

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD
AT LONGDON HALL SCHOOL ON TUESDAY, MAY 21ST, 2013

Present: Cllr. Allen Juxon, (Chairman of the Parish Council, who took the chair);
Cllr. Brian Butler; Cllr. Chris Cherry; Cllr. Richard Clarke;
Cllr. Mrs. Heather Meere; Cllr. Kevin Morgan; Cllr. Ken Taylor;
Cllr. Steve Welch; Cllr. Neil Roberts, of Lichfield District Council;
and the Clerk;
Mrs. Irene Clark; Mr. and Mrs. Philip Clee; Mrs. Diane Howells;
Mrs. Ann Juxon; Mr. Richard Meere; Mrs. Sue Morgan;
Mrs. Gwynneth Nichols; Mrs. Jean Parker; Mrs. Isobel Roberts;
Mrs. Val Shand; and Mr. Neil Vyse;

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Mick Nash; Cllr. Chris Webb.

2. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened proceedings by welcoming everyone to the meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman then presented his annual report.

He began with an invitation to parishioners to give their view on what they would like to see changed to make the parish a better place to live in, though he pointed out that some areas such as highways and traffic were the responsibility of the County Council, and the Parish Council's role in such matters was limited to lobbying.

Changes

Referring to changes which had taken place and were taking place, he told the meeting that, following the recent County Council elections, Cllr. Martyn Tittley was now County Councillor for the area.

He himself had been Chairman of the Parish Council since the previous September, but would be standing down following the meeting and would be succeeded by Cllr. Richard Clarke.

Another change had been the retirement of PC Andy Brown as Community Beat Officer; he had been replaced by PC Alison Lewis, working in partnership with PCSO Lisa Anderson.

He reminded the meeting that occasional police surgeries took place in the Village Hall car park at Brook End and that there was an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme in most parts of the village.

The Parish Council had been kept busy with changing Government legislation designed to devolve more powers from County and District level to the Parishes.

The Budget

Parishioners will have noticed in their community charge that there had been an increase of 13% in the Parish Council rate, the Precept having gone up from £13650 to £17000; this increase had been necessary, since the Precept had been unchanged for several years only because the Council had been using up a surplus accrued over past years in the expectation of having to fund a playing field and a churchyard extension at Gentleshaw.

Major items of expenditure for which the Council had budgeted included: grass cutting (£3000+); improving the path through Church Hollow and replacing the fence and handrail at the entrance to the car park (£2000); clearing the path across the glebe field (£500); and investigating and possibly producing a Neighbourhood Plan (£2000).

In addition, the Clerk would be retiring later this year, and the Council would have to budget to pay his replacement at the ongoing rate.

The Neighbourhood Plan in particular was a major undertaking, designed to enable residents and other interested parties to “buy in” to future parish development; to establish general policies on where development should be and how it should look; and to identify required services and facilities.

Most importantly, it would be taken into account by Inspectors and Adjudicators and have legal status to guard against reckless development.

An application for the whole parish to be a designated area had been made to Lichfield District Council, and a working group had been set up, chaired by Cllr. Clarke.

Best Kept Village Competition

Cllr. Juxon reminded the meeting that Longdon & Longdon Green and Upper Longdon had once again been entered in the Best Kept Village Competition.

Last year, Upper Longdon had won the Small Villages category, while Longdon & Longdon Green had finished second in the Large Villages category

The first judging had already taken place, and he urged everyone to keep up the good work!

Councillor Juxon ended his report by thanking his fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work during the past year and Matt Storey for allowing the meeting to take place in his wonderful school.

4. REPORT BY CLLR. WELCH

Cllr Juxon then invited Cllr. Welch to give his report on the work of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee.

Cllr. Welch said that his Committee was an amalgamation of two previous Committees, the Highways and Footpaths Committee and the Greens and Open Spaces Committee, which had merged to avoid duplication.

