

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 2004

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Vice-Chairman, who, in the absence of the Chairman, chaired the meeting); Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk, Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council; County Councillor F. W. Lewis; and sixteen members of the public - Mr. Tom Badgery, Mrs. Leslie Bill, Mr. John Bonnett, Mrs. Jane Colley and Mr. Colin Heseltine, all of Upper Way, Upper Longdon; Mrs. Eva Overton, Mr. Richard Rawlinson and Dr. John Watts, all of Brook End, Longdon; Mr. Will Rose and Mr. Martin Sandground, both of The Croft, Longdon; Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hewitt, of High Street, Longdon; Mrs. Maggie Derry, of Hawcroft, Longdon; Mr. Russell Fox, of Borough Lane, Longdon; Mr. John Knight, of Giddywell Lane, Longdon; and Mr. Neil Vyse, of Stockings Lane, Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. H. C. Bramley; and Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, September 14th, 2004, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Hemmingsley and seconded by Cllr. Welch, approved and signed after "upon confirmation" had been amended to "upon completion" on page 107 (14. PARISH WEBSITE).

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Cllr. Welch welcomed members of the public to the meeting and asked if any wanted to address the Council.

Mrs. Colley informed the Council that she had collected the signatures of nearly all the residents of Upper Way on a petition expressing concern about the number of vehicles which exceeded the speed limit as they travelled through the village and calling for the enforcement of the 30 mph speed limit.

She spoke of verbal abuse suffered by residents who attempted to remonstrate with speeding motorists and pointed out that Upper Way was now home to a growing number of children who had nowhere safe to play. Others put at risk included horse-riders and residents exercising their dogs.

The petition showed that, while there were differences of opinion over what should be done, residents were unanimous that something needed doing urgently.

Cllr. Juxon pointed out that, while it was the responsibility of the police to uphold speed limits, they no longer had the resources to do so.

Cllr. Welch commented that, while one of the functions of the Parish Council was to act as the collective voice of its parishioners, it could not fulfil this role without their active support. He recalled that an earlier attempt to introduce traffic calming to Upper Longdon had failed because that support had been lacking.

He then read from a letter written to the Council by Simon Edwards, Project Engineer at the Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, dated 17th September 2004, in which he had acknowledged that something needed to be done on Upper Way to tackle the problems raised and informed the Council that he had arranged for Upper Way to

be investigated under the Speed Management in Villages Initiative, as part of which there would be a comprehensive review of the signing, lining, footpaths, crossing points and entry into the village.

Mrs. Colley asked that any speed checks be carried out at a time when traffic was at its heaviest; during the middle of the day the village was quiet except for the passage of lorries, but between 7. 00 a.m. and 9. 30 a.m. and 4. 00 p.m. and 7. 00 p.m. the lanes were very busy.

She asked whether volunteers could be trained to carry out speed checks, as was being done in other parts of the country.

Mr. Heseltine was anxious that any measures taken to reduce speeding vehicles would not detract from the rural character of the village. He pointed out that, over recent years, the street lighting had been upgraded and the kerbs replaced, measures which, in his view, had encouraged speeding. He suggested that anti-speeding measures should be limited to raised cobbles and signs painted on the surface of the road.

Cllr. Roberts said that the Cannock Chase AONB Unit was equally concerned about the problem of speeding traffic. He reminded the meeting that the County Council had just issued its Draft County Transport Plan and was canvassing views on traffic management, and he urged those present to make their views known. However, while there was nearly always unanimity in identifying the problems, there was very often disagreement over what were the appropriate solutions, no one solution - be it humps, build-outs, or lights - ever receiving unanimous support.

Asked about progress in the scheme to improve the safety of the A51 at Longdon, Cllr. Welch replied that a meeting had just been arranged between the Parish Council, members of the County Council's Development Services Directorate and County Councillor Lewis for Thursday, October 21st, though the venue and time of the meeting, which would be private, had not been decided.

