

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD  
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2008

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

Also present were the Clerk and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; and Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield  
District Council

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon,  
on Tuesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield  
and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Land adjacent to A51 above Longdon Church

The Clerk reported that he had received no further information concerning this  
site.

(ii) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall

The Clerk reported that information about user-organisations now appeared on  
the Parish Website.

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

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written the letter of support  
required by Noreen Moore.

Cllr. Lewis confirmed that no ownership claims had been forthcoming,  
and Ms. Moore could now proceed with the formalities of adopting this footway.

(iv) Replacement of stile accessing footpath off Giddywell Land with kissing-gate

The Clerk reported that, so far, he had been unable to establish who owned this  
field, but he would continue his enquiries.

(v) Elimination of Moles from Longdon Green

The Chairman reported that two traps which he had placed there had been stolen, and he would now resort to poisoned pellets.

He assured Councillors that these would be of no danger to pets or other wildlife since they would be placed beneath the surface.

Asked why it was necessary to eliminate these moles, he said that the decision had been taken by the Council after it had received reports from Graham McCulloch that the presence of so many mole-hills was making mowing difficult.

(vi) Abuse of Gentleshaw Common by Parked Coal-Delivery Lorries

The Chairman reported that there had been a site visit by two members of the District Council's Planning Department following allegations of planning infringements at Hollows Farm and the adjacent part of Gentleshaw Common.

The Council agreed that it should now await a report from Chris Hibbs, the District Council's Enforcement Officer, before seeking to make the matter further.

(vii) Precept 2008/2009

The Clerk confirmed that the Requisition Form had been completed, signed and submitted.

(viii) Bus Services

The Clerk confirmed that he had written to Mrs. Piper assuring her that no changes were scheduled in bus services through Longdon.

(ix) Litter in Longdon Lanes

The Clerk pointed out that recent winds seemed to have dispersed much of the litter about which Cllr. Juxon had complained, but he would be writing to Lichfield District Council's Operational Services, asking for a copy of its cleansing schedule for Longdon.

He expected that this problem would be tackled by volunteers during the forthcoming Best Kept Village Competition.

## 5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

07/01289/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. D. Davies: Erection of stable block consisting of three stables and tackroom/store: "Greensleeves", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

Cllr. Stanfield said that, while it had been noted that the size of the stables had been reduced from those previously proposed, it had remained the opinion of the Working Group that to grant permission would be contrary to Policy DC10 (Stables and Equestrian Activities) and Policy NA1 (Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Two photographs of the site taken from Footpath 51 and enclosed with the Parish Council's comments, showed clearly that the proposed building would not, as required by Policy DV10 (2), be well screened from public view.

Contrary to Policy NA1, would not preserve or enhance this part of the AONB, but would cause harm to it, which it was the duty of the District Council to preserve.

The Working Group had suggested, however, that, if the building were re-sited in front of the adjacent outbuildings, and the existing white stable building removed (which, given its incongruous colour and design, would enhance the appearance of the area), this could be acceptable.

The Working Group had concluded its comments by asking three questions:

Had the applicant previously applied for a change of use from agriculture?

Had planning permission be given for the existing stable on the site?

What arrangements were there for the disposal of organic waste?

(ii) For Consideration

07/00987/FUL: Longdon Stud Ltd.: Erection of studman's dwelling: Longdon Stud, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon

Cllr. Stanfield said that this planning application had been received that same day, and he would convene an emergency meeting of the Planning Working Group so that it could be dealt with promptly within the allotted ten days.

However, his first impression was that the proposed amendments did nothing to address the Parish Council's original objections and were therefore irrelevant.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

07/01097/FUL: Mr. D. Cope: Infilling of existing open-sided hay barn: Beaudesert Park Farm, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

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

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Red Hill Barn, Red Hill, Upper Longdon

Cllr. Stanfield said that an appeal had been lodged against the Enforcement Notice served on the owner of Red Hill Barn, who was claiming that planning permission should be granted for the development and that the period of compliance was too short.

Cllr. Stanfield reminded the Council that it had no evidence to support local complaints that the activities being carried out at the site were constituting a danger to health and public safety and, in his view, could therefore make no further representations.

The Council agreed with Cllr. Stanfield that the issue was purely a planning matter and that it should be left to the District Council to resolve.

