

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 2006

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. N. J. Bird;
Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;
Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols; and Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds.

Also present was the Clerk and PC Andy Brown, Community Beat Officer.

APOLOGIES

Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. N. Stanfield; Cllr. N. J. Roberts; and Cllr. F. W. Lewis.
(Councillors were delighted to learn that Cllr. Lewis had just been awarded the MBE
for services to local government)

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, December 13th, 2005, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed PC Brown to the meeting and invited him to address the Council. Referring to a recently- launched project, "Building Safer Communities", PC Brown said that the aim was to set up neighbourhood policing by 2008 in conjunction with other agencies. Members of the public would be encouraged to become more closely involved. There would be no increase in the number of police officers; instead, there would be an increase in the number of Community Support Officers, who, though they had fewer powers than police officers, could draw attention to criminal or anti-social activity taking place at one location when the police officer was occupied elsewhere, and they did have citizens' powers of arrest. The Clerk added that he had down-loaded a questionnaire relating to the project, copies of which he would distribute to Councillors so that they could respond individually. On the matter of painting double yellow lines in Chapel Lane and Buds Road to deter irresponsible parking at the beginning and end of the school day, PC Brown said that his understanding had been that these lines would be zig-zag, and he was disappointed that they had not yet been put down.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Community Paths Initiative

The Clerk reported that he had identified and written to all four land-owners on whose land it was proposed to replace stiles with kissing-gates.

(ii) Speedwatch

Cllr. Butler reported that this had been suspended during the Christmas period.

(iii) Public Bridleway No. 15

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Chris Cheeseman, the Rights of Way Technical Assistant, requesting that she keep the Parish Council informed of any application received from the land-owner relating to this bridleway.

(iv) Cast-Iron Roadside Signs

The Clerk reported that he had written to Alison Richards, Project Implementation Co-ordinator, informing her that renovation of the signpost on Longdon Green had been completed and requesting payment of the grant offered by Lichfield District Council.

(v) Track across Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, the previous day, who had promised to lay planings in the potholes in front of "The Red Lion" before the end of the week.

He had also spoken to Nicola Hodgson, of the Open Spaces Society, with whom he had discussed the problem of establishing the legal status of the track and the responsibility of maintaining it.

She had apologised for not having responded to the Parish Council's letter and promised a considered reply to it.

He was also expecting to hear from Alan Wallis, of the Chief Executive's office at Stafford.

(vi) St. James Churchyard

The Clerk reported that he had, as requested, written to Barry Toothill, Secretary to the Diocesan Glebe Committee, concerning the possible use of the Glebe Field as an open space, and sent a copy of his letter to the Rev. Michael Jefferson.

(vii) Chairman's Badge of Office

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, placed an order for the Chairman's Badge with Thomas Fattorini Limited.

He had confirmed that the proposed size was the standard size of such badges.

(viii) Draft Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Plan

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to the Chairman of the Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Plan Steering Committee, congratulating him and his Committee on such a well-researched Plan.

(ix) Lichfield District Council Summer Playscheme

It was agreed that the Council should, as last year, make a grant of £150. 00 towards the cost of running a Summer Playscheme in Longdon.

5. DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' PERSONAL, PREJUDICIAL AND FINANCIAL INTEREST

None was declared.

6. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the following planning application had been considered by the Working Group and that no objection had been raised to it:

05/01305/FUL: Mr. S. Lindley: Two-storey side extension to form lounge and bedroom with en suite: 5 Stockings Lane, Longdon

(ii) For Consideration

The Council then considered the following planning application:

05/01141/FUL (Amended): Mr. and Mrs. R. Allatt: Proposed front and rear extension and pitch roof over garage: 8 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

It was noted that, while the proposal to form a hipped roof met one of the Council's reservations, others remained unaddressed.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council:

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had approved the following applications:

05/00821/FUL: N. Stanfield: Proposed retention of existing building and conversion to domestic garage and agricultural store: Hawthorne Cottage, Chapel Lane, Gentleshaw

05/01144/FUL: Mr. R. Tyler: Extension to entrance hall and new canopy tiled roof: 4, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had refused permission for the following application:

05/01305/COU: Mrs. L. M. Murran: Change of use of agricultural land to grazing of horses and erection of stable block: Land east of Olde Croft, Borough Lane, Longdon

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Withdrawn Applications

The Clerk reported that he had received notice that Longdon Stud Limited had withdrawn the following applications:

Erection of studman's dwelling (outline) (05/01171/OUT); replacement of existing building with purpose-built block (outline) (05/01172/OUT).

