

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2007

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell; Cllr. N. Stanfield;
and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present were the Clerk, County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE,
and eighteen members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. B. J. Butler; and Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, on Tuesday, July 10th, 2007, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Bird, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman then welcomed members of the public to the meeting and asked if any wished to address the meeting.

Speaking on behalf of the parishioners present, Dr. Richard Totty, of Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon, drew the Council's attention to the activities of a pest control company which had been operating from Redhill Barn for the last twelve months without planning permission.

Its neighbours were concerned that dangerous chemicals and firearms were being stored on the premises, and that toxic substances and occasional dead carcasses could pollute the Shropshire Brook. In addition, large vehicles towing trailers were adding extra pressure to a single-track road.

Both the police and environmental health officers had already been called to the site, and Dr. Totty urged the Council seek a resolution to the problem.

The Chairman assured Dr. Totty that the Parish Council was fully aware of the situation and had been pursuing the matter with the District Council's Planning Department.

The Chairman said that the Clerk had recently received a letter from Chris Hibbs, the Senior Planning Officer responsible for enforcement, in which she had outlined the action already taken and being taken, and he promised that the Parish Council would continue to work with the District Council to resolve the matter.

He then asked if any other parishioner wished to address the Council.

Mr. Graham Grieve expressed concern over pressure now being exerted on the Green Belt, citing the field between Brereton Hill Lane and Lower Way, where lobbying was already taking place to allow its development.

He was assured that the field must first be allocated for development in the Lichfield District Framework Plan and that, currently, there had been no such move.

However, it was acknowledged that the West Midlands Strategy was putting pressure on district councils to find extra land for development.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Hill Top, High Meadow

The Clerk reported that, so far, he had received no reply to his letter of 13th July 2007 to Ros. Robb, Principal Planning Officer, asking for a plan showing which of the walls at the above property had been demolished.

He was instructed to send her a reminder.

(ii) Gentleshaw Common

The Chairman referred to a recently published management plan for Gentleshaw Common SSSI, covering the nature conservation aspects only, which had been sent to the Clerk by Kabara Tabat, Biodiversity Officer, Lichfield District Council, and passed on to him and which he had been studying.

The plan had summarised the condition of the Common and had recommended action which should be taken to ensure its improvement.

The Chairman reminded the Council that a management plan of some sort or other had been in preparation for the past ten or twelve years, and he would seek further information.

An infestation of Japanese Knotweed was at the moment being treated.

(iii) Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Cllr. Stanfield said that this had not been discussed at the recent meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Working Group.

(iv) Footpath between Nos. 31 and 33 Church Way, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Tradewell, Director of Law and Governance, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 3rd September 2007, in which he had confirmed that this was not a legally-recognised public right and had gone on to inform the Council that its application to have it recognised as such was currently sixty-fifth in the list of outstanding applications. It was therefore likely to be still some time before the matter was investigated and a decision taken.

Maintenance of the footpath was outside the remit of the Highways Office, who could not therefore be asked to carry out any work on it.

Councillors agreed that it would be an offence, nonetheless, for anyone other than the land-owner to block this as yet unrecorded but regularly used footpath; under the existing circumstances the Parish Council would carry out any essential maintenance.

The question of precipitating the recognition and adoption of this footpath by the County Council would be looked into by Cllr. Lewis.

(v) Car displayed for sale on highway verge at entrance to Bardy Lane, Armitage

The Clerk reported that this had been removed shortly after he had referred the matter to Cllr. Lewis.

(vi) Leaning Bus Stop

This had now been removed.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that, since the last meeting, the Working Group had considered and commented on the following planning applications:

07/00555/FUL (Amended Site Plan): P. A. Boston: Portal Frame Machinery/Produce Store: Hawcroft Grange Farm, Hood Lane, Longdon

An objection had been made to this proposal on the grounds that there were already farm buildings on this site being used for non-agricultural purposes and, consequently, the proposal could not be justified as an exception to Green Belt Policy.

07/00679/FUL: Mr. J. Woodward: Rear and side extensions to form bedroom, utility, tackroom and garden room at ground floor with bedroom at first floor: Cringleford, Lower Way, Upper Longdon.

