

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2010

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews;
Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke;
Cllr. M. J. Nash; Cllr. K. C. Taylor; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

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

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere;
and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, Buds Road, Cannock Wood, on Tuesday, July 13th, 2010, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Taylor, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Ditches in Borough Lane

The Clerk reported that he had arranged a site visit with Richard Rayson, the Community Highways Liaison Manager, the following Thursday, September 16th, at which this and other highway issues could be discussed.

The initial meeting would take place at Longdon Green at 9.30 a.m., followed by inspection of other sites, including Church Hollow, Brook End Green and the locations chosen for the floral gateways.

The Chairman, Cllr. Andrews and Cllr. Clarke indicated that they would attend this meeting, and the Clerk said that he would invite Mr. Rose, as co-opted member of the Footpaths and Highways Committee, to be present as well.

(ii) Church Car Park

Cllr. Butler reported that Luke Kia had, as commissioned, sprayed the church car park with weed-killer, but this had almost immediately been neutralised by heavy rain, and he would be returning at a later date to repeat the treatment.

(iii) Halifax Mandate

Cllr. Welch said that, now that he was back from holiday, he would call at the Lichfield office of the bank to add his signature to the passbook.

The Clerk added that the NatWest mandate was near completion.

(iv) Planning

Cllr. Roberts advised the Council that, while the Regional Spatial Strategy had been redacted, some of its points remained relevant, and Lichfield District Council still had the responsibility of producing a core strategy based on the Local Development Framework.

A public consultation period would start in November, and the final draft had to be presented to the Secretary of State at the end of next year.

(v) Dog Waste Bins

The Clerk reported that he had received from Neil Wait, Senior Environmental Protection Officer, Lichfield District Council, an email dated September 13th, 2010, informing him that his letter of September 1st, 2010, regarding the protection of Gentleshaw Common against dog-fouling had been passed to him for action and that he was currently liaising with a colleague in the Parks Department.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

The following planning applications had been considered by the Working Group:

10/00978/FUL: Lichfield Cathedral School: Variation of Condition No. 1
08/00835/FUL relating to removal of building (re-submission of Application
No. 10/00398/FUL): Lichfield Cathedral School, Church Hill, Longdon Green

It was felt that the applicant had had sufficient time to apply for the permanent replacement that prolonged use of temporary accommodation seemed to indicate might be necessary, and consequently an objection had been lodged against the application.

10/01030/FUL: Mr. M. Germany: Installation of solar panels to south-facing
roof: 6, The Grange, Upper Way

No objection had been made to this application.

10/01048/FUL: Mr. A. R. Baskerville: Erection of building to store agricultural
machinery and produce only: Field at Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

No objection had been made to this application.

10/01073/FUL: Mr. M. Lewis: Proposed boundary retaining wall fronting Grange Hill: 2, The Grange, Upper Longdon

The revised application appeared to meet the earlier objection that exposed crib block would present an inappropriate appearance in a rural location which was also within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and consequently there was no objection to the application.

(ii) For Consideration

There were no further plans to consider.

(iii) 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:

08/00859/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. John Rout: Ground-floor and first-floor extensions to form utility, bedroom with en suite and WC: Coppice View, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

10/00153/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. J. Howell: Two-storey extension and alterations to existing dwelling to form kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and en suite with extensions and alterations to outbuilding to form stables, tack room and storage areas; Cherry Orchard Farm, Stafford Road, Longdon

10/00390/COU: Mr. S. Burt: Use of outbuilding as ancillary accommodation for occupation by dependent relative/holiday accommodation: Rookery Farm, Giddywell Lane, Longdon

10/00437/FUL: Mr. and Mrs Thomson: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a new three-bedroom detached dwelling: Woodhouse, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

10/00647/FUL: Mr. Robert Moore: Increase in ridge height to create new first-floor comprising of three bedrooms and two en suites: 27, Upper Way, Upper Longdon

10/00660/FUL: Mr. Barry Overton: Two-storey extension to form kitchen and bedroom: Longdon Post Office and Stores, 11 Brook End, Longdon

10/00665/FUL: Mr. Keith Ashby: Excavation of ground at front of property to allow for builder's skip: Villiers, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

10/00781/FUL: Mr. K. Ashby: Erection of two-storey side and first-floor rear extensions to form kitchen, bedrooms and paved driveway: Villiers, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

10/00819/FUL: Mr. T. Hawkins: Conservatory to side and rear: 19, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iv) Other Planning Matters

(a) *Application No.:* 10/00390/COU

Location: Rookery Farm, Giddywell Lane, Longdon

Proposal: Use of Outbuilding as Ancillary Accommodation for Occupation by Dependent Relative/Holiday Let

The Clerk reported that he had received from Claire Billings, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 3rd August 2010, in which she stated that, while the Parish Council had expressed concern about the granting of planning permission for this development, it had been concluded that the proposed use of the building was in accordance with the relevant Policies of the Development Plan and the Government guidance, and the Countryside Officer had been satisfied that no protected species would be unacceptably affected.

(b) Unauthorised “For Sale” Board at Brook End at junction with A51

The Clerk reported that this board, which related to the sale of No. 1, Brook End, had been re-located within the curtilage of the property within days of his writing to the estate agent.

(c) Alleged Business Activity at Fir Tree Cottage, Thorleys Hill, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement), Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 12th August 2010, confirming that the sale of logs was taking place at these premises, but not on a scale to constitute a material change of use.

In addition, she stated that she considered that the signs advertising the sale of these logs were within The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

(d) Alicena, Chapel Lane, Gentleshaw

The Clerk reported that he had also received from Christine Hibbs an email dated 12th August 2010 informing him that she had received an anonymous letter with regard to a number of properties, one of which was “Alicena”, where it was alleged that some outbuildings had been erected without planning permission and that commercial activity was taking place on the premises.

She asked whether the Parish Council could shed any light on these allegations.

