

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, FORD LANE, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 12TH, 2013

Present: Cllr. A. J. Juxon (Chairman); Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke;
Cllr. Mr. H. A. Meere; 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, Cllr. N. J. Roberts and Cllr. M. C. Tittley,
both of Lichfield District Council.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Tittley to the meeting and invited him to address the Council.

Reminding the Council that he was also Chairman of the Armitage with Handsacre Parish Council, Cllr. Tittley emphasised the importance of the part played by parish councils in local government and predicted that recent legislation would strengthen their position.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. B. J. Butler and Cllr. P. M. Couchman.

Councillors heard with regret of Cllr. Butler's illness and sent him their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Nash and seconded by Cllr. Cherry, the minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, on Tuesday, January 15th, 2013, were approved and adopted as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Drains in Borough Lane

The Clerk reported that he had written to Paul Clamp, Technical Review Officer, County Highways Department, who had met a parishioner on site in Borough Lane to consider the problem of flooding in the lane, asking him if he could say when action would be taken to eliminate the problem.

He had also expressed regret that the Parish Council had not been made aware of this meeting prior to its taking place, in view of the Council's longstanding concern about the problem.

(ii) Roadside Displays

The Clerk reported that there was now a banner approximately twelve feet in length and more than three feet wide attached to the fencing alongside the A51 at Longdon Green opposite Longdon Hall advertising the Lichfield Cathedral School Open Days.

Since it was on private land and not the highway verge, the County Highways Department could take no action to secure its removal, but, if it was thought hazardous to passing traffic, whose attention the banner was intended to attract, it could be reported as such to the police.

Councillors were reminded that the Council had decided to introduce a policy of non-tolerance when no fewer than eleven signs had appeared along a two-mile stretch of the A51, but, except in the case of house agents' signs, which were covered by planning laws, it could only be successful if supported by the Highways Authority.

When writing to the Highways Department, he had asked if the Authority would be prepared to delegate its powers in this matter to the Parish Council, but this part of his letter had been ignored.

He was instructed to continue his correspondence with the Highways Department with a view to obtaining a decision.

(iii) Planning Check List

Cllr. Morgan said that he was not in a position to report back to the Council yet and would be meeting Cllr. Roberts the next day to establish some criteria.

Cllr. Clarke showed Councillors a list of material considerations which he had downloaded from the Planning Aid England website and which the Clerk said he would copy and distribute to Councillors.

(iv) Request for Litter Bin outside St. James School

The Clerk reported that he had written to John Roobottom, Technical Assistant, Operational Services, Lichfield District Council, informing him of the request and asking him to assess the need.

Cllr. Taylor said that he had not yet been able to raise the matter at a meeting of the School Governors.

(v) Pot Holes in Briertey Hill Lane, Gentleshaw, and Shavers Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had reported the existence of these pot holes to the County Highways and had been given reference numbers – 13166798 and 13167039 respectively.

Cllr. Roberts advised the Council to maintain pressure on the Authority to ensure that they were filled.

(vi) HGVs in Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written in support of Mr. White's letter of 14th January 2013 regarding the problems being caused by the use of Bardy Lane and Horsey Lane by heavy goods vehicles.

The Chairman said that he had seen a sign at the entrance to a rural lane which showed a satnav with a diagonal line through it, though whether this sign was official or unofficial he could not say.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Committee

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

Cllr. Nash said that he saw no difficulty with this application, since it extended the covered way only by about a foot.

(ii) 13/00074/FUL: Mr. A. Moore: Erection of a steel-framed cattle shed: Benbrook Farm, Stoneywell Lane, Longdon

It was noted that, when built, the barn would cover an area of 320 square metres, and there was concern, too, that there appeared to be no provision for waste disposal, given the number of cattle that a barn of this size would accommodate.

It was also noted that a condition was being proposed whereby sufficient parking space should be provided before work started, and it was agreed that, not only should this condition be rigorously enforced, but that the surfacing should be of an appropriate material.

Development on this site had been piecemeal, and it was believed that the District Council should ask the applicant whether and how he intended to develop the site further. For example, would there be a third phase whereby the extension was further extended and the barn doubled in size?

At present the site was looking a mess and was impacting on those living nearby.

(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:

12/01088/FUL: Mr. P. Stevens: Installation of window to rear: Stables Barn, Hay Lane, Longdon Green.

