

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM, CHRIST CHURCH, GENTLESHAW, ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 2007

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell; Cllr. N. Stanfield; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present were the Clerk; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council; County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE; and seventeen parishioners.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons.

2. PRESENTATION BY JUSTINE LLOYD, BIODIVERSITY OFFICER, AND TAMARA KABAT, COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER, BOTH OF LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Prior to the commencement of the business of the meeting, Ms. Lloyd gave a presentation to the Council on the management of Gentleshaw Common.

Ms. Kabat then outlined a number of options for preventing damage by vehicles to that part of the Common opposite Gentleshaw School and for the future management of the site.

At the conclusion of the presentation, after which Ms. Lloyd and Ms. Kabat answered a number of questions from Councillors, the Chairman thanked them for attending the meeting, and Ms. Lloyd and Ms. Kabat withdrew.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The meeting then moved to the nave of the church so as to accommodate the number of parishioners present, and the Chairman invited parishioners to address the meeting.

Mrs. Ann Thomas, of Church Hill, Longdon Green, told the Council that local residents were objecting to a planning application for a change of use of former agricultural buildings at Cherry Orchard Farm, Longdon Green, to form storage, office and tourist accommodation.

It was apparent from the application that the applicant intended to make this site the centre for his business of designing heating systems and to use it as its main UK distribution point.

Mrs. Thomas challenged the figures given in the application for a traffic flow of no more than seven cars, one other vehicle and no HGV's, claiming that heavy lorries were already in evidence at the site.

She pointed to other inaccuracies in the submission, notably the statement that the site was not adjacent to a footpath and that the dwelling was no longer occupied.

She reminded the Council that Longdon Green was a Conservation Area, which, in her view and that of her neighbours, made the proposed development totally inappropriate and unacceptable.

The Chairman assured Mrs. Thomas that the Parish Council shared her concerns and would be lodging an objection to the application with the District Council.

Mrs. Glenys Beveridge, of Mill Way, Longdon, then complained that her telephone conversation with the Chairman regarding an article in the August 2007 issue of "Longdon Life" concerning Longdon Memorial Hall had not been accurately reported; she also pointed to discrepancies between the approved minutes which had been circulated after the October meeting and the version which had appeared on the parish website, in which reference to 'a closed meeting' had been amended to 'a special meeting' and the sentence 'However, the Chairman informed Councillors that the discussion had been constructive and amicable, and he had thanked Mrs. Beveridge for contacting him' added.

(The Clerk later confirmed that the Chairman had indeed asked for these amendments to be made when shown the initial draft and that he had in fact made them to the draft which he had saved on his computer, which had later been transferred to the parish website, but that he had inadvertently used an unamended copy when he had printed off copies for distribution to Councillors prior to the meeting, an oversight which had only just come to light and for which he apologised.

He hoped that this explanation would remove any suspicion that the Chairman might have unilaterally amended the minutes before putting them on the parish website, which the Chairman had already emphatically denied).

In particular, Mrs. Beveridge had objected to the statement that she had at first *denied* that the Club had instructed a solicitor to act on its behalf but had then *conceded* that a solicitor had offered to make enquiries, believing that this had encouraged doubts as to her honesty. However, the Chairman thought that this was simply a literal statement whose purpose was to summarise what she had said and unlikely to be interpreted in the way she suggested.

Mrs. Beveridge went on to say that the Management Committee of the Club and Institute had been further confused by a reference in the article to 'the current legal action', concluding that this must refer to action being taken by the Parish Council, since no legal action had been taken by her Committee. She explained that the Committee had merely been seeking clarification over the issue of ownership of the Memorial Hall through the voluntary services of a solicitor, a friend of a member of the Management Committee.

The Chairman pointed out that the Council had been unaware that the Committee had made the enquiry until it had received a letter from the Charity Commission which seemed to assume that it was. It was to be regretted that a lack of communication between Council and Committee had resulted in misunderstanding, but it had to be pointed out that Committee had in the past refused to co-operate with the Council in securing the future of the Hall.

