

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2008

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

Also present was one parishioner – Mr. Richard Clarke, of Brook End, Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council, and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.
Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons was also absent.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, on Tuesday, July 8th, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Russell and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, were approved and signed after the words “from her perspective” were, at the request of Cllr. Mrs. Meere, removed from the original draft.

3. PARISHIONERS’ QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

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

Mr. Clarke replied that he was present simply as an observer, but asked if it was obligatory for parishioners to submit their questions in writing in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman assured him that this was not required under the Council’s Standing Orders.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Recording Councillors’ Absences

Cllr. Mrs. Meere and Cllr. Bird re-iterated their displeasure at the way in which the number of their absences had been highlighted in the minutes of the previous meeting, and it was agreed, at the Chairman’s suggestion, that the way in which Councillors’ absences were recorded should be reviewed at the next meeting.

He pointed out that the purpose of the letter which he had sent reminding Councillors of their responsibility and commitment had been written in general terms to all Councillors and had not been intended to single out individuals.

(ii) “Longdon Life”

Cllr. Juxon asked whether, in the view of the Council, the Editorial in the Summer issue of “Longdon Life”, just published, was an accurate account of the Council’s attempt to negotiate with the Governors of St. James School the use of the school grounds in out-of-school hours as a village play area for local children.

The Council confirmed that, in its view, it accurately recorded the Council’s initial approach to the Governors and their eventual response.

(iii) Traffic in School Lane, Malthouse Road and Dollymakers Hill, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Tim Buxton, Traffic Management Technician, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, dated 14th August 2008, in which

he responded in detail to the concerns raised by the Parish Council's Highways and Footpaths Committee.

It was agreed that the contents of Mr. Buxton's letter should be closely studied by the Highways and Footpaths Committee at its next meeting, scheduled for October 7th.

(iv) Grassed Area opposite Gentleshaw School

The Clerk reported that work on cutting back branches which were overhanging power cables had just been carried out on behalf of e-on.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Planning Working Group

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

08/00793/REM (Amended): Mr. and Mrs. R. Bate: Erection of detached bungalow: Land adjacent to "Pine Ridge", Brereton Hill Lane, Upper Longdon

These amendments had related to elevational changes to window and door positions, increase in width of rear patio, and reduced width of right-hand front gable. There had been no objections to this application.

08/00740/LBC: Richard Attridge: Formation of two internal openings: Buttercup Barn, Horsey Lane, Longdon

There had been no objections to this application.

08/00751/FUL: Mr. R. A. Beasley: Erection of three-bedroom dormer bungalow and detached double garage: Land rear of "Meadow View", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

An objection had been made to this application on the grounds that the proposed development would be inappropriate within the Green Belt.

Moreover, access would require considerable improvement to provide adequate visibility, but this could only be obtained by the uprooting of hedges, etc., which would have an adverse effect in this part of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

08/00767/FUL: Mrs. Maureen Dewell: Retention of timber garden implement shed/store: Trout Lodge, Startley Lane, Upper Longdon

There had been no objections to this application, but confirmation was requested that no other development had been carried out at this site without the necessary planning permission.

In particular, the walkway and lighting around part of the lake appeared an

incongruous urban feature in this part of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

08/00802/COU: William Tyler Developments: Retention of equestrian use, including field shelter and removal of container: Land adjacent to "Giddies", Hay Lane, Longdon Green

It had been noted that this application was a re-submission following the refusal of the previous application 08/00390/COU.

Although the applicant now proposed to remove the storage container from the site and Reason Refusal No. 2 was no longer relevant, the field shelter/stable was to remain, and therefore Reason for Refusal No. 1 was still relevant.

The fact that the horse had a debilitating condition could not overcome the objections on policy grounds to the development.

However, it was felt that the attention of the Principal Planning Officer should be drawn to her letter of 5th August 2008, and she should be asked to advise the Parish Council on how this situation differed from that to which her letter referred.

