

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD  
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 8<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. 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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;  
Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; and Cllr. N. J. Roberts, Lichfield District Council.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the Meeting Room at Christ Church,  
Gentleshaw, on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008, were, on a motion proposed by  
Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No parishioners were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Replacement of stile accessing Footpath No. 46 from Giddywell Lane

The Clerk reported that, following consultation with the joint owners of the field,  
it had been agreed that the present stile would be replaced by a new stile, not  
a kissing-gate.

The work would be carried out by the County Ranger Service.

(ii) Elimination of moles from Longdon Green

The Chairman reported that, to date, two moles had been killed, but future  
treatment would be aimed at dispersing the moles, not eliminating them.

(iii) Litter in Longdon lanes

The Clerk reported that he had received from Glen Ogden, Street Scene  
Supervisor, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> March  
2008, informing the Council that his staff attended Longdon on a weekly basis to  
empty bins and litter-pick.

If, however, areas with build of litter were identified, then a hit squad would  
carry out further clearance.

His Department now planned to carry out inspections of all areas to identify  
problems and make the necessary arrangements for litter clearance as and when  
required.

Mr. Ogden had also informed the Refuse Department about the Council's concerns with waste disposal and asked that its crews ensured that any items dropped from recycling boxes were removed.

(iv) Shaw Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Local Highway Officer, Lichfield Highways Office, asking him to arrange further clearance of Shaw Lane.

(v) Parish Website

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that he had received no suggestions for improving the appearance of the Parish Website.

There had been no fewer than 20,000 'hits' on the website in March, though the Guest Page was not being used as widely as he had hoped,

Cllr. Parsons suggested that the existence of the website could be given greater publicity in "Longdon Life".

(vi) Footpath between Nos. 31 and 33 Church Way

Cllr. Lewis that the approval of the Secretary of State for the adoption of this passage as a footpath should be received within the next four to six weeks.

He was confident that its surface would be tarmacked by the County Highways Department, especially if the Parish Council were to agree to share the cost.

(vii) Mowing Contract 2008/2009

The Clerk reported that the Council's invitation to continue as mowing contractor for 2008/2009 had been accepted by Mr. McCulloch, who had sent the Clerk a copy of his current insurance policy.

## 5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

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

08/00229/FUL: Mr. A. Silvester: Single- and two-storey rear extension to form kitchen, sitting-room and bedroom: Anglesey Cottage, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

There was no objection to this application provided that it complied with the District Council's policies regarding extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

08/00286/FUL: Mr. Bradbury: Conservatory to rear: The Bungalow, Commonsides, Gentleshaw

There was no objection in principle to the proposed development provided that it complied with the District Council's policy regarding extensions to properties within the Green Belt.

08/00289/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. D. Hopley: First-floor extension and loft conversion with dormer window to form bedrooms, en suite and study: 3 Church Way, Longdon

There was no objection to this proposal provided that the planning officer dealing with the application was satisfied that no resident of an adjoining property would suffer loss of privacy.

*Commenting on the District Council's response to the Parish Council's comments, Cllr. Stanfield said that he had been disappointed to discover, while researching recent past planning applications, that, in writing their reports, planning officers consistently failed to address or even refer to the Parish Council's concerns.*

*He pointed out that, if these concerns were not included in planning officers' reports, then the Planning Committee, unaware of them, would not be able to consider them.*

*It was agreed that Cllr. Stanfield should draft a letter expressing the Parish Council's frustration at this oversight which the Clerk would send to the Development Services Portfolio Holder.*

(ii) For Consideration

The Clerk reported that no further planning applications had been received.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received no Notices of Approval of Planning Permission by the District Council.

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

07/00978/COU: Mr. T. Cox: Change of use of stables/workshop to offices, welfare area and small tools store room: Holly Farm, Chorley.

(v) Notice of Appeal

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a Notice of Appeal by Mr. T. Cox against the refusal of Lichfield District Council to permit the change of use of stables/workshops to offices, welfare area and small tools store room at Holly Farm, Chorley.

Comments should be sent to the Planning Inspectorate at Bristol within six weeks of the Appeal Date, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

However, it was decided that the Parish Council had nothing further to add to its earlier comments.

(vi) Other Planning Matters

Erection of Stable Block at "Greensleeves", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Jeff Upton, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council,

a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008, informing the Parish Council that the above planning application had been approved.

