

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Mar 21st, 2018

A meeting of Eccleshall Parish Council was held on March 21st, 2018, at Eccleshall Community Centre, at 7.00pm. This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Planning Committee at 9.40pm.

20/18). Present were:-

Councillor G. Garner (Chairman)	Councillor T. Price
Councillor P. Jones	Councillor J. Leather
Councillor E. Amos	Councillor P. Alcock
Councillor J. Jones	Councillor B. Delanchy
Councillor C. Marshall	Mrs S.J. Worden (Clerk)

Candidates for co-option:- Mrs. L. Dale and Mr. R. Milne.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Baskerville, Langford, Le Monnier, Mullee and Jacques.

The meeting opened with prayers

21/18). To consider Councillor requests for dispensations:- There were no requests to receive.

22/18). Public Participation:- There were two members of the public present, who did not wish to speak.

23/18). To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Feb 21st, 2018:- The minutes, which had been previously circulated were agreed and signed.

24/18). Co-option to Eccleshall Ward:- Both candidates were present and each was asked to leave the room whilst the other gave a short presentation to the meeting, answering questions from existing Councillors.

Eccleshall Ward:- Following a secret ballot Mrs Libby Dale Price of 74, High Street was duly co-opted to represent the Eccleshall Ward.

Councillor Garner welcomed Mrs Dale to the Council and thanked the other applicant for his interest in the Council. Councillor Dale signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

25/18). Reports from Borough and County Councillors:-

County Councillor Pert provided a report on the following:

- Cllr. Pert noted the good news regarding Eccleshall Rugby Club, who have become Midlands Junior Vase champions, and are one win away from playing at Twickenham.
- The library consultation is ongoing and feedback is encouraged. The deadline for responses is the 1st April.
- The new bus timetables will be implemented from the 1st April.
- Potholes – there have been a number of site visits over the last few weeks. The inclement weather has not helped the situation, and delays to repairs have resulted from the need to redeploy staff to grit the roads. The extensive works to the Newcastle Road have now been completed.
- Cllr. Pert noted the planned works by Severn Trent at Aspley to install new water pipes, which will result in temporary closure of Rock Lane from the junction of the A519 Newcastle Road. Works are expected to start from Monday 30 April for approximately 8 weeks.
- It was reported that County Council funding from government had reduced by £120m over the last 5 years, resulting in a current budget of approximately £500m. In the next year the County Council are putting another £30m in for social care, and £10m towards families. This is why the County Council needs to reorganise services in order to make them as sustainable as possible.

- From recent discussions with local businesses in Eccleshall, Cllr. Pert noted one or two retailers are struggling for business. Cllr. Pert urged the Parish Council to consider ways to address the potential loss of businesses, in order to keep Eccleshall thriving.
- It was noted that the County Council are unable to commit to resurfacing work at Cotes Heath.
- Smart Motorways – work is due to start on the upgrade of the M6 to smart motorways, and is anticipated to last around 3 years. It was noted that during the motorways consultation the likely impact of traffic from HS2 was not considered.
- Cllr. Pert outlined his concerns with regards to a piece of road, 1-1.5 car lengths, situated on the Stone Road, directly to the left of the Co-op car park entrance/exit, nearest to the roundabout. If a car is parked on this stretch of road, all vehicles pulling off the car park have to swing around the parked car, and into oncoming traffic on the other side of the road. Due to the danger this poses, Cllr. Pert proposed the addition of approximately 1 car length equivalent of double yellow lines, to prevent parking causing danger. He noted that if the Parish Council agreed to this now, it could be completed free of charge.
- Eagle Street Art – Amey have confirmed they are on board to complete the construction work as per their original agreement, and the Highways department are confident that the outstanding licences that need to be applied for will not impede the progression of the project. Mr. Rayson has agreed to waive the £100 application fee for the licence to plant. Cllr Pert is waiting for Bovis to confirm the final total for the grant.
- There is a current campaign on Dementia awareness with the aim to make Stafford Borough dementia friendly by 2020. A number of people have already been trained in dementia awareness, including the library in Eccleshall and the prison. Visits are planned to the Carer's Café, and to train all Borough Council staff.
- White Ribbon campaign – work is ongoing to raise the awareness of male violence against women, and to use men as good role models to promote appropriate relationships and behaviours.
- Cllr. Pert was recently in London discussing the funding of supported accommodation with the Housing Minister.

