

Appendix A

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 2010

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Chairman); Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke;
Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman of the Parish Council);
and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; B. J. Butler and Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Thursday, September 17th, 2009, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Rose, approved and signed.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Footpath No. 73

Mr. Rose referred to the reply from Michael Murphy, of the Directorate of Law and Governance, Staffordshire County, to the Clerk's letter of 19th September 2009, in which he had insisted that this route had not, as alleged, been wrongly depicted on the Definitive Map and that Mr. Alan Rowe's application, based on evidence of use, had been to re-designate it as a bridleway.

This application would have to be submitted to the procedures followed when dealing with all Section 53 applications. Such matters were very time-consuming and, unless the application received priority status, it was likely to be several years before it was determined.

However, in a letter to Mr. Rowe from Bridget Parsons, another member of the Directorate, dated 1st October 2009, he had been advised that, under paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 14 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, where the County Council failed to determine an application for a Definitive Map Modification Order within twelve months of receipt, an applicant had the right to request the Secretary of State for the Environment to issue a Direction to the Authority to determine the application before the expiration of such period as may be specified in the Direction.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Director, informing him that the Parish Council would make such an application if the County Council fail to treat this application in the next thirty days. Copies of this letter should be sent to County Councillor Frank Lewis and Mr. Rowe.

(ii) Ditches in Stockings Lane

The Chairman reported that one of the affected landowners had told her that work on clearing these ditches had been started but then discontinued before it had been completed.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Richard Rayson asking when to work would be completed.

(iii) Potholes in Borough Lane

It was noted that work on patching the road surface had been carried out and the exposed service cover removed.

(iv) Embankment in Grange Hill

It was noted that the County Council's Legal Department had made its position clear to Mr. Lewis and agreed that it should be left to him to seek independent legal advice if he was not satisfied with this conclusion.

(v) The Mowing of Highway Verges

It was agreed that, following the Parish Council's request, the verges at the junctions of the A51 at Borough Lane, High Street and Brereton Hill Lane had been satisfactorily mown.

(vi) Footpath across Glebe Field

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that the Churchwardens had unable to establish with the Diocese whether the tenant was responsible for mowing this field, in parts of which brambles and stinging-nettles had spread.

She said that she would take the early opportunity to ask the tenant if his agreement required him to do this.

Mr. Rose added that there was no immediate problem with the edges of the footpath, which Ground Force, a team of volunteers, was regularly mowing, though the path itself would be treated with weed-killer from time to time.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Paul Rochfort, the County Council's Principal Rights of Way Officer, asking if he was still prepared to fund or part-fund the maintenance of this footpath.

(vi) Rights of Way Survey

Mr. Rose reported that Richard Collins, the County Council's Rights of Way Officer – Maintenance and Enforcement (South), had issued a works order for the clearance of Footpath No 72 (Brook End), though, at this time of the year, the undergrowth obstructing the footpath had died back.

Mr. Collins had visited Stephen Whitmore at Mill House, Brook End, to advise him about his concern over his legal liabilities related to Footpath No. 45, part of which ran through his property.

6. EXTENSION THROUGH CHURCHYARD OF FOOTPATH ACROSS GLEBE FIELD

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had now received a quotation from D. McCarthy Brothers (Lichfield) Limited for surfacing work from the field gate to the existing church path.

The cost of the work would be £920. 00. This would involve excavating levels to a maximum of 100mm, breaking up the existing surface, and retaining soil for re-grading; re-using selected materials arising from the excavation to form the sub-base; making up to a depth of 75mm with a graded limestone sub-base; and compacting with a mechanical roller 52m².

An option for edging boards of treated timber similar to those used by the same firm in upgrading the footpath across the Glebe Field would add £480. 00 to the cost.

VAT at 17.5% was not included.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Rose, it was unanimously agreed that the Committee should accept this quotation, and that, in addition, the contractors should be asked to lay a membrane beneath the sub-base and remove the shallow step at the field gate at the entrance to the churchyard.

The Clerk added that Cllr. Juxon had met an electrician at the churchyard to discuss the illumination of the footpath once it had been made and was now waiting for a quotation from him.

7. FOOTPATH NO. 73 AND BRIDGE OVER SHROPSHIRE

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had received a quotation from a contractor, Kevin Healey for £1230. 00, plus VAT, for levelling the footpath and renovating the bridge.

The Clerk asked whether the Environment Agency should be consulted before commissioning the work on the bridge, but it was argued that this would be restoring the stream to its original flow, not diverting it.

However, it was agreed that the Clerk should consult Paul Rochfort over this and at the same time ask whether a grant would be available from the County Council.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Clarke and seconded by Mr. Rose, it was agreed that the quotation should be accepted, though work was not expected to start until February.

8. NOTICE-BOARD AT UPPER WAY

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett reported that she had received a quotation of £389. 00 from a carpenter and joiner, Andrew Copestick, for supplying a notice-board for erecting in Upper Way, close to its junction with Shavers Lane.

Two posts would cost a further £70. 00 each and a further £70. 00 to erect them.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Hemmingsley, it was agreed that this quotation should be accepted, with the proviso that the posts should be encased in metal spikes.