He asked that the results of the survey being conducted in the parish should be made known to the Parish Council prior to this meeting and assured parishioners that they would be informed of the outcome of the meeting at the following meeting of the Council.

Asked whether the proposed development on the site of Rugeley Power Station - where it was proposed to build 560 new houses - would be subject to an agreement under Section 106, Cllr. Roberts replied that the houses were being built on a brown-field site which would be costly to prepare, so the money available would be limited. Already, issues had been raised about medical facilities, while some of the money would be going towards the cost of the by-pass around Rugeley.

Cllr. Lewis said that thirty-five letters from Longdon residents had been received by the County regarding the A51.

Mr. Rose informed the meeting that he had learnt that there had been 105 accidents had occurred on the A51 between "The Wishing Well" and Longdon Green over a period of fifteen years. However, between November 2003 and June 2004 there had been only two accidents involving injury, and he feared that the County Council might base their calculations on this.

Moreover, he had discovered a wide discrepancy between figures held by the County Council and those held by the police, who had recorded nine, one fatal.

Mr. Rose also informed the meeting that no action seemed to have been taken following the footpath survey whose results he had submitted to Stafford in May, in spite of a promise that they would be investigated. Cllr. Lewis said that he would take this up with the County Countryside Officer.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Concerns over safety on the A51

It was noted that the source of the questionnaire being circulated in the parish had not been identified on the form and that, as a consequence, some parishioners thought that it emanated from the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the meeting on October 21st would be held in the W. I. Hall and that it should commence at 7. 00 p.m.

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mr. Charles Brown, of Upper Way, Upper Longdon, a letter postmarked 1st October 2004, enclosing a copy of a letter which he had

written to David Grain, of the Development Services Directorate of Staffordshire County Council asking that a crossing warden be provided for the A51 at Brook End.

It was agreed that this request should be included in the discussion with Mr. Grain on October 21st.

(ii) Verge at side of Church Hill, Longdon Green

The Clerk informed the Council that he had received a complaint from a resident of Church Hill that the path from "Jasmine Hayes" to the bus stop at the top of the hill was in parts impassable because of the uncut grass and nettles.

Having confirmed this, he had reported the complaint at the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee, who had agreed that the Clerk should be given permission to invite Alan Johnson, of Aqua Jet Services, to cut the verge.

This had now been done.

(iii) Flags for flying over Longdon Village Hall

The Clerk reported that he had still not received a reply to the Council's offer to provide a Union Flag and a St. George's Flag to be flown on appropriate occasions over Longdon Village Hall.

Cllr. Butler said that the St. George's flag flying from the flagpole was tattered and in a disgraceful condition.

(iv) Japanese Knotweed in Church Hollow

The Clerk reported that he had still not received a reply from the District Council Countryside Officer regarding the presence of Japanese Knotweed in Church Hollow, nor had he received a copy of the management plan for Gentleshaw Common, promised for the end of 2003.

Cllr. Roberts said that he had already spoken to Mrs. Tomlin, but would raise these matters with her again.

(v) Alleged new access from Redmoor Road

Cllr. Stanfield said that he had not completed his researches into this case, but he was concerned that land might have been taken into the curtilage of the property on Hayfield Hill without planning permission.

(vi) Missing letter-box

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Lowe, Royal Mail, Glasgow, a letter dated 8th October 2004 regarding the post-box stolen from Brereton Hill Lane, in which he said that the Clerk's letter of 27th August 2004 had been re-directed to the West Midlands Mail Centre for action.

(vii) Fatal Accident on A51

The Clerk reported that he had received from HM Coroner, Staffordshire (South) Coroners District, Stafford, a letter dated 20th September 2004, in which he said that he had made a note to advise him of the arrangements for the inquest of the late Roger William Pickerin, the motorcyclist killed in the recent accident on the A51 at Longdon Green.

(viii) Roadside Tree Planting

The Clerk reported that he had visited Woodshoot Nurseries and met the proprietor, Richard Flint, who had told him that his firm was now concentrating on exotics, but could still obtain stocks of native trees.

