

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, FORD LANE, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JUNE 12TH, 2012

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Chairman); Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. C. D. Cherry;
Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. P. M. Couchman; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;
Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. K. C. Taylor; and Cllr. C. J. Webb.

Also present were the Clerk; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District
Council; PC Andy Brown; and PCSO Lisa Anderson.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. M. J. Nash; Cllr. S. K. Welch; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis,
MBE.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon,
on Tuesday, May 8th, 2012, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and
seconded by Cllr. Taylor, approved and signed.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Meeting, also held in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane,
Longdon, on Tuesday, May 8th, 2012, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and
seconded by Cllr. Taylor approved and signed.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present other than PC Brown and PCSO Anderson,
whom the Chairman invited to address the meeting when matters relating to law and
order were discussed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Development at “The Swan with Two Necks”

It was reported that, following the departure of the licensee, development at
“The Swan with Two Necks” had been suspended.

Currently, the pub was being run by a temporary manager put in place by the
brewery who owned the premises.

(ii) Footpath Leaflets

The Clerk reported that he had placed an order with POS Acrylics for seven five-tier leaflet holders at a total cost, including Postage and VAT, of £93. 56.

Cllr. Juxon added that thirty copies of each leaflet had been placed in the Tourist Information Centre at Lichfield.

Furthermore, "Staffordshire Life" might be interested in including a feature about them in a later issue.

(iii) Parish Website

Cllr. Clarke reported that Cllr. Cherry would be going a training session with Eric Roy on the following Wednesday.

Cllr. Cherry added that nothing would be published on the website without the prior consent of the Council, though it was agreed that he should be free to add non-contentions items without referring them to the Council first.

(iv) Cycle Path between Longdon and Lichfield

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mark Evans, Transport Policy Officer, Place Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 6th June 2012, acknowledging the Council's letter regarding a proposed cycle facility between Longdon and Lichfield and informing the Council that he had forwarded a copy to Edward Healey, the regional manager for Sustrans, who would contact the Council shortly.

(v) Road Signage

The Clerk reported that he had sent an email to Timothy Buxton, Traffic Management Technician, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, asking him whether the County Council had a policy regarding the number and spacing of roadside signs.

(vi) Computer Course

Cllr. Clarke said that he believed that he had found two sources of possible funding for the computer course which he was hoping to run in the autumn.

(vii) Wall at No. 19, The Grange, Upper Longdon

Cllr. Taylor reported that the original sandstone cap which had topped one of the pillars had not been replaced, and he asked if the owner could be asked to restore it, since it was part of the original estate wall.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the owner asking if he would replace the cap.

(viii) Drains in Borough Lane

The Clerk reported that he had sent an email to Richard Rayson, the County Council's Community Highways Liaison manager, drawing his attention to this problem.

6. PLANNING

(i) Report of Planning Committee

12/00410/FUL//12/00411/CON: Mr. & Mrs. N. Betteley: Demolition of existing building: The Spinney, Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

It was noted that the only amendment proposed was to reduce the size of the windows.

It was pointed out that the new building, which, it was thought, would be an improvement on what it was replacing, would barely be visible from the road.

Moreover, there had been no objections from any of the neighbours.

12/00504/FUL: Beaudesert Park: Erection of two single-storey buildings, comprising of an equipment store, drying room, offices and WC: Beaudesert Scout and Guide Camp, Beaudesert Park, Cannock Wood.

The Council saw no problem with this application.

(ii) For Consideration

12/00409/FUL: Mr. A. Moore: Erection of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling (3 bedrooms) with associated works: Benbrook Farm, Stoneywell Lane, Longdon

The Council had strong objections to this application.

It seemed that the proposed dwelling would be in addition to and not a replacement for the temporary dwelling already on the site, which had not, it was observed, been sited in the position indicated in the plan submitted in support of the original application.

There was a good deal of local concern, even anger, over what the applicant had already done on this Green Belt site, which was described by one Councillor as "a cross between a rubbish tip, a breaker's yard and a builder's yard"; the Council feared that such a quantity of rubble posed a health-and-safety hazard, and believed that it should be cleared before any more building work was allowed on the site.

