

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE MEETING ROOM OF CHRIST CHURCH, GENTLESHAW, ON
TUESDAY, JULY 11TH, 2006

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Vice-Chairman, who, in the absence of the Chairman, chaired the meeting); Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk and P.C. Andy Brown, Community Beat Officer.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;
Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds; Cllr. S. K. Welch;
Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council; and County Councillor
F. W. Lewis, M.B.E.

2. REPORT BY P.C. BROWN

Cllr. Hemminglsey welcomed P.C. Brown and invited him to address the meeting.

P. C. Brown reported that, while there had only been two criminal incidents in the parish over the past two months, both had been serious; a house in Lower Way had been burgled while its occupants had been away on holiday, and a barn in Longdon had been set on fire, causing substantial loss in hay and farming equipment.

It was not certain whether this latter incident had been linked to recent arson attacks elsewhere in the district.

Generally, the public had been very satisfied with the results of the new speed management scheme, though several people had expressed their concern that there were no double lines coming down the hill from Longdon Green, and at times the feeder lane for turning into Brook End from the direction of Lichfield proved too short for the number of vehicles waiting to make the turn.

A police camera van had been on the scene a couple of times.

P.C. Brown reminded the Council that the new Neighbourhood Policing policy would be starting in September, and he went on to outline 'PACT' ("Partners in Communities Together"), which would entail the setting up of a local panel which would act as a discussion group, meeting twice a year.

It was agreed that a separate meeting of the Parish Council would be needed to launch this initiative.

Only four people had attended the surgery held in the car park of "The Swan with Two Necks" on June 21st.

At the conclusion of his report, Cllr. Hemmingsley thanked P.C. Brown for his attendance.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, June 11th, 2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Hemmingsley, approved and signed.

4. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Anna Priestley, Planning Assistant Officer, Development Services, Lichfield District Council, who had told him that the owner's agent had promised to submit a planning application for the engineering works begun at the above site within a fortnight.

Miss Priestley had added that, if no plans had been received within that time, she would re-visit the site with a planning officer.

(ii) Replacement Kissing-Gates

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ned Mutter, Surveyor (Property Management Consultancy), GVA Grimley, Brindley Place, Birmingham, a letter dated 21st June 2006, confirming that his client, Mr. Tom Marshall, a tenant, had no objection to the replacement of the stile in the field which he rented from the Schools of King of Edward VI in Birmingham with a kissing-gate.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Services, who had been similarly employed by the Council in the past, should be asked to carry out the work of erecting all three kissing-gates.

The Clerk would notify Mr. Marshall and Mr. Power that this work was imminent.

(iii) Caravan in Field next to Commonsie

The Clerk reported that Miss Priestley had also informed him that the owner's failure to remove this caravan had now been referred to the District Council Solicitor, who had rejected the owner's claim that the enforcement order had been incorrectly served.

(iv) Tithe Barn, Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that the owner of the above property had been visited by Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), Development Services, Lichfield District Council, who, according to Cllr. Mrs. Meere, Mr. Archer's neighbour, had identified elements of work being carried out in the field at the rear of the property as requiring planning permission.

(v) A51 Speed Management Scheme

The Clerk reported that the official launch of this scheme had, in fact, taken place on July 22nd, not, as he had been led to believe, on July 29th.

Neither the County Highways Department nor the Parish Council had been represented.

While the kissing-gate at the end of The Croft presented mothers with prams with some difficulty, it was felt that, in the interests of road safety, it should remain.

(vi) Noise Attenuation System at Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Neil Vyse, Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee, asking for a meeting but, to date, had received no reply, neither had he received an invoice for the system.

(vii) Leakage of water at end of High Street, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had visited the site prior to writing to South Staffordshire Water, but had discovered that the problem no longer existed, possibly because the company had already been contacted by a resident.

6. DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR'S FINANCIAL, PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

No interest 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:

06/00547/FUL: Mr. S. Lindley: Two-storey side extension to form lounge and bedroom with en suite: 5 Stockings Lane, Longdon.

No objection had been made to this application.

06/00565/FUL: Lichfield Cathedral School/St. John's Preparatory School: Erection of temporary accommodation: Longdon Hall, Longdon.

