

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM, CHRIST CHURCH, GENTLESHAW, ON TUESDAY, MARCH 11TH, 2008

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. N. J. Bird;
Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell;
and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council; and two parishioners – Mr. Tony Ellis and Mrs. Michelle Golby, both residents of Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw.

1. APOLOGIES

The Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr The Rev. J. R. Andrews, Cllr. B. J. Butler, Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere, Cllr S. K. Welch and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons was also absent from the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Russell and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chairman then asked Mr. Ellis and Mrs. Golby whether either wished to address the meeting.
Mr. Ellis said that the residents of Malthouse Road were very concerned by the proposal to erect a grain store at Chestall Manor, on the Chestall Hall Estate, with access to and from Malthouse Road.
The road was already being extensively used by commuters, many driving at excessive speeds, and by heavy commercial vehicles, and the only restrictions were a 30 mph speed limit in School Lane (described as the shortest in the County) and an advisory sign recommending a weight limit of 7.5 tons.
There had been three accidents in the last ten weeks, and verges had been worn away, exposing manhole covers.
However, the Highways Authorities thought that the access would enjoy good visibility and were not therefore raising any objection to the access.
In addition, the proposed development, being agricultural in character, was deemed suitable for the rural environment.
Pointing out that the nearest "SLOW" sign was in Thorleys Hill, Mr. Ellis asked that, at the very least, there should be similar road-markings in Malthouse Road.
Cllr. Roberts thought that there was a high possibility that such markings could be provided or the 30 mph speed restriction extended.

The Chairman assured Mr. Ellis and Mrs. Golby that the Parish Council had already written to Lichfield District Council pointing out the existing traffic problems affecting Malthouse Road and adjacent lanes.
In fact, the local school was so concerned that it had set up a working party of staff and pupils to assess the extent of the problem and to find ways of influencing parents and grandparents bringing their children to school by car each day.
An assembly was being planned for that Friday which he would be attending and at which PC Andy Brown, the local Community Beat Officer, would emphasise the dangers inherent in their present behaviour.

He thanked Mr. Ellis and Mrs. Golby for their attendance and assured them that the Council would continue to monitor the situation very carefully.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

The Clerk reported that he had been advised by County Councillor Lewis that, following a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Panel on March 10th, this path had now been adopted by the County Council, but its status would not be confirmed for another six months, when the legal formalities had been completed.

Cllr. Lewis thought that the Divisional Highway Manager might then be prepared to re-surface the path, particularly if the Parish Council were prepared to part-fund the cost.

(ii) Replacement of stile accessing Footpath No. 46 off Giddywell Lane, Longdon.

The Clerk reported that he had written to Mr. and Mrs. Burt, recorded as the owners of the field which this footpath crossed, but the letter had been returned inscribed "No longer resident at this address".

He would continue to try and establish who owned this field.

(iii) Elimination of moles on Longdon Green

The Chairman thought that the moles' activity had subsided in recent weeks, but acknowledged that only time would tell whether this was because he had been able to eliminate the animals or whether the inactivity was simply seasonal.

(iv) Abuse of Gentleshaw Common by parked coal-delivery lorries

The Clerk reported that, in spite of assurances given to the Enforcement Officers, he had observed a coal-delivery lorry parked on the area of Gentleshaw Common adjacent to Hollows Lodge and therefore would continue to monitor the situation.

(v) Litter in Longdon lanes

The Clerk reported that he had written to Glen Ogden, Street Cleaning Supervisor, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council, asking for a copy of his Department's cleaning street-cleaning schedule.

(vi) Shaw Lane, Gentleshaw

Cllr. Stanfield reported that this lane was once again in need of sweeping.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the Divisional Highway Manager, asking him to arrange for this to be done.

(vii) Parish Play Area/Playing Field

The Clerk reported that he had not yet received a reply to his letter asking the Governors of St. James School to allow public use of the school's outdoor facilities when the school was not in session.

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett said that she had been told informally that the request had been rejected, and she was surprised that the Governors had not yet informed the Council of their decision.

Cllr. Juxon suggested that a refusal would not be in line with the Government's recommendation that such facilities, being paid for out of public funds, should be made available to the community at large when not in use by the school.

