

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 2008

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

Also present was Mr. Will Rose, of The Croft, Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. N. J. Roberts; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.
(Cllr. Stanfield asked that Cllr. Mrs. Duckett's apologies for the previous meeting, which he had omitted to give on her behalf, also be recorded)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, December 11th, 2007, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, approved and signed.
On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, the minutes of the meeting of November 13th, 2007, were amended to record that, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, the minutes of the meeting of October 9th, 2007 were approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Rose to the meeting and asked him if he wished to address the Council.

Mr. Rose said that he was concerned that, after six months, the County Council had still not addressed the problem of a blocked footpath – Footpath No. 33 – in Lysways Lane, despite receiving an official complaint and a series of telephone calls, and he asked the Council take the matter up with the relevant officers.

The Chairman assured him that the Council would take appropriate action to ensure that the matter was dealt with.

Mr. Rose went on to report that seven volunteers had responded to his appeal for volunteers to take part in a survey of parish footpaths and the survey would now go ahead, subject to the approval and support of the Parish Council.

The Chairman assured him that he had the council's full support and thanked him for organising the survey

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Redhill Barn, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had still not received a copy of the Enforcement Notice served by Lichfield District Council on the owners of Redhill Barn.

He was instructed to write to the District Council's Enforcement Officer, requesting one.

(ii) Treework in Spinney off Lysways Lane

The Clerk reported that he had written to A. Dunford and Son, instructing them to carry out this work in accordance with their quotation.

He had given the firm Cllr. Welch's name and telephone number as the Council's contact, should any further consultation be needed. Cllr. Welch said that, so far, no contact had been made.

(iii) Grand Lodge

Cllr. Stanfield pointed out that even temporary fencing such as that erected on the periphery of this site needed planning permission when the building in question was Listed, yet the Parish Council had not been consulted.

It was understood that the prospective purchaser of the property had withdrawn from the sale and it remained in the ownership of Maple Properties Development.

It appeared that work at the site had been suspended.

(iv) Laurel Cottage

The Clerk reported that he had received from Chris Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, an email dated 7th January 2008, in which she reported that she had looked at the history of the property, and believed that the change of use related to only a small piece to the right of the entrance and not to the gardens, which had always been large.

She had therefore concluded that the removal of Permitted Development Rights only applied to that part of the garden.

However, Cllr. Stanfield remained convinced that Development Rights related to the whole of the curtilage edged in red on the plan and feared that, if Mrs. Hibbs' interpretation was correct, it gave the owners the right to erect other buildings on what was a sensitive site on the brow of a hill.

He would draft a reply to Mrs. Hibbs' email and forward it to the Clerk for him to send to Mrs. Hibbs.

(v) Land adjacent to the A51 above Longdon Church

The Clerk reported that he had received no further information about the above site.

He was instructed to contact Mrs. Hibbs and ask whether the matter was now in the hands of her Council's legal department.

(vi) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall

The Clerk reported that it appeared that an information sheet listing details of all the organisations meeting in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall had been distributed to households in Cannock Wood, one of which he had laminated and posted on the Parish Notice Board opposite Gentleshaw School.

The Chairman reported that, so far, he had not been asked to put this information on the Parish Website.

(vii) Route between Nos. 31 and 33 Church Way, Longdon

The Clerk reported that, so far, no one had come forward in response to the notice posted at either end of this footpath, and Noreen Moore, the Countryside and Rights of Way Group Leader, would proceed with the formalities of adopting it as an official footpath once she had received a letter of support from the Parish Council.

After it had been pointed out that the Parish Council had long since made

an official application for it to be adopted by the County Council, the Clerk was instructed to write such a letter to Ms. Moore.

(viii) Surface Water in Gentleshaw Lanes

The Clerk confirmed that he had now written to Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, asking for the accumulated debris in the middle of Shaw Lane to be removed.