Cllr. Welch went on to report that, in the past year, 100 footpaths had been surveyed, and paid tribute to Will Rose, who had been particularly active in checking on the state of the parish’s footpaths and had established a good relationship with the County Council’s footpaths team.

Two more footpath leaflets had been published making the total number seven; these were available at a nominal charge from Longdon Post Office, the local public houses and a number of other outlets, including Brereton Library and the Lichfield Tourist Information Centre, the money collected going to charity.

Ongoing projects included: maintaining Gentleshaw Green, for which bedding plants had been delivered to Gentleshaw School the previous week for planting in the triangular flower beds; establishing a cycle path between Longdon and Lichfield by clearing the existing roadside pathway; and carrying out treework and stabilising the banks on either side on Church Hollow.

Here, Cllr. Welch pointed out that not all projects could be completed within a year, since they often depended on the contribution of other agencies.

Summing up, Cllr. Welch said that, in a parish such as Longdon, a balance had to be struck between maintaining the features of a rural area without over-manicuring them.

5. PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2013

The Clerk presented the financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2013 (*Appendix A*), a copy of which was included in the folders of reports made available to every member of the public attending the meeting.

6. FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The Clerk reported that he had received written reports from the following organisations:

The Parish Church of St. James the Great, Longdon
Longdon Parochial Charities Trust
Longdon Cotton Almshouses Trust
Longdon Village Hall Management Committee
Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee
Longdon Club & Institute
Longdon Friends of St. Giles Hospice
Longdon Women's Institute
Gentleshaw Women's Institute
Longdon Brownies
Longdon Branch, Royal British Legion
Longdon Model Flying Club
Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Flower Club

The Chairman thanked all those who had submitted reports on behalf of their organisations.

7. OPEN FORUM ON LOCAL ISSUES

Cllr. Juxon then invited then invited questions from the floor.

Mrs. Taylor asked when work on the triangle at the bottom of Grange Hill would be started.

The Clerk said that the original intention had been to start at the end of April, but he believed that there was a question of liability still to be solved.

He would, however, pursue the matter.

Mrs. Howells stressed the importance of giving everyone in the village the opportunity of contributing to the Neighbourhood Plan; Cllr. Clarke assured her that this was the intention, the more people involved the greater the validity of the finished Plan.

Mrs. Parker said that tree surgeons had been working on the trees along the main road at the side of Church Hollow, but there were still some dangerous trees on the opposite side, which she acknowledged were the responsibility of the adjoining householders, of which she was one.

She thought the trees had been planted between the footpath and the main road as a screen, but the growth had been at the top of the trees.

It was not clear whether the work currently being carried out on the trees had been completed.

8. RESOLUTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

No resolutions were proposed.

9. CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUDING REMARKS

Bringing the meeting to a close, Cllr. Juxon thanked all those who had attended the Assembly, and, in particular, thanked Mrs Diane Howells and Mrs. Jean Parker for providing the refreshments.

Cllr. Clarke thanked Cllr. Juxon not only for chairing the meeting for taking over as Chairman of the Council following the resignation of the previous Chairman.

He pointed out that Cllr. Juxon was also involved in other areas of village life such as the Church and the British Legion.

Cllr. Clarke's vote of thanks was warmly endorsed by the meeting.

10. TALK BY MATT STOREY, HEADMASTER, LONGDON HALL SCHOOL

The formal business of the meeting was preceded by an illustrated talk by Mr. Storey on the work of the school.

The School had been open for two years and now had thirty-eight pupil, aged between seven and eighteen, who had been referred to the School by local authorities because they had behavioural difficulties which had resulted in their becoming a danger to the children and consequently to their exclusion from mainstream schools.

There was a far higher ratio of boys to girls.

These behavioural difficulties resulted in low learning and low attainment and arose from conditions such as dyslexia, autism and language difficulties.

Whereas their behaviour had previously been seen as just a problem, the School saw them as symptoms of a wide range of specific problems and unmet needs, and to address these the School offered a wide-ranging curriculum focussing on creative and innovative activities which took them out of the classroom as much as possible, since the classroom had become an environment which they had found far too challenging.

