

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, FORD LANE, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY,
JANUARY 15TH, 2013

Present: Cllr. A. J. Juxon (Chairman); Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. P. M. Couchman;
Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. K. R. Morgan; Cllr. M. J. Nash;
Cllr. K. C. Taylor; Cllr. C. J. Webb; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

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

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. B. J. Butler; 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 W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, on Tuesday, December 11th, 2012, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Nash, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Adoption of Church Hollow

The Clerk reported that he had now sent a second email to Richard Rayson, the Community Highway Liaison Manager, stressing the urgency of a decision in view of the condition of the footpath and the state of the bank.

(ii) Drains in Borough Lane

The Chairman reported that he had received a copy of a letter dated 16th December 2012 and sent by a parishioner, Mr. Russell Fox, of Claughton Cottage, Borough Lane, addressed to Mr. P. Clamp, of the County Highways Department, following their site meeting at which they had discussed the flooding in Borough Lane.

It had been agreed that the problem of flooding was due to poor maintenance of the drainage system adjacent to Moat Farm: the drainage sink and underground drainage pipe were blocked, causing water to run down the lane causing the surface of the road to wear out; the ditch that should take away the water had not been maintained and was filled with all kinds of rubbish; and the amount of heavy goods vehicles now using the lane had opened up pot holes, some of which were dangerous when filled with flood water.

Mr. Fox had suggested that the problem would be resolved when the drainage sink and pipe had been cleared at Moat Farm and the ditches re-instated.

The Chairman added that it was unfortunate that the Council had not been informed of this meeting and had not been represented at it.

The Clerk reported that he had received from Janet Allen, Clerk to the Longdon Parochial Charities Trust, an email dated 13th January 2013, in which she had expressed concern about the water running down Borough Lane and the risk which it presented to the residents of the Almshouses when it froze.

He had informed Mrs. Allen of the meeting which had taken place between Mr. Clamp and Mr. Fox, the results of which were awaited.

(iii) St. James School Banner

The Clerk reported that the banner which had been put up alongside the A51 by St. James School had now been removed but that two advertising boards had been put up by a firm called Creative Décor at the entrance to Dark Lane.

While the planning regulation governing the erection of boards by house agents was clear-cut and enforceable, signs put up on the highway verge were a different matter. Such signs required the consent of the Highways Authority, which, he had once been informed, would never be given, but the Authority seemed reluctant to divert manpower to enforcing this stricture.

He would, therefore, seek guidance from the Highway Authority on how the Parish Council could assist the Authority in this matter.

(iv) Accident at Junction of Grange Hill and Lower Way

The Clerk reported that he had received a phone call from Miss Ann Griffiths, who lived at Brambleside Cottage, immediately opposite the junction, expressing her concern that no action had yet been taken to repair the damage caused by the gritting lorry.

She was particularly concerned that children were playing on the site and feared that one might attempt to use the damaged sign as a swing.

The Clerk added that he had subsequently written again to Richard Rayson, the Community Highways Liaison Manager, enclosing a photograph of the site supplied to him by the Chairman.

5. PLANNING

(i) Working Group Report

12/01334/CON: Walton Homes: Demolition of the two existing bungalows:
Lysways Lane Farm, Lysways Lane, Hanch

There was no objection to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

12/01089/LBC: Mr. P. Stevens: Works to listed building to enable the
installation of window to rear: Stables Barn, Hay Lane, Longdon Green

Councillors noted that the window would replace an existing flue and would
overlook open countryside; they therefore saw no reason to object to the application.

12/01364/FUL: Mr. T. Hewitt: Conversion and extension of existing outbuilding
to form covered access way and bedroom: Watery Lane Farm, Watery Lane,
Gentleshaw

A decision was deferred on this application, which had only just been received.

(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:

12/01199/FUL: Mr. A. Wright: Demolition of bungalow and ancillary buildings,
renovation of mill and erection of new dwelling with associated landscaping:
Windmill Farm, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon.

12/01091/FUL: Lichfield Cathedral School: Two-storey extension to provide
classrooms, assembly hall and reception area (amendment to application
11/01171/FUL): Lichfield Cathedral School, Church Hill, Longdon Green.