Borough Councillor P.Jones provided a report on the following:-

- Car sharing – Officers at County Highways are looking to trial a car sharing scheme with a volunteer Parish. More information will be available in the future.
- Cllr. P. Jones attended a full Borough Council meeting on 26th February and the Audit and Accounts committee meeting on 20th March.
- Cllr. P. Jones will attend the next Borough Council committee meeting on the 28th March, which will include the planning application for the development of land at the rear of The Burgage.
- The monthly surgery session included issues such as potholes, parking, the Co-Op parking charges and the resulting increase in on-street parking.
- Cllr. P. Jones met the new PCSO, Emily Davenhill, and spoke to PC Karl Green regarding the issue of obstructive parking on pavements. PC Green advised it is an offence when vehicles are parked on a public footpath and is preventing a wheelchair or pram from passing without entering the road.
- Car parking – the manager of the Co-Op has provided an information sheet to clarify the pricing structure of the car park, which has been circulated to all councillors. Any decisions as to the policy of the car parking are decided by head office. Cllr. P. Jones is carrying out a survey to determine how many car parking spaces are needed by local businesses for all day parking, and to see if any organisations or businesses with car parks could 'lend' a space or two under some kind of permit scheme. Discussions are ongoing, there have been no commitments to 'loan' spaces as yet.

26/18). Committee Reports:-

Traffic Management Committee:- There has been no meeting since the last Parish Meeting, and the next meeting has been rescheduled to June 6th.

The minutes of the Traffic Management Committee were adopted by the Council.

The Parish Council discussed Cllr. Pert's proposal to put double yellow lines in the area next to the Co-Op car park entrance, nearest to the roundabout. The Parish Council noted concerns regarding the removal of any parking space in the current climate of parking issues. However, a car parked in that single space causes a number of dangers, including reduced visibility and causing traffic to turn into oncoming traffic. With regards to the Highway Code, it is illegal to park in that space. After consideration, the Parish Council **resolved** to approve the addition of double yellow lines, to prevent a single car from parking between the Co-Op entrance and the Police Station.

Enhancements Committee:- The next meeting of the Enhancements Committee will be held on 4th April 2018.

Policy and Resources Committee:- Cllr. Garner presented a report from the meeting held on March 7th 2018, the minutes of which were circulated to all members:-

- It was noted that in the unavoidable absence of the Clerk, discussion of the following items were deferred until the Parish meeting of 21st March:
 - Review of the precept
 - Earmarked reserves
 - Pay review update
 - Adoption of bank reconciliation statement (The Clerk will defer this until the next P&R committee meeting).
- **Allotments Association funding request:-** requested financial support for the repair of their shed roof, which they are unable to repair themselves. 3 quotations were provided for the repair of their shed roof, with the most suitable quote at £1150 plus VAT. The committee recommended a contribution of £900, as they were unable to confirm the total amount available in the earmarked funds for allotments. The Clerk advised there were sufficient funds available to pay for the full repair, and after discussion the Council **resolved** to commission the works as landlord of the site, and pay the full amount of £1150 plus VAT. The Council also requested clarification of the lease agreement regarding its responsibilities, as there are limited funds available to support further funding requests.
- **Allotment Rent Increase:-** Allotments rents are historically increased every 3 years, and following committee recommendation, the Council **resolved** to accept the proposed rent increase of 30p per garden road, bringing the rent up to £3.60 per garden road, effective from 1st April 2019.
- **Revision of section 11.1h of the Financial Regulations:-** at present, the financial regulations state the need to obtain 3 estimates for work when expected values are between £100 and £1000. The committee recommends the lower value is raised to £500, which is a more reasonable expectation. The Council **resolved** to accept this recommendation and the regulations will be updated accordingly.
- **Grant Application, Eccleshall Churches Together:-** a grant of £250 has been requested towards a set of new nativity figures for display in the High Street, which will cost £1485 in total. The Committee recommends the full grant of £250 be awarded. The Council **resolved** to approve this course of action.
- **Grant Application, Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme:-** This was deferred until the Parish Meeting, when Cllr. P. Jones could outline the detailed costs. Cllr P. Jones advised the request was for a contribution of £227.12, which will cover the annual insurance premium for the volunteer drivers, which is required in addition to their usual car insurance policies and covers volunteers for liability when assisting the passengers to and from the car. The Council **resolved** to award the full grant amount of £227.12.
- **Grant Application, Croxton Speed watch:-** An application was made for £44.72, to cover the cost of new permanent speed watch signage at Croxton. The group have also been quoted £288 to erect the signs, but they are looking into erecting the signs themselves. Based on this, the committee recommends awarding a grant of £44.72. The Council resolved to approve this course of action.

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

Footpaths Committee:- The Footpaths Committee met on March 7th, 2018 and the minutes were circulated to all members.