(ix) Programme of work as recommended by the Highways and Footpaths Working Group

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Services, asking him to carry out the tasks listed by the Council at its last meeting.

However, he had not yet been able to make contact with the owners of the land on which the stile and the kissing-gate stood and, in the former case, might have to seek the information from the Land Registry.

(x) Elimination of moles on Longdon Green

The Chairman reported that, so far, one mole had been trapped, but activity continued.

(xi) Gentleshaw Common

It had been observed that vehicles, including coal-delivery lorries, were regularly being parked overnight on that part of Gentleshaw Common adjacent to Hollows Lodge.

Moreover, there had been complaints alleging unauthorised activity on Hollows Farm, including the erection of a building without planning permission, the operating of a non-agricultural business from the site, and the use of a caravan for long-term residential purposes.

The Clerk was instructed to refer these complaints to the District Council's Enforcement Officer.

(xii) Radon Map

The Clerk reported that he had been unable to obtain access to a large version of the Radon Map referred to in a recent article in "The Times", but had downloaded some information from the website which he would send to Mrs. Piper, who had first voiced concern.

Cllr. Butler informed the Council that he had been assured that Longdon was at no risk from radon emissions, radon being present only in granite.

(xiii) Choked ditches in Lysways Lane

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, advising him of this problem.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that, since the last meeting, the Working Group had dealt with the following planning applications:

07/00131/CLE: Mr. and Mrs. T. Cox: Continued use of land as residential curtilage, retention of poolside building and swimming pool: Holly Farm, Chorley

Cllr. Stanfield explained that this application related to land which was still part of Gentleshaw Common, but which had been appropriated by the owner of Holly Farm and on which part of a swimming-pool and poolside building now stood.

He had learnt that Lichfield District Council, owner of the Common, was preparing to sell this land to Mr. and Mrs. Cox for £35,000, plus legal expense, which it was legally entitled to do since the Commons Act of 2006 became law last October.

However, it would be left to the new owners to apply for de-registration, which they were not obliged to do. Cllr. Stanfield pointed out that, if such an application were not made, the public would not be able to object to the sale, nor could there be a public enquiry; failure to do so would, on the other hand, mean that any fencing or hedge screening the swimming-pool from the rest of the Common would inevitably inhibit public access to Common land and would therefore be unlawful.

The Council objected on principle to the sale, which one Councillor described as “selling the family silver”, but recognised that it was powerless to prevent it, though it was agreed that, by pointing out the anomaly which would result from a refusal to apply for de-registration, it might force an application and give members of the public an opportunity to make their feelings known.

07/01224/FUL: David Wintle: Proposed detached double garage: 2 Giddywell Lane, Longdon

The Parish Council had no objection to this proposed development.

07/01228/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. P. Biddle: First-floor bedroom extension: Garden Cottage, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon

The Parish Council had no objection to this development provided that it complied with the District Council’s policy in relation to extensions in the Green Belt.

07/01261/FUL: Mr. N. Vyse: Single-storey extension to form hall, WC and conservatory: Lilac Cottage, Stockings Lane, Longdon

The Parish Council had no objection to this development provided that it complied with the District Council’s policies in relation to frontages and the Green Belt. As a friend of the family, Cllr. Stanfield took no part in this consultation.

(ii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

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

(iii) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

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

(iv) Other Planning Matters

(a) Lichfield District Council Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Principal Plans Development Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 18th December 2007, notifying the Council that Lichfield District Council had, on 18th December 2007, adopted a Supplementary Planning Document, providing the District Council's current approach, policies and procedures in respect of residential design. This document was available for inspection at District Council offices and local libraries.

(b) Draft East Midlands Regional Plan Panel Report

The Clerk reported that he had received from Chris Bentley, Regional Planning Manager, Government Office of the East Midlands, a letter dated 19th December 2007, informing the Council that the draft East Midlands Regional Plan Panel Report had just been published and that copies were available to view or download from the Government Office website: www.goem.gov.uk/planning/regional-planning/rsspanelreport. However, the report was 270 pages long.

