

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL,  
LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2009

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews;  
Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;  
Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Russell; and Cllr. N. Stanfield

Also present were the Clerk and Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. B. J. Bird; Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. S. K. Welch; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, the minutes of the Annual Meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, were approved and signed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, the minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, were approved and signed.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Grange Hill, Upper Longdon

It was agreed that, now that the County Council elections were over, Cllr. Lewis should be asked to press for action in this matter.

(ii) Play Area

The Chairman reminded the meeting that Cllr. Mrs. Duckett had been tasked with exploring possibilities and would be contacting interested parents and children.

Cllr. Roberts said that he had advised Cllr. Mrs. Duckett to notify the District Council of the requirement for a play area in the parish so that it could be recorded in the Lichfield District Framework. He had also suggested possible contacts.

Cllr. Juxon also suggested that the Parish Council might consider the possibility of purchasing land itself.

(iii) Disqualification of Councillor and Declaration of Vacancy

The Chairman reported that a vacancy had now been declared, and any requests for a poll had to be made in writing to the Returning Officer at Lichfield by tomorrow (June 10<sup>th</sup>).

In the absence of such a request, the Council would have to decide the procedure for co-option.

## 6. PLANNING

### (i) For Consideration

09/00652/FUL: Mr. J. Howells: Extension to existing building for storage of livestock and buildings: Hill Top Farm, Hill Top, Longdon Green

09/00615/FUL: Phillip Hulme: Single-storey rear and first-floor side extension to form lounge and bedroom: 25 Church Way, Longdon

The Parish Council had no objection to these applications, provided it received no further information before the expiry of the consultation period.

### (ii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

09/00338/FUL: Mr. Derek Jessop: Two-storey side extension to form kitchen/breakfast room, bedroom and ensuite: 6 Stockings Lane. Longdon

09/00350/LBC: Mr. Alan Showell: Remove existing chimney, replace windows and rear door, and construct new tiled canopy: Hill Top Cottage, Hill Top, Longdon Green

### (iii) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued no Notices of Refusal of Planning Permission relating to the Parish of Longdon.

### (iv) Other Planning Matters

#### (a) The Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Debbie Boffin, Senior Conservation Officer, Conservation and Urban Design, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2009, confirming that a post-and-rail fence erected at the above site should have had planning consent.

She had written to the owners' agent informing him of the need to submit a planning application for its retention; this would be contained within a planning and Listed Building application due to be submitted in the near future.

#### (b) Application for New Farmstead in Hay Lane, Longdon Green

Cllr. Roberts informed the Council that a pre-application consultation had taken place on site at which the applicant had re-iterated his intention to raise cattle if his application were approved.

However, a degree of uncertainty remained, based on the belief that his main source of income was likely to remain his work as a contractor.

Cllr. Stanfield asked whether the applicant was owner of the land or whether, as he suspected, ownership was vested in one of his companies, in which case the certificate of ownership supporting the application had been incorrectly made out.

Cllr. Roberts assured the Council that the application would be put to the District Council's Planning Committee and not be left to planning officers for a decision.

(c) Review of Arrangements for Processing Planning Applications

As Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr. Stanfield was concerned that, as a Committee, it should hold formal meetings at which a member of the public with an interest in a planning application under consideration by the Committee could voice his or her views.

The disadvantage in this arrangement was that it would introduce unacceptable delay in processing planning applications, which had a time-limit of at most three weeks and, in the case of amended plans, of only two.

Any such delay could result in the Parish Council's comments not being considered by the planning authorities when making a final decision on the application.

The Parish Council's Standing Orders did give the Chairman of the Planning Committee the option of calling a formal meeting, but they also gave power to the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Planning Committee to make a decision on the Council's behalf which was then communicated to the planning authorities by the Clerk.

The decision was always ratified at a meeting of the full Council.

Nonetheless, it was agreed that that all planning applications should in future be considered - even retrospectively - by the full Council and that any submission made to the planning authorities prior to ratification by the full Council should include the proviso that the comments were subject to revision in the event of any correspondence received in the time between their submission and the expiration of the consultation period.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) SPCA Executive: June 2nd

Cllr. Stanfield reported on a meeting of the Executive of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which had taken place in Stafford on Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

Alstonefield Parish Council had reported a difficulty with raising an adequate precept; many properties in the parish were changing their status from domestic dwellings to holiday lets, so that the Council Tax was being replaced by a Business Rate, thus reducing the number of properties (from an already low base of 146) on which the Parish Council could levy a precept.

