

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 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. H. A. Meere; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols; Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds;
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Roberts, Lichfield District Council; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, M. B. E.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Footpath across Glebe Field

The Clerk reported that he had spoken that day to Barry Toothill, Secretary of the Diocesan Glebe Committee, who had told him that the Parish Council's proposal to lay a solid surface along and illuminate the footpath crossing from Church Way to the church in return for his Committee's permission to allow the community to use the field (or part of the field) as an open space had been discussed by the Committee, who wanted the Parish Council to submit its proposal in more detail.

Cllr. Juxon agreed to prepare such a plan, reminding the Council that the suggestion had first been made to him by the Vicar.

(ii) Footpath No. 5 (Gentleshaw) – Obstructed stile at Briertey Hill,

The Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from Paul Rochfort, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, that the Ranger Service had been requested to investigate the complaint and submit a report by November 24th.

(iii) Management of space at side of No. 12 Berkeley Way

The Clerk reported that he had issued instructions to Acme Tree Services, of Burntwood, regarding the pruning of the robinia growing at the side of No. 12 Berkeley Way.

The Chairman added that he had inspected the site following Mrs. Cauldwell's fear that the bark would rot the bottom of her fence and discovered the level of the bark was measurably lower than the soil had been and that the exposure revealed that the bottom of the fence was already rotting.

(iv) Replacement of dead and broken trees

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Gareth Hare, Lichfield District Council's Arboricultural Officer, about the possibility of adding the Parish Council's requirements to the District Council's impending order for trees for its parks, but Mr. Hare had dismissed the suggestion as "too complicated". He had, however, recommended the Clerk to contact Bluebell Nurseries, of Smiston, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The Clerk had subsequently discovered that, while Bluebell Nurseries offered a comprehensive catalogue of flowering cherries (which he had down-loaded), they did not offer a planting service.

The Chairman agreed to study the catalogue and select suitable specimens.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols suggested that the Council did not need to replace the dead tree on Longdon Green, which had been one of a tight group. She also drew the Council's attention to damage to a chestnut tree caused, she believed, when the Green was being mowed.

The tree needed treatment and the mowing contractor asked to take greater care.

(v) Lichfield Cathedral School

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the School had not so far provided the link to the parish website which had been promised at the recent meeting.

He agreed to get in touch with the School's Development Officer.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the Working Group had considered and commented upon the following applications:

06/00712/FUL: N. Sweeney: Alteration to existing roof and new front entrance:
Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw

It had been concluded that, while the amended plans had addressed the projection of the front porch, the roof alterations still fell within the Council's previous observations.

06/01011/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. D. Roe: First-floor and single-storey extensions to form utility and porch, three bedrooms and en suites: 73 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

While there had been no objection in principle to this application, it was believed that, in view of the size of the proposed extensions, the District Council should give careful consideration to the considerable effect which they would have on adjoining properties.

(ii) For Consideration

The Council then considered the following applications:

06/01017/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Taylor: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of five-bedroom detached dwelling: Broad Hazels, Beaudesert Park.

The Council believed that the demolition and replacement of the existing dwelling, which was within the Green Belt, would be contrary to the requirements of Policy DC7.

The Structural Engineer's report, which gave neither address nor qualifications, listed numerous problems, all of which could clearly be remedied, and there was no evidence of significant structural defects.

It was clear, therefore, that the present dwelling was capable of retention through renovation.

Moreover, the proposed replacement dwelling, given its overall height and design, would be imposing and detract from the rural character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

06/01071/FUL: New pitched roof and alterations to family/snooker room:
61 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

It did not appear to the Council that the proposed development would have any adverse impact on either the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or on adjacent occupiers. The Council did not therefore object to the application.

06/01083/FUL: R. S. and J. Burt: Change of use of land and existing building from agriculture to equestrian use: Rookery Farm, Giddywell Lane, Longdon

The Parish Council had no objection to this application in principle, particularly since it seemed unlikely that the land would in future be used for agriculture.

The Council's only reservations were that the plan did not indicate the building from amongst those on the site and the lane was narrow for the passage of horse-boxes or similar vehicles.