08/00835/FUL: Mr. C. Spruce: Variation of Condition No. 1 of 06/00565/FUL to allow retention of the temporary nursery accommodation for a further two years: Lichfield Cathedral School, Longdon Hall, Church Hill, Longdon Green.

It had been observed that the structure was clearly visible from Footpaths 38 and 40 and detracted from the openness of the Green Belt.

However, if further temporary permission was granted, the District Council was requested to make clear to the applicants that a further application for renewal would not be approved.

08/00837/FUL: Mr. P. A. Boston: Erection of roof over cattle corral: Hawcroft Grange Farm, Hood Lane, Longdon

It was noted that the evidence submitted indicated that this development was essential in the interests of agricultural and was therefore appropriate development within the Green Belt.

However, it was felt that the District Council should ensure that the site was extensively landscaped and a condition imposed that the building would only be used for agricultural purposes.

08/00859/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. John Rout: Ground-floor and first-floor extensions to form utility, bedroom with en suite and WC: "Coppice View", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

There had been no objections to this application.

08/00862/FUL: Mr. Andy Shaw: Single-storey extensions to form dining-room, lounge, utility and family dining area; "Sunny Corner", 76 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

While there had been no objections in principle to this development, it had been considered that the design was inappropriate.

(ii) For Consideration

There were no further planning applications to be considered.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

08/00484/FUL: Mr. Richard Burt: Demolition of existing utility room and erection of a single-storey kitchen and utility room: Rookery Farm, Giddywell Lane, Longdon

08/00516/FUL: Mr. William Tyler: New vehicle access: "Giddies", Hay Lane, Longdon Green

08/00576/REM: Ms. Sue Boston: Erection of three-bedroom detached bungalow and detached double garage: 38 Brook End, Longdon

08/00581/LBC: Mr. and Mrs. Phillips: Various internal and external works, including demolition of small single-storey extension: Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Longdon

08/00644/FUL: Mr. F. Barton: Single-storey oak-framed orangery to rear: "Southdown", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

08/00384/FUL: Mr. Alan Lake: Proposed first-floor extension to form en suite and bathroom and installation of two dormer windows to front: "Rockery Rise", Lower Way, Upper Longdon

(iv) Refused by Longdon Parish Council

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

08/00384/COU: Mr. T. Cox: Change of use of stables/workshop to offices, welfare area and small tools store room: Holly Farm, Chorley

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Developments at Trout Lodge, Beaudesert Park

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 8th July 2008, in which she informed the Council that the boathouse at the above site had been built with planning permission in 1991, and the quay, which was actually a slipway into the lake, had been there a similar length of time.

The newly-tarmaced drive was the original one and, as it was within the curtilage of the property, was Permitted Development.

She was able to confirm, therefore, that no unauthorised development had taken place at this site.

However, Cllr. Stanfield questioned whether the location of the property within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty had been given sufficient consideration.

(b) Withdrawal of Application No. 08/00506/FUL

The Clerk reported that he had received notification that this Planning Application to erect a conservatory at Cross Ash Cottage, Thorleys Hill, Longdon, had been withdrawn on 29th July 2008.

(c) Erection of Stables and Keeping of Horses at Olde Croft, Borough Lane, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 8th July 2008, in which she had informed the Council that she had written to the landowner in relation to the above and had been informed that one of the field shelters had been removed and that the remaining shelters would be removed as soon as possible.

The landowner intended to submit an application for the change of use of land to the keeping of horses only.

Mrs. Hibbs added that she would review the situation again at the end of the month.

The Clerk further reported that he had received a second letter from Mrs. Hibbs, dated 6th August 2008, in which she had informed the Council that, in further discussions, the landowner had claimed that the horses were not used for equestrian purposes or kept on land as such, but that they grazed on land in the same way that livestock graze on the land, and that their only source of food was from the land itself.

The landowner had also claimed that livestock were present on the land for the majority part of the year.

Mrs. Hibbs had gone on to list the six types of horses known in planning law: the working horse, the racing horse, the recreational horse; the grazing horse. the residentially incidental horse and the horse bred for horsemeat.