There were concerns regarding the size and design of the proposal and the impact that the extension on the east elevation was likely to have on the amenities of the residents of the adjoining property.

07/00784/FUL: Mr. C. Crarer: Erection of Conservatory: Brook House, Longdon Green

There was no objection to this application provided that volume limits were not being exceeded and appropriate materials were being used.

07/00793/REM: Mr. and Mrs. R. Bate: Erection of detached bungalow: Land adjacent to "Pine Ridge", Brereton Hill lane, Upper Longdon

There was no objection to this application provided that appropriate conditions were attached to protect the tree in the highway verge during construction of access and the provision of any services.

(ii) For Consideration

The following application was then considered:

07/00873/COU: Mr. J. Woodward: Conversion of outbuilding to ancillary accommodation/holiday let: "Cringleford", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

The Council objected to this application on the following grounds:

1. Although the proposal was described as "conversion of outbuilding to ancillary accommodation/holiday let", it was clear from the plan that what was proposed was two separate units of living accommodation, and the application should therefore be considered against the policies that relate to such a conversion.
2. The proposal to convert the open barn would require substantial building works contrary to Policy DC4 of the Local Plan.
3. The alterations to the agrarian appearance of the open barn would result in a building which would be more prominent in the landscape and would result in harm to the appearance of the Area of Outstanding Beauty.

07/00840/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Jukes: Erection of new summer-house/store with new roof to pergola and rendering to various walls to main house and new windows to front ground-floor elevation: "Brooklands", Hay Lane, Longdon Green

No details had been supplied to the Parish Council in respect of the proposed replacement windows, but it was assumed that these would match those already existing.

There was no objection to the proposed building works, subject to the use of appropriate materials, as, for example, tiles to match the existing building.

(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:

07/00488/FUL: Miss R. Patterson: Conservatory to rear: 1, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

07/00549/FUL: Mr. Alan White: Proposed first-floor extension to form bathroom: White Cottage, Red Hill, Upper Longdon

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Withdrawal of Applications

The Clerk reported that he had received from Lichfield District Council notice of the withdrawal of the following planning applications:

07/00498/FUL: Mr. D. Harrison: Erection of a four-bedroomed detached dwelling: Land adjacent to 23 Upper Way, Upper Longdon (withdrawn on 11th July 2007).

07/00425/FUL: Mr. David Miles: Proposed side and rear extension to form kitchen and bedroom: Lilac Cottage, Church Hill, Longdon Green (withdrawn on 8th August 2007).

(b) Unauthorised Parking of Caravans at Commonsides
(aka land north-west of Holly Cottage, Windmill Bank, Gentleshaw)

The Clerk reported that the caravan nearer Commonsides had now been removed, but the other remained partially concealed by vegetation in a corner at the opposite side of the field. However, such was its condition (one side was completely missing) that it was unlikely that it could be moved without falling apart.

(c) Erection of Additional Building at Land off Giddywell Lane, Longdon

The Clerk reported that the attention of the District Council's Development Control Manager had been drawn to the recent erection of a second building on the above site, for which the Parish Council had expected a planning application. In a letter dated 20th August 2007, Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) had informed him that an Agricultural Determination had been submitted on 27th November 2006, on which the Parish Council had been consulted. Plans had been submitted to Lichfield District Council on 12th January 2007 and had been considered acceptable. Subsequently, Prior Approval had been granted on 16th February 2007.

When, in a subsequent telephone conversation, the Clerk had reminded her that, in view of the size of the proposed building, the Parish Council had called for a full planning application, she had told him that such a request had been outside the Parish Council's powers.

(d) Erection of Building at Rookery Farm, Giddywell Lane, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 14th August 2007, advising him that this matter was being investigated by his Enforcement Team.

He had subsequently received a letter from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), dated 31st August 2007, in which she stated that she was of the opinion that the building did not constitute a breach of planning regulations.

(e) Cannock Chase Local Development Framework

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Heminsley, Planning Services Manager, Cannock Chase Council, a letter dated 12th July 2007, enclosing information relating to Regulation 17 of the Town & Country Planning Act (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 which inadvertently was not included in the SPD documents sent on 27th June.

