

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN  
THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2007

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

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

1. APOLOGIES

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

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in The Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Proposed Base Station at Hill Top

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to AWA, advising the company that the Council was likely to object to its proposal when the full planning application was sent to it for comment.

He had sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Gerald Golding, who had acted as spokesman for the local residents who had attended the previous meeting.

(ii) Parish Website

The Clerk confirmed that payment had been made to Mr. Eric Roy for hosting the parish website.

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that use of the website had increased ten-fold since the website had first been set up nearly two-and-a-half years ago.

He also sought and received the approval of the Council to accept a request to add a link to a website providing information about aircraft flight-times from Birmingham Airport and to add a revised notice about the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Over Sixties Club.

The Chairman said that he now had some new colour photographs of Gentleshaw Common for use on the website.

(iii) Notice-Boards

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Owen, Divisional Highways Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007, in which he had stated that he had no objection to the siting of the Parish Council notice-board between the telephone kiosk and the bus shelter in Brook End.

He would issue the necessary licence when he had received the Parish Council's application.

The Clerk reminded the Council that there was a fee payable for this licence of £200. 00;

Cllr. Stanfield reminded the Council that it had already agreed this expenditure.

The Clerk further informed the Council that he had written to Alan Johnson asking him to erect the new notice-board in front of Longdon Post Office and Store.

(iv) Unauthorised Parking of Caravans at Gentleshaw

Cllr. Roberts acknowledged that there had been no progress in resolving this problem, adding that he too was becoming frustrated by the lack of action and was raising the matter regularly.

It had now been referred for action to Richard King, Strategic Director, Democratic, Development and Legal Services.

(v) A51 Traffic Management Scheme at Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had sent a copy of the email from Will Rose in which Mr. Rose had asked whether monitoring equipment could be installed in the box controlling the new puffin crossing on the A51 to the Divisional Highway Manager, who in turn had forwarded it to Martin Fenlon, Principal Signals Engineer, for his consideration.

(vi) Longdon Church Car Park

The Clerk had reported that he had, as instructed, written to Graham McCulloch asking him to treat the car park with herbicide.

(vii) Publication of Draft Minutes

After careful consideration of possible alternatives, it was confirmed that the draft minutes should be published on the Parish Website at the earliest opportunity, prefaced by a notice advising readers that the minutes were subject to formal approval at the next meeting of the Council. The approved minutes would then, if necessary, be substituted for the draft minutes.

#### 4. PLANNING

(i) Report of Planning Group

07/00154/FUL (Amended): Lichfield Cathedral School: Two-storey and single-storey extensions to form visitors and delivery entrance, classrooms, stores and dining/assembly area: St. John's Preparatory School, Longdon Hall, Longdon.

Cllr. Stanfield explained that this amended plan had provided simply additional information, showing the area affected by the application and the total area owned by the applicants and had required no further comment from the Council.

(ii) For Consideration

There were no further planning applications to be considered.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

07/00086/FUL: Mr. Bird: Single-storey side extension to form utility and dining room: 12, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued no Notices of Refusal for Development relating to the Parish of Longdon.

## 6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### (i) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership – Parish Councils’ Meeting: March 14th

The Chairman gave a report on a meeting of Parish Councils in the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty Partnership which took place at the John O’Leary Centre, Cannock Chase on Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at which he had been present.

A number of pressing issues had been discussed, including development on the periphery of the Chase and the new signage, which would incorporate a deer’s head.

The meeting had also considered the web of committees and consultation bodies operating within the Partnership, particularly the role of parish councils, three of whom had pledged a fixed sum of money, held in reserve in a dedicated fund, which could be drawn upon in response to particular calls for funding from the Partnership.

Cllr. Roberts, who had chaired the meeting, added that there had been a concern to ensure a more embracing business sector involving cafés and caravan sites.

He also reported that Emma Beaman, currently employed by the Community Council of Staffordshire as Community Development Worker, had been appointed Assistant AONB Officer for a trial period of six months.

### (ii) Police Authority Community Consultation Meeting: March 15th

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Staffordshire Police Authority Community Consultation Committee for the Burntwood and District Neighbourhood Policing Unit which had taken place at Alrewas Village Hall on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at which he had been present.

Inspector Ashley Farrington, newly-appointed Commander of the Burntwood NPU, gave an update on policing matters, including figures for reported crime and consequent detection rates. The former had shown an increase in criminal damage, where, in the absence in most cases of witness evidence, the detection rate had been low, but special policing measures had this year resulted in a sharp reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour.