Cllr. Butler then informed the meeting that there was growing anger amongst residents of Upper Way that a petition signed by ninety-eight per cent of householders he had approached and submitted to the Area Surveyor in January had so far been ignored.

Since then, the problem of motorists ignoring the speed limit and sometimes reaching speeds of 70 mph had grown worse and the safety of pedestrians and horse-riders continued to be put at risk. He called for traffic-calming measures to be put in place before a serious incident occurred.

Cllr. Lewis responded by saying that, as a preliminary step, he would be asking Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, and Inspector Farrington, the commander of the Burntwood & District NPU, to carry out speed checks as soon as possible. However, he reminded the meeting that an earlier proposal by the Highways Authority for traffic-calming in Upper Way had been rejected by a sufficient number of local residents to make its implementation impossible.

He also reminded the meeting that any application would have to meet strict criteria and would be in competition with other communities who no doubt regarded their own needs as just as pressing.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Removal of hedgerow and gates at Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane

It had been observed that both the gates and the hedgerow on either side had been removed, and it was agreed that the Council should keep a close watch on any replacement.

The Clerk confirmed that the gates, having been erected in the 1970s, had not been covered by the Listed Building status of the Lodge, but, paradoxically, any replacement of gate and hedgerow would have to receive planning approval because they marked the periphery of a listed building!

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that the following observations had been submitted on behalf of the Parish Council:

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

The Parish Council's objections to this proposal had not been mitigated by the amendment of the site plan to show one planning unit. The Council failed to see how this would result in the proposal's being acceptable in terms of Green Belt and AONB policies. To the user of Footpath 51 (from where the building would be clearly visible), the proposal would be seen as new dwellings in the open countryside.

07/01019/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. P. Davies: Erection of stable block consisting of four stables and tack room/store: Greensleeves, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

The Parish Council objected to this proposal: the building would clearly be seen from Footpath 51 and represented an undesirable extension of buildings into the open countryside and would cause harm to the appearance of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The size of the building would be particularly obtrusive, given that there were already two stables to the north of the proposed building, which was considered excessive for the area of land in the applicant's ownership and was moreover commercial in character.

07/01043/FUL: Mr. D. Harrison: Erection of four-bedroom detached dwelling: Land adjacent to 23 Upper Way, Upper Longdon.

Whilst the Council noted that the dwelling was to be constructed at a lower level than other dwellings in Upper Way, nevertheless it was considered unfortunate that a more appropriate design could not be achieved.

(ii) For Consideration

The Council then considered the following applications:

07/00995/FUL: Mr. A. Rowe: Two-storey extension to form lounge and bedroom with en suite and extension to garage, including a new pitched roof: 70 High Street, Longdon. The Council had no objection to this application.

07/01032/COU: Mr. Henk Verweijmeren: Change of use of former agricultural buildings to form storage, office and tourist accommodation: Cherry Orchard Farm, Stafford Road, Longdon

The Parish Council objected to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. This proposal would adversely affect the amenities of the occupiers of Brook House and Orchard Cottage, between which properties access to the site was gained. Notwithstanding the agent's statement that there would only be eight vehicles a day visiting the site (with no HGVs), the Parish Council could not see how this could be controlled in terms of number, type of vehicles or frequency, for, as the applicant's agent pointed out, this was proposed to be the base from which parts would be distributed throughout England (The Parish Council had received representations from residents that large vehicles were already having difficulty accessing the site from Church Hill).

2. The proposal involved the substantial reconstruction of the buildings to accommodate the new uses to the extent that the appearance of the buildings would be markedly different; this was not considered to be in accordance with the District Council's policies.

3. It was clear that the proposed residential units would not be used for tourist accommodation but for potential customers and clients. Given that it would be

impracticable to control the occupancy of the proposed dwellings, this proposal should be considered against the policies for conversion to permanent residential use.

4. The overall appearance of the site would be significantly changed from that of a farmyard to a storage and distribution centre which would appear from Footpath 30, which crossed the site, as an incongruous commercial feature in this rural landscape and represent inappropriate and unsustainable development in the Green Belt (It should be noted that the applicant's agent has stated that the site was not adjacent to a Public Right of Way).