(viii) Parish Website

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that Councillors had not yet made any suggestions for the updating of the Parish Website.

He pointed out that the Website had already been updated technically and that what he wanted was suggestions for ways in which its content could be improved.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

Cllr. Stanfield reported that, since the last meeting, the Working Group had considered five planning applications, and the Clerk had submitted the following observations on the Council's behalf:

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

In the opinion of the Council, the proposed amendments had not addressed the Parish Council's objections, which had therefore been re-iterated.

However, the application had now been considered by the District Council's Planning Committee, who, deciding that the circumstances were very special, had approved it, subject to two conditions: the applicants should enter into a Section 106 agreement, binding the land and dwelling together; and the dwelling should not be built until the stables associated with the development were completed.

08/00133/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. V. Taylor: Various internal and external alterations, including new pitched roof to upper building: Broad Hazels, Beaudesert Park

The Parish Council was aware that a previous application for the demolition and replacement of this dwelling had recently been refused on grounds of Green Belt and because of the adverse effect on the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Although the proposal now submitted appeared to conform to the District Council's policy for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and would not harm the character of the AONB, the Parish Council would need to be assured by planning officers that they would, if permission were granted, ensure that the development was carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and that it did not result in the erection of a new dwelling, as had occurred at the bungalow at Hill Top, Longdon Green.

08/00168/FUL: Mr. P. Boston: Erection of roof over existing cattle corral: Hawcroft Grange Farm, Hood Lane, Longdon

In connection with this application, the Parish Council made the following observations:

1. A previous application (07/00555/FUL) for permission was considered by the Parish Council at its meeting of 11th September 2007, and an objection was raised on the basis that there were already buildings on the site which would be suitable for the purposes proposed, but that those buildings were being used for non-agricultural purposes, that is, the storage of caravans. That application was subsequently withdrawn.

2. The building proposed was very large and would be clearly seen from the adjacent public footpath, No. 72. If permission were to be granted, the District Council needed to satisfy itself, particularly given the history of this site for caravan storage, that there was no other building on the site that could be used for the purpose proposed and that the building would be exclusively used for agricultural purposes. A landscaping condition should also be imposed.

3. The applicant's agent stated that "Twelve years ago, the partnership developed a very successful diversified business with caravan storage where present demand vastly exceeded supply due to the highly efficient and safe storage facilities offered by the Boston family". The Parish wished to be informed if planning permission had ever been granted for this use or if, given the period of time that this storage may have taken place, it was appropriate for an application to be made for a Certificate of Lawful Development.

CH/08/0001: Installation of wind farm comprising three wind turbines, control building and associated infrastructure: Lane east of Wimblebury Road, Heath Hayes

The Parish Council had registered a strong objection to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. Land-based wind farms were known to be the least viable form of generating energy and the most destructive environmentally, and the Parish Council was of the opinion that the harm to the environment could not be justified on the grounds that the proposal was in the national interest.

2. The turbines would be seen from Gentleshaw Common (to which the applicants did not refer) and from many other parts of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, The Peak District National Park and from the Shropshire Hills AONB.

3. The proposal was not in accordance with local and national policies which sought to protect the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from inappropriate development. In particular, the Cannock Chase District Council's Local Plan dealt with the AONB in the following terms:

"The integrity of the Cannock Chase AONB will be protected in the following way:

(i) The District Council will strive to conserve and enhance the landscape, nature conservation and recreation interest of the AONB and its setting;

(ii) Only development which is compatible with the conservation of the natural beauty of the AONB and is in accordance with other relevant policies of the Local Plan will be permitted;

(iii) Proposals for development on the fringes of the AONB will be considered in the context of the primary objective of protecting the area's qualities."

4. The proposal would have an adverse effect on bird life and activity in the area. There are a significant number of wintering fowl at Blithfield Reservoir and Chasewater, and since the turbines would be directly in line with both, bird strikes would be a real possibility. The rotors would sweep an area of some two and a half miles and be aligned across the prevailing wind, so bird deaths would most likely be significant.

5. The lowland heath habitat was of global importance and would be bisected by access/service roads; this would adversely affect the nightjar, the woodlark and now the Dartmouth Warbler, all of which were expanding their range. To allow this proposal would therefore result in the loss of these birds.