The Council believed that the applicant's claim that the rubble stored on the site was needed for the foundation of future building on the site and was not the consequence of the applicant's alternative commercial business should be investigated, possibly by employing the services of a quantity surveyor to calculate the amount of rubble and estimate the area of foundation it would cover.

In the view of the Council, storing so much rubble for such an extended period on this Green Belt site was quite unacceptable, and the District Council should be urged to take the necessary steps to protect the local environment.

The Council was also concerned that the occupant of any accommodation, on this site, temporary or otherwise, should be employed full-time in agriculture and believed that the condition that it should be occupied by an agricultural worker should be rigorously enforced, though, on recent evidence, it feared that the existing mechanism for enforcing such a condition might not be strong enough.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Richard King, Strategic Director, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, asking for a legal definition of “agricultural worker” and whether there was any limitation on potential future profit-making from a future sale.

(iii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

12/00298/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. M. Hearne: Conversion and extension to existing dwelling to form two dwellings and creation of new vehicular access: 77, Upper Way, Upper Longdon.

12/00308/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. G. Harris: Garage and bay window to front: 5, St. James Close, Longdon.

12/00326/FUL: Mr. M. Hammersley: Conversion of four residential units into two: Gorton Lodge Farm, Stoneywell Lane, Longdon.

(iv) 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 in relation to the Parish of Longdon.

(v) Other Planning Matters

The Clerk reported that Lichfield District Council had issued the following Certificates of Lawful Use or Development:

Application No. 12/00324/CLP
Site: Castle Ring Lodge

“The proposed two-storey extension would fall within Schedule 2, Part1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) and therefore would be lawful”.

Application No. 12/00327/CLE

Site: High Meadow, Hill Top, Longdon Green

“The Council is satisfied that, on the balance of probability, the dwelling has not been occupied by a person employed or last employed locally in agriculture or forestry, or a dependent of such a person for a period in excess of 10 years prior to the submission of this application. As such, the occupation of the dwelling in non-compliance with Condition 4 of Planning Permission ELR/5983 is lawful”.

(Both Certificates were signed by Bal Nahal, Legal Services Manager, Democratic, Development Services, the first dated 18th May 2012, the second 2nd May 2012)

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty – Parish Councils’ Meeting: May 14th

Unfortunately, neither Cllr. Taylor nor Cllr. Welch had been able to attend this meeting.

(ii) Localism and Neighbourhood Planning Briefing Session: May 22nd

The Chairman reported on the briefing session on Localism and Neighbourhood Planning held in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Tuesday, May 22nd, which she, together with Cllr. Clarke, Cllr. Webb and the Clerk had attended.

She professed herself to be disappointed by the presentation; Lichfield District Council was not due to publish its Core Strategy until June 14th, so the speaker could not answer specific questions.

Moreover, the terminology was confusing, and the Government kept changing the criteria.

What was clear was that a Neighbourhood Plan would carry more weight than a Parish Plan, though even Neighbourhood Plans had to adhere to the District Council’s Core Strategy.

Cllr. Webb suggested that the more democratic a Plan could be shown to be in the way in which it was compiled, the more credible it would seem, and he asked what the Council’s reaction would be to the setting up of a Residents’ Association in Longdon Green, for which he felt that there would be some support.

It was agreed that there could be no objection on the part of the Council to such a move, but the Chairman thought that there was a danger that this might lead to fragmentation in presentation, whereas it would be essential to produce a cohesive picture for the whole village. It might, however, provide the structure for getting feedback from residents, particularly if other parts of the Parish followed suit.

A Neighbourhood Plan would need the support of the majority of those who attended the referendum meeting, though a failed Neighbourhood Plan could be adopted as a Parish Plan.

It was agreed that further action should be delayed until the District Council published its Core Strategy, but, in the meantime, Cllr. Webb should be encouraged to explore the possibility of setting up a Residents’ Association in Longdon Green.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Site meeting at Dark Lane, Longdon

The Chairman reported on a site meeting at Dark Lane, Longdon, which had taken place on Friday, May 25th, at which she, together with Cllr. Clarke and the Clerk, had met Richard Rayson, the Community Highway Liaison Manager, and Kevin Wawrzynczyk, the Community Highway Liaison Officer.

It had been agreed that the lane was in an increasingly dangerous condition due to collapsing banks and would, for safety's sake, have to be closed to through traffic.