5. As the applicant owned the adjoining fields, the conversion of these buildings could result in further buildings being required in connection with the use of the land.

Cllr. Roberts said that, if necessary, he would exercise his discretion as Portfolio Holder and refer the application to the full Planning Committee.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that he had received no Notices of Approval of Planning Permission by Lichfield District Council.

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that he had received the following Notice of Refusal of Planning Permission by Lichfield District Council:

07/00998/ABN: Michael Davies: Building for storage of machinery and grain:
Land at Chestall Hall Estate, Beaudesert Park, Cannock Wood.

REASON GIVEN: The proposed building by virtue of its siting and design would be overly prominent and would not maintain the character of the Green Belt. In addition, the siting of the proposed building would detract from the surrounding Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Hill Top, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ros Robb, Principal Planning Officer (North), Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 8th October 2007, in which she acknowledged that it had become apparent that development at the above site had proceeded outside the the original parameters of alteration and extension approved by the District Council and this was now under investigation by the District Council's Enforcement Team.

However, she added that, aside from the matter of questions over retention, the dwelling, to the best of her knowledge, appeared to be visually in accordance with the approved plans and that replacement dwellings in the Green Belt were considered appropriate under the provisions of National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) where they were not materially larger than the dwelling they were replacing.

It was agreed that the Parish Council needed reassurance that the development was in keeping with the cubic capacity of the original dwelling. As it was, it was strikingly visible as a consequence of the elevated site on which it stood and the dazzling white in which it had been painted.

(b) Alleged Engineering Works at Land off A51

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 10th October 2007, informing the Council that his Enforcement Team would visit this site and that he would inform the Parish Council of what action, if any, could be taken to resolve the matter.

(c) Anemometer at side of A51 at Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that the structure recently erected on the highway verge at the junction of the A51 and Church Hill was an anemometer installed by the Highways Authority to measure road temperatures and wind speed in order to provide the Meteorological Office with a site-specific forecast for winter maintenance within Lichfield.

As such, it had not required planning consent from the District Council.

(d) Tithe Barn, Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Chris Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, an email dated 22nd October 2007, in which she explained the situation at the above site, which went back to 2006, when the owners purchased part of the adjacent field and erected three buildings on it in breach of the conditions of a planning consent for a barn conversion, which had restricted the erection of outbuildings.

These three buildings were now being moved to the piece of land not controlled by this condition, and, provided that they were not more than four metres high with a pitched roof and three metres in any other case, they would be allowed as General Permitted Development.

Mrs. Hibbs added that she would be visiting the site the next day but did not anticipate any problems.

She had subsequently advised the Clerk by an email dated 25th October 2007, that the use of the adjacent field for domestic purposes had now ceased and that a low fence would be erected shortly to demarcate the domestic curtilage and the field.

(e) Laurel Cottage, Brierty Hill Lane, Gentleshaw

Following investigations by a member of the Council, the Clerk had also reported the erection of a new barn at the above site, even though the property was not being used for agricultural purposes.

Mrs. Hibbs had confirmed that an application for an agricultural determination had been refused in 2006 on the grounds that the property did not comprise a viable agricultural unit.

She added that she would log the issue as a new enquiry.

The Clerk had subsequently been advised that this matter was now being investigated by the District Council's Enforcement Team.

(f) Red Hill Barn, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Roberts had, in an email dated 1st November 2007, advised him that an enforcement order was that day being served on the owners of the above property.

It was agreed that the District Council should be commended for the speed with which they had taken action to resolve this problem.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Staffordshire Playing Fields Association AGM: October 10th

The Clerk reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Staffordshire Playing Fields Association, which had taken place in the Council Chamber in the Council Offices of the South Staffordshire District Council at Codsall on Wednesday, October 10th, 2007.

The Chairman reported that, in the past year, the Association had continued its primary role of providing financial support to eligible organisations and practical advice to all who had requested it.

It was also engaged in a new initiative which would involve individual Associations forming a regional grouping.

While the National Playing Fields Association was to change its trading name to “Fields in Trust” in order to reflect more accurately its aims and aspirations, County Playing Fields Associations would not be changing theirs.

