

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 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; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were The Clerk and Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, M. B. E.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, the minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006, were approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Car Park off Hayfield Hill

The Clerk reported that, to date, he had received no reply to his letter to the Head of Operational Services regarding the cleansing of litter on this car park.

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that he had that afternoon noticed four more plastic bags full of litter which had been left on the edge of the car park.

The Chairman said that there were proposals to provide a litter bin at this car park as part of a management scheme for Gentleshaw Common.

(ii) House Agents' Advertisement Boards

The Clerk reported that no action had yet been taken in response to his complaints to the house agent and the District Council.

Cllr. Stanfield reminded the Council that, from 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006, parish councils could take action themselves under the 2005 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.

The Clerk was instructed to seek written confirmation of this from the District Council.

(iii) Tara House

The Clerk said that, as far as he knew, there had been no site visit yet.

Cllr. Stanfield added that work had now stopped.

(iv) Replacement of Stiles by Kissing Gates

The Clerk reported that the four kissing gates had now been delivered and were at present being kept at Tithe Barn Farm.

He had not yet received written confirmation from Ned Mutter on behalf of the King Edwards Schools Foundation, nor had he received a reply from Reg. Hollinshead.

(v) Speedwatch

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Butler was given authority to purchase a Dictaphone for use by the Speedwatch team, the cost not to exceed £50. 00.

(vi) Caravan in Field next to Commonsides, Gentleshaw

Cllr. Hemmingsley reminded the Council that the time allowed for the owner to appeal against an enforcement order requiring him to remove this caravan had now passed, and it was nearly twelve months since the District Council first noted its presence.

The Clerk was instructed to contact Christine Hibbs, the Principal Planning Officer responsible for enforcement and ask her for a progress report.

(vii) Sound Cut-off for Longdon Village Hall

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that he had been studying catalogues, and the most expensive equipment he had discovered had cost no more than £545. 00, plus V. A. T., far less than the £1000 now being quoted.

It was agreed that the Village Hall Management Committee should be asked to provide more information about their intentions.

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

None was declared.

6. PLANNING

(i) Report of Planning Working Party

06/00297/FUL: A. J. Mowbray: First-floor extension and conversion of garage to form porch, WC and utility: 15 Church Way, Longdon

Cllr. Hemmingsley said that the Working Group had found no reason to object to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

The Clerk reported that no other planning applications had been received.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

05/01229/COU//05.01230/LBC: The Earl of Shrewsbury: Change of use of agricultural buildings to a four-bedroom dwelling: Dark Lane Farm, Dark Lane, Longdon

06/00222/FUL: Miss E. R. E. Patterson: Single-storey rear dining-room extension and new pitched roof: 1, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received from Lichfield District Council the following Notice of Refusal of Planning Permission:

06/00127/FUL: Richard Attridge: Erection of garden shed: Buttercup Barn, Horsey Lane Farm, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

v) Other Planning Issues

(a) Redhill Barn Conversion

The Clerk reported that he had received copies of a correspondence which had taken place between Dr. and Mrs. Richard Totty, of Rock Cottage, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon, and Lichfield District Council concerning the proposed conversion of Redhill Barn to residential accommodation in which they had complained that, though near neighbours to the above property, they had not been consulted about the application.

They had also complained that no notice had been displayed on or near the property and wished both their concern at apparent irregularities in the planning process and their objection to the development to be recorded.

In reply, Cllr. Neil Roberts, Portfolio Holder – Development Services, had expressed his surprise and concern at the failings of the District Council's Consultation Procedure, which the Director of Development Services would investigate; and he had assured Dr. and Mrs. Totty that all observations and comments were taken into account when arriving at a planning decision and that the due process would be followed in this case.

The Clerk further reported that he had received a copy of a letter written to Dr. and Mrs. Totty by Jeff Upton, the Development Control Manager, dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in which he had explained that it was the Local Planning's Authority's normal practice to consult by direct letter only occupiers of neighbouring properties and that, in this instance, only Redhill Cottage adjoined the site.

However, Mr. Upton had gone on to assure them that their letter of representation would be taken into account in determining the application.

In his reply to Mr. Upton, dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006, Dr. Totty had re-iterated his objections to the application on the grounds of increased traffic and the fact that the property had been erected for agricultural purposes without planning consent twenty-five years before.

He also questioned whether the site was fit for human habitation since it was close to the mass grave of several hundred cattle slaughtered following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease a few years previously.