12/01144/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. R. Totty: First-floor extension of bedroom
(re-submission of application 12/00701/FUL): Rock Cottage, Bardy Lane,
Upper 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 relating to the Parish of
Longdon.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Certificate of Lawful Use or Development

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

Heather Bank, Shaw Lane, Gentleshaw

“The proposed extension to the rear of the dwelling house would fall within Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) and therefore would be lawful.”

The Certificate had been signed B. Nahal, Authorised Officer, and dated 14th December 2012.

(b) Development of Planning Check List

Cllr. Morgan proposed that, to assist Councillors in making an informed judgment of planning applications, a list of criteria should be drawn up to which Councillors could refer when making their comments.

Supporting the proposal, the Chairman said that the present system needed tightening up; no Councillor had the responsibility of convening meetings of the Planning Committee or even of co-ordinating Councillors' comments when no meeting was needed.

Cllr. Roberts said that he was sure that one of the District Council's planning officers would be willing to advise in the drawing up of a check list, and it was suggested that assistance might also be sought from Neil Vyse, a local resident and a planning officer working for Birmingham City Council.

Cllr. Morgan agreed to produce a pro forma for the Council to consider.

Cllr. Cherry agreed to take the lead role in planning matters once the pro forma had been agreed.

(d) Lichfield District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission – Transport Appraisal of the Spatial Strategy for Lichfield City and Housing Strategy Plan (Draft) 2013-2017

Both Cllr. Clarke and Cllr. Morgan had read through these documents, and neither had found anything contentious in them.

However, there was a limit to their usefulness to the Council in drawing up its Neighbourhood Plan, since it would be completed before the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan.

As it was, three Neighbourhood Plans were on the agenda of the next meeting of the District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee – those of Alrewas, Little Aston and Shenstone -. and guidance could be sought from those who were already going through the process.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Report on meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Chairman gave a report on the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, on Tuesday, January 8th, 2013, and at which the main item of business had been agreeing the precept for 2013/2014 to be recommended to the full Council.

Identifying likely expenditure for the remaining weeks of the present financial year, the Chairman said that, apart from administrative costs, the major part of which would be the Clerk's salary and expenses, the Easter issue of "Longdon Life" was due before the end of the financial year at a cost of between £500. 00 and £550. 00, and a further £500. 00 had been set aside as the Parish Council's contribution towards the cost of installing a child's swing on the Beaudesert Sports Field.

The Chairman said that a surplus of £1900. 00 was expected at the end of the present financial year, more than £1000. 00 down on the previous year's. In other words, the reserves on which the Council had been drawing in order to maintain the present level of precept, which, two years ago, had stood at close on £7000. 00, were fast diminishing.

Turning to likely expenditure in 2013/2014, the Chairman said that the Committee had made the following calculations:

Administration (including hire of rooms audit fees and insurance) £1500. 00;
 Clerk's salary: £3500. 00 (in reaching this figure, the Committee had concluded that the Council could no longer go on paying the Clerk a salary substantially below the rate recommended by both NALC and SLCC);
 Clerk's expenses (including photocopying and postage): £700. 00;
 Publicity (including publication of "Longdon Life", maintenance of website and maintenance of notice-board): £2000. 00;
 Greens and Open Spaces (including mowing contract, contract to empty dog waste bins and treework): £4350. 00;
 Highways and Footpaths: £315. 00;
 Community Halls: £1000. 00;
 Churchyards: £1500. 00;
 Payments made under Section 137 (includes donations, subscriptions and entry in the Best Kept Village Competition): £1050. 00.
 Contingency: £1000. 00.

This brought the total anticipated expenditure in 2013/2014 to £16915. 00.

At the same time, income other than from the precept, was thought to be no more than £1500. 00

In addition, two projects were under consideration for 2013/2014, a Neighbourhood Plan (at an estimated cost of £2000. 00) and the regeneration and future maintenance of Church Hollow (at an estimated cost of £1200. 00). though both these projects might be the recipients of outside funding.