(c) Revision of West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy: Phase II Revision Draft

The Clerk reported that he had received from Rose Poulter, of the West Midlands Regional Assembly, a letter dated 3rd January 2008, informing the Council that the WMRSS Phase Two Revision Draft had been submitted to the Secretary of State and that, following the submission, there would be a twelve-week public consultation period starting on 7th January and ending on 20th March. There would then follow an Examination in Public in September/October 2008. Documents could be viewed and downloaded from the Regional Assembly website: www.wmra.gov.uk or hard copies could be posted by contacting the Regional Assembly on 0121 245 0200 or by email wmrssl@wmra.gov.uk.

5. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, it was unanimously agreed that both Working Groups should become Committees.

It was agreed that that the Clerk should be present at each meeting to make a formal record of its proceedings.

Each would have a budget set by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and approved by the full Council.

The constitution and powers of each Committee would be agreed at the next meeting of the Council.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Executive Committee, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association

Cllr. Stanfield gave a brief report on a meeting of the SPCA Executive Committee which had taken place on Monday, 17th December 2007 and at which he had been appointed the Executive's representative on the Committee of the Staffordshire Branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- (i) Longdon Memorial Hall Restoration Fund – Open Meeting: Tuesday, 11th January 2008, at the Memorial Hall, commencing at 8. 00 p.m.

The Parish Council would not be represented at this meeting, but Cllr. Mrs. Russell would be present in her capacity as Village Correspondent and a member of the Longdon Club and Institute.

- (ii) “Working Woodlands”: Sunday, 20th January 2008, in the Punchbowl Car Park, Cannock Chase, from 10. 00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

This event would include basket and trugg making, hurdle and besom making, children’s activities and information displays.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

- (i) Proposed Footpath and Bridleway Survey Form

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, the Council agreed to the adoption of the footpath and bridleway survey form drawn up by Mr. Rose.

- (ii) New Parish Council Notice-Board

The new Parish Council notice-board had been erected in Brook End by the Chairman and Cllr. Juxon, who were thanked by the Council for their efforts.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

- (i) CPRE Questionnaire

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Chairman of the Staffordshire Branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England a circular intended to help the Branch prioritise its work by ascertaining the main concerns of councillors.

Each Councillor had been provided with a copy and was asked to complete and return it independently.

Cllr. Stanfield would establish whether there was a deadline by which the completed forms should be returned.

10. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (i) Accounts for Payment

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

*Audit Commission	Audit Fee	£158. 68
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall: January 7 th : £12. 00	
	Hire of Hall: January 8 th : £12. 00	
		£ 24. 00

R. C. Hemmingsley Re-imburement:
metal post for supporting
new Parish Council notice-board £ 8. 60

(* confirmation)

(ii) Payments Received

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

Paul Adams	Advertisement: 'Longdon Life'	£ 5. 00
Mrs. T. J. Johnson	Advertisement: 'Longdon Life'	£ 7. 00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £253. 89 The Halifax s/a: £16470. 23

There were no uncleared cheques.

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that he had received appeals for financial support for the Lichfield District Council Summer 2008 Playscheme and the Rugeley and District First Responders.

He was instructed to send to each a Grant Application form.

(v) Presentation of Reconciliation Statement

The Clerk presented a Reconciliation Statement for the nine months from 1st April 2007 to 31st December 2007, together with a detailed Statement of Accounts for the same period.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, both were adopted.

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

The Chairman gave a report on a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall the previous evening and at which he, Cllr. Andrews, Cllr. Juxon, Cllr. Stanfield and the Clerk had been present.

Apologies had been sent by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, Cllr. Welch and Cllr. Parsons.

After studying the Statement of Accounts prepared by the Clerk, which indicated that both income and expenditure were broadly in line with budget, the Committee had given careful consideration to the Council's projected budget for 2008/2009.