(b) Pre-application consultation with Local Planning Authority - proposed base station at Hill Top Farm, Longdon Green

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the Council had received a submission from Craig Blackadder, Acquisition Surveyor, of Lyminster, Hampshire, dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006, inviting comment on the choice of the above site for a base station, a number of alternative sites having been previously discarded, principally on the grounds that they were too close to residential areas.

However, it was pointed out that this was not a planning application and therefore needed no response from the Parish Council, and it was agreed to wait until a planning application was received before commenting.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Area Committee Meeting: April 6th

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, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and which he and Cllr. Andrews had both attended.

The Chairman had once again commented on the poor support for such meetings, but believed that this was the experience of other Area Committees as well.

There had been no elections in spite of the meeting having been advertised as the Annual General Meeting.

The main item on the agenda had been a talk by Cath Wohlers, a Community Development Officer with the Staffordshire County Council Health and Consumer Services, who had described the workings of the County Council Trading Standards 'Watchdog Scheme'.

(ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006

The minutes of this meeting, attended by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and Cllr. Stanfield, had been distributed to all Councillors prior to the present meeting.

Clive Thompson, Area Highway Manager East, Staffordshire County Council, had given a presentation on the delivery of highway services in the County, explaining how the Service was organised and structured and listing its key functional services.

He had also outlined the Local Transport Plan (2006 – 2011), which had been submitted in March and had focussed on access to facilities, especially for non car-users, safety, congestion reduction and the improvement of air quality.

It had been agreed that the main item on the agenda of the next meeting, which would be taking place on June 27<sup>th</sup>, should be a presentation by Lichfield District Council on the work of the Design and Conservation Team.

(iii) Annual General Meeting, Beau Desert Sports Field & Recreation Ground Trust:

May 3<sup>rd</sup>

The Clerk reported that he had attempted to attend the above meeting, which was scheduled to be held in the Conservatory of “The Park Gate Inn”, Cannock Wood, but had allegedly been re-scheduled to take place in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, but he had been unable to find it at either.

There was concern over the lack of publicity for this meeting, and the Clerk was instructed to contact the Secretary and ask for a copy of the latest annual accounts.

## 8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Notice of the following meetings was given:

(i) Cannock Chase area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Annual Conference: Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006, at the Beaudesert Golf Club, from 9. 30 a.m. to 3. 30p.m.

(ii) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership: Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. 2006, at the John O’Leary Centre, commencing at 10. 00 a.m.

The Chairman expected to attend both these meetings.

## 9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Speed Management in Upper Way

The Clerk reported that he had received from Simon Edwards, Project Engineer (Engineering Services), Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in which he expressed disappointment at hearing that vehicles were still exceeding the speed limit through the village adding that it might be possible to enhance the gateway by providing edge of carriageways, a 30 mph roundel and coloured surfacing.

However, he lacked the funds for any additional works and would ask Alan Oakley, the Local Traffic Management Officer if he could arrange for the works to be carried out.

(ii) Public Footpath Improvements in Parish of Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Right of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2006 in which he said that he would be writing to Mr. Reg. Hollinshead to arrange a meeting with himself and a member of the County Ranger Service.

(iii) Grange Hill

The Clerk reported that he had received from K. R. Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in which he had said that he was currently in dialogue with Mr. Mark Lewis, of 2, The Grange, over the exact location of the highway boundary and that he had referred the matter to his Asset Management team for clarification.

The Chairman thought that a restraining mesh might be needed to prevent further movement of the soil.

(iv) Smithy Lane

The Clerk reported that, in the same letter, Mr. Owen had said that he would arrange for Smithy Lane to be inspected and for the inspector to arrange the necessary repairs.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols felt that a site meeting was vital.

10. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION(i) Renovation/Replacement of Notice Boards

The Chairman reported that he had made an inspection of the parish notice boards and had concluded that, while the notice board in High Street was in the right place, it was in need of renovation.

However, the notice board outside Longdon Post Office offered inadequate space for the number of Council, community and public information notices which it was sometimes expected to display, and he suggested that a second notice board be purchased exclusively for Council notices.

This could be glass-fronted and wide enough for three A4 sheets of paper.

Two alternative locations were suggested – outside the Village Hall or alongside the bus shelter in front of The Mill.

It appeared that the Village Hall Management Committee believed that the notice board already outside the Village Hall was the property of the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the Chairman's recommendations should be considered at the next meeting of the Council.

(ii) Children's Posters

The Clerk reported that he had collected a large number of posters from St. James School and taken them to Cllr. Mrs. Nichols for judging.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Bird and seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that two W. H. Smith tokens to the value of £5. 00 should be purchased as prizes for each of the four classes and that a donation of £60. 00 should be made to the School Library in recognition of the children's work.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and Cllr. Juxon would choose the prize-winners and arrange to visit the school to award the prizes.

11. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2006

The minutes of the Annual Assembly, held at St. James School, Longdon, on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, approved and signed.

It was agreed that the complaint that cars parked on the highway verge outside No. 71 Upper Way, Upper Longdon, were obscuring the view of vehicles emerging from Grange Hill should be referred to the police.

Letters of thanks should be sent to Mrs. Diane Howells and Mrs. Jean Parker, who provided and served the refreshments.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall	£ 12. 00
Allianz Cornhill	Insurance Premium	£622. 36
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – April 28 <sup>th</sup> :	£205. 00

Herbicide Application: £ 70. 00

£275. 00

*(The Clerk reported that the additional £5. 00 added to the monthly mowing cost was to cover the cost of mowing the verge outside “The Chetwynd Arms”, which the Council had added to the mowing specifications for this year)*

W. B. Sullivan	*5 A3 laminated BKV poster: £15. 80	
	*3 flower tubs and compost: £54.94	
		£ 70. 74

(re-imburement)

*(\*expenditure incurred under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of 1972)*

(ii) Payments Received

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

Lichfield District Council	Precept 2006/2007	£13000. 00
Central Networks	Wayleaves	£ 31. 77
D. Harris Plastering	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
W. Rose	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Olwyn Bennett	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Paul Adams	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Sandra Butler	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
A. W. Johnson	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
J. R. Andrews	Contribution to cost of reception	£ 10. 00
B. J. Butler	Contribution to cost of reception	£ 10. 00
R. C. Hemmingsley	Contribution to cost of reception	£ 10. 00
Mrs. M. G. Nichols	Contribution towards cost of reception	£ 10. 00
W. B. Sullivan	Contribution to cost of reception	£ 10. 00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £1723. 99;	The Halifax d/a: £19457. 91
(less uncleared cheque for £20. 00)	

(iv) Applications for Grant Aid

While there were no applications for the Council to consider, Cllr. Hemmingsley reminded the Council of his proposal to publish an application form on the parish website.

It was agreed that the Council should consider the form it should take at the next meeting.

(v) Adoption of End-of-Year Accounts

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Butler, the end-of-year accounts for the financial year 2005/6, presented at the Annual Assembly, were adopted.

13. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Alison Richards, Implementation Projects Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in which she thanked the Council for its invitation to the reception on March 29<sup>th</sup> and enclosed a copy of the guidance notes for the District Council's Conservation Area Enhancement Scheme.

It was suggested that renovating the bus shelter at Longdon Green might come under this scheme.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Justine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in which she said that, from recent visits to Gentleshaw Common, it was evident that it had been fenced in the past and she asked whether the Council held any historic documents which confirmed this.

However, Councillors believed that the only fencing that appeared on the Common had been placed round newly-planted trees, and the Clerk was instructed to ask Ms. Lloyd where such evidence had been found.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mary Cooke, Play Development Manager, Leisure and Culture, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2006, enclosing a update and review of the District Council's Play Strategy and advising the Council that she would in due course be sending out an audit form to establish the open spaces, parks and playgrounds available for play in the parish.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Senior Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006, informing the Council that, following receipt and consideration of the Inspector's Report, Lichfield District Council had formally adopted that Statement of Community Involvement on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

14. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk reported that, in addition to the above correspondence, 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 – April – Version 1  
(to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006).

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

Monthly Applications for 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006.

- (iii) From The Performance and Policy Manager, Organisational Development, Lichfield District Council:

Minutes of meeting of Lichfield District Parish Forum held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

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

Chief Executive's Circular 30;  
Booking Form for SPCA Training in Chairman's Skills (23 May);  
Advance Notice of Clerk's Training Day (27 June);  
NALC Update L04-06 – Licensing Act;  
NALC Policy & Parliamentary Briefing P02-06 – Accounts and Audit

Amendment Regs. 2006);  
NALC Urgent Financial report on Gratuities and Taxation;  
NALC Legal Briefing L03-06 – Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment  
Act 2005.

(v) From The National Association of Local Councils:

Local Council Review: Vol. 58, No. 1 - May 2006.

(vi) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

“Change Up” – Newsletter of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Consortium  
of Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO);  
Leaflet: “Discover Cannock Chase AONB in the Chase Hopper Taxi Bus  
Service”;  
Calor Village of the Year Entry Form;  
Diary of Staffordshire Village Festivals and Events 2006.