After lengthy discussion, at the end of which it was agreed that to maintain the present level of precept would result either in withdrawing some services to the community or taking the Parish Council into debt and was therefore untenable, it was proposed by Cllr. Taylor, seconded by Cllr. Webb and unanimously agreed that the Council should be recommended to set the Parish Council's precept for 2013/2014 at £17,000.

(ii) 'Beat the Cold' Presentation

Cllr. Clarke presented a written report on a presentation given by the 'Beat the Cold' charity and organised by South Staffordshire Community Energy at the Curborough Community Centre on Wednesday, January 9th, 2013, copies of which he distributed to Councillors.

SSCE could do surveys on properties based on thermal imaging which would highlight where energy loss was occurring and could then advise on the best means of correction.

The main purpose of the presentation was to recruit volunteers as advisers and to solicit help from Councils and community organisations to get introductions to potential fuel poverty subjects.

The survey was free to any householder over sixty, as well as to almshouses, schools, churches and village halls.

It had been noted that Lichfield was a bit of a black spot as regards fuel poverty.

While acknowledging the good intentions behind this scheme, Cllr. Clarke said that he was concerned about the possible response of communities to a stranger seen walking around their area using a camera, bearing in mind the hostility that Google had aroused when carrying out a photographic street survey.

(iii) Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust

Cllr. Webb gave a report on a meeting of the Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust which had taken place at The Park Gate Inn, Park Gate Road, Cannock Wood, the previous evening, and which he had attended in place of Cllr. Butler.

He had found the Trustees to be a small group of very dedicated people.

They were, however, concerned that the grant of £500.00 from Longdon Parish Council towards a child's swing should still be available.

The Clerk said that he had recently emailed Avril Green, the Trust's fund-raiser, confirming that it was, but probably not until the next financial year, though the Chairman thought that it could be made in the current financial year, if required.

However, payment of the grant had from the first been made conditional on the completion of the project; the Council had not been prepared to contribute £500 of public funds for a project for which no final date was yet in view.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Thursday, January 17th, 2013, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Two items on the agenda of particular interest to the Council were Risk Management for Parish Councils and a Neighbourhood Plans Update, and Cllr. Clarke and the Clerk would both be attending the meeting.

(ii) “Find out more about NHS111 Service” – Public Engagement Events

The new NHS111 service would offer a fast and easy way to get the right help whatever the time of day. People should use the service if they urgently needed medical help or health care advice, though 999 should be dialled in life-threatening situations.

The service was expected to be available across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent from March 2014, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls would be free from landlines and mobile phones.

Before then, ten events were being held across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to inform people about and gain feedback on the service, the nearest of which was at the King Edward VI Leisure Centre, Lichfield, on Tuesday, March 5th, from 5. 30 p.m to 7. 30 p.m.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Request for Litter Bin

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Maureen Piper, of Brookend House, a letter dated 3rd January 2013, asking the Council for assistance over a problem of litter being scattered by children on their way to and from school.

She suggested that, if a litter bin were be put on a lamp-post near the school, the children could be encouraged to dispose of their wrappers and cans tidily, thus improving the village’s chances of doing well in the Best Kept Village Competition.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the District Council’s Waste and Environmental Manager to ask whether it would be possible to install a litter bin close to the school; in the meantime, Cllr. Taylor agreed to raise the issue at the next meeting of the School Governors.

(ii) Footpath Leaflets

Cllr. Morgan said that he would be testing one of the proposed Gentleshaw walks when conditions allowed.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

Councillors were reminded that the Highways and Open Spaces Committee would be meeting on Tuesday, January 22nd, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, at 7. 00 p.m.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr. Clarke reported that he had drawn up a list of parishioners whose interest he hoped to engage in the project.

In the meantime, he would be submitting a letter of application to the District Council, together with a map showing the parish boundaries

11. LAW AND ORDER

Cllr. Taylor reported that money and items had recently been stolen from two unsecured vehicles in Upper Way, and PCSO Lisa Anderson had been delivering leaflets to households in the area warning residents of the dangers of leaving their vehicles unsecured.

