

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON MONDAY,
MAY 10TH, 2005

Present: Cllr. J. R. Andrews (Chairman); Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley;
Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols;
Cllr. N. Stanfield; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present were the Clerk and one parishioner - Mr. Rodney Abrahams,
of "The Chetwynd Arms", Upper Way, Upper Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District
Council; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols,
Cllr. Welch was nominated as Chairman of the Parish Council.

There being no other nominations, Cllr. Welch was unanimously elected.

Before vacating the Chair, Cllr. Andrews thanked his fellow Councillors for their
unstinting support during the two years in which he had been Chairman

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Meere and seconded by Cllr. Andrews,
Cllr. Hemmingsley was nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council.

There being no other nominations, Cllr. Hemmingsley was unanimously elected.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols,
membership of the Council's Sub-Committees and Working Groups was agreed as follows:

(i) Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee

The Chairman: the Vice-Chairman; Cllr. Andrews; Cllr. Juxon;
and Cllr. Mrs. Meere.

(ii) Planning Working Group

Cllr. Bird; Cllr. Hemmingsley (convenor); Cllr. Mrs. Nichols; Cllr. Parsons;
Cllr. Stanfield; and Cllr. Welch.

Meetings would require the attendance of a minimum of three of the above
Councillors.

(iii) Highways & Footpaths and Greens & Open Spaces Working Group

Cllr. Bird; Cllr. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. Meere (convenor); and Cllr. Welch.

Mr. Will Rose would be invited to continue as a co-opted members of this Working Group.

5. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Representation of the Council on outside bodies was confirmed as follows:

Management Committee, Longdon Village Hall	Cllr. Bird
Management Committee, Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall	Cllr. Hemmingsley
Governing Body, St. James C. E. (V. C.) School, Longdon (until 31 st August 2005)	Cllr. Mrs. Nichols
Governing Body, Gentleshaw County Primary School (until 31 st August 2005)	Cllr. Mrs. Meere
Management Committee, Beaudesert Sports Field & Recreation Ground	Cllr. Mrs. Meere
Board of Trustees, Cotton Almshouses	Mrs. Ann Juxon (Longdon) Cllr. Andrews (Gentleshaw)
Lichfield District Parish Forum	Cllr. Mrs. Nichols Cllr. Stanfield
Lichfield Area Committee, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	Cllr. Andrews, The Clerk
Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership	Cllr. Welch

6. CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, it was agreed that the Chairman's Allowance for the next twelve months would be £100. 00.

This concluded the business of the Annual Meeting.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD
IN THE W. I. HALL, LONGDON, ON MONDAY, MAY 10TH, 2005

Present: Cllr. S. K. Welch (Chairman); Cllr. J. R. Andrews; Cllr. B. J. Butler;
Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. M. G. Nichols;
and Cllr. N. Stanfield.

Also present were the Clerk and one parishioner – Mr. Rodney Abraham,
of “The Chetwynd Arms”, Lower Way, Upper Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. M. A. W. Parsons; Cllr. N. J. Roberts,
of Lichfield District Council; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon on Monday,
April 12th, 2005, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and seconded by
Cllr. Andrews, approved and signed.

3. PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

There were none.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Invitation to Stephen Hill

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Stephen Hill, Development
Control Manager in the Development Services Department of Lichfield District Council,
inviting him to one of the Parish Council's meetings and providing him with alternative dates.

(ii) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had sent details of the mowing contract to Ken Owen, the
Divisional Engineer.

(iii) Site Visit – Holly Farm, Chorley

Cllr. Andrews gave a report on a site visit which had taken place on the afternoon of
April 26th and at which he had been present, together with Cllr. Roberts, Cllr. Hemmingsley,
Mrs. Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, and Mrs. Marieke Tomlin, Countryside
Officer.

For part of the time the party was joined by Mr. Tony Cox, the owner of Holly Farm.

Concern had been raised over the erection of an electronically-operated gate at the
entrance to the bridleway running from opposite Dodds Lane to Commonsides and an attempt
to fence off the triangle of land at the top of the bridleway.

It had also been noted that an ornamental lake, together with what appeared to be a stone bridge, had been created without planning permission.

At the Gentleshaw end of the bridleway, part of an SSSI had been destroyed and ownership assumed of land which belonged to the District Council and was being looked after by English Nature.

There were signs that an electronically-operated gate was about to be erected at this end of the bridleway, which already bore notices giving the distinct impression that it was a private road.

In the view of the parishioner, however, he had done no more than improve the appearance of the area; there had unfortunately been no meeting of minds, and the officials would now be taking the matter further.

Cllr. Hemmingsley said that he believed that these actions had indeed been motivated by a genuine belief that they would result in an improved appearance to the area.

It was hoped that there could be a dialogue between the two parties and that it would result in restoring the area to a more acceptable form.

Complaints that the bridleway was being used for fly-tipping and drug-dealing would have to be referred to the police, however.

Subsequent to this meeting, Cllr. Roberts had received an e-mail from Mrs. Hibbs, dated 25th April 2005, in which she had informed him that rangers from the County Ranger Service would visit the site and inspect the gates.

She had also confirmed that the track was a bridleway and therefore should not be gated.

(iv) Caravans in field next to “The Windmill Inn” and field adjacent to Windyridge Nursey, Commonside

Mrs. Hibbs’ attention had also been drawn to the presence of the four caravans, two in each of the above fields.

The owners of the fields had been identified and had been written to.

The caravans in the field adjacent to “Windyridge” had since been removed.

(v) Flooding in Smithy Lane

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols attributed the present flooding to a burst water main, though the septic tank of a nearby property was continuing to discharge into the ditch at the side of the lane.

The Chairman agreed to take photographs of the flooding which could be used to support a call for action.