(b) Holly Farm, Chorley

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Brown, Land and Property Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008, confirming that the terms of the proposed sale of land to the owner of Holly Farm, Chorley, did not include any requirement that the purchaser applied for the relevant part of Gentleshaw Common to be de-registered.

However, the solicitor acting for the prospective purchaser was fully aware of the need to regularise the designation of that land as a Common.

The Chairman added that perusal of the copy of the Deed of Conveyance drawn up between the then owner of Gentleshaw Common, the seventh Marquess of Anglesey, and The Rural District Council of Lichfield, dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 1955, and enclosed with the above letter, did not reveal any restrictions on the future sale of the Common or part of the Common, and the only opportunity which the Parish Council would have to object would be when an application for its de-registration was made.

(c) Land north-west of Holly Cottage, Windmill Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008, informing the Parish Council that, while, following the serving of an Enforcement Notice, one of the two caravans still remained at the above site in breach of the Notice, he did not consider it expedient to pursue any further action at the present time, since it was in an area which becomes overgrown for periods during the year and was screened by substantial hedges

Councillors expressed considerable dissatisfaction with this attitude, which they regarded as taking the easy way out and giving the impression that enforcement notices could be defied. It was also felt to be unfair to the great majority of people who observed planning regulations.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Upton urging him to ensure that the Enforcement Notice was observed in full.

(d) Erection of Stables at Laurel Cottage, Brierty Hill, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008, confirming that the stable to the rear of the above property was Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Schedule 2, Class E, and therefore did not require planning permission.

However, Cllr. Stanfield insisted that there was still a problem with this development, as the question “Why was it mandatory to have planning permission in 1989, but not now?” remained unanswered, and he asked that the Clerk be instructed to write to Ms. Hibbs asking her to identify the planning application and permission of 1989.

The Clerk was so instructed.

(e) Bleak House Wind Farm

The Clerk reported that he had received from Cllr. Neil Roberts an email dated 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008 drawing his attention that the final date for sending comments to Cannock Chase District Council on the above application was February 11<sup>th</sup>, the day

after the Parish Council's next meeting, and he had suggested that the Council seek an extension.

The Clerk added that he had subsequently spoken to Mazer Aqbal, one of the Cannock Chase District Council's planning officers, who had advised him that comments would be accepted right up to the meeting of the Planning Committee at which the application would be considered, which he did not anticipate taking place until March or even April.

The Chairman asked Councillors to send any comments they wished to make on this development to the Clerk by the end of the month, so that he could submit them in time for the meeting.

(f) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – Chasewater Supplementary Planning Document

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Principal Development Plans Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008, advising the Council that Lichfield District Council had prepared draft planning guidance for Chasewater and giving details of an exhibition at the Chasewater Innovation Centre between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008 (the final dated for the submission of comments), as well as a website address at which it could be viewed.

(g) Lichfield District Local Development Framework - Draft Greens and Open Spaces Strategy

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Smith, Greens and Open Spaces Strategic Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008, advising the Council that Lichfield District Council had developed a Draft Greens and Open Spaces Strategy and that copies of the Draft document were available for inspection during normal office and opening hours at the Chasewater Innovation Centre, District Council Offices and local libraries.

The deadline for comments was Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Cllr. Welch said that he would be meeting Mr. Smith shortly and would be discussing this and other related issues with him.

(h) IAPP Application Forms and 'Local List' of Validation Criteria

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mike Grundy, Planning Development Control Manager, Development Services Directorate, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008, advising the council that the Government was introducing a new system of standard planning application forms (IAPP) with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008. At the same time the Government was introducing a 'national list' of validation requirements and had invited Local Planning Authorities to adopt their own 'local list' to accompany the IAPP forms derived from Government guidance.

Consultation documents were available on the Staffordshire Planning Portal website [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/planning) via the 'Applications' channel, and comments should be sent by email to [planning@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordshire.gov.uk) or by post to Mr. Grundy at the Development and Waste management Unit, Development Services Directorate at Riverway, Stafford ST16 3TJ by 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

## 6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### (i) Longdon Memorial Hall – Open Meeting: January 11th

In the absence of any Parish Council representative at this meeting, which had taken place at the Memorial Hall on Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Clerk referred Councillors to the report which had appeared in the columns of “The Lichfield Mercury” of Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

At this meeting, at which there had been a disappointing attendance, a committee to oversee the refurbishment of the Hall had been set up, with John Beveridge as its temporary Chairman, and Barbara Flaherty as its Secretary.