(b) Notice of Appeal

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 14th December 2005, notifying the Council that Mr. and Mrs. R. Bate had appealed against the decision of Lichfield District Council to refuse planning permission for a proposed residential dwelling on land at "Pine Ridge", Brereton Hill Lane, Upper Longdon.

The hearing would be decided on the basis of an informal hearing, the date of which had yet to be arranged.

(c) Lichfield District Local Development Framework

The Clerk reported that Lichfield District Council had received a representation from Mrs. Kay Davies, of Fisher German, proposing the allocation of an area of land between Upper Way and Lower Way to be allocated for residential development.

Councillors agreed to object to the inclusion of this proposal in the Local Development Framework on the grounds that the site was outside the new village footprint and in Green Belt and that access, whether from Upper Way or Lower Way, would be on a dangerous bend.

It was further pointed out that the plan did not record the existence of a footpath.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

While there had been no meetings over the Christmas period, Cllr, Bird informed the Council that a meeting of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee, to which he had sent his apologies, was taking place that very evening, and he understood that financial support would shortly be sought from the Council for an electronic cut-off for the Hall's sound system and new tables and chairs.

8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of the following meetings:

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Wednesday, January 11th, 2006, in the Committee Room, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.

In the absence of Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and Cllr. Stanfield, Cllr. Andrews and the Clerk would be attending.

(ii) Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Management Committee: Wednesday, January 11th, 2006, at The Park Gate Inn, Park Gate Road, Cannock Wood, commencing at 8. 00 p.m.

Cllr. Mrs. Meere would be unable to attend and had sent her apologies.

(iii) Open Afternoon at Colton Village Hall: Sunday, January 29th, 2006, from 2. 00 p.m. to 4. 30 p.m.

The Chairman of Longdon Village Hall Management Committee had been informed.

(iv) Police Authority Community Consultation: Thursday, February 9th, 2006, at Kings Bromley Village Hall, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

The Clerk hoped to attend.

(v) AONB Advisory Partnership: Wednesday, February 1st, 2006 at the John O'Leary Centre, commencing at 10. 00 a.m.

The Chairman expected to attend.

8. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Treework in Longdon and Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received, in support of his invoice for the work, a report from Graham McCulloch, dated 9th December 2005, listing the treework which he had carried out on behalf of the Council in Longdon and Longdon Green.

The Chairman confirmed that this work had been done according to the Council's specifications.

(ii) Planting opposite Gentleshaw School

Cllr. Hemmingsley reminded the Council of its earlier decision to invite Kevin Yates, Parks Manager, to re-visit Gentleshaw and inspect the progress of the trees.

He himself thought some modification was necessary and some discussion on their future management.

The Clerk was instructed to contact Mr. Yates and arrange such a visit.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Payment of Accounts

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, payment of the following accounts was approved:

*G. C. McCulloch	Treework	£120. 00
*Cornhill Insurance	Increase to cover cast-iron roadside signs	£ 37. 78
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall on January 5 th and January 10 th	£ 24. 00
Aqua Jet Services	Renovating Gentleshaw Notice-Board	£119. 00

(*confirmation)

(ii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received the following payments:

Aqua Jet Services	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 7. 50
D. Harris Plastering	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 7. 50
B. & E. Overton	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£15. 00

(iii) Current Balances

The Clerk reported that currently the Council's balances stood as follows:

NatWest c/a: £363. 66	The Halifax d/a: £10357. 91
(less £311. 54 uncleared cheques)	

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) St. Giles Hospice, Whittington

The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Holliday, Group Chief Executive, St. Giles Hospice, Whittington, a letter dated January 2006, enclosing a copy of the Hospice's Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2005, and asking whether the Council would consider once again making a donation.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Bird, it was agreed that the Council should make a donation of £100. 00.

(v) Report of Meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Chairman gave a report of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Thursday, January 5th, 2006, and at which he, Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Hemmingsley, Cllr. Juxon and the Clerk had been present.

Cllr. Mrs. Meere had sent her apologies; no members of the public had attended.

The Clerk had presented a financial statement which had set out in detail income and expenditure over the past nine months and comparable figures for the corresponding period from 1st April to 31st December 2005; these had since been made available to those Councillors not members of the Committee.

The Chairman believed that they showed that the Council had remained comfortably within budget.