(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:

06/00712/FUL: N. Sweeney: Alterations to existing roof and formation of new front entrance: Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw

06/00797/FUL: Mrs. Janet Tompkins: Extension of existing stables: Forge Cottage, Broomy Fields, Hay Lane, Longdon

06/00814/FUL: Mr. G. Witherington: Proposed garden building: Ivyhurst, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

06/00883/FUL: Maple Property Developments Ltd.: Replacement agricultural building: Dark Lane Farm, Dark lane, Longdon

06/00895/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Kibble: First-floor side and single-storey rear extensions to form kitchen, dining room, bedroom and bathroom: 16 The Croft, Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that he had received no Notices of Refusal of Planning Permission since the last meeting.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Siting of residential caravan at Tara House

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 26th October 2006, in which she had confirmed that the caravan, whose delivery to Tara House had caused the unofficial closure of School Lane, was a mobile home to be used as living accommodation while work took place within the property.

This was Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

In an earlier telephone conversation with the Clerk, Mrs. Hibbs had informed him that there had been disagreement between her and the land agent over whether planning permission had been needed for engineering work which had been carried out at the rear of the property. but she had decided that, if an application were to be received, it would be approved, so the matter need not be pursued any further.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Staffordshire Playing-Fields Association A. G. M.: October 18th

The Clerk presented a written report on the Annual General Meeting of the Staffordshire Playing-Fields Association, which was held at the Staffordshire Football Association Headquarters, at Dyson Court, Beaconside, Stafford, on Wednesday, October 18th, 2006.

Only thirteen representatives had attended the meeting, and the formal business had been completed within twenty-five minutes.

There had then followed a meeting of the Executive Committee which the Clerk had not attended, not being a member.

(ii) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership - Parish Councils' Meeting: October 18th

The Chairman gave a report on the above meeting, which had taken place at Tixall Village Hall on Wednesday, October 18th, 2006, at which he had been present.

Concern had been expressed that the practice of dividing fields into corrals was, in some cases, resulting in the obstruction of footpaths, and it was hoped that a policy could be formulated to deal with the problem.

The policy of re-laying of overhead cables underground was not likely to affect Gentleshaw Common, since it was not an option for high-voltage cables and, in any case, the cost would be prohibitive.

Hatherton Parish Council had expressed concern that the amalgamation of English Nature, The Countryside Agency and DEFRA into a single unit – Natural England – would lead to a reduction in funding which would affect the Cannock Chase AONB.

(iii) SPCA Lichfield Area Committee: November 1st

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 Wednesday, November 1st, 2006, which Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Hemmingsley and Cllr. Stanfield had also attended.

There had been an otherwise disappointing attendance, only nineteen of the forty representatives who had accepted the Committee's invitation being present.

The guest speaker had been Ruth Plant, Corporate Director – Operational Services, Lichfield District Council, who gave a talk on litter control, which, she said, was costing the District Council £¼m. annually.

On average there was a fly-tipping incident every day, amounting to five hundred a year, and the Council was doing a lot of promotional work in which they were encouraging people to take their litter home.

Some limited enforcement work was also being carried out, resulting in over two hundred fixed-penalty notices being issued last year.

Fewer vehicles were being abandoned, possibly because of the high value of scrap metal.

Mrs. Plant confirmed that there was no obligation on the part of parish councils to retain or return any fly-posters which they removed.

(iv) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association A. G. M and Conference: November 4th

The Clerk presented a written report on the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, which had taken place in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, on Saturday, November 4th, 2006.

This year, the election of President had been contested, the two candidates being the current President, Cllr. Phyllis Bailey and the retiring Chairman of the Executive Committee, Cllr. Stan Lovatt, the former being elected.

The elections to the Executive Committee had left several vacancies which would be filled by postal ballot.

Speakers had included Justin Griggs, Head of N. A. L. C. Development, on the Local Government White Paper and David Kidney, M. P.

There had been three resolutions before the meeting: the first (overwhelmingly defeated) had proposed that one elected member of the S. P. C. A. Executive Committee should be Chairman of that District's Area Committee; the second, calling on members of the Association to support the main recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Report on Community Governance, had been carried by a majority vote; while the third, expressing concern about the possible closure of Staffordshire County Council Day Centres for the elderly and disabled, was carried nem. con. after the proposer had refused to accept an amendment which instead sought an assurance from the County Council that, in reviewing the present system, the best features provided by existing day centres would be taken into account.

(v) Police Authority Consultation Meeting: November 8th

The Clerk presented a written report on a public consultation meeting held by the Police Authority at the W. I. Hall, Hammerwich, on Wednesday, November 8th, 2006.

Inspector Emma Griffiths, of the Burntwood and District Local Police Unit, had reported that all crime in the area was down by 2½%, while the detection rate had risen to 29.4%.