It was proposed, therefore, to erect a keyed gate at the Thorleys Hill end of the lane. This gate would be kept locked to prevent itinerant encampments and fly-tipping, but, to ensure that the owners of the adjacent fields could continue to reach them, they would be provided with keys.

Beyond the field gate a bollard would be erected in the middle of the lane which would allow access by cyclists, walkers and horse-riders. A similar bollard would be erected past Dark Lane Farm.

These arrangements were accepted by the Council without reservation.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Registering Brook End Green

Cllr. Clarke reported that there had been some delay in concluding the process of registration resulting from a request from the Land Registry for a copy of the decision of the Commons Commissioner, which he had provided.

He now hoped that the process could be completed without further delay.

(ii) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received from Graham McCulloch a report dated 20th May 2012 stating that he had carried out the latest mowing on the previous Wednesday, the 16th, and not encountered any problems, the weather being dry.

He would be visiting the parish again in early June.

(iii) Village Lengthsman/Grass Cutting Agreement

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Rayson, Community Highway Liaison Manager, Lichfield Highways Office, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated May 2012, enclosing the official order for the Lengthsman Agreement and/or Grass Cutting Agreement with the Parish commencing 1st April 2012, the expected value of which was £707. 15.

The Clerk pointed out that this was the same as the previous year's.

10. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Communication between meetings

Cllr. Cherry said that he had been concerned by the length of recent meetings and also felt that some action could be taken on their own initiative by Councillors between meetings, thus reducing the time taken to expedite matters.

The Chairman replied that Councillors would have to distinguish between seeking information or clarification and raising or pursuing issues of importance to the Council as a whole.

Any Councillor with a particular interest could bring background information to the Council and request permission to take it further.

The Clerk pointed out that Councillors could raise issues as private citizens provided that they did not use their office without the prior knowledge or agreement of the Council.

There had been instances in the past when Councillors had used their office in the pursuit of matters of a purely personal interest.

To facilitate communication between Councillors between meetings the Clerk would draw up a list of Councillors' addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses.

11. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Report by PC Andy Brown

The Chairman welcomed PC Brown and PCSO Anderson to the meeting and asked them if either of them wished to make a report to the Council.

PC Brown said that, until the weekend, when there had been two criminal incidents, the Parish had been free of crime.

However, a motor-cycle had been stolen from the rear of "The Red Lion" and a shed at the rear of the racing stables had been entered and a strimmer taken.

An attempt to break into the blacksmith's shop had failed when the intruder had been disturbed.

The only other incident had been a stranded lorry which had tried to make its way down Horsey Lane; the driver, from Eastern Europe, had been unable to read the warning sign and had been relying on his satnav!

However, an improved sign would be erected at the entrance to the lane shortly.

PC Brown then distributed copies of a newsletter reporting local matters in Longdon and Chorley and warning about a scam being worked by a team accosting unsuspecting shoppers in supermarket car parks with spurious requests for directions while an accomplice searched for unattended bags in open car boots.

(ii) Neighbourhood Watch Report

Cllr. Taylor said that the scam mentioned by PC Brown had been highlighted in the latest report from Rob Nunn, the Watch Liaison Officer, dated 27th April 2012.

The method used was for a female, described as Eastern European, to approach a shopper returning to her car after loading the boot and returning the trolley and, as she unlocked the car, distracting her by asking for directions. Meanwhile, a second offender opened the boot and removed credit cards from the handbag while a third offender acted as look-out; the victim did not realise this until later.

A short time later, the cards were used in Lichfield, suggesting that the pin number was observed at the check-out.

Offenders in such incidents are invariably Eastern European, often females in their twenties.

In a second email, dated 2nd May 2012, Mr. Nunn had reported that there had been a burglary at an isolated cottage in Lower Lane, between Chorley and Boney Hay, between 4. 00 p.m. and 7. 20 p.m. the previous day, May 1st, when the beading and glass had been removed from a rear window and the burglar alarm ripped out.

An untidy search had been made and property stolen, including a computer and a camera.

The police were asking anyone with information to contact them.

12. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

(i) Progress Report

The Clerk reported that he had removed the two flower tubs containing the dead conifers from the top of Shavers Lane.

