

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN
THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JUNE 13TH 2006

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

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

The meeting was prefaced by a presentation on Planning Obligations by Cllr. Roberts, speaking in his role as Portfolio Holder – Development Services.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols;
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; County Councillor F. W. Lewis, M. B. E.; and Mr. Neil Vyse,
Chairman of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, May 9th, 2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, approved and signed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, May 9th, 2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Hemmingsley and seconded by Cllr. Butler, approved and signed.

4. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioner was present.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Car Park off Hayfield Hill

The Clerk reported that there were once again bags of rubbish awaiting disposal.

(ii) House Agents' Signs

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), Development Services, Lichfield District Council, a copy of a letter dated 1st June 2006 and addressed to the house agents Tydemans of Lichfield.

In it, she had reminded the firm that anyone who displayed an advertisement, or used an advertisement site or knowingly permitted someone else to do so without consent for it was acting illegally and instructed the firm to remove the sign at the junction of the A51 and Borough Lane within fourteen days of the date of the letter.

The Clerk added that the sign had been removed shortly after this letter had been sent.

However, there were now signs in Longdon Green and Upper Longdon advertising the sale of teak and garden furniture at Eaton Lodge Hotel, Rugeley, over a succession of weekends.

(iii) Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Anna Priestley dated 12th June 2006, referring to a site visit which she had made to Tara House.

As a consequence, she had advised the owners that, because the landscaping of the garden which had been carried out within the residential curtilage involved the use of heavy machinery and substantial alterations, it constituted engineering works and therefore planning permission should be obtained. She had subsequently been advised by the planning agent that plans were being drawn up, though they had not yet been submitted.

However, work being undertaken in the field to the rear of the house was in connection with drainage and therefore did not require planning permission.

Cllr. Stanfield suggested that Ms. Priestley should be asked to supply the Parish Council with a plan which clearly identified the two areas to which she was referring, and the Clerk was instructed to apply for such a plan,

(iv) Replacement Kissing-Gates

The Clerk reported that he still awaited the promised letter from Ned Mutter giving formal approval for the erection of a kissing-gate on land adjacent to Longdon Hall.

(v) Caravan in Field next to Commonsides, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had attempted to speak to Mrs. Hibbs, but had found that she was on holiday.

Cllr. Stanfield suggested that the Clerk should write to the District Council asking whether information had been laid before a magistrate regarding the landowner's failure to comply with the enforcement order which had been served on it, since not to do so constituted a criminal act.

Failure on the part of the District Council to take appropriate action was not fair to the majority of parishioners who observed planning law.

The Clerk was duly instructed to write to Mrs. Hibbs.

(vi) Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust

The Clerk reported that he had now received a copy of the Trust's Statement of Accounts from March 2005 to February 2006.

This showed an excess of income over expenditure of £2325. 81.

(vii) Speed Management in Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had yet been able to speak to Andrew Oakley, of the County Council's Development Services Directorate, about improvements to the road markings in Upper Way, but he would renew his efforts to do so when Mr. Oakley returned from holiday.

(viii) Grange Hill

The Clerk reported that there had been no further communication from the County Council's Highways Department on stabilising the banks on either side of Grange Hill.

(ix) Smithy Lane

The Clerk reported that, to date, it had not proved possible to arrange a site meeting to discuss the drainage problems in Smithy Lane.

(x) Damage to Verge outside No. 71 Upper Way

The Clerk reported that three of the plastic posts outside this property had been re-instated.

(xi) Tithe Barn, Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw

Cllr. Stanfield reported that, from his observations, there had been a clear encroachment into the field behind this property, contrary to Green Belt Policy, and the Clerk was instructed to draw the attention of Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer responsible for enforcement, to this development.

(xii) Protruding Wire Strands in Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon

These had been removed by the Chairman.

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

None was declared.

7. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that, since the last meeting, the Working Group had dealt with the following planning applications:

06/00437/FUL: Mark Parsons: Inclusion of existing vehicular access into curtilage of The Old Barn and new fencing: The Old Barn, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon

There had been no objection to this application, provided that it was a separate entrance and that it was approved by the Highways Authority.

Cllr. Hemmingsley emphasised that Cllr. Parsons had not been present while this application was being discussed.

