

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE
W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, MAY 8TH, 2007

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

Also present were the Clerk and four parishioners – Mrs. Gina Duckett;
Mrs. Tracy Fellows; Mr. Michael Neill; and Mrs Jane Russell, Village
Correspondent for “The Lichfield Mercury”.

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,
April 10th, 2007, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded
by Cllr. Juxon, approved and signed

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

There were none.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Parish Website

The Chairman pointed out that the new website now linked to the Parish Website
provided flight times from all airports in the UK and not just from Birmingham and would be
updated regularly.

(ii) Notice-Boards

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ros Robb, Principal Planning Officer
(Northern Team), Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council,
a letter dated 11th April 2007, in which she informed the Council that, under Schedule 2,
Part 12, Class A, of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order,
no planning consent was needed to erect a structure required in connection with the operation
of a public service by a Parish Council.

The Clerk added that he had applied to the Divisional Highway Manager for
a licence to erect the new notice-board in Brook End. He had now been informed that a fee
was not required.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was agreed
that the Clerk should arrange for the erection of this notice-board immediately the licence was
received.

The Clerk further reported that the notice-board at Longdon Village Hall had just been
painted but would need replacing eventually.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that
an early replacement should be sought.

The Clerk reminded that the notice-board at High Street needed to be replaced.

It was agreed that this should be referred to the Highways and Footpaths Committee.

(iii) Unauthorised Parking of Caravans at Gentleshaw

The Chairman reminded the Council that the attention of the District Council's Enforcement Officer had first been drawn to these caravans on 3rd June 2004.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Richard King, the District Council's Strategic Director – Democratic, Development and Legal Services, pointing this out to him and asking him to take the necessary action to have these caravans removed without further delay.

(iv) Longdon Church Car Park

The Clerk reported that this car park had now been treated with herbicide.

Following an enquiry from Cllr. Lewis as to whether the Council would prefer a kissing-gate or barriers at the top of the car park, the Council stated its preference for a kissing-gate, since it was unlikely that anyone would attempt to push a pram or push-chair up Church Hollow.

(v) Retirement of Cllr. Mrs. Gwynneth Nichols

It was agreed that the Council should mark Cllr. Mrs. Nichols' retirement after thirty-one years' continuous service on the Parish Council.

Final arrangements for a reception and presentation would be agreed at the next meeting.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that the following planning applications had been considered by the Working Group:

05/01118/COU (Amended): Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Freeman: Change of use of agricultural building to two-bedroom dwelling: New House Farm, Batesway, Upper Longdon

While noting the amended access, it had been felt that the Parish Council's previous objections were still valid, namely, that the proposal would involve the change of use of an isolated building in the open countryside where no clear need for a dwelling in connection with a use appropriate to the countryside had been demonstrated.

Moreover, the provision of a new access driveway across agricultural land and the formation of a residential curtilage would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

07/00300/FUL: Mr. Alan Crarer: Conservatory: Brook House, Longdon Green.

There had been no objection to this application provided that the property remained within the permitted limits of development.

07/00323/FUL: Lichfield Cathedral School: Various alterations and extensions for education use (Revised scheme of approval 05/01069/COU): Coach House at Longdon Hall, Longdon.

No objection had been raised to the proposed alterations and extensions.

07/00344/COU: Mr. P. Wilmore: Change of use of byre to stables and extension:
Byre adjacent to The Cottage, Goosemoor Green

Whilst the proposal was described as a change of use, a site inspection would reveal that new foundations had been formed around the building, and the proposal related, therefore, to the erection of the stables. The applicant should be asked to clarify his intentions, as the description of the development might need amending.

It had been concluded that, given that planning permission had lapsed for a similar development, there was no objection in principle to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

There were no further planning applications for consideration.

(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:

07/00172/FUL: M. Lukeman: Alterations to front elevation including new bay windows, replacement windows and gables: Hillside, Stockings Lane, Longdon.

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) High Meadow, Hill Top, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that there was local concern over how much of the original dwelling had been demolished, leaving very little to extend.

He was instructed to get in touch with the planning officer handling the application to see whether the work being undertaken at the site had breached the conditions of the planning approval.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: April 17th

Cllr. Stanfield presented an outline 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 Thursday, April 19th, 2007, when the sole item on the agenda had been a presentation on disability legislation, including the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act and subsequent amendments.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) SMP Seminar – Play and Leisure Provision for Parish Councils:
Thursday, 28th April 2007, at Hothorpe Hall, Theddingworth, Leicestershire,
from 6.30 p.m. till 3.30 p.m.

- (ii) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership – Fifth Annual Conference: Friday, 13th July 2007, at The Cedar Tree Hotel, Brereton, from 9. 30 a.m. till 3. 30 p.m.