However, anti-social behaviour was up by 5%, and other causes of concern included binge drinking and under-age drinking.

One member of the public had expressed dissatisfaction with the employment of Community Wardens in the place of 'proper' police, and continued to voice his dissatisfaction even when he had been reminded that Central Government had made funds available exclusively for their recruitment.

Another concern was that yobbish behaviour, hitherto associated with urban areas, had now reached local villages, though the perpetrators were often from nearby towns, driven out by CCTV cameras.

In answer to a complaint that operators at call centres were often ignorant of the locality at which an incident was occurring, Inspector Griffiths pointed out that there were, in fact, two call centres in Staffordshire, at Stafford and at Hanley, and that operators at both had access to maps via their computer screens.

In conclusion, Inspector Griffiths acknowledged that there was a gap between the success which Staffordshire Police, officially acknowledged as the best-performing police force in the country, was achieving in reducing crime and the perception of the public, in whom there appeared to be a strongly-entrenched fear of crime, and she agreed that part of the solution was higher-visibility policing, which it was her aim to provide.

(vi) Longdon Village Hall Management Committee: November 13th

Cllr. Bird reported that he had attended a meeting of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee the previous evening, but unfortunately the meeting had been inquorate.

However, he had learnt that £1033 had been raised at the recent ball, and he believed that the Committee's funds were in a healthy state.

There had been uncertainty over how to respond to Robin Heslop's recent letter concerning the deeds relating to the land on which the Hall stood, and the Clerk suggested that the Committee should be urged to deal with Mr. Heslop direct.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received notice of the following meetings:

(i) Seminar ("Play and Leisure Provision for Parish Councils"), organised by SMP Playgrounds Ltd.: Thursday, 2nd November 2006, at The Travelodge Hotel, Droitwich, at 7.30 p.m.

(ii) Public Consultation on the Management of Cannock Chase Country Park Heathlands: Sunday, 3rd December 2006, at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Marquis Drive, from 10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.

(iii) Launch Event – “A Core Strategy for the Black Country”: Wednesday, 6th December 2006, at The Hawthorns, West Bromwich, from 9.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Report of Highways & Footpaths and Greens & Open Spaces Working Group

Cllr. Mrs. Meere reported on a meeting of the above Working Group which had taken place at Tithe Barn Farm on Monday, November 6th, 2006 and at which Cllr. Bird, Cllr. Butler and Cllr. Welch had also been present.

Cllr. Reynolds had sent his apologies.

Sites under discussion had included Brereton Hill Lane, where the hedge and brambles were growing over the path; Grange Hill, where the question of ownership had not yet been resolved; the triangle of land at the front of Byron Court, where a row of leylandii growing there needed tidying up; the grassed area in front of the notice-board at Upper Longdon, where there had been a request for a bench; the church car park, where damaged fencing needed attention and the path at the top of Church Hollow needed clearing; the Shropshire Brook and banks at the rear of Mill Way, which would benefit from a clearance programme; the kissing-gate at the end of The Croft, which was discouraging mothers with prams or push-chairs from using the puffin-crossing; the grassed area opposite Gentleshaw School, which awaited the attention of the District Council's Parks Department; and the triangle of land at the junction of Borough Lane and the A51, where it had been suggested that a bench might be sited.

Other sites which the meeting had considered were the grass triangle at the junction of Hill Top and Lysways Lane, which was being eroded by heavy vehicles, and the footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk, where, it was understood, action was already being taken.

There was also a need to waymark the new ‘Three Longdons’ walk.

The continuing failure of the County Highways Department to extend the kerbside lines outside Gentleshaw School also gave the Group concern.

Following the presentation of this report, for which the Chairman thanked Cllr. Mrs. Meere and the Working Group, the Council decided on the following action: the hedge in Brereton Hill Lane should be vigorously pruned, though action had already been taken to reduce the obstruction; the Clerk should write to the Divisional Highway Manager to discover whether the ownership of the banks on either side of Grange Hill had been established; the owner of the area in front of Byron Court should be identified; and Justine Lloyd, the District Council's Biodiversity Officer, should be consulted over a possible refurbishment programme for the brook which might include the provision of a new bridge.

The Council also decided to look again at alternative gating at the end of The Croft when the traffic management scheme was reviewed in January.

The Clerk would also write to Kevin Yates, the Parks Manager, regarding the management of the grassed area opposite Gentleshaw School and to Ken Owen, the

Divisional Highways Manager, about laying down the double yellow lines and zig-zags outside the School.

