

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE
W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 2006

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere;
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council;
County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE; and three parishioners – Mrs. Susan Smith,
of Briertey Lane, Gentleshaw; Mr. Neil Vyse, Chairman of the Longdon Village Hall
Management Committee; and Mrs. Judith Winterton, of Windmill Bank, Gentleshaw.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;
and Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, January 10th,
2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr. Andrews,
approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the three parishioners to the meeting and asked if any wished to
address the Council.

Mrs. Smith said that she and Mrs. Winterton were present to make known to the Council their
concern over the planning application submitted by Mr. Alan Smith for an agricultural building to
house water buffalo at a site off Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw.

Basically, their concerns were fourfold: situated at the bottom of a valley, the building would
have an undesirable visual impact; the proposed access would be on a dangerous bend; there was a
danger that effluent would contaminate the stream running at the bottom of the field; and there was
insufficient provision for domestic facilities or for the storage of fuel and hay or straw.

Mrs. Smith also pointed out that there was a declared intention to accommodate up to 100
beasts and suggested that such a number would be too big for a site of approximately twelve acres.

Mrs. Winterton added that she shared Mrs. Smith's concerns.

The Chairman thanked them for their attendance and assured them that their views would be
taken into account when the Council considered the application later in the meeting.

Mr. Vyse said that he did not wish to address the Council but was present to hear the outcome of
an application made to the Council by the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee for grant
aid.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Speed Watch in Upper Longdon

The Chairman reported that the Speed Watch team had been back in action since the Christmas
break and had recorded speeds of 60 mph and 62 mph, the former by a Land Rover towing a trailer.

(ii) Cast-Iron Roadside Signs

The Clerk reported that he had now received the grant allocated to this project by Lichfield District Council under its Conservation Area Improvement Grant Scheme.

A news item had appeared in "The Lichfield Mercury" of January 26th which appeared to attribute the work to Burntwood Town Council, and, in response, he had written to the Editor informing him that the project had been carried out by Longdon Parish Council in partnership with Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council.

He asked Councillors whether they would like to consider marking the completion of the project with a photo-call followed by a small reception in "The Red Lion" at which the Council could express its appreciation of the help given by people such as Cllr. Lewis, Cllr. Roberts and Mrs. Alison Richards, the District Council's Project Implementation Co-ordinator, who had provided the Council with the address of Leander Architectural, the firm responsible for erecting the original signs.

He reminded Councillors that he had already been in touch with Alan Taylor, an English Heritage Inspector, to see whether the project could be featured in one of the organisation's regional publications.

The Council approved the suggestion and instructed the Clerk to approach the licensee of "The Red Lion" with a view to arranging such a reception on Wednesday, March 29th.

Cllr. Andrews suggested that Ted McAvoy, of Leander Architectural, should also receive an invitation, and Cllr. Roberts added that, if an invitation were sent to the new Midlands Regional Director of English Heritage, he would seek to arrange with the Lichfield Civic Society a similar ceremony on the same day to mark the completion of the restoration of the Johnson Mosaic in Bird Street, in Lichfield, to which the Regional Director could also be invited.

(iii) St. James Churchyard, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Michael Jefferson, Priest-in-Charge, a letter dated 1st February 2006, acknowledging receipt of a copy of a letter which he had written to Barry Toothill, Secretary of the Diocesan Glebe Committee, setting out the Council's proposals for the Glebe Field at Longdon.

So far, he had not heard from Mr. Toothill himself, possibly because the Committee had not met since Mr. Toothill had received the letter.

Cllr. Andrews drew the attention of the Council to a voluntary organisation called "Grow Well Horticulture" which gave employment to people with long-term mental problems. One of the activities in which the organisation engaged was churchyard maintenance, and the Clerk was instructed to make this known to Mr. Jefferson.

(iv) Chairman's Badge of Office

The Clerk reported that he had received acknowledgement of the Council's order from Thomas Fattorini

(v) Lichfield District Summer PlayScheme

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was agreed that the Council should make a grant of £150. 00 towards the cost of running a Summer Playscheme at St. James School, Longdon, this year.