It had been reported that there were sufficient funds to replace the existing timbers at the front of the building with tanalised timber and to pick out the lettering on the front wall in black.

The meeting had authorised the committee to proceed with this work provided that it could be carried out within budget.

Fund-raising would continue throughout 2008.

Cllr. Mrs. Russell, the writer of the column, who had been present at the meeting, added that she had nothing to add to her report.

### (ii) Staffordshire Branch, CPRE – Branch Meeting: January 16<sup>th</sup>

Cllr. Stanfield gave a short report on a meeting of the Staffordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England which had taken place in the County Buildings, Stafford, on Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and at which a very interesting presentation had been given by a planning officer from Stafford Borough Council.

Otherwise, there had been nothing on the agenda which specifically related to Lichfield District.

The next meeting of the Executive would be on February 20<sup>th</sup>, which he expected to attend as representative of the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association.

### (iii) Longdon Village Hall Management Committee: February 4th

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, who was Chairman of the Committee, said that this had been a very short meeting for which she awaited the minutes.

She confirmed that Cllr. Bird, the Parish Council’s representative on the Committee, had also been present.

## 7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

(i) Coppice Pit Memorial Service: Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, at St. Michael’s Parish Church, Brereton, commencing at 6. 00 p.m.

The Clerk said that, as far as he was aware, no representative of the Parish Council had been present.

(ii) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership – Parish Councils Meeting: Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at Colwich Parish Centre, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

There would be a speaker from Natural England at this meeting discussing Natural England’s role within the AONB, and the Council were being asked to contact Emma Beaman, AONB Assistant Officer, if it wished to put forward items for the agenda.

Ms. Beaman had also given notice of two Cannock Chase AONB Awareness Days, the first a tour of the newly-designated Shoal Hill Local Nature Reserve on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, from 9. 30 a.m. to 12. 30 p.m., and the second a day of forest crafts at Shugborough on Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9. 00 a.m. to 4. 00 p.m., the charge for which would be £5. 00 per person towards the cost of lunch and refreshments.

## 8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Traffic Issues in Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a copy of a letter which Mr. Owen had sent to Michael Fabricant, MP, dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007, in which he had informed Mr. Fabricant of the site meeting in Upper Way on November 21<sup>st</sup>, when he had met the Chairman and the Clerk of the Parish Council, Cllr. Butler, County Councillor Lewis and PC Andy Brown.

His own observation had been that there had been very little evidence of a major problem, but the Safety Camera Partnership had been advised of local concern and would be visiting the site during the early morning peak, as Cllr. Butler had suggested that this was the most appropriate time.

Subsequent action would depend on the results of the survey.

The Clerk further reported that he had received from Mr. Owen a copy of a second letter sent by Mr. Owen to Mr. Fabricant, dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008, in which he had informed him that the Safety Camera Partnership would be visiting Upper Way to carry out enforcement of the speed limit and that once he had the results the site would be assessed for suitable temporary measures.

However, he warned that resources were targeted to sites where accidents and deaths were occurring and that the statistics he currently held for this location would not reach a sufficiently high priority to fund a physical calming scheme.

The Clerk added that PC Brown had subsequently reported that a speed check lasting between an hour and a half had taken place shortly before Christmas during which the speed of over a hundred vehicles had been clocked but only one motorist issued with a speeding ticket.

The Clerk finally reported that he had received from Mr. Owen an email dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, enclosing the results from the speed/volume survey on Upper Way, which had not highlighted a massive speeding issue, though some of the west-bound vehicles recorded an average speed of 39 mph.

While these results did not support the request for traffic calming by engineering solutions, the site would be periodically visited by a motor-cycle unit carrying out traffic enforcement, and, while the Speed Indication Device was committed for the remainder of the financial year, Mr. Owen would look at next year's programme when he had data to judge the effects of this year.

It was agreed that the Parish Council had no other option at present than to await the results of these surveys before attempting to initiate any further initiative.

Finally, Cllr. Lewis reported that two members of the Staffordshire County Council's Casualty Reduction team had been in Upper Longdon on February 8<sup>th</sup>, but had reported that there had not been much traffic. However, they would return the following week during the rush-hour.