The recommendation to provide new benches in Upper Way and Borough Lane would be considered at a later meeting.

(ii) Speed Management – Upper Way

Cllr. Butler reported that the problem of speeding vehicles along Upper Way was worse than ever, the average speed having increased from 36 mph to 45 mph.

In addition, it appeared that the road was now a frequently-used route for 38 tonne lorries.

He had posted information on the notice-board about a speed management scheme in Great Haywood which he would like to see introduced in Upper Way and was canvassing every house-holder for their support.

It was suggested that Cllr. Butler might write an article for inclusion in the forthcoming issue of "Longdon Life" and that information about his proposal might also be posted on the parish website.

(iii) Village Signs for Longdon

Cllr. Parsons pointed out that, while Upper Longdon, Longdon Green and Gentleshaw all had prominent village signs, similar signs did not exist for Longdon, and he suggested that three such signs might be sited in Borough Lane, Hood Lane and Stockings Lane.

The Clerk was instructed to obtain costings for these signs.

(iv) Condition of Pavement in St. James Close

The Clerk reported that there had been an exchange of emails, copied to him, between Cllr. Roberts and Portia Howe, one of Lichfield District Council's Arboricultural Officers, concerning the dangerous conditions underfoot on the pavement along the lower part of St. James Close caused by leaves falling from trees in Church Hollow.

The Clerk had assured Cllr. Roberts that the Parish Council had no legal responsibility for the maintenance of Church Hollow, which had remained in the ownership of Staffordshire County Council, and it was agreed that the matter should be left to the District Council and the County Council to resolve.

(v) Notice-Board in Brook End

The Clerk reported that he had received a phone call from Charlotte Bell, who had told him that she and her partner, James O'Donnell, objected to the siting of the new notice-board in front of their property, Crown Bank, but had agreed to meet the Chairman to discuss the Council's proposal.

The Chairman added that he hoped to make an early opportunity to meet Ms. Bell and Mr. O'Donnell.

In addition, Cllr. Hemmingsley suggested that the notice-board in Stockings Lane needed replacing with a larger notice-board, since the present one was clearly of an inadequate size to accommodate all the notices being displayed.

(vi) Tree Maintenance

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, dated 13th November 2006, informing him of tree maintenance work which he was planning to carry out in the Longdon area.

The sites would be in Lower Way, west of Grange Hill, where all the elm trees would be coppiced or re-coppiced and crown-lifted, and on the A515 north of Constitution Island, where trees overhanging the footway would be trimmed and obstruction removed.

(vii) Footpath/Bridleway No. 15 – Farewell and Chorley

The Clerk reported that he had received from Caroline Golder, of the Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 8th November 2006, in which she had informed the Council that the earlier complaint concerning the above Public Right of Way had been resolved.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reminded the Council that the current two-year mowing contract had ended in October, but the Council could extend it for a further twelve months without the need to advertise.

He was instructed to write to Graham McCulloch, informing him that the Council was minded to offer him a one-year extension, but might wish to vary the specifications.

(ii) Longdon Green – Management of Spinney

The Clerk reported that he had received from Gareth Hare, Arboricultural Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 9th October 2006, in which he stated that, as his Council's corporate insurance did not cover him in terms of professional indemnity, he was unable to advise the Parish Council on the condition of the trees in this spinney.

Instead, he had advised the Clerk to consult the website of the Arboricultural Association, where he would find a list of approved consultants

The Clerk had subsequently spoken to Eric Roy, Clerk to Abbots Bromley Parish Council, who had given him the name of a consultant employed by his Council.

The Clerk was instructed to seek costings for an inspection in time for the next meeting.

10. COMMUNITY HALLS

(i) Longdon Memorial Hall

Cllr. Reynolds and the Clerk gave a report on a public meeting held at Longdon Memorial Hall on Friday, October 20th, 2006, at which both had been present.

The purpose of the meeting had been to launch an appeal for the renovation of the building and the improvement of the facilities of the Club and Institute which occupied it.

Because the Hall belonged to the village and not to the Club and Institute, who were its tenants, it had been agreed that the two objectives should be kept separate and two different funds should be set up, the one, supervised by the Parish Council, to raise money to renovate the front of the building and bring the electrical system up-to-date, the second to provide funding for such internal improvements as new toilets and an access for the disabled.

No costings had yet been obtained for any of the work, but it was thought that restoring the front would cost in the region of £10,000 alone.