(vi) Approval of Bank Mandates

The Clerk reported that all eleven Councillors had now signed the NatWest mandate form, which he would deposit at the Lichfield branch in the next day or two.

Four Councillors need to present evidence of their identity at the bank before their signatures could be validated – Cllr. Bird, Cllr. Butler, Cllr. Reynolds and Cllr. Stanfield.

The bank required two documents and had suggested a current passport and a current driving licence.

The Clerk would arrange a convenient time with the Chairman to call at the Lichfield office of The Halifax in order to add Cllr. Welch's signature to that mandate.

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

Cllr. Stanfield declared an interest as a nearby neighbour in Planning Application No. 06/0076/FUL, and Cllr. Reynolds reminded the Council that he had attended the meeting at which the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee's application for extended hours had been considered.

6. PLANNING

(i) For Consideration

The Council considered the following planning applications:

06/ 00033/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Keenan: Proposed detached double garage and garden room, including demolition of existing outbuilding: First Cottage, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

The Council saw no reason to object to this application.

06/00076/FUL: Mr. A. Smith: Agricultural buildings to house water buffalo: Land adjacent to Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw.

The Council objected to this application for the following reasons:

- (a) the proposed intensive calf-rearing unit would be on a prominent site within the Green Belt, the Farewell and Chorley Area of Landscape Value and adjacent to the boundary of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty;
- (b) as the majority of the food would be brought in, the use of the surrounding area of agricultural land would only be ancillary to the rearing unit, and therefore the proposal could not be seen as essential to the interests of agriculture;
- (c) the site of the proposed building in this valley would, because of its scale and siting, be clearly seen from Malthouse Road and Windmill Bank and also from Public Footpath No. 3, which crossed the nearby field;
- (d) the proposed development would also have an adverse effect on the small-scale, high-quality landscape of the area, detracting from its openness, and be contrary to the advice contained in PPG2 and Policies E4 and NA3 of the Local Plan. This adverse effect on the landscape could not be mitigated by the landscaping proposals;
- (e) the proposed development would also have an adverse effect on the setting of the adjoining Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which was recognised as being of national importance and which the Planning Authority had a statutory duty to safeguard;
- (f) the proposed vehicular access was located very close to a bend, and it was anticipated that, as this road was used by a substantial number of commuters, appropriate visibility splays would have to be provided, which would, together with the hard-surfacing proposed by the applicant, further detract from the rural character of the area;

- (g) it was noted that the applicant states, "With regard to feed, to start with, this would only be delivered once a month" and "at the moment only one person twice a day, morning and evening, is needed to feed and water the buffalo". It was the Parish Council's understanding that these movements related to the existing herd of seven, but that they would increase substantially with a herd of one hundred, particularly food deliveries, as most of the food was to be brought in;
- (h) the Parish Council was also concerned that, if approved, the proposal could lead to the pollution of the nearby Maple Brook, which was a source of public water supply.

30818 – LD: Corporate Director (Development Services), Staffordshire County Council:
3m. high powder-coated catch-ball netting to protect vehicles and properties from damage:
St. James C. E. (V. C.) Primary School, Brook End, Longdon.

The Council strongly objected to this proposal: the erection of a three-metre-high fence on raised land at the centre of the village would give it an unacceptably high profile and would seriously detract from the rural charm of the village which the Council was anxious to preserve.

(ii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued the following Notices of Approval of Planning Permission:

05/01217/FUL: Mr. C. C. Turbill: Installation of 2000 litre Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) tank: The Thatched Cottage, Hill Top, Longdon Green.

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

(iii) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received no Notices of Refusal of Planning Permission from Lichfield District Council.