(f) Lichfield District Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - Consultation on Draft Methodology

The Clerk reported that he had received from Linda Renshaw, Principal Development Plans Officer, Development Plans and Implementation, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 28th August 2007, informing the Parish Council that the District Council had prepared a draft methodology for undertaking a Strategic Housing Land Assessment which would inform the preparation of a Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework.

A copy of the draft methodology was available for inspection at District Council House and on the Council's consultation centre.

The document would be available for comment until 14th September, and officers would be available on Monday, 13th September, at the Council Offices between 0900hrs. and 1500hrs. for a 'drop-in' session to deal with any queries raised.

(g) Lichfield District Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Issues Consultation

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Principal Development Plans Officer, a letter dated 29th August 2006, in which he had informed the Council that the District Council was in the process of formulating a collection of documents known as the Local Development Plan which would guide the way in which Lichfield District develops to 2026.

The Council was now at the initial stages of preparing the Core Strategy and needed the Parish Council's input on the important issues facing the district for the next twenty years.

To stimulate thought and discussion a short paper had been published identifying some of the issues the Core Strategy would need to deal with, and comments on this were being invited from parish councils prior to the production of an Issues and Options paper for wider consultation in November.

The documents could be viewed through the District Council's consultation centre, and comments should be submitted no later than 28th September 2007.

A leaflet had been enclosed with Mr. Cox's letter entitled "Your guide to the online consultation system".

(h) West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ian Smith, Sustainable Futures Directorate, Government Office for the West Midlands, Colmore Row, Birmingham, a letter dated September 2007, informing the Council that the Secretary of State was publishing her Proposed Changes to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy: Phase One – The Black Country on 10th September 2007, and that a schedule of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes and related documents would be available on the website of the Government Office for the West Midlands (www.go-wm.gov.uk).

Comments on the proposed changes were invited by 5.00 pm by 9th November 2007.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Chairman reported on a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Monday, July 16th, 2007 and at which the Clerk had presented a Financial Statement and Reconciliation Statement for the first two quarters of the current financial year which showed a balance of £21513. 08.

The Committee had also considered the Final Report of the Internal Auditor, one of whose recommendations was that the Council's Standing Orders should make clear that,

where planning applications were received between meetings and were not contentious, the decision was delegated to the Clerk after consultation with the Working Group, a practice already followed by the Council but not yet formally authorised.

(The Committee would later recommend that Standing Order 68 be amended to replace “and then dispatch it to the Planning Department of the District or County” with “and then instruct the Clerk to dispatch it to the Planning Department of the District or County”.)

Mr. Blount had also suggested that, if the Council believed that the Job Description removed the need for a Contract of Employment, it might like to consider the words ‘terms and conditions to be agreed’ which appeared in the Job Description

The Committee had then considered proposed amendments to the Standing Orders relating to financial matters, including an increase from £75. 00 to £100. 00 to the limit to the Chairman’s powers to approve urgent and necessary expenditure (SO53(c)).

The Committee was also recommending that the Council’s Financial Regulations should be subject to regular review, at least once every three years (SO53 (i)).

The Committee was also recommending the adoption of the Revised Code of Conduct with the exception of 12 (2).

A Schedule of Payments should be prepared by the Clerk prior to every meeting.

Finally, the Clerk had drawn the attention of the Committee to a letter which he had received from Scott Murphy, of Charity Commission Direct, Liverpool, dated 10th July 2007, stating that he had been contacted by solicitors acting on behalf of the Longdon Club and Institute requesting information with regard to the title of the land and asking whether there had been any developments made by Longdon Parish Council.

The solicitors had been advised that the Charity Commission did not have the jurisdiction to determine the ownership of the property

The Chairman added that he had been contacted by Mrs. Glenys Beveridge, the Club’s Secretary, principally regarding the Editor’s comments in the August 2007 issue of “Longdon Life” and in particular the reference to “current legal action”.

Mrs. Beveridge had at first denied that the Club had instructed a solicitor to act on its behalf, but had later conceded that one of its members, a solicitor, had offered to make enquiries.