At the conclusion of this discussion, Cllr. Stanfield proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr. Lewis, pointing out that his support had proved invaluable in making the Highways Authority aware of and act on local concern. He was seconded by Cllr. Welch, and the motion was warmly approved by the rest of the Council.

(ii) Shaw Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Local Highway Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008, informing the Council that he had given instructions to his contractor to clear the debris at the bottom of Shaw Lane and that this should have been completed by the end of the week commencing January 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Clerk confirmed that the compacted gravel in the centre of the lane had been removed but only over a limited area.

(iii) Public Footpaths

(a) The Clerk reported that he had received from Simon Priddey, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, a letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008, in which he had reported on action taken regarding three public rights of way in Longdon Parish:

(i) Bridleway No. 7 (Commonside – Coldwell, Gentleshaw)

This had been passed back to the County Ranger Service in November 2007 following a report of continuing unsuitability for horse-riders.

(ii) Footpath No. 44 (Dark Lane – Smithy Lane, Longdon)

A Ranger Report had been issued for this footpath that same day.

(iii) Footpath No. 64 (Dark Lane – Stoneywell Lane, Longdon)

This footpath was currently the subject of an investigation especially in relation the northern end, where health and safety issues had been raised relating to access at the junction of Dark Lane.

(b) Footpath No. 45 (Brook End - The Croft, Longdon)

The Clerk reported that the hanging stile had been repaired by Mr. Stephen Whitmore, of Mill House, alongside which the footpath ran.

(c) Footpath No. 33 (Lysways Lane - Hill Top, Longdon Green)

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008, in which he described this section of the footpath as a cul-de-sac with no access or egress onto the highway at the eastern end. Whilst he had been able to address the issue of the locked gate with the landowner, who had agreed to install a standard stile, the other issue of the cul-de-sac route had not been resolved, and he had arranged to meet the landowner in mid February when the latter had returned from a business trip abroad.

It seemed that the apparent cul-de-sac was the result of an omission on the most recent Definitive Footpath Map, though the full length of the footpath had been recorded on earlier prints.

Cllr. Lewis had earlier rung the Clerk to explain the position to him and to advise him that the landowner had been given a new stile, which he was expected to put in place within a reasonable period of time.

(iv) Community Paths Initiative Scheme – Bids for 2008/2009

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008, inviting bids for path projects to be supported by the Community Paths Initiative Scheme for 2008/2009, for which the closing date was 31st March 2008.

This invitation had been considered at the recent meeting of the Highways and Footpath Working Group.

(v) Report of Meeting of Highways and Footpaths Working Group

Cllr. Mrs. Meere presented a report on a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Working Group which had taken place at her home on Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

The meeting had been attended by Cllr. Bird, Cllr. Butler, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, Cllr. Stanfield and Mr. Will Rose, and the following matters discussed:

1. Footpath No. 74: the meeting had been reminded that, in 2005, Mr. Peter Hannen had requested the replacement of stiles by kissing-gates along this footpath and the request was accepted in principle by the Parish Council.

The Council would be asked to pursue this matter.

2. Dog Gates: The Council should be asked to consider the possibility of providing dog gates with replacement stiles.

It was, however, pointed out that this would require increasing the width of the access, and landowners might not consent to the necessary removal of hedgerow.

3. Grange Hill: A survey of Grange Hill was still outstanding, and pressure should be put on the Highways Authority to meet the Parish Council on site to consider essential remedial measures.

4. Flower Tubs: Cllr. Juxon had arranged for the purchase by the Parish Council of flower tubs and compost from The Plant Pot, which he was prepared to store on his premises until they could be re-located in the parish.

Cllr. Stanfield had offered to adopt any tub not already maintained by a parishioner, though the Clerk thought that all the tubs were being maintained.

5. Community Paths Initiative Bid

The meeting had agreed to recommend the upgrading of the footpath from Church Way through the Glebe Field to the Church.

6. Survey of Footpaths

Will Rose had reported that the number of volunteers had increased. Copies of the survey form were available at Longdon Post Office.

He had also recommended adoption of the practice he had observed at Newchurch of adding the footpath name and number to way-markers.

7. Other Matters

- (a) It had been observed that the “Upper Longdon” sign in Startley Lane had been damaged and was lying on its side.
- (b) The “Dark Lane” street name plate at the junction of Thorleys Hill had been uprooted and needed re-erecting.