It had been considered that the stables would be of a scale and design which would be physically well related to the surroundings and, subject to the use of appropriate materials, they would not cause harm to the character and openness of the Green Belt or the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008, Sue Hodgkinson, Senior Planning Officer, had addressed the Parish Council's concerns about this development as follows: although there was no record of an application for change of use of the land, it appeared to have been used for grazing horses for well in excess of ten years; a planning application dating back to 1974 clearly showed the field shelter present at that time, which meant that it would now be considered lawful and immune from enforcement action; and there was a condition requiring that details of how organic waste was to be disposed of should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, who would forward it to the Environment Agency for their comments.

## 6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### (i) CPRE, Staffordshire Branch: March 19<sup>th</sup>

Cllr. Stanfield gave a short report on a meeting of the Staffordshire Branch of the Council to Protect Rural England which he had attended on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

It had been reported that plans to widen the M6 west of Stoke-on-Trent had been abandoned and, instead, greater use would be made of the hard shoulder at peak times.

There was concern over the Government's plans for more housing in the West Midlands, especially as the final number was not yet known.

The new President, Bill Bryson, was making fly-tipping his principal concern during his period of office, and members were being asked to provide photographic evidence.

More members were needed, and Cllr. Stanfield suggested that an appeal might be made county-wide through the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, and, locally, through "Longdon Life".

## 7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust AGM: Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2008, in The Conservatory, The Park Gate Inn, Cannock Wood, commencing at 8. 00 p.m.

While the Clerk hoped to be present, he had informed Cllr. Mrs. Meere, the Parish Council's representative on the Board of Trustees, of the meeting.

(ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2008, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

The principal speaker would be Ian James, District Director, Staffordshire County Council.

Both the Chairman and Cllr. Stanfield hoped to be present.

(iii) Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee AGM: Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008, in the Village Hall, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.  
The Chairman expected to be present.

## 8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Report of meeting of Highways and Footpaths Committee

The Clerk presented a written report of a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 (*Appendix A*).

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Butler, the Council approved the expenditure of £283. 54, plus VAT, on the purchase of four notice boards from G. E. Collis & Sons Limited, Chasetown.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, the Council accepted the price quoted by N. Baker Agricultural Services, Chorley, of £150. 00, plus VAT, for clearing overhanging trees at Coldwell, Gentleshaw.

### (ii) Street Lighting in Brook End, Longdon

The Clerk reported that several residents had expressed their concern over the proposed location of new street lights in Brook End, both to him and to Malcolm Beavis, the Senior Project Manager with ABB Limited, of Derby, the company which had been awarded the contract by Staffordshire County Council.

Subsequently, he had received a letter from Mr. Beavis, dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008, stating that he had attended the site and inspected the marked locations of the new street lights.

He would review the locations again after consulting with a colleague and would shortly confirm any action that he was able to take to alleviate local concerns.

### (iii) Flooding in Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Harris, Assistant Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008, informing the Parish Council that a scheme had been designed to eliminate the problem of flooding in Lysways Lane and added to the current three-year rolling programme.

This scheme would be assessed with others throughout the County to determine a priority list to which funding would be allocated. He was at present unable to give a definite date for the commencement of the work.

He had spoken to the neighbouring Golf Club regarding a blocked pipe which discharged from the highway into the stream located on their land, and was awaiting permission to enter on to the land to undertake a repair which might solve some of the surface water problems.

With regard to the signing and use of white lines, the road was too narrow to put a centre line, but he had asked the Traffic Management Department to investigate the possibility of using warning signs and applying "SLOW" markings on the carriageway.

Cllr. Lewis said that he had spoken with Mr. Harris, stressing the urgency with which temporary remedial work needed to be carried out in the lane; the cost of the full scheme would be £60,000.

It was observed that Lysways Lane had been closed on April 7<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup> while this work was being carried out and agreed that its effectiveness should be checked following the next rainfall.

(iv) 40 mph Speed Limit with Cannock Chase AONB

The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Davies, Parish Clerk, Brereton and Ravenshill Parish Council, a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008, informing the Council that his Parish Council would, at its next meeting, be considering whether there should be 40 mph speed limits on roads that were both within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and also within or forming the boundary of Brereton and Ravenshill, that is, Colliery Road, Stile Cop Road and Startley Lane, and inviting the Council's comments on this proposal.

While sympathetic to the proposal, Councillors had reservations about it: Longdon Parish Council had had similar problems and had taken action to deal with them; it was not clear why roads running through an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be given preferential treatment over other country roads, where the problem of speed was often as acute; and it seemed unlikely that the aim was achievable.

