



ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM MAY 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

Eccleshall Parish Council – Chairmans Annual Report 2021/2022

2021-2022 follows two very challenging years for everyone including the Eccleshall Parish Council.

The members of the council listen to members of the public and endeavour to support any ideas that they receive.

The Council has worked closely with the local organisations and the Borough and County Council to get support for our community.

A new committee for events was formed and has spent months planning the celebrations for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in the parish resulting in four days of activities with literally something for everyone.

The replacement of councillors who have left the council seems to be a constant rolling problem and so far, this year has been successfully achieved with new councillors. Each new councillor brings his or her own thoughts, expertise and ideas to add to the current councillor's 'pot' of ideas.

The committees have each been working hard on the items within their remit and the Chairmen and members have achieved many of the goals that they hoped for.

The use of Zoom to hold our meetings during the lockdown and other difficult times has proved invaluable in aiding us to complete our tasks. Having said that, face to face meetings have resumed and allow the public to see councillors in action.

The sometime slow pace of Parish, Borough, and County Councils in making decisions is a constant concern to council members and it can be difficult to accept that not everything can be resolved immediately. Working on issues can sometimes take months even years when not in the immediate control of the Parish council.

The success of yet another new group within the Parish Council is the Keep Eccleshall tidy team which has achieved much success with the work of over 27 volunteers covering the various parts of the town.

I must praise the Chairmen of the various, former and new committees for the work that they have done and the achievements that they have made.

Without the sterling work of our parish clerk Mrs Stacey Worden and the recently appointed assistant clerk Mrs Beverley Partridge we could so easily have not achieved many of our targets in even the most basic areas.

This is my third year as chairman of the Council and I would like to thank members for their support.

Peter W Jones

May 2022

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM ON WEDNESDAY 11th May 2022

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee consists of all the members of the Parish Council and the quorum for a meeting is five members. The present chairman is Councillor Bryan Delanchy, and the Vice-Chairman is Councillor Joy Jones.

Meetings of the Planning Committee are generally held every two weeks on a Wednesday. This is because applications have to be considered by the Parish Council within 21 days of receipt. This can reduce to 14 days in the case of amended plans for a previously submitted application, because of this time constraint, and as all members make up the Planning Committee decisions are not subject to the approval of the full Council.

The Parish Council considers planning applications submitted to Stafford Borough Council, which fall within the boundary of the parish. The Borough Council is the local planning authority for this area and it has no statutory obligation to consult the Parish Council on planning applications. It has, however, a policy of consulting widely on applications made to it and the Parish Council is afforded the opportunity of making its opinions known and bringing to the attention of the Borough Council, local issues of which they may not be aware. It is the duty of those of us on the Parish Council to raise the views and concerns of the residents of the Parish of Eccleshall, both the town and the surrounding area. As Parish Councillors, we draw on our local knowledge and our awareness of your concerns and opinions, to fulfil our obligations, not least of all with regard to planning matters.

If you have a concern about an issue or a specific planning application, please raise the matter with your local Parish Councillor who will be able to raise your concerns at the meeting when the application is discussed. Alternatively, you may attend the meeting yourself and raise your concerns during the public participation session at the start of the meeting. It must be pointed out, however, that any concerns that parishioners have with regard to a specific planning application must also be made directly to the Borough Council, as it is this body that finally determines the application. The Parish Council works closely with the Borough Councillors who represent Eccleshall. These councillors are able to “call in” applications for determination by the Development Control Sub-Committee. Otherwise, most applications are determined by the officers of the council, who interpret the requirements of the Local Plan. During 2021, the Parish Council considered 55 applications compared to 2020 when there were 58 applications. In 2019, 72 applications were considered - the recent drop may well be attributed to the pandemic.

Most applications are for small domestic extensions, agricultural buildings and barn conversions.

The most recent large application to gain approval is the proposed development of up to 37 houses off Castle Street. Residents were supported by the Parish Council to voice their concerns against the application. The Parish Council objected strongly and it was refused by the Borough Council. Unfortunately on appeal to central government, the developers won their case and the application was approved.

In July 2016 the Neighborhood Plan for Eccleshall Parish was formally adopted after successfully being approved by a referendum and became an integral part of the plan for Stafford Borough defining the residential boundary and the extent of housing.

The plan for Stafford Borough named Eccleshall as one of 11 key service villages which would deliver 1200 houses for the 2011 to 2031 development strategy. An ‘Issues and Options’ document published by Stafford Borough Council in February 2020 acknowledged that Eccleshall has experienced a 23.8% increase in the number of dwellings since 2011 and at 323 dwellings (completed since 1 April 2011, and sites with a planning commitment as at 31 March 2019), the largest number of dwellings of all the key service villages.