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

12/010297/FUL Mr. R. Dhanoa: Single-storey side Extension to form swimming pool (extension of time for application 10/00013/FUL): Park House, Lower Way, Upper Longdon.

12/01334/FUL Walton Homes Ltd.: Demolition of existing two bungalows: Lysways Farm Bungalow, Lysways Lane, Hanch.

(iv) 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:

Cherry Trees, Lower Way, Upper Longdon

“The proposed front hall extension 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 proposed the rear dormer windows would fall within Schedule 2, Part 1, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) and therefore would be lawful.”

The Certificate had been signed by B. Nohal, Authorised Officer, and dated 18th January 2013.

(v) Planning Procedures

It was confirmed that Cllr. Cherry was both Chairman and Convenor of the Council’s Planning Committee.

(vi) Lichfield District Parish Forum

Cllr. Cherry reported that the agenda of the next meeting of the Forum, due to take place on April 10th, would include an item on planning.

He had been advised that the Council might be allowed to bring four delegates to the meeting if an early application for places was submitted.

Cllr. Cherry, Cllr. Clarke himself and Cllr. Morgan all expressed an interest in attending.

(vii) Publication of Cannock Chase Local Plan

The Clerk reported that he had received from Antony Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager, Cannock Chase District Council, a letter dated 6th February 2013, informing the Council that Cannock Chase Council would be publishing its Local Plan (called “The Cannock Chase Local Plan – Local Plan (Part 1) Proposed Submission 2013”) on 14th February 2013 and was offering a further chance for public comment prior to its submission for examination by a Local Government Inspector.

Community forum events had been arranged at The Museum of Cannock Chase, Hednesford, on March 4th, at Heath Hayes Community Centre on March 6th and at the Council Chamber of Rugeley Town Council on March 11th, all to begin at 7. 00 p.m.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum

Cllr. Clarke presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Lichfield, on Thursday, January 17th and which he and the Clerk had both attended (*Appendix A*).

(ii) Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr. Taylor said that he had been unable to attend the last meeting of the Committee and had sent his apologies.

The Clerk said that he would in due course be receiving the minutes of the meeting, which he would circulate.

(iii) Society of Local Council Clerks, Staffordshire Branch

The Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting of the Staffordshire Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks held in Stafford on Thursday, February 7th, at which there had been a number of issues discussed which he thought would be of interest to Councillors:

Real Time Information

There had been a presentation by two members of the Birmingham Office of HMRC detailing the changes which would result from the requirements of Real Time Information which every Council should have met by October. Basically, the only change that Councils would notice would be the requirement to report payments each month online rather than only at the end of the financial year. The method and frequency with which payment was paid would not change.

Dispensations

Under the new Code of Conduct, Councillors would, prior to the relevant meeting, have to apply in writing to the Clerks of their Councils for dispensation if they wished to contribute to a discussion on an issue of personal, prejudicial or financial interest. However, the grounds for granting dispensations were wide-reaching. The Clerk added that he was expecting to receive a copy of a pro forma from the Branch Secretary which he would then distribute to Councillors.

Bulk Fuel Oil Purchase

Chris Welch, the Chief Executive of the Community Council of Staffordshire, had reported that, to date, the scheme had two hundred members, but he would like to increase that number to four hundred, at which point it became uneconomic for any supplier to reduce his price any further. The scheme was open to anyone using domestic fuel oil, and church and community halls were being targeted.

Cash for Clothes

Mr. Welch also reported on another scheme, run by European Textile Recycling of Cannock, which provided communities with plastic bins for collecting all sorts of clothing still in re-usable condition. The company also distributed a plastic bag to every household four times a year and made a contribution out of the proceeds to the Parish Council from the sale of the clothes. Asked whether this would impinge on donations made direct to charities, Mr. Welch said that he understood that charity shops were not too concerned, since it was thought that there was still a massive amount of unused clothing left hanging in wardrobes because they were no longer fashionable.

However, Cllr. Cherry suggested that local charity shops were not receiving enough re-usable clothing to meet demand and that much of what it did receive was only fit for re-cycling, for which there was a very low financial return.

It was agreed that the Council should not become involved in this scheme.

(iv) St. James School Governors' Meeting

Cllr. Taylor reported that he had attended a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Governing Body the previous week but was unable to give the Council a report on the proceedings because of the confidential nature of the business.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

(i) Introduction to Energy Awareness and Fuel Poverty Course: Thursday, February 7th, 2013, at Metropolitan Care & Repair, Falcon Point, Cannock, from 9. 30 a.m. to 4. 00 p.m.