Presenting the audited Receipts and Payments Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2007, the Honorary Treasurer reported subscriptions for the year down by £350 but a surplus of £1130, leaving the Association with assets of £83,523.

Outstanding loans amounted to £14,970.

The guest speaker was Lakhvir Sahota, Regional Development Manager of Play England, whose primary role was to support children’s play opportunities.

At present, one child in ten was watching television for five hours a day, yet, conversely, the United Kingdom had one of the worst rates of child-fatalities on its streets. One reason for this, he thought, was that modern children found traditional playgrounds boring because they failed to offer risk, the lack of which was, he thought, having an adverse effect on children, both physically and mentally, and he was urging local authorities to develop appropriate and successful strategies, for which Lottery funding was available through his organisation.

(ii) Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association AGM & Conference: November 3rd

Cllr. Stanfield that he had reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association, which had taken place in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, on Saturday, November 10th, 2007, but would defer making his report until the next meeting of the Council, by which time he thought that the official minutes of the meeting would have been published.

(iii) Governors’ Meeting, Gentleshaw School: November 6th

Cllr. Andrews gave a short report on a meeting of the Governing Body of Gentleshaw County Primary School, of which he was Chairman, which had taken place at the school on Tuesday, November 6th, 2007.

The building programme, which would provide a new library and improved toilets, would go ahead at the beginning of 2008.

Cllr. Hemmingsley had spoken of the surprise and disappointment which had resulted from the school’s failure to support the recent Country Fayre and had been assured that it would take part next year.

(iv) Lichfield District Parish Forum: November 7th

The Clerk gave a 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 Wednesday, November 7th, 2007, at which he had been present and to which Cllr. Hemmingsley and Cllr. Stanfield had sent their apologies.

The meeting had had as its theme “Developing relationships with local councils”, and had been opened by Steve Hopkins, External Relations Manager, Staffordshire

County Council, who had traced the development of relations over the past decade, not all initiatives – charters, the “Big 56” (larger councils) meetings - having been successful; given the County Council’s perspective on the shared priorities for both District and County; and suggested ways in which the priorities of Parish Councils could be taken forward.

He concluded by asking what parish councils wanted and expected from the District and the County, what the major issues were which needed addressing, and how the dialogue between the various authorities could be developed.

He was followed by Steve McQuade, Performance, Policy and Procurement Manager, Lichfield District Council, who reminded the meeting of the five priorities which had been identified by earlier meetings and had generated a set of action points to be taken forward as a shared agenda between Parish and District over the next four years.

The next meeting, to be held on 10th January 2008, would be devoted to issues of Policing, Crime and Community Safety, one of the identified priorities.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

- (i) Staffordshire Police Authority – Community Consultative Committee, Burntwood & Lichfield Neighbourhood Police Unit: Wednesday, 14th November 2007, at St. John’s Church Hall, High Street, Chase Terrace, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.
- (ii) SPCA Training Course – “Communication and Town & Country Planning”: Thursday, 15th November 2007, in the Walton Room, Stafford Borough Council Offices, Riverside, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.
Course Fees: Affiliated - £20. 00 (first delegate), £10. 00 (second and third delegates); Unaffiliated - £40. 00 (first delegate), £20. 00 (second and third delegates).
- (iii) SPCA Training Course – “Bidding for Funding”: Thursday, 22nd November 2007, in Room 9/10, Peel Buildings, St. Chad’s Place, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.
Trainers: Barry Holland (SPCA) and Bob Stokes (Consultant specialising in bid funding).
Course fees as above.
- (iv) Revision of the Spatial Draft Project Strategy for the West Midlands: Phase Three Draft Project Plan – Launch Event: Tuesday, 27th November 2007, at The Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Burlington Arcade, 126 New Street, Birmingham, from 9. 30 a. m. to 1. 00 p.m.
- (v) Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership: Tuesday, 4th December 2007, at the Staffordshire Wildlife Centre, Wolseley Bridge, at 10. 00 a.m.
Speakers: Simon Eddleston, Development Manager of Onshore Wind, and Rob Chapman, Public Policy Analyst, BT Openreach.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Programme of Work

It was agreed the programme of work drawn up by the Highways and Footpaths Working Group should be considered at the next meeting.