He had promised to provide the Clerk with a price list of different species of sorbus so that the Council could make a choice for replacing the dead and missing trees in Upper Way.

(ix) Footpath Leaflets

The Clerk was instructed to obtain a quotation from Benhill Press, of Rugeley.

(x) Repair and Installation of Benches

The Clerk reported that he had not heard when this work was likely to be carried out.

(xi) Street Cleansing - Grange Hill, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, as instructed, sent a copy of the letter from the Operational Services Department, dated 9th September 2004, regarding the cleaning of Grange Hill to Ken Owen, the County Council's Divisional Engineer, inviting his comment, but had so far received no reply.

(xii) Dog Fouling and Litter Campaign

The Clerk reported that he had received three copies of each of the two posters publicising the District Council's campaign and would display them on the Parish noticeboards after they had been laminated.

(xiii) Verge outside No. 71 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, to date, he had received no reply to his letter to Ken Owen, the Divisional Engineer, on this matter.

(xv) Disintegrating Surface at the Top of Shavers Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, to date, he had received no reply to his letter to Ken Owen on this matter.

(xvi) Alleged Boarding Kennels at No. 44 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had written to Christine Hibbs, Senior Planning Officer, Development Services Department, Lichfield District Council, asking her to investigate this report.

He had subsequently received a letter dated 29th September 2004 informing him that her Enforcement Team was investigating the matter and she would advise him of the outcome.

Cllr. Butler said that, as the neighbour charged with looking after the property during the absence of the owner, he had found no evidence of the alleged breach of planning regulations.

(xvii) Brook End Conservation Area

Cllr. Stanfield said that he would see whether a suitable plan was available from the District Council.

5. DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' PERSONAL, PREJUDICIAL AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS

None was declared.

6. PLANNING

(i) For Consideration

Consideration was given by the Council to the following applications:

04/01045/COU: Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Johnson: Barn conversion to residential building: Moat Farm, Borough Lane, Longdon

While there were no objections to this application, it was thought that demolition of the old Dutch barn should be made a condition of planning approval.

Cllr. Juxon reported that there were no objections from immediate neighbours.

04/01064/OUT: Mrs. S. Evans: Outline permission for a four-bedroom detached dwelling with double garage: Land at rear of "Sunny Corner", Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Council objected to this application on grounds of access and over-development of plot.

Upper Way was currently the cause of great concern because of the volume and speed of traffic using it, and access from the dwelling would be onto Upper Way, via Dark Lane, at a bend where visibility would be limited.

A dwelling on this site would create a second row of houses, and it was thought that it would not be within the present planning line.

(ii) Approved by Lichfield District Council:

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

04/00861/COU: J. W. Liggins: Change of use from agricultural land to mixed use for keeping of agricultural and recreational horses: Land at rear of "Embo", Stocking Lane, Longdon

(iii) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued the following Notice of Refusal of Permission for Development:

04/00764/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. Archer: Conservatory: Tithe Barn, Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw.

(iv) Other Planning Matters

(a) Unauthorised Development at Bradley Lakes

The Clerk reported that he had received from Stephen Hill, Development Control Manager, Development Services Department, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 5th October 2004, informing the Council that he had now received Counsel's response regarding the legality of the conversion of the garage and workshop built in the grounds of "Rose Cottage", Bradley Lakes, to a dwelling without first obtaining planning permission.

Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 provided for the erection of a building within the curtilage of a dwelling house for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house, subject to restrictions on size, height, relationship to highway, etc., without the need for planning permission; it appeared that this building had been erected for an ancillary use and used for that purpose for a short period of time prior to its conversion to a primary residential use as a granny annex.

Unfortunately, it was well established that the change of use of a building within the curtilage of a dwelling house from an incidental use (as, for example, a games room) to a primary use (as, for example, a granny flat) did not constitute a material change of use and planning permission was therefore not needed, though planning permission would be needed if the building were to be sold off as a separate entity.