No member of the Council had attended this meeting.

(ii) Cancer Care Event: Monday, February 25th, 2013, at the North Staffordshire Medical Institute, Hartshill, from 5. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.

(iii) Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Annual Conference: Wednesday, March 20th, 2013, at the Chase Golf Course, Pottal Pool Road, Penkridge, from 9. 30 a.m. to 4. 00 p.m.

Cllr. Welch hoped to attend this meeting.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Report of Highways and Open Spaces Committee

The Chairman presented a written report on a meeting of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee which had taken place on Tuesday, January 22nd (*Appendix B*).

(ii) Correspondence from Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager

The Clerk reported that he had received five letters from Richard Rayson, the Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager, Highways Operation Unit, Staffordshire County Council, all dated 29th January 2013, on the following subjects:

Cycle Path from Longdon to Lichfield

Mr. Rayson had explained that, in order to consider the viability for the creation of a cycle path from Longdon to Lichfield, the matter needed to be discussed via Councillor Lewis's Divisional Highways Programme and prioritised by a member for a feasibility study to be commissioned. This would then need to be considered by the County Council's Transport Strategy Team to determine if the cost could be justified against other similar enquiries across the County and how this fitted with the Lichfield District Transport Strategy to attract funding from the County Council's Local Transport Plan.

Mr. Rayson added that he had added this request to Cllr. Lewis's Divisional Highways Programme for discussion when they next met, but pointed out that his current year's prioritisation had already been allocated.

The Chairman commented that the Parish Council's original enquiry had been whether the existing footpath could be cleared and encroaching trees and shrubs trimmed back so that the path could be used by both pedestrians and cyclists, and it was agreed that this enquiry should still be pursued.

Church Hollow

Mr. Rayson had said that he was more than happy for the Parish Council to enter into a Lengthsman's Agreement for the future maintenance of Church Hollow. He had reminded the Council that a Neighbour Highways Team already visited the parish, and he was sure that a local agreement could be reached whereby the Team and the Parish Council could carry out regular and co-ordinated maintenance.

He expressed his willingness to attend a site meeting, and suggested the Parish Council arrange this through Cllr. Lewis.

It was noted that ownership of the Hollow was not mentioned, though this could be raised at the site meeting which Mr. Rayson was proposing.

Cllr. Cherry reported that a contractor claiming to be working on the A51 for the County Council had offered to deliver the surface planings to the church car park and had, in fact, laid half the car park with these planings.

However, he had then demanded 90p per square foot for the planings, threatening to remove them if the money was not paid.

An urgent call to Richard Rayson had not met with a response, nor had a call to the Highways Department at Stafford.

Subsequent enquiries had raised doubts over whether the contractor was, in fact, working for the County Council, nor was the exact location on the A51 where the contractor was working certain.

It was thought regrettable that no highway officer was able to respond to this need for assistance.

Damage to Triangle at Bottom of Grange Hill

It was Mr. Rayson's understanding that the damage had been caused by a gritter who was swerving to avoid another vehicle while undertaking gritting operations.

There was a liability to be resolved, and this was currently with the County Council's insurers.

The Council would restore the site to how it was in the picture provided, if that was how it looked prior to the accident.

Mr. Rayson thought that his Department could use its Neighbourhood Highway Team to restore the area.

He would arrange for the damaged street furniture to be repaired as soon as possible, and the timing of any repairs would be arranged in line with the Team's visits.

The Clerk added that he had delivered a copy of Mr. Rayson's letter to Miss Ann Griffiths, who had first reported the accident, and it was agreed that a copy should also be posted on the notice-board at the top of Grange Hill.

Flooding at Borough Lane

Mr. Rayson had reported that the issue of flooding in Borough Lane had been passed to his Department's Highway Operations Team for further investigation and he would seek to get timescales on the repairs.

Overgrown Hedgerows in Hay Lane, Longdon Green

Mr. Rayson had reported that this matter had been logged under a highways enquiry reference number E-1065911 and sent to a Reactive Inspector.

An enforcement letter had then been sent to the owner of the hedge.

Mr. Rayson added that he would ask his inspection team to determine the status there and take appropriate action.

Unauthorised Signs

Mr. Rayson had reported that his Department's Highway Inspection Team had visited the area to remove illegal signs placed on the highway, but the banners mentioned had not been placed on highway land, so his Department had no jurisdiction over their removal.