In the open forum which followed, concern was expressed over anti-social behaviour by a minority of youths who appeared dedicated to the job culture, fuelled, it was thought, by a combination of a lack of organised activity and under-age drinking. In response, Inspector Farrington referred to the setting up of a Friday night youth club which had been set up as a pilot scheme in Burntwood, where under-age drinking was a serious problem.

Speeding was another issue which was concerning a great deal of concern, though there had been a noticeable lack of unanimity over the best way of dealing with it; traffic-calming had been rejected by some on the grounds of increased pollution and noise, and local residents were urged by a member of the Kings Bromley Speedwatch team to take the initiative by forming their own team.

Other traffic issues touched on were the passage of heavy vehicles through the village and the parking of vehicles on pavements.

Inspector Farrington concluded the meeting by assuring those present that, while the police, being human, made mistakes, they were a caring force, and his personal objective was to achieve greater involvement with the public.

## 8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2007, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7.15 p.m.

The principal item on the agenda would be disability legislation.

Cllr. Stanfield said that he expected to attend.

(ii) Annual General Meeting – Staffordshire Branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England: Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2007, at Whitmore Hall, Whitmore, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, commencing at 2. 30 p.m.

Speaker: Alan Taylor, Chairman, Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust.

(iii) Annual Conference – Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations: Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007, at the County Showground, Stafford, from 9. 30 p.m. to 4. 30 p.m.

Theme: “21<sup>st</sup> Century Delivery – Modernising Development and Delivery of Services by the Third Sector”.

Speakers: Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, and Chris Eade, Deputy Director for Social Inclusion, Government Office West Midlands.

## 9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Kissing-gate between The Croft and the A51

The Clerk reported that he had received from Will Rose, of The Croft, Longdon, an email dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, in which he had suggested that the kissing-gate at present providing access to the A51 from The Croft should be retained when it was replaced by staggered barriers and re-located elsewhere in the parish.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Paul Rochfort, the Rights of Way Assistant, proposing that the kissing-gate be re-located as a pedestrian entrance to the car park in front of St. James Church.

### (ii) Highway Maintenance Agreement – Programme of Works

It was agreed that Cllr. Mrs. Meere be asked to convene a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Working Group to set out a programme of work which could be carried out under the Highway Maintenance Agreement.

The Clerk was instructed to discuss with Ken Owen, the Divisional Highways Manager, the range of tasks which he would allow the Parish Council to carry out under this Agreement.

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that he had received complaints from Gentleshaw residents about the amount of litter lying in local lanes; he had also heard complaints about the amount of dog waste which could be found on Gentleshaw Common, and he reminded the Council of an earlier suggestion that at least two dog waste bins be provided by the Council on the periphery of the Common.

### (iii) Smithy Lane

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Local Highway Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, who had arranged for the compacted spoil from the badger set in Smithy Lane to be removed.

However, he had warned that badgers were protected animals, whose sets should not be disturbed, and if the badgers' excavations made the lane too dangerous for traffic to use, it might have to be closed.

In the meantime, he would continue to monitor the situation.

## 10. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

### (i) Gentleshaw Common

The Chairman reported that he had met two Lichfield District Council officers, John Smith, Greens and Open Spaces Strategy Officer, and Justine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer, on Gentleshaw Common on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss on site the problem of parking outside Gentleshaw School and the development and future management of the grassed area immediately opposite the school.

It had been felt that the site provided an ideal opportunity to involve the pupils of the School in an environmental project involving the planting of an orchard or the laying out of a wild flower meadow.

The area could be protected from parked cars by the erection at regular intervals of a line of wooden posts. To prevent vehicular encroachment at the junction of Darlings Lane and of Redmore Road, the bank would be built up; however, Mr. Smith would also liaise with Ken Owen, the Divisional Highways Manager, and PC Andy Brown, the Local Community Beat Officer, over the parking problem, since it was first and foremost a highways issue.

A possible division of the cost of this project might be 50 % AONB, 25% Lichfield District Council and 25 % Longdon Parish Council.

These proposals would now be discussed with Tamara Kabat, the District Council's newly-appointed Countryside Officer.

#### (ii) Longdon Green

The Chairman further reported that he had met Clare Waterson, of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust on Longdon Green on April 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss the future management of Longdon Green.

Ms. Waterson said that an ecological site report had identified the area as semi-improved arid grassland which was host to a variety of interesting flora.

She also thought that the central area, cut only once a year, was too large and should be reduced.

She had expressed approval of the recommendations made by Rodney Helliwell, but had warned that, initially, they would have a devastating effect on the area nearest Lysways Lane until re-planting had been carried out.

The Chairman had then taken her to the ford at Brook End, where she had concluded that little could be done to improve the area, but she would ask her colleague, Nick Mott, to put up an interpretation board at the site.