The Council had been asked to nominate two Councillors; though Cllr. Welch said that he would be unable to attend, Cllr. Butler and Cllr. Stanfield both expressed an interest in attending

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) A51 Traffic Management Scheme

The Clerk reported that he had received from Will Rose, of The Croft, Longdon, an email dated 17th April 2007, enclosing the response which he had received from Martin Fenlon, Principal Signal Engineer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, who had said that no funding was available for the speed measuring equipment which Mr. Rose had suggested.

The Clerk had himself spoken to Mr. Fenlon, whose advice had been to approach Roger Whittall, of the Road Safety Partnership, to see whether speed checks could be put in place instead.

He understood that County Councillor Lewis intended to intercede on the Parish Council's behalf.

(ii) Roadworks – A51 Main Road, Brereton Hill

The Clerk reported that he had received from R. J. Harris, Assistant Divisional Highway Manager, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a copy of a letter dated 24th April 2007 and addressed to "The Occupier(s), Brereton Hill, Upper Longdon", advising them that works on a carriageway reconstruction scheme along the A51 from Lea Hall Way to Bardy Lane would begin shortly.

The work was planned to begin on 14th May 2007 and last for approximately fifteen weeks.

(iii) Highway Maintenance Agreement

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 3rd May 2007, enclosing official orders for the Lengthsman Agreement and the Grass Cutting Agreement within Longdon which commenced on 1st April 2007.

Payment for Periods 1 and 2 of the Lengthsman Agreement were payable immediately and he asked to receive the Council's invoice accordingly.

Payment for Periods 3 and 4 were subject to invoices which should include justification for payments made during Periods 1 and 2.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Mowing Contract 2007 – First Report

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham McCulloch a report dated 29th April 2007 informing the Council that he had carried out the first cut of the season on April 26th.

He reported that moles were active on Longdon Green and had created one of the biggest molehills which he had ever seen, and he asked the Council to send for a professional mole-catcher.

The Church Car Park had been treated with herbicide at the same time, and he would check on the result during his next visit.

The Clerk was instructed to contact the District Council's Countryside Officer to see if she could give him the name of a mole-catcher.

(ii) Gentleshaw Common

Cllr. Welch reported that he and Cllr. Hemmingsley had met Tamara Kabat, the District Council's Countryside Officer, on May 4th, to discuss proposals for improving and managing the area of Gentleshaw Common opposite Gentleshaw School.

These included planting trees, putting up nesting boxes, clearing the area of bracken and erecting bollards and an earth bank to discourage parking.

It was hoped that pupils from the School could be involved in the future management of this area; Cllr. Andrews, who was currently Chairman of the School Governors, said that, so far, the School's enthusiasm had not met with a positive response from the District Council.

(iii) Maintenance of Spinney at side of Stockings Lane, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received a complaint from a parishioner about the state of the spinney at the side of the road at the far end of High Street, where tyres and grass-cuttings had been dumped.

It was agreed that no action could be taken until the ownership of the spinney was established, and Cllr. Mark Parsons undertook to try and find out who that was.

10. COMMUNITY HALLS(i) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee, which had taken place on Wednesday, 2nd April 2007, and at which a total of seven people had been present.

The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2006 showed income of £9167, an increase of £1220. 00 over the previous year. The main reason for this had been a grant of £1500 from the Parish Council, which had offset a fall in receipts from the hire of the Hall.

Expenditure had amounted to £8171, compared with £5404 the previous year, largely due to the purchase of chairs, tables and blinds.

The balance at the end of the year had been £996. 00, compared with £2543 at the end of the previous year; nonetheless, the Management Committee's Accumulated Fund stood at a healthy £3904, though the Hall continued to rely heavily on Longdon Pre-School for its annual income.

(ii) Longdon Memorial Hall

The Clerk reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Longdon Club and Institute, which had taken place at the Longdon Memorial Hall on Friday, 4th April 2007.

The accounts for the year ended 31st December 2006 showed a net loss of £2527, after charging depreciation of £785. The trading loss was £1742, bar takings having fallen by £2536 over the previous year; consequently, the Accumulated Fund now showed a deficit of £200.

Following the presentation of the Accounts, the election of officers took place with the following results: Chairman, John Beveridge; Secretary, Glenys Beveridge; Treasurer, Janet Allen

A meeting of members was convened for Friday, May 4th, at 8. 00 p.m., when the ownership of the Hall would be the sole item on the agenda.

(iii) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall

The Clerk reported that the Annual General Meeting of the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee had taken place on Wednesday, 25th March, 2007, when both he and Cllr. Hemmingsley had been present.

A Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006 showed income of £14665. 94 and expenditure of £12858. 70, a balance of £1807. 24.