(v) Public Footpath No. 33

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008, in which he informed the Council that the Definitive Map of public rights of way was not entirely clear as to the exact line of this footpath and this had led to some dispute between the landowner and the County Council.

He was currently seeking the advice from his Department's Map Technician, who would research the historic maps and provide an interpretation of the definitive route.

The landowner had assured Mr. Rochfort that he had no intention of permanently restricting public access and was working with the County Council to resolve this issue at the earliest convenience.

## 9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

The Clerk reminded Councillors that a meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Committee would be taking place in the W. I. Hall on Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.

## 10. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

(i) Progress Report

The Clerk reported that he and Cllr. Stanfield had replaced a number of flower tubs in poor condition with the new flower tubs recently purchased from The Plant Pot

Two of the notice-boards ordered from Collis's had been delivered and erected by the Chairman and Cllr. Stanfield inside the bus shelter at Longdon Green, but, in the Chairman's opinion, their quality was not good enough to survive outdoor exposure.

It was agreed that the third still on order should be made from a harder wood, even though this might add to the cost, and Cllr. Stanfield agreed to contact the firm and amend the order.

(ii) Children's Posters

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and Cllr. Mrs. Russell agreed to judge the children's posters when they had been received from St. James School.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, it was agreed that the prizes awarded this year should be the same as last year.

11. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Date of Annual Assembly

It was agreed that this year's Annual Assembly should be held on Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Clerk was instructed to ask the Head Teacher of St. James School to allow the Hall to be used for the meeting, which would begin at 7. 30 p.m.

The Chairman would publish the arrangements for the meeting on the Parish Website.

(ii) Supplements to the Agenda

The Chairman suggested that, instead of appearing on a supplement to the agenda distributed at the meeting, business items which had been received immediately prior to the meeting should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

He was concerned that additional items appearing on supplements were making agendas too congested, with the result that insufficient time was being given to some items already on the agenda, especially towards the end of the meeting.

The Clerk suggested that the value of a supplement was that it prevented delay in dealing with parish business which had come to his attention after he had distributed the formal agenda.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, it was agreed that the final decision on whether to continue with supplements to the agenda should be left to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

12. FUTURE OF LONGDON POST OFFICE

The Chairman reported that, in the current survey of postal services, Longdon Post Office had been placed on the "intended-to-keep-open" list.

However, this did not necessarily mean that its future was secure, for, if any post office designated for closure successfully appealed, another post office would have to be closed in its place. In those circumstances, selected post offices would be given only three weeks' notice, and there would be no appeal against the decision.

It was vital, therefore, that letters of support, addressed to The National Consultation Team, PO Ltd., Freepost, Consultation (Ref. Longdon Post Office WS15 4PN), should continue to be written.

### 13. LAW AND ORDER

The Clerk reported that he had received by email the minutes of a meeting of the Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

### 14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

#### (i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, payment of the following accounts, received since the last meeting, were approved:

*#Instaprint, Rugeley	Printing 700 copies of "Longdon Life" and inserts	£266. 97
*#Hazel Crosbie	Delivering "Longdon Life"	£ 35. 00
*#A. J. Juxon	Editor's Expenses	£ 15. 00
*Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Cement for securing bollards on Gentleshaw Common	£ 47. 88
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – March 20 <sup>th</sup> : £12. 00 Hire of Hall – April 8 <sup>th</sup> : £12. 00	£ 24. 00
Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	Membership Subscription	£365. 00
Community Council of Staffordshire	Membership Renewal	£ 20. 00
National Association of Local Councils	12 annual subscriptions to "LCR"	£144. 00
(*confirmation	#payment under Section 137)	

#### (ii) Payments Received

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

e-on central networks	Wayleave – Longdon Green	£ 34. 02
A. W. Johnson	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 6. 50

#### (iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £362. 95      The Halifax s/a: £14170. 23



(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Longdon Village Hall Management Committee

The Council had the previous month received an application for a grant from the Management Committee of Longdon Village Hall which it had deferred until the present meeting.

This application was for £1500. 00 to cover the cost of repointing external walls, repainting interior walls and for the installation of a loft ladder.

After the Chairman had pointed out that this was the amount set aside for community halls in last year's budget, none of which had been spent, it was agreed, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, that the application should be met in full.

*(Cllr. Mrs. Duckett declared an interest as Chair of the Management Committee and took no part in the discussion)*

(b) Staffordshire Branch, CPRE

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Staffordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England a letter dated March 2008 listing the campaigns facing them in 2008 (many of them, Councillors recognised, of local concern) and asking for a contribution towards its expenses.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was agreed that the Council should make a donation of £100. 00.