Counsel had therefore advised against taking enforcement action in relation to the

current situation and in the light of this guidance Mr. Hill considered that it would be inappropriate to take further action in the matter.

Councillors found this conclusion unacceptable; as Cllr. Stanfield pointed out, it gave the green light to any home-owner first to build and then convert a garage within the curtilage of his property to an independent dwelling without planning permission.

He also asked whether such a development would be rated as part of the existing property or re-assessed as a separate dwelling.

Councillors also objected to the refusal to release the text of Counsel's decision to the Parish Council on grounds of confidentiality, since this meant that the Council was not in a position to challenge it.

The Council was concerned about the general principle which lay behind the judgement and agreed that a meeting should be sought with senior planning officers at which the implications of the judgement could be discussed.

The Clerk reported that the Chairman had asked him to ask for the Council's support in the Chairman's seeking a meeting with the Senior Planning Officer, but the Council decided that the Clerk should first reply to Mr. Hill making him aware of the Council's dissatisfaction with the current position and then look at his response in detail before requesting such a meeting.

(b) Notice of Appeal

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of an appeal by Brian and Lynne Harris against the decision of Lichfield District Council to refuse planning permission for a conservatory to the side of The Cottage, High Street, Longdon.

The appeal was to be decided on the basis of an exchange of written statements by the parties and a site visit by an Inspector.

Any further representations should reach the Planning Inspectorate at Bristol no later than 27th October 2004.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum

The Clerk reported that both he and Cllr. Mrs. Nichols had attended a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum held at the Stonnall Youth and Community Centre on Wednesday, September 15th, at which there had been presentations by Andrew Halden, Chief Executive of the Community Council of Staffordshire (on Village Agents) and Graham Hakes, Environmental Health Officer, Lichfield District Council (on the District Council's "Clean it up" Campaign). In addition, Rita Wilson, Corporate Director - Organisational Development, Lichfield District Council, had given a verbal report on 'Joint Working on Payroll'.

Following the meeting the Clerk had received the official minutes of the meeting, a copy of which he had sent to every Councillor prior to the current meeting.

(ii) Lichfield Area Committee, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association

The Clerk presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield Area Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which had taken place in the Council Chamber at District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Thursday, October 7th, and at which the Chairman and he had both been present.

Cllr. Joe Powell, Chairman of the Lichfield District Parish Forum, had been the guest speaker, and topics discussed had been the future of the Forum and the strengthening of ties between the District Council and the parish councils within its area, and the likely consequences of the regionalisation of local government.

(iii) Other Meetings

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols gave brief reports on two other meetings - the Annual General Meeting

and Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations of the Community Council of Staffordshire, held in the County Buildings, Stafford, on Tuesday, September 21st, at which Andrew Halden, Chief Executive, had given a brief history of the Community Council, and a meeting of the School Governors of St. James School (which she had just left), at which the main topic of discussion had been the dangers facing pupils crossing the A51 each day.

8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Clerk reported that he had received notice of the following meetings:

(i) Burntwood Citizens Advice Bureau - Annual General Meeting: St. John's Community Church, High Street, Chase Terrace, on Monday, 11th October 2004, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

The guest speaker would be Sue Wigley, Regional Manager of Citizens Advice.

(ii) Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - "A Vision for the Future", a talk by David Bellamy, at The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, commencing with a light buffet and refreshments at 5.15 p.m.

The talk will be preceded by a short presentation by the Trust Director, Guy Corbett Marshall, and the evening should close at approximately 7.00 p.m.

Admission was free but limited to two persons per application, and, since the closing date for applying for tickets had closed on October 8th, the Clerk had applied for two tickets on behalf of the Parish Council lest any members of the Council should be interested in attending.

Cllr. Butler said that he would be interested in attending if tickets were available.

(iii) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty - Parish Councils' Meeting at The Community Centre, Colwich, on Tuesday, October 19th, 2004, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Cllr. Welch expected to be present.

(iv) Staffordshire Playing Fields Association - Annual General Meeting at Shbnall Leisure Complex, Burton-on-Trent, commencing at 2.00 p.m.