The Chairman had emphasised to Mrs. Beveridge that he could not accept that the special meeting held by the Council to discuss the situation regarding the Memorial Hall could be accurately described as “secret”, pointing out that the meeting had been properly minuted, and a full report had been presented at the next meeting of the Parish Council and published as part of the minutes of that meeting.

Mrs. Beveridge had told him that the reported remark by one of the Councillors that the Hall appeared to be of limited value to the community had been hurtful to Club members, but the Chairman had pointed out that this remark had been made in the context of the Club’s membership being only thirty subscribing and thirty non-subscribing members.

However, the Chairman informed Councillors that the discussion had been constructive and amicable, and he had thanked Mrs. Beveridge for contacting him.

The Clerk informed the Council that he had replied to Mr. Murphy, outlining recent developments and stressing that the Council’s main concern was that the Hall, which had been gifted to the community, should remain a community asset and not become a private asset whose sale –should it ever take place – would benefit only a group of private individuals, some of whom did not even reside in the village.

(ii) Greens and Open Spaces Working Group

Cllr. Welch presented a written report on a meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Working Group which had taken place at his home, 106 Upper Way, Upper Longdon, on Tuesday, 24th July, 2007 and had been attended by Cllr. Bird, Cllr. Juxon, Cllr. Mrs. Russell and himself.

The Group had identified its purpose as mapping out, monitoring and instigating projects for the management of greens and open spaces in the parish, and had drawn up a list of projects for the Council to consider.

The Group had begun a list of relevant areas and action plans, including contacts and lead players with a view to identifying projects which could be carried out possibly in conjunction

with John Smith, of Lichfield District Council.

It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should study the list and attempt to cost the work involved.

Meetings of the Working Group had been arranged for 30th October 2007, 29th January 2008 and 29th April 2009.

(iii) Highways and Footpaths Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that he had attended the recent meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Working Group held at Tithe Barn Farm, the home of Cllr. Mrs. Meere, who acted as convenor of the Group, but he felt that a report should await the return of Cllr. Mrs. Meere, who was at present on holiday.

He had understood that she would be sending the Clerk a copy of the minutes of the meeting, but the Clerk said that, so far, he had not received them.

(iv) Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust

The Clerk reported that there had been a meeting of the Trustees on August 22nd, but, regretfully, neither he nor Cllr. Mrs. Meere had been present.

(v) Longdon Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr. Bird gave a brief report of a meeting of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee which had taken place on Monday, 3rd September 2007 and which he had attended.

He had asked the Secretary to send the Clerk a copy of the minutes, but, so far, these had not been received.

Cllr. Bird thought that the finances of the Committee were in a slightly healthier state than when the Committee had last met.

(vi) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership– Fifth Annual Conference

Cllr. Stanfield and Cllr. Butler had both attended the Fifth Annual Conference of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership which had taken place at The Cedar Tree Hotel, Brereton, on Friday, 13th July 2007.

There had been a discussion about financing the AONB Unit, two suggested methods being voluntary contributions and a levy from parish councils whose parishes bordered the AONB.

Next year would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Cannock Chase AONB, and ways of celebrating it were being considered.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

- (i) OG Saltex 2007: Tuesday-Thursday, 4th- 6th September 2007, at Windsor Racecourse from 9. 00 a.m. to 5. 00 p.m. Tuesday/Wednesday, 9. 00 a.m. to 4. 30 p.m. Thursday.
- (ii) Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Annual General Meeting: Thursday, 6th September 2007, at The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.
- (iii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Thursday, 13th September 2007, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.

“The main item on the agenda of this meeting, to which Chairman and Clerks have also been invited, will be to continue refining parish priorities, building on work done at the previous meeting so that we can identify the fundamental things we want to achieve through working at Parish and District level over the next four years....”

(Letter from Steve McQuade, Policy Performance and Procurement Manager,

Organisational Development, Lichfield District Council, dated 4th September 2007)

- (iv) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Country Village Fayre: Saturday, 15th September 2007, on the Beaudesert Sports Field, Cannock Wood, from 1. 00 p.m. to 5. 30 p.m.