The first three types were recognised as agricultural use, as was the use of land for grazing, though not for keeping, while the keeping of a horse within the curtilage of a dwelling, though not agricultural, might be permitted on the grounds that it was incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.

Finally, the human consumption of horsemeat was common in other European countries, and the breeding and keeping of horses for food would clearly constitute an agricultural use.

Mrs. Hibbs' conclusion had been that the keeping of horses at Olde Croft for grazing only could be considered as an agricultural use, and the field shelters present on the land in association with the authorised use of the land could be regarded as chattels.

Therefore, neither constituted development and consequently did not require planning permission.

However, the landowner had been informed that the situation would continue to be monitored.

(d) Engineering Works at Land at Stafford Road, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 8th July 2008, in which she advised the Council that a delegated report had been signed to pursue no further action at present. Since an initial visit on 12th October 2007, no further work had been completed

at the site which would facilitate the potential use of the land, and no response had been received from the landowner. If further activity was noted at the site, however, the enforcement case would be re-opened.

(e) Erection of Building and Continued Parking of Coal Lorries at Hollows Farm, Shaw Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 23rd July 2008, in which she reminded the Council that, at the site meeting in February 2008, they had been advised that the parking of coal lorries had ceased and that a planning application for the new building would be submitted.

However, as no such planning application had been submitted and complaints had been received that coal lorries were still being parked on the land, Mrs. Hibbs intended to serve a Planning Contravention Order as the initial step in the enforcement process, and she would keep the Council informed of the progress.

The Chairman added that, in a recent telephone conversation with Mrs. Hibbs, she had told him that it would be difficult to prevent coal lorries from being parked at this site. She had, however, suggested erecting posts along the perimeter of the area, but he had strongly advised her against doing this as it would block the farmer's access to the field beyond.

(f) Building Materials at North Lodge, Startley Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Don Winn, Planning Enforcement Assistant, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 25th July 2008, informing the Council that he had visited the above address and spoken with the co-owner, Ms. Nikki Flanagan.

He reminded the Council that planning permission had been granted in 2002.

However, complaints had been made going back to 1999 regarding the storing of building materials and, as in this case, no evidence had been found to suggest that the materials were being used for anything but the approved development.

Nonetheless, the Council's concerns had been noted, and he would continue to monitor the situation.

(g) Alleged Siting of Containers and Change of Use of Land to Equestrian, Commonsides, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 18th August 2008, in which she informed the Council that she had visited the site on a number of occasions but had not managed to catch anyone there to talk to.

Land Registry did not have a registered owner for the land and consequently she was asking whether the Parish Council could help her in determining who was responsible for the land.

The Chairman was able to inform the Council that the land was owned by Mr. Ron Foster, of "Windyridge", Commonsides, Gentleshaw, whom he had visited and who had agreed to ask the tenant to whom he had rented the land to remove the container.

(h) Proposed Grain and Machinery Store at Chestall Manor, Chestall Estate, Cannock Wood

The Clerk reported that he had received from J. W. Heminsley, Planning Services Manager, Cannock Chase Council, a letter dated 18th August 2008, in which he had informed the Council that his Council had granted planning permission for the above development with an amended design which replaced metal sheeting by timber cladding for the external walls.

Longdon Parish Council's concerns about traffic, but the evidence was that the Store would accommodate machinery for use within the farm holding and reduce the amount of traffic needed to use Malthouse Road to access the farm holding.

Moreover, the building was sited in the least obtrusive location within the site well screened from residential properties by the woodland and, while it was appreciated that there was some heavy traffic involved in the construction process, this had now been completed.

Cllr. Stanfield added that planning permission had been required because earlier applications for agricultural buildings on this site had already been granted under Permitted Development Rights by Lichfield District Council.

(i) Business-Rated Premises in the Parish of Longdon

Cllr. Stanfield distributed copies of a list of business-rated premises in Longdon, which he invited Councillors to study for omissions.