At the conclusion of the Chairman's report it was agreed that he and the Clerk should prepare a list of specifications for the work which need to be done in the spinney adjacent to The Farmhouse, Lysways Lane, and invite quotations from the tree surgeons recommended by Mr. Helliwell.

## 11. COMMUNITY HALLS

### (i) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had applied to the Land Registry for an official search of the Index Map to establish in whose name ownership of the land on which Longdon Village Hall had been registered and had been informed that it was unregistered.

From this, Councillors concluded that it remained in the ownership of the Marquis of Anglesey, though he could not re-claim the site all the while the Hall was being used for educational purposes.

### (ii) Longdon Memorial Hall

The Clerk reported that he had applied to the Land Registry for an official search of the Index Map to establish in whose name ownership of the land on which Longdon Memorial Hall had been registered and had been informed that it was unregistered.

He was instructed to find out whether, since the Hall itself had been donated to the community, the Council could lay claim on the community's behalf to ownership of the land.

## 12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

### (i) Programme of Improvements

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, a budget of £200. 00 was approved for improvements such as the purchase of new flower tubs.

(ii) Publicity

The Clerk reported that, at a recent meeting of judges, he had been concerned that publicity had been exclusively associated with the display of posters, and he had pointed out that the responsibility imposed on parish councils under the 2005 Clean Environment and Neighbourhood Act of suppressing litter would be compromised if the practice of previous years of staking out posters on the highway verges at the entrance to villages was maintained.

He had pointed out that Longdon Parish Council was publicising the Competition by purchasing a substantial number of handbills and distributing one to each household with the parish newsletter and also by posting notice of the Competition on its website, and he sought an assurance that this would be acknowledged in the judges' marking.

He believed that this position had been strengthened by the disclosure that some villages had withdrawn from the Competition because they did not wish to display posters.

After Cllr. Stanfield had pointed out that the unauthorised display of advertisements on the roadside was, in fact, a criminal act, and the Chairman had reminded the meeting that Upper Longdon lay within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in which the display of posters should be strictly controlled, it was agreed that Cllr. Stanfield and the Clerk should compose a letter to the Chairman of the BKV Working Group explaining the Parish Council's attitude and policy towards the display of BKV posters during the course of the Competition.

(iii) Children's Posters

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that, as last year, the Council should offer the pupils of St. James School nine prizes of £5. 00 tokens, divided between three ages groups, together with a donation of £45. 00 to the School Library.

On a motion also proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that the Council should, instead of prizes, offer a donation of £50. 00 to Longdon Pre-School.

13. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

It was confirmed that the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting would take place in the Hall of St. James School, Longdon, on Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, commencing at 7. 45 p.m.

The Clerk reported that he had written to all local organisations asking for short written report for inclusion in a dossier to be made available on the evening. Cllr. Andrews agreed that, as Chairman of Governors, he would write a report for Gentleshaw Primary School.

The Clerk also reported that, other duties allowing, PC Andy Brown, the Local Community Beat Officer, would be present to talk about local policing issues and to answer parishioners' questions.

14. ELECTIONS 2007

The Clerk reported that ten nomination papers had been received by the deadline of April 4<sup>th</sup>. These had been as follows:

Gentleshaw

John Robert Andrews, 1 Chaseley Gardens, Burntwood; Raymond Colin Hemmingsley, Hollows Lodge, Commonsides, Gentleshaw; and Heather Anne Meere, of Tithe Barn Farm, Tithe Barn Lane, Longdon.

Longdon

Nigel Bird, Croft House, 61 Brook End, Longdon; Brian Butler, 39 Upper Way, Upper Longdon; Allen James Juxon, Fairfield House, Borough Lane, Longdon; Mark Anthony William Parsons, Longdon Lodge, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon; Michel Tracey Colin Parsons, Longdon Lodge, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon; Norman Stanfield, The Old Bakehouse, Chapel Lane, Gentleshaw; and Stephen Kenneth Welch, 106 Upper Way, Upper Longdon.

This left a vacancy for a Councillor for Longdon Ward, to be filled by co-option.

Cllr. Reynolds informed the Council that, though he had enjoyed his time as Councillor, he had reluctantly decided that, for personal reasons, he could not seek election, though he did not rule out the possibility of seeking re-election at a later date.

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols said that she felt that, after thirty-one year, she felt that it was time for her to retire rather than commit herself to a further four years of office.

The Clerk informed the Council that, once the date and time of Notice of Withdrawal of Candidature (noon, Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>) had passed, the Returning Officer would publish the result of an uncontested election.

