Power need to undertake a fairly savage cutback of trees to ensure residual safety of the 33KV power line for next five years. All trees within 6 metres of line will be removed. Brash will be chipped and spread on site, logs will be stacked in situ. All the affected trees are now marked with green spot, so the Council can review the scope of work before commencement. Ground

Control will notify local residents before work commences, which is expected to start in late spring or summer 2018, depending on ground conditions.

- **Elford Pond:-** the water level has recovered slightly but is still not back to “normal”. Work is needed to the surrounding willows and pond greenery, but the committee recommend waiting until completion of the tree felling, then review the situation. Cllr Baskerville has contacted the Environment Agency via Liz Fowler and Mick Buxton, and meeting Mr. Buxton at 2.30pm on Friday 19th January. There is a small possibility that he can offer some fish, depending on water quality.
- **Elford Common Car Park:-** It was noted that the surface of the car park at Elford Common needs levelling and filling. The committee recommends obtaining a quote for the completion of the work from Martin Atkins. The Council **resolved** to accept this course of action.
- **BT Phone Boxes:-** A site meeting was arranged for 8th January to try and establish what work is necessary on the adopted phone boxes at Croxton and Fair Oak. A list of repairs was noted, and material costs are initially estimated at £300, plus labour. Local residents are keen to start work, and wish to use both Croxton and Fair Oak boxes as information points, and as a book swap at Croxton in the drier months. Cllr Langford volunteered to raise this at their Parish church committee magazine meeting on Monday 22nd January, and to arrange a team to start with initial cleaning, and cutting back of the encroaching hedge. The Council **resolved** for this course of action to be approved.

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

Policy and Resources Committee:- Councillor Garner presented a report from a meeting of the committee held on December 6th, 2017. The minutes and relevant documentation had been circulated to members.

- **Precept 2018/19:-** Spreadsheets were circulated detailing the proposed precept for 2018/19. Mrs Worden advised that the Concurrent Functions Allowance from the Borough Council was to remain unchanged at £3733. Due to an increase in the Tax Base, if the Parish set an unchanged precept of £52440 for 2017/18 a reduction of 3.2% in the charge for a Band D property would occur.

The proposed budget was reviewed and it was noted that the loss of the County Council Neighbourhood Highways team has been accounted for within the budget, with an initial figure of £3500, based on an estimate of past expenditure as advised by the Highways team. Cllr Delanchy advised that costs to the Parish are likely to be higher than this, as alternative providers may not be able to offer the services at the same rate. This may result in the Parish being unable to cover all of the work previously completed by the County Council Highways team.

The Council unanimously resolved that a precept of £54850.00 should be levied for 2018/19 as per the attached spreadsheet – due to the increase in the tax base this would be an increase of 1.5% for a Band D property.

- The electronic accounting system was ongoing, and as we move forward towards the end of the financial year the Clerk will be updating earmarked reserves and balances accordingly.
- **Data Protection Legislation:-** The Clerk and Cllr Baskerville recently attended a briefing about the new GDPR regulations due to be implemented in May 2018. Final guidance is still to be finalised on the implications to Parish Councils. County Council is looking to offer a Data Protection Officer service to Parish Councils, for a fee to be determined. Cllr Le Monnier expressed willingness to take up the role of Data Protection Officer, and would be able to provide training to the Council on the key areas. Cllr Marshall noted that it would be preferable moving forward that councillors were able to have a separate email address for Council business. The Clerk has requested this as part of the new website project.
- **Social Media Policy:-** Following committee recommendation, the Council **resolved** to accept the new social media policy, which will be added to the Declaration of Office form for signature by new and current councillors, ensuring records are updated accordingly.
- **Grant application form:-** as recommended by the committee, the Council **resolved** to accept the revised Grant application form, which now requires further information from the

applicant to help with the decision making process, along with guidance notes to clarify under what circumstances the Parish Council could consider grant applications. It was noted that applications for individuals are to be discouraged, but if a group applies and then chooses to use the grant to support individuals within their group, this is acceptable.

- **SPCA Guides:-** The updated guide was noted to be a useful source of information for new and existing councillors. The Council **resolved** to purchase 16 additional copies at £3.75each, plus P&P.
- **Grant Applications from Broughton Tennis Club:-** The club has applied for a grant towards the cost of a fertiliser and seed spreader, costed at £185.94. The Committee recommends a grant of £100 be given towards this cost. The Council **resolved** to approve this course of action.
- **Other grant requests:-** Eccleshall Churches Together have requested a grant towards the replacement of their nativity figures, and will now be sent a copy of the new grant application form for completion. The Community Transport Scheme have deferred their application for support with annual insurance costs as a quote is still pending.