(v) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association - Seminar on "Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures" at St. Bertelin's Church Hall, Holmcroft Road, Stafford, on Friday, 29th October 2004, from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

The key speaker would be Tim Ricketts, Head of NALC's Legal Team and the fee, including background papers and refreshments, would be £21.00 per person for SPCA members.

(vi) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association Annual General Meeting and Conference in the Council Chamber, County Building, Martin Street, Stafford, on Saturday, 6th November 2004 from 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

The main speaker would be from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Clerk would attend but Cllr. Juxon would not be able to be present this year.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Verge at side of footpath between Berkeley Way and Beech Walk

The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Elizabeth Caudwell, of 12 Berkeley Way, Longdon, a letter dated 4th October 2004, asking if the area between her property and the footpath could be cleared of weeds and roots of weeds and offering to plant the area if the Council were to maintain it in the future.

She also expressed concern at the size of a robinia and a hawthorn on the edge of her bungalow.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Welch and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols it was agreed that Alan Johnson should be asked to carry out this work, payment for which could be made under the Highway Maintenance Agreement.

(ii) Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Access Forum

The Clerk reported that he had received from Peter Morris, County Countryside Officer, of the Development Services Directorate of Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 27th September 2004, enclosing a copy of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and inviting proposals for improvements to the existing network.

Cllr. Welch said that he would study the document and present the Council with an overview at the next meeting.

10. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Proposed Restructuring of Lichfield District Council Tree Warden Scheme

The Clerk reported that he had received from Paul Ansell, Development Plans and Implementation Manager, Development Services Department, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 13th September 2004, informing the Council that it was intended to restructure the present Tree Warden Scheme by appointing one or two tree wardens in each parish who would be provided with a more structured role in the local community and inviting Parish Councils to establish a 'host' group to provide support to their parish Tree Wardens.

Cllr. Welch said that he believed that Mr. and Mrs. Phil Clee were still actively involved and he would contact Mrs. Jackie Hooley to see if she was still interested in supporting the Scheme.

11. PARISH WEBSITE

The Clerk reported that he had written to Eric Roy inviting him to provide the Parish Council with a website and that he had subsequently received a letter from Mr. Roy dated 1st October 2004, accepting the commission on the agreed terms.

He had also written to all the local organisations inviting them to contribute material for the website.

Cllr. Hemmingsley said that Mr. Roy had agreed that the copyright for the website should be the Parish Council's as of right forever.

He added that it was now a matter of urgency that the information required from local organisations should be made available to Mr. Roy without delay.

Cllr. Bramley had sent a number of views which he had taken in Longdon Green for a selection to be made for inclusion; Cllr. Hemmingsley commented that there was a problem in selecting appropriate illustrations inasmuch as the Parish did not have a focal point. However, Cllr. Welch said that he would be able to provide panoramic views ranging over 120 degrees.

The Clerk further reported that he had received an offer from Mrs. Val Passey to collect information from local information from group organisers for a 'Village Planning Diary'; Councillors thought this was a good idea, and instructed the Clerk to ask Mrs. Passey to get in touch with Cllr. Hemmingsley.

12. LAW AND ORDER

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Giffard, Chief Constable, Staffordshire Police, a letter dated 20th September 2004, informing the Council that, from 4th October, Staffordshire Police would have a single non-emergency telephone number - 08453 30 20 10 - chargeable at local rate wherever the call was made.

This easy-to-remember number was intended to reduce the number of inappropriate 999 calls.

All calls would continue to be answered by police employees based within Staffordshire.

Cllr. Butler said that it had taken three hours for the police to respond to a report of a burglary in Upper Way recently, and then only one police officer had arrived.

He was concerned to hear that Cannock Police Station was to be closed and that the police station at Rugeley would be open only in the day-time.