The issue was deemed either a police matter, if the signs were likely to cause a distraction to drivers, or a Lichfield District Council planning matter over illegal advertising.

Councillors noted that these letters were belated replies to letters written as far back as October 2012 and that, in some cases, they did not even address the specific enquiries made by the Parish Council.

Cllr. Tittley said that, on his visits to parish councils in the District, he had found that this was a common complaint and suggested that the Parish Council make its dissatisfaction known at the highest level of the County Council.

It was agreed that this was what the Parish Council would do.

(iii) Community Paths Initiative Bid

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Environment and Countryside, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 28th January 2013 inviting the Parish Council to bid under the Community Paths Initiative for projects to improve the local rights of way in the parish.

The deadline for bids was 1st April 2013, and an application form was enclosed.

Councillors were reminded that there were still three footpath walks being set up, two in Gentleshaw and one in Upper Longdon, and it was suggested that a fourth, linking local pubs, could be laid out, to which the owners of the premises might make a contribution towards the cost.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that the Council should submit a bid for £500.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Extension of Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had written to Richard Rayson, advising him that the Parish Council had given Graham McCulloch a twelve-month extension to his mowing contract and that the terms and conditions and the areas to be mowed remained unchanged.

10. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Clarke updated Councillors on the progress made so far in formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.

A letter applying for designation of a Neighbourhood Area had been submitted to Lichfield District Council on January 28th, and there would now follow a six-week period of public consultation beginning on March 26th and ending on May 14th.

This would be advertised by the District Council, and the Parish Council had already been sent the text of a notice to be placed in the next issue of "Longdon Life".

The application had to be approved by the full District Council, which he anticipated would be some time in June.

Cllr. Clarke said that he had been assembling a working group which would start work in May; in the meantime, there would be a briefing meeting at the District Council Offices next month to decide what the plan should cover and how to contact everyone, including residents, workers, businesses and other organisations on whom the Plan would impact, such as neighbouring villages and public amenities.

In addition to himself, Cllr. Cherry, Cllr. Morgan, Cllr. Nash and Cllr. Webb would be joining the working group, which would include local residents with specialist expertise, including an architect, an accountant, a dairy farmer and an equine breeder.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Clarke for his work in setting this project in motion and for the enthusiasm which he had brought to the task.

(ii) Revision of Standing Orders

A copy of the draft Revised Standing Orders had been sent to each Councillor prior to the meeting, but it was agreed that more time was needed to consider them.

It was then agreed that final submissions should be sent to the Clerk no later than the end of the month, when he and the Chairman would incorporate them into a final draft.

(iii) Arrangements for Annual Assembly

The Chairman reminded the meeting that, on the occasion of the Council's visit to the School, the Headmaster of Longdon Hall School had invited the Council to hold one of its meetings on the premises, and he suggested that the Annual Assembly might be just the occasion to take up the offer.

He felt sure that the venue would attract a greater number of parishioners than usually came to an Annual Assembly, particularly if the Headmaster were prepared to give a talk on the work of the School.

However, Cllr. Clarke expressed misgivings about the suitability of the venue, pointing out that it would require parishioners living in Brook End to cross the A51, although it was in turn pointed out that parishioners living in High Street and Upper Longdon already faced crossing the road to reach St. James School, where the Annual Assembly had been previously held.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Taylor, it was agreed nem. con., Cllr. Clarke abstaining, that the Clerk should write to the Headmaster asking him if the Hall could be used for the occasion, at a date between 31st March and 1st June convenient to him, and whether he would like to give a talk to the meeting about the work of the School.

(iv) Best Kept Village Competition 2013

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that Longdon & Longdon Green should be entered in the Large Village Section of the Lichfield/Cannock Chase District and Upper Longdon in the Small Village Section of the same District.

It was also agreed to purchase twelve posters and 550 handbills, the latter to be distributed to all householders in the villages.

(v) Arrangements for Printing "Longdon Life"

Cllr. Webb reported that he had been able to arrange for 725 copies of the next issue of "Longdon Life" to be printed at the Lichfield Campus of the South Staffordshire College at a cost of £163. 64.

In return, the College would like to insert two advertisements in the Newsletter, a condition which the Council gladly accepted.

The Chairman said that the Newsletter would have to be out before March 26th, when the consultation period for the Neighbourhood Plan began, and he was proposing March 17th as the deadline for receiving articles.