Potential fund-providers had been identified, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the County Council, the District Council, the Parish Council, the Community Chest Scheme and the Royal British Legion.

There would be a meeting of a steering committee in the New Year at which progress could be assessed.

The Clerk added that he had ascertained that no planning permission would be needed for work on the front of the building provided there were no material alterations.

However, informal enquiry had suggested that the present arrangement whereby the Hall housed a private club which, as sole tenants, had accepted responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the building might prove an obstacle to obtaining public funding.

It was agreed that, in principle, the Parish Council would like to see the Hall preserved, but it was also thought that, if the Council were to invest public money in the maintenance of the Hall, it should seek a role in its future management.

It was agreed that the Clerk should make available copies of the 1934 Deed of Conveyance for each Councillor to study before the Council's next meeting.

11. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2006

The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Jackson, Chairman of the BKV Working Group, a letter dated 2nd November 2006, in which he had responded to the Parish Council's complaints about the judging of Upper Longdon.

He had argued that, notwithstanding the problem of fly-posting, posters could still be displayed at strategic points around the village, but he had conceded that the fact that the Council publicised the Competition through its newsletter and website may have escaped the notice of the judges.

His suggestion that a notice be posted on the notice-board giving details of how the villagers were informed was rejected by the Council, however, since this was already recorded on the entry form.

The Chairman said that the Cannock Chase AONB Unit intended to write to Mr. Jackson reminding him that Upper Longdon was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where a prominent display of posters should not be encouraged.

Cllr. Butler doubted whether there would be much support for the Competition in Upper Longdon next year and suggested that, by way of a protest, the village should not be entered.

12. 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:

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – November 13 th : £12. 00 Hire of Hall – November 14 th : £12. 00	£ 24. 00
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – October 23 rd	£205. 00
Aqua Jet Services	To fit two kissing-gates: Labour: £336. 00 Materials: £ 50. 00 Hire of post hole borer: £ 41. 00	£427. 00

(ii) Payments Received

No payments had been received.

(iii) Current Balances

(as at 1st November 2006)

NatWest c//a: £1298. 33 (less uncleared cheque: £12. 00)	The Halifax d/a: £15062. 52
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(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) St. Giles Hospice, Whittington

The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Holliday, Chief Executive of St. Giles Hospice, Whittington, a letter dated September 2006, enclosing a copy of the Hospice's Autumn Newsletter and inviting support from the Council for a number of projects currently in the pipeline.

However, the Council decided that, having already made a donation in 2006, it would wait till the New Year before making a further donation.

(b) Christ Church, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Fitter, Flower Festival Organiser, Christ Church, Gentleshaw, a letter dated 12th October 2006, informing the Council that the church would be staging a flower festival next year on the theme of "Famous Paintings", together with a display of local arts and crafts, and asking if the Council would be prepared to make a contribution towards the cost.

The Clerk was instructed to send Mrs. Fitter an application form for completion and return, when the Council would give her request its consideration.

(c) St. James Churchyard and Car Park

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Michael Jefferson, Vicar of St. James Church, Longdon, two letters, both dated 24th October 2006, in one of which he informed the Council of the measures taken to maintain the churchyard, including the employment of GrowWell to cut the grass, a rota of volunteers to sweep the path and a series of 'gardening days'.

The first of these measures had incurred expenditure amounting to over £1000, and a donation from the Parish Council would be greatly appreciated.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, a donation of £1000 was approved, subject to the Council's receiving a completed application form.

In his other letter, Mr. Jefferson had replied to the Clerk's earlier letter in which he had asked for the wooden poles obstructing the pedestrian access to the car park to be removed.

He had explained that they had been intended as a temporary measure and would be removed as soon as a repair to the dislodged post had been carried out.

At the same time, he had asked whether, as report had suggested, the Council had been intending to erect a kissing-gate at that point. He had also asked if the Clerk could clarify the legal position regarding the car park, which some thought belonged to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols reminded the Council that the car park had been laid with stone obtained through the good offices of her husband when he was District Councillor and that the operation had been supervised by Mr. John Tipper, who was then Churchwarden.

The Parish Council had played no part in establishing the car park, though it had in recent years paid for it to be treated with weed-killer following adverse criticism by BKV judges, and Church Hollow itself, of which the car park was still presumably part, had remained in the ownership of the County Council.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Jefferson advising him of the circumstances.