6. The amenities of the residents in the area would be adversely affected by the noise and the sunlight reflected from the blades, and, by their overall size, the turbines would dominate the area.

Cllr. Roberts remarked that Lichfield District Council had decided that its initial response needed sharpening up, and a second letter was being sent.

Ruth Hytch, Cannock Chase ANOB Officer, had also written a detailed response, and Cannock Chase Parish Council would also be objecting to the proposal.

CH/08/0079: Proposed Grain and Machinery Store: Chestall Manor, Chestall Hall Estate, Cannock Wood

Having examined the details of this application, which, while it referred to a development within Cannock Chase District, proposed an access from Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw, the Parish Council had the following concerns:

1. No mention was made in the application that the access onto Malthouse Road was to be widened to approximately twice its width. This could be clearly seen, as the work had already been carried out, and the original single five-bar gate replaced by double gates. This had involved the removal of a length of verge which had now been replaced by roadstone, giving the appearance of an access to commercial rather than agricultural premises.

2. The Design and Access Statement submitted by the applicant's agent made no reference to the fact that the application site was within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the advice of the Government was that the siting of agricultural buildings should be given very careful consideration. This issue needed to be addressed in particular, as all the former agricultural buildings on the estate had now been converted to residential use, and the question needed to be asked whether this was the first of a number of buildings which it was proposed to erect on this site. In addition, the question of light pollution needed to be addressed.

3. The Parish Council wished to draw attention to a recently-submitted application for a similar proposal within that part of Chestall Park which is within the area of Lichfield District and was refused because the proposed building by virtue of its siting

and design would be overtly prominent and would not maintain the character of the Green Belt, and the siting of the proposed building would detract from the surrounding Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

(ii) For Consideration

No other planning applications were considered.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

07/01262/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. N. Vyse: Single-storey extension to form hall, WC and conservatory: Lilac Cottage, 19 Stockings Lane, Longdon

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

(v) Planning Appeals

(a) White Cottage, Red Hill, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of an appeal by Mr. A. White, of White Cottage, Red Hill, Upper Longdon, against the decision of Lichfield District Council to refuse permission for a first-floor extension to form hall, WC and conservatory.

Observations should be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate at Bristol within six weeks of the Appeal Starting Date, 7th February 2008.

However, the Parish Council did not wish to add to its initial observations.

(b) Red Hill Barn. Red Hill, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of an appeal by Mr. S. Willows against an Enforcement Notice served on him by Lichfield District Council in connection with activities currently taking place at the site.

An Inspector had been appointed by the Secretary of State to determine this appeal. The hearing into this appeal would be held at the District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on 22nd April 2008, starting at 10. 00 a.m, when members of the Parish Council could attend and, at the discretion of the Inspector, give their views.

A copy of the Council's and the Appellant's statements and any future comments could be inspected at the District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, between 8. 45 a.m. and 17. 15 p.m., Monday to Friday.

The Clerk further reported that he had received copies of two letters supporting the serving of the Enforcement Notice sent to Opirim Agala, the Planning Inspector dealing with the Appeal, the first from Tim Hollinshead, of Deva House, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon, dated 3rd February 2008, the second from Cllr. Neil Roberts, of Lichfield District Council, dated 18th February 2008.

(vi) Withdrawal of Application

The Clerk reported that he had received notice that the following application had been withdrawn on 29th January 2008:

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

(vii) Lichfield District Local Development Framework

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 27th February 2008, informing the Council that there was still time to comment on two draft documents which the District Council had put out for consultation at the present time, namely, the draft Chasewater Supplementary Planning Document and the draft Greens and Open Spaces Strategy.

Comments should be received no later than 13th March 2008.

Cllr. Welch said that he would comment on behalf of the Parish Council.

(viii) West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision

The Clerk reported that he had received from Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive, West Midlands Regional Assembly, a letter dated 3rd March 2008, informing the Council that the RSS Phase Two Consultation Period had been extended from 7th January 2008 to 30th June 2008 and was likely to be extended further.

Cllr. Roberts commented that there had been some question over the propriety of the public examination and that a list of further consultees was being prepared.