It had been agreed that a resolution should be framed calling on the Government to review the financing of local government so that it could enjoy a greater share of the business rates.

8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

(i) SPCA Seminar – “Visionary Leadership”: Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in Room 1, The Peel Building, St. Chad's Place, from 7. 00 pm to 9. 00 pm.

The object of the course was to learn ways how to engage with the community, public and media to create effective working partnerships.

(ii) The Katharine House Hospice Midnight Walk: Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, starting from the Beaconside Sports Centre. Stafford.

Advertised as “a great night out for the girls!”, it would follow a 10 km well-lit paved route around Stafford. It would cost £10. 00 to enter, for which each entrant would receive a Midnight Walk t-shirt, glow stick, refreshments and a free fundraising pack.

The Clerk also reminded Councillors of two forthcoming Committee meetings – the Highways and Footpaths Committee on Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and the Greens and Open Spaces Committee on Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

Both these meetings would take place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, and both would start at 7. 30 p.m.

## 9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Footpath Survey

The Clerk reported that he had received from Dawn Green, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, three letters in response to reports submitted to her Department as part of the parish footpaths survey.

The first, dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009, reported that, as regards Footpath 35, the stiles had been repaired and the fingerpost cleared of growth, while the second, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009, had reported that, as regards Footpaths 47 and 55, no problem with horses had been encountered and repairs had been carried out on a stile.

In her third letter, dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Miss Green had reported that a stile and steps had been installed on Footpath/Bridleway 0.402.

### (ii) Village Lengthsman Agreement

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Rayson, Divisional Highway Manager, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009, enclosing an official order for the Lengthsman Agreement within the Parish which would commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and run to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

The expected value of this order, which was to carry out maintenance services as per Lengthsman Agreement, was £1,387.00.

Payments for periods 1 & 2 were payable immediately, while payments for periods 3 & 4 were subject to detailed invoices which should include justification for the payments of periods 1 & 2.

## 10. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

### (i) Mowing Contractor's Reports

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, he had received two reports from Graham McCulloch, the first dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009, in which he reported that the grass had been long and wet, and the second dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009, in which he again reported that the grass had been wet, but otherwise there had been no problems.

He had on the second of these visits cut down the dead daffodil leaves.

## 11. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Clerk reported that he had been given by Mrs. Kathleen Worrall, of Brook End, Longdon, the draft of a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and originally addressed to County Councillor Lewis in which she had expressed concern over the reduction in the local bus service over the years during which she had lived in the village and the impact which this was having on the independence of its older residents.

While recognising that the County Council no longer provided the bus services directly, she called on the Council to work with bus companies to find a solution which would provide a more frequent and extensive service, as it had done in the past.

Her letter had been supported by a petition calling for an improved regular bus service to Longdon and bearing twenty-seven names.

Since the letter had been handed to him at a time when elections to the County Council were pending and he was aware that a review of local bus services was being conducted by the County Council, the Clerk had, after consulting the Chairman, sent the letter and the petition to Hayley Slater, the Passenger Transport Assistant, who had, earlier in the year, invited the Council, as part of that review, to inform her of any outstanding issues relating to the local bus service.

## 12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that the second team of judges had visited the villages the previous day.

He also reported that Cllr. Stanfield had carried out weed-killing with a systemic weed-killer – for which he held a licence – in the church car park above Church Hollow, in Ford Lane outside the W. I. Hall, and along one side of the footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk.

The Council thanked Cllr. Stanfield for carrying out this work.