(iv) Other Planning Matters

(a) Lichfield District Council: Allocation of Land Omission Sites

The Clerk reported that he had received from Maria Bailey, Principal Development Plans Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 19th January 2006 thanking the Council for its representation regarding the Allocations of Land Omission Sites and advising the Council that representations received would be available for public inspection at District Council House and on the District Council's website. She further informed the Council that a Pre-Examination Meeting was to be held on Tuesday, 14th February 2006 in the Committee Room at District Council House at 4. 00 p.m., to which anyone was welcome.

Cllr. Roberts explained that the business of this meeting was primarily to identify a timetable and resolve some issues of planning protocol.

He added that a huge number of representations had been received.

(b) Lichfield District Local Development Framework: Core Strategy pre-examination proposed changes relating to development north of Tamworth and recreation facilities at Chasewater

The Clerk reported that he had received a further letter from Maria Bailey, dated 1st February 2006, notifying the Council that Lichfield District Council had submitted its Core Strategy to the Secretary of State on 28th October 2005, and Public Examination into the soundness of the Document would commence on 25th April 2006.

The Council was proposing two changes to the Core Strategy relating to development north of Tamworth (which would mean that there would be no consideration within the Core Strategy of housing development north of Tamworth, a removal, that is, of the earlier proposal to release land if it could be demonstrated that suitable housing sites were not available in Tamworth) and recreation facilities at Chasewater (where it was proposed to make it clear that the proposals for recreation facilities to be developed within the Area Action Plan would be consistent with Green Belt status).

(c) Borrow Pits in connection with the West Coast Mainline Railway Upgrade involving the excavation, storage and treatment of engineering materials with surplus materials being infilled to restore the land to agriculture at land at Hunts Farm, Elmhurst

The Clerk reported that he had received from Julian Morris, Senior Planning Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 26th January 2006, in which he advised the Council that the above proposal would be decided by Planning Committee on 9th February 2006 and inviting the Council to nominate someone on its behalf at the meeting.

It was agreed that, since the Parish Council had not, as the letter had suggested, submitted a written presentation, it would not take up the offer.

(d) Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity and Landscape

The Clerk reported that he had received from Maria Bailey, the aforesaid Principal Plans Development Officer, a letter dated 8th February 2006, informing the Council that Lichfield District Council had prepared a draft supplementary planning document for biodiversity and Landscape, copies of which were available for inspection at local offices and libraries in the District and also on the Council's website www.lichfielddc.gov.uk.

Representations should be sent to FREEPOST, Development Services, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6YZ or via email to developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk, by 23rd March 2006.

(e) Enforcement Appeal by Mrs. Janet Anne Tompkins

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 10th February 2006 advising the Council that the District Council had served Enforcement Notices on the above parishioner in relation to the change of use of the land from agriculture to residential use and the formation of an associated hardstanding.

Mrs. Tompkins had appealed against the issuing of the Enforcement Notices, and consequently the Parish Council was being invited to make any views it had on the development known to the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, Bristol BS1 6PN by no later than 14th March 2006.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: January 11th

The Clerk and Cllr. Andrews gave a short report on a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Lichfield, on Wednesday, 11th January 2006, which both had attended.

The theme of the meeting had been "The role parish councils could play in improving the quality of the local environment". The meeting had divided into discussion groups on abandoned vehicles (led by David Smith, Waste Awareness and Compliance Officer, Operational Services), general litter, fly tipping and dog fouling (led by Ruth Plant, Corporate Director, Operational Services) and water pollution (led by Ron Grainger, of The Environmental Agency, which had been prefaced by a presentation outlining the work of the Agency in general pollution control).

(ii) Lichfield Area Committee: January 19th

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield Area Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Lichfield, on Thursday, 19th January 2006, at which both he and Cllr. Andrews had been present.

There had been feed-back on the recent meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum.

Concern was expressed at the continuing lack of support for the Committee, the small numbers hardly justifying invitations to outside speakers. While it was recognised that councillors felt the need to prioritise calls on their time, the sharing of experience with fellow-councillors from other councils which meetings of the Area Committee provided was seen as invaluable by those who availed themselves of the opportunity which attendance gave them.