- (c) Cllr. Stanfield would obtain quotes for a second notice-board in the bus shelter at Longdon Green and the replacement of the existing one.  
(On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, it was then agreed that Cllr. Stanfield and the Clerk should be delegated authority to spend up to £200 on new and replacement notice-boards)
- (d) It had been suggested that a bench might be erected close to the notice-board at Upper Longdon.

At the conclusion of her report, the Chairman thanked her and her Working Group and assured her that her recommendations would be acted on.

## 9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

### (i) Mowing Contract 2008

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that a two-year mowing contract for the seasons 2008 and 2009 should be advertised in "The Lichfield Mercury" at the earliest opportunity.

It was further agreed that the specifications should remain unchanged.

### (ii) Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Brown, Land and Property Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008, confirming that the Parish Council's request to take over the management of the grassed area opposite Gentleshaw School was being considered and that he would be writing to the Parish Council in due course.

The Chairman reported that he had recently received two telephone calls from Tamara Kabat, the District Council's Biodiversity Officer, in which she had indicated that the Parish Council's request would receive a favourable response, though both John Brown and Kevin Yates, the Parks Manager, would expect to be involved.

He had stressed to her, however, that, while the Parish Council would certainly accept their support and would also be looking to involve the school, the final decision-making must rest with the Parish Council, who were, after all, expecting to fund the scheme.

Ms. Kabat had also informed the Chairman that, on the following Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, a group of volunteers would be starting to erect a line of posts along the edge of the green, though she did not expect the work to be completed that day.

The area had already been checked for underground cables, and the posts would be planted to a depth of half a metre and then cemented in.

She had asked whether the Parish Council would be prepared to meet the cost of the cement, and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that the Council would meet this cost up to a maximum of £75. 00.

### (iii) Friends of Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Poynton, Treasurer, Friends of Gentleshaw Common, a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008, in which he had enclosed a cheque for £100. 30 and thanked the Parish Council for its support for the organisation, which had not, unfortunately, attracted sufficient local interest and had therefore spent none of its funds.

However, this cheque had been returned by the bank, and he would be ask Mr. Poynton to find out why it had not been accepted.

(iv) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Roadside Signs

The Clerk reported that he had received from Emma Beaman, Assistant Officer, Cannock Chase AONB, a letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008, in which she had said that her organisation would like to put up boundary signs in all AONB parishes.

She reminded the Council that her organisation was prepared to meet fifty per cent of the price of each sign, which cost about £105. 00.

However, this funding might not be available after March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, it was agreed that the Council should order four of these signs, two to be erected in Stockings Lane and two on the edge of Gentleshaw Common.

(v) Report of Greens and Open Spaces Working Group

Cllr. Welch gave a report on a meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Working Group which had taken place at his home on Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at which only he and Cllr. Mrs. Russell had been present.

The following matters were considered:

- (a) Tree Survey: He and Cllr. Mrs. Russell were carrying out a tree survey in the parish which they hoped to complete by the end of April.
- (b) Spinney off Lysways Lane: The first phase of the regeneration programme had been completed: he felt that there was no urgency to carry out Phase 2, but was proposing a meeting of Councillors on site. He recommended the removal of some spindly leylandii and their replacement with orchard trees.
- (c) Watercourses: The Shropshire Brook was getting silted up at Brook End and might soon need clearing. Ownership of Benbrook needed to be established so that it could be properly maintained. The dumping of stable waste into the watercourse at "Greensleeves" needed addressing, and he would be liaising with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust over the problem. The brook behind Red Hill Barn appeared to have been re-routed and a sump dug out, and he would consulting maps with a view to establishing ownership.
- (d) The greens and open spaces in Longdon were being mapped out; the open space in front of Longdon Hall had already been recorded.
- (e) It was being recommended that the Parish Council purchase two benches for siting at the side of the A51, the one at the junction with Brereton Hill Lane, where there was once a bus shelter, and the other opposite High Street.  
(It was immediately agreed by the Council that the Highways Authority should be contacted to establish whether these benches would be acceptable.

At the conclusion of his report, the Chairman thanked Cllr. Welch and Cllr. Mrs. Russell and assured them that the Council would act on their recommendations.