The Clerk said that he would be sending out requests for contributions to local organisations in the next week or so.

11. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Report on Police Surgery

Cllr. Clarke reported that no parishioners had attended this surgery, held outside Longdon Village Hall on Saturday, January 19th.

The next surgery would be on Saturday, March 7th, between 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m., when it was hoped it would be given more publicity.

In the meantime, the Clerk would establish whether the Village Hall was available.

(ii) Interim Police and Crime Plan

The Clerk reported that he had received by email from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire a copy of the Interim Police and Crime Plan dated January 2013.

He had forwarded the email to Councillors, but had brought a print copy of the Plan to the meeting for any Councillor to consult.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall – January 22 nd : £12.00 Hire of Hall – February 12 th : £12.00	£ 24.00
Eric Roy	Hosting, supporting and maintaining the website for the twelve months beginning 1 st March 2013	£ 130.00
Beaudesert Sports Field & Recreation Ground Trust	Donation towards the cost of child's swing	£ 500.00
Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee	Hire of meeting room in March, July and November 2013	£ 75.00

(ii) Payments Received

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, the Council had received the following payment:

Longdon Post Office & Store Advertisement: "Longdon Life" £ 7. 50

(iii) Current Balance

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

NatWest c/a:	£3997. 73
less uncleared cheque:	
	<u>1760: £ 24. 00</u>
	£3973. 73

(iv) Requests for Grant Aid(a) Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust

The Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from Mrs. Avril Green, Fund Raiser for the Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust, that the funding for the child's swing to be erected on the Recreation Ground had now been secured and asking the Parish Council for the £500 committed to the project by the Council.

He had subsequently been sent a copy of the invoices which, he had noticed, requested payment before delivery.

As recorded above, the Council then approved payment of the donation, but adopted Cllr. Taylor's suggestion that the Trust should be informed that the Council reserved the right to claim re-imburement of the money if it was not spent within the next three months.

13. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

This had been dealt with under 8 (ii), this being the only correspondence received since the last meeting.

14. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Register of Electors – Notice of Alterations (February 2013);
Publication of a Revised Register of Electors.

- (ii) From Heather Gibbons/Dawn Everitt, Democratic and Legal Services Officers,

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 27th January 2013;
Forward Plan – Version 2 – Issued 17th January 2013 – Effective
for the Period 01. 02. 2013 – 31. 05. 2013;
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 4th February 2013 – Effective
for the Period 01. 03. 2013 – 30. 06. 2013;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 10th February 2013.

- (iii) From David Whittaker, Housing Options Manager, Lichfield District Council:

Help for rough sleepers during cold weather.

- (iv) From Mark Hooper, Democratic and Legal Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

“We Love Lichfield” Fund – Grants up to £500.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 11th January 2013;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 18th January 2013;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 25th January 2013;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 1st February 2013;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 8th February 2013.

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

S3SN – E Bulletin – Issue No. 1/13 – 10th January 2013;
S3SN – E Bulletin – Issue No. 2/13 – 17th January 2013;
S3SN – E Bulletin – Issue No. 3/13 – 24th January 2013;
S3SN – E Bulletin – Issue No. 4/13 – 31st January 2013;
S3SN – E Bulletin – Issue No. 5/13 – 7th February 2013.

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

- Carers: Staffordshire County Council can help you take a break;
- Weekly Update (1st February 2013);
- HSR2 e-petition;
- South Staffordshire Carbon Management;
- Weekly Update (8th February 2013);
- NALC Policy Consultation PC43-12;
- Royal Garden Party (selection of parish councils’ representative).

- (viii) From The Deputy Office Manager, Community Council of Staffordshire:

Staffordshire Diary of Village Festivals and Events.

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

Weekly Email News Digest – 14th January 2013;
MPs rally for fairer rural funding;
Weekly Email News Digest – 21st January 2013;
Weekly Email News Digest – 28th January 2013;
Weekly Email News Digest – 4th February 2013;
Weekly Email News Digest – 11th February 2013.

(x) From Action for Market Towns:

Getting to Grips with Localism and the Community Rights;
“The new funding routes that can help your town’s projects”;
(Birmingham, 5th March; Churchdown, Glos.: 14th March);
Survey into towns’ biggest challenges;
Town Team Initiative Workshop: Morpeth Town Hall, 26th February 2013.