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

Footpaths Committee:- A meeting of the Footpaths Committee was held on Dec 6th, 2017, and the minutes had been circulated to all members.

The Council **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Footpaths Committee.

08/18). Liaison Representatives:- There were no reports to receive from Eccleshall Community Centre, Slindon Residents, Croxton News or Tourism.

Allotments:-

- The AGM was held in early December, and the current officers were re-elected. There is still a vacant post of Vice-Chairman. Finances were healthy at approximately £700. 8 or 9 plots will be made available this year. Most will be filled from their waiting list, and the remaining plots will be advertised. Cllr Price volunteered to replace Cllr Starkey as the other liaison representative for allotments

Ecclian Society:-

- The Ecclian Society AGM was held at the Community Centre on Tuesday, November 21st.
- The Christmas trees were erected on Sunday, December 3rd using the new battery powered lights, which were very successful. The Christmas trees were taken down and recycled on Sunday, January 7th 2018.
- The Ecclian Society provided the mulled wine for the Parish Council "Carols around the Christmas Tree" on Monday, December 18th.
- A post for hanging baskets has been demolished outside Vons. Cllr Baskerville has moved this and sawn off the post to make safe.

The Council noted that the Carols around the Christmas Tree event was a great success, and wished to express their thanks to Mr. Gordon Dale, for the ongoing work in planning the event.

Offley Hay Village Hall:-

- A meeting was held on Thursday 11th January. Mr John Perrott was elected as the new Chairman, other roles remained the same. There is a vacant role for a trustee, and details will be sent to the Clerk for advertisement on the Parish website and Facebook pages.

Young People:-

- Most items were reported in Cllr Pert's update. Cheryl Ball has been working on a number of activities, some of which are now in place. The launch of the evening activities at The Eagle Inn is to engage the young people of the older age group who would otherwise be uninvolved.

09/18). Community Transport update:- There are no further updates on the project.

Cllr P. Jones noted that as part of the 2018 Eccleshall Festival, the Street Market will be held on the 23rd June, and they are looking for organisations to take part in the events. The Ecclesian Society will be running open gardens at the beginning of the week, as well as running a stall at the market. Cllr Langford advised that the WI are arranging talks and activities celebrating the 100 years of female suffrage, and may be able to link into the festival activities.

Cllr Jacques noted with regard to the bus service, and the fact that it may appear to be unsustainable long term, would it be possible to develop a car sharing scheme that could be supported by the County Council, such as the Uber scheme. Cllr Pert advised these projects tended to be community driven in the first instance, rather than instigated by the County Council.

10/18). To discuss the requirements for ongoing Highways maintenance, in the absence of the Neighbourhood Highways Team:-

Members had received a document detailing the past works completed by the Neighbourhood Highways Team, and all were requested to look around Eccleshall and to submit to the Clerk detailed information regarding what areas may need to be maintained by the Parish moving forward. The Clerk will compile a list from all submissions, for consideration by the enhancements committee.

The Clerk will circulate an email to all members with the summary of works completed by the NHT team in the past, and the link to the Highways microsite, which clarifies which areas of work we need to consider. There will be a deadline for submission of all information.

11/18). To consider the request by Flood Action Group to administer a grant for erection of 10 flood gates for business properties at the bottom of High Street:-

Should the application for the grant be successful, the group has requested the Council to act as administrator of the grant. This would entail the adoption of the project by the Council, which would then be actioned by a new sub-committee of the Council, comprising of Cllr Price, along with members of the Flood Action Group. The grant would be expected to cover all costs of the project work and the Council would not be liable for any additional costs of the project. The Council **resolved** to accept this course of action and the Clerk would advise Mr Archer of the Flood Action Group accordingly.

12/18). To consider and approve civic amenity visits for 2018/19:-

In order to retain the bi-monthly civic amenity visits for the disposal of large household items, the Council **resolved** to approve the proposed cost of £780.00. The Borough Council will contact the Clerk to advise available dates shortly.

13/18). To approve further quotations for the tree work at Copmere Picnic site common land:-

Balfours, following a request from Cllr Jacques, have provided the Clerk with a contact who may be able to provide a lower quote than Streetscene for completion of the work. Mr Terry Crick runs training courses in tree surgery, and may be able to use the work as part of the training programme. The Council resolved for the Clerk to obtain a quote from Mr. Crick. It was noted that the Parish Council, as neither owners nor managers of the land, have any obligation to complete the tree works.