No objection had been made to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

Consideration was then given to the following planning applications:

06/00576/ABN: C. D. Greenhalgh: Erection of Store: Land off Giddywell Lane, Longdon.

This was not a full planning application, but an agricultural determination based on the grounds that the proposed building was necessary for agricultural activity.

However, the land appeared to be permanent pasture, and the Council believed that the existing building was adequate for the present activity.

The Council recommended that, before a decision was made, a site visit took place.

06/06/00578/CLE: Mr. W. Peace: Certificate of Lawfulness for An Existing Use – Use of Barn for Storage Purposes: Redhill Barn, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon.

The Council could not confirm the applicant's statement of continuous use of this building.

Indeed, it was the Council's understanding that the first floor was put in by Mr. Peace less than ten years ago and that, before that, it was a conventional hay barn and stables.

The Council also believed that the storage of building material therein was ancillary to Redhill Cottage, within whose curtilage the barn until recently stood.

The Council suggested that, in view of the new use to which the barn had been put, namely, vermin control, the application for a certificate of lawfulness based on a previous use must fail.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

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

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

06/00127/FUL: Ian M. Heelas: Conversion of existing barn to four-bedroom dwelling: Redhill Barn, Bardy Lane, Longdon.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Single-storey side extension to form pool: Park House, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 27th June 2006, explaining why, in spite of the Parish Council's concerns, planning permission had been given for the above development.

It had been decided that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the AONB, due to its size and location within the development boundary.

(b) Appeal by Mr. and Mrs. R. Bate

The Clerk reported that he had also received from Mr. Upton a letter dated 22nd June 2006 notifying the Council that Mr. and Mrs. Bate had appealed against the decision of the District Council to refuse planning permission for a proposed residential dwelling on land adjacent to "Pine Ridge", Brereton Hill Lane, Upper Longdon.

The appeal would be considered at an informal hearing to be held at the Council Offices, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on 19th October 2006, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

Some surprise was expressed that an appeal had been lodged, and it was agreed that the Council's response should be considered at the next meeting.

(c) Laurel Cottage, Briertey Hill Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Princial Planning Officer, Development Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated July 2006 (sic), in which she had confirmed that planning permission had been given in 1989 for the stables at the above property and that the ménage was clearly identifiable on an aerial photograph of 2000 held by the District Council and, having existed for in excess of four years, was therefore immune from enforcement action.

In relation to the touring caravan, the owner had advised that this had been moved outside the curtilage while some planting was being carried out and would be moved back once this was completed.

8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) SPCA Training Day for Clerks: June 27th

The Clerk reported that he had attended a Clerks' Training Day on the theme of "Communication", organised by the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, which had taken place in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, on Tuesday, June 27th, 2006.

The programme had opened with a short workshop on agenda setting, which had been followed by a talk by John Huff, Director, European Information Bureau, on the structure of the European Parliament and ways of communicating with its members.

This, in the Clerk's view, had been the best organised and most lucid presentation of the day.

In the afternoon, Alan Jones, Head of Communication, National Association of Local Councils, gave a presentation on preparing parish and town council newsletters.

The information, in the Clerk's view, had been basic and predictable.

There had then been a presentation by Shirley Goodchild and Roseleen Bonner, of Postwatch, on the new "Pricing in Proportion" to be introduced on August 21st, as a consequence of which the cost of mailing communications in A4 envelopes would increase substantially, though the number of sheets of paper which it would be possible to enclose in smaller envelopes without incurring extra cost would increase.

The day had concluded by a brief presentation by John Greatwood, of Land Registry, on the voluntary registration of land.

(ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: June 27th

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Tuesday, June 27th, 2006, which she had attended.

Cllr. Joe Powell, Chairman of the Forum, had expressed a wish to visit all of the parishes within the District, starting in September. The purpose of his visits was to discuss with councils national proposals on the devolvement of powers.

Nuala Stewart, Regeneration Manager, Lichfield District Council, had outlined the purpose of the Local Strategic Partnership and the proposed mechanisms by which the rural communities would be engaged.

It was proposed to develop a "Touring Forum" which would visit each rural settlement over the next two years to discuss local issues.

Dan Brown, Urban Design and Conservation Manager, then gave a presentation on the Conservation and Urban Design Service.