Cllr. Clarke reminded Councillors that there would be a police surgery that Saturday, January 19th, in the Village Hall car park from 1. 00 p.m. to 2. 00 p.m. at which PC Alison Lewis, one of PC Andy Brown's replacements, would be present.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall- January 8 th : £12. 00	
	Hire of Hall -January 15 th : £12. 00	
		£ 24. 00
+A. J. Juxon	Andy Brown Presentation	£ 30. 99

(+ payment made from Chairman's Allowance)

(ii) Payments Received

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

P. J. Adams	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 5. 00
A. D. Bennett	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 5. 00
Lynn Marshall	Advertisement: Longdon Life"	£ 5. 00
C. T. & L. Marshall	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 5. 00
Aqua Jet Services	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 6. 50

Architectural Services	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 7. 50
N. J. Sutcliffe	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 7. 50
Longdon Club & Institute	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 7. 50
Bradley Lakes Turf 'n' Landscape	Advertisement: "Longdon Life"	£ 15. 00
Staffordshire C. C.	Mowing Agreement	£707. 15

(iii) Current Balances

The Clerk reported that, on 31st December 2012, the Council's balances had stood as follows:

NatWest c/a:	£808. 10	The Halifax s/a: £3189. 33
<u>less uncleared cheques:</u>		
	1755: £ 12. 00	
	£796. 10	

However, The Halifax had since closed all its Small Business Accounts and a cheque for £3193. 62 had subsequently been paid into the Council's current account.

The Clerk would now look for a more favourable account, though his early enquiries had suggested that interest rates were low on any account which did not maintain a substantial amount throughout the year.

(iv) Requests for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Mrs. Janet Allen, Clerk to the Longdon Parochial Charities Trust, dated 13th January 2013, in which she asked whether the Parish Council had ever considered making a request to the Parochial Charities Trust on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee for a grant towards the cost of re-surfacing of the car park at the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall in view of the fact that residents of Gentleshaw used the facilities provided by the Hall.

However, Councillors felt that there was little to be gained by adopting an indirect approach to the Trustees, rather that the case for making the grant would stand or fall by the strength of the argument regardless of who made the application.

13. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Debbie Wakefield, Chief Executive of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, an email dated 6th December 2012, confirming that the Association would not be increasing its Membership Subscriptions for the forthcoming financial year.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary, The Open Spaces Society. an email dated 10th December 2012, advising the Council that the Growth and Infrastructure Bill had now completed the committee stage in the House of Commons and would be returning to the full House for report and the third reading on Monday, 17th December.

He further reported that he had received a second email from Ms. Ashbrook, dated 21st December 2012, informing the Council that the Bill had now left the House of Commons with the clauses which concerned the Society unamended, and the Society was now briefing members of the House of Lords for the second reading on January 8th, and drafting amendments for them.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from consult@bjections.co.uk an email dated 10th December 2012, informing the Council that a Visibility Study would be available to view and comment on between 10th December 2012 and 28th January 2013.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Holden, of The Community Council of Staffordshire, an email dated 17th December 2012, asking the Council to encourage responses to a survey about Community Learning Needs in Staffordshire.

A copy of the survey had been attached, and he had forwarded the email to Councillors for their attention.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Kate Sadler, of the Southern Community Energy Limited, an email dated 19th December 2012, asking whether Longdon Parish Council intended to become involved with the District Council's project.

He had replied that a member of the Council, Cllr. Clarke, was already attending on behalf of the Council.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Phil Cornfield, Business Development Co-ordinator, Midlands Region, Glendale Management Services Ltd., an email dated 3rd January 2013, introducing his company and attaching the company's catalogue.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from The Communications Team, Staffordshire County Council, an email dated 4th January 2013 reporting that recent employment figures showed that the County was leading the way in increasing job opportunities and that the number of people claiming jobseekers allowance across Staffordshire had fallen by 6.5%, compared with 1.4% nationally.

Every borough and district in Staffordshire had seen a fall in claims in the last quarter.

(viii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Ian Ashbolt, President of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, an email dated 4th January 2013, informing the Council that the Association's Chief Executive would be leaving at the end of February and expressing his appreciation of her contribution to the work of the organisation and wishing her well in the future.