It was noted that Turf n'Landscape at Bradley Lakes, the Longdon Stud and the storage of caravans at Hawcroft Grange Farm were not included.

(j) Cannock Chase Local Development Framework
Core Strategy – Issues and Options 2008 Consultation

The Clerk reported that he had received from Antony Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager, Cannock Chase Council, a letter dated 10th July 2008, inviting comments to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation, the period for such comments commencing on July 10th and ending on September 12th (though comments would be accepted after the final date) and listing the different ways in which these comments could be recorded.

(j) Proposals for ProLogis Park, Lichfield

The Clerk reported that he had received from Scott Royal, Accounts Director, of Dialogue, Leeds, a letter dated 29th July 2008, enclosing copies of a news update on proposals for warehousing, distribution units and business starter units at Fradley, near Lichfield, and offering to make a presentation of the scheme to the Parish Council

(Dialogue was a company with offices in London, Leeds and Cardiff providing tactical advice and practical consultation and communication support at all stages of the development process).

Such a presentation was not considered necessary, however.

6. REPORT OF MEETINGS

(i) SPCA Executive Committee:

Cllr. Stanfield gave a brief report on a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which had taken place at Stafford.

Cllr. Stanfield said that the business of the meeting had been devoted exclusively to internal arrangements, and consequently there was nothing of interest to the Council for him to report.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

(i) "Lifting the Lid on Domestic Violence" Event: Tuesday, September 2nd, 2008 in the Guildhall, Bore Street, Lichfield, from 11. 00 a.m. to 5. 00 p.m.

(ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Thursday, September 11th, 2008, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.

(iii) Staffordshire Wildlife Trust –38th Annual General Meeting: Thursday, September 11th, 2008, at the Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Speaker: Stephanie Hilborne, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts, on "Living Landscapes – the National Picture".

(iv) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee - 50th Anniversary Celebrations: Tuesday, September 16th, 2008, at Shugborough, Milford, Stafford, from 10. 30 a.m. to 2. 00 p.m.

(v) St. Giles Hospice Service of Thanksgiving: Sunday, September 23rd, 2008, at Lichfield Cathedral, commencing at 3. 30 p.m.

(vi) Community Council of Staffordshire Annual General Meeting: Thursday, September 25th, 2008, at Stowe-by-Chartley Village Hall, Station Road, Stowe-by-Chartley, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

(vii) South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust Annual General Meeting: Tuesday, September 30th, 2008, at Oak Farm Hotel, Watling Street, Cannock, commencing at 5. 00 p.m.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Report of Meeting of Highways and Footpaths Committee

Cllr. Stanfield gave a report on a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Committee which had taken place at the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 22nd, 2008 (*Appendix A*).

Two issues had been drawn to the attention of the Committee by parishioners attending the meeting: Dr. Richard Totty, of Redhill, Upper Longdon, had referred to the presence of unrestrained dogs who were inhibiting the lawful use of a footpath in Upper Longdon, while Mr. Tony Ellis, of Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw, had expressed neighbourhood concerns about the use of Dollymakers Hill, Malthouse Road and School Lane by heavy commercial vehicles.

Cllr. Stanfield had promised that both problems would be addressed and the Clerk had subsequently written to the relevant authorities.

Mr. Will Rose had reported on the progress of the Footpath Survey, and other topics considered had been the County Council's Community gangs Scheme and village notice-boards.

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place at the W. I. Hall, on Tuesday, October 7th.

(ii) Surfacing of Footpath across Glebe Field at Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Mason, Diocesan Property Manager, Diocese of Lichfield, a letter dated 23rd July 2008, in which he informed the Council that the Diocesan Glebe Committee had approved the Council's proposal to surface the footpath from the village to the church where it crossed the glebe field.

Furthermore, the Committee had agreed to make a grant of £500 towards the cost of the work providing the path had a "rural" finish rather than tarmac.

On receiving confirmation of this, Mr. Mason would send the Council a formal letter of consent.