(vii) From The Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council:

Cannock Chase AONB Annual Action Plan 2006-07;  
AONB News: Spring 2006;  
Booklet: “The Five Visitor Centres in and around the Cannock Chase Area  
of Outstanding Natural Beauty”.

(viii) From The Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust:

Minutes of meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

(ix) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 96, April 2006;  
“Natural World”: Spring 2006;  
Short Courses 2006;  
Wildlife What’s On – May to August 2006;  
Nature Reserve Volunteers Workparties: May to August 2006;  
Wolseley Centre Events;  
Illustrated Talk by Pollyanna Pickering, Wildlife Artist, on “Giant Pandas  
and Sleeping Dragons” – Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2006, at Weston Road High School  
(tickets costing £5.00 available from Wolseley Centre);  
Cannock Group News.

(x) From DEFRA, London SW:

“Getting to grips with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005  
- a parish council guide to environmental enforcement” (three copies)

*(Copies to be distributed initially as follows:*

*The Chairman, Cllr. Parsons, Cllr. Butler;*

*Cllr. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. Nichols;*

*Cllr. Stanfield; Cllr. Hemmingsley)*

(xi) From The Head of Division, Democracy and Local Governance Division, Office of  
Deputy Prime Minister:

“Local Authority Byelaws in England: A Discussion Paper”.

(xii) From The Chairman, Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Plan Steering Committee:

Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Plan.

(xiii) From Shaw & Sons Limited, Crayford, Kent:

Catalogue: Books, Forms and Registers.

#### 15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Councillors heard that the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee had endorsed the Council's suggestion that an information centre should be set up in the Village Hall, and it was agreed that a Working Group composed of members of the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee should be set up to meet members of the Management Committee to discuss possible arrangements.

(ii) The Clerk reported that the seat in the bus shelter at Longdon Green was in need of repair.

(iii) Cllr. Roberts offered to make a twenty-minute presentation on planning obligations at the next meeting of the Council, an offer which Councillors gratefully accepted.

(iv) Cllr. Juxon expressed the view that the right-hand turn into Brook End opposite Borough Lane was too tight.

He also thought that the broken white should be continuous, since, in its present form, it still encouraged dangerous overtaking.

He asked whether the Council should write to the Highways Department, pointing out these deficiencies

However, the Chairman advised the Council to wait until the scheme was completed and its effectiveness tested before making any observations on it, particularly as it was unlikely that the present contractors could change the details of the scheme.

Similarly, the Council should delay writing a letter of thanks to the contractors until the scheme was completed.

(v) Cllr. Andrews drew the attention of the Council to activity that was taking place in fields adjacent to Laurel Cottage, Briertey Hill Lane, Gentleshaw, and to a new nameplate which designated this area "Laurel Farm".

Cllr. Stanfield said that he would investigate.

(vi) Cllr. Parsons reported that he had observed landscaping work in the field behind Tithe Barn Cottage and suggested that such encroachment into agricultural land amounted to change of use and needed planning permission.

Cllr. Stanfield offered to investigate.

(vii) Cllr. Parsons was anxious that children seen playing rugby on Longdon Green should not be driven off by local residents.

The Council confirmed that such activity was permissible on a registered green.

(viii) Cllr. Butler drew the attention of the Council to fixed commercial signs that had appeared at the side of the A51 between Brook End and Brereton Hill.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the County Highways Department to establish what its attitude was to such signs.

(ix) Cllr. Hemmingsley drew the attention of the Council to the lack of action over improving the area of land opposite Gentleshaw School.

Cllr. Roberts said that, unfortunately, Kevin Yates, the Parks Superintendent, had been on the jury of a fraud case since September and was likely to remain committed until June.

(x) The Clerk reported that the cast-iron roadside sign at the end of Commons side was showing a spot of rust, the result, it was thought, of its being struck by a flying chipping.

He was instructed to write to Leander Architectural asking for advice on the correct way of treating the post.

(xi) The Chairman reported that a resident of Upper Longdon had had two tyres punctured by three strands of wire protruding from a slab of concrete at the side of Stockings Lane outside The Kennels.

It was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Divisional Highway Manager.

(xii) The Chairman reported that, following the intervention of John Smith, Lichfield District Council's temporary Countryside Officer, Ocean View Properties had now drawn up a management plan for the area opposite Longdon Hall.

The non-indigenous trees had also been removed.

(xiii) Cllr. Bird asked whether the area of grass at the side of the pavement opposite his house could be adopted by the Council, now that the householder who had previously cut it felt unable to continue.

It was thought that at least part of it might be the responsibility of Homezone, and the Clerk was instructed to establish whether this was so.

#### 16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.