He had subsequently been advised that the outbuildings had been erected many years previously and that the alleged commercial activity was the restoration of vehicles, undertaken not as a commercial enterprise but as a hobby.

He had duly passed on this information to Mrs. Hibbs.

(e) Erection of Pole with CCTV Camera at The Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, having noticed the erection of a pole-mounted CCTV camera at the entrance to The Grand Lodge and having been advised by a planning officer that any development within the curtilage of a listed building needed planning consent, he had duly reported the presence of pole and camera to the planning authorities.

He had subsequently received from Claire Billings, Development Control Manager, a letter dated 17th August 2010, informing him that the matter was being investigated by her Enforcement Team.

(f) Cannock Chase Local Development Framework
Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan - Pre-Publication Draft

The Clerk reported that he had received from Antony Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager, Cannock Chase Council, a letter dated 30th July 2010, inviting comments from the Council over the next six weeks on the Pre-Publication Draft of the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan, preferably online.

The document could be downloaded at www.cannockchase.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

(g) Rural Masterplanning Project: Consultation

The Clerk reported that he had received from Clare Eggington, Principal Development Plans Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 3rd September 2010, advising the Parish Council of a project being undertaken by Lichfield District Council looking in detail at the future needs of the District's rural communities following a successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency's national Rural Masterplanning programme.

To get the views of local people about what their needs and aspirations were for their communities, the District Council was distributing copies of a questionnaire and was asking for responses by Friday, October 8th, 2010.

The Clerk said that reference had been made to the project at the District Parish Forum, adding that a copy of the questionnaire had been distributed with the documents for the present meeting for Councillors to completed and return.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Thursday, September 2nd, 2010 (*Appendix A*).

The main topic under discussion had been the proposed High Speed Rail Link, against which opposition had been unanimous.

Other topics had been Neighbourhood Watch, the Rural Masterplanning Project, sustainable energy and the digital switch-over.

(ii) Other Meetings

Cllr. Taylor said, that immediately prior to the meeting of the Council, he had attended consecutive Governors' meetings at St. James School, one a curriculum meeting.

It had been reported that pupil numbers were down and agreed that a recruitment drive should be mounted, in which it was hoped that the Parish Council could assist.

Cllr. Clarke reported that he had he had recently attended a concert at Gentleshaw School and had been very impressed by the standard.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOING EVENTS

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting of the Council, he had received notice of the following meetings and other forthcoming events.

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Thursday, September 2nd, 2010, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.

(ii) Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - Annual General Meeting: Thursday, September 9th, 2010, at The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

Following the AGM, there would be a presentation by Guy Corbett-Marshall, Chief Executive Officer of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, on "Living Landscapes in Staffordshire".

(iii) Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Briefing on the Electoral Review of Staffordshire 2010: Wednesday, September 15th, 2010, in the Oak Room, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, from 2. 00 p.m. to 3. 30 p.m.

(iv) Society of Local Council Clerks Course - "Managing Charities": Monday, September 20th, 2010 at the Village Hotel, Chilwell, Nottingham, from 10. 00 a.m. to 4. 00 p.m.

Cost: £95. 00, plus VAT (members); £120. 00, plus VAT (non-members).

(v) Staffordshire Rural Forum Keynote Conference – "We lack a compelling view of the future of our countryside": Wednesday, September 22nd, 2010, at the Yarnfield Conference Centre, near Stone, from 9. 15 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m.
Tickets: £60. 00.

"The purpose of the Staffordshire Rural Forum is to represent, act and collaborate on behalf of Staffordshire's rural businesses and communities, to address challenges and exploit opportunities that result in tangible and sustainable economic benefits to the County's rural areas."

(vi) Community Council of Staffordshire – Annual General Meeting: Thursday, September 23rd, 2010, at Haling Dene Centre, Cannock Road, Penkridge, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Following the formal business of the evening, there will be a short talk by Cllr. Matthew Ellis, Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, Staffordshire County Council.

This will be followed by the presentation of awards to the winner of the “Community Buildings Champion Best Chairman Awards” and presentation of Hallmark Quality Standard certificates.

- (vii) Family Day: Saturday, September 25th, 2010, at the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Pirehill. Stone, from 12. 30 p.m. to 4. 30 p.m.
- (viii) Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association - Seminar: “Council Employment”: Wednesday, September 29th, 2010, in Room 3, The Peel Building, St. Chad’s Place, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.
Cost: £20. 00 for first delegate, £15. 00 for second delegate and £10. 00 for each subsequent delegate from the same Council.
- (ix) South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust – Annual General Meeting and Patient Engagement Conference: Thursday, September 30th, 2010, at Tillington Hall Hotel, Eccleshall Road, Stafford, commencing at 5. 30 p.m. (for 6. 00 p.m.).
- (x) HSR2 Lichfield Action Group: Friday, October 1st, 2010, at Boley Park Community Hall, Lichfield, commencing at 8. 00 p.m.
- (xi) Annual Neighbourhood Watch Conference: Saturday, October 9th, 2010, at the Yarnfield Conference Centre, Yarnfield, near Stone, from 9. 30 a.m. to 4. 00 p.m.
There will be no charge, and a free buffet lunch will be provided.
Places are restricted and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
Anyone wishing to attend should ring 01785 234576 as soon as possible.
- (xii) Staffordshire Playing Fields Association – Annual General Meeting: Wednesday, October 20th, 2010, at Stafford Boat Club, Hazelstrine Arm, off Maplewood, Wildwood, Stafford, commencing at 2. 00 p.m.
- (xiii) Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association – 71st Annual General Meeting and Conference: Saturday, November 13th, 2010, in the Council Chamber, County Council Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, from 10. 00 a.m. to 3. 30 p.m.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Report of meetings of Highways and Footpaths Committee

The Chairman presented written reports on meetings of the Highways and Footpaths Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 27, 2010 (*Appendix B*), and Tuesday, September 7th, 2010 (*Appendix C*).