It concluded that it should recommend a five-per-cent increase on last year's precept, which would then amount to £13650. 00.

Expenditure was budgeted as follows: General Administration £5500; Parks and Gardens £3000; Section 137 (subscriptions & donations, 'Longdon Life') £2500; Churchyards £800; Highways and Footpaths £3500; and Community Hall £2000.

Expenditure in excess of 2008 income would be met from reserves.

(vii) Precept 2008/2009

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was accepted, and it was agreed that the precept for 2008/2009 should be set at £13650. 00

(viii) Appointment of Independent Internal Auditor

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that John Blount, Clerk to Stowe-by-Chartley Parish Council, should once again be invited to act as the Council's Independent Internal Auditor.

11. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Maureen Piper, of Brookend House, Longdon, a letter dated 8th December 2007, in which she referred to an article in "Longdon Life" which stated that the present bus service through Longdon was likely to cease at the end of January.

The Clerk added that he had made enquiries with the bus company running the present service and had been assured that, while the company was cutting back on some of its services, Longdon was not amongst those communities which would be affected.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Lisa Mason, of Chameleon Creative, an email dated 5th January 2008, asking whether the Parish Council would be interested in a low-cost, high-quality newsletter, designed and printed locally.

It was agreed that the current Parish Newsletter already met all these criteria!

12. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Forward Plan – Version 1 – issued 17 January 2008
(effective from 1st January 2008 to 31st April 2008);
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 23rd December 2007;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 6th January 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 28th January 2008.

(ii) From Sally Duckett, Licensing Assistant, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 14th December 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 21st December 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 28th December 2007;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 4th January 2008.

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

Register of Electors 2008 - Monthly Applications for 2nd January 2008

<i>Thomas A. J. May</i>	<i>7 Brook End, Longdon</i>	<i>Removal</i>
<i>Robert J. Heywood</i>	<i>9 Church Way, Longdon</i>	<i>Addition</i>

(iv) From The Minutes Secretary, Lichfield District Parish Forum:

Minutes of meeting of 7th November 2007.

(v) From The Support Services Team, Operational Services,
Lichfield District Council:

Poster: Christmas and New Year Refuse/Recycling Collection
Arrangements 2007.

(vi) From The County Ranger Service, Staffordshire County Council:

Poster: Countryside Events – January 2008.

(vii) From Staffordshire Highways:

Winter Driving Leaflet (2 copies).

(viii) From Lynn Jones, NPU Administration, Staffordshire Police:

Minutes of public meeting of Police Authority Community Consultation Committee held
on 14th November 2007.

(ix) From The Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service:

The Staffordshire Safety Plan 2008/11;
The Staffordshire Safety Plan 2008/11 – Area Specific Factsheet;
“Our plans for 2008/2011 – A summary of business”
– Consultation Document;
Winter Fire Safety.

(x) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils Association:

Newsletter: December 2007;
Training Booking Form – Internal Audit (31 January 2008).

(xi) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR”: Volume 59, No. 5 – January 2008.

(xii) From The West Midlands Regional Assembly:

“Speaking Out”: December 2007.

(xiii) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 101, December 2007;
“Natural World”: Issue 81, Winter 2007;
Cannock Group News – December 2007;
Wild Bird Food: 2007-2008 Catalogue;
Leaflet: “Wildlife What’s On”.

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

Minutes of meeting held on 12th November 2007.

(xv) From GOPAK, Hythe, Kent:

Promotional card.

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Juxon drew the attention of the Council to the amount of litter lying in lanes about the parish, some of which was, he felt, the residue from the waste collection.

It was agreed that the District Council should be asked to carry out cleansing operations in the area.

(ii) The Council was reminded that the future of Longdon Post Office remained in the balance, and it was agreed that an appeal for written support from parishioners should be made through the parish website at the appropriate time.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 12th, 2008, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.