Eccleshall Parish Council awaits the proposed draft Local Plan from Stafford Borough Council, in order to review any potential impact on the current Neighbourhood Plan. Any changes to the current Local Plan boundaries will supercede the existing Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council will be proactively considering how it can best respond in the best interests of the residents and ensure any modifications to the existing plan will result in a robust, defensible document to meet the needs of the community moving forwards.

Enhancements and Preservation Committee – Annual Report 2021/2022

Outdoor Gym Equipment

The Pandemic has made us all very aware of the need to do whatever we can as a Parish to support everyone's Health & Wellbeing.

With this goal in mind a working party was formed to put forward a proposal to install some Outdoor Gym Equipment.

After much discussion and hard work 6 pieces of Gym Equipment have been installed at the far end of the Community Centre Car Park and 3 other pieces of Outdoor

Gym Equipment have been installed on land just off Hartlands Road.

Pavement Clearance activities within the Parish.

Pavement Clearance work is the responsibility of the County Council, but as we

have been informed that the County Council is unable or cannot not afford to do this work the Parish Council have taken the decision to keep the pavements clear, especially during the last year of the Pandemic when walking has been seen as a priority exercise.

Completed works:

Chester Road footpath from opposite Kerry Lzne To path end

Castle Street to Swynnerton Road Junction- from the bus shelter on the dentist/ Smithy side of the road, up to where it ends opposite the junction.

Croxton pavement digging off.

Pending Completion

Stone Road- Blurtons Lane end to Fletchers

Stone Road- Badgers Croft to Fletchers

Newport Road from Cross Butts to the junction with Wootton Lzne

Swynnerton Road to Sturbridge crossroads.

Swynnerton Road HMP Car Park to Parish Boundary- from Car Park up to

boundary at Cold Meece.

The pavement on the Newport Road has been resurfaced by the County Council using a new technique.

Cheshire Fencing at Elford

The responsibility for maintaining and painting this fence lies with the County Council.

As no painting or maintenance has been done for over 20 years the Parish Council have agreed a quote to get this fence painted.

This fence is in a prominent position in Eccleshall and surrounds Elford Pool and it has now been agreed that this work will take place later this year.

B T Boxes in Eccleshall, Fair Oak and Croxton

Quotes have now been received and agreed for the refurbishment of these 3 BT Boxes.

The Parish Council has agreed to fund a defibrillator in the Fair Oak Box once work has been completed.

The Pillar Clock

The Pillar Clock and bins have now all been repainted.

Oak Posts

Ongoing maintenance

Croxton Play Area

Remedial work has been carried out to ensure safety standards are met.

The Annual Inspection by Wicksteed has taken place.

Eyeswells

On the advice of the arboricultorist the conifers at the entrance to the Eyeswells were removed, thus making the entrance much more open.

It was agreed that 4 Rhododendrum bushes would be purchased and planted there at the appropriate time.

It was agreed to allow the WI to site a Tree here to commemorate their Centenary year.

Elford Pool

Maintenance here is ongoing.

An extra safety sign has been installed.

The Rill has been cleared and the Spring at the bottom of the Common has been opened up.

Coppicing of the bushes round the front of the pool has been agreed.

Staffordshire wildlife Trust have undertaken an ecological quality of the pool between June and August and we were pleased with the ongoing improvements.

Remembrance Silhouettes

7 of these were purchased and there was a very positive response from the general public when these went on display for the first time in November.

Eccleshall Festival

A discussion took place as to whether the Parish Council could take over responsibility for this. But on reflection it was decided to retain the status quo.

Copmere Picnic site

It was agreed that fallen tree branches would be removed.

Shaw's Lane

Removal of an Ash Tree which has a severe fungal infection.

A replacement tree will be planted on the Allotment Site in due course.

Risk Assessments and Assets Survey reports

These were completed and actioned.

Beech Road Play Area

Awaiting a decision from the Borough Council

Ecclian Society

The Parish Council agreed to financially support the work of the

Ecclian Society with regard to purchasing and installing the Christmas Trees.

To pay for the watering of the hanging baskets and flower posts.

Report compiled by Libby Dale, Chairman.

Events Committee report for the Parish Community Forum – May 11th 2022

The Events Committee was formed in September 2021, firstly in response to the decision that Eccleshall Parish Council should organize events and activities to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee in a way that would involve all residents in the parish if possible, and secondly so that the Committee will then continue to plan events for future years.

This Committee's primary function since September, has been planning events and activities across the four day Jubilee celebration from 2 to 5 June 2022. The Parish Council will be sponsoring and planning some events and have encouraged members of the community and various businesses to also put on activities and/or sponsor events.