The focus of these meetings had been on the new footpath leaflets, which were now in the final stages of preparation.

Other items of business discussed had been the siting of the floral gateways, which had been traced in outline by a working party; the field gate adjacent to Fir Cottage, whose legality was still under consideration by the County Council; stencilled dog-fouling signs, rejected by the District Council's Environmental Protection Officer, but still considered desirable by the Committee; and the visit of the community gang.

(ii) Permission to Place Planters on Highway

The Clerk reported that he had received from Marion Giles, Operations Administration, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 17th August 2010, confirming that the County Council, as Highway Authority, had no objection to this proposal subject to the following conditions:

(a) that any requirements of Lichfield District Council, as planning authority, were complied with;

(b) that the Parish Council accepted full responsibility for the future maintenance of the planters;

(c) that the County Council incurred no responsibility for any damage to the planters, indemnified the County Council against any third party claim for damage and agreed to move any, if reasonably requested to do so, at no cost to the County Council;

(d) that, before erecting the planters, the Parish Council agreed the exact locations with the Community Highways Liaison Manager.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Clarke, the Council agreed to accept these conditions.

(iii) Power Cut in Brook End

Cllr. Cherry reported that the recent power-cut which had affected Brook End had resulted when Kevin Healey had damaged the plastic cover of a power-cable while erecting the new gate at the entrance to the Glebe Field.

However, in mitigation of Mr. Healey's action, Cllr. Cherry pointed out that the cable had been buried at a depth of only eighteen inches.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received a report from Graham McCulloch dated 14th July 2010, informing the Council that another cut had been completed and that the next cut would take place in mid-August.

He hoped to have the long grass in the centre of Longdon Green mowed and removed when the weather had dried.

The Clerk further reported that he had received a second report from Mr. McCulloch dated 17th September 2010 informing the Council that another cut had been completed the previous Sunday, when an improvement in the weather had allowed the work to be carried out.

(ii) Robinia outside No. 12 Berkeley Way

The Clerk reported that he had met Portia Howe, one of Lichfield District Council's two Arboricultural Officers, at Brook End Green on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 3rd, when she had carried out a visual inspection of the robinia.

Her conclusion had been that there was no need for urgent action, but she had noticed a small area of lost bark, which she thought might in time develop into a break point.

However, she had added that, if, as the County Council had acknowledged, the verge – and therefore the tree rooted in it – was in their ownership, she saw no reason why the Parish Council should incur the expense of maintaining them.

The Clerk said that he had now written to Richard Rayson, the Community Highways Liaison Officer, asking whether the Parish Council could continue to maintain the verge and tree as part of the Highway Maintenance Agreement.

(iii) Pruning of Trees on Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that, at the same time, he and Ms. Howe had met Darren Medr, of West Coast Network Services, on Longdon Green, to agree the extent of the pruning needed to allow sufficient clearance of overhead cables on Longdon Green.

Three trees were affected a hawthorn, an elder and a sycamore.

(iv) Cannock Chase Country Park Management

The Clerk reported that he had received from Sue Sheppard, Biodiversity Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 12th July 2010 updating the Council on the management of the Cannock Chase Country Park

(v) Meeting of Greens and Open Spaces Committee

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Greens and Open Spaces Committee should take place on Tuesday, October 19th, 2010, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

10. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Risk Assessment Register

Cllr. Clarke presented the definitive version of the Risk Assessment Register for adoption by the Parish Council.

In taking Councillors through the details of the Register, Cllr. Clarke pointed out that, though dated 12th July 2010, it was a living document which would need constant updating.

It was agreed that each Committee should monitor those parts of the Register relevant to its activities and that this should be an item on each of its agendas.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Cherry, the Risk Assessment Register was unanimously approved and adopted by the Council, and Cllr. Clarke was warmly thanked for his work in preparing it.

(ii) Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received from Robin Heslop, of Mosleys, Bore Street, Lichfield, a letter dated 11th August 2010, advising the Council that his firm's Conveyancing Department had succeeded in registering the title to the Village Hall in the name of Longdon Parish Council.

He has added that there was a bundle of old title deeds for Longdon Village Hall in his office of historical interest which he would like to pass on to the Council for safe keeping.

The Chairman offered to call at Mr. Heslop's office to collect these documents.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr. Heslop thanking him for the expeditious way in which he had carried out this work.

(iii) Local Referendums to Veto Excessive Council Tax Increases

The Clerk reported that he had downloaded a consultation document issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government setting out proposals for introducing legislation to allow local referendums to veto excessive tax increases.

However, it remained for the Government to define what should be regarded as excessive increases and to formulate the sets of principles which it was proposing for each level of local government.

11. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr. Taylor reported that he had received from Rob Nunn, Watch Liaison Officer, Neighbourhood Watch, Staffordshire Police, an email dated 1st September 2010 reporting a burglary at a house in St. James Close for which two door-to-door sellers claiming to be ex-offenders were thought to be responsible.

Cllr. Cherry had earlier alerted fellow-Councillors to this incident, which had occurred at his next-door neighbours'.

There had also been a burglary at a house in Brook End, where a door had been forced and property stolen, including jewellery, car keys and a Peugeot parked in the driveway.

Cllr. Clarke added that a green van had been seen cruising the area at about the time of the burglary and its registration number noted and reported to the police.

Cllr. Taylor said that a copy of the September 2010 Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter had been attached to the email, in which a series of scams had been listed. The message from all these scams was that one should never disclose personal information, including bank or credit card details, to a caller over the phone.

12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that Longdon had finished second in the Large Villages Section in the Lichfield/Cannock District and Upper Longdon third in the Small Villages Section of the same District.

