

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL,
LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, 2008

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett;
Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons;
Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present were the Clerk and one parishioner - Mr. Richard Meere,
of Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler;
Cllr. N. Stanfield; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council,
and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon,
on Tuesday, September 9th, 2008, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch
and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Mr. Meere said that he was greatly concerned about the alterations and extensions which the owner of
Grand Lodge was proposing to make which appeared to involve substantial extensions to the rear of the
property.

He pointed out that Grand Lodge was one of nine lodges built on the periphery of the estate and the only
one to retain any degree of integrity, which would, if this application were to be approved, be severely
compromised.

Regardless of any architectural merit it might have, it was of great historical importance; it was built to
mark the return of the Marquess of Anglesey from Waterloo and was once the main entrance to Beaudesert
Hall.

Its two wings had provided accommodation for estate workers and their families.

The proposed extensions would be out of all proportion to the existing building and destroy its original
character by turning it into an executive dwelling.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Meere for sharing his concern with the Parish Council; he assured him that,
after more research, the Council would be preparing
a detailed response to the application, which, it was believed, contained a number of misleading statements.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Buildings of Local Interest

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they had been asked by Cllr. Stanfield
to nominate buildings in the parish which were, in their opinion, of exceptional local interest.

Amongst those nominated were Keeper's Cottage, Startley Lane, Upper Longdon; "Levanto", Upper Way,
Upper Longdon (which, it was believed, was once a roadside inn); and Freedom House, Upper Way, Upper
Longdon, (which once housed a bakery).

It was also suggested that The Old Bakehouse, in Chapel Lane, Gentleshaw, might be included on the list.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

The Chairman reported that the following planning application had been considered by the Working Group:

08/00978/FUL: Mr. J. N. Tipper: Single- and two-storey front extensions to form sitting-room, dining-room and bedroom with an extension to detached garage to form garden store: Byegate, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

No objection had been raised to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

08/01032/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. K. Phillips: Refurbishment and single- and two-storey extensions and alterations to form kitchen, utility, billiard room, gymnasium, bedroom with en suite, plus detached garage with accommodation above, stables/kennels, relocation of swimming pool and re-instatement of gates: Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Longdon

The Chairman said that a preliminary examination of the planning application had appeared to indicate that a number of the proposals were contrary to various Lichfield District Council Planning Policies.

In addition, it was believed that some of the statements made in the application were not factually accurate.

A detailed response was being prepared and would be submitted to the District Council within the time limit.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

08/00835/FUL: Mr. C. Spruce: Variation of Condition 1 of 06/00565/FUL: Lichfield Cathedral School, Church Hill, Longdon Green
However, permission had been granted for a limited period only, expiring on 4th August 2010, and at the end of this period the building should be removed from the site and the land re-instated as a car park.

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

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

A number of conditions had been attached relating to materials, landscaping and the creation of dormers, windows and other openings on the east facing-elevation of the side extension.

(iv) Refused by Lichfield District Council

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

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

The reasons given for refusing planning permission were that the proposals were considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which would cause harm to its character and openness, and that, by virtue of its design, the development would detract from the special character of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

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

The reasons given for refusing planning permission were the inappropriateness of the development within the Green Belt, which would cause harm to its character and openness, and its failure to conserve or enhance the beauty of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding 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

The reason given for refusing planning permission was that the building, due to its siting in a visually-prominent and isolated location in the open countryside (unrelated to any existing buildings), would have a detrimental impact on the character and openness of the Green Belt.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Notice of Appeal

The Clerk reported that he had received from Claire Jackson, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 15th September 2008, informing the Council that an appeal had been made by Mr. T. Cox against the decision of Lichfield District Council to refuse planning permission for change of use of stables/workshop to offices, welfare area and small tools store room at Holly Farm, Chorley.

The appeal was to be decided on the basis of an informal hearing, the date of which had yet to be arranged.

The Chairman said that he and Cllr. Stanfield would be checking to see that the District Council represented the Parish Council's views in making its response.

(b) Lichfield District Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options - Advance Notification

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Cox, Principal Development Plans Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 8th September 2008, informing the Council that, following the publication and successful consultation of the Issues and Options Core Strategy at the beginning of the year, they were now working towards identifying the District Council's Preferred Options.

It was intended to publish these Options on November 27th, following which there would be a seven-week consultation period involving appropriate

publicity in the local press and a touring exhibition.

If the Parish Council wanted further publicity in its area or a member of the Development Plans team to visit the parish, it had only to contact Mr. Cox.

(c) West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase Two Revision

The Clerk reported that he had received an unsigned and undated letter notifying the Council that the period of consultation for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Draft had been extended to 8th December.

(d) Alleged Unauthorised Developments at “Cringeford”, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

It had been noticed that considerable earthworks were being carried out in the field outside the curtilage of the property. It was agreed that the matter should be referred to the District Council’s Enforcement Officer.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: September 11th

The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Thursday, September 11th, 2008, which Cllr. Stanfield had attended, but, in Cllr. Stanfield’s absence, no report could be given until the next meeting.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Diary Dates: Thursday, September 25th, 2008 – Litter Pick at Beaudesert Scout Camp from 9. 30 a.m. to 11. 30 a.m.; Tuesday, October 11th, 2008 – Shugborough visit from 2. 00 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m. (The cost of the day will be £5. 00 and will include a cream tea).