Cllr. Hemmingsley, who had attended the Committee Meeting which had followed the AGM, said that, while not insolvent, the Hall was not well financed; without grants there would have been a loss in the region of £1800. He felt that the Committee should be trying to get more bookings by advertising the facilities of the Hall more widely.

The current Bookings Secretary had resigned, and the vacancy was being filled for the time being by the Chairman.

11. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that the first judging had taken place on May 1st, the second day of the Competition.

He had received some posters from Longdon Pre-School, which were now on display in a window of the Post Office, but, as yet, none from the School.

12. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Welch, the minutes of the Annual Assembly, held at St. James School, Longdon, on Monday, April 30th, 2007, were approved and signed.

The presentation by Sgt. Fairhurst and PC Brown had raised some lively interest and, in response to a request from Cllr. Hemmingsley, they had since provided him with telephone numbers to be posted on the website: these were 08453. 303132. 03490 (PC Brown); 08543. 302010. 5667/mobile 0797 68 81 934 (Sgt. Fairhurst).

Cllr. Hemmingsley was willing to provide the local Neighbourhood Watch with a dedicated page on the Parish Website, but insisted that it would have to be regularly updated.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, payment of the following accounts, received since the last meeting, was approved:

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall (April 4 & May 8)	£ 24. 00
≠Community Council of Staffordshire	Membership Fee	£ 20. 00
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – April 26: £205. 00; Treating Church Car Park with Herbicide: £ 70. 00	£275. 00
Aquajet Services	Longdon Post Office notice-board: to remove old notice-board, collect new notice-board from Clerk and erect, drill out existing steel frame, bolt 2 new battens at rear to locate pre-drilled holes in new board – materials £11. 22; labour £90. 00	£101. 22
Allianz Cornhill	Insurance Premium	£632. 73

(≠ payment made under section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act)

(ii) Payments Received

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

Lichfield District Council	Precept 2007/2008	£13,000.00
Staffordshire County Council	Highway Maintenance Agreement	£ 1295.00
	Mowing Agreement	£ 616.06
E on central networks	Wayleaves	£ 32.87
Paul Adams	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 6.50
Will Rose	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 8.00
Olwyn Bennett	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 8.00

(iii) Current Balances

The Clerk reported that, on 4th May 2007, the Council's balances stood as follows:

NatWest c/a: £2420.02	The Halifax d/a: £22062.52
(There were no uncleared cheques)	

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid(a) Open Spaces Society

The Clerk reported that he had received from Rodney Legg, Chairman of the Open Spaces Society, a letter dated 12th April 2007, inviting a donation from the Council towards the cost of the Society's campaign to identify unlawful works and encroachment on commons and to campaign for their removal.

It was concluded, however, that this campaign was not addressing a local issue and therefore did not justify a donation from the Council.

(b) County Air Ambulance

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Weir, Fund Raising Development Manager, County Air Ambulance Charity, Brierley Hill, a letter dated 7th March 2007, asking whether the Parish Council would consider making a donation towards the cost of maintaining this charity.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was agreed to make a donation of £100.00 after Councillors had been reminded that the Air Ambulance had not long ago been called to a riding accident in Upper Longdon.

(c) Longdon Model Flying Club

The Clerk reported that he had received from Cllr. Brian Butler, acting in his capacity as Chairman of Longdon Model Flying Club, a letter dated 23rd April 2007, in which he asked the Council to give consideration to a grant of £270.00 towards the cost of a gate which the Club had installed at the back of St. James Churchyard leading into the field used by the Club.

The Council recognised that replacing the gate had been part of a community project and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Hemmingsley, approved the requested donation of £270.00.

(Before this request was considered, Cllr. Butler declared an interest and took no part in the discussion)

(d) Lichfield and Cannock Cruse Bereavement Care

The Clerk reported that he had received from Josephine Boughton, Funding and Development Officer, Lichfield and Cannock Cruse Bereavement Care, a letter dated 26th April 2007, giving details of the service which the organisation offered and asking the Council for a donation of £50. 00 towards training and volunteer expenses.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, a donation of £50. 00 was approved.

(v) Report of meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, April 27th, 2007 (*Appendix A*).

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Butler, the report was adopted as the minutes of the meeting.

The Chairman said that the Committee was proposing a series of amendments to Standing Order 53 (Financial Matters) and an amendment to Standing Order 68 (Planning); he then distributed copies of the proposed amendments to Councillors and asked them to give these amendments their careful consideration before the next meeting.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from A. P. Harris, Environmental Services Supervisor, Operational services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 30th March 2007, advising the Council that Lichfield District Council was pleased to inform the Parish Council that it would continue to provide discounts to charitable organizations.