(d) Open Spaces Society

The Clerk reported that he had received from Rodney Legge, Chairman of the Open Spaces Society, a letter dated 9th November 2006, in which he had suggested that, as a result of a recent ruling in the House of Lords, he expected a significant increase in cases where members and others sought the advice of the Society in registering land as greens, and he asked the Council for a donation towards the expected increase in costs.

However, the Council decided that the purpose of the appeal was too remote to justify the expenditure of its resources in this way.

(v) Report of Meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee: November 13th

The Chairman gave a report on a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, the previous evening.

The meeting had been attended by Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Hemmingsley, Cllr. Mrs. Meere, Cllr. Parsons, the Clerk and himself; Cllr. Juxon had sent his apologies, and no member of the public had been present.

The Clerk had presented figures which showed that income and expenditure for the first two quarters of the current financial year had been similar to those of the corresponding period in the previous financial year and that they were also within budget.

The Committee had discussed the list of projects drawn up at the meeting of the Highways & Footpaths and Greens & Open Spaces Working Group, which had now been put before the Council, and had heard a preliminary report on the public meeting at Longdon Memorial Hall.

The Committee's recommendation that the Precept for 2007/2008 be kept at its present level of £13,500 was, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Bird, approved by the council.

13. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from the Central Networks Customer Operation Team, e.on/central networks, a letter dated 9th October 2006, inviting the Council to apply for grants to light up its community at Christmas by paying for festive lights and decorations.

However, Longdon Parish Council had no such plans.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Steve McQuade, Policy and Performance Manager, Operational Department, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 12th October 2006 drawing the Council's attention to the draft document of Lichfield District Council's Consultation and Research Strategy, which had been published on the Council's website: http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_onfo.php?downloadID-728

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Carol Brabazon, Corporate Accounting – Resources Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 24th October 2006, informing the Council that the Staffordshire Statement of Accounts for 2005/2006 was now available on the internet as a PDF document and could be found using the link: http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/your_council/public_services/statementofaccounts/

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from David Swift, Chief Constable, Staffordshire Police, a letter dated 25th October 2006, in which he informed the Council that, following the publication of the Police Performance Assessment, Staffordshire Police had been nationally recognised as one of the top forces in the country.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Simon Hart, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance, an undated letter in which he described the Government's announcement that the Post Office Card Account would not be renewed after 2010 and its failure to make a decision on the subsidy given to rural Post Offices as potentially devastating for the communities they serve, and he called for parish councils to join in lobbying the Government.

It was observed that a national newspaper had already begun a campaign to which some members of the Council had contributed.

14. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

(i) From Heather Gibbons, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2006/2007 – Version 2
(published 25th October 2006 – effective from 1st November 2006);
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 12th November 2006;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 26th November 2006.

(ii) From The Licensing Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 20th October 2006;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 27th October 2006;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 3rd November 2006;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 10th November 2006.

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

Minutes of meeting of Parish Forum held on 13th September 2006.

(iv) From The Arts Development Officer, Lichfield District Council

Poster of events

- (v) From The Head of Highways Policy, Development Services Directorate,
Staffordshire County Council:

Winter Driving Leaflet (2 copies).

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

NALC Employment Briefing E06/06: The Employment Equality (Age)
Regulations 2006;
Form for candidate nominated for election to the Executive Committee
for Lichfield District.

- (vii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Rural Views and News: Autumn 2006;
Questionnaire: "Listening to our friends";
Publicity leaflet: UK Villages.

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

"Sustainable Staffordshire": Issue 19, Autumn 2006.

- (ix) From Staffordshire Police:

"saferstaffs": Autumn 2006.

- (x) From The Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Committee:

Minutes of meeting of 5th September 2006.

- (xi) From St. Giles Hospice, Whittington:

"St. Giles hospice news": Autumn 2006.

- (xii) From the Open Spaces Society:

"Open Spaces": Autumn 2006.

- (xiii) From Wicksteed Leisure, Kettering, Northants.:

Brochure: "Wicksteed Their World",

- (xiv) From GOPAK, Hythe, Kent:

Advertising material.

- (xv) From the Staffordshire Broadband Steering Group:

Leaflet: Rural Staffordshire Online Update.

15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- (i) Cllr. Parsons drew the Council's attention to play equipment recently installed at the rear of "The Red Lion" and asked whether, in view of the fact that Longdon Green was an Area of Conservation, planning permission should have been sought first.

It was thought unlikely, but the Clerk was instructed to make the necessary enquiries.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, December 12th, 2006, in the Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.