Primary amongst the functions of the Service were the giving of advice on planning proposals; the appraisal of the character of historic conservation areas; and the administration of heritage grants (for which there few applications at the moments).

He advised parish councils to draw up village design statements, which, if adopted by the District Council, could be of benefit in protecting conservation areas.

There were eight hundred listed buildings in the District, all of which were protected, whether they were in a conservation area or not.

Conversely, though there may be several listed buildings within an area, that area would not qualify as a conservation area unless it was cohesive and of special interest.

A number of suggestions were made for future agenda items, including input into the Local Development Framework; tree conservation; litter on highways and general littering; Section 106 agreements; and energy efficiency.

Those attending the meeting were given a written briefing on the Clean Neighbourhoods and 2005 Environment Act, copies of which the Clerk had distributed with Cllr. Mrs. Nichols' report.

(iii) Governors' Meeting, Gentleshaw CPS: June 29th

Cllr. Hemmingsley gave a report on a meeting of the Governing Body of Gentleshaw County Primary School which had taken place at the School on Thursday, June 29th, 2006, which he and Cllr. Andrews had attended.

The School had received another excellent OFSTED report; on a four-point scale – 1: excellent; 2: good; 3: satisfactory; 4: inadequate - the School had scored 1s and 2s, the only criticisms being that some pupils had not been sure of the grades they needed to achieve or, in some cases, the meaning of the teacher's comments.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Head Teacher, conveying the Council's delight with the outcome of the inspection and congratulating both staff and pupils on such a good report.

Cllr. Hemmingsley added that the school roll now stood at 142 pupils and that work would soon begin on constructing new classrooms and library.

9. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) SPCA/SLCC Joint Event for Clerk and Councillors: Tuesday, 18th July 2006, at the Stone Station Community Centre, Station Road, Stone, commencing with a buffet lunch at 1. 15p.m.

The Clerk expected to attend.

(ii) SPCA Lichfield Area Committee: Thursday, 20th July 2006, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

The meeting would be addressed by Nuala Stewart, Regeneration and Communications Manager, Community Housing and Health, Lichfield District Council.

The Clerk expected to attend, but Cllr. Andrews would be away on holiday.

(iii) Best Kept Village Competition – Announcement of Results: Monday, 31st July 2006, in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

The Clerk expected to attend.

10. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Speedwatch, Upper Longdon

A request by the Speedwatch team for a police speed check was conveyed to PC. Brown before he left the meeting.

(ii) Smithy Lane, Longdon

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols gave a report on a meeting which she had had in Smithy Lane with Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Highways Inspector, on the morning of Thursday, 29th June, 2006.

Using a metal detector which he had brought with him, Mr. Wawrzynczyk had quickly uncovered five metal gratings, all of which had been dug out and washed through the same afternoon.

He had assured Cllr. Mrs. Nichols that the lane would be thoroughly swept before re-surfacing was carried out later in the summer.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr. Wawrzynczyk, thanking him for arranging for the work to be carried out so promptly.

(iii) Control of Roadside Advertising

The Clerk reported that he had received from Beth Harries, Solicitor, Democratic and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 21st June 2006 acknowledging his receipt of his letter of 18th June 2006 and informing him that she was currently looking into the situation and hoped to come back to him shortly.

(iv) Highway Verges

The Clerk reported that, in his letter of 9th June 2006, Graham McCulloch had reported that several areas of highway verge needed raking clear of stones, levelling and re-seeding following the completion of the work on the A51.

He had offered to carry out this work for £60. 00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, the Clerk was instructed to invite Mr. McCulloch to carry out this work.

The Clerk further reported that he had received a letter from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, dated 6th July 2006, informing the Council that his Local Highway Officer had recently visited

Giddywell Lane, in Longdon, and Shaw Lane, in Gentleshaw, following complaints passed on to him by the Clerk about the standard of the mowing in these lanes.

As a consequence, he would arrange for the top of Shaw Lane to be cut as soon as possible; however, the inspection had not identified a problem with the grass cutting in Giddywell Lane.

(v) Footpaths Nos. 38/39

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols reported that the stile leading to the above footpaths from Smithy Lane was overgrown with nettles and needed clearing.