He added that the process of recruiting a replacement was under way and, in the meantime, the Association's service to its members would continue.

14. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Register of Electors – Notice of Alterations (January 2013).

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 28th November 2012;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 13th January 2013;
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 17th December 2012 – Effective for the Period 01. 01. 2013 – 31. 04. 2013;
Forward Plan – Version 2 – Issued 21st December 2012 – Effective for the Period 01. 01. 2013 – 30. 04. 2013;
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 7th January 2013 – Effective for the Period 02. 01. 2013 – 31. 05 – 2013.

- (iii) From Mark Hooper, Democratic and Legal Officer, Lichfield District Council:

Agenda for meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum to be held on 17th January 2013;
Minutes of meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum held on September 18th, 2012.

- (iv) From Michaela Plant, Licensing Assistant, Democratic, Development Services, Lichfield District Council:

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 7th December 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 14th December 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 21st December 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 28th December 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 4th January 2013.

- (v) From Mary Cooke, Play Development Manager, Lichfield District Council:

Agenda, appendices and minutes of meeting of Play Partnership held on Friday. December 7th, 2012.

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

S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 44/12 - 6th December 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No, 45/12 - 13th December 2012.

- (vii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Localisation of Council Tax Support;
Council Tax Benefit Relief.

- (viii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR” – Winter 2012, Volume 65, No. 3.

- (ix) From The Rural Services Network, Tavistock, Devon:

Weekly Email News Digest – 10th December 2012;
Weekly Email News Digest – 17th December 2012;
'Countryside hit hardest as government cuts council funding';
Weekly Email News Digest – 24th December 2012;
Weekly Email News Digest – 31st December 2012;
Rural Opportunities Bulletin 31st December 2012;
Weekly Email News Digest – 7th January 2013;
Rural Opportunities Review – January 2013.

- (x) From Action for Market Towns:

Town Team Initiative Workshops in Coleford, Gloucestershire,
Catherham, Surrey, and Halstead, Essex.

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

Minutes of meeting held on 26th November 2012;
Agenda for meeting to be held on 28th January 2013.

- (xii) From Ordnance Survey:

PSMA member events (at Southampton, Birmingham and Wales)
and potential products.

- (xiii) From Getmapping, Hartney Wintney, Hants.:

Parish Online Newsletter.

(xiv) From Act Now Training Ltd., Dewsbury, West Yorkshire:

Online course on data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

(xv) From Stephanie Chambers, Safe & Sound Playgrounds Ltd., Westcott, Bucks.:

Safe and Sound Winter Offers.

(xvi) From SSP Water & Play, Odiham, Hants.:

Revamp your Play Area for 2013.

(xvii) From Notts Sport, Lutterworth, Leics.:

Refurbish your playground for less.

(xviii) From Play & Leisure Ltd., Buckley, Flintshire:

Play & Leisure – New Play Products, January 2013.

(xix) From Gordon Fong, Managing Director, e-mango, Bournemouth, Dorset:

Active Business Solutions.

(xx) Christmas Greetings were received from

Cllr. Mike Wilcox (and everyone at Lichfield District Council);
Anne Walker, Cannock Chase AONB;
Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association;
David Pott, Project Leader, Two Saints Way Project;
Action for Market Towns;
HAGS SMP;
The Institute of Groundsmanship;
Sutcliffe Play;
Cruse Bereavement Care (South Staffordshire Area).

15. DOCUMENTS

The Clerk reported that the following document was available for Councillors to consult:

“LCR” - Winter 2012. Volume 6, Number 3.

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Taylor reported that two large pot holes were opening up in Shavers Lane. Cllr. Nash added that there was a large pot hole in Briertey Hill Lane which stretched halfway across the road.

The Clerk was instructed to report the presence of these pot holes to the Highway Authority.

(ii) Cllr. Clarke said that he had distributed leaflet and literature about the Lichfield and District Community and Voluntary Sector Support to Councillors and asked his colleagues to decide by the next meeting whether they wanted the Council to join.