On the principle that positive emotions promote positive learning, the children are encouraged to develop dignity, mutual respect and kindness, to show consistency, to listen as well as talk, to lose as well as to win, in a phrase, to achieve emotional literacy.

To achieve this, the School employs only quality staff who are energetic and understand and share the core beliefs of the School. This includes a team which offers a range of therapies. All staff are trained in anger management. The balance of staff to pupils ratio two to six.

The work is tough, but it is rewarding.

All activities are structured, including break-time, and while the importance of creating a welcoming environment – the children are greeted individually at the door by the members of staff when they arrive each morning at 8.45 – is understood, the children are nonetheless challenged with high expectations.

Success is recognised, however small, and every week there is a celebratory assembly; this is seen as an important way of promoting self-esteem.

These children came to the School as very damaged and vulnerable young people, and the aim of the School was to change their behaviour so that they could eventually be re-integrated back into mainstream schools with the potential to be successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The School works hard to support families and carers, contacting them daily

There was, said Mr. Storey, a huge demand for schools such as Longdon Hall, which had a catchment area of an hour's drive and received referrals from twenty-one local authorities; and he was proud of the recent OFSTED report that had rated the School as "Outstanding", describing it as "conspicuously successful in meeting its aims".

At the conclusion of the presentation, Cllr. Juxon thanked Mr. Storey for a very illuminating talk which had given the audience a valuable insight into the important work being carried out within their own parish.

Appendix A

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (1ST APRIL 2012 – 31ST MARCH 2013)

| | (2012/13) | (2011/12) |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Opening Account: | £ 3104. 41 | £ 6979. 79 |
| <u>Receipts</u> | | |
| Precept: | £13650. 00 | £13650. 00 |
| Halifax interest | £ 4. 29 | £ 00. 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": | £ 371. 50 | £ 134. 50 |
| Wayleaves: | £ 38. 91 | £ 36. 27 |
| Donation: | <u>£ 00. 00</u> | <u>£ 5. 00</u> |
| Total Receipts: | £16615. 52 | £15663. 59 |
| Total Income: | £19719. 93 | £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: | £ 120. 00 | £ 320. 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: | £4238. 68 | £ 7001.68 |

General Administration

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Insurance: | £ 880. 11 | £ 865. 44 |
| SPCA: | £ 384. 91 | £ 383. 00 |
| "LCR" | £ 15. 50 | £ 15. 50 |
| Clerk's Salary: | £1120. 00 | £ 1050. 00 |
| Employer Tax: | £ 280. 00 | £ 350. 00 |
| Photocopying: | £ 509. 51 | £ 492. 19 |
| Postage: | £ 146. 12 | £ 137. 93 |
| Hire of rooms: | £ 337. 00 | £ 350. 00 |
| Audit Fee: | £ 192. 00 | £ 162. 00 |
| Printing "Longdon Life": | £1469. 75 | £ 2034. 00 |
| Delivering "Longdon Life" | £ 135. 00 | £ 180. 00 |

| | | |
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| Editor's Expenses | £ 45. 00 | £ 60. 00 |
| Professional fees: (internal audit) | £106. 50 | £ 101. 40 |
| Website: | £ 600. 00 | £ 330. 00 |
| Notice-boards: | £ 180. 00 | £ 165. 00 |
| JRA Presentation: | £ 00. 00 | £ 68. 00 |
| Comm. Council: | £ 22. 00 | £ 22. 00 |
| Delivering BKV leaflets: | £ 45. 00 | £ 00. 00 |
| Andy Brown Presentation: | £ 30. 99 | £ 00. 00 |
| Ticket: | £ 38. 00 | £ 00. 00 |
| Election expenses | £ 00. 00 | £ 312. 62 |
| Tax on interest | £ 00. 00 | £ 1. 66 |
| TOTAL: | £6537. 39 | £7080. 74 |