Thursday, 2 June will be especially symbolic as thousands of beacons will be lit at 9.45pm all across this country and the Commonwealth. Our beacon will be lit in the grounds of Eccleshall Castle representing the solemnity of this very special occasion. This will be accompanied by the ringing of church bells from Holy Trinity Church, a lone Piper and a professional vocalist who will sing the 'Song for the Commonwealth', a piece written specially to commemorate this wonderful poignant occasion. A siren will call people to this event.

Amongst the events on offer are: Afternoon Teas in Eccleshall and in Croxton, Live Music during the evening in local pubs, a Celebration Dance featuring a 'Last Night of the Proms' finale, a Treasure Hunt and Barbeque, Thanksgiving Services, Skatepark, Bouncy Castles, Children's Art Competition, a Classic Vehicle Cavalcade along the High Street, a 'Dinner Fit for a Queen' featuring the Queen's favourite dishes and much more. The celebrations will culminate with the High Street closure and a 'Party on the Street' with live entertainment and a cake competition and auction for charity.

The Parish Council hope that these four days really will give everyone the opportunity to celebrate and meet other people in the community. The Platinum Jubilee Events Programme has been printed and will be available to everyone so that residents can plan the events/activities they wish to join. Details of events can also be found on our dedicated website:

www.eccleshallplatinumjubilee.co.uk

The Parish Council would also like residents to share memories of The Queen's Coronation and past Jubilee events (wherever you were living at the time), to use during our Platinum Jubilee events and may be used in the Commemorative Brochure that is being planned. Please contact the clerk at eccleshallpc@gmail.com with your memories and/or photographs.

We are all looking forward to a very exciting four days when Eccleshall can celebrate The Queen's very special and unique Platinum Jubilee in style.

Ros Taylor
Chairman of the Parish Council Events Committee

Footpaths Committee Report for the Parish Annual Meeting

Parish Council Footpaths

The Footpath Marshal scheme is working well. All footpaths in the parish have now been walked at least once and many twice each year by our Footpath Marshals. Problem areas have been identified and many issues rectified by our Footpaths Maintenance Operative – Graham Cole.

Stiles have been, perhaps, been one of the biggest problems. Many issues have been resolved by replacing the steppers on stiles and cutting back nettles, ivy and brambles. Graham has also undertaken a survey of all stiles and found that around a dozen needed complete replacement. The County Council have replaced four complete stiles in the past few months. The other issue is finding the names of landowners so that we can gain permission to carry out work and discuss stile replacement.

The Parish Council is about to publish a Bench to Bench leaflet detailing 24 benches in and around Eccleshall and suggesting possible walks between benches. This has been undertaken so that older residents and people recovering from illness can walk easy distances. Many thanks must go to Cllr Chris Wilkins for spending much time on this valuable project.

The Footpaths Committee are also working on a brochure suggesting circular walks. Ten of our Footpath Marshals are detailing these proposed circular walks and it is hoped that this work will be completed by the autumn.

I wish to thank all our dedicated Footpath Marshals and our Footpath Operative for all the work carried out to make the Parish footpaths available and pleasant to walk for the whole community.

Keep Eccleshall Tidy Team (KET)

The KET team have been busy throughout the parish keeping our pavements and signs (those they can reach) clean and tidy. Lots of people have commented that the town looks pleasant and well kept. Many of our KET team carried on with the litter picking work throughout the pandemic.

During the past year we have had a teenager carrying out duties as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Bronze Award and we would certainly welcome any young person who would like to make KET duties the Community Service section of the DofE award. We also have a young man with learning difficulties who has found his KET involvement beneficial. His name is Nick and his KET patch is the left side of the High Street looking from the Little George roundabout. Please say 'hello' to Nick if you see him.

Eccleshall will shortly be celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. I am very much hoping that the KET team will make an extra effort to ensure that the town and surrounding areas are especially clean so that all the planned events can take place in pleasant surroundings.

May I thank all the KET team for all their hard work, I am sure that everyone will continue the excellent work they have done in the past.

Councillor Ros Taylor
Chairman of the Footpaths Committee

3 May 2022

Policy and Resources Committee - Annual Report 2021/2022

The committee is traditionally chaired by the chairman of the full council and this year that was Councillor Peter Jones.

The committee meets on all matters financial and policy oriented as the name suggest and makes recommendations to the full council on those matters including the annual budget.