The judges' comments were now awaited.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payments

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

*G. C. McCulloch	Ground Maintenance of Parish Sites - July 14 th	£350. 00
*Staffordshire Parish Council's Association	Course Fees	£ 35. 00
*Instaprint, Rugeley	700 copies of "Longdon Life", 600 inserts	£397. 00
*Hazel Crosbie	Delivering "Longdon Life"	£ 45. 00
*A. J. Juxon	Editor's Expenses	£ 15. 00
*D. McCarthy Bros.	Footpath Surface Works: Cost of works: £120. 00 VAT: £ 21. 00	£141. 00
*Aquajet Services	Refurbishment of Benches: Materials: £ 60. 23 Labour: £295. 00	£355. 23
*Moseleys, Lichfield	Professional Charges and Land Registry Fee	£275. 62
*HM Revenue & Customs	Overpayment of VAT Refund	£304. 18
*Brissco Signs & Graphics	Carriage and VAT (omitted from original invoice)	£ 9. 40
*G. C. McCulloch	Ground Maintenance of Parish Sites - August 15 th	£350. 00

*Centrewire	Ashton Gate-2 Way: £193. 00	
	Carriage Charge: £ 75. 00	
	VAT: £ 46. 91	
		£314. 91

(Before payment was made, the Clerk had asked for a justification from the company of the high delivery charge and had, in reply, received a letter dated 20th August 2010 explaining that the cost was based on the AA-recommended rate of 60p an hour and a person's time based on £20 an hour)

Longdon W. I.	*Hire of Hall - July 27 th :	£12. 00	
	Hire of Hall - September 7 th :	£12. 00	
	Hire of Hall - September 14 th :	£12. 00	
			£ 36. 00

W. B. Sullivan	Clerk's salary: £350. 00	
	Photocopying: £167. 28	
	Postage: £ 31. 72	
		£549. 00

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Membership Renewal	£ 39. 00
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Staffordshire Playing Fields Association	Annual Subscription	£ 15. 00
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(* confirmation #payment made under Section 137

(ii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting the following payments had been received:

HM Customs & Excise	VAT Refund	£844. 55
	<i>(NB. £540. 37 claimed)</i>	
A. I. D. Fuels	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 9. 00
Mrs. Anne Walters	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 23. 00
N. J. Sutcliffe	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 8. 00
A. W. Johnson	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 6. 50
D. T. Powell	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 8. 00
C. T. Marshall	Advertisements: "Longdon Life"	£ 10. 00
Paul Adams	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 5. 00

Will Rose

Advertisement: "Longdon Life"

£ 8.00

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £1659.02 The Halifax s/a £12677.84

There were no uncleared cheques.

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that the Council had received an appeal for a donation from St. Giles Hospice, Whittington.

However, it was agreed that, since the appeal had only just been received, a decision should be taken on the application at the next meeting.

(v) External Auditor's Report

The Clerk reported that he had received from Thomas Kelly, External Auditor, a report on the Parish Council's Final Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2010.

In the opinion of the External Auditor, the information contained in the Annual Return was in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements, and no matters had come to his attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

He had, however, drawn attention to the fact that no formal risk assessment had been carried out.

(vi) Halifax Liquid Gold Account

The Clerk reported that this account had been closed on 23rd July 2010 and the closing balance of £18677.84 transferred to the Council's new account.

(vii) Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee would take place on Tuesday, October 5th, 2010, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE THE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Viv. Evans, Chief Executive, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, an email dated 7th July 2010, informing the Council that that she had recently bought four books for the Association's technical library – "Essentials of Employment Law", "the Law of Parks and Gardens", "Street Use and Law" and "The Law of Allotments" – which could be consulted in the Association's office.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Michael Dinn, of the Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 19th July 2010 informing the Council that the consultation document, “Emerging Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010-2026”, had been approved by the Planning Committee on 1st July 2010 and was available for consultation by clicking on <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/committeesold/planningcommittee> and then referring to Item 6 of the meeting of 6th July 2010.

As this was a joint strategy with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, approval would be sought from the City Council Cabinet on 29th July, and it was intended to go out for consultation during the week commencing 9th August until the end of September.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Cllr. Tim Corvett, Planning Committee Chairman, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 11th August 2010, asking for the Council’s help in engaging its community in setting the standards which would control where waste sites were located in the years ahead by encouraging members of its community to go to www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourstandards and complete a simple survey found there.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Lyn Hamnant, Parks Administration Officer, Leisure Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 24th August 2010 inviting Councillors and parishioners to the forthcoming Lichfield Proms in Beacon Park event on 4th September 2010, admission to which was free.

The Clerk added that he had duplicated the poster enclosed with the letter and posted a copy on each of the parish notice-boards.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Tanya Kenney, Campaign Co-ordinator, No Need for Nuclear, a letter dated August 2010, enclosing a campaign newsletter

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

- (i) From Dawn Everitt, Democratic and Legal Services, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 1st August 2010;
 Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 1st August 2010 (amended);
 Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 16th August 2010;
 Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 13th September 2010;
 Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 17th August 2010 – Effective for Period 01. 09. 2010 – 31. 10. 2010.

- (ii) From Christine Lewis, Outview and Scrutiny Officer, Lichfield District Council:

Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16th July 2010 – Effective for Period 01. 08. 2010 – 31. 10. 2010.

(iii) From The Electoral Registration Officer, Lichfield District Council:

Register of Electors - Monthly Applications for 2nd August 2010.

(“Please aware that there will be no further updates until next year as rolling registration is now suspended to allow us to complete the annual canvass.”)

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 9th July 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 16th July 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 23rd July 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 30th July 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 6th August 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 13th August 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 20th August 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 27th August 2010;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 3rd September 2010;
Licensing Act 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy.

(v) From Bob Haynes, Community Safety Officer, Lichfield District Council:

Main points of meeting of Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, 29th July 2010;
Main points of meeting of Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, 12th August 2010.

(vi) From Nigel Walker, Resilience Manager, Lichfield District Council:

Major Incident Management – Guidance for Elected Members

(“District Council members asked that the documents be circulated to all Parish Councils in the District for your information and use at local level, if considered appropriate.”)