At this point, the Chair requested permission from the Council to extend the meeting past 9.30pm, in line with the Standing Orders, and the Council voted in favour of continuation.

14/18). To consider any New Development updates:-

Taylor Wimpey site:- there were no items to report.

Bovis:- there were no items to report.

Roundabout feature:- The planning application is still under consideration, after submission of a revised drawing to provide 2D representations of the eagle from all aspects.

Cross Butts:- Cllr Amos had advised the Clerk of water being pumped onto the road from the development. Following input from Cllr Pert, the Clerk had been contacted by the on-site manager, who had no knowledge of this activity. On a positive note, the Clerk now has an on-site contact for any future issues.

Cllr J. Jones requested clarification on the works taking place at the top of School Road and Gaol Butts. Cllr Delanchy advised this is not the location for the planned roundabout, but is a remodelling of the junction to create a space between School Lane and Gaols Butts.

15/18). To receive the Clerk’s report and correspondence:-

The Council **resolved** to accept the Clerk’s report

The report had been previously circulated and included:

- **Warmer Homes information:-** The Council **resolved** to publicise the Warmer Homes scheme to residents, where possible, by highlighting it to anyone who might benefit, and publishing in notice boards.
- **Correspondence from Mr Frank Chapman:-** The Council noted Mr Chapman’s comments regarding concerns about social housing and whether due consideration is being taken in building social housing only where there is a proven local need.
- **Invitation to take part in Best Kept Village 2018:-** The Council **resolved**, as in previous years, not to apply to participate in the competition.
- **Launch of Staffordshire Libraries Consultation:-** The consultation was launched on the 8th January, and will close on 1st April 2018, as per Cllr Pert’s report. The Council **resolved** to add the library consultation to the February agenda, to allow members time to consider the proposal in detail.
- **Community Connectors Volunteering Role:-** Richard Upton has circulated details of an opportunity to volunteer as a Community Connector, engaging with isolated older adults to signpost and connect people to local services, and keep them up to date with what is available in the local community. Council members were requested to flag up the opportunity where possible.
- **Resident email re Police Funding:-** A resident email was read out concerning the lack of police presence in Eccleshall and that additional funds raised from the public aren’t being reflected in the provision of local support. The Council acknowledged the concerns of the resident and that a fair point had been raised. It was also noted that unless residents report any criminal activity to 101, data cannot be recorded on crimes in the area, and this will not help to increase police presence.
- **Resident correspondence regarding the Eagle Sculpture:-** The Council had been circulated a resident letter that is part of ongoing correspondence regarding the Eagle sculpture, and their objections. The resident felt that the original response from the Council did not address their issues and concerns. Following consideration of the points raised, the Council **resolved** to acknowledge receipt of the letter and had taken note of the response, but did not have any further information to advise the resident at this time.

16/18). Chairman’s Report:-

The Chairman attended the Civic Carol Service in Stone.

17/18). Accounts:-

Authorisation was requested for payment of the following:-

S. Worden - Salary - LGA 1972 s. 112	969.15
Expenses - Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1963	139.83
PAYE - LGA (Financial Provisions) 1963	15.00
NHI - LGA (Financial Provisions)1963	106.81
Pension LG Pensions Scheme Regs. 1995	303.04
Chairman's Allowance 2017/18 - LGA 1972 ss. 15 (5)	150.00
UK2.net - payment for VPS for Parish Website via Eccleshall Guide - LGA 1972 s.111	31.00

All were in favour and the cheques were signed.

Audit return for 2016/17:- The Clerk noted an omission in the minutes of September 20th 2017, when the return from Grant Thornton was advised as returned. The Council **resolved** to minute the receipt of the unqualified return from Grant Thornton, without comment, as verbally advised in the September meeting and confirmed this evening.

Eccleshall Parish Website:- The Clerk advised that the development of the new website was ongoing, and the aim is to be up and running by the end of January, so no further costs are incurred in the monthly charges for the VPS server. The new site address is www.eccleshallparishcouncil.co.uk, rather than .org. We will be able to retain the .org address for a further 12 months, in order to redirect traffic whilst the new website address is being updated on all relevant paperwork and advised to all contacts.

18/18). To pass a resolution in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for discussion re delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan, where publicity may be prejudicial to the special nature of the business:-

The Council accepted a report for consideration by Cllr Pert, in relation to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.

19/18). Items / Date and Venue for next meeting:- February 21st, 2018, Eccleshall Community Centre, 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.05pm.