A decision of the choice of a name-board, pelmet and lettering was deferred.

9. RIGHTS OF WAY SURVEY

Mr. Rose gave a report on action taken following the submission of complaints to the County Council's Rights of Way team:

Footpath No. 41 (Church Hill, Longdon Green)

The fencing between which this footpath ran was leaning in such a way as to obstruct access, and, after a visit to the site by Richard Collins, the owners had been written to; one had not replied, the other had replied that he thought that it wasn't a problem.

Both would now be served with enforcement orders, and, if these were ignored, Mr. Collins would either refer the matter to his Council's Legal Department or arrange for the work to be carried out and then send invoices to the owners.

A third land-owner whose land abutted part of the footpath had also been written to.

Bridleway No. 21 (Holly Farm)

The present line did not coincide with the route as set out in the Definitive Map. Paul Rochfort had visited the site and advised the owner to apply for a diversion order, but no application had so far been received.

Footpath No. 37 (Glebe Field)

This footpath had been unofficially diverted because of the presence of the brambles to which reference had already been made earlier in the meeting.

It was hoped that the situation would be improved shortly.

In reply to Cllr. Clarke's question, the Committee thought that the Club and Institute was responsible for that portion of the footpath which had been tarmacked on the grounds that it had changed the surface.

Footpath No. 42 (Broomy Fields)

A loose foot plate at one of the stiles had been reported and the report acknowledged.

It was suggested that, whenever Lynn Marshall organised one of her sponsored walks, she should be asked to report on the state of the footpaths covered by the walk.

Footpaths Nos. 29 (Hill Top), 30 (St. James Church - Lysways Lane), 31 (Lysways Lane - Hanch) and 32 (Hill Top – Longdon Green)

Cllr. Duckett reported that she had recently walked these footpaths and found them in good order.

Footpath No. 73 (Brook End – Armitage)

This footpath was also in good order, but use of a stile along Footpath No. 20b was hampered by an overgrown hedge, and one of footplates on the stile was loose.

Although this footpath was in the adjoining parish, its condition would be reported to the County Council, since it was a continuation of Footpath No. 73 and, as such, used by Longdon parishioners.

10. FOOTPATH LEAFLET FOR GENTLESHAW

There was disappointment that no progress had been made in producing this leaflet, and it was agreed that Mr. Rose should approach three Gentleshaw parishioners who had acted as volunteers in the Footpath Survey – Norman Stanfield and Bob and Carol Shelley – to see if they would assist in the project.

There was a discussion on the Longdon footpaths leaflets, and it was suggested that the Lichfield Tourist Office should be asked if it would print some more leaflets, preferably updated, which could then be distributed through Longdon Post Office and the local public houses, as well as being advertised in “Longdon Life”.

11. ROLLING PROGRAMME

Cllr. Hemmingsley reminded the Committee that the Council allocated it its own budget and that expenditure could be incurred without the prior authority of the Council provided that no single item exceeded £1500. 00.

Cllr. Mrs. Duckett invited members to submit any ideas to the Committee by first sending them to her to filter and then pass those which were appropriate to the Clerk, who could then publish them in the agenda of the next meeting.

Cllr. Clarke suggested that projects, both those carried out and those under consideration, should be publicised in “Longdon Life”.

One recurring undertaking was a twice-yearly spraying of the footpath across the Glebe Field and of the church car park with weed-killer, and Cllr. Mrs. Duckett suggested that all this could be carried out by one contractor, though the Clerk warned that the cost of mowing the verges would have to be kept separate from the cost of the other activities if the Council was to continue its Mowing Agreement with the County Council.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN)

(i) Highway Maintenance Agreement

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the second payment was now due, but a claim was dependent on the Council’s having spent all of the first payment, whereas, to date, the Council had spent just £325. 00.

Cllr. Duckett asked the Clerk for details of expenditure allowed under the Agreement so that the Council could utilise payments on further maintenance as soon as possible.

The Clerk agreed to supply each member of the Committee with a list of those tasks which the Council was authorised to carry out under the Agreement.

(ii) Blue Bins

Mr. Rose commented that a number of householders were leaving their bins at the front of their properties, which was giving some streets an untidy appearance.

He acknowledged that, in the case of some elderly residents, this was a convenience, but feared that the general impression would detract from the village's chances of winning the Best Kept Village Competition.

It was agreed that the editor of "Longdon Life" should be asked to include an item in the next issue asking residents to store their bins when not in use in a less conspicuous way.

(iii) Dog Fouling

Mr. Rose also reported that dog fouling was becoming a problem. He thought that dog owners might not be aware that, by allowing their animals to foul pavements, gutters and public footpaths, they were running the risk of incurring a fixed-penalty fine of £80. 00.

It was agreed that the Editor of "Longdon Life" should be asked to include an article in the next issue warning readers of the possible consequences of allowing dogs to defecate in any public place.

13. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2010

Tuesday, March 2nd; Tuesday, June 1st; Tuesday, September 7th.

All these meetings would take place in the W. I.Hall, Longdon, and would commence at 7. 00 p.m.