Longdon Parish Council had been invited to man an information point publicising its activities, but, unfortunately, two of the three Gentleshaw Councillors would be away on holiday, while the third, Cllr. Hemmingsley, was already manning a stall.

- (v) St. Giles Hospice Service of Thanksgiving and Evensong: Sunday, 16th September 2007, in Lichfield Cathedral, commencing at 3. 00 p.m.
- (vi) Community Council of Staffordshire Annual General Meeting: Thursday, 20th September 2007, at Rodbaston College, Penkridge, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Following the meeting, Rachel Eeles, Energy Conservation Officer at South Staffordshire Council, would be giving a short talk on the impact of climate change, and this would be followed by the presentation of awards to the winners of "How 'green' is your hall?".

Awards would also be made to the county winners and runners-up of the Calor Village of the Year Competition.

- (vii) Cannock Chase AONB Unit – Parish Councils Day: Saturday, 29th September 2007, at the John O'Leary Centre, Marquis Drive, from 9. 30 a.m. to 1. 00 p.m.

- (viii) "Building the Future of Local Communities" – NALC Conference and Exhibition: Friday, 5th October – Sunday, 7th October 2007, at the Bournemouth International Centre.

Weekend rate for member-councils with budgeted income below £25,000: £248. 00 (day rate £95. 96)

- (ix) South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust Annual General Meeting: Wednesday, 26th September 2007, at Oak Farm, Watling Street, Cannock, commencing at 2. 00 p.m.

"A copy of the Agenda is enclosed, and the Annual Report 2006/07 and Strategic Intent document will be available on the Trust's website www.southstaffordpct.nhs.uk no later than seven days before the AGM".

- (x) South Staffordshire Playing Fields Association Annual General Meeting: Wednesday, 10th October 2007, at the Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, commencing at 2. 00 p.m.

Speakers: Lakhvir Sahota, Play England, and Mike Langsford, National Development Officer, Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association).

- (xi) Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Annual General Meeting and Conference: Saturday, November 3rd, 2007, in the Council Chamber, Martin Street, Stafford. Registration at 10. 00 a.m. for a start at 10. 30 a.m. (until 3. 30 p.m.) Enclosures: Delegate Booking Form; Nomination Form for Officers of the Association; Form for Candidates nominated for election to Executive Committee; Resolutions for Debate.

(Longdon Parish Council would frame a resolution critical of Section 12 (2) of the Revised Code of Conduct at its next meeting)

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

- (i) Replacement Access to A51

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Paul Rochfort, Rights of Way Assistant, Staffordshire Council, dated 2nd August 2007, advising the Council that he had just spoken to the contractor, who had informed him that he hoped to do this work before the children went back to school.

This had now been carried out to the satisfaction of Cllr. Juxon and the Clerk, who had been invited to inspect the work, and the Clerk had since observed its use by children pushing a bicycle.

(ii) Redundant Bus Stop - Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager,, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, dated 10th August 2007, advising the Council that he had arranged to have the pole removed; the work had been rated as a Priority 4 task and should be completed within the next eight weeks.

However, as reported, the pole had already been removed.

(iii) Survey of Street Furniture

The Clerk reported that he had received by email from Will Rose, a member of the Highways and Footpaths Working Group, an update of the survey of street furniture which he himself had carried out prior to the beginning of the Best Kept Village.

Most of the earlier tasks remained to be carried out, and it was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should prioritise and cost the work at its next meeting.

(iv) Unauthorised Roadside Signs

The Clerk pointed out that there had been an increase in the number of unauthorised signs being displayed in the verge at the side of the A51, including a new post-mounted commercially-designed sign advertising “The Red Lion on the Green” and he asked the Council if it wished to re-affirm or modify its policy of non-tolerance regarding such signs.

The Council was reminded that such unauthorised roadside signs were illegal, and the Clerk was instructed to draft a letter reminding those responsible that their actions were contrary to the law.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Mowing of Greens and Verges

The Clerk reported that he had received two reports from Graham McCulloch since the last meeting, in both of which he had noted further activity by moles on Longdon Green.