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

- 27/18). Liaison Representatives:-** There were no reports to receive from the Allotments Association, Eccleshall Community Centre, the Ecclians, Offley Hay Village Hall, Slindon Residents or Croxton News.
Ecclian Society:- It was noted that the new Ecclian Society newsletter had recently been delivered to all residents.
Tourism:- The annual meeting will be held at the County Showground on April 18th 2018.
Young People:- YoYo had recently had their AGM meeting, and the committee remains the same. Funding has now ended for the outreach worker, but the work has set a basis for ongoing improvements.
- 28/18). Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme update:-** Insurance is in the process of being arranged. The group are working with Staffordshire County Council to find the best price for DBS checks which are needed for all volunteers. The Council noted it may be worth checking whether volunteers can get DBS checked free of charge. The campaign to recruit drivers and passengers will re-start on Saturday April 7th 10-12pm with a session at the library. The group are also working with the Crown Surgery to promote the scheme. It was noted that the District Nurses are now based in Stone, but some have responsibility for Eccleshall and it may be worth making them aware of the scheme. It was also noted that the NHS at present spend a great deal of money on taxi's to get patients home from appointments, and this would be a much more cost effective option.
- 29/18). To consider the Data Protection Officer service offered by Staffordshire County Council:-**
The Council **resolved** to postpone the consideration of the proposal until the Parish Council meeting on the 18th April 2018, when more clarification may be available with regards to who can act as a Data Protection Officer, and when Cllr. Le Monnier will be in attendance to provide input to the discussions.
- 30/18). Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessments, Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure.:-**
The council **resolved** there were no further amendments required to these documents, in addition to the agreed amendment in item 26/18).
- 31/18). To provide an update on Elford Common proposed tree works:-**
The proposed trees to be removed were reviewed by the Clerk and Mr. Garner on March 6th, and following advice, most of the marked trees were deemed appropriate to be removed. However, there are 3 oak trees situated near the car park entrance to the common that do not appear to pose an imminent danger to the power lines, and if removed would be detrimental to the outlook of the area. The Council **resolved** that a second site visit would be arranged with Mr. Almond to discuss the possibility of retaining the oak trees with minimal work to cut them back, and to request that on completion of the work, all brash be removed from site, and the logs stacked on site in an appropriate location.
- 32/18). To consider the feedback from a site visit to Copmere Picnic Site common land, regarding condition of trees:-** The Clerk and Cllr. Garner met with Mr. Terry Crick on site, to review the condition of the trees. There are a number of trees noted to be in need of removal, but there is some clarity required regarding which trees are on the common land and which may be on the Sugnall Estate. Mr. Crick recommended that an up to date survey of the trees be undertaken to detail the works that need to be completed and enable the Council to decide on the next course of action. The estimated cost of the survey would be £300. The Clerk has contacted Balfours, the land agent for the Sugnall estate, in order to obtain clarification on the land boundaries, prior to any further decisions to be made.
- 32/18). To consider any New Development updates:-**
Taylor Wimpey site:- It has been noted that there is no signage to indicate that there is a new roundabout in place, so drivers have no advance warning of a change to the road layout. It was also queried whether the final roundabout will be a raised design, to prevent cars driving across it. Cllr. Pert agreed to liaise with Highways to clarify the final design of the roundabout and whether signage is to be put in place.

Bovis:- There are ongoing problems regarding the flooding of Footpath 17 that runs alongside their site. Bovis do not believe the footpath is on their land, but it is unclear if this is accurate. Cllr. Alcock requested a site visit to look at the problem in more detail. It was also noted that a stile and a fingerpost have been removed from the path, and there has been some deviation to the footpath line. Residents in the area have also been experiencing considerable problems with flooding as a result of water being pumped off site into ditches and drains which are overflowing. Since this has been reported to the Borough Council enforcement team, Bovis have appeared to turn down the pump overflow.

After discussion the Council **resolved** to look into obtaining land ownership details from the land registry, for a small fee of £3 and Cllr. Leather agreed to follow this up. The Clerk would contact the Rights of Way team to see if they could clarify the land boundaries and ownership of the footpath land.

Roundabout Feature:- As reported in Cllr. Pert's report earlier, Highways do not expect any complications with the outstanding permits that need to be applied for, and Cllr Pert is awaiting final grant details from Bovis.

Cross Butts:- The Clerk had received feedback from the site manager to indicate that on-site parking would be completed this week, and every effort would be made to reduce the current problem with obstructive parking. The Council **resolved** for the Clerk to follow up with the site manager to confirm the car park is on target for completion this week.