Cllr. Stanfield reported that a site meeting had taken place between Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, the Clerk and himself at which the proposed work had been considered, after which Mr. Rochfort had sent an email to both him and the Clerk confirming his support and informing them that the County Council would make a grant of £1500. 00 towards the cost.

However this money would come from the County Council's Rights of Way maintenance budget, not from the Community Paths Initiative Scheme.

Once the Clerk had received the formal written consent of the Diocesan Glebe Committee, the work could go ahead.

(iii) Responsibility for Maintaining Drains, Ditches and Watercourses.

The Clerk reported that he had received from Judy Magill, Administrative Assistant, Policy and Performance, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 21st July 2008, outlining the various agencies' responsibilities for maintaining drains, ditches and watercourses.

Piped watercourses and private drains were the responsibility of the owner of the land over which they flowed or of the properties served by the drain, though Lichfield District Council had the powers to enforce maintenance.

Main rivers came under the control of The Environment Agency, who also had powers to deal with pollution in any watercourse.

Some roadside ditches were in the ownership of the fronting landowner, other to Staffordshire County Council or, in the case of trunk roads, The Highways Agency. but, in all cases, the Highway Authority had powers to ensure that they were kept clear, thereby providing the best starting point for dealing with problems with these ditches.

(iv) Animals on Rights of Way

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29th July 2008, in which he explained the legal position regarding animals kept in field crossed by public rights of way.

The keeper of an animal was liable for damages if it injured another person, where the keeper was aware of the animal's tendency to injury. Consequently, if an animal with such tendencies was kept in a field crossed by a right of way and a person was attacked, prosecution could ensue, unless the damage was wholly the fault of the injured person.

A dog which prevented the use of a path by behaving in a threatening manner might constitute a public nuisance at common law.

It was an offence for a dog to be out of control in a public place and an aggravated offence if, whilst out of control, it injured any person. A dog was

judged dangerously out of control on any occasion on which there were grounds for reasonable apprehension that it would injure any person, whether or not it actually did.

There were special provisions relating to bulls.

The Clerk added that he had sent a copy of Mr. Rochfort's letter to the parishioner who had first raised this issue at a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Committee.

(v) Public Rights of Way Survey

The Clerk reported that he had received from Caroline Watterson, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 5th August 2008, updating the Council on work carried out on a number of footpaths in the parish where the Parish Survey had recorded the need for maintenance.

(vi) Paved Footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Elizabeth Cauldwell, of Berkeley Way, Longdon, a letter dated August 8th, 2008, in which she had asked for a holly tree growing in the verge at the side of the above footpath to be removed since it was overhanging the footpath and threatening the stability of her fence.

After consulting Cllr. Stanfield, as Chairman of the Highways and Footpaths Committee, he had instructed Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Service, to remove the tree, though Mr. Johnson had subsequently reported that it had been impossible to uproot it, since this would damage the fence.

(vii) Traffic in School Lane, Malthouse Road and Dollymakers Hill

The Clerk reported that he had received from Tim Buxton, Traffic Management Technician, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 14th August 14th, 2008, thanking the Council for highlighting the concerns raised by its Highways and Footpaths Committee regarding the use of the above lanes by heavy commercial vehicles, but rejecting most of the Parish Council's suggestions.

It was agreed that the Highways and Footpaths Committee should prepare a detailed response to Mr. Buxton's letter at its next meeting.

(viii) Overgrown Hedgerows in Brook End

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Margaret Woollard, of The Croft, Longdon, a letter dated August 22nd, 2008, in which she had drawn the Council's attention to overgrown hedgerows at the side of the A51 and along the footpath between The Croft and Brook End.

However, the Council heard that that, in the first instance, the house-owners had already been approached and arrangements made for the hedge to be trimmed, while, in the second instance, the encroaching vegetation had now been cut back.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Report of Meeting of Greens and Open Spaces Committee

Cllr. Welch gave a report on a meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 15th, 2008 and which John Smith, Greens and Open Spaces Manager, Lichfield District Council, had attended (*Appendix B*).