He had learnt, too, that there were only ever two police officers on duty at any one time.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Chief Constable asking him what the current situation was locally in terms of cover.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Butler, payment of the following accounts, received since the last meeting, was approved

# *Eric Roy	First payment on website	£100. 00
Longdon W. I	Hire of Hall	£ 12. 00
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing - September 15th: £200. 00 Mowing & clearing the centre of Longdon Green: £160. 00	£360. 00
Salute Ltd.	Internal Auditor's fee	£ 80. 00
* Staffordshire Playing Fields Association	Annual Subscription	£ 15. 00

Payment made under Section 142 of The Local Government Act of 1972

* Payment made under Section 137 of The Local Government Act of 1972

(ii) Payments Received

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

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £736. 05

The Halifax d/a: £12818. 65

(iv) Report of Meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee

Cllr. Welch gave a report on a meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on 20th September 2004, at which the Clerk had presented figures showing that the Council's expenditure was approximately as predicted.

The meeting had also scrutinised draft documents prepared by the Clerk; these covered Standing Orders (Financial Procedures); Business Risk Assessment; Insurance Cover; Clerk's Job Description; and Inventory of Street Furniture and Other Material Assets.

Prior to the current meeting, the Clerk had distributed copies of these drafts, together with a financial statement which included a reconciliation statement for the first six months of the current financial year.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by Cllr. Stanfield, the Council, after studying these documents and making one or two minor amendments, confirmed and adopted them.

(v) Reconciliation Statement

The reconciliation statement for the six-month period ending 30th September 2004 showed the Council's balances standing £13554. 70.

Receipts for the period had been £21244. 29 and payments £8013. 59, making a final total of £13230. 70.

When four uncleared cheques amounting to £324. 00 were deducted from the Council's balances, these also totalled £13230. 70.

(vi) Report of Internal Auditor

The Clerk reported that, following the visit of the Independent Internal Auditor on September 20th, he had now received the Auditor's final report, copies of which he had distributed to members.

Mr. Blount had identified one error in the Council's accounts; the reconciliation statement had been dated 25th March 2004 and the Clerk had later failed to take into account that two cheques uncleared at the time had subsequently been cleared before the end of the financial year five days later.

The Clerk had consequently updated the statement and would enclose a copy of the revised statement with the Annual Return when he submitted it to the District Auditor.

Mr. Blount had also noted that it was not the practice of the Council to keep minutes of meetings of the Finance Sub-Committee, though the Clerk had pointed out that these meetings were fully reported at the next meeting of the Council.

He had once again commented on the lack of a contract for the Clerk, though the Clerk had told him that all the Council's procedures were currently under review.

(vii) Appeals for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Group Chief Executive of St. Giles Hospice, Whittington, an undated letter enclosing a copy of the Autumn issue of the St. Giles Hospice News, together with a request for continuing financial support from the Council.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that the Council should make a donation of £100. 00.

The Clerk said that payment could be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of 1972.

(viii) District Council Grant Aid to Parishes 2005 - 2006

The Clerk reported that he had received from Nuala Mullarkey, Regeneration and Communications Manager, Communications, Culture & Community, Lichfield District Council, an undated letter in which she thanked the Clerk for his letter of 5th September 2004 feeding back thoughts about the grant aid scheme for 2005-2006.

Although the response had been received after the grant aid scheme had been approved, some of the issues raised had been significant and she would be keeping the letter on file and include its comments in the more fundamental review to be undertaken next year.

The Clerk reminded the Council that it had invited the Chairman to respond on its behalf and the comments to which Mrs. Mullarkey had referred had been his.

(ix) Fusion Credit Union

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Ashley, Chair of the Fusion Credit Union Development Committee dated 20th September 2004, giving a report of the progress being made towards the development of a Credit Union.

He pointed out that it often took three or four years to develop a Credit Union; however, the Committee had almost completed the process and were hoping to launch a new Credit Union shortly.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Janet Allen, Clerk to the Longdon Parochial Charities Trust, a letter dated 14th September 2004, in which she had asked what the current situation regarding the funding of Vital Villages was.