33/18). 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:

- **Response to Libraries Consultation:-** The report noted the website for further information and the questionnaire. As resolved in the Parish Meeting of February 21st, a working group met and a response letter was produced and circulated to all members. The Clerk noted that she had been able to meet with Mr. Plant from the County Council at the consultation afternoon, who provided a comprehensive overview of the proposal. The response notes the concerns of the Parish Council to the proposal, which includes the loss of experienced library staff who are key to running the library and ensuring it supports the needs of the community effectively.
- **Call for articles for the May/June newsletter:-** The Clerk requested for members to forward any suggestions for articles, as it would soon be time to compile the next newsletter. The recent success of Eccleshall Rugby Club in winning the Midlands Junior Vase was noted, and the Council **resolved** to send a letter of congratulation to the team, and to wish them luck for their upcoming national semi-final, where a win would provide them with the opportunity to play at Twickenham.
- **Planned Severn Trent works, resulting in closure of Rock Lane, Slindon:-** As noted by Cllr. Pert, Rock Lane will be closed from 30th April for up to 8 weeks. This has been publicised on the Parish Council website and Facebook page. It was noted this would affect 11 houses along that road, and Cllr. Leather had been in contact with Severn Trent to clarify their plans for access to frontages.
- **Request for grit bin on Linacre Road:-** a resident has requested that a grit bin be located half way up Linacre Road, where conditions are dangerous and the current bin is not close enough to transport the grit. The Council **resolved** for the Clerk to contact Mr. Latham at Highways to apply for an additional bin.
- **Resident correspondence concerning parking in St. Chads Road:-** A resident has wrote to express concerns that the new double yellow lines and the planned additional pedestrian access from St. Chad's road to the new development would result in the top of St. Chad's road being used for parking during school drop off and pick up. The Council noted the concerns of the resident and that the issue would be monitored.

34/18). Chairman's Report:-

- As a result of the recent bad weather, the Mayor's dinner has been rearranged to Wednesday May 2nd.
- The Chairman attended the inauguration service of the new vicar last week. The Clerk and other members of the Council were also in attendance. It was well attended and a very pleasant occasion.
- Stafford College students are producing a film about Eccleshall and the Chairman was interviewed about the role of the Parish Council.
- The chairman congratulated the Clerk on successful completion of the ILCA (Introduction to Local Council Administration) qualification.

35/18). 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	220.57
PAYE - LGA (Financial Provisions) 1963	15.00
NHI - LGA (Financial Provisions) 1963	106.81
Pension LG Pensions Scheme Regs. 1995	303.04
Jacksons of Eccleshall - grass cutting - Open Spaces Act 1906 s10	1119.60
Chairman's Allowance 2017/18 - LGA 1972 ss. 15 (5)	80.00
Japhlin - PC Check ,anti-virus renewal & toner carts- LGA 1972 s.111	491.40

The cheques for approved grants in point 26/18 (Eccleshall Churches Together, Croxton Speed watch and Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme) were also written and signed, and a record would be made in the final accounts sheet of 31st March 2018 which will be presented for approval at the Parish Meeting in April. This will also include a final chairs allowance cheque for £70.

Precept 2017/18 update and earmarked reserves:-

Spreadsheets showing the estimated total spend, estimated reserves and earmarked reserves had been circulated as per the attached copy. It was noted that the balances at the end of March would be higher than last year.

The Council resolved to approve the following:-

- £303 from contingencies would be vired to cover the shortfall in budget for Bloom due to fewer funds available to allocate from concurrent allowance.
- The transfer of the following funds to earmarked reserves:-
 - ❖ £700 – from Clerks Salary to Clock repairs and re-gilding
 - ❖ £660 – Elections
 - ❖ £454.62- Allotments from rents
 - ❖ £750 – Eagle Street Art SCC grant
 - ❖ £3000 – from Traffic managements, towards Neighbourhood Highways Team works
 - ❖ £1546 - £550 from overlap Salary, £550 SCC grant and £446 Historical Society donation towards the War Memorial project.
 - ❖ £700 – from training towards the cost of the Councillor training and professional qualifications for the Clerk.

It was noted that the annual earmarking of funds for the Allotments will be reviewed for 2019 in line with the statutory requirements of the Parish Council, as detailed in the lease, to maintain the land and boundaries.

To note the increase in National Minimum /Living Wage from 1/4/2018:- The hourly increase from £7.50 to £7.83 was noted and would be applied to future payments made to the Handyman.

To update on proposed pay offer for Clerks:- The pay negotiations for any pay offer is ongoing, and the Clerk will advise when an agreement has been reached.

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

36/18). 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:- After further discussion, the Parish Council **resolved** to express an interest in the proposal put forward by Cllr. Pert, and are in favour of discussions being initiated.

37/18). Items / Date and Venue for next meeting:- April 18th, 2018, Broughton Parish Rooms, 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.