(vii) From Carol Pepper, Admin. Co-ordinator, Lichfield District Council:

Community Fund Launch

(“Bank launches new fund to support local communities”)

(viii) From Jan Wright, Administration Assistant, Lichfield & District Community and Voluntary Sector:

S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 22/10 - 24th June 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 23/10 - 8th July 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 24/10 - 15th July 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 25/10 - 22nd July 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 26/10 - 29th July 2010;

S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No, 27/10 - 5th August 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 28/10 - 12th August 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 29/10 - 19th August 2010;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 30/10 - 2nd September 2010.

(ix) From Julia Harris, Development Officer, Lichfield & District Community and Voluntary Sector:

Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (02. 07. 2010);
Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (08. 07. 2010);
Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (16. 07. 2010);
Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (23. 07. 2010);
Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (30. 07. 2010);
Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and the Surrounding Areas (12. 08. 2010).

(x) From Cllr. Philip Atkins, Leader, Staffordshire County Council:

“Staffordshire Unites: summary of our strategic plan 2010-2015”

(xi) From Emma Beaman, AONB Assistant, Cannock Chase AONB Unit:

Agenda for Parish Councils’ Meeting on 29th September 2010;
Minutes of Advisory Partnership held on 20th April 2010;
AONB dates for the Diary.

(xii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association:

Weekly Update (13th July 2010);
Weekly Update (20th July 2010);
Weekly Update (4th August 2010);
Weekly Update (11th August 2010);
Weekly Update (25th August 2010);
Weekly Update (2nd September 2010);
Chairman’s Update (8th September 2010);
Clerk’s Update (8th September 2010).
Marie Curie Cancer Care – Fundraising Walk – Shugborough
- Friday, August 27th, 2010, 6. 00 p.m.;
Free second-hand printers for voluntary and community groups;
Notice of Annual General Meeting (13th November);
Delegate Booking Form;
Form for Nomination for Member/Officer of the SPCA;
Constitution proposed for adoption;
Resolutions for Debate;
Staffordshire LINK Bulletin: Volume 1, Issue 4, June 2010.

(xiii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

NALC Mailbox (12th July 2010);
NALC Updates (13th July 2010);
NALC Updates (20th July 2010);
NALC Updates (30th July 2010);
NALC Mailbox (13th August 2010);
NALC Mailbox (18th August 2010);
“LCR”: Autumn 2010, Volume 63, No. 2;
Notice of meeting – Larger Town Councils Conference,
1st December 2010, London (Theme: Local Place).

(xiv) From The Chief Executive, Community Council of Staffordshire:

Notice of Annual General Meeting;
Minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting;
Nomination for Election Form 2010 (to become a member of the Board);
Notes on Nomination to the Board;
Voting Slip/Form of Proxy;
Location Map;
Annual Report 2009-2010.

(xv) From Liz Sanderson, Community Council of Staffordshire:

Two consultations - Community Right to Build (consultation ends on 31st August 2010) and Change to Policy Direction for the Big Lottery Fund (consultation ends on 29th October 2010).

(xvi) From Christopher Moulton, Secretary, Staffordshire Branch, Society of Local Council Clerks:

Branch Newsletter – Special Edition

(“Officers from the Society and the National Association have met with Government officials responsible for the consultation into the proposal that, from the next financial year, any “excessive” Council Tax increase by precepting authorities (including town and parish councils) in England must be supported by a majority vote in a referendum to be run by the principal authority....”)

(xvii) From Peter Caine, VAST (Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent):

Voluntary and Community News - July 2010 - Week 2;
Voluntary and Community News - July 2010 - Week 3;
Voluntary and Community News - July 2010 - Week 4;
Voluntary and Community News - September 2010 - Week 1.

(xviii) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 109, August 2010;
“Natural World”: Issue 89, Summer 2010;
Notice of 40th Annual General Meeting;
Annual Review 2009;
Cannock Group: Diary Dates for September – December 2010;
Summer Raffle 2010 (2 books x 5 tickets @ £1.00 each);
e-newsletter: July 2010.

(xix) From The Secretary, Staffordshire Playing Fields Association:

Agenda for 2010 Annual General Meeting;
Minutes of 2009 Annual General Meeting;
Annual Report and Accounts 2009/2010.

(xx) From SMP Playgrounds Ltd., Egham, Surrey:

Parish and Community News;
“Big names launched at Playfair 2010” (by email);
Brochure: “It’s time to play”.

(xxi) From Jan Cosgrove, Fair Play for Children (via SPCA):

E-letter: Summer 2010.

(xxii) From GOPAK, Hythe, Kent:

Promotion Card: “First with Folding Furniture”.

(xxiii) From Husson UK Limited, Bourne End, Bucks.:

Husson Street Furniture
 (“French design at affordable prices”)

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Clarke asked whether the Council had ever considered providing the village with Christmas illuminations.

He was informed that this had been considered in the past, but it had been considered that the risk factor would have been too great.

The Chairman pointed out that a lighted Christmas tree was placed in a window of Longdon Village Hall every year.

(ii) Cllr. Clarke asked whether the Council was taking full advantage of opportunities to apply for grants and funding.

He pointed to funding currently available through the Countryside Wildlife Programme, a successful bid for which would, he thought, bring a grant towards the cost of developing Gentleshaw Green.

However, an application had to be received no later than Tuesday, September 21st.

Cllr. Welch agreed to look at the application forms, but, at first glance, thought there would be insufficient time to prepare the sort of detailed application which was required.

It was agreed that the question of applying for grants should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(iii) Cllr. Clarke asked if the Chairman could elaborate on her suggestion that the present committee-structure could be improved.

The Chairman replied that, at present, current membership of the Committees was unequal, and said that she was open to suggestions from other Councillors over how the structure could be improved.

(iv) Cllr. Cherry said that he thought that the parish website could be modernised, and while the majority of Councillors thought that the website was adequate for purpose it was nonetheless agreed that, as a first step, Eric Roy, the present Webmaster, should be invited to offer the Council his ideas for its improvement.