She suggested that the County Ranger Service be asked to inspect the footpath for accessibility.

11. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that, in his letter of 9th June 2006, Graham McCulloch had advised the Council of the presence of moles on Longdon Green, recommending the employment of a mole catcher before they did further damage to the Green.

However, the Council decided not to take any action for the present, but to monitor the situation closely.

(ii) Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that he had received from Justine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer, Development Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 10th June 2006, informing the Council that evidence found during a recent site visit in the form of remnants of concrete wire posts suggested that, at some stage in the past, parts of Gentleshaw Common might have been fenced.

There were many of these posts scattered all around the boundary of the Common, and she was trying to gather information as to why these post had been installed.

Cllr. Hemmingsley showed the meeting a copy of a photograph lent to him by Mr. Jim Cantrill, of Fairview, Commonsides, thought to date from the late 1950s, which showed a series of concrete posts lining the edge of the Common at the bottom of Hayfield Hill, opposite The Redmoor Inn. He added that he thought that the purpose of these posts was to prevent travellers from driving their caravans onto the Common.

The Clerk was instructed to send a copy of this photograph to Miss Lloyd.

The Clerk reported that he had been informed that a "Heathland Harvest" was being held on Sunday, September 24th, 2006, between 10. 00 a.m. and 4. 00 p.m., which would focus on celebrating heathland and would include attractions such as a display by birds of prey, Morris dancing, face-painting, hot-air balloons and stalls selling local produce.

The organisers hoped to use the car park at "The Windmill Inn" as a visitors' car park, thus reducing pressure on parking space outside Gentleshaw School and Gentleshaw Church.

The Clerk reported that John Smith's temporary appointment as Countryside Officer would terminate at the end of August, but Marieke Tomlin would not be returning from maternity leave before the beginning of October.

Cllr. Hemmingsley reminded the meeting that a management plan for Gentleshaw Common should have been in place by the end of 2005, and it was agreed that this should be a subject for discussion at the Council's next meeting.

12. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Clerk reported that, following the failure of the A2B Taxibus Service to submit a tender, the 823 Lichfield-to-Rugeley Service would, from August, be run by The Green Bus Company, of Landywood.

Mrs. Freda Griffiths, a resident of Bradley Lakes, had been concerned that the service provided by The Green Bus Company would not be as accommodating as the one provided by

the A2B Taxibus, which had been prepared to use the service road at Bradley Lakes in both directions and to drop passengers off in the Rugeley Medical Centre car park and next to Morrison's Supermarket on its way back to its garage.

The Clerk had also received a letter on the subject from Mrs. Maureen Piper, of Brookend House, Longdon, dated 28th June 2006, a copy of which he had distributed to each Councillor.

The Clerk had discussed these concerns with Adrian Hunt, the County Council's Principal Passenger Transport Officer, who had told him that the County Council's role was limited to agreeing the route, the timing and the official stopping places of a service and that any deviation from these was unofficial and, strictly speaking, illegal, although it was recognised that some operators varied them to accommodate their clients.

He had assured the Clerk that The Green Bus Company was a small enterprise experienced in serving rural communities.

13. COMMUNITY HALLS

(i) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received from Robin Heslop, of Moseleys, Bore Street, Lichfield, a letter dated 21st June 2006, concerning the Title to the village hall and land, which remained vested in the names of Charles Cliffe, Michael Moore and himself.

It was his view that the Title to the land should be transferred to the Longdon Village Hall Charity, adding that he would be happy to accept instructions to deal with the formalities.

The Clerk reported that he sent a copy of Mr. Heslop's letter to Neil Vyse, the Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – May 23rd/24 th	£205. 00
≠*Ann Anson	Plants for Flower Tubs in Brook End	£ 23. 88
≠*Lichfield District Council	Contribution to Summer Playscheme	£150. 00
*Lichfield District Council	Hire/Collection/Disposal of Eurobin (Gentleshaw Churchyard)	£237. 82
Christ Church, Gentleshaw	Hire of Room	£ 10. 00
≠B. J. Butler	Dictaphone for use by Speedwatch	£ 29. 99
Lichfield District Council	Emptying 5 Dog Waste Bins	£611. 00
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – June 29 th	£205. 00
≠Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Membership Renewal	£ 33. 00
‡ ≠Community Council of Staffordshire	Membership Renewal	£20. 00
* Confirmation	≠Payment made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of 1972)	‡ omitted from minutes of 9 th May 2006