10. ADMINISTRATION

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that the Greens & Open Spaces Working Group and the Highway & Footpaths Working Group should both become Committees of the Parish Council and that this

decision should be incorporated in the Council's Standing Orders, together with the delegated authority to incur expenditure.

Constitution of the Committees, which would meet in public and whose meetings would be attended by the Clerk, who would record their proceedings, would be as follows:

Greens & Open Spaces: Cllr. Welch (proposed as Chairman); Cllr. Mrs. Duckett; Cllr. Juxon; and Cllr. Mrs. Russell.

Highways & Footpaths: Cllr. Mrs. Meere (proposed as Chairman); Cllr. Bird; Cllr. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. Duckett; Cllr. Stanfield; and Mr. Will Rose (co-opted member).

## 11. LAW AND ORDER

### (i) Joint Operations Group Update

The Clerk reported that he had received by email an updated report from the Joint Operations Group on anti-social and criminal activity in Lichfield District. However, it contained no record of such activity in the parish of Longdon.

### (ii) Developing Links between the Police and Parish Councils - Community Pride Meetings

The Clerk reported that he had received from Helen Spearey, Strategic Director, Community, Housing and Health, Lichfield District Council, dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008, in which she asked for feedback in relation to a proposal made at a recent meeting of the Parish Forum for holding Community Pride meetings adjacent to scheduled parish council meetings and an indication of whether Longdon Parish Council would be willing to participate.

However, discussion of this proposal was deferred till a later meeting.

## 12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2008

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that both Longdon & Longdon Green and Upper Longdon should be entered in this year's Best Kept village Competition.

The Clerk was instructed to place an order for twelve large posters and 550 small posters with the Community Council.

Cllr. Stanfield and the Clerk would carry out a survey of street furniture with a view to renovating, repairing or replacing weather-worn items.

## 13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

### (i) Accounts for Payment

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

*The Plant Pot	8 wooden tubs & 9 bags of compost	£ 200.00
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – February 12 <sup>th</sup>	£ 12.00

N. Stanfield	Reimbursement – Photocopy of map of Gentleshaw Common	£ 13. 15
A. Dunford & Son	To carrying out tree-felling in spinney off Lysways Lane as scheduled under Section 4.2 of Report	£1145. 62
≠Community Council of Staffordshire	BKV Entry Fees: £24. 00 Publicity Material: £40. 30	£ 64. 30
(* Confirmation	≠Payment made under Section 137)	

(ii) Payments Received

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

C. T. Marshall	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 5. 00
A. W. Johnson	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 6. 50
Lynn Marshall	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 7. 50
Olwyn Bennett	Advertisement: “Longdon Life”	£ 8. 00
Friends of Gentleshaw Common	Refund ( <i>payment stopped by bank</i> )	£100. 30

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £584. 29                      The Halifax d/a: £16470. 23

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid(a) The Donna Louise Trust

The Clerk reported that he had received from Melanie Mills, Head of Fundraising and PR, The Donna Louise Trust, the children’s hospice service for Staffordshire and South Cheshire, a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008, asking if the Council would be prepared to make a donation.

Unfortunately, the letter had not been accompanied by any Balance Sheet or Statement of Accounts in support of the appeal, and the Clerk was instructed to request a copy.

(b) Rugeley and District First Responders

The Clerk reported that he had now received a completed Grant Application Form from the Chairman of this organisation in which he had singled out two items towards which the Council might like to contribute.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed to donate £150. 00 towards the cost of these items.

(v) Interim Report by Independent Internal Auditor

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Welch, the comments of the Independent Internal Auditor were noted and his report accepted.

(vi) Section 137

The Clerk reported that a Financial Update from NALC dated January 2008 had advised that the Section 137 cash limit for 2008-09 would be £5. 86.

(vii) Appointment of External Auditor

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mike Norman, Manager, Audit Appointments and Fees, a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008, advising the Council that Jackie Ballard, of the Audit Commission's Limited Assurance Specialist Unit, had been appointed the Council's external auditor for a five-year period commencing with the 2007/08 accounts.

The Council saw no reason to challenge this appointment.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Cath Wohlers, Community Development Officer, Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008, in which she introduced "Communities First", a local initiative which aspired to afford local people a real shareholding in the future development of Community Services in Staffordshire and which incorporated the Stafford Watchdog Scheme.