Community Halls

| | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Longdon | £1500. 00 | £ 00. 00 |
| Cannock Wood | <u>£ 00. 00</u> | <u>£ 500. 00</u> |
| TOTAL: | £1500. 00 | £ 5 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 | <u>£ 230. 00</u> | <u>£ 00. 00</u> |
| TOTAL | £ 1241. 00 | £ 1487.00 |

Section 137

Donations

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Gentleshaw School | £ 00. 00 | £ 500. 00 |
| St. Giles Hospice | £ 200. 00 | £ 200. 00 |
| Longdon W. I. | £ 200. 00 | £ 00. 00 |
| LDC Playscheme | £ 00. 00 | £ 130. 00 |
| Preschool: | £ 50. 00 | £ 50. 00 |
| Jubilee Fund | £ 550. 00 | £ 219. 29 |
| Beaudesert Trust | £ 00. 00 | £ 150. 00 |
| Produce & Flower Show: | £ 210. 00 | £ 210. 00 |
| Beaudesert Sports Field Trust | £ 500. 00 | £ 100. 00 |
| Wreath | £ 00. 00 | £ 19. 00 |
| "Messy Church" (Gentleshaw) | £ 00. 00 | £ 60. 00 |

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| S. Staffs. Cruse | £ 50. 00 | £ 50. 00 |
|------------------|----------|----------|

Subscriptions

Staffs Wildlife

| | | |
|--------|----------|----------|
| Trust: | £ 39. 00 | £ 39. 00 |
|--------|----------|----------|

Staffs. Playing-

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Fields Assoc'n: | £ 15. 00 | £ 15. 00 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|

| | | |
|------|----------|----------|
| CPRE | £ 00. 00 | £ 20. 00 |
|------|----------|----------|

BKV Comp.

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| St. James School | £ 50. 00 | £ 00. 00 |
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|-------------|----------|----------|
| Gift tokens | £ 40. 00 | £ 60. 00 |
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Flower Tubs,

Compost &

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|
| Bedding Plants: | £153. 38 | £ 216. 00 |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|

Entry fees

| | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| and publicity: | £ 70. 30 | £ 70. 75 |
|----------------|----------|----------|

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|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| TOTAL: | £2127. 68 | £2109.04 |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|

Churchyards

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Longdon: | £1348. 90 | £1032. 80 |
|----------|-----------|-----------|

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|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Gentleshaw | <u>£ 237. 48</u> | <u>£ 342. 00</u> |
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|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| TOTAL: | £1586. 38 | £ 1374. 80 |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|

SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Greens & Open Spaces: | £ 4328. 68 | <i>£5000. 00</i> | £ 7009. 68 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|------------|

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|-------------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| General Administration: | £ 6537. 39 | <i>£5500. 00</i> | £ 7080. 74 |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------|------------|

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|----------|
| Community Halls: | £ 1500. 00 | <i>£2000. 00</i> | £ 00. 00 |
|------------------|------------|------------------|----------|

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Highways & Footpaths: | £ 1241. 00 | <i>£3500. 00</i> | £ 1487. 00 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|------------|

| | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Section 137: | £ 2127. 68 | <i>£2500. 00</i> | £ 2109. 04 |
|--------------|------------|------------------|------------|

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|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Churchyards: | <u>£ 1586. 38</u> | <u>£ 800. 00</u> | <u>£ 1374. 80</u> |
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|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL: | £17321. 13 | <i>£19300.00</i> | £19561.26 |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|

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

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Balance – NatWest c/a: £ £2693. 10

less uncleared cheques

1776: £ 15. 00

1775: £ 45. 00

1771: £ 38. 00

1767: £ 12. 00

1766: £ 70. 30

1763: £ 24. 00

£ 2488. 80

Opening Balance: £ 3104. 41

+Total Receipts: £16615. 52

-Total Payments: £ 17231. 13

£ 2488. 80