(xi) From Maria Anderson, Public and Patient Officer, NHS Staffordshire
Commissioning Support Services:

Fact Sheet – Deadlines for assessment of eligibility for NHS Continuing
Healthcare funding for cases during the period 1st April – 31st March 2012
(deadline 31st March 2013)
(Copies of this Fact Sheet were posted on the parish notice-boards).

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

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

(xiii) From PSMA User Group:

Update on topics discussed at national PSMA Group meeting held
on January 11th, 2013.

(xiv) From Eco Sustainable Solutions:

Playground chip – up to 10% cheaper than other suppliers.

(xv) From Gavin Traynor, Exteriors, Amington, Tamworth:

“I am enquiring for some directions to supply our grounds maintenance and
or window cleaning services to your Parish....”.

(xvi) From Seton, Banbury, Oxon.(Health and Safety Facilities Management):

Catalogue.

(xvii) From Shelutions Ltd., Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham;

Fantastic Bus Shelters from Shelutions.

(xviii) From HAGS SMP, Egham, Surrey:

Theme It Up!

("Get your Nature themed play items in super quick time and for a great price, too!")

(xix) From Sutcliffe Play, Upton, Pontefract:

"Don't miss out, up to 40% off selected products."

(xx) From Proludic, West Bridgford, Nottingham:

Newsletter and Special Offers.

(xxi) From Notts Sports, Lutterworth, Leics.:

"Nowhere to play outside?"

(xxii) From Lamps and Tubes Illuminations Ltd., Chesham, Bucks.:

LED Light Bulbs, Pull Testing, Column Testing.

15. DOCUMENTS

The following document was available for Councillors to consult:

Interim Police and Crime Plan – January 2013.

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 12th, 2013, in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, Buds Road, Cannock Wood, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Appendix A

REPORT ON LICHFIELD DISTRICT PARISH FORUM HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL,
FROG LANE, LICHFIELD, ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 2013

This meeting was attended by Cllr. Richard Clarke and the Clerk; apologies were made for Cllr. Mick Nash, who regretfully was unable to attend.

The minutes of the meeting of 18th September 2012 were approved with only a short discussion on an administrative point raised by one parish concerning distribution for consultation on the Council's Planning Enforcement Policy. No matters were arising.

Risk Management for Parish Council

An overview presentation on (a) how risk management can benefit Parish Councils and (b) exploring emerging risks was given.

It was defined as understanding, evaluating and taking appropriate action to increase the probability of success. Taking a calculated risk is O. K.; avoids being rash.

Parishes were advised to analyse risks, define them and compile control actions to avoid detrimental events; record all in a register and review as sensible (There was a temptation to seek clarification between risk and hazard).

Nine examples of risk to parish business were cited. It was encouraging that, instead of the usual 'Health & Safety' aspects, the presentation concentrated on 'Fit-for-Purpose' and intangible risks, e.g. funding gap; financial budget management; data loss, media scrutiny; supply chain failure; inadvertent data exchange; fraud and compensation.

There was little on suggested control actions, but an interesting chart listed both the financial cost of control actions and of risks, e.g. insurance, inspection, maintenance on the one hand and fines, repair and reputation on the other.

The Longdon Parish Council Risk Register and Management is due for annual review next month and those above risks not already covered but relevant can be assessed and included.

Neighbourhood Plans (NP) Update

Clare Eggington, Principal Development Plans Officer of the Policy (Development Plans) team, led a NP updating presentation assisted by team members, Maxine Turley and Patrick Jersey.

The presentation had four topics: a quick recap on benefits of NP and the process; the review of the local activity to date; funding possibilities; help available from LDC. It was the “funding” and “help” that were most interesting and new.

Benefits include:

- * “buys in” residents, businesses and workers in the parish, and other relevant interests, into the future (fifteen years) parish development;
 - * defines what, where, how building development should be allowed to progress;
 - * identifies and protects green spaces and recreational areas;
- and, the Chairman stressed, *“most importantly, a NP has legal status to guard against reckless developers”*.

Local activity to date

Stonnall, which is a front runner, Little Aston, Shenstone and Alrewas parishes have started into the process, and some other parishes, e.g. Armitage, are preparing.

(Nationally, many parishes have progressed NP through the draft stages which are available for guidance)

Funding

Once a neighbourhood area has been designated as such by LDC, the parish can apply for £5k for the initial work, e.g. gathering evidence, consultation.

A further £5k can be applied for when the pre-examination draft is published by LDC.

£20k is available for the examination and referendum stages.