He had also reported that a depression was forming in front of the seat on the verge at the junction of Brook End and Borough Lane – probably a problem left over when highway works were carried out there - which was making mowing that area difficult.

(ii) Longdon Green

(a) Quotation for Remedial Work at Spinney

The Clerk reported that he had invited quotations from three firms – Midland Tree Management, of Belper, Derbyshire; Peter Deacon Tree Services, of Chase Terrace; and Wolverhampton Tree Services, of Wombourne -, but only Wolverhampton Tree Services had responded, quoting £1150. 00, plus Vat for each of the two sections.

It was agreed that at least one other quotation should be obtained, and the Clerk was instructed to write to A. Dunford & Son, of Pye Green Road, Hednesford, asking the firm to quote for the work.

(b) Elimination of Moles

The Clerk reported that he had met Dave Hollingsworth, of Pest & Vermin Control Services Ltd., Mayfield, near Ashbourne, on Longdon Green on July 23rd.

Mr. Hollingsworth had quoted the cost of eliminating the moles at £300. 00, if gas were used, £680. 00, if traps were used and a six-months guarantee were given, and £980. 00, if traps were used and a twelve-months guarantee were given.

Subsequently, the Chairman and the Clerk had met Peter Cartwright, of Greenhills Nursery, Gentleshaw, who had questioned whether there could be more than two moles

active under the Green and had quoted a price of £30. 00 per canister of gas used, plus labour.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Bird, it was agreed that Peter Cartwright should be engaged to carry out this work, an initial limit of £200. 00 being set on payment.

(iii) Managing Cannock Chase Country Park

The Clerk reported that he had received from Sue Sheppard, Biodiversity Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 19th July 2007, updating the Parish Council on continuing management works on the Park, principally in the control of the spread of bracken, and informing it of the findings of a recent public consultation on the management of the Country Park Heathlands.

These findings were summarised as follows: people valued the Country Park highly for both wildlife and recreation; a majority of people supported the methods currently being used to restore and manage the heathlands areas; some people wanted to see some recreational activities redirected away from parts of the Country Park; there was a call for more information about some practices to address concerns about them, such as aerial bracken spraying; many people supported the idea of grazing re-introduction but expressed concerns about restrictions to access, including fencing associated with grazing; most people wanted to be informed about ongoing management in a variety of ways, many feeling that they were not informed at all at present; and a quarter of the comments received from people indicated that better ways of communicating with the local public were needed.

(iv) Green Belts in the West Midlands

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Roberts, Chairman, Staffordshire Branch, Campaign to Protect Rural England, a letter dated 16th August 2007, enclosing a copy of the CPRE's new report on Green Belts in the West Midlands which argued for a much stronger and more proactive approach to environmental improvement of Green Belts so that the contribution they made could be increased still further.

10. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2007

The Clerk reported that, in the Lichfield/Cannock District of the Competition, Longdon and Longdon Green had been placed first in the Large Village category, while, in the Small Village category, Upper Longdon had been 'Highly Commended'.

He had written to every resident who had volunteered for specific tasks such as litter-picking and maintaining flower tubs, thanking them for their contribution.

Copies of the judges' comments on Longdon and Longdon Green, which the Clerk had just received, were then distributed and would be noted in an attempt even better results in 2008.

Both sets of judges' comments would appear in the next issue of "Longdon Life".

11. REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT

On a motion proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, adoption of the Revised Code of Conduct with the exception of Section 12 (2) was unanimously approved.

12. POLICING MATTERS

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Graham, Project Manager, Content Management System, Corporate Services, Staffordshire Police, an email dated 14th August 2007, informing the Council that Staffordshire Police was currently developing a new internet website which would be launched early in 2008.

A draft proposal for the structure of the new site which included some material from the current site had been prepared.

During August and September, Staffordshire Police would be conducting a consultation exercise whose purpose was to afford everyone the opportunity to provide examples of the type of functionality and content they would find most useful on the new site.