Alan Johnson had reported that the planter at the top of Church Hill would need virtual reconstruction, and it was agreed that that too should be removed.

Cllr. Taylor reported that Taylor Maids had thoroughly cleaned and washed both the telephone kiosk and the litter bin at the top of Grange Hill; he was asked to thank Mr. James Taylor for undertaking this task.

The Chairman suggested that the Council might like to consider employing a handyman in future years to carry out such maintenance work.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, payment of the following accounts was agreed:

* G. D. Duckett	Temporary Tattoos 4U: £	2.75	
	Amazon:	£13. 98	
	Crafty Arts:	£12. 14	
	Baker Ross:	£29. 93	
	Sage Pay:	£52. 99	
	Party CN:	£58. 94	
			£170. 73

(Jubilee Account)

* Alan Rowe	Fireworks	£150. 00
	(Jubilee Account)	
* G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – May 15 th	£370. 00
Lichfield District Council	Emptying 6 Dog Waste Bins @ £2. 20 x 52 weeks: Net Amount: £686. 00 VAT: £137. 28	£823. 63
W. B. Sullivan	Clerk’s Salary	£280. 00
HM Revenue & Customs	Employers Tax	£ 70. 00
	<i>(cheque made out to “The Post Office”)</i>	
W. B. Sullivan	<u>Clerk’s Expenses</u> Photocopying: £180. 00 Postage: £ 40. 24 #W. H. Smith’s Tokens: £ 40. 00	£260. 30
* G. D. Duckett	Hire of Bouncy Castle: £50. 00 Hire of Skittles: £45. 00 Sweets for Prizes: £ 4. 66	£ 99. 66
	(Jubilee Account)	
Longdon W.I.	Hire of Hall – June 12 th	£ 12. 00
Ann Anson	Plants	£ 38. 88

(* confirmation # payment made under Section 137

(ii) Payments Received

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

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£1816. 90	The Halifax s/a: £9889.33
<u>less uncleared cheques</u>		
	1705: £1500. 00	
	1714: £ 12. 00	
	1719: £ 50. 00	
	<u>1720: £ 50. 00</u>	
	£ 204. 90	

(iv) Requests for Grant Aid(a) Longdon Produce Show Committee

The Clerk reported that he had received from Val Heseltine, Secretary of the Produce Show Committee, a Grant Application form in support of her Committee's request for a grant of £210. 00 to meet the cost of renting the W. I. Hall and Longdon Village Hall on the day of the Longdon Produce Show.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and seconded by Cllr. Taylor, payment of the grant in full was agreed.

(b) Beau Desert Sports Field & Recreation Ground Trust

Cllr. Butler reported that the Trustees, who had originally asked him to apply to the Council on their behalf for a grant of £100. 00 towards the cost of running the Jubilee Family Picnic on the field on Saturday, June 2nd, had now withdrawn their request.

(v) Consultation on Appointment of External Auditor for 2012/13 and Future Years

The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Davies, Senior Manager, Markets and Fees, Audit Commission, Millbank, London, a letter dated 10th May 2012, asking the Council to advise the Commission of any reason why the Commission should not appoint Grant Thornton UK LLP as the Council's external auditor for 2012/13 and future years.

The Council regarded this request as a courtesy to which there was no need to respond.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Chris Welch, Chief Executive, The Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 15th May 2012, thanking the Council for its continued support and expressing his Council's willingness to provide help or assistance whenever it was required.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from the Aon Local Council Team an undated letter thanking the Council for its renewal instructions and confirming that the Council's policy had been renewed.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

(i) From Lichfield District Council:

Council Dairy 2012-2013;
"Headlines" – monthly update for all Lichfield District Councillors.

(ii) From Heather Gibbons/Dawn Everitt, Democratic and Legal Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 3rd June 2012;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 17th June 2012;
Revised Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 17th June 2012;
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16. 05. 2012 – Effective for the Period 01. 06. 2012 – 30. 09. 2012.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 4th May 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 11th May 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 18th May 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 25th May 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 1st June 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 8th June 2012.

(iv) From Karen Travers, Admin Officer, Electoral Services, Lichfield District Council:

Register of Electors - Notice of Alterations (June 2012).