06/00410/FUL: Mr. R. Dhanoa: Single-storey side extension to from swimming pool: Park House, Upper Way, Upper Longdon

Objection had been made to this application.

It was felt that, by reason of its size and dominant position in relation to the site, this development would not enhance the existing dwelling and would be in conflict with the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It was believed that the proposal would be incompatible with Policy D2, Policy NC2, Policy NC3 and arguably Policy DC1 of the Lichfield District Plan.

06/00474/LBC: Mrs. J. Pybus: Replacement of front entrance door: Hill Top Cottage, Hill Top, Longdon Green

There was no objection to this application provided that the replacement complied with the Listed status of the building.

(ii) The following planning applications were then considered:

06/00505/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. J. Heaton: Erection of wooden 3 box stable block: Red Hill Cottage, Red Hill Upper Longdon

The Council objected to this proposal on the grounds that the erection of new stables in the Green Belt and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was in conflict with Policy NC3.

It was noted that there were currently stables within the curtilage, albeit divided by Horsey Lane; it was therefore not clear whether the application was for additional stabling or for a replacement in the event of the proposed sale of the land where the existing stables were sited being completed.

The Parish Council had no record of an application for change of use and the Clerk was instructed to ask the District Council to check its own records to establish whether one had ever been submitted.

06/00516/FUL: Mr. G. Foster: Two-storey and first-floor extension to form kitchen and bedroom en suite: Barn Farm, Lichfield Road, Armitage

The Council had no objection to this application; however, it was thought that there might be an issue regarding permitted development quota.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

05/00203/FUL: Mr. Simon Allan-Smith: Formation of an all-weather exercise area for horse/training (40m.x 20m.): Land north of "Tree Tops", Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

"...it was considered that the proposed development accorded to Policy DC10 (Stables and Equestrian Activities) in that it was well screened and would not harm the open character of the Green Belt or the adjacent Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty...."

(Letter from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, dated 8th May 2006)

06/00237/FUL: Mr. A. J. Mowbray: First-floor bathroom extension and conversion of garage to form porch, WC and utility: 15 Church Way, Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the previous meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued the following Notice of Refusal of Planning Permission:

06/00242/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. R. Allen: Conservatory to rear: 3 Rookery Cottages, Longdon Green

"The site lies within the Green Belt, where there is a presumption against inappropriate development...Existing extensions at number 3 Rookery Cottages already exceed...maximum standards and, as such, the current proposals cannot be seen to be proportionate...."

(Letter from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, dated 18th May 2006)

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Supplementary Planning Document covering Planning Objections

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Senior Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, a letter dated 7th June 2006, notifying the Council that Lichfield District Council had adopted a Supplementary Planning Document providing the District Council's current approach, policies and procedures in respect of planning obligations, on 16th May 2006.

A copy of the adoption statement had been enclosed which specified where the document could be reviewed and how paper copies could be obtained.

Further copies were available on the District Council's website: www.lichfield.gov.uk.

8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

No report was presented.

9. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Notice of the following meetings was given:

- (i) SPCA Annual Clerk's Training Day (Theme for the Day – "Communication"): Tuesday, 27th June 2006, in The Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, from 10. 00 a.m. to 3. 30 p.m.
The Clerk would be attending.
- (ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Tuesday, 27th June 2006, in The Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.
Cllr. Stanfield was unable to attend this meeting, but it was hoped that Cllr. Mrs. Nichols would be able to attend.

10. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Erection of Kissing-Gates – Report of Site Meeting

The Chairman gave a report on a site meeting which had taken place at Upper Longdon on May 16th and which he, Paul Rochfort, Rights of Way Assistant, and Tim Hollinshead, land-owner, had attended.

At this meeting, it had been agreed that the County Council Works Unit would install two steps on either side of the stile at the side of the gate at the entrance to Footpath No. 49 in Catmeadow Lane and that Mr. Hollinshead would replace a second stile, which he would treat to minimise the risk of damage by horses; that Mr. Hollinshead would replace an existing stile on Footpath No. 50, which he would also treat to minimise the risk of damage by horses; and that he would replace the wooden gate at the junction of Footpaths Nos. 49 and 50 and similarly treat so as to minimise the risk of damage by horses.