## 13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

### (i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, payment of the following accounts was approved:

*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – May 14 <sup>th</sup>	£ 225. 00
Longdon W. I. Hall	Hire of Hall – June 9 <sup>th</sup>	£ 12. 00
W. B. Sullivan	Clerk's Salary: £300. 00	
	Photocopying –	
	Administration: £140. 83	
	≠ BKV Competition: £ 9. 71	
	Postage: £ 24. 30	
	≠ Tokens: £ 40. 00	
	≠ Half-barrel: £ 35. 00	
		£ 549. 84
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – June 4 <sup>th</sup>	£ 225. 00
	(* confirmation ≠ payment under Section 137)	

### (ii) Deferred Payment

The Open Spaces Society	Annual Subscription	£ 40. 00
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It was agreed that payment of this subscription, due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009, should be deferred to allow the value of continued membership to be assessed by the Greens and Open Spaces Committee.

### (iii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that the Council had received no payments since the last meeting.

(iv) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£1131. 76	The Halifax s/a: £19659. 98
<u>less uncleared cheques:</u>		
	1466: £ 36. 00	
	1470: £ 60. 00	
	1473: £ 12. 00	
	<u>1474: £ 225. 00</u>	
	£ 798. 76	

(v) Appeals for Grant Aid

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, it was agreed that, the Clerk having received a completed Grant Application Form, the Council should meet the cost of purchasing a Mikoni digital dictation machine, quoted at £39. 99, for use by the Upper Longdon Speedwatch Team.

(vi) Approval and Adoption of the Annual Return

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, the Annual Return for the Financial Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 was approved and adopted, copies having been distributed to all members of the Council prior to the meeting.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Annette Johnson, Secretary, Committee of Management, Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, a letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009, expressing the grateful thanks of her Committee for the grant of £1500. 00, which would go towards the cost of improving the security of the Village Hall.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Poynton, Treasurer, Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Country Fayre, a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009, expressing the grateful thanks of his Committee for the Council's donation of £100. 00 towards the cost of funding the event.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Shaun Jardine, of Brethertons, a firm of solicitors in Banbury, a letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009, requiring the Council under The Freedom of Information Act to send him a copy of a letter which the Council had received from Colin Thomas, of Ocean View Properties, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 and recorded in the minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

The Clerk had consulted Sheila Beenessreesingh, Senior Officer, Democratic and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, who had confirmed that there was no impediment to the Parish Council's meeting this request.

The Clerk added that the letter in question was Mr. Thomas's reply to a letter from the Clerk drawing his attention to the state of the planter outside Longdon Hall and asking him to arrange for its repair or removal.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

- (i) From Christine Bluck, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Forward Plan - Version 1 - Issued 15. 06. 09 - Effective for Period 01. 06. 09 - 30. 09. 09;

Forward Plan - Version 2 - Issued 15. 05. 09 - Effective for Period 01. 06. 09 - 30. 09. 09.

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009;

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009;

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

- (iv) From Christine Cole, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council:

Posters (2) & Leaflets (12); “fly tipping (dumping rubbish) is a crime”.

*(Copies of the poster had been displayed on all five of the principal parish notice boards)*

- (v) From Stephanie Cartwright, S3SN Admin Assistant, Lichfield & District Community and Voluntary Sector:

E Bulletin – Issue No. 83, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009.

#### 16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS (AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN)

- (i) Cllr. Roberts reported that completion of the Lichfield Southern bypass had been delayed as a result of Wrekin Construction’s going into administration.

However, the work was now being completed by another Railtrack-approved contractor, and it was expected that the by-pass would be opened on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

- (ii) Cllr. Juxon said that he would like to publish the next issue of “Longdon Life” by the end of July.

It was agreed that letters to correspondents should be sent at the end of June and the deadline for contributions should be set mid-July.

- (iii) The Chairman reported that the Neighbourhood Watch Crime Log for May had recorded three criminal incidents in the parish, one in Longdon, when a barn lock had been forced, and two in Longdon Green, the first the theft of a quad bike and generators from a container standing on farmland and the second the theft of alcohol from a dwelling in Hay Lane, where a door had been forced.

In addition, the Log had included a warning about a red Mazda Aero sports car, Registration YK57 NTP, containing four or five male offenders posing as officials who had already been responsible for burglaries in Alrewas, Drayton Bassett and Burntwood.

(iv) The Chairman expressed disappointment at the lack of support for the parish website and once again appealed for information which could be posted on it.

He pointed to a fall in the number of visits being made to the site as an indication of a declining appeal.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.