(ix) Other Planning Matters

(a) Alleged unauthorised commercial activity at Fir Tree Cottage, Tithe Barn, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that it had been alleged that wooden fence panels were being constructed as a commercial business on these premises.

However, Cllr. Stanfield pointed out that the cottage was undergoing

extensive alterations, of which these might be part, and his suggestion that no action should be taken until this work had been completed was accepted.

(b) Alleged unauthorised equestrian activity at “The Giddies”, Hay Lane, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that it had been alleged that equestrian activity was taking place at the above site without benefit of planning permission.

He added that he had been told that a planning application would be submitted, and it was agreed that the Council should wait to see how soon it would be forthcoming.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Management Committee, Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting of the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee which had taken place at the Hall on Wednesday, February 27th, 2008.

The Committee was still experiencing difficulty in attracting sufficient income and was trying to generate greater revenue instead of having to rely on grants to make ends meet.

There were problems with the flat roof, as well as an urgent need to resurface the car park. The Committee was now advertising its facilities on the Parish Website.

(ii) Management Committee, Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received copies of the minutes of two meetings of the Committee which had taken place on 4th February 2008 and 3rd March 2008.

(iii) Executive Committee, Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association

Cllr. Stanfield gave a short report on a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association which had taken place at Stafford on 18th February 2008.

He had been disappointed that, once again, the meeting had been not been well prepared and thought that the Executive Committee should now take radical action to ensure that this state of affairs did not continue.

He had confirmed that the Parish Council could seek legal advice, particularly on planning matters, from the SPCA, who would refer any enquiry to the Legal Department of the National Association.

(iv) Governors’ Meeting, Gentleshaw County Primary School

The Chairman reported on a meeting of the Governors of Gentleshaw County Primary School which had taken place on Wednesday, March 5th, 2008.

The School now had 142 pupils and was oversubscribed.

It had just been awarded its third Ecograde.

Turnover of staff was negligible; he had not attended an interview for the past three years.

The School would be match-funding the cost of installing disabled toilets, and the funds needed for converting parts of the interior - £45,000 – were virtually assured.

Work would begin next year.

Traffic problems – speeding, parking and abusive parents – were still acute, and an assembly had been organised the following Friday, March 14th; it would be attended by PC Andy Brown, who would draw parents’ attention to them and remind them of the penalties persistent offenders faced.

Unfortunately, Darlings Lane was not considered dangerous enough to warrant the employment of a lollipop lady!

7. NOTICE OF MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received notice of the following meeting:

South Staffordshire National Health Service Primary Care Trust – Patient Advice and Liaison Service Open Session: Tuesday, 27th March 2008, at Sandy Lane Health Centre, Rugeley, from 5. 30 p.m. to 6. 30 p.m.

(ii) Cllr. Stanfield reported that he would be attending a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Staffordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England which was taking place at the County Buildings, St. Chad's Place, Stafford, on Wednesday, March 19th, 2008.

The Branch had a good relationship with Lichfield District Council and was regularly consulted over planning matters.

The President, Bill Bryson, was particularly concerned about fly-tipping, and

the Council would shortly be mounting a campaign. It was, however, short of members, and Cllr. Stanfield suggested that an article on the organisation might appear in the next issue of "Longdon Life".

He thought that the CPRE was doing a good job trying to protect the countryside.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Path between Nos. 31 and 33 Church Way, Longdon

The Clerk reported that Lichfield Tarmacadam Limited had quoted £2100, plus £367. 50 VAT for the section between the two houses and £6300, plus £1102. 50 VAT for the path across the field.

However, County Councillor Lewis had suggested that the Divisional Highway Manager might be prepared to re-surface Section 1 when the legal formalities were finally concluded.

It was agreed that a final decision should be left to the Highways and Footpath Committee.

The Council was reminded that the Diocesan Authorities had indicated that it wanted to see a plan of the proposal before agreeing to its implementation.

(ii) New Lighting Scheme

The Clerk reported that ABB Limited, of Derby, had been commissioned by Staffordshire County Council to bring the street lighting in Brook End up to British Standard and that the firm had notified residents of their intention, but the County Council had not informed the Parish Council of this project.

There had been considerable concern amongst local residents about the proposed increase in the number of lamp-posts and about the positioning of some of them.

