

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE OF LONGDON
PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JULY 22nd, 2008

Present: Cllr. N. Stanfield (Chairman); Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler;
Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley;
Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present were the Clerk and four parishioners – Mr. Tony Ellis and Mrs. Helen Price, both of Malthouse Road, Gentleshaw; and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Totty, of Red Hill, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

There were none, all members of the Committee being present.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed Dr. and Mrs. Totty, Mr. Ellis and Mrs. Price to the meeting and asked them if they wished to speak.

Dr. Totty said that he and his wife believed that the Council should know that, from their own experience, the use of Footpath No. 51 was being inhibited by the presence of four dogs allowed to exercise by their owner in a field through which this footpath crossed and which he also owned.

Though noisy and boisterous rather than dangerous, their behaviour was nonetheless frightening and could be discouraging the lawful use of this footpath.

It was agreed that, as a first step to addressing this problem, the Clerk should write to the Principal Rights of Way Officer at Stafford asking him what the law was governing the control of animals kept in fields crossed by footpaths.

Mr. Ellis said that he and Mrs. Price had come to the meeting to express their concern and that of their neighbours over the use of Dollymakers Hill by heavy lorries in general and those using the access to and from the newly-erected grain store at Chestall Manor in particular.

To illustrate the danger, he gave an example of a 12-wheeled, forty-foot lorry having to reverse as far as School Lane and, as a result, nearly causing a collision.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council had objected to the planning application in support of the development at Chestall Manor, including the widened access, but, so far, nothing had been heard from Cannock Chase District Council.

However, he understood that permission was likely to be given, since the proposed building, which, he believed had already been erected, was less than 465 metres square and would therefore be allowed under Permitted Development.

Nonetheless, in his view, the widening of the access, which had involved the appropriation of highway verge, should be recognised as engineering works and, as such, did require planning permission.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the County Surveyor drawing his attention to the problem being caused to local residents by the use of School Lane, Malthouse Road and Dollymakers Hill by heavy goods

vehicles and suggesting the imposition of a weight restriction and appropriate roadside and road-surface signage.

He would also be asked to comment on the Council's view that widening the access to the grain store at Chestall Manor was an engineering operation within the highway and therefore needed planning consent.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Dog Waste Bins

No alternative contractor had been found.

(ii) Roadside Hedge at Coldwell, Gentleshaw

The Chairman had advised members that arrangements had been made by the owner for this hedge to be cut back by a local contractor.

(iii) Footpath No. 33 (Lysways Lane)

The Principal Rights of Way Officer was still in negotiation with the landowner.

5. FOOTPATH SURVEY

Mr. Rose reported that a further twelve footpaths had been surveyed, three of them new.

He handed the Clerk copies of the completed survey forms for forwarding to Stafford.

These recorded problems of footpaths not being re-instated after ploughing and planting, and the intimidating presence of two dogs encountered in the course of one of the surveys had also been reported.

In addition, aggressive horses had been encountered while crossing Footpath No. 46, when one of the walkers had been bitten on the shoulder.

A number of other problems, including the absence of waymarking, were also noted.

A sponsored walk in aid of the County Air Ambulance involving more than 100 walkers had proved useful. Mr. Rose had learnt that other footpath walks had been planned by local groups, but they found that they could not follow the route originally planned and been obliged to find an alternative.

6. COMMUNITY PATHS INITIATIVE

The Chairman reported that he had received an updated quotation from D. McCarthy Brothers, of Lichfield, so work could proceed on upgrading the footpath across the Glebe Field once the Council had been notified of the result of its application for a grant under the Community Paths Initiative Scheme.

7. COMMUNITY GANGS SCHEME

The Clerk reported that he had received from Clive Thomson, Area Highways Manager (East), Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 11th July 2008, advising the Council of a scheme to use Community Gangs to carry out low priority work on the highway that was seen as important to the local community.

The scheme would be launched from this September, and it was intended to operate with three gangs, which should enable each community area in Area East to be visited three times a year on a seventeen-week cycle.

In order to discuss the matter further, there would be a meeting for parish councils in Lichfield Rural West at the Lichfield Depot, Trent Valley Road, on Monday, 11th August, at 10. 00 a.m.

Each parish council was being invited to send one representative, who was being asked to bring to the meeting a list of his or her Council's priorities.

It was agreed that, since Cllr. Stanfield was Chairman of the Highways and Footpaths Committee, he was the one best placed to represent Longdon Parish Council at this meeting.

8. NOTICE-BOARDS

(i) Village Hall Notice Board

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had received a quotation of £329. 00 for a hardwood notice-board measuring 1200mm. by 900mm. (4ft by 3ft.) with doors of toughened glass.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Bird and Seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that the Parish Council would contribute half the cost of the notice-board, in return for which the Council would be allowed to display statutory notices on it.

(ii) Notice-Boards in Bus Shelters

The Clerk pointed out that, at present, notices were being pinned to the back walls of the bus shelters in Brook End, and he asked whether the Committee thought that small notice-boards should be provided.

The general feeling was that there were enough notice-boards in the parish already, though Cllr. Bird said that he would look into the question of appropriate material.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Grange Hill, Upper Longdon

It was noted that nothing had so far been done to secure the bank in Grange Hill, and the Clerk was instructed to write to Ken Owen, the Divisional Highway Manager, asking him what action he was proposing to take.

(ii) Footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received a complaint from Mr. Elizabeth Cauldwell, of 12 Berkeley Way, concerning the overgrown vegetation bordering this footpath.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Bird and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, the Clerk was instructed to write to Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Service, asking him to clear this site and re-lay the bark.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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