The Chairman added that he would monitor the situation to ensure that the work was carried out.

It was agreed that the three kissing-gates purchased from Centrewire by the Parish Council should all be erected at the same time just as soon as written consent was received from Ned Mutter.

(ii) Highway Verge at Side of Church Hill, Longdon Green

It was agreed that this should be added to Graham McCulloch's mowing contract as soon as permission to do so was received from the Divisional Highway Manager.

(iii) Cast-Iron Roadside Sign at Junction of Commonside and Rugeley Road, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ted McAvoy, of Leander Architectural, Dove Holes, Derbyshire, a letter dated 30th May 2006, setting out the procedure for repairing the damaged paintwork on the above sign.

He had also offered some touch-up paint, but explained that he would be unable to send it by post because of Health and Safety Restrictions.

The Clerk said that he would be travelling into Derbyshire within the next fortnight and might well be able to collect the paint from the foundry.

(iv) A51 Speed Management Scheme

The Clerk reported that he had received from David Shanahan an email dated 15th May 2006 in which he had listed some points of concern regarding the road improvements which had been carried out on the A51 at Longdon, which he asked the Council to consider.

He believed that the lanes for turning right into Brook End and Borough Lane were not long enough, particularly when four or five cars were trying to make the turn at the same time; and he also felt that double white lines from Longdon Green to the pedestrian lights would be safer than the present broken lines.

Councillors were reminded that these points had already been raised by Cllr. Juxon at a previous meeting, when it had been agreed that time should be allowed for the scheme to settle down before passing comment to the County Council.

Generally, comments had been very favourable, and it had even been noted that noise levels were down as the result of the reduced speed.

The Clerk went on to report that there was to be an official 'launch' of the completed scheme, arranged by the County Council, on Thursday, June 29th, at 10.30 a.m., when it was hoped that representatives of the local press and television stations would be present. The Council had been asked to send two of its members, and it was agreed that these should be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

It was also agreed that the Council should offer hospitality at the end of the ceremony, and the Clerk was instructed to book the W. I. Hall for the occasion.

(v) Roadside Advertising

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Own, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 5th June 2006, in which he stated that he considered all illegal signs erected on the Highway as an obstruction, and consequently his Officers would seek their removal.

However, the task of removing them was given a low priority unless highway safety was compromised.

11. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES(i) Area of Grass at Side of Pavement opposite No. 61 Brook End

The Clerk reported that this had been cut free of charge by Graham McCulloch, at the request of Cllr. Bird.

The Clerk further reported that he had received from Martin Shearer, Building Surveyor, HomeZone, Lichfield, a letter dated 5th June 2006, to which he had attached a copy of a terrier plan showing the areas of grass which HomeZone owned and maintained.

These did not include the area cut by Mr. McCulloch, and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that this area and the verge running alongside Church Hill, Longdon Green should in future be included in the Council's own mowing contract once the agreement of the County Council's Divisional Highway Manager had been secured.

12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that the villages had been visited by a team of judges for a second time on June 8th.

Councillors once more addressed the question of replacing the notice-board at Brook End and agreed that a new notice-board outside the Post Office should be dedicated to village events, while a second glass-fronted notice-board dedicated exclusively to Parish Council notices should be purchased and erected next to the bus shelter in front of Mill House, subject to ownership rights and planning permission.

Cllr. Hemmingsley's offer to seek prices to lay before the Council at its next meeting was gratefully accepted.

13. COMMUNITY HALLS

(i) Longdon Village Hall – Purchase of Noise Attenuation System

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Neil Vyse, Chairman of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee, addressed to the Chairman and dated 12th June 2006, in which he had reported that fund-raising was going well and that the noise attenuation system required by the Premises Licence had arrived and was awaiting installation.

He had added that invoice for the system would be addressed directly to the Parish Council in order to save VAT.

Councillors were surprised that their request for more details about technical specifications and comparative prices had been ignored, and the Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Vyse asking for an urgent meeting at which this and other matters, such as the future of the notice-board standing in the Village Hall car park and the setting up of an information centre at the Hall, could be discussed.

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mr. Vyse two copies of the Scheme set up in 2003 which named the Parish Council as Custodian Trustees, one of which he would send to Mr. Heslop.