(ii) South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust – “Help us to make a difference”: Thursday, October 2nd, 2008, at the Emmanuel Christian Centre, Lichfield, from 1. 30 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m.

(iii) Staffordshire Playing Fields Association Annual General Meeting: Thursday October 16th, 2008, at Cannock Chase District Offices, Beecroft Road, Cannock, commencing at 2. 00 p.m.

(iv) Playbuilder Roadshow: Thursday, October 23rd, 2008, at Sankeys Corner, Bridge Cross Road, Burntwood: Session 1 10. 00 a.m. – 1. 00 p.m.; Session 2 1. 00 p.m. – 3. 00 p.m.

(v) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership – Parish Councils’ Meeting: Wednesday, November 12th, 2008, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Hemmingsley and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, it was unanimously agreed that the cost of hiring the W. I. Hall for this meeting should be met by the Parish Council.

(vi) Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association Annual General Meeting and Conference: Saturday, November 15th, 2008, in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, from 10 30 a.m. to 3. 30 p.m.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Report on meeting of Highways and Footpaths Committee

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Highways and Footpaths Committee which had taken place at the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, October 7th, 2008 (*Appendix A*).

Topics under discussion included the volume and speed of traffic using Dollymakers Hill, Malthouse Road and School Lane, which Cllr. Stanfield had undertaken to monitor; the ongoing survey of parish footpaths, which it was hoped to complete by the end of the year; the Community Gangs scheme, which had cleared obscured roadside signs but left the work of re-claiming the full width of the highway opposite Catmeadow Lane to a later date; and the presence of animals on public rights of way.

(ii) Upgrading of footpath across Glebe Field, Brook End, Longdon

There was uncertainty over whether the work on upgrading this footpath had been completed, since the finish was uneven; in some parts the surface had been covered with a layer of fine stone but in others the larger stones had been left exposed.

Cllr. Mrs. Russell was also concerned that access at either end of this footpath was not disability-friendly, though it was pointed out that they never had been and this should therefore be treated as a separate issue.

The Chairman also pointed out that any gate would have to ensure that the field remained cattle-proof.

He also emphasised the need to ensure that instructions to contractors were always precise and detailed.

It was agreed that the Council's concerns should be made known to Cllr. Stanfield, who would be asked to convey them to the contractor.

9. GREENS AND OPENS SPACES

(i) Provision of Play Areas in Parish

The Clerk invited the Council to consider the possibility of the school play area being made available for younger children to use under adult supervision in out-of-school hours, subject to the permission of the School Governors, and of the field at the back of the Memorial Hall being made available for recreational use by older children, subject to the agreement of the Longdon Club and Institute, the owners of the field, with whom the Council could enter into a leasing arrangement.

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had discussed the second part of this proposal with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Club and Institute, who had reacted favourably but said that her Committee would require a detailed proposal from the Council.

The Clerk thought this approach had been premature, since the Council had not until this moment been presented with the proposal for its consideration, and he suggested that, if the Council were to consider the proposal worth exploring, the first step might be to set up a steering group to which the School Governors and the Management Committee of the Club and Institute might be asked to contribute.

However, the Chairman thought that the first step would be to assess the need for such facilities, and it was agreed instead to ask the Greens and Open Spaces Committee to give some thought to the proposal at its next meeting, which was scheduled to take place on October 28th.

(ii) Application by Mr. T. Cox to de-register Common Land

It was noted that, following the Parish Council's letter to the The Planning Inspectorate pointing out inaccuracies and omissions in the advertisement of September 4th, 2008, Mr. Cox's application had been re-advertised in "The Lichfield Mercury" of October 9th, 2008.

Although it had been observed that this later advertisement gave inaccurate details of the opening hours of Burntwood Library and did not inform the public of where copies of the documents could be obtained, a further objection would only postpone the completion of the procedure further, and it was agreed to take no action.

10. LAW AND ORDER

The Chairman reported that the latest report from the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator had recorded only one criminal act in Longdon during September, when a house in Hay Lane, in Longdon Green, had been broken into and food stolen from the freezer/fridge.

11. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Recording Councillors' Absences from Council and Committee Meetings

After further discussion, it was agreed that

(a) apologies for unavoidable absence should be sent to the Clerk, whenever possible before the meeting, and recorded as such in the minutes of that meeting;

(b) reasons for absence should be given with the apology, although not recorded in the minutes of that meeting; the Chairman might, however, at his or her discretion, consider further dialogue necessary.

(c) where no apology is received, none should be recorded;

(d) Councillors' record of attendance should be put into the public domain as part of the Council's report to parishioners at the Annual Assembly.

Cllr. Parsons requested clarification concerning the number of times that Councillors could be absent before being disqualified.

The Council's understanding was that, if a Councillor had failed to attend six consecutive meetings, disqualification procedures might be instituted.