(ii) Payments Received

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

Halifax	Gross Interest	£104. 61
Staffordshire County Council	Highway Maintenance Agreement (1 st Sept. 05 – 31 Mar. 06)	£520. 00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £757. 86 (less £640. 70 in uncleared cheques)	The Halifax d/a: £17062. 61
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(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid(a) Longdon Produce and Flower Show

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Val Heseltine, Secretary of the Longdon Produce and Flower Show Committee, a letter dated 23rd June 2006, asking if the Parish Council would support the Committee's two shows - the Longdon Summer Show (formerly the Sweet Pea and Rose Show) and the Produce and Flower Show – by meeting the cost of hiring the W. I. Hall and the Village Hall, a total of £172. 00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Parsons and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, it was agreed that the Parish Council would once again meet the full cost of hiring the halls.

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

Copies of a report of this meeting, which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, 27th June 2006, had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the present meeting.

The meeting had been attended by Cllr. Welch, Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Hemmingsley, Cllr. Juxon, Cllr. Mrs. Meere and Cllr. Parsons, together with the Clerk.

No members of the public had been present.

No apologies were received, all six members of the Committee being present.

The Clerk had presented a reconciliation statement covering the period from 1st April to 27th June 2006. This had been updated for the present meeting.

The Committee had reviewed income and expenditure for the first three months of the current financial year and concluded that these were in line with budget.

The Committee had reviewed the current insurance cover and concluded that it was adequate.

Cllr. Hemmingsley had presented the results of his research into the variety and cost of renovating or replacing the parish notice-boards, and it had been decided to make the following recommendations to the full Council at its next meeting: at Brook End, the notice-board outside Longdon Post Office should be replaced using the existing metal frame, but the new notice-board – which would be used to display community notices - should be flat-topped, while a new glass-fronted notice-board should be erected at the side of the bus shelter close to Orchard Cottage for the exclusive use of the Parish Council.

The Council should consider the aluminium-framed notice-board offered by Cllr. Butler as a possible replacement for the notice-board in High Street.

The Council should consider replacing the notice-board inside the bus-shelter at Longdon green with a free-standing notice-board to one side.

Cllr. Hemmingsley had presented the draft of a grant application form for display on the parish website. This required details of the applicant and of the organisation on whose behalf the application was being made; details of the grant application, project finance details and details of ongoing costs, if applicable, were also required.

It had been agreed that it would also be prudent to require a copy of the latest set of financial accounts; however, where application was for £150. 00 or less, only details of the applicant and the organisation would be required.

The Committee had also listed a number of future projects which the Council might be invited to consider: adoption of the verge along Church Hill, Longdon Green, and of the grassed area opposite Gentleshaw School; the installation of a public seat on the grassed area at the end of Borough Lane; the establishment of a conservation area at the side of the Shropshire Brook by the ford, subject to the consent of the owner of the riparian rights; the re-location of the milestone at present in St. James Close to a more visible site alongside the main road; and the installation of village signs.

The Council was also awaiting a reply from the Diocesan Glebe Committee regarding its offer to lay down alighted pathway across the Glebe Field from Church Way to St. James Church.

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that, subsequent to this meeting, he had received quotations from two manufacturers of notice-boards – Harry Stebbing Workshop, of Great Hockham, Norfolk, and Village and Urban, of Berrow Green, Somerset.

After consideration, it was agreed, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Parsons, that two notice-boards should be purchased from Harry Stebbing Workshop - an open-fronted notice-board capable of holding 24 A4 sheets, with “The Parish of Longdon” in hand-carved lettering, at a cost of £690. 00, plus VAT, for the board and £74. 00 for the lettering; and a single-doored, post-mounted notice-board capable of holding four A4 sheets, with “Longdon Parish Council” in hand-carved lettering at a cost of £524. 00, plus VAT, for the board and £74. 00 for the lettering.

The first of these would replace the notice-board outside Longdon Post Office, and the second would be erected at the side of the bus shelter close to Orchard Cottage.