(ii) Longdon Memorial Hall

The Clerk reported that the Management Committee of the Longdon Club and Institute had launched an appeal to fund the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall, including the renovation of the frontage and the updating of the electrical system.

So far, no approach had been made to the Parish Council, however.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------|
| Longdon W. I. | Hire of Hall | £ 12. 00 |
| G. C. McCulloch | Mowing – May | £205. 00 |
| W. B. Sullivan | Clerk's Salary: £300. 00 (1 st April – 30 June 2006); Photocopying: £128. 83; Postage: £27. 96; ≠8 x £5. 00 tokens (re-imburement): £40. 00; ≠Plants purchased by Gentleshaw School (re-imburement): £25. 00. | £521. 79 |
| Open Spaces Society | Annual Subscription | £ 30. 00 |
| Lichfield District Council | Hire/Collection/Disposal of Eurobin – St. James Churchyard | £156. 24 |

(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 payment had been received:

Lynn Marshall Advertisements: "Longdon Life" £ 15. 00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £730. 89 The Halifax d/a: £19457. 91
(less uncleared cheques for £ 72. 00)

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that, in his email of 12th June 2006, Neil Vyse, Chairman of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee, had asked the Council to release the grant of £1500. 00 allocated to the Hall for this financial year.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Reynolds, payment of this grant was approved.

(b) Open Spaces Society

The Clerk reported that he had received from Rodney Legg, Chairman of the Open Spaces Society, a letter dated 18th May 2006 in which he had asked for a donation from the Council towards the cost of supporting government policy of removing restrictions to footpaths such as redundant stiles and gates which made access difficult.

However, the Council once again concluded that it would not be justified in using its funds to support national campaigns.

(v) Notice of Audit for year ended 31st March 2006

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2006, together with the Annual Return for completion and return by September 11th.

Councillors had been provided with copies of the completed Statement of Accounts and of the Statement of Assurance.

The Chairman then went through the Statement of Assurance with Councillors, who, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Butler, approved its adoption.

The Clerk said that he would now contact John Blount, the Independent Internal Auditor, and arrange a date for his visit.

(vi) Date of meeting of Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee should take place on either Monday, June 26th, or Tuesday, June 27th, depending on the availability of the W. I. Hall.

15. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

All correspondence had already been dealt with under the appropriate agenda items.

16. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2005/2006 – May – Version 1
(to take effect from 1st June 2006);

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2006/2007 – May – Version 2
(to take effect from 1st June 2006).

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

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

(iii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Questionnaire: Countywide Update of Village Facilities in Staffordshire.

(iv) From The West Midlands Regional Assembly & Black Country Consortium:

Draft Revision to Regional Spatial Strategy.

(v) From The Beau Desert Sports Field & Recreation Ground Trust:

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

(The Clerk reported that this had taken place in the Conservatory of “The Park Gate Inn”, Cannock Wood, as scheduled, but had started late)

(vi) From The Open Spaces Society:

“Open Space”: Summer 2006 - Volume 28, No. 6;

Annual Report and Accounts 2005;

Notice of Annual General Meeting to be held at 11. 00 a.m. on Wednesday,
5th July 2006 at The Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ;

Stop Press: “Victory in House of Lords for Trap Grounds, Oxford.”

17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Juxon reported that there was a leakage of water at the end of High Street.

This was confirmed by Cllr. Reynolds.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company, asking them to take the necessary remedial action.

(ii) Cllr. Butler reported that pedestrians with prams or push-chairs were experiencing trouble with negotiating the kissing gate at the end of The Croft and asked whether the gate could be removed.

It was agreed that the Clerk should seek the advice of Paul Rochfort, the County Council’s Right of Way Assistant first.

(iii) Cllr. Butler asked whether a letter of appreciation should be sent to the company responsible for carrying out the road works on the A51.

It was agreed that the Clerk should ask the Divisional Highway Manager for the name and address of the company at the launch on June 29th.

(iv) The Clerk reported that PC Andy Brown would be holding a surgery at “The Swan with Two Necks” on Wednesday, June 21st, from 10. 30 a.m. to 3. 00 p.m.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, July 11th, 2006, in The Meeting Room, Christ Church, Gentleshaw, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.