After ringing the office of the Community Council of Staffordshire for information, he was able to tell her that no funding would be available before the beginning of the next

financial year, when the scheme was likely to be taken over by a Government Department.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rt. Hon. Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environment Quality, a letter postmarked 28th September 2004, in which he referred to a consultation which he had recently launched called "Clean Neighbourhoods".

A consultation document was available on <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/clean-neighbourhood/index.htm>, and the Council was invited to send its comments as soon as possible.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Annette Davies, Planning Officer, School Organisation and Information, Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 29th September 2004, informing the Council of proposals to re-organise special schools within the County.

The proposed changes, which would affect twelve schools, related to changes of age range only.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

(i) From The Corporate Director - Democratic and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Report of Corporate Director - Development Services for meeting of Planning Committee to be held on Monday, 27th September 2004;

Report of Corporate Director - Development Services for meeting of Planning Committee to be held on Monday, 18th October 2004;

Executive Arrangements - Forward Plan 2004-2005 Version 1 (to take effect on 1st October 2004);

Executive Arrangements - Forward Plan 2004-2005 Version 2 (to take effect on 1st October 2004);

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 3rd October 2004;

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 17th October 2004;

Statement of Licensing Policy - Draft Document for Consultation.

(ii) From The Passenger Transport Business Unit, Staffordshire County Council:

Public Transport News - October 2004 (2 copies).

(iii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Booking Forms: CiLC Portfolio and Working with Your Council Monitoring Evenings - Autumn Semester.

(iv) From The Staffordshire Playing Fields Association:

Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004.

(v) From Wicksteed Leisure, Kettering:

A Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (and how the October 2004 provisions relate to Outdoor Play Areas).

16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Butler reported that the road sweeping machine had difficulty in cleaning the

pavements running from the A51 as far as Brereton Hill Lane up to the walls.

He also drew the attention of the Council to overgrown laurels along Upper Way from Grange Hill to The Grange.

(ii) Cllr. Parsons reported that the road nameplate at the junction of Lower Way and Grange Hill had gone.

The Clerk was instructed to report this to the District Council's Operational Services Department.

(iii) Cllr. Parsons asked whether there had been any progress in enforcing the removal of the windmill and hard-standing in Stockings Lane.

Cllr. Roberts said that he would pursue the matter on behalf of the Council.

(iv) Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that Ken Davis, of Hollows Farm, Peggs Lane, Gentleshaw, had complained to him about the discharge of sewage from a septic tank in Shaw Lane, caused, it was thought, by the absence of a soakaway.

It appeared that the complaint was already under investigation by Environmental Health Officer from Lichfield District Council, though Mr. Davis was not satisfied with the rate of progress.

Cllr. Roberts said that he would act in the matter.

(v) The Clerk drew the attention of the Council to an uprooted village sign in Longdon Green and a broken metal footpath sign opposite Catmeadow Lane, in Upper Longdon.

He was instructed to take the necessary steps to ensure that they were replaced.

(vi) Cllr. Juxon said that he hoped to be able to produce a Christmas issue of "Longdon Life", but, for a publication date in early December, he would need to receive material by 26th November.

The Clerk was instructed to write to local organisations asking for contributions by that date.

(vii) Cllr. Roberts was invited to say a few words about the new Local Development Framework which would be replacing Strategic Plans.

This would in future be driving all planning issues, but the process was quite complicated and he had brought to the meeting a diagram setting out the different stages which he thought the Council might find quite useful.

(viii) Cllr. Mrs. Nichols suggested that, in future, the Council should follow the example of other parish councils in limiting the amount of time devoted to public participation, pointing out that the first hour of the evening's meeting had been taken up by a discussion on traffic matters and that many of the points had been made before.

She suggested that the time should be limited to fifteen minutes and that each parishioner wishing to speak should be allowed three minutes.

Cllr. Stanfield pointed out that the current level of public participation had been unusual and had been the result of concern over road safety issues.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, November 9th, 2004, in The Meeting Room of Christ Church, Gentleshaw, commencing at 7.30 p.m.