

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD  
IN THE MEETING ROOM AT CHRIST CHURCH, GENTLESHAW, ON  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2006

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. N. J. Bird;  
Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols;  
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council; and Mrs. Jane Russell, of Brook End, Longdon, Village Correspondent for “The Lichfield Mercury”.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. H. M. P. Reynolds; 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, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Bird and seconded by Cllr. Hemmingsley, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS’ QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Russell and invited her to address the meeting.

Mrs. Russell said that she had recently become Longdon Correspondent for “Village Voices”, a weekly feature in “The Lichfield Mercury”, and would welcome contributions for inclusion in her column.

She could be contacted by phone on (01543) 490924 or on e-mail at [jane\\_foxhollow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jane_foxhollow@yahoo.co.uk).

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Footpath No. 5 (Gentleshaw) – obstructed stile at Briertey Hill

No action had been taken, and the Clerk would contact Paul Rochfort, Right of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, to enquire whether a report had been filed by one of his Department’s Rangers.

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

The Clerk reported that the branches of the robinia overhanging No. 12 Berkeley Way did not appear to have been trimmed yet.

He had noticed that alkanet was growing once more in the space in front of the fence and would need clearing before it re-established itself.

(iii) Replacement of dead and broken trees in Upper Way

The Chairman reported that he had studied the catalogue given to him by the Clerk, but had felt that, since the firm did not plant the trees, an alternative firm should be sought, and he recommended that the Council should consider Harry Dickinson, of Mavesyn Ridware.

However, since planting would not now take place before February or March, there was no urgency in placing an order.

(iv) Lichfield Cathedral School

The Clerk reported that he had received an invitation to the Council to attend Lichfield Cathedral School's Nativity Play, taking place at St. James Church, Longdon, on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Unfortunately, owing to the short notice given, most Councillors had prior engagements, but the Council had been represented at the event by Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Butler, Cllr. Parsons and himself.

Cllr. Hemmingsley said that there had to date been no response to his invitation to the School to provide a link to the School's website through the parish website, and he was anxious to remove the existing website for St. John's Preparatory School which contained a brief reference to its imminent replacement by the Cathedral School before it affected the integrity of the parish website.

The Clerk agreed to ring the School the next morning.

(v) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association Executive Committee

The Clerk reported that, Cllr. Stanfield having indicated a willingness to be nominated for one of the two vacancies for a representative for the Lichfield Area, he had, with the agreement of the Chairman, submitted a nomination form completed by Cllr. Stanfield before the deadline, which had fallen in the previous week.

Cllr. Stanfield informed the Council that the nomination had been successful and that he had already attended his first meeting, at which Cllr. Harry Brunt, of Stone Town Council, had been appointed Chairman in succession to Cllr. Stan Lovatt.

Amongst topics discussed had been Quality Parish Councils and the future of the Staffordshire Ambulance Service.

His first impression had been that the Committee had the potential to be a good forum.

(vi) Notice-board at Brook End

The Chairman reported that he had not yet been able to arrange a site meeting with the occupants of Crown Bank to discuss their objection to the siting of a notice-board on land in front of their property.

(vii) Tree Maintenance

The Chairman reported that, as the Council had been advised, the trees in Lower Way had now been pollarded.

(viii) Longdon Green – management of spinney

The Clerk reported that he had spoken by phone to Rodney Helliwell, an arboricultural consultant living in Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, about inspecting the trees in the spinney at the side of The Farmhouse, Lysways Lane.

Mr. Helliwell, who was employed by Abbots Bromley Parish Council, had quoted a charge of £40. 00 per hour, plus VAT, and half his travelling expenses.

He had estimated that the inspection, which would include a written report, would cost in the region of £150. 00.

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

(ix) Grant Applications

The Clerk reported that he had sent grant applications forms to both the Rev. Michael Jefferson and Mrs. Chris Fitter in response to their applications for grant aid and awaited their return completed.

(x) Play equipment in grounds of “The Red Lion”

Cllr. Stanfield advised the Council that the erection of this equipment, even within an Area of Conservation, was of no significance in planning terms.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

06/01099/FUL: Mr. G. Witherington: Single-storey detached garden building (storage/studio): Ivyhurst, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that no objection had been made to this application provided that a condition was attached associating the buildings with the existing residence.

(ii) 06/01141/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. I. Morrall: Retention of garden wall and landscaping: Willow Barn, Borough Lane, Longdon

Cllr. Hemmingsley explained that this application had been required since the applicant had not confined himself to the original specifications: the entire wall was half a metre higher than approved, and the material used on the driveway was not the material which had been specified, though in amenity terms this was of no great significance.

However, the wall at whatever height provided vehicles emerging from Giddywell Lane with a serious hazard, since it obstructed the view of traffic travelling along Borough Lane and required the motorist to pull well forward.

Moreover, a downpipe and the screen of rocks surrounding it projected into the highway at Giddywell Lane.