(ii) Unauthorised Roadside Signs

The Clerk reported that, following a plethora of roadside signs which had appeared along the A51 (eleven over a distance of two miles), he had written to those responsible reminding them that such displays were unlawful unless permission was first obtained from both the District Council and the County Council.

The Headmaster of Lichfield Cathedral School, responsible for four of these signs publicising an Open Day, had written to say that this practice would be stopped forthwith, while Michael Quantrill, of the estate agents Quantrills of Lichfield, had written to say that his firm's contractors had been instructed to remove their board.

Two other estate agents, Bill Tandy of Sutton Coldfield and Jayman of Lichfield, had also removed signs when requested.

Signs publicising Open Days at Abbots Bromley Girls' School and Denstone College had been removed and returned by the Clerk, together with accompanying letters.

(iii) Traffic Calming in Upper Longdon

It was agreed that the subject of a traffic calming scheme in Upper Way should be put on the agenda of next month's meeting, when the possibility of a speed survey and a speed check will have been discussed with the County Highway Authority and Staffordshire Police.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that, while they were at liberty to write to local authorities, agencies and dignitaries as individuals, they should not refer to their status as Councillor when doing so.

Any letter associated with the Parish Council should be written by the Clerk on the instructions of the Council

(iv) New AONB Entry Signs.

The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, AONB Assistant Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, a letter dated 12th November 2007 reminding the Council that the Unit would be willing to pay for fifty per cent of the total cost of the new AONB entry signs on a first come, first serve basis while the limited funding provided for this project remained available.

The cost of these signs was £105. 78 each.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Programme of Work

It was agreed that the programme of work drawn up by the Greens and Open Spaces Working Group should be considered at the next meeting.

(ii) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham McCulloch, the eighth and final report for the current season, dated 20th October 2007.

Mr. McCulloch had also expressed interest in carrying on with the mowing contract again next season and had offered the same price provided the contract remained the same.

It was agreed, however, that, since it was three years since the contract was last advertised, it should be re-advertised next year.

(iii) Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that he had received from Tamara Kabat, Biodiversity Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Department, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 5th November 2007 advising the Council that, as part of the District Council's management work, it had engaged contractors to conduct scrub clearance works on Gentleshaw Common SSSI.

This would take place between 12th November and the end of December.

It was noted that notices to this effect were already being displayed on fingerposts at the side of the Common.

(iv) Treework in Spinney off Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that two quotations had now been received for the above work.

Wolverhampton Tree Services had quoted £1150 plus VAT for Section 4.2 and a similar figure for Section 4.3, while A. Dunford & Son, of Hednesford, had quoted £975 plus VAT and £725 plus VAT respectively.

Cllr. Bird commented that Dunford & Son had provided excellent service on the occasions when he had employed them.

It was agreed that Cllr. Welch should give the two quotations a final scrutiny before the Council made its decision.

(v) Elimination of Moles on Longdon Green

The Chairman said that he was disappointed that the contractor had apparently not yet taken any action to eliminate the moles, who had remained conspicuously active.

He would make a final attempt to contact Mr. Cartwright, but thought that the Council might have to consider terminating the contract.

(vi) 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 26th October 2007, giving an update on this winter's works programme in heather management and tree and shrub management.

This work was being carried out in Oldacre Valley, Sherbrook Valley and the Katyn Memorial

10. CHURCHYARDS

(i) Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Michael Jefferson, Vicar of St. James Church, Longdon, a letter dated 25th October 2007, enclosing a completed Grant Application form.

Mr. Jefferson had also informed the Council that he had been in touch with the Archdeacon concerning the idea of a properly-laid path across the glebe field from the churchyard to Church Way.

The Archdeacon had told him that the Glebe Committee would be very happy to give permission for this on receipt of plans giving details of the width and depth of the path and the materials to be used, details which Mr. Jefferson would like to discuss with the Council.

He had also been put in touch with someone who could advise on the possibility of intersecting paths in the churchyard, and he would report back as soon as he had the opportunity.