Cllr. Parsons insisted that the Chairman agree that, if he attended only once in any six successive meetings, he could not be disqualified. The Chairman accepted the proposition, subject to a definitive clarification of the law, though he emphasised his aversion to a law which, by definition, tolerated Councillors' attending only two meetings yearly.

(ii) Parish Council Representation on Standards Committee of District Council

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Brown, Land and Property Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 2nd October 2008, inviting the Council to nominate a Parish Councillor to serve as a third Parish Council representative on the Standards Committee of the District Council.

No member of Longdon Parish Council wished to be nominated, however.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – September	£215. 00
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – October 7 th : £12. 00	
	Hire of Hall – October 14 th : £12. 00	
		£ 24. 00

(*confirmation)

(ii) Payments Received

Staffordshire County Council	Grant towards upgrading footpath across Glebe Field	£1500. 00
HM Customs and Excise	VAT refund	£ 574. 60
Lynn Marshall	Advertisements in "Longdon Life"	£ 22. 50

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£2698. 00	The Halifax s/a: £19009. 98
(less uncleared cheque: £ 215. 00)		

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that no appeals for grant aid had been received.

(v) Reconciliation Statement

The Clerk presented a Reconciliation Statement for the second quarter of the current financial year ending 30th September 2008 (*Appendix B*).

The figures showed that variations were within reasonable limits and that the Council was comfortably within budget.

(vi) Lichfield District Council – Trading with Suppliers

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham Keatley, Financial Services Manager, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 26th September 2008, informing the Council of two changes regarding invoices sent to the District Council, namely, that invoices should be sent to Financial Services at District Council House and that the District Council was now making payments by the BACS system.

However, Longdon Parish Council was not currently one of the District Council's suppliers

13. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Sue Venables, Head of Communications, South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust, a letter dated 5th September 2008, enclosing a copy of the Draft NHS Constitution and inviting the Council's comments; these should be submitted - either by post or by visiting the Trust's website www.southstaffordshirepct.nhs.uk - by 17th October 2008.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Rita Wilson, Strategic Director, Organisational Development, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 12th September 2008 informing the Council that the District Council had purchased 2,000 flood sacks which were being made available free of charge to Parishes for storage and distribution within the community if need arose.

A self-explanatory leaflet was enclosed with the letter.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Colin Aston, Chairman, Longdon Branch, Royal British Legion, an email dated October 2008, inviting Councillors and their families to the Branch's Services of Remembrance.

There would be a traditional church service at St. James Church, Longdon, on Sunday, November 9th, commencing at 10. 30 a.m., while, on Tuesday, November 11th, there would be a short outdoor service at the junction of Swan Close with Brook End (adjacent to the bus shelter), commencing at 10. 45 a.m

A copy of Mr. Aston's email had been included amongst the papers distributed to Councillors prior to the present meeting,

14. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16. 09. 08 – effective for period
01. 10. 08-31. 01. 09;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 12th October 2008.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 12th September 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 19th September 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 26th September 2008;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 3rd October 2008.

- (iii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Annual General Meeting and Conference Programme;
Delegate Booking Form;
Annual Report and Accounts for 2007-2008;
Notice of vacancy for Community Relations Advisor with Homezone
Living.

- (iv) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Annual Report 2007-2008.

- (v) From The County Ranger Service:

Poster: Countryside Events – October 2008.

*(The poster had been copied and displayed on each of the Parish
notice-boards)*

- (vi) From The Campaign to Protect Rural England (Staffordshire Branch):

Summer Newsletter,

- (vii) From The Staffordshire Playing Fields Association:

Agenda for 2008 Annual General Meeting;
Minutes of 2007 Annual General Meeting;
Annual Report 2007/2008.

- (viii) From Holly Tunley, S3SN Admin. Assistant, Lichfield & District CVS :

E Bulletin – Issue No. 54, 11th September 2008;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 55, 18th September 2008;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 56, 25th September 2008;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 57, 3rd October 2008.

(ix) From The Chief Group Executive, St. Giles Hospice, Whittington:

St. Giles Hospice News – Autumn/Winter 2008.

(x) From The South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust:

Annual Report 2007/2008.

(xi) From the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:

“from Time 2 Time”: Issue 17, Summer 2008.

(xii) From Staffordshire Police:

“saferstaffs” (Trent Valley Edition), Autumn 2008;

Poster: “one new number to remember” (non-emergency 0300 123 4455).

(xiii) From The Secretary, Longdon Village Hall Management Committee:

Minutes of meeting held on 8th September 2008.

(xiv) From Shaw and Sons Ltd., Crayford, Kent:

2 Catalogues: Forms, Records & Registers for Local Councils;
Essential Reference

15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Parsons asked whether it would be possible for the Parish Council to provide the village with an outdoor Christmas tree this year.

It was agreed that Cllr. Parsons’ suggestion should be considered by the Greens and Open Spaces Committee at its next meeting.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, November 11th, 2008, in the Meeting Room, Christ Church, Gentleshaw. commencing at 7. 30 p.m.