LDC Help

Clare’s team can provide general advice and guidance, and checking we’re on the right track.

The Project Team can provide *bespoke* technical advice and support options, including evidence gathering; report preparation; funding; public engagement; sustainability; site planning; preparing for examination and referendum.

The Chairman and Clare emphasised *repeatedly* “*the value of meeting and discussing and working with the LDC teams*”.

Post Meeting. On the 21st January an application for Designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Longdon Parish was submitted to LDC. This goes for six weeks public consultation and then for discussion/agreement with the LDC Planning Committee and then to the LDC Cabinet for decision. (Anticipated total: 2 months)

R.A.G.C.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES
COMMITTEE OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL,
FORD LANE, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 22ND, 2013

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. P. M. Couchman;
Cllr. A. J. Juxon; and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. M. J. Nash;
and Cllr. K. C. Taylor.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Couchman and seconded by Cllr. Clarke, the minutes of the meeting of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee held in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, on Tuesday, September 4th, 2012, were approved and signed, after the following amendments had been made:

Footpath 52: The reference to this footpath was deleted, being out of date.

Footpath 56: Mr. Rose said that he had reported that the gate *had* been replaced and the general area cleared.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Lysways Lane

It was noted that this road was still closed following recent flooding, due, it was thought, to blocked roadside ditches.

It was pointed out that clearing these ditches was the responsibility of the owners of the adjoining fields, a responsibility which, in this case, was complicated by the fact the adjoining fields were in multiple ownership.

It was agreed that Cllr. Lewis should be asked to take this matter up with the Community Highway Liaison Manager.

5. FOOTPATHS REPORT

Mr. Rose updated the meeting on action which had been taken on footpaths since the last meeting.

FP. 27 (Hill Top)

A stile had been repaired, and the finger-post installed at the cross-roads.

FPs. 40/41

These footpaths ran behind Longdon Hall.

There were at least two stiles along this footpath where the footplates were in poor condition. He had reported this on 11th October 2012 and again on 4th December 2012, but still no action had been taken, and he would be following the matter up.

FP. 46 (Giddywell Lane – A51)

A very loose stile had been repaired, but one of the two rail sleepers which formed the bridge had been displaced and was lying on one of the banks.

Mr. Rose said that he would be reporting this.

FP. 51 (Red Hill - Lower Way)

The steps and stile behind White Cottage had been repaired.

FP. 55 (Bradley Lakes)

The finger post was lying on the ground and had been reported on 5th December 2012.

Cllr. Couchman thought that, although it was clear at the moment, the footpath would need clearing once the vegetation started growing again.

FP. 69 (Borough Lane – Smithy Lane)

The overgrown stile at the Borough Lane end had now been cleared.

FP. 72 (Brook End - Hood Lane)

While Paul Rochford had expressed himself unhappy with the double fences erected across this right of way to facilitate the passage of horses from one field to the other, even though a gap had been left for walkers using the footpath, he appeared to have taken no action, and Mr. Rose said that he would email Mr. Rochford to find out if he proposed to take the matter any further.

6. FOOTPATH NO. 73

Cllr. Clarke pointed out that this stretch of the right of way, which runs from Ford Lane to the junction with the proposed, that is the revised, end of Bridleway 25 was currently designated as part of Footpath 73. Concerned parishioner had requested - and the Parish Council had supported their request - that the designation of this short stretch was changed from footpath to bridleway.

Mr. Rose suggested that there were some private individuals who were prepared to contribute towards the cost of laying out a track along the perimeter of the field; however, it first need to be established that the owner of the field was willing to permit this, while retaining ownership of the piece of land required.

He would need to give up a three-metre strip, but once thick fencing was put up he would be able to bring cattle into the field without fear of harassment by dogs.

It was doubtful whether the Parish Council could contribute to the cost, but a grant might be available from the Paths for Communities scheme.

Cllr. Clarke pointed out that such a measure would greatly enhance what the Council was attempting to do with Bridleway 25, though it would still end up at a footpath!

Cllr. Juxon agreed to draft a letter from the Council to Mr. Boston asking him if he would consider the proposal and present to the Council at its February meeting for its approval.

Cllr. Clarke pointed out that what the Council was seeking to achieve was not a footpath diversion but an undesignated horse track, which would not figure as an official right of way but as an official local agreement.