The time-consuming item was of course the budget - establishing where the council gets its income and how it spends it, and whether to increase or reduce the parish precept, or of course leave it as it is. Balancing the budget whilst considering the plans of the Council and its committees is one of the main aims of the Policy and Resources committee. During Covid many of the items budgeted for were never spent due to the restrictive conditions applying at the time and this has been accounted for in the forward planning of the Council.

Applications for grants come first to the Policy and Resources Committee and in many cases if the budget allows, granted. The council only gives grants to Eccleshall parish organisations or ones that provide a service for the Eccleshall community. Sometimes the grant is minimal and other times larger depending on the application needs and the remaining budget allocation.

Traffic Management Committee – Annual Report 2021/2022

Electric Vehicles

Our Assistant Parish Clerk has done an in-depth report on installing and the use of electric chargers.

The result was that we really need to wait and to be led by the government and County Council as to what is the best way forward.

There are many different types of chargers as people who have already purchased electric cars have found out. Some very slow some very fast and many that don't work!

The ideal is for every home to be fitted with their own charger, but there are many flats in the Parish, where this is not an option.

This item is continually on our agenda and once the Government and our County Council have agreed a policy we will be able to move forward.

Car Parking

As you are aware our bid for the Police Station which would have acquired

13 car parking spaces for the Parish Council was unsuccessful.

We have approached the Old Gas Works site in Stone Road to see if they are willing to sell or let the site to the PC. They have replied informing us that the site is still in use.

The Kings Arms do let out car spaces at £40 per space per month.

One of our big problems is traders and their employees parking in the High Street for very long periods, thus preventing prospective customers from parking.

The Co-op still sponsor 10 parking spaces for use by traders.

Zebra Crossing

A request was made to the County Council for the lights on the poles

highlighting the zebra crossing to be upgraded to flashing poles as seen in nearby towns.

This is a very busy crossing and oncoming traffic cannot always see the zebra

Crossing until the last minute.

This request was turned down.

A request to the County Council to have the zebra crossing painted as it is so faded to must be a health and safety issue.

The reply was that this is not urgent and will be put on the list.

Speed Indicator Signs

These are still proving to be very popular and the most effective way of slowing down the traffic.

Stone Road

The device for slowing down traffic here is working well.

Report compiled by Libby Dale, Chair.

Summary Receipts & Payments by Budget Heading 31/03/2022

Cost Centre Report

		Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
100 Administration	Receipts	89,945	89,363	(582)			100.7%
	Payments	46,393	55,699	9,306		9,306	83.3%
	Net Receipts over Payments	<u>43,552</u>	<u>33,664</u>	<u>(9,888)</u>			
	plus Transfer from EMR	1,966					
	less Transfer to EMR	12,943					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>32,575</u>					
110 Open Spaces	Payments	19,874	18,855	(1,019)		(1,019)	105.4%
	plus Transfer from EMR	4,583					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(15,291)</u>					
120 Projects	Payments	17,878	18,200	322		322	98.2%
	plus Transfer from EMR	200					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(17,678)</u>					
130 Traffic Management	Payments	1,180	1,200	20		20	98.3%
	plus Transfer from EMR	0					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(1,180)</u>					
140 Highways Maintenance	Payments	3,792	6,300	2,508		2,508	60.2%
	plus Transfer from EMR	163					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(3,629)</u>					
150 Events	Payments	1,159	8,000	6,841		6,841	14.5%
160 Village Halls	Payments	1,000	750	(250)		(250)	133.3%
199 Contingencies	Payments	248	950	702		702	26.1%
999 VAT Data	Receipts	3,668	0	(3,668)			0.0%
	Payments	7,808	0	(7,808)		(7,808)	0.0%
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(4,140)</u>					
	Grand Totals:- Receipts	93,612	89,363	(4,249)			104.8%
	Payments	99,331	109,954	10,623	0	10,623	90.3%
	Net Receipts over Payments	<u>(5,719)</u>	<u>(20,591)</u>	<u>(14,872)</u>			
	plus Transfer from EMR	6,912					
	less Transfer to EMR	12,943					
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(11,750)</u>					

Eccleshall Parish Council

Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 31 March 2022

Confirmed Bank & Investment Balances

Bank Statement Balances

31/03/2022	Current Account	6,763.23
31/03/2022	Deposit Account	66,648.61
31/03/2022	Public Sector Deposit Fund	25,182.01

98,593.85

Unpresented Payments

575.00

98,018.85

Receipts not on Bank Statement

0.00

Closing Balance

98,018.85

All Cash & Bank Accounts

1	Current Bank A/c	6,188.23
2	Deposit Account	66,648.61
3	Savings Account 1	25,182.01
	Other Cash & Bank Balances	0.00
	Total Cash & Bank Balances	98,018.85