(v) Cllr. Butler reported that the guttering at Longdon Village Hall was constantly being broken by youngsters playing football in the yard outside, and he asked whether a full-size football net would be obtained and permanently erected close to one of the perimeter walls.

Cllr. Clarke pointed out that children were free to play football on the field behind the Memorial Hall, but Cllr. Butler said that they preferred to play on the smoother surface provided by the yard, rather than the rougher grassed surface behind the Memorial Hall.

The Chairman said that she would consult the Village Hall Management Committee and at the same time look at the cost which providing the net would incur.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 12th, 2010, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Appendix A

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE LICHFIELD DISTRICT PARISH FORUM HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSE, FROG LANE, LICHFIELD, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2ND, 2010

COUNTY COUNCIL EVENT FOR PARISH COUNCILS

The meeting, attended by approximately thirty people, began with the announcement by *Cllr. Ben Adams*, Cabinet Member with responsibility for communicating with parish councils, that an event was being held at the County Showground on the morning of October 4th, to which parish councils were being invited to send up to three representatives.

There would be three items on the agenda of the meeting, the first on IT for local councils (The County Council was proposing to offer a free email address to each Parish Councillor and to every Clerk).

The second item would be on certain aspects of planning, such as infrastructure, highways and schools, while the third would address the “Big Society” idea.

There would be workshops, and lunch would be provided at the end of the morning.

HIGH SPEED RAIL LINK

There followed a presentation by *Riach Ryder*, a resident of Armitage, on the proposed HS2 Rail Link, which would, in his opinion, devastate first Lichfield, replacing the Cathedral as the dominant feature of the city with a viaduct, and then neighbouring villages like the Ridwares and Weston as it ran non-stop north along the Trent Valley, affecting areas of outstanding natural beauty and historic buildings without bringing any benefit to Lichfield.

Justification for the development was that there was a need to increase capacity and reduce travel-time, to support development and to improve links with the Continent. It was proposed that, eventually, the line should extend as far as Scotland and would link up with the West Coast Main Line, which would be running at full capacity in 2022.

While alternative routes were under consideration, it was argued that, because of the speed at which the trains would be travelling, the railway track would have, as far as possible, to run in a straight line, any curve having to be very gradual in order to accommodate the speed, so little deviation was possible.

Cllr. Richard Cox, of Armitage, said that the four-track, a much more limited development, now running past the village, had taken six years to complete and had blighted the community, and he asked the meeting to reflect on the potential damage to the environment. He believed that any attempt just to move the line of the railway further from the local area would be NIMBYism, and he strongly urged outright opposition to the entire scheme, arguing that the promised benefits, even if fulfilled, would be minimal; reducing the end-to-end time between London and Birmingham to a mere twenty minutes would be insufficient justification for the devastation it would cause to the communities through which line passed.

Even though the project was still only in the planning stage and had not yet been approved, blighting already had already occurred; it was proving impossible to sell houses in Canwell and Hints.

Cllr. John Walker, drawing a parallel with the M6 Toll, pointed to a recent report that had revealed that the M6 Toll had completely failed to live up to the promise that it would relieve congestion on the M6/M5 and had last year registered a loss of £26m.

It was also argued that, even though the project would not be completed in the lifetime of many of those present, it was vital that it was robustly opposed at the outset, not least because it already had cross-party support in Parliament, and the attention of the meeting was drawn to an organisation called “HSR2 Action Alliance” comprising fifty communities between London and Birmingham dedicated to ensuring that the Government conducted issues properly and made the right decisions and listing six ‘myths’ surrounding the project on its website.

It should be added that not one person at the meeting spoke in favour of the project!

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Robb Nunn, Neighbourhood Watch Manager – Lichfield District, Staffordshire Police, then gave a talk on the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

He began by acknowledging and then dismissing a popular view of the scheme that it encouraged “nosey neighbours”! There were, he said, thousands of members in the Lichfield District alone, whose primary function was to keep their neighbourhoods informed of crimes and other issues.

There was no minimum or maximum number for membership of individual groups, though the ideal was 10 to 20 houses so that members got to know each other. Groups were usually set up by victims of crime who wanted to do something for the community, though sometimes they were set up as the result of a specific problem in the area such as vandalism.

Most residents were aware of the existence of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in their area through a newsletter published from time to time and levered door-to-door.

There were a number of associated schemes – School Watch, Business Watch, Farm Watch, Forecourt Watch.

Mr. Nunn urged the use of OWL (Online Watch Link), an internet system with which any resident could register and through which alerts could be sent out in a matter of twenty-four hours.

RURAL MASTER-PLANNING PROJECT

Clare Eggington, Principal Development Plans Officer, then spoke on the Rural Master-Planning project, which focussed on six of the larger villages in the District which had scored highly in terms of their levels of sustainability based on the presence of such key facilities as a school, a doctor's surgery, a dentist's, a post office, a local shop, a pharmacy and a pub, and also the accessibility by local transport to employment, leisure, retail and hospitals, much of this information being obtainable through Village Plans.

After a period of consultation, a strategy would be drafted for the rural villages, setting out where and what the development opportunities were and what the restraints were, taking into account the varying needs of each village.

She insisted that other villages could become involved, and to that end she distributed copies of a Rural Villages questionnaire which she invited people to complete and return to her (*copy enclosed*).

SHARED LEARNING

Sustainable Energy

A petition was circulated opposing the erection of wind turbines on Hogs Hill, on the outskirts of Lichfield.

It was reported that discounts were available to householders prepared to have solar panels installed on their roofs, but a warning was also given that some firms, in return, demanded that the householder sign over to the company his rights to the feed-in tariff to the company to the next twenty-five years.

It was suggested that the District Council might negotiate a bulk discount for an agreed number of properties in the District.

DIGITAL SWITCH-OVER

Concern was expressed over how the vast number of obsolescent analogue radios would be disposed of.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The following items were agreed: a presentation by The Community Council of Staffordshire; Energy Efficiency/Solar Panels; Energy Planning.