Mr. Smith had told the meeting that the parish rated very highly for the provision of a park, though, so far, no suitable site had been identified,

Cllr. Welch had explained to Mr. Smith that the Parish Council had been trying to promote the use of existing amenities and had been disappointed by the negative response which it had received when it had approached the Governors of St. James School.

The next meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Committee would be taking place in the W. I. Hall on Tuesday, October 28th.

(ii) Gentleshaw Common

The Clerk reported that he had received from Tamara Kabat, Biodiversity Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 16th July 2008, in which she had informed him that she had referred his letters regarding the status of the open land opposite Hollows Lodge and the parking of lorries and wrapped hay bales thereon to John Brown, of her Council's Property and Asset Management Team, and Christine Hibbs, of the Council's Enforcement Team.

He had subsequently received from Richard King, writing on behalf of John Brown, a letter dated 13th August 2008, confirming that this land was indeed part of Gentleshaw Common and that no consent had been given by the District Council for the activities currently taking place there.

(iii) Bracken Control at Gentleshaw Common SSSI

The Clerk reported that he had received from Tamara Kabat a further letter, dated 22nd July 2008, in which she had advised the Parish Council that Lichfield District Council had employed contractors to conduct herbicide spraying on the Gentleshaw Common Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Bracken spraying would take place from 31st July to 1st August, weather permitting, and Japanese knotweed spraying would take place in September.

She would let the Council know the exact dates of this operation when they had been confirmed.

(iv) De-registration of Common Land

The Clerk reported that he had received from B. Parsons, writing on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 5th August 2008, informing the Council that it was his understanding that Mr. Tony Cox would in due course be submitting an application to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the de-registration of that part of Gentleshaw Common recently sold to him by Lichfield District Council.

He believed that this was currently being prepared by his solicitor.

A Notice of application had duly been published in the columns of "The Lichfield Mercury" of September 4th, but this had failed to meet legal

requirements in a number of ways and should therefore be considered unacceptable.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the Secretary of State pointing out these flaws.

It was also felt that the ownership of the release land should be verified.

(v) Grounds Maintenance

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham McCulloch a letter dated 15th August 2008 in which he reported that there had been no problems cutting the greens and verges that month and that he had also mown and removed the long grass from the centre of Longdon Green.

10. COMMUNITY HALLS

(i) Longdon Memorial Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received from Janet Allen, Club Secretary and Treasurer of the Longdon Club and Institute, a letter dated 8th August 2008 offering the Longdon Memorial Hall for the venue of the open-air Remembrance service which the Longdon Branch of the Royal British Legion were proposing to hold.

He had forwarded the letter to Mrs. Margaret Woollard, the Branch's Secretary.

11. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2008

The Clerk reported that Longdon and Longdon Green had finished second in the Large Village Section of the Lichfield and Cannock Section of the Best Kept Village Competition, while, in the Small Village Section, Upper Longdon had been "Highly Commended".

A summary of the judges' comments had not yet been received, but he believed that the map would come in for some criticism.

12. LAW AND ORDER

The Clerk reported that he had received the minutes of three meetings of the Joint Operations Group held on July 17th, July 31st and August 14th.

Items of local interest included the departure of Inspector Ashley Farrington from the Burntwood Neighbourhood Police Unit and his replacement as NPU Commander by Inspector Kevin Mulligan and a campaign to promote the location of defibrillators in local offices and shops and training in their use.