This donation would be made under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act.

*(Cllr. Stanfield declared an interest as SPCA representative on the Branch Committee and took no part in the discussion)*

(c) Parish Church of St. James the Great, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Vicar and Church Wardens of Longdon Parish Church a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 informing the Council that a recent survey of the ceiling of the church had revealed considerable damage caused by beetle infestation and asking if the Council would consider making a grant towards the cost of repair of over £20, 000.

In addition, they were asking if the Council could advise and assist in making approaches to other agencies.

The letter had been accompanied by a disc containing photographs showing how severe the problem was.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was agreed that the Council should make a donation of £1000. 00.

However, it was felt that the Diocesan Authorities would be better able to offer advice and assistance in making approaching other agencies..

On a motion also proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, it was confirmed that the Council should, as in previous years, continue to meet the cost of hiring and emptying the Eurobin kept in Longdon Churchyard.

(v) Reconciliation Statement

The Clerk presented a Reconciliation Statement for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, which showed a year-end balance of £14533. 18.

He would prepare a detailed financial statement for presentation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its next meeting.

(vi) Date and Venue of Next Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Clerk confirmed that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee would take place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2008, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

(vii) Appointment of External Auditor

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mike Norman, Manager, Audit Policy and Practice, Audit Commission, Longdon, confirmation of the appointment of Jackie Ballard, of the Audit Commission's Limited Assurance Specialist Unit, as auditor to Longdon Parish Council for the financial years 2007/08 to 2011/12.

15. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from David La Trobe, Honorary Secretary of Longdon Cricket Club, a letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008, enclosing a copy of the Club's accounts for the 2007 season.

(ii) The Clerk reported receiving from Bernie Bailey, Marketing Administrator, Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, Oldbury, a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008, updating the Council on the services offered by its local Energy Efficiency Advice Service, together with a number of enclosures.

16. 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. 03. 08 – effective from period from 01. 04. 08 to 31. 07. 08.

- (ii) From Jenny Moore, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 30<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008;

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 21<sup>st</sup> March 2008;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

(iv) From Judy Magill, Administrative Assistant, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Central West People's Millions Launch: "News at Ten's Julie Wants ITV Central West Communities To Go For Gold".

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

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

(vi) From The Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council:

Bus/Rail Services Timetable – Lichfield & Rugeley Area: March 2008 (four copies).

(vii) From Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

- ◆Subscription Invoice;
- ◆Proforma for Council details;
- ◆SPCA Services Leaflet;
- ◆Newsletter – March 2008;
- ◆Advertising Material – Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design & Publishing Limited; The MJ (weekly journal for local government sector); Abberley Kitchens, Stone, Staffs.; Field Guard, Cranleigh, Surrey (safe surfaces); rekk Limited, Nottingham (youth shelters);
- ◆Vacancies for Part-time Parish Clerk for Colwich and Curborough/Elmhurst & Farewell/Chorley;
- ◆Details of Training Programme: Welcome New Councillors; Chairmanship Skills; Working Smarter – Tips and Tricks in Microsoft Word;
- ◆Booking Form for new training course: "How to Compile an Evidence Portfolio" (17<sup>th</sup> April 2008);
- ◆"Speaking Out": the news magazine for West Midlands Regional Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association, Issue 18, March 2008.

(viii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

- ◆Calor Gas Village of the Year – Staffordshire ("Please send me an application form for Village of the Year/ Please send me more information on Village of the Year/ I would like to arrange a formal chat. Please call me on....");
- ◆Diary of Staffordshire Village Festivals & Events 2008.

(ix) From The Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:

"from Time 2 Time": Issue 16, Spring 2008.

(x) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 102, April 2008;  
“Natural World”: Issue 82, Spring 2008;  
Cannock Group News.

(xi) From The Playing Field Association (formerly known as The Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust):

Minutes of meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

(xii) From Wicksteed Leisure Limited, Kettering, Northants:

Brochure: Wicksteed Playscapes.

#### 17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Parsons reported that the hedge outside “The Kennels”, Upper Way, needed cutting.

(ii) Cllr. Parsons reported that there had recently been an accident outside Longdon Lodge, when a motorcyclist had skidded on mud outside Catmeadow Lane and collided with the wall, though fortunately he had been able to continue his journey.

He suggested that the Clerk might write to the Divisional Highway Manager, asking him to re-instate the width of the road and to provide a painted centre line.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Owen asking for this to be done.

#### 18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, following the Annual Meeting, which would commence at 7. 30 p.m.