Anyone wishing to take part should visit <http://www.staffordshire.police.uk>, where

a banner advertisement could be found on the homepage providing further information on how to take part in the consultation exercise.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – July	£205. 00
*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – August	£205. 00
*Lichfield District Council	Emptying 6 Dog Waste Bins	£733. 20
*Instaprint, Rugeley	Printing 680 copies of “Longdon Life” and 600 inserts	£385. 53
*Hazel Crosbie	Delivering “Longdon Life”	£ 35. 00
*A. J. Juxon	Editor’s Expenses	£ 15. 00
W. B. Sullivan	Clerk’s Salary:	£300. 00
	Photocopying:	£ 84. 76
	Printing “Longdon Life”	
	Gentleshaw Supplement:	£ 12. 69
	Postage:	£ 33. 84
		£431. 29
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall (Sept. 11)	£ 12. 00
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Membership Renewal	£ 36. 00

(*confirmation ≠payment made under Section 137, LGA 1972)

(ii) Payments Received

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

Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons	Contribution to cost of Reception	£ 5. 00
Aquajet Services	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 6. 50
Olwyn Bennett	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Paul Adams	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Will Rose	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Staffordshire C. C.	Highway Maintenance Agreement	£663. 50
HM Revenue & Customs	VAT Refund	£557. 02

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £2612. 92 (as at 5th September 2007) The Halifax d/a: £18170. 23

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Longdon Produce and Flower Show Committee

The Clerk reported that he had received from Val Heseltine, Secretary of the Longdon Produce and Flower Show Committee, a letter dated 13th July 2007, in which she asked whether the Parish Council would be able to support the Longdon Produce and Flower Show by once again meeting the cost of hiring the Village Hall (£100. 00) and the W. I. Hall (£50. 00) for the occasion.

The Clerk confirmed that Mrs. Heseltine had completed and submitted one of the Council's Grant Application Forms.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, the Council agreed to meet the full cost of £150. 00.

Cllr. Mrs. Russell declared an interest as a member of the Committee and did not vote.

(b) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Country Fayre Committee

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Poynton, Treasurer of the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Country Fayre Committee, an application for a grant towards the cost of organising the Fayre.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Parsons, the Council agreed to make a donation of £75. 00.

The Chairman declared an interest, Mrs. Hemmingsley being a member of the organising committee, and did not vote.

(c) Victim Support Staffordshire

The Clerk reported that he had received from Melina Hancox, Service Manager, Victim Support Manager Staffordshire, a letter dated 1st July 2007 requesting a contribution towards the cost of training its volunteers.

However, Councillors concluded that it was outside the Council's remit to respond to this appeal.

(v) Friends of Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that the Treasurer of the now-defunct Friends of Gentleshaw Common was seeking the advice of the Council on the disposal of a grant of £100. 00 which it had made to the organisation when it was first set up and which was lying untouched in its bank account.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Parsons, it was agreed that Mr. Poynton should be asked to return the grant to the Parish Council for re-distribution to other local organisations.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Halden, of the Community Council of Staffordshire, an undated letter informing the Council that the Community Council had recently been invited by the Councillors Commission (on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) to take part in a review looking at the role of local councillors and asking Longdon Parish Council to consider and comment on issues highlighted by the Commission.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Ian Benson, Director – Staffordshire Municipal Waste Strategy, acting on behalf of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Management Board, a letter dated 20th July 2007, in which he advised the Council that he was undertaking a period of consultation over the summer and was inviting comments from both the Council and residents within the parish.

Details could be found on www.staffswaste2020.info, and leaflets and questionnaires would be available at 450 public locations throughout the County.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Nigel Pursey, Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 2nd August 2007, advising the Council that the Regulations governing the flying of the Union Flag had recently been amended and now permitted the flag to be flown every day of the year.

The County Council was keen to persuade partners and other public bodies to join its lead in promoting the display of the Union Flag on public buildings across Staffordshire and hoped that the Parish Council would join the County Council in the display of national pride.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from James Baldry, Area Manager, Record SS Limited, Selby, North Yorkshire, a letter dated August 2007, introducing Fit Stop, a range of exercise stations designed to combat the effects of modern life.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Charlotte Green, Community Development Officer, Community Council of Staffordshire, an undated letter advising the Council that funding was now available for projects based in Staffordshire that worked within rural communities.