The Clerk added that, subsequent to receiving this letter, he had confirmed by phone that the arrangements currently in place at the two churches would continue.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Halden, Events Organiser, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 11th April 2007, in which he wished to make it clear that the Calor Village of the Year Competition was distinct for the Best Kept Village Competition and related to different aspects of village life.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that Cllr. Mrs. Nichols had suggested that the Council might like to consider entering Longdon in the Calor Village of the Year Competition as an alternative to the Best Kept Village Competition, which some felt was in need of a new approach.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen Bradbury, Lighting and ITS Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 11th April 2007, informing Councils of the requirements for the installation of seasonal attachments onto street equipment.

The Clerk thought that this referred to the hanging of flower baskets on lighting standards, which had, in previous years, caused some concern.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Executive Arrangements – Forward Plan 2006/2007 – April – Version 1

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 29th April 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 13th May 2007.

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

Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16. 03. 07 – Effective for Period
01. 04. 07 – 31. 04. 07

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 13th April 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 20th April 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 27th April 2007.

(v) From The Recycling Warden, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council:

Set of four recycling posters

(These had been posted on notice-boards through the parish)

(vi) From The Director of Law and Governance, Staffordshire County Council:

Invitation to Local Councils' Conference to be held at the Kingston Centre, Stafford, on Friday, 29th June 2007, from 9. 45 p.m. to 3. 00 p.m.

There would be no charge for attending this conference, and a free lunch would be provided for all delegates. Delegates should notify their intention to attend by June 1st.

(vii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

- Policy & Parliamentary Briefing – NALC Financial Update, March 2007;
- Legal Briefing – The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (“The Revised Code”);
- Welcome, New Councillor” – training induction for new Councillors: Thursday, 14th June 2007, at the Peel Building, Stafford, either 2. 00 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m. or 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.
Cost: First delegate £20. 00, subsequent delegates £10. 00 each;
- Chairmanship Skills – Modules 1 & 2: Wednesday, 12th September 2007, at the Peel Building, Stafford (no times given)
Cost: First delegate £40. 00, subsequent delegates £35. 00 each;
- Annual Clerks Training Day: Tuesday, 3rd July 2007, at the County Hall, Stafford, from 9. 30 a.m. to 1. 30 p.m.
Theme of the Day: “Go there knowing you know where you’re going”
Speakers: Meera Tharmarajah, Head of legal Services at NALC, on the revised Code of Conduct, and Malcolm Kimber, on the Society of Local Councils “Working with your Council” project;
- “Speaking Out”: Issue 15, Spring 2007.

(viii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Diary of Staffordshire Village Festivals and Events 2007.

(ix) From The Department of Communities and Local Government:

The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI No. 1159).

(x) From The County Air Ambulance Charity:

“takeoff”: The County Air Ambulance Newsletter – Spring 2007, Issue No. 1.

(xi) From The Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Shugborough Park:

AONB News – Spring 2007;
Pamphlet: “Cannock Chase AONB – an historic landscape”.

(xii) From The National Association of Local Councils;

“LCR” – Volume 59, No1. May 2009.

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Juxon reported that his neighbour, Russell Fox, at 5 Borough Lane, had complained to him about litter in Borough Lane and the use of the lane by heavy commercial vehicles.

However, while the litter could be cleared, there was nothing that could be done to prevent the use of Borough Lane by heavy commercial vehicles without a weight restriction order, which, so far, the County Council had been reluctant to put in place.

(ii) Cllr. Michel Parsons drew the attention of the Council to the degrading of the triangle of the grass triangle at the entrance to Hill Top by passing traffic.

A local resident had spoken to the Divisional Highway Manager, who had told him that a request for its restoration must come from the Parish Council.

It was noted that this item had appeared on the list drawn up by the Highways and Footpaths Working Group for consideration, but it had been decided to take no action.

It was agreed that it should once again be referred to the Working Group.

(iii) Cllr. Butler asked whether the Council had dedicated any of its funds to the purchase of a playing-field, since he had understood that a land-owner in Upper Longdon was prepared to sell a parcel of land to the Council for use as a playing-field.

He was reminded that, in the absence of an identifiable site, money which had been set aside for his purpose had been taken back into the Council’s general fund.

However, it was agreed that the Council would reconsider its position if the need could be established for such a play area in Upper Longdon.

Cllr. Butler agreed to pursue the matter further.

(iv) Cllr. Stanfield reminded the Council that a vacancy for a Councillor for Longdon Ward remained after the General Election earlier in the month.

It was understood that there were two parishioners ready to submit an application, both of them present at the meeting.

It was suggested that they should write formally to the Council setting out what they saw as their qualifications for co-option.

(v) Cllr. Stanfield drew the attention of the council to building work which was being carried out at Laurel Cottage, Gentleshaw, for which the Council had received no prior notification.

He also drew the attention of the Council to slates which had been used to replace old Staffordshire blue tiles at Horsey Lane Farm.

It was agreed that both matters should be referred to the District Council.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 12th June 2007, at the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.