It was also agreed that there should be a presentation on Minerals Planning at a later meeting.

LICHFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

Only three people attended this meeting, which preceded the meeting of the Forum - Viv Evan, SPCA's Chief Executive, Cllr. Mrs. Ann Oulton, of Hints Parish Council, and WBS -, and, while three other parish councils had expressed support for the Committee (Burntwood, Drayton Bassett and Harlaston), none had sent a representative.

It was therefore decided to wind up the Committee and to use the Forum to debate local issues and express local concerns

Appendix B

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS
COMMITTEE OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL,
LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JULY 27TH, 2010

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Chairman); Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler;
Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere;
and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

All members of the Committee were present.

Mr. Norman Stanfield, who had attended the previous meeting and who had hoped to be present, had been detained on business in the north of England.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 27th, 2010, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Cherry and seconded by Cllr. Clarke, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Bridge over Shropshire Brook

The Chairman reported that she had spoken to Kevin Healey regarding the easing of the drop on the far side of the bridge, but he had been concerned about the depth of the fall in the ground.

He had said that he would do what he could to improve the situation.

(ii) Floral Gateways

The Clerk reported that he had written to Richard Rayson, the Community Highway Liaison Manager, and was awaiting his reply.

(iii) Footpath 73

Cllr. Clarke reported that assistance had been given to the applicant, Mr. Alan Rowe, and a response the letter from DEFRA sent in time to meet the dead-line.

In reply, DEFRA had advised that it would be pursuing the case with the County Council; in the meantime, there was an opportunity to update the evidence to be submitted, though time was short.

(iv) Ditches in Borough Lane

It was noted that the Parish Council had received an assurance that the work would be carried out in the first week in August.

(v) Footpath across Glebe Field

The Clerk confirmed that the metal gate intended to replace the wooden kissing-gate had been ordered from Centrewire of Longton.

(vi) Church Hollow

It was suggested that the existing footpath could be widened, leaving half the width of the path for local youths to use for skate-boarding, though there was a fear that they might not restrict themselves to the area allocated to them.

As Church Hollow had never been down-graded by the County Council, it was agreed that the suggestion should first be put to Cllr. Lewis for his opinion.

(vii) Footpath No. 73

Mr. Rose reported that he had spoken to Paul Rochford, the County Council's Principal Rights of Way Officer, about the possibility of replacing an insecure wooden stile on this footpath with a metal kissing-gate

Mr. Rochford had agreed to this provided that the Parish Council would meet half the cost of the new gate, which would cost £250. 00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Bird, it was agreed that the Council should pay half the cost of this gate, namely, £125. 00.

It was also agreed that an old wooden gate on Footpath No. 28 should be replaced by a new metal gate at present lying at the bottom of the hedge.

(viii) Plastic Dog Signs

Mr. Rose commented that he had observed a number of new plastic signs attached to lamp-posts warning against dog-fouling that had appeared recently.

He felt that, while they performed a useful function, they were not an adequate substitute for the stencilled signs requested by the Parish, and the Clerk was instructed to enquire whether these signs would still be introduced.

(ix) Grange Hill

It was noted that a planning application submitted by Mr. Mark Lewis to carry out work on strengthening the boundary wall above Grange Hill had been refused on the grounds of inappropriate material.

5. VISIT OF COMMUNITY GANG

The Clerk reported that a Community Gang would be working in the parish for three weeks beginning at the end of the month and a list of tasks had been drawn up for completion during that period.

It was agreed that the following tasks should be added: trim the side of the footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk; trim the bank at the side of the A51 at its junction with High Street; trim the right hand bank of the Shropshire Brook at the ford; cut back the hedge at the side of the footway alongside the A51 between the two entrances to Brook End; trim the verges in Stockings Lane.

If any of these tasks could not be completed within the time allocated to the parish, they could be carried out by the Village Lengthsman as part of the Highway Maintenance Agreement.

The Clerk also reported that Mrs. Elizabeth Cauldwell, of 12 Berkeley Way, had expressed concern about some of the branches of the robinia growing between the footpath and her fence, which she felt were becoming a threat to her property.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Gareth Hare, one of Lichfield District Council's Arboricultural Officers, and ask him to inspect and advise.

6. DESIGN AND FORMAT OF FOOTPATH LEAFLETS

Cllr. Cherry presented a draft of the texts of Walks Nos. 2, 3 and 4, and after discussion the following layout was agreed: front page – title and photograph, the photographs to be provided by Mrs. Ann Juxon; inside spread - top two-thirds text, bottom third map of walk, possibly circular; back page – a brief history of Longdon on the middle section and the Countryside Code on the right-hand section, with possible advertisements illustrating one or all the three pubs, in the remaining space.

There was support for retaining the existing background illustrations on the inside fold.

Cllr. Cherry agreed to prepare a dummy layout for the next meeting of the Committee, and Cllr. Butler would design an Upper Longdon Walk, starting at The Chetwynd Arms.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 7th, 2010, in the W. I. Hall, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

Appendix C

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

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Chairman); Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. C. D. Cherry;
Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present was the Clerk and one parishioner – Mr. Norman Stanfield,
of Chapel Lane, Gentleshaw.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere.
Also absent was Cllr. N. J. Bird.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday,
July 27th, 2010, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr.
Clarke, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Bridge over Shropshire Brook

Work had yet to be started.

(ii) Floral Gateways

The Chairman reported that consent had been given for the proposed planters,
subject to the acceptance of a number of conditions: that any requirements of
Lichfield District Council, as planning authority, were complied with; that the Parish
Council accepted full responsibility for the future maintenance of the planters; that the
County Council incurred no responsibility for any damage to the planters and were
indemnified by the Parish Council against any third party claim for damage; that the
Parish Council agreed to remove any, if reasonably expected to do so, at no cost to the
County Council; and that, before erecting the planters, the Parish Council agreed the
exact locations with the County Council's Community Liaison Manager.