It was pointed out that the problem with promoting defibrillators was not their expense but finding a sufficient number of people to provide a round-the-clock service.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

*Longdon W. I. Hire of Hall – July 15th: £12. 00;
 Hire of Hall – July 22nd: £12. 00

£ 24. 00

*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – July	£215. 00
*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – August: £215. 00; Mowing centre of Longdon Green: £ 170. 00	£385. 00
*Audit Commission	Audit Fee	£158. 63
*≠Instaprint, Rugeley	Printing 700 copies of “Longdon Life” and 600 inserts	£279. 00
*≠Hazel Crosbie	Delivering “Longdon Life” and inserts	£ 35. 00
*≠A. J. Juxon	Editor’s Expenses	£ 15. 00
*Lichfield District Council	Annual charge in respect of emptying dog waste bins	£733. 20
W. B. Sullivan	Clerk’s Salary : £300. 00 Photocopying: £ 74. 94 Postage: £ 32. 10	£407. 04
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – Sept. 2 nd : £12. 00 Hire of Hall – Sept. 9 th : £12. 00	£ 24. 00
≠Longdon Produce & Flower Show Committee Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Hire of Halls for Annual Produce and Flower Show Membership Renewal	£160. 00 £ 36. 00
Lichfield District Council	Annual charge in respect of waste collection service at St. James Church, Longdon	£199. 75
Aqua Jet Services	Remove and dispose of rotting and new vegetation between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk, including application of Round-Up weed-killer	£ 60. 00

(*confirmation ≠payment made under Section 137)

(ii) Payments received

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

Staffordshire County Council	Highway Maintenance Agreement	£680. 00
Lynn Marshall	Advertisements: “Longdon Life”	£ 12. 50

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£1185. 19	The Halifax d/a: £20009. 00
less uncleared cheques:	<u>£ 699. 00</u>	
	£ 486. 19	

(iv) Appeals for Grants

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, no appeals for grant aid had been received.

(v) Completion of Final Audit

The Clerk reported that the Annual Audit had been completed and the certified Annual Return, signed by Dina Pejcinovic and dated 21st July 2008, returned.

Her comments had been considered at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee reported below.

A copy of the certificate had been put in the Parish Council folder kept at Longdon Post Office, and a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit posted on each of the Parish Council's notice-boards

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

The Chairman gave a report on a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place at the W. I. Hall on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2008 (*Appendix C*).

He told the Council that the Committee had checked the budget and found it healthy.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Bird, the Committee's recommendation that the Highways & Footpaths Committee be allocated a further £2500. 00 was approved.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, the Committee's recommendation that the Council's payment of £35. 00 to Mrs. Hazel Crosbie be increased to £45. 00 was also approved.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was agreed that the wording of Standing Order 53 (e) be amended in the light of the Independent Internal Auditor's comment in his Final Report.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Poynton, Treasurer of the Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Country Fayre, a letter dated 19th July 2008, thanking the Parish Council for its donation towards the cost of the Fayre.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Val Shand, PCC Secretary, Church of St. James the Great, Longdon, a letter dated 15th August 2008, inviting members of the Council to the service at the church on Tuesday, September 9th, at which the Rev. Robert Bull and the Rev. Rob Farmer would be welcomed to the parish as priest-in-charge and resident priest respectively.

Unfortunately, he had been obliged in reply to inform Mrs. Shand that this date was also the date of the next meeting of the Parish Council, the first since the summer break and one for which there was already a full agenda.

It was agreed that Mr. Farmer should be invited to the next meeting of the Council.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Alex J. H. Fox, MBE, Chair of the Trust Board, South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust, a letter dated 20th August 2008, informing the Council that the Trust's Annual General Meeting would be taking place at Oak Farm, Watling Street, Cannock, on Tuesday, September 30th, when some of the developments which had taken place in district areas would be highlighted.

A copy of the Agenda had been enclosed; the Annual Report for 2007/2007 would be available on the Trust's website www.southstaffsspct.nhs.uk no later than seven days before the meeting.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

- (i) From Beth Harries, Solicitor, Democratic, Development and Legal Services,
Lichfield District Council:

Forward Plan – Version 1 – effective for the period 01.06.2008 – 30.09.08
- issued 17.07.09;
Year Book 2007/2008.

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 5th August 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 12th August 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 19th August 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 26th August 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 2nd September 2008;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 9th September 2008.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 11th July 2008.
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 18th July 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 25th July 2008.
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 1st August 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 8th August 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 15th August 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 22nd August 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 29th August 2008.