## 15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, payment of the following accounts, received since the previous meeting, were agreed:

*#Instaprint, Rugeley	Printing 680 copies of "Longdon Life" and 600 inserts	£281. 36
*#Hazel Crosbie	Delivering "Longdon Life" and inserts	£ 35. 00
*#A. J. Juxon	Editor's Expenses	£ 15. 00

*(The Council once more complimented Cllr. Juxon on producing a very interesting and informative issue of the newsletter, which had contained a higher-than-usual number of contributions from local organisations, testimony to his persistence in pursuing material)*

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall	£ 12. 00
Staffordshire Parish	Annual Subscription	£356. 00
CPRE (Staffs. Branch)	Annual Contribution	£ 20. 00

### (ii) Payments Received

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

### (iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £494. 59	The Halifax d/a: £9562. 52
(less uncleared cheques: £165. 00)	

### (iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that no appeals for grant aid had been received since the last meeting.

### (v) End-of-Year Reconciliation Statement

The Clerk presented a Financial Statement and End-of-Year Reconciliation Statement which showed that the Council had ended the financial year 2006/2007 with a balance of £9892. 11.

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

It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee should meet in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at 7. 30 p.m., when it would review income and expenditure for the financial ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, consider the Independent Internal Auditor's Report, and review insurance.

## 16. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman, QC, MP, Minister of State at the Department of Constitutional Affairs, and others, a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007, in which she drew attention to concerns that had arisen about the way in which action in some cases had been taken to deal with unstable or dangerous memorials in public cemeteries. In it she called for authorities to bear in mind the need for a proportionate response to actual risks, the importance of giving adequate prior notice of inspection plans and remedial work, the impact on individuals and communities if memorials are laid down, cordoned off or removed unexpectedly, and the need for great sensitivity and careful planning in the way the work was carried out.

The contents of the letter were noted, though the Council had no responsibility in this matter.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mike Norman, Manager, Audit Policy and Practice, Audit Commission, Millbank, London, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007, confirming the appointment of Michael Newbury as auditor for Longdon Parish Council for the financial year 2006/07.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Glenys Beveridge, of Mill Way, Longdon, an email dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007, in which she had explained the circumstances in which the national flag of Eire had been flown from the Village Hall flag-post on St. Patrick's Day and the week following.

She feared that, as it had not been possible to lower the flag for several days, the Council may have received complaints.

However, the Council concluded that, since no planning permission had been required to fly a national flag, it was not a matter on which the Council should express an opinion.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Julie Castree-Devon, Principal Planning Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007, in which she invited the Council's comments on issues which needed to be considered in planning for the future development of waste management facilities in Staffordshire.

A consultation document, "Issues and Options for the Waste Core Strategy" was now available to view and download from the Staffordshire Portal website at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk), and the consultation period would run from March 30<sup>th</sup> to May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

## 17. 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:  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 18<sup>th</sup> March 2007;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

(ii) From The Democratic, Development and Legal Services Officer,  
Lichfield District Council:  
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16. 03. 07 – Effective for Period 01. 04. 07 –  
31. 04. 07.



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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

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

Register of Electors 2007 – Monthly Applications for 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007.

(v) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Chief Executive's Circular 33;  
Model Contract of Employment – Revisions;  
Freedom of Information Act 2000/Environmental Information Regulations 2004:  
Basic Guide on Compliance for First Tier Councils;  
Community Empowerment Awards: Ideas and Guidance;  
Services Available to Member Councils 2007/08;  
Representatives on the Executive Committee of SPCA 2006/07.

(vi) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

“Rural News and View”: Spring 2007.

(vii) From The West Midlands Regional Assembly:

“Speaking Out”: Issue 14, Winter 2007.

(viii) From The Electoral Commission/National Association of Local Councils:

Resource Pack: “All about parish and town councils”.

(ix) From The Staffordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England:

Annual Report 2007.

(x) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 99, April 2007;

“Natural World”: Spring 2007;

“Get a Wild Life!”: Courses and Events;

Wildlife What's On: May to August 2007;

Cannock Group News.

## 18. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received complaints that there had been no bus service in Longdon on Maundy Thursday or on Easter Tuesday.

He was instructed to seek an explanation from Green Bus Services; it was also suggested that the unreliability of local bus services might be raised at the next meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum.

(ii) Cllr. Parsons expressed concern at noticing a number of golf balls lying in Lysways Lane in the vicinity of Seedy Mill Golf Course.

There had not, however, been any reports of damage of passing vehicles or of injury to pedestrians.

(iii) Before closing the meeting, the Chairman reminded Councillors that this would be the last attendance by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, who was retiring from the Council after thirty-one years' continuous service.

He expressed his deep appreciation of Cllr. Mrs. Nichols' dedication, an expression which was heartily endorsed by every other Councillor present.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

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