The Treasurer's report had shown a balance of £586, and the meeting was in favour of using some of this to organise an event which would attract more members.

The next meeting of the Committee would be the Annual General Meeting, which would be taking place on Thursday, April 6th and at which Gemma Durie, of the Community Watchdog Programme, would be the guest speaker.

(iii) Police Authority Community Consultation Committee: February 9th

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Community Consultation Committee for the Burntwood and District Policing Unit which had taken place in Kings Bromley Village Hall on Thursday, 9th February, 2006, at which he had been present.

The main issue under consideration was the proposed amalgamation of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands into a single regional force, a proposal which the West Mercia Police Authority was resisting and which it was expected to reject.

In that event, Staffordshire, already concerned about the implications for its policing precept, would withdraw its offer to 'volunteer', and the proposal would have to go back for further public consultation, although there was already anger at the little time previously allowed for public consultation and a growing belief that, particularly in the light of a statement from the Home Secretary that the merger would be driven through, "it was going to happen, anyway".

Objectors were urged to write to their MPs, who were the only people in a position to influence the Home Secretary, if, at this stage, anyone could.

Figures were given for reported crime in the LPU between October and December: these showed that, while there were decreases in burglary of dwellings, theft of and from vehicles, all forms of violence and anti-social behaviour, there had been an increase in criminal damage.

(iv) Other Meetings

(a) Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership: February 1st

The Chairman reported on a meeting of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Advisory Partnership which had taken place at the John O'Leary Centre, Marquis Drive, Brindley Heath, on Wednesday, 1st February 2006, which he had attended.

There had been no issues of direct and immediate relevance to parish councils, but Ruth Hýtch, the new AONB officer, would like to involve more people.

It had been decided that the Annual Spring Conference should be held at Beaudesert Park.

In addition, there would be a birdwatch starting at Marquis Drive on March 2nd, at which he would be present.

The Chairman also reported that, on February 9th, he had taken part in a trip to Long Mynd, to see how the Shropshire Hills AONB was managed. He had found the situation quite different from Cannock Chase, not least because much of the land was in the care of The National Trust.

8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

Staffordshire County Council Chairman's Civic Service: Sunday, March 12th, 2006, at St. Mary's Collegiate Church, Stafford, at 3.00 p.m. The service would be followed by afternoon tea in the County Buildings.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Temporary Road Traffic Regulation Orders

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of two Temporary Road Traffic Regulation Orders relating to the parish.

The first imposed a temporary speed restriction of 30 mph on the A51 between its junctions with Church Hill, Longdon Green, and Lea Hall Way, Brereton. The Order would come into force from 1st February 2006 and remain in force for a period of eighteen months or until the carriageway resurfacing works and speed reduction measures which it was proposed to carry out on or near the road had been completed, whichever was the earlier.

The second prohibited any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Borough Lane between its junctions with the A51 and Giddywell Lane unless the vehicle was being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle required access from Giddywell Lane only to premises on the length of the road or was being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes.

An alternative route for traffic would be available via Giddywell Lane, High Street, the A51 and vice versa.

This Order would come into operation on 20th February 2006 and remain in force for a period of eighteen months or until the highway drainage improvement works which it was proposed to carry out on or near the road had been completed, whichever was the earlier.

(ii) "Three Longdons" Walk – Replacement of Stiles with Kissing-Gates

The Clerk reported that he had received from Margaret McCann, Secretary to the Governors of the Schools of King Edward the Sixth in Birmingham, a letter dated 12th January 2006, acknowledging his letter of 6th January 2006 regarding the replacement of a stile on land to the rear of Longdon Hall owned by the Foundation which she had passed to the Foundation's Land Agents for attention.

The Clerk further reported that he had received from A. M. Power, of Windmill Farm, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon, a letter dated 25th January 2006 in response to his letter of 6th January 2006 to the Honorary Secretary of the Meynell and South Staffordshire Hunt regarding the replacement of a stile on land in the Hunt's ownership in Upper Longdon.