7. FOOTPATH LEAFLETS

Mr. Rose reported that he had written up two walks in Gentleshaw, one of which would be walked by two parishioners, Mr. and Mrs. Drinkwater, the other by Cllr. Juxon and Cllr. Morgan.

Both he and Mrs. Juxon had taken a number of photographs, some of which could be used to illustrate the leaflet.

He had also written up a walk in Upper Longdon, the route of which would be as follows: "The Chetwynd Arms" - Dark Lane - Batesway - The Wishing Well garage - Brereton Hill Lane - The Kennels - The Racing Stables - Catmeadow Lane - Redhill - Lower Way - Stockings Lane - "The Chetwynd Arms".

He had calculated that this walk covered 2¾ miles.

Cllr. Juxon reminded the meeting that the leaflets had to be with the printers no later than the end of March if the Council were not to lose the Community Paths Initiative Grant.

A decision as whether to print 1000 or 500 copies remained to be made and would depend on cost.

8. TREWORK

The Committee had been asked to consider an offer from Graham McCulloch to inspect all newly-planted trees and remove any now-restrictive ties.

The Committee agreed with Cllr. Welch that to reject the offer would be a false economy and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Couchman, it was agreed that Mr. McCulloch's offer should be accepted.

Cllr. Welch added that one of the hawthorns planted on either side of the bench alongside the A51 close to its junction with Brereton Hill Lane needed replacing.

It was now agreed to have the depression caused by subsidence on the verge at the junction of Brook End and the A51 filled in.

9. GENTLESHAW GREEN

Cllr. Welch said that he would arrange to meet the pupils of Gentleshaw School after the Easter break and would see what sort of planting they wanted.

Easter being early this year, it would not be too late for planting Spring bulbs.

Cllr. Clarke said that the pupils favoured a dominant plant at the centre of each tub surrounded by smaller plants which could be changed according to season.

They were willing to take part in the planting, weeding and general maintenance of the Green during term time as part of the School's plant technology and community involvement programmes.

Cllr. Welch added that the hornbeams would now be planted in the autumn.

10. CLOSURE OF DARK LANE

The Clerk reported that the closure of Dark Lane should have been formalised by the end of December and was one of the matters which the Council wished Cllr. Lewis to raise with Mr. Rayson.

Cllr. Welch reminded the Committee that Bardy Lane, which ran from the A51 to Armitage, was impassable, though not officially closed, and Lysways Lane was closed for nine months of the year.

He was concerned that lack of funding was impacting on rural lanes.

Mr. Rose added that the other Dark Lane, which ran from Upper Way to Batesway, was still officially a highway and needed some clearance.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Ford Lane

Mr. Rose reminded the Committee of a letter from Mrs. Val Passey asking if the broken tarmac on either side of the side of the lane could be replaced, as well as the street nameplate replaced.

This first part of this request had been passed on to Mr. Rayson, whose reply was awaited, the second to the District Council's Operational Services, who had so far taken no action.

(ii) Church Hollow

Cllr. Juxon said that, at the very least, the pathway needed clearing and the fencing at the top repaired or replaced.

Moreover, there were two ash trees which need checking for ash dieback.

Here again, the Council was waiting for a reply from Mr. Rayson to its letter suggesting a partnership between the County Council and the Parish Council in the management of Church Hollow.

Mr. Rose asked whether an additional sum could be added to the precept and ring-fenced specifically to be spent on the regeneration of Church Hollow and the church car park; Cllr. Juxon replied that a sum of money had already been identified for doing this work by the Parish Council, to which it was hoped that the County Council might contribute a grant.

(iii) Layby on A51 between Bradley Lakes and Brereton Hill Lane

Cllr. Couchman said that this lay-by was being monopolised by lorries from Biotech, whose drivers were still using the adjacent field as a toilet.

At one time there had been as many as eight, and some had remained in the layby for five days over Christmas.

Mr. Wright, the owner of the adjacent field, had spent a considerable amount of money fencing the lay-by, and other motorists were being deprived of the facility.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Armitage Shanks drawing the company's attention to the problem being caused by these lorries and copy the letter to Mr. Wright.

(iv) Damaged Speed Restriction Sign

Cllr. Welch reported that the 50 mph speed restriction sign on the dual carriageway at the junction of the A51 with Church Hill had been reversed following a collision and motorists approaching from Lichfield were confronted by a de-restriction sign when they should be facing a speed limit.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the County Highways Department asking that this be rectified.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee was provisionally arranged for Tuesday, May 7th, 2013, in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