The Clerk was instructed to make enquiries regarding the need to obtain planning permission and land-owner’s permission before installing the second of these notice-boards.

It was further decided that the grant application form drawn up by Cllr. Hemmingsley should be adopted, subject to the upward limit of £150. 00 before it would be necessary to complete the application form in all details being raised to £200. 00.

There was no support for the proposal to re-locate the milestone in St. James Close to a site on the main road.

(vi) Funding Opportunities

(a) Funding for Parish Plans

The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Rural Field Officer, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 20th June 2006, advising the Council that a small pot of funding was now available from DEFRA for all parishes in Staffordshire who had not yet completed a parish plan.

Cllr. Hemmingsley commented that the notice which he had placed on the parish website inviting expressions of interest in helping to prepare a Parish Plan had attracted no response locally, though one correspondent from outside the parish had urged the Council to have nothing to do with parish plans!

(b) Breathing Places Grants Programme

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Cannock Chase AONB Unit notice of a UK-wide small grants programme designed to provide funding for small groups inspired by the BBC’s “Breathing Places” campaign.

The minimum grant available was £300, the maximum £10,000, the closing date for application being 26th July 2006.

15. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Beth Harries, Solicitor, Democratic and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 26th June 2006, offering to hold a meeting with parish clerks at which she could introduce herself and assist them in any issues with they felt that they needed assistance, such as councillors' declaration of personal and prejudicial interests.

The Clerk added that these meetings had been arranged at District Council House on Monday, July 17th, and Thursday, August 24th, the second of which he would be attending.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Marc Willis, Principal Planning Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29th June 2006, informing the Council that Staffordshire County Council had formally adopted the Statement of Community Involvement on 8th June 2006.

A copy of the Statement had been enclosed, and it could also be viewed on www.staffordshire.gov.uk/planning.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Keith Watson, Senior Planner, Development Plans and Policy Unit, Cannock Chase District Council, a letter dated 30th June 2006 informing the Council that the Statement of Community Involvement had been subject to examination by an independent inspector, who had been satisfied that the Statement met the Tests of Soundness set out in national policy.

The Inspector's Report had been considered by the Council's Cabinet on 15th July 2006. when it had been resolved to adopt it in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation.

16. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

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

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 23rd July 2006.

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

Minutes of meeting of Lichfield District Parish Forum held on 27th June 2006.

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

Register of Electors 2006 – Monthly Applications for 2nd July 2006.

(v) From The Heyday Organiser, Heyday, Rugeley:

Leaflet: "Retirement. Do not approach with caution."

"Heyday is a brilliant new membership scheme, backed by Age Concern

England. Heyday is primarily aiming to change the status quo, and aims to support and assist people in their 50s and 60s, or those approaching retirement, or who have just retired...Heyday aims to challenge the stereotype of retirement and really make a difference in the way people think of the older person....”

(vi) From Signs & Labels, Stockport:

Safetyshop Special Offers.

17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that he had delivered two damaged nameplates – one from Brereton Hill Lane and the other from Thorleys Hill – to the Operational Services Department depot at Vulcan Road, Lichfield.

He had also reported that the village nameplate at the bottom of Hayfield Hill had been struck by a passing vehicle and was now lying flat on the highway verge.

(ii) The Clerk reported that the triangle of land opposite Dodds Lane which had been the subject of an earlier inspection had now been levelled and the grass surface removed.

He believed that this was now being investigated by a Highways Inspector.

(iii) Cllr. Parsons drew the attention of the meeting to a leaflet advertising the sales of shoes from an address in Upper Way.

He pointed out that the leaflet, distributed in the neighbourhood, invited prospective customers to “come and try ‘em on”, and suggested that this went beyond the acceptable practice of working from home by inviting customers to call at the house.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), of Lichfield District Council’s Development Services, asking for her opinion.

(iv) Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the Chairman had asked him to refer a complaint which he had raised from a resident of Upper Way about the decking which had been put down at the front of “The Chetwynd Arms”.

The Clerk was instructed to establish whether planning permission was needed for such a development, though the raised level of the decking at “The Chetwynd Arms” did not seem to create the problem for local residents of being overlooked.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 12th September 2006, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.