Mr. Power had expressed himself perfectly happy for the Council to replace this stile and had suggested that a second stile at the frontage of the field with Lower Way also be replaced with a kissing-gate.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, it was agreed that this should be done.

The Clerk went on to report that he had received a phone call from Mrs. Dorothy Keely, of Brookfield House, Lower Way, Upper Longdon, during which she had expressed her concern that a kissing-gate would leave a gap through which a small dog could pass.

The Chairman had agreed to visit the site to assess the extent of the problem.

The Clerk said that, so far, he had received no response from Mr. Reg. Hollinshead, the other land-owner to whom he had written.

(iii) New Gate and Stile at Entrance to Catmeadow Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that a new gate and stile had been erected at the entrance to Catmeadow Lane. In view of the discs fastened to the stile, he believed that this may have been done with the approval of the County Council Ranger Service.

Since this was on the route of the proposed "Three Longdons" Walk, the stile, which lacked a lower step but whose top spar was hinged, did not conform with the Parish Council's project to make all access-points convenient for the more mature rambler.

The Chairman said that he would visit the site.

10. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from Nicola Hodgson, of The Open Spaces Society, a letter dated 2nd February 2006, copies of which he had distributed to Councillors before the meeting.

She had pointed out that, without ownership rights, the Council could not give any consents in respect of easements including those concerning vehicular access.

However, under section 68 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, various criteria were given whereby easements, although they were unlawful, would be allowed to be granted, and a right of prescription was now possible in those circumstances where lawful authority could have been given, making the act lawful.

Councillors felt that, while a detailed reply, the letter did not fully clarify the legal situation regarding the status of the track, but concluded that, since the potholes in front of "The Red Lion" had now been filled, further enquiries need not be made.

(ii) Gentleshaw Common

(a) Condition of Car Park off Hayfield Hill

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Lichfield District Council's Operational Services Department and asked them to arrange for the car park off Hayfield Hill to be cleared of the discarded plastic bags full of empty beer cans and other litter which was threatening to become a health hazard.

The Department had responded promptly to his request and the car park was, for the time being, at least, clear of litter.

However, he had noticed that bags of empty beer cans were being regularly left at this car park and asked whether a large rubbish bin would reduce the amount of litter left lying around.

He was instructed to write to the Corporate Director asking her for her views on the matter.

(b) Report of Site Meeting with Willie Austin, Parks Assistant Manager

Cllr. Andrews gave a report on a site meeting which had taken place in Gentleshaw on the afternoon of Monday, 13th February 2006 between Willie Austin, the District Council's Parks Assistant Manager, Cllr. Hemmingsley, the Clerk and himself, at which the future maintenance of the grassed area opposite Gentleshaw School had been discussed.

It had been pointed out to Mr. Austin that the planting had not been in accordance with the agreed scheme, which had intended the trees to form a distinct boundary. Instead, they had been set back from the pavement, allowing vehicles to be parked thereon, and weeds had established themselves between the whips.

Cllr. Andrews had also suggested that access onto the green at the top of Redmoor Road could be prevented by the erection of posts.

Mr. Austin undertook to re-address the position in consultation with the Parks Manager and Justin Lloyd, the District Council's Biodiversity Officer.

11. STANDING ORDERS

It was agreed that, in the absence of Cllr Hemmingsley, who had prepared the draft of the proposed Standing Orders, and of Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, who had submitted a number of suggested amendments, further discussion should be deferred until the next meeting.

12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2006

(i) Entry

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Parsons, it was agreed that Longdon & Longdon Green and Upper Longdon should both be entered in the 2006 Best Kept Village Competition, at a cost of an entry fee of £12. 00 each (£24. 00).

(ii) Publicity

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was agreed that the following publicity material should be purchased:

20 x A3 posters @ 0.15p each (£3. 00); 550 x A5 posters @ 0.07p each (£38. 50).

The total cost of entering the Competition would therefore be £65. 50.