It was agreed that this project should be referred to the Highways and Footpaths Working Group.

11. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2007

The Clerk reported that he had now received the judges' comments on Upper Longdon.

The judges had been critical of the fact that there were no posters other than on

the parish notice-board and local information lacked any specific reference to Upper Longdon, though it had been acknowledged that the combined nature of the village might make specific information hard to use.

“The Chetwynd Arms” had received a favourable comment, and private gardens had been considered almost all of an excellent standard, but it had been thought that the public open space in Shavers Lane needed attention.

Planters and tubs had also been of an excellent standard throughout the village, but the map had needed updating.

12. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Postal Scam

The Clerk reported that the Trading Standards Office was making people aware of a postal scam originating from Belize which involved a card being posted through doors from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that the company had been unable to deliver a parcel at the address and telling the householder to contact them on 0906 6611911, which was a premium number.

Anyone doing so would hear a recorded message and would be incurring an immediate charge of £15.00 for the phone call.

Anyone receiving such a call was being advised to contact Royal Mail Fraud on 02072396655 or ICSTIS, the premium rate service regulator, at www.icstis.org.uk.

The Chairman confirmed that this warning had been placed on the parish website.

(ii) Neighbourhood Watch

The Chairman reported that Rob. Nunn, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, had notified him that there had been a single instance of criminal activity in the parish during October – a garage in Hay lane had been broken into.

13. “LONGDON LIFE”

The Clerk reported that the Editor had felt that the Christmas issue of “Longdon Life” would benefit from the introduction of some colour and had asked him to obtain prices.

Instaprint had quoted 50p a sheet, Viking Press 90p and Benhill Press £386.00 for seven hundred copies of a newsletter with a cover in colour, plus ten pages in black and white.

It was the Editor’s conclusion that such expense would not be justified, a conclusion with which the Council agreed.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Christ Church, Gentleshaw	Hire of room	£ 10.00
*CIN & Media Services	Advertisement: Adoption of Revised Code of Conduct	£119.85
*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – October 19 th	£205.00

(*confirmation)

(ii) Payments Received

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

Cllr. N. Stanfield Contribution towards cost of presentation £ 5.00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £1235.78	The Halifax d/a: £18170.23
(less uncleared cheques: 1348: £ 36.00 1350: £205.00)	

At this point, it was agreed that, in view of the lateness of the hour, the meeting should be suspended and reconvened on Tuesday, November 20th, at a venue to be arranged by the Clerk, when business would be restricted to completing the remainder of the evening's agenda.

CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON
SUSPENDED ON NOVEMBER 13TH AND RECONVENED AT CHRIST CHURCH, GENTLESHAW, ON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews;
Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; and Cllr. A. J. Juxon.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere;
Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell; Cllr. N. Stanfield; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Michael Jefferson, Vicar of St. James the Great, Longdon, a completed Grant Application form in support of a request for grant aid towards the management of Longdon Churchyard.

The sum requested was £1200.00, the cost to the PCC of hiring Growmore, a charitable organisation which employed educationally-challenged young people to carry out gardening tasks in the District.

After it had been pointed out that the donation would simultaneously benefit two worthy causes, the church and the organisation, it was agreed, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, that the requested grant of £1200 should be made in full.

15. REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chairman said that he had identified ambiguities relating to the definition of personal and prejudicial interest which needed resolving.

After the meeting had discussed the document in depth, it was agreed that a workable interpretation had been identified which the Parish Council could operate effectively.

It was agreed that a copy of the Revised Code of Code should be made available to parishioners by application to the Clerk.

16. DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

The Chairman then presented a discussion document in which, concerned about the length of time often taken to carry out projects, he was proposing measures to improve the efficiency of the Council.

Principal amongst these was a proposal to elevate the two Working Groups to the status of Committee and to allocate to each a small budget, thus giving them the capacity to act independently and achieve outcomes more expeditiously.

However, though there was support for the idea of allowing Working Groups greater initiative in identifying projects and obtaining quotations to present to the Council, opinion was divided over whether they should be allocated funds.

It was agreed that, in view of the small number of Councillors present, a decision should be deferred until the next meeting of the Council, when a more representative number of Councillors would be present.

17. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham Keatley, Financial Services Manager, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 10th October 2007 informing the Council that, as part of his Council's drive to improve efficiency, it would be changing how its paid its suppliers to BACS payment.

At present, however, Longdon Parish Council did not act as a supplier to Lichfield District Council.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Susan Jefferson, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council, Parish Church of St. James the Great, Longdon, a letter dated 12th October 2007, conveying the thanks of the PCC for the installation of a new gate post at the entrance to the church car park.

The PCC had also noted with pleasure the favourable comments of the Best Kept Village judges relating to the condition of the churchyard and were grateful for the help of the Parish Council in its maintenance.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen R. Bradbury, Lighting and ITS Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 23rd October 2007, reminding the Council that, should it decide to install seasonal decorations this Christmas, it should first contact him, since the requirements and permissions to undertake these works were becoming ever more onerous.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Charlotte Green, Community Development Officer, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 25th October 2007, reminding the Council that funding was still available from DEFRA for all parishes in Staffordshire who had not yet completed a Parish Plan.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Vivien Evans, Chief Executive, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, a letter dated 29 October 2007, in answer to his enquiry as to whether, under current legislation, the Council needed to formulate a Health and Safety Policy.

However, he felt that Mrs. Evans, in focussing on the need for adequate public liability insurance, had not fully addressed his enquiry, and he had asked the County Secretary of the Society of Local Council Clerks for his advice.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Debbie Lloyd, Marketing Assistant, Furnitubes International Limited, of Barnet, Hertfordshire, a letter dated October 2007, enclosing a street and amenity furniture leaflet for the attention of the Council.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen Lightfoot, Regeneration Projects Manager, Lichfield District Council, an email dated 13th November 2007, drawing the Parish Council's attention to his Council's annual grant aid scheme, through which groups might be eligible for grants of up to £1000 to help with their running costs.

18. 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:

Forward Plan – Version 1 – issued 17. 10. 07 – effective from 01. 11. 07
- 29. 02. 08;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 28th October 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 11th November 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 25th November 2007.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 12th October 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 19th October 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 26th October 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 2nd November 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 9th November 2007:

<i>Stephen Roger Emery</i>	<i>St. James CE Primary School, Brook End, Longdon</i>	<i>Sale by retail of alcohol 30. 11. 07 between 18. 00 – 21. 00</i>
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- (iii) From The South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust:

Patient and Public Involvement Strategy 2007-10.

- (iv) From Staffordshire County Council's Ranger Service:

Countryside Events – November 2007.

- (v) From The Cannock Chase AONB Unit:

Cannock Chase AONB Design Guidelines.

- (vi) From CPRE (Staffordshire):

Newsletter – Summer 2007

- (vii) From The Open Spaces Society:

“Open Spaces”: Autumn 2007, Volume 28, No. 10.,

- (viii) From Staffordshire Police:

“saferstaffs” (Trent Valley Edition): Autumn 2007.

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

Form for Nomination to the Executive Committee for Lichfield District
(to be returned by noon on 1st December 2007).

(x) From St. Giles Hospice, Whittington:

Annual Review for year ended 31st March 2007.

(xi) From The Secretary, Longdon Village Hall Management Committee:

Minutes of meeting held on 3rd September 2007.

(xii) From The Secretary, Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust:

Minutes of meeting held on 22nd August 2007.

(xiii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR”: Volume 59, No. 4 – November 2007.

(xiv) From The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:

“from Time 2 Time”: Issue 15, Autumn 2007.

(xv) From frankHR:

Free Offer (valid for 30 days): Free Employment Law Advice.

19. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) At the conclusion of business, the Chairman read the following statement and asked that it be recorded in the minutes of the meeting:

“The version of my recent telephone conversation, reported to Longdon Parish Council at its meeting on Tuesday 13 November 2007 by Mrs. Beveridge, left me with a sense of disparity and disappointment. However, pursuant to avoiding further misunderstanding, future dialogue will only be entered into through Longdon Parish Council or in the presence of Councillors.”

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, December 11th, 2007, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7.30 p.m.