06/01146/ABN: Mr. Phillip Hamlet: Agricultural Determination – erection of implement and fodder store: Land of Giddywell Lane, Longdon

The Council remained adamant that this considerably-sized building could not be justified given the area of the small-holding, which no more than eight hectares and of doubtful economic viability.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

05/00774/COU//05/00775/LBC: Mr. M. W. Jones: Conversion of existing barn to three-bedroom dwelling: Cruck Cottage, Hood Lane, Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Public Consultation on the Management of Cannock Chase Country Park Heathlands – Drop-in Exhibition: December 3<sup>rd</sup>

No Councillor had been able to attend this exhibition.

(ii) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership: December 4<sup>th</sup>

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership which had taken place at Shugborough Park, Milford, near Stafford, on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006, at which Cllr. Roberts had given a presentation on the identification of areas of tranquillity on Cannock Chase.

These had been identified by the reverse process of first identifying areas of greatest activity.

The exercise had had implications in planning for visitors.

The Chairman thought that the meeting had been the occasion for exchanging and evaluating new ideas and suggestions.

## 7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Notice was given of the following meeting:

(i) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership: Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, at the Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridges, commencing at 1.30 p.m.

Under discussion would be a possible uniform system for speed, directional and village signs.

## 8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Report by Speedwatch

Cllr. Butler expressed the view that the situation regarding speeding in Upper Way was continuing to deteriorate, and he believed that one factor contributing to this was the growing reliance of satellite navigation systems, which did not take into account the quality of the roads.

So far, he had canvassed 80% of the houses in Upper Way and found that 95% of those he had approached had wanted the introduction of a traffic-calming scheme.

He expected that his survey would be completed in time for him to present its results to the Council in January.

The Chairman thought that the Council could then forward Cllr. Butler's report to the County Highways Department on behalf of the residents.

He thanked Cllr. Butler for his hard work in conducting the survey.

### (ii) Village Signs

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Roobottom, Technical Assistant, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006, confirming that village nameplates had been supplied by his Authority.

However, he had added that the Authority was under no form of obligation to provide signs of this nature and, moreover, no longer had a budget for this operation.

He pointed out that, even if the Parish Council was prepared to fund the provision of such signs, this would still leave the problem of future liability and maintenance.

That being the case, he regretted that he could not assist the Parish Council with the provision of these signs.

Councillors were disappointed by Mr. Roobottom's response, and it was suggested that, at the very least, a Longdon village sign could be attached to the reverse side of the Upper Longdon sign in Stockings Lane.

The Clerk was instructed to ask Mr. Roobottom if this at least was possible.

(iii) Community Paths Initiative – Bids for 2007/08

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006, inviting bids for path projects under the Community Paths Initiative Scheme for 2007/08.

The Clerk added that the deadline for submitting such bids was 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

He had forwarded the letter and accompanying form to Cllr. Mrs. Meere, who would prepare a bid for funding for printing a leaflet about the ‘Three Longdons’ walk.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES(i) Gentleshaw Common(a) Parking on grass opposite Gentleshaw School

The Clerk reported that he had received from Kevin Yates, Parks Manager, Leisure and Culture, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006 in which he explained that the management of the budget used to assist in planting this area had been removed from his control and was now under the direct management of Operational Services, whose officers he would endeavour to make aware of the Parish Council’s requirements for this area.

Cllr. Andrews reminded the Council that, contrary to Mr. Yates’ reference to raising the kerbstone at the corner of Darlings Lane and Redmore Road, the Council had expressly asked for the corner to be built up, since kerbstones would give the area an appearance of urbanisation inappropriate to what was part of Gentleshaw Common.

10. COMMUNITY HALLS(i) Longdon Memorial Hall

Each Councillor had received a copy of the 1934 Deed of Conveyance in which the original provisions for the management of the Hall had been set out.

It was agreed that a closed meeting of the Council should be convened at which the Council could formulate its response to the current Management Committee’s appeal for financial support; and it was further agreed that this meeting should take place on Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, subject to the availability of the W. I. Hall.

11. 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:

≠*Insta Print, Rugeley	Printing 660 copies of “Longdon Life” and 600 inserts	£212. 25
≠*A. J. Juxon	Editor’s Expenses	£ 15. 00
≠*Hazel Crosbie	Delivering “Longdon Life”	£ 35. 00

(The Council was unanimous in its desire to express its appreciation of the hard work which Cllr. Juxon put into editing the Parish Newsletter in general and this issue in particular)

Christ Church, Gentleshaw	Hire of room	£ 10. 00
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W. B. Sullivan

Clerk's Salary: £300. 00

Photocopying: £152. 88

Postage: £ 19. 30

£472. 18

(≠ payment made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of 1972;  
\* confirmation)

(ii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, no payments had been received.

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £ 859. 33	The Halifax d/a: £15062. 52
(less unpaid cheques amounting to £491. 25)	

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid(a) Summer Playscheme Programme

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mary Cooke, Play Development Manager, Leisure and Culture, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006, asking if the Parish Council was prepared to continue its support for the District Council's Playscheme Programme in 2007.

The Council agreed that it was willing to continue its support, and the Clerk was instructed to send Mrs. Cooke one of the Council's grant application forms.

