

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE GREENS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON  
TUESDAY, JULY 21ST, 2009

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett;  
Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; and Cllr. A. J. Juxon.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies, all members of the Committee being present.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, the minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009, were approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) The Ford

Cllr. Welch reported that the responsibility of repairing or replacing the bridge over the Ford had been taken over the Highways and Footpaths Committee, and Cllr. Stanfield, the Chairman of that Committee, was seeking quotes.

He noted that the stream was flowing much more freely since it had been cleared.

It was proposed to widen the footpath which ran alongside the stream from Ford Lane to the bridge.

(ii) Play Area

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had approached Sue Boston, the owner of the field behind "The Swan with Two Necks" which had formerly been designated open space by the District Council and asked her whether it was still available, but Ms. Boston had been adamant that she was not prepared to relinquish ownership either by donating or selling it.

Nonetheless, it remained the preference of the District Council, since it was accessible and within four hundred metres of the centre of the community.

The Management Committee of the Longdon Club and Institute had approved the plan to lay out a bowling green on the field behind Longdon Memorial Hall, but was prepared to provide a nursery play area (that is, a sand pit and bench) in a corner of the field.

The Committee had pointed to the Glebe Field as an alternative site for a play area, but this was already tenanted, and sub-letting by the tenant was forbidden by the terms of the lease.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Diocesan Glebe Field Committee, explaining the Council's difficulties in finding a suitable site for a local play area and asking when the current lease expired.

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett warned that, while the District Council might support an application from the Parish Council for a Compulsory Purchase Order, it would do so only when all other avenues had been explored.

She concluded her report by informing the meeting that her proposals under the District Council's Playbuilder Scheme had been accepted and she now had to present the District Council with costings by November 9<sup>th</sup>.

## 5. MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GRASSED AREA OPPOSITE GENTLESHAW SCHOOL

The Clerk reported that, in response to a letter he had received from John Brown, Land and Property Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009, confirming that the terms for maintaining that part of Gentleshaw Common opposite Gentleshaw School set out in the Parish Council's letter of 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009, were acceptable, he had confirmed that the Parish Council would now accept full responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of this area.

He had been assured by Allianz, the insurance company which provided the Parish Council with insurance cover, that its current liability cover of £5m. would also cover its increased responsibility.

Cllr. Hemmingsley thought that this assurance should be sought in writing, but Cllr. Mrs. Duckett said that an article on open spaces which she had in her possession and would copy to the Clerk confirmed that this was the case.

Cllr. Welch said that the Committee should now draw up a management plan, the first stage of which should, he believed, be the clearance of scrub and inappropriate planting such as dogwood and the regular mowing of the grass.

Grants of up to fifty per cent were available from the Sustainable Development Fund for this stage of the programme, though future maintenance costs would have to be met in full by the Parish Council.

The match funding which was essential to the awarding of a grant could be in the form of voluntary labour.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Graham McCulloch, the Council's mowing contractor, and ask him to meet Councillors on site to discuss the work; Cllr. Hemmingsley would also speak to another contractor, Nick Brown, who had previously done work for the Council.

Once this first stage was completed, the Council could embark on a maintenance programme, though this would now have to be deferred till next Spring.

## 6. TREE SURVEY

Cllr. Welch suggested that it was now time to re-visit the survey conducted last year and identify the dead trees which needed to be removed.

He recommended that A. Dunford and Son be employed for this work, since the firm had carried out the work in the spinney off Lysways Lane to a high professional standard.

Cllr. Juxon pointed out that the stakes used to support the small group of trees on Longdon Green when newly-planted needed removing.

## 7. LONGDON GREEN

It was agreed that it was now time to ask Graham McCulloch to mow the centre of Longdon Green, as per contract.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AT DISCRETION OF CHAIRMAN)

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Sue Sheppard, Biodiversity Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009, in which she gave an update on the management of the Cannock Chase Country Park.

Referring to two items in Ms. Sheppard's letter, Cllr. Welch said that Beaudesert Park Farm had now reached the Upper Level of Stewardship.

Phyophthora was now infecting the bilberries on Cannock Chase, and the authorities were struggling to contain it.

It had been established that the spores were being carried by animals, especially the deer, and walkers were being urged to keep their dogs on established footpaths.

If not contained, the disease threatened to change the entire landscape of the Chase.

(ii) The Clerk confirmed that no objection had been raised by the Highways Authority to the establishing of a bench at the corner of Upper Way and Grange Hill.

Cllr. Welch said that he would liaise with Cllr. Butler over the exact positioning of the bench and then ask Alan Johnson to build and install it.

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.