One of the activities undertaken was to despatch alerts of scams to their watchdogs in order to minimise the risk of local consumers being conned.

Ms. Wohlers was offering talks, free of charge, to groups that would like to know more about what her organisation was doing to tackle issues of underage drinking, doorstep crime and rogue trading practices, and invited any that would benefit from the scheme to contact her.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rowsell, Department of Communities and Local Government, Bressenden Place, London, a letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008 (but not received until 17<sup>th</sup> January) enclosing a consultation paper which sought the views on the detailed arrangements for putting into effect the orders and regulations to provide a revised locally-based ethical regime for the conduct of local councillors in England.

Comments should be received by Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Elizabeth Marginson, Strategic Communications Manager, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 offering the opportunity to nominate local members of the Fire and Rescue Service as Fire Heroes.

Copies of the nomination form had been sent to all Councillors prior to the meeting to allow them time to make a nomination, if they so wished.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Vivien Evans, Chief Executive, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association, a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008, informing the Council that the SPCA had been invited by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership to become involved in a major climate change communications project.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Kate Bannister, Conference/Committee Officer, NALC, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 inviting Member-Councils to submit motions for discussion at the National Conference on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

All motions should be sent to her no later than Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Tamara Kabat, Biodiversity Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008, enclosing a copy of her Department's 2008 Guide to Parks and Countryside Events in Lichfield District.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen Lightfoot, Regeneration Projects Manager, Community, Housing and Health, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 2008, informing the Council that Lichfield District Council's Community Transport Scheme had recently placed an order for a brand new fully accessible minibus that would be available for use by clubs and groups this summer and asking the Council to encourage any group that might benefit from accessible transport to get in touch with him.

(viii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Bernie Bailey, Marketing Administrator, Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, European Business Park, Oldbury, a letter dated January 2008, updating the Council on the services offered by its local Energy Efficiency Centre and enclosing a copy of the Lichfield EEAC News for Winter 2007, handbills, leaflets and a poster which he had duplicated and displayed on the parish notice-boards.

## 15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

Forward Plan – Version 1 – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
(effective from 01.02.08 to 31.05.08);  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2008;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2008;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 8<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

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

Register of Electors – Monthly Applications for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008.

(iv) From The Chief Executive, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association:

Notice of 2 courses: Internal Audit (31<sup>st</sup> January 2008) and Chairmanship Skills (6<sup>th</sup> February 2008);  
Notice of Seminar – “New Challenges and Innovation for Local Government” – to be held at the Wychavon Civic Centre, Pershore, on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008, from 10. 30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. (Fee: £30. 00, plus VAT per delegate);  
Training Booking Forms: *Budgets and Annual Returns*, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008, in the White Room, County Buildings, Stafford; *Project Management*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008, in Room 9/10, Peel Buildings, St. Chad’s Place, Stafford; and *Organising Consultations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008, in Room 9/10, Peel Buildings, St. Chad’s Place, Stafford. All these meetings would take place between 7. 00 p.m. and 9. 00 p.m. and the fees would be £20. 00 (first delegate), £15. 00 (second delegate) and £10. 00 (third delegate);  
Notice of vacancies for part-time parish clerks at Newborough and Hoar Cross.

(v) From St. James School Parents, Teachers and Friends Association:

Minutes of meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007.  
(downloaded from website)

(vi) From Monster Play Systems:

“Youth Shelters designed with young people”  
(publicity leaflet distributed through the SPCA).

(vii) From Wicksteed Leisure Ltd., Kettering, Northants.:

Wicksteed Playscapes, Winter 2007/8.

## 16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Parsons drew the Council’s attention to a metal farm gate erected across the cul-de-sac at the side of the A51 at Longdon Green and to a second garage and caravan sited at an adjacent property.

The Clerk was instructed to investigate.

(ii) Cllr. Butler reported that a twelve-year parishioner had presented him with a petition with 250 signatures calling for a play area in the parish which he would bring to the next meeting.

The Clerk said that he had already written to the Chairman of Governors at St. James School asking for the Governing Body to look into the possibility of using the School’s outdoor facilities during out-of-school hours and awaited a reply.

(iii) The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Parish Website had now been in operation for three years.

Although 'hits' were encouraging, the site needed a new look, and Councillors were asked to give some thought to new ideas and material.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008, in The Meeting Room, Christ Church, Gentleshaw, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.