(iii) The Chairman reported that he had received a copy of a letter written by Mr. Alan White, of White Cottage, Red Hill, Upper Longdon, dated 14th January 2013 and addressed to Richard Rayson, the Community Highway Liaison Manager, concerning the problems being caused by heavy vehicles trying to use Horsey Lane and Bardy Lane.

The previous week, three lorries had on the same day become wedged on Red Hill outside his property, causing damage to telephone cables and poles and to the grass frontage.

He asked whether a larger, more graphic sign could be erected at the entrance to Borough Lane, since the present sign was proving ineffective, not least because the lorry drivers were often Polish or Lithuanian and unable to read English.

Councillors agreed that the Council should lend its support to Mr. White's appeal, and the Clerk was instructed to write to Mr. Rayson, asking him to take the necessary action to eliminate this problem.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 12th, 2013, in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon.
commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Appendix A

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, FORD LANE, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 2013

Present: Cllr. A. J. Juxon (Chairman); Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. P. M. Couchman; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; and Cllr. C. J. Webb.

Also present were Cllr. B. J. Butler, Cllr. K. R. Morgan and the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

All members of the Committee were present.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman reminded Councillors that the last meeting of the Committee at which there had been a representative number of members present and at which minutes had been taken had taken place on Tuesday, October 18th, 2011, and these minutes had been agreed as an accurate record by Cllr. Juxon and Cllr. Clarke, the only two Councillors still members of the Committee, at an informal meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, October 2nd, 2012.

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED ON 31ST DECEMBER 2012

The Clerk presented a financial statement for the third quarter of the current financial year ended 31st December 2012 (*Appendix A*).

This showed a reduction in income on the previous year of £3000 and reductions in expenditure on Greens & Open Spaces and Highways & Footpaths, but an increase in expenditure on General Administration, Community Halls, Section 137 and Churchyards, though the overall figure showed a reduction in the region of £500.

It was noted that items under “General Administration” were wide-ranging and were, like the Newsletter, rather more than just administrative.

Councillors foresaw only two major items of expenditure in the remaining months of the financial year – the Clerk’s salary and expenses and an issue of “Longdon Life”, and it was expected that the Council would end the financial year with a surplus of between £1500 and £2000.

The two issues of “Longdon Life” published in the current financial year had cost nearly £1500, but this had been inflated by the inclusion of a photographic supplement commemorating a number of events in the summer of 2012 and was unlikely to be repeated.

Cllr. Webb offered to approach the Principal of the South Staffordshire College to see whether the newsletter could be printed at the Lichfield Campus at a reduce cost.

4. LIKELY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IN NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

Three projects were identified as likely to involve the Council in capital expenditure in the next financial year – the Neighbourhood Plan, the regeneration of Church Hollow and the maintenance of the footpath running across the Glebe Field.

Cllr. Clarke thought that work on the Neighbourhood Plan would cost no more than £100 in the current financial year, and £2000 in the next, though this could be met from grants.

It was agreed that, to spread the cost, work on limited clearance of the pathway through Church Hollow, repairing the fencing and replacing the hand rail at the entrance to the car park could be carried out in 2013/14, but stabilising the banks and major treework might have to be carried out in a series of stages over three to five years.

Here again, outside funding might be available through Paths for Communities and, given that it was part of an old coaching road, English Heritage.

It was agreed that the first step should be to press for a site meeting with officers of the County Highways Department at which the legal and risk implications of adopting Church Hollow should be considered. The Council had already written to the County Highways Department but had not yet received a response.

The Chairman suggested a possible initial cost of £1200 to clear the path and replace the fencing, the latter task having already been estimated at £700. In addition, the car park, which did not belong to the Church and was therefore not their responsibility to maintain, was in poor condition and might, in the future, need re-surfacing, though, for the time being, weed-killing needed to be carried out regularly. He also suggested that clearing and maintaining the footpath across the Glebe Field would cost at least £250. 00. This could be done from this year's budget, subject to the consent of the full Council.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Council had only recently confirmed its commitment to contributing £500 towards the cost of installing a child's swing on the Beau Desert Sports Field, though it had been agreed that such commitments should in future be time-limited and dependent on match-funding by the organisation making the appeal.

It was agreed that this particular payment could be made from this year's budget and that this should be recommended to the full Council.