He had spoken to Martin Beavis, the Senior Projects Manager, who had explained the criteria which had to be followed in implementing such projects, but had also expressed a willingness to speak to any anxious resident.

He had given the Clerk his telephone number, which the Clerk had passed on to residents who had expressed their unhappiness with the development.

There was annoyance amongst Councillors that the County Council had not notified the Parish Council of the project, and the Clerk was instructed to make this known to the Lighting Manager.

(iii) Footpath No. 44 (Dark Lane, Longdon)

The Clerk reported that he had received from Caroline Watterson, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 26th February 2008, informing the Council that a County Ranger had now inspected this route and cleared the footpath of overgrown vegetation.

(iv) Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Clerk reported that he had received from Noreen Moore, Countryside and Rights of Way Group Leader, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 25th February 2008, enclosing a copy of the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

This was passed to Cllr. Stanfield after he offered to provide the Council with a summary of it.

(v) Various Highway Matters

(a) Flooding in Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Harris, Assistant Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29th February 2008, in which he informed the Council that initial investigations had been made into the cause of the flooding at Lysways Lane, and a scheme had been devised and added to the current three-year rolling programme

However, he was unable to give the Council a definite date for the commencement of the work.

It was agreed that, in view of the persistence of this problem over a matter of months, delay was unacceptable, and the Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Harris, urging him to give a higher priority to implementing the scheme.

(b) Grange Hill, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, in the same letter, Mr. Harris had informed the Council that he had been in discussion with the owner of the adjacent property regarding a solution to the eroding embankment and had offered to install a kerb to stop vehicle erosion, but the owner was considering funding the erection of gabion walling.

Mr. Harris was now awaiting further developments.

(c) Church Hollow, Longdon

Finally, Mr. Harris had expressed his willingness to meet a representative of the Parish Council to discuss the management of this bridleway.

(d) Signpost outside Grand Lodge, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Roobottom, Technical Assistant, Operational Service, Lichfield District Council, an email dated 6th March 2008, informing the Council that he had passed on its concern about the isolated position of the cast-iron roadside sign outside Grand Lodge to his Department's Network Management who dealt with the installation of access crossings.

Mr. Roobottom understood from initial investigation that the owner had not applied for an extension to the existing access, and a letter would be sent to him asking him to apply through the official procedure.

On receipt of the application, a decision would be made on the suitability of the access and the re-positioning of the sign, if required.

It was the view of the Parish Council, however, that any re-positioning of the sign would make it less conspicuous and reduce its value to road-users.

(e) Street Nameplates and Village Signs

In the same email, Mr. Roobottom had informed the Council that he would arrange for the replacement of nameplates at Upper Way, Startley Lane, Grange Hill and The Grange and the re-setting of the nameplate at Dark Lane, but that this work would not be carried out until the beginning of the next financial year, when it would be given priority.

However, he had no budget for village signs and had referred the Parish Council's enquiry to his manager with a request that he reach a decision on the matter.

(f) Erection of gates in access road off the A51 at Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 6th March 2008, in which he confirmed that he was aware of the problem being caused at this location by anti-social behaviour, but added that consent had not been given by the Highway Authority for the erection of these gates.

However, rather than insist on their immediate removal, he proposed to refer them to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel to check whether they conformed with the County Council's Gating Policy in an attempt to regularise the position.

In the meantime, he would write to the owners of Ben Brook Cottage outlining his position.

(g) Tree of highway verge outside "Sunny Corner", Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Ken Owen, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, dated 7th March 2008, in which he informed the Parish Council that this tree had been removed on 24th February 2008 and that he would arrange for the stump to be ground out when next he had the equipment in the area.

Both the current owners of "Sunny Corner" and Lichfield District Council had been notified prior to the tree being felled.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Mowing Contract 2008/2009

The Clerk reported that he had received three quotations for the above contract. These were:

External Environment Services, Rugeley: £880 per cut, £7040 per annum;

ATA Garden Care, Tamworth: £5220 per annum;

G. C. McCulloch, Tutbury: Price per cut in 2008: £215 (£1720 per annum)

Price per cut in 2009: £225 (£1800 per annum)

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was unanimously agreed that the contract should be offered to Mr. McCulloch.

10. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Joint Operations Group Update

The Clerk reported he had received from Bob Haynes, Community Safety Officer, Lichfield District Council, a report on the meeting of the Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, February 28th, 2008.

(ii) Neighbourhood Watch Crime Log

The Chairman reported that he had received a copy of the Neighbourhood Watch Crime Log for February 2008, which showed no recorded crime in Longdon.

11. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

*CIN and Media Ltd.	Advertisement: Mowing Contract	£ 68. 40
*Aquajet Service	Repairs to 2 Gentleshaw signs	£ 40. 00
Christ Church, Gentleshaw	Hire of room	£ 10. 00
W. B. Sullivan	Clerk's Salary:	£300. 00
	Photocopying:	£146. 48
	≠ Printing "Longdon Life" inserts:	£ 29. 38
	Postage:	£ 18. 85
		£494. 71

E. A. Roy	Continuing hosting and support of Parish Web Pages	£130. 00
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(*Confirmation ≠Payment made under Section 137)

(ii) Payments received

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

Staffordshire County Council	Mowing Agreement	£645. 39
Friends of Gentleshaw Common	Repayment of Grant	£100. 30 7

≠ the previous cheque had been returned because the bank had declared the account "Inactive" without advising the Treasurer

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £1664. 51	The Halifax d/a: £14170. 23
(There were no uncleared cheques)	

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) The Donna Louise Trust, Trentham

The Clerk reported that he had now received a copy of the Trust's Consolidated Balance Sheet and Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2007.

However, it was decided that the Trust was not sufficiently local to justify the Council's making a donation to it.

(b) Rugeley Fire Station Three Peaks Challenge

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Woodward, of Lower Birches Way, Forgemill, Rugeley, a letter dated 12th February 2008 inviting the Parish Council to make a donation to the above event, when twenty firefighters from Rugeley would attempt to complete the Three Peaks Challenge in Scotland, England and Wales in twenty-four hours.

Money from sponsors would be divided between The Fire Services National Benevolent Fund and The Martin Woodward Cancer Trust.

After Councillors were reminded that the Fire Services had recently been called to a house fire in St. James Close, it was proposed by Cllr. Stanfield that the Council should make a donation of £50. 00. The motion was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and unanimously approved.

The Clerk confirmed that the donation could be made under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act.

(c) Longdon Cricket Club

The Clerk reported that he had received from David La Trobe, Secretary of the Longdon Cricket Club, a letter dated 4th March 2008, asking if the Parish Council would consider making a donation towards the cost of improving the security of the hut in which the Club's mower was stored.

The Club had been able to find only one builder willing to estimate for so small a job, Longdon Construction Limited, who had estimated £347. 00, plus VAT.

The Clerk added that the request had been supported by a completed Grants Application Form.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Bird, it was agreed that the Council should make a donation of £200. 00.

The Clerk confirmed that payment of this grant could be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of 1972.

As a member of Longdon Cricket Club, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett declared an interest in this matter and took no part in the discussion.

12. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen Bradbury, Lighting and ITS Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 20th February 2008, reminding the Council of the requirements for the installation of seasonal attachments such as hanging baskets, banners and flags onto street lighting.

However, it was noted that it was not local practice to hang such attachments from lampposts.

13. 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:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 2nd March 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 16th March 2008.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 15th February 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 22nd February 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 29th February 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 7th March 2008.

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

Register of Electors 2008 – Monthly Applications for 3rd March 2008.

- (iv) From The Ranger Service, Staffordshire County Council:

Poster: Countryside Events – March 2008.

- (v) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

“News and Views”: Issue Number 2, January 2008.

- (vi) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR”: Volume 59, No. 6 – March 2008.

- (vii) From The Open Spaces Society:

“Open Space”: Volume 29, No. 1 – Spring 2008.

- (viii) From St. Giles Hospice, Whittington:

St. Giles Hospice News: Spring 2008;
Summer Raffle Tickets

- (ix) From Newsdeck Communications:

Brochure: “Enjoy England – Celebrate St. George’s Day”.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- (i) The Chairman distributed copies of the newly-revised Standing Orders to all Councillors present, each Councillor signing a note of acceptance upon receipt of his or her copy.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 8th, 2008 in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.