The Clerk said that he had written to Mr. Rayson, proposing a site meeting, but, to date, had not received a reply.

At the Chairman's suggestion, the Committee agreed to meet on site the following afternoon at 6. 00 p.m (later changed to 5. 15 p.m.) to mark out the exact locations where the planters would be erected.

(iii) Footpath 73

Cllr. Clarke reported that Mr. Rowe had received a reply from DEFRA thanking him for the additional information which he had provided and informing him that they had written to Staffordshire County Council asking for the reasons for the delay and demanding a reply within six weeks.

Cllr. Clarke thought that the matter would be resolved by Christmas.

He was concerned, however, that an application to replace a stile along the right of way with a kissing-gate might jeopardise efforts to have it correctly designated a bridle-way, but was assured that it would be the field-gate at the side of the kissing-gate which would be replaced with a bridle-gate.

In any case, the stile had a loose footplate and was a hazard to ramblers.

(iv) Ditches in Borough Lane

The Clerk reported that he had no reply to his enquiry as to whether work on clearing these ditches would be carried out by the County Highways Department even if there was no contribution from the land-owners.

It was one of the issues which he hoped could be discussed with Mr. Rayson at the site meeting which he was trying to arrange.

(v) Footpath across Glebe Field

The meeting heard that the metal gate supplied by Centrewire had not yet been erected.

(vi) Church Hollow

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, emailed Cllr. Lewis, asking for his comments and that Cllr. Lewis had forwarded his email to Richard Rayson.

(vii) Plastic Dog Signs

The Chairman reported that an email had been received from Jen Wright, Lichfield District Council's Environmental Protection Officer, stating that she had erected numerous dog-fouling signs throughout Longdon; these, she claimed, were longer-lasting and clearer than signs sprayed on the pavement, which were labour-intensive and needed renewing every few months.

Mr. Rose pointed out that the plastic signs to which Ms. Wright referred warned the public against surveillance by CCTV cameras, of which there were none in Longdon, and he asked whether the District Council would be prepared to carry out the spraying at the Parish Council's expense.

The Clerk was instructed to write to Ms. Wright asking if this were possible.

(ix) Grange Hill

It was reported that a second planning application had been submitted by Mr. Lewis to carry out work on the boundary wall above Grange Hill which provided for brick cladding.

It was thought that this should make the application acceptable.

(x) Visit of Community Gang

The Chairman expressed the view that the Community Gang had done good work on their recent visit to the parish, though Mr. Rose said that the gang had not cleared the bank at the side of the A51, work which he had arranged to be carried out.

The Clerk said that he had requested the clearance of the verge between Brook End Green and No. 12 Berkeley Way, and this too had not been done, though he added that this had been a last-minute request which the gang might not have had enough time to carry out.

The Clerk further reported that, following Mrs. Cauldwell's complaint about the state of both the robinia and the verge, he had arranged a site visit with Portia Howe, one of Lichfield District Council's Arboricultural Officers, who had concluded that, while there was no need for urgent work to be carried out on the tree, there was a small area of lost bark which might, in time, become a break-point.

She had also pointed out that, since the tree stood on land belonging to the County Council, its maintenance was the responsibility of that Council, not that of the Parish Council.

The Clerk said that, as a consequence, he had written to Richard Rayson asking whether the Parish Council could carry out maintenance work on both the tree and the verge as part of its Highway Maintenance Agreement with the County Council and was awaiting a reply.

5. FOOTPATH LEAFLETS

Mr. Stanfield then outlined two walks in Gentleshaw, the one lasting approximately forty-five minutes, which he described as "fairly easy", the other lasting approximately an hour, which he described as "moderately easy".

While the second of these extended for a short distance beyond the boundaries of the parish, he felt that this was preferable to the alternative of walking along a road.

He would now provide a text for each of the walks, noting such features as Gentleshaw Church, the windmill (a Grade II listed building), The Windmill Inn and Gentleshaw Common (for which an information board had already been erected by Lichfield District Council at the car park opposite Gentleshaw Church), as well as the wider landscape.

Cllr. Cherry said that he would now set about preparing final drafts and would email Ann Juxon and Rob Heywood, asking them to provide photographs.

The Committee agreed with Cllr. Clarke's suggestion that, in addition to being numbered, the walks should be given a suitable name.

The Chairman added that not all the colours chosen by the Committee were available and alternatives would have to be chosen; green would not be suitable, and colours that confused the colour-blind must be avoided.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received a phone call from Marcus Barley, Network Management Engineer, Staffordshire County Council giving an update on the situation at Fir Tree Cottage, where a field gate had been erected.

Following the Clerk's last letter, the owner had been told that, in the absence of the documentary evidence he claimed to have establishing that an access-point had been at that location previously, he should now remove the gate and close the gap.

In response, he had sent by fax a plan which, he claimed, showed that a gap had existed as far back as 1964. However, the quality of the print had been so poor that he had been asked to send a photocopy, which was now awaited.

The owner had claimed that the access-point was needed in order to empty the septic tank, but this begged the question as how it had been emptied before the gate had been installed.

Moreover, if there was already a gap, why did the owner think it was necessary to apply now for permission for a *temporary* access?

Mr. Barley was awaiting a reply to these questions but in the meantime was asking if anyone with local knowledge of the area could supply any further information.

Mr. Stanfield said that he had never been aware of the existence of a gap at this point in the hedge; he also argued that, in order to create the access, the owner had torn up part of the highway verge, for which he would have need the permission of the County Council.

(ii) Cllr. Cherry told the Committee that the 2001 Census had shown Longdon as having a population of 1807, 357 of whom were under twenty. He suggested that, while present-day figure might not be exactly the same, it was reasonable to assume that the proportion of those living in Longdon who were under twenty was about the same, and he felt that this provided the Parish Council with vital information in its pursuit of a play area.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.