Cllr. Clarke confirmed that the proposed computer course would be self-financing, but added that the Parish Council was likely to receive a request from Gentleshaw School for a grant towards the cost of purchasing ipads; the School was also looking to provide a pre-school play area at a possible cost of between £15,000 and £18,000, but was hoping to obtain funding from other outside sources.

Cllr. Webb pointed out that, as a statutory body, the School had access to sources of funding not available to voluntary organisations and questioned whether the Parish Council should be expected to use its funds in support of such projects.

It was agreed that, as a general principle, requests for grant aid should not always be met in full, and applicants should be expected to provide evidence of their own fund-raising activities.

The Chairman suggested that consideration should be given to paying the Clerk's salary at the full rate recommended by the SLCC and NALC, which the Clerk was at present investigating, and would be built into the budget.

On the question of maintaining a reserve, it was agreed that a small reserve was necessary against possible unbudgeted contingencies but thought that 25% of the annual precept, as suggested by the internal auditor, would be too high.

5. PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2013/14

It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk should meet to draw up a budget based on the Committee's deliberations and present it to the full Council at its next meeting, together with a recommendation as to the level of the precept for 2013/14.

6. CLOSURE OF SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Following the closure by the bank of the Council's Halifax Savings Account, the Clerk was authorised to make enquiries of other banks as to a suitable alternative and report his findings at the next meeting of the full Council.

7. REVISION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman invited the Committee to study the proposed amendments to Standing Orders set out in the document presented by the Clerk, who would prepare a draft of the amended Standing Orders for presenting to the Council at the February meeting. Copies of the draft would be circulated to members of the Committee earlier.

Two areas which needed consideration by the full Council were the proposal to resume meetings in August and a strengthening of the planning committee, including the drawing up of a check list of criteria and the appointment of a Chairman and Convenor.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should take place in April on a date to be agreed.

PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (1ST APRIL – 31ST DECEMBER 2012)

	(2012)	(2011)
Opening Account:	£ 3104. 41	£ 6979. 79
<u>Receipts</u>		
Precept:	£13650. 00	£13650. 00
Staffs. C. C.	£ 500. 00	£ 1000. 00
Mowing Agreement:	£ 1414. 30	£ 00. 00
VAT Refund:	£ 436. 52	£ 837. 82
Jubilee Fund:	£ 200. 00	£ 00. 00
Advts: "Longdon Life":	£ 278. 50	£ 134. 50
Wayleaves:	£ 38. 91	£ 36. 27
Donation:	£ 00. 00	£ 5. 00
Gross Interest:	<u>£ 00. 00</u>	<u>£ 00. 00</u>
 Total Receipts:	 £16518. 23	 £15663. 59
 Total Income:	 £19622. 64	 £22643. 38

Payments

Greens & Open Spaces

Work on Gent. Gn:	£ 00. 00	£ 2768. 00
Mowing:	£2960. 00	£ 2880. 00
Mowing centre of Longdon Green;	£ 170. 00	£ 170. 00
Emptying dog waste bins:	£ 823. 68	£ 823. 68
Sub: "Open Spaces:	£ 40. 00	£ 40. 00
Treework:	£ 00. 00	£ 180. 00
Land Registry Fee:	£ 40. 00	£ 00. 00
Valuation Fee:	£ 60. 00	£ 00. 00
<u>OS Map:</u>	<u>£ 25. 00</u>	<u>£ 00. 00</u>
 TOTAL:	 £4118. 68	 £ 6861.68

General Administration

Insurance:	£ 880. 11	£ 865. 44
SPCA:	£ 384. 91	£ 383. 00
"LCR"	£ 15. 50	£ 15. 50
Clerk's Salary:	£ 840. 00	£ 840. 00
Employer Tax:	£ 210. 00	£ 210. 00
Photocopying:	£ 431. 52	£ 394. 05
Postage:	£ 114. 48	£ 110. 35
Printing AA reports:	£ 00. 00	£ 00. 00
Hire of rooms:	£202. 00	£ 258. 00
Audit Fee:	£192. 00	£ 162. 00
Printing "Longdon Life"	£1469. 75	£ 1368. 50