(iii) Survey of Parish Notice-Boards

The Clerk reported that he had carried out a survey of notice-boards in the parish and had the following comments to make:

- (a) the laminated surface of the notice-board outside Longdon Post Office was beginning to peel, especially at its seams, and much of the space was wasted because it was either too high to reach or below the top of the wall behind which it stood;
- (b) similarly, space on the notice-board in High Street was wasted because of its height, and, in its present position, coloured notices were either bleached by the sun or their colours ran, making them illegible;
- (c) the notice-board in the bus shelter on Longdon Green was small and its surface too hard for most drawing-pins;

- (d) the notice-board at Upper Longdon was in good condition but would benefit from being painted;
- (e) the notice-board at Gentleshaw was in excellent condition, having only just been renovated;
- (f) the notice-boards outside the W. I. Hall and Longdon Village Hall were in need of attention. Though not the responsibility of the Parish Council, their present condition would undoubtedly reduce the village's chances of succeeding in this year's Competition.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Services, who had renovated the notice-board at Gentleshaw, inviting him to carry out his own inspection and quote for the work which needed doing.

He was also instructed to write to Longdon W. I. and the Management Committee of Longdon Village Hall, drawing their attention to the need to refurbish their notice-boards.

(iv) Programme of Improvements

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, the Clerk was instructed to write to Graham McCulloch, asking him to treat the car park at the top of Church Hollow with weed-killer.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, payment of the following accounts was approved:

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall	£ 12. 00
Aqua Jet Services	Digging out land between Berkeley Way & Beech Walk and laying membrane and bark	£175. 00

(ii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that, since the previous meeting, the following payments had been received:

Lichfield District Council	Grant towards cost of restoring cast-iron roadside sign on Longdon Green	£533. 35
Staffordshire County Council	Contribution towards of mowing highway verges	£630. 00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £1287. 37; The Halifax d/a: £10357. 91.
(there were no uncleared cheques)

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Christ Church, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Martin Butt, Vicar of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, a letter dated 12th February 2006, in which he had informed the Council that his Parochial Church Council had recently had a new oil tank fitted to meet current regulations.

Cannock Wood District Council had made a grant of £450 towards the total cost of £1000, and he asked whether Longdon Parish Council would also be able to make a contribution.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, it was agreed that the Council should make a grant to the Parochial Church Council of £150. 00.

(b) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Chairman of Longdon Village Hall Management Committee a letter dated 7th February 2006 in which Mr. Vyse had informed the Council of the next project in his Committee's continuing refurbishment programme.

This included a noise attenuation system – required to meet the conditions of the new premises licence -, the cost of which was estimated as being £1250. 00, which he was asking the Council to meet.

He also asked whether the Council would agree to allocate £1500. 00 from its 2006/2007 budget to the refurbishment programme as a clear indication to other potential funding agencies as a mark of its confidence in the Committee's commitment to provide improved facilities to the community of Longdon.

On a motion proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that the Council would fund the cost of a noise attenuation system up to a total of £1250. 00, and on a motion proposed by Cllr. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was agreed that the Council would commit £1500 from the 2006/2007 budget to the Village Hall's refurbishment programme.

(v) First and Interim Independent Internal Audit

The Clerk reported that John Blount would be carrying out the first and interim independent internal audit of the Council's accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2006 at the Clerk's home on Monday, February 20th.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Chief Superintendent Keith Smy, Trent Valley Policing Division, a letter dated 6th January 2006, enclosing a copy DVD of a briefing entitled 'Building Safer Communities' which linked the Government-driven Council and Policing agendas and was recently presented to his staff, and inviting the Council's views on identifying and prioritising local needs in its area and its evaluation of the effectiveness of the solutions applied.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mr. and Mrs. Les. Blackwell, of 'Heath View', Burntwood, a letter dated 13th January 2006, congratulating the Council on the renovation of the finger-posts within the parish, which he had acknowledged.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Nana Ayebiara-Arhu, Supporter Relations Officer, Dogs Trust, Wakeley Street, London, a letter dated 16th January 2006, enclosing a poster about the Trust's free Canine Care Card scheme and asking for it to be displayed on one of the Council's notice-boards.