A grant of up to £1000. 00 was available to registered charities, constituted community groups and constituted activity groups to help tackle environmental, social or economic issues.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Assistant AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unity, a letter dated 16th August 2007, advising the Council that she was holding a meeting at the John O'Leary Centre, Marquis Drive, to give impetus to the Fixed Point Photography Project, which, she felt, had fallen behind.

For those inexperienced in photography but willing to learn, a course of six sessions was being offered by Steve Welch, of Steve Welch Images, starting on Wednesday, 26th September, at the John O'Leary Centre, and running from 9. 30 a.m. to 12 noon.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Assistant AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, a second letter, also dated 16th August 2007, in which she invited Councillors to one of four consultation events, which were part of the public consultation programme for the review of the Management Plan for Cannock Chase AONB.

The first of these would be in Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall during the forthcoming Country Fayre, the others on different days at the village halls at Etching Hill, Walton and Huntingdon.

(viii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Assistant AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, a third letter also dated 16th August 2007, in which she advised the Council that a small pot of funding was available for parish councils to use to enable them to have the new Cannock Chase AONB village entry signs.

It was anticipated that these signs would cost between £200. 00 and £400. 00, for which 50% funding would be available.

(ix) The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Assistant AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, a fourth letter dated 16th August 2007, informing the Council that there would be an historical tour round Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on Wednesday, 10th October 2007, led by Steve Dean, an Environmental Health Officer from Staffordshire County Council.

The walk would leave Marquis Drive at 10. 45 a.m. and return at 3. 00 p.m.

There would be a second Awareness Day on Monday 29th October, which would take the form of an autumn sweep starting from Birches Valley at 10. 00 a.m. and returning there by 12. 30 p.m.

(x) The Clerk reported that he had received from Bernard Godwin, Technical Sales Representative, Queensbury Shelters, dated 24th August 2007, enclosing some information about Queensbury Shelters Limited, a firm which had been supplying bus shelters to local authorities throughout the UK for the past forty years.

- (xi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Halden, Contracts Manager, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 29th August 2007, asking for details of any existing voluntary village car schemes which might benefit from inclusion in a new Support Association which the Community Council was in the process of establishing.
- (xii) The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Mrs. Gwynneth Nichols, dated 31st July 2007, expressing her appreciation of the reception which the Parish Council had organised to commemorate her retirement after thirty-four years as a member of the Parish Council.

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 2006/07 – Version 1
(effective from 01.09. 07 to 31. 12. 07);
Year Book 2007/2008.

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 5th August 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 19th August 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 2nd September 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 16th September 2007.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 13th July 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 20th July 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 27th July 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 3rd August 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 10th August 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 17th August 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 24th August 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during week ending 31st August 2007.

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

Monthly Applications for 1st August 2007.

- (v) From The Countryside Team, Lichfield District Council:

Leaflet: “Bringing back grazing to Chasewater”.

- (vi) From Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 100, August 2007;
“Natural World”: Issue 80, Summer 2007;
Annual Review 2006;
Wildlife What’s On – September to December 2007;
Cannock Group News;
Notice of 37th Annual General Meeting;
Invitation to take part in Heather Hike (9th September 2007);
Blank postcard: “Support a strong climate law”;
Autumn Raffle Tickets.

(vii) From The Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust:

Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 4th June 2007.

(viii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

LCR: Volume 59, No. 3 – September 2007.

(ix) From The Staffordshire Playing Fields Association:

Annual Report and Accounts 2006/2007.

(x) From The Staffordshire County Council's Ranger Service:

Countryside Events – September 2007.

(xi) From GOPAK, Hythe, Kent:

Promotional postcard: stacking benches, folding servery tables,
round folding tables and lightweight staging systems.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Stanfield drew that attention of the Council to a large sign erected in the highway verge outside Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, a listed building, advertising a restoration and renovation project by Maple Property Developments.

The Clerk said that he had received no planning application and would pursue the matter with Lichfield District Council.

(ii) Cllr. Parsons asked whether there had been any progress over the proposed new village signs.

The Clerk said that he had heard nothing and would pursue the matter with Lichfield District Council's Operational Services.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 9th, 2007, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.