Delivering "Longdon Life"	£ 90.00	£ 135.00
Editor's Expenses	£ 30.00	£ 45.00
Overpayment of VAT:	£ 00.00	£ 00.00
Professional fees: (internal audit)	£ 106.50	£ 101.40
Website:	£ 470.00	£ 200.00
Course fees:	£ 00.00	£ 00.00
Notice-boards:	£ 180.00	£ 174.50
JRA Presentation:	£ 00.00	£ 58.50
Comm. Council:	£ 22.00	£ 22.00
Delivering BKV leaflets:	<u>£ 45.00</u>	<u>£ 00.00</u>
TOTAL:	£5683.77	£5343.24

Community Halls

Longdon	£1500.00	£ 00.00
Cannock Wood	<u>£ 00.00</u>	<u>£ 00.00</u>
TOTAL:	£1500.00	£ 00.00

Highways and Footpaths

Footpath leaflets	£ 987.00	£ 00.00
Contribution to cost of roadworks	£ 00.00	£1000.00
Treating church car park with herbicide	£ 00.00	£ 65.00
Treating Ford Lane with herbicide:	£ 24.00	£ 00.00
Refurbishing street furniture	£ 00.00	£ 422.00
New bench	£ 230.00	£ 00.00
Repair to bridge	<u>£ 00.00</u>	<u>£ 00.00</u>
TOTAL	£ 1241.00	£ 1487.00

Section 137

Donations

St. Giles Hospice	£ 200.00	£ 200.00
Longdon W. I.	£ 200.00	£ 00.00
Preschool:	£ 50.00	£ 50.00
Jubilee Fund	£ 550.00	£ 00.00
Beaudesert Trust	£ 00.00	£ 150.00
Produce & Flower Show:	£ 210.00	£ 210.00
Beaudesert Sports Field Trust	£ 00.00	£ 100.00
Wreath	£ 00.00	£ 19.00
"Messy Church" (Gentleshaw)	£ 00.00	£ 60.00
S. Staffs. Cruse	£ 00.00	£ 50.00

<u>Subscriptions</u>		
CPRE (Staffs.)	£ 00. 00	£ 00. 00
Staffs Wildlife Trust:	£ 39. 00	£ 39. 00
Staffs. Playing-Fields Assoc'n:	£ 15. 00	£ 15. 00

<u>BKV Comp.</u>		
St. James School	£ 50. 00	£ 00. 00
Gift tokens	£ 40. 00	£ 60. 00
Flower Tubs, Compost & Bedding Plants:	<u>£153. 38</u>	<u>£ 216. 00</u>

TOTAL: **£1507. 38** **£1169.00**

Churchyards

Longdon:	£1348. 90	£1032. 80
Gentleshaw	<u>£ 237. 48</u>	<u>£ 342. 00</u>

TOTAL: **£1586. 38** **£ 1374. 80**

SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS

Parks & Open Spaces:	£ 4118. 68	<i>£5000. 00</i>	£ 6861. 68
General Administration:	£ 5683. 77	<i>£5500. 00</i>	£ 5343. 24
Community Halls:	£ 1500. 00	<i>£2000. 00</i>	£ 00. 00
Highways & Footpaths:	£ 1241. 00	<i>£3500. 00</i>	£ 1487. 00
Section 137:	£ 1507. 38	<i>£2500. 00</i>	£ 1169. 00
Churchyards:	<u>£ 1586. 38</u>	<u>£ 800. 00</u>	<u>£ 1374. 80</u>

TOTAL: **£15637. 21** *£19300.00* **£16235.72**

(Italicised figures represent budgeted expenditure – excess expenditure to be met from reserves)

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Opening Account:	£ 3104. 41	NatWest c/a:	£ 808. 10
Receipts:	<u>£16518. 23</u>	Halifax d/a:	<u>£ 3189. 33</u>
Total:	£19622. 64		£ 3997. 43
less Payments:	£15637. 21	less uncleared cheque:	£ 12. 00
TOTAL:	£ 3985. 43.	TOTAL:	£ 3985. 43