

Appendix A

REPORT OF MEETING OF THE GREENS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 2008

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. Mrs G. D. Duckett;
and Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell;

Also present were the Clerk and eight parishioners = Hazel Crosbie,
Nicola Crosbie, Anne Hewitt, Richard Rawlinson, Rebecca Shenton,
Jennifer Vyse, Anne Walters and Samantha Warren.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. A. J. Juxon

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, the minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 15th, 2008, were approved and signed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was agreed that these should be dealt with within the main agenda of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed the parishioners to the meeting and asked if any of them wished to address the Committee.

Speaking for the group, Mrs. Vyse said that they were there to voice their concern that there was nowhere in the village for children to play in safety.

With the permission of the Management Committee, children were allowed to play in the car park of the Village Hall, but this was not a designated play area.

Both the number of children living in the village and volume of traffic had grown in recent years, and this made the need even more acute.

In reply, the Chairman said that the Parish Council shared their concern but had been unable to identify an acceptable site; there had been a recent approach to the Governors of St. James School seeking their agreement for the school play area to be used by village children out of school hours, but this had been unequivocally rebuffed.

For years, a field behind "The Swan with Two Necks" had been officially designated an Open Space by Lichfield District Council, and the Parish Council had reserved a sum of money in case this ever became a reality, but this designation had now been withdrawn in the latest District Plan, though the District Council continued to acknowledge that Longdon rated highly in its need for a park.

Other possible options existed, but all these sites were in private ownership, and the Parish Council needed evidence from parishioners of the strength of need before entering into any negotiations.

Unfortunately, an appeal for support from parishioners printed in "Longdon Life" and published on the Parish Website brought not a single response.

The Chairman emphasised that the Parish Council's position in negotiating with land-owners and funding agencies would be greatly strengthened if it had tangible evidence that it was acting on behalf of a substantial number of its parishioners, which a petition and individual letters would provide.

The parishioners then left the meeting, having undertaken to obtain such evidence.

Following the resumption of the meeting, it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Head Teacher of St. James School and to the Headmaster of The Friary School asking each if he could provide the Parish Council with a figure showing the number of pupils attending his school who lived in Longdon, Longdon Green and Upper Longdon.

5. ROLLING PROGRAMME OF PROJECTS

(i) The Ford

The Chairman reported that Nick Mott, of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, was still considering options.

He hoped that the area could be maintained as a conservation area and would be working in partnership with The Environment Agency to clear the brook and re-instate its banks.

The Chairman added that he would speak to Mr. Mott, who was currently looking for funding, and seek to establish with him when the work could be carried out.

(ii) Tree Management

(a) Spinney off Lysways Lane

It was agreed that the Committee should recommend to the Parish Council that Phase Two of the management scheme prepared by Rodney Helliwell should now be commissioned.

(b) Tree Survey

It was further agreed that the Clerk should seek quotations for the work identified in the report submitted by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and Cllr. Mrs. Russell.

(c) Brook End Green and Church Hollow

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by the Chairman, it was agreed that Graham McCulloch should be asked to cut back the hollies and elder on Brook End Green, as he had recommended in his report of 21st October 2008

It was further agreed that he should be asked to remove one of the two dead trees in Church Hollow to which the Council's attention had been drawn by a resident of St. James Close and reduce the height of or remove altogether the second.

(d) Installation of Roadside Benches

The Chairman reported that Alan Johnson had quoted £235. 00 (£85. 00 for material, £150. 00 for labour) to make and install each of the three benches to be erected at the junctions of the A51 with Borough Lane, High Street and Brereton Hill Lane.

In addition, each bench would require a foundation of six concrete slabs costing £5. 00 each on which to stand.

The Chairman also proposed planting a hawthorn costing £19. 00 each on either side of each bench.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Russell, it was agreed that that Mr. Johnson should be asked to carry out this work and that the Chairman should purchase the six hawthorns.

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GRASSED AREA OPPOSITE GENTLESHAW SCHOOL

The Chairman pointed out that the proposed arrangement for the Parish Council to manage this area in partnership with the School seemed to have stalled and he suggested that, in order to progress it, the Committee should draw up a management plan to present to the District Council.

The site was within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore qualified for match-funding from the Sustainable Development Fund.

His own suggestions were for the removal of non-native trees, the tidying-up of the area around the bench and notice-board, the planting of a community orchard and a wild flower patch, and the provision of nesting-boxes.

It was agreed that, as a first step, the Clerk should write to the Head Teacher of Gentleshaw School outlining the Council's own suggestions and asking for the School to contribute their own.

7. PROVISION OF OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS TREE

The Committee considered Cllr. Parsons' suggestion that the Parish Council provide an illuminated outdoor Christmas tree to be erected in turn in each of the three settlements on a three-yearly cycle, but concluded that the cost of supplying the power and of insurance would be prohibitive.

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Moreover, there would undoubtedly be health-and-safety issues to take into account.

In any case, the parish was already well illuminated at Christmas by house-holders who hung Christmas lights from trees in their front gardens

8. ABUSE OF GENTLESHAW COMMON BY PARKED VEHICLES

The Clerk reported that a medley of vehicles was still being parked on the area of Gentleshaw Common next to Hollows Lodge, even though the farmer had been advised that this was part of the Common and not within the curtilage of his farm.

It was agreed that the Clerk should make this continuing abuse of the Common known to the District Council.

9. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2009

Meetings in 2009 were scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, January 20th; Tuesday, April 21st; Tuesday, July 21st;
Tuesday, October 20th.