The Committee had also considered the Clerk's salary, which, Cllr. Hemmingsley had pointed out, fell well below NALC recommendations.

To satisfy these, the Council should be paying the Clerk a salary at the rate of £7.62 an hour for an eight-hour week, a total of £2834.00 per annum, which the Committee was now recommending to the Council.

In addition, the Committee believed that the Council should pay the Clerk 25% of his telephone line rental and a flat minimum rate of £15.00 a month in travelling expenses.

It was recognised that the Clerk did not wish to receive the full salary and agreed that it should be left to him to decide what proportion he would accept.

The Committee was also recommending that the Council's precept for 2006/2007 should, to take account of this increase, be £13,000.00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Bird, the Committee's recommendations were accepted in full, and the Clerk was instructed to submit a request to the District Council for a precept for £13,000.00 for the financial year 2006/2007.

(vi) Approval of Revised Mandates

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Hemmingsley, it was agreed that Cllr. Welch should be added to the list of signatories on the Halifax mandate and that, in addition to the Clerk, any two of the three Councillors should sign the Halifax Request for Withdrawal form, Cllr. Andrews and Cllr. Juxon being the other two signatories.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, all eleven Councillors should appear as signatories on the NatWest mandate, but only any two signatures be required on any cheque

(vii) Appointment of Independent External Auditor

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, it was agreed that John Blount should be invited to act as Independent External Auditor for the 2005/2006 accounts.

10. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from G. Turner, Customer Services, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council; a letter dated 12th December 2005, enclosing a poster informing residents of the Waste Collection arrangements for the Christmas and New Year period, copies of which he had displayed on the parish notice-boards.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rowsell, Head of Democracy and Local Governance, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, a letter dated 15th December 2005, enclosing a copy of a document entitled "Standards of Conduct in English Local Government", in which the Government had set out its vision for a future comprehensive conduct regime for local authority members and employees.

He added that, from a preliminary reading, he believed that it was the Government's intention to delegate the examination of complaints, many of which had been found to be trivial, vexatious or politically-motivated, to local adjudication.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Catherine Russell, Deputy Office Manager, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 4th January 2006, enclosing forms relating to the 2006 Diary of Events for completion and return.

He would inquire of local organisations if there were any events which they would like included in the Diary.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Jackson, Chairman of the BKV Working Group of the Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated January 2006, enclosing entry forms for the 2006 Best Kept Village Competition.

Unfortunately, this letter had been received after the main agenda had been circulated, so he was unable to ask the Council to approve a cheque to cover the entry fees, even though the final date for receiving them fell before the next meeting of the Council.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Mr. Jackson to explain the problem and to assure him of the Council's desire to enter Longdon & Longdon Green and Upper Longdon for the Competition.

11. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk reported that, in addition to the above, he had received the following communications:

- (i) From Beth Harries, Solicitor – Democratic, Development and Legal Services,
Lichfield District Council:

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2005/2006 – December – Version 1
(to take effect on 1st January 2006).

- (ii) From The Corporate Director – Democratic, Development and Legal Services,
Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 8th January 2006;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 22nd January 2006.

- (iii) From The Electoral Registration Officer, Lichfield District Council:

Register of Electors 2006 – Monthly Applications for 3rd January 2006.

- (iv) From The Transport and Policy Planning Unit, Staffordshire County Council:

Public Transport News – December 2005 (2 copies).

- (v) From The Sustainable Staffordshire Forum, c/o The Development Services Directorate,
Staffordshire County Council:

“Sustainable Staffordshire”: Issue 17, Winter 2005.

- (vi) From The National Association of Local Councils:

Local Council Review Volume 57, No. 5 – January 2006.

- (vii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

National Salary Award for Clerks (as applicable from 1st April 2006);
Notice of Vacancy in the Office of Clerk to Cheslyn Hay Parish Council;
Notice of Two-Day Residential Training Course for the Certificate in Local Council
Administration- Saturday/Sunday, 1st & 2nd April 2006, at Quality Hotel, Hanley.

- (viii) From The Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trustees:

Minutes of meeting of 14th September 2005.

- (ix) From SMP Playgrounds Ltd.:

Leaflet: Special Offers.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that an enforcement order had been served on the owner of the caravan at present standing in the field alongside Commonside, next the “The Old Windmill Inn”, in Gentleshaw.

He understood that Ron Smith, the District Council’s Enforcement Officer, had now retired and had not been replaced.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 14th, 2006, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.