(v) From Jan Wright, Administration Assistant, Lichfield and District Community and Voluntary Support Sector:

S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 16/12 - 4th May 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 17/12 - 10th May 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 18/12 - 17th May 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 19/12 - 24th May 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 20/12 - 31st May 2012.

(vi) From Andy Goode, Environment Group Leader, Staffordshire County Council:

Heritage Update 231.

(vii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

SPCA Update (9th May 2012);
NALC Update (16th May 2012);
Torch Relay Route and Road Closure Information (Stafford Borough);
SPCA Update (22nd May 2012);
Staffordshire Voluntary Strategy – Consultation Launched!
Weekly Update (28th May 2012).

(viii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Members' Newsletter – Spring 2012.

(ix) From Staffordshire Police:

Staffordshire Police Support Volunteer Programme;
Poster: Police Support Volunteer Team.

(x) From Ordnance Survey:

PSMA Newsletter – May 2012;
Update for PSMA User Group
("The full notes from the meeting will soon be published on the PSMA Forum").

(xi) From The Secretary, Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee:

Minutes of meeting held on 30th April 2012;
Agenda for meeting to be held on 28th May 2012;
Mission Statement;
Plan of Action 2012-2013;
Longer term plan.

(xii) From The Secretary, Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust:

Minutes of meeting held on 24th April 2012.

(xiii) From The Rural Services Network, Tavistock, Devon:

2012 Rural Insight Survey;
Weekly Email News Digest – 8th May 2012;
Rural intelligence from behind the headlines;
Weekly Email News Digest – 14th May 2012;
Weekly Email News Digest – 21st May 2012;
Weekly Email News Digest – 28th May 2012;

Weekly Email News Digest – 6th June 2012;
Rural Opportunities Bulletin – June 2012.

(xiv) From Steve Shaw, National Co-ordinator of Local Works:

“Please help urgently: a new bill to empower Local Councils”.

(xv) From Nottssport, Lutterworth, Leics.:

Postcard: Synthetic Surfacing – A perfect pitch that doesn't cost the earth.

(xvi) From Proludic Sports Ltd., West Bridgford, Nottingham:

‘All about Play’ Newsletter featuring Playfair 2012.

(xvii) From Littlethorpe of Leicester:

Catalogue: Quality Hardwood Bus Shelters.

(xviii) From The Institute of Groundsmanship:

IOG SALTEX 2012 will return to Windsor Racecourse on 4th - 6th of September.

(xix) From Stephanie Chambers, S & S Playground Equipment Ltd., Aylesbury, Bucks.:

“Fancy testing a new roundabout from Safe & Sound?”

(xx) From HAGS, Sturminster Newton, Devon:

“HAGS Play Matters” – June/July 2012
(new bi-monthly newsletter).

(xxi) From GardenBargains.com:

Catalogue: Main Season 2012.

(xxii) From Act Now Training Ltd.:

Information Law Workshops in Birmingham.

16. DOCUMENTS

The following documents were available for Councillors to consult:

- (i) “Bullying and harassment at work” – A guide for managers and employees”;
- (ii) “Bullying and harassment at work – Guidance for employees”.

17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Taylor reported that a large hole had opened up in Lower Way close to its junction with Bardy Lane.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham Green, who lived opposite at Old Holly Bank House, had acted quickly in alerting the County Highway Authority to the danger which this presented, particularly to the many horses which passed along the road at this point, and he asked that the Council send a letter of appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Green.

The Clerk was instructed so to do.

(ii) It was agreed that there would be a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Tuesday, June 26th, and of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee on July 3rd.

Both these meetings would take place in the W. I. Hall and begin at 7. 00 p.m.

(iii) The Chairman offered the congratulations of the Council to Cllr. Juxon for organising the very successful Open Gardens Weekend in Longdon, Longdon Green and Upper Longdon on May 26th and May 27th.

Responding, Cllr. Juxon said that the event had contributed £2800 to the funds of St. James Church.

(iv) The Clerk read out a letter from the 1st Longdon Brownies addressed to the Chairman thanking her for organising the Jubilee celebrations, which had been greatly enjoyed.

Councillors added their own thanks and congratulations for organising such a successful event.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, July 12th, 2012, in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, Buds Road, Cannock Wood, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.