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

Monthly Applications for 1st August 2008.

- (v) From Judy Magill, Democratic, Development and Legal Services,
Lichfield District Council:

Minutes of Special Parish Forum (Gold Report Presentation and Progress Update) held on 8th June 2008.

(vi) From Holly Tunley, S3SN Admin. Assistant, Lichfield District Council
Voluntary Services:

Staffordshire Third Sector Network – E Bulletin, Issue No. 49,
1st August 2008’
Staffordshire Third Sector Network – E Bulletin, Issue No. 50,
8th August 2008;
Staffordshire Third Sector Network – E Bulletin, Issue No. 51
14th August 2008;
Staffordshire Third Sector Network – E Bulletin, Issue No. 52
21st August 2008.
Staffordshire Third Sector Network – E Bulletin, Issue No. 53,
28th August 2008.

(vii) From Lynn Hammant, Parks Administration Officer, Parks and Rangers Unit,
Lichfield District Council:

2 Posters: “Proms in the Park”.

*These posters had been colour-copied, laminated and displayed
on the Parish Council’s notice-boards*

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

Poster: Countryside Events – August 2008;
Poster: Countryside Events - September 2008.

*These posters had been colour-copied, laminated and displayed
on the Parish Council’s notice-boards*

(ix) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association:

- Vacancies on Executive Committee in the Lichfield District;
- Booklet: “a guide to becoming a Quality Council”;
- Leaflet: Kinder Grass Mat.
- Newsletter: September 2008;
- Resolutions for Debate and Annual General Meeting and Conference
- 15th November 2008;
- Executive Committee Nomination Form;
- Training Programme.

(x) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

- “News and Views”: Issue No. 2, August 2008 (2 copies);
- Notice of Annual General Meeting;
- Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31st March 2008;
- Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 29th September 2008;
- Notes on Nominations to the Board;
- Nomination for Election Form 2008;
- Voting Slip;
- Location Map.

(xi) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

- “Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 103, Autumn 2008;
- “Natural World”: Issue 83, Summer 2008;
- Annual Review 2007;
- Notice of Annual General Meeting;
- Cannock Group News – July 2008;
- Appeal: “Recycle your mobile and help wildlife”;
- Invitation to take part in Heather Hike on Sunday, 7th September 2008;
- Sheet of tickets for Autumn Raffle 2008.

(xii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR”: Vol. 50, No. 2 – September 2008.

(xiii) From Proludic UK Ltd., West Bridgford, Nottingham:

“About Play”: Issue No. 6.

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The date of next year’s Annual Assembly was provisionally fixed for Tuesday, April 21st, to be confirmed at next month’s meeting.

It was suggested that a member of the Forestry Commission might be invited to address the meeting.

(ii) On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that the Chairman should write to the Chief Executive of Lichfield District Council making her aware of the frustration which was being caused by the manner in which the Parish Council’s request to be allowed to manage the part of Gentleshaw Common opposite Gentleshaw School was being dealt with.

(iii) Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had received a complaint from a parishioner that there were no buses through Longdon at the weekend.

Unfortunately, there was no Community Bus Scheme to compensate.

(iv) Cllr. Stanfield reminded Councillors of his earlier request that they nominate entries for the list of buildings of local interest being compiled by Lichfield District Council.

The W. I. Hall, Longdon Memorial Hall and Longdon Village Hall had already been proposed.

It was agreed that a final list of suggestions should be put together at the Council’s next meeting.

(v) Cllr. Welch said that there was a problem of litter around Longdon Village Hall.

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett pointed out that there were already anti-litter notices at the Hall.

(vi) Councillors instructed the Clerk to put on record their recognition and appreciation of Cllr. Juxon’s hard work in editing the latest issue of “Longdon Life”.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Highways and Footpaths Committee: Tuesday, October 7th, 2008, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Full Council: Tuesday, October 14th, 2008, in the W: I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Greens and Open Spaces Committee: Tuesday, October 28th, 2008, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.