(v) Completion of Annual Audit

The Clerk reported that he had received from Dina Pejcinovic, of the Audit Commission, Bolton, a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006 notifying the Council that work on the 2005/2006 audit had been completed and enclosing the certified Annual Return.

The Clerk had posted a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect on each the five parish notice-boards and a colour-copy of the certified Annual Return in the Parish Council folder kept in Longdon Post Office, to which parishioners' attention had been drawn.

He drew the Council's attention to Ms. Pejcinovic's comment that the fidelity insurance cover was not adequate and should be extended to cover Councillors. She recommended that cover should be equivalent to the year-end balance plus fifty per cent, which, in Longdon's case, amounted to £20,000.

The Clerk was instructed to ask the Council's insurers how much this would add to the premium.

(vi) Precept 2007/08

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham Keatley, Financial Services Manager, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006, enclosing application forms for the 2007-2008 Precept and requesting their completion and return by 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2006.

It was confirmed that the Council had already decided on a precept of £13, 000, and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Hemmingsley and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, the Clerk was instructed to request that sum.

## 12. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mary Cooke, Play Development Manager, Leisure and Culture, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006 on the subject of her Council's 2006 Play Strategy Review.

She informed the Council that the Play Strategy needed to be reviewed and updated, and work was being carried out to help identify and prioritise the current gaps in play provision. The formation of a Play Partnership was an important aspect of this process, and she was looking for two Parish Council representatives to join the Partnership and to report and feedback developments to the Parish Forum.

However, no Councillor offered to put his or her name forward for either of the vacancies.

## 13. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2006/2007 – Version 1  
(effective for the period 01.12.06 – 31.03.07);  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 10<sup>th</sup> December 2006;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 24<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during the week ending 17.11. 06;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during the week ending 1.12.06.

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

Full Register of Electors 2007.

- (iv) From The Commission of Rural Communities:

Discussion Paper: "Shire Local Government – time for change?".

- (v) From The Cannock Chase AONB Officer:

Minutes of Parish Councils' Meeting held at Tixall Village Hall  
on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

- (vi) From The Burntwood & District Neighbourhood Policing Unit:

Minutes of meeting of Police Authority Community Consultation  
Committee held in the Hammerwich W. I. Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

- (vii) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

"Staffordshire Wildlife": No. 98, December 2006;  
"Natural World": Issue 78, Winter 2006;  
Cannock Group News: Forthcoming Events;  
Leaflet: Events 2007;  
Leaflet: Wildlife What's On (January to April 2007);  
Leaflet: Nature Reserve Volunteer Workparties (January to April 2007);  
Leaflet: "Great Gift Idea for Adults and Children! – Adopt a Species".

(viii) From The Director of Planning & Transport, East Midlands Regional Assembly:

Draft East Midlands Regional Plan, Part 2: Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy;  
Additional Consultation on a Replacement Housing Provision Figure for the Northampton Implementation Area (DVD enclosed).

(ix) From SMP (Playgrounds) Ltd., Egham, Surrey:

Promotional leaflet: Arena Philadelphia Goal & Basketball Combination.

#### 14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that thieves had entered a house in Hawcroft between 2. 45 p.m. and 9. 10 p.m. on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> and stolen property to a value in the region of £1000.

In addition, a VW Beetle standing on the driveway had been driven away.

(ii) Cllr. Andrews drew the attention of the Council to the achievements of both St. James School, Longdon, and Gentleshaw Primary School in the newly- published league tables for primary schools in England, in which Gentleshaw had been placed third amongst the 226 primary schools in Staffordshire and St. James among the top five per cent in the country for progressing its pupils.

Cllr. Hemmingsley was asked if he would publish the Parish Council's congratulations to both schools on the parish website.

(iii) The Clerk reported that the litter-bin at the junction of Ford Lane and Brook End was becoming unstable.

He was instructed to ask Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Services, to secure it.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols suggested that Mr. Johnson should also be asked to look at the litter-bin next to the bus shelter at Longdon Green.

(iv) Cllr. Hemmingsley suggested that a list of responsibilities of each of the three tiers of local government should be added to the parish website.

This was agreed.

(v) Cllr. Parsons pointed out that there was no reference to the Parish Council's meetings in the parish planner which had appeared on the back page of "Longdon Life".

It was agreed that this omission should be referred to Mrs. Passey, who edited this feature.

(vi) Cllr. Roberts informed the Council that a major consultation on the Regional Spatial Strategy would be taking place between January 8<sup>th</sup> and February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007, to which, he thought, the Parish Council should give some consideration.

While most of the issues – housing, rural transport and employment - were above parish council level, he thought it important that the Parish Council should express a view.

He promised to supply the Clerk with details for circulation to Councillors, though they would be available on the web.

(viii) The Chairman reported that new street nameplates erected in Brereton Hill Lane were mis-spelt.

#### 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

16. DATES OF MEETING IN 2007

Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> (Longdon); Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> (Gentleshaw);  
Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> (Longdon); Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> (Longdon);  
Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> (Longdon); Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> (Gentleshaw);  
Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> (Longdon); Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> (Longdon);  
Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> (Gentleshaw); Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> (Longdon)