It was agreed that it might be of sufficient local interest to justify finding space for it on a notice-board.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Gillian Owen, of the Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 16th January 2006, informing the Council that a small sum of money still remained for funding Parish Plans.

However, the Council was not yet in a position to apply for funding.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Keith Watson, Senior Planner – Development Plans and Policy Unit, Cannock Chase Council, a letter dated 30th January 2006, asking the Council whether, in the light of a written reminder his Council had received from Government Office (sic) that specified bodies were required to be consulted prior to the publication of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement, Longdon Parish Council had felt ‘prejudiced’ at not being formally consulted.

It was agreed that the Council had not felt and did not feel slighted by the oversight.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Greta Banks, Assistant Passenger Transport Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 2nd February 2006, seeking the views of the Council regarding the level of local bus services.

It was noted that the Council had not recently received any complaints about the level of bus services in the parish.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mario Paparelli, Senior Manager, Bank of Scotland, Birmingham, a letter dated 8th February 2006, advising the Council of his bank’s current business deposit rates, which compared favourably with those of a number of other well-known banks.

It was agreed that this information should be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for evaluation.

(viii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Searle, Research Consultant, pmp, Warwick Street, London, a specialist sports and leisure consultancy recently appointed by Lichfield District Council to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy for the district, an undated letter enclosing a questionnaire for completion.

In the absence of any designated play areas in Longdon, the Council could only make a nil return, since the questionnaire appeared to focus exclusively on existing play areas.

15. 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 – January – Version 1
(to take effect on 1st February 2006).

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 5th February 2006.

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

Register of Electors 2006 – Monthly Applications for 1st February 2006.

(iv) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Advisory Notes and Newsletter – Issue 104, 2006;
Nomination form for vacancy on Executive Committee in Lichfield District to serve to the 2007 Annual General Election (nominations to be received by noon on Monday, February 13th, 2006);
Training programme for Councillors and Clerks;
Information and Booking Form: “Engaging the Community and Small Businesses in the Planning Process”, at Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek, on Thursday, 30th March 2006, from 9. 30 a.m. to 3. 30 p.m.;
“Speaking Out”: Issue 10, Winter 2005 (published by the West Midlands Regional Assembly).

(v) From Keith Watson, Senior Planner, Development Plans and Policy Unit, Cannock Chase Council:

Statement of Community Involvement – Submission Document.

(vi) From The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty Unit:

Minutes of Parish Councils' Meeting of 17th October 2005;
'Training & Events Venues' leaflet.

(vii) From Lo-CO Motion (Local Council Support Services), Colmore Row, Birmingham:

Promotional Leaflet.

(viii) From Plantscape Limited, Belper, Derbyshire:

Product Catalogue 2006.

(ix) From Wicksteed Leisure Limited, Kettering, Northants.:

Brochure: “Wicksteed Their World”.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Parsons said that the finger on the roadside sign on Longdon Green which should be pointing down Hay Lane

was, in fact, pointing in the direction of Rookery Cottages.

The Clerk said that he would investigate.

(ii) The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had taken the following action:

(a) he had written to Bagshaw's, the auctioneers, reminding them that “For Sale” signs of any kind should be erected only within the curtilage of the property being offered for sale.

This had been in reference to a sign recently erected at the side of the A51 at Longdon Green.

He had sent a copy of this letter to Mrs. Hibbs, the District Council's Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement).

(b) in addition, he had referred to Mrs Hibbs the presence of two boards screwed to the walls at the top of Grange Hill and the entrance to The Grange by a contractor.

(c) at the request of Cllr. Stanfield, he had notified the District Council of building works being carried out to the rear of Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw, and asked for verification that this work was permitted development or that it needed of permission.

(d) he had referred the presence of malodorous surface water in Smithy Lane to the District Council's Environmental Health Department and had been subsequently advised that it had, in turn, be referred to the County Highways Department.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 14th, 2006, in the Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.