(vi) Damaged Bus Stop on Commonside opposite “The Old Windmill Inn”.

The Clerk reported that this was now leaning towards the road and could become dangerous to passing traffic.

He would contact the County Highways Office once more.

(vii) “For Sale” Signs

Cllr. Andrews reported that he had had a telephone conversation with Mr. Will Peace, of Redhill Cottage, regarding the display of “For Sale” notices advertising the sale of his property.

Mr. Peace had sought a compromise which would have allowed him to display the signs at the entrance to Horsey Lane and Bardy Lane for a month, but Cllr. Andrews had informed him that the Council had no discretion in the matter; the law insisted that such signs should be erected only within the curtilage of the property being offered for sale.

There was some surprise amongst Councillors when they heard that Mr. Peace’s telephone call had followed a conversation which he had had with Christine Hibbs, which had led him to believe that the District Council was acting in support of Parish Council policy,

whereas it was the Parish Council which was acting in support of a national planning regulation.

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

None was declared.

6. PLANNING

(i) Report of Working Group

The Chairman reported that, since the last meeting, the Working Group had considered and commented upon the following planning applications:

05/00352/FUL: Mr. & Mrs. Barber: New vehicular access with new wall and entrance gates: Hood Lodge, Hood Lane, Longdon

While there was no objection in principle to this application, there was concern that it was proposed to remove part of an ancient hedgerow, and consultation with the Countryside Officer was urged before a decision was taken.

05/00363/OUT: Mrs. S. Evans: Outline permission for a detached dwelling: land at rear of "Sunny Corner", Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Parish Council's objection to this proposal was renewed.

While there was an offer to reduce the size of the dwelling, it was feared that it would only be a matter of time before an application for an extension would be submitted.

05/00391/FUL//05/00392/LBC: Leonora Whittome: Single-storey rear kitchen/dining room extension: Hill Top Farm, Hill Top, Longdon Green

There had been no objection to this application, which proposed to double the size of an existing small extension.

05/00404/Mr. & Mrs. R. Abrahams: Erection of single-storey dining extension: The Chetwynd Arms, 57 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

While there was no objection to this application, some concern had been expressed that the consequent reduction in parking space might lead to on-street parking.

(ii) For Consideration

Consideration was then given to the following application:

05/00441/OUT: Miss S. J. Boston: Erection of single-storey dwelling (siting and means of access): Forge Cottage, 38 Brook End, Longdon

The Council did not object to this application in principle, provided that the new dwelling was in character with other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

It was noted that access would be at a point where a garage already stood, so, at least in theory, there should not be an increase in vehicular movement; however, the Council believed that any gates should be set back from the lane.

Any development should not inhibit the right of access to the rear of the Hall currently enjoyed by Longdon Women's Institute and essential for the maintenance of the building.

The Council recognised that, since the proposed development would be immediately behind the W. I. Hall, it could be seen as backland development, even though the Hall was not a residential dwelling, and therefore assumed that it would be subject to the District Council's own planning policy in such matters.

(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:

05/00110/FUL: Mr. A. Whitehouse: Retrospective application for extension to existing pond: Land known as Coldwell Meadow, Briertey Hill Lane, Gentleshaw

05/00165/FUL: Punch Taverns: Various internal and external refurbishment and erection of single-storey lobby/WC and first-floor extension enclosing staircase: The Redmore Inn, Hayfield Hill, Cannock Wood

05/00203/FUL: Nigel Theaker, Estate Manager: Retrospective application for a steel storage container: Beaudesert Scout and Guide Camp, Beaudesert Park

05/00268/FUL: Mr. N. Hyslop: Single-storey extensions and alterations to form dining area, kitchen, lobby, dressing-room and conservatory: 61A Upper Way, Upper Longdon

05/00290/FUL: Mrs. R. Davidson: Single-storey side garage and utility extension: 6, St. James Close, Longdon

(iv) 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:

05/00090/FUL: Mrs. E. Parry: Retention of boundary wall and gates: The Ridgeway, High Street, Longdon

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Appeal Decision

The Clerk reported that he had received notice that the appeal of Brian and Lynne Harris against the decision of Lichfield District Council to refuse planning permission to erect a conservatory at the side of "The Cottage", High Street, Lichfield, had been allowed.

The Inspector had decided that the proposal would not be an inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not cause unacceptable harm to the openness of the character and appearance of the area.

(b) Beaudesert Park Farm, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Robert Duncan, Principal Planning Officer, Development Services Department, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated

20th April 2005, in which he had informed the Council that he had written to the owners of the above farm raising the Parish Council's concern over the conspicuousness of the grain silos and asking if they could be treated in order to minimise their visual intrusion.

(c) New Planning Document on Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The Clerk reported that he had received from Maria Bailey, Principal Development Plans Officer, Planning, Development, Building Control and Business Investment, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 26th April 2005, enclosing a draft copy of the above document and inviting the Parish Council to submit its comments by 20th June 2005.

7. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Lichfield District Parish Forum: April 20th

Cllr. Mrs. Nichols presented a written report on a meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum which had taken place in the Committee Room, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Wednesday, April 20th, 2005.

At this meeting, Geoff Kitching, Transport Policy Manager, Staffordshire County Council had explained the Staffordshire Five-Year Local Transport Plan, while Brian Heathcote, of the East Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership, had outlined the role of the Partnership in promoting social inclusion by providing transport options in rural areas.

Chris Stanley, Strategic Partnership Manager, Lichfield District Council, had explained the structure of the Partnership, whose purpose was to deliver a Community Strategy.

Jenni Coleman, Community Safety Manager, Lichfield District Council, had explained the background to the work of the Crime and Disorder Education Partnership, which involved the Police, Trading Standards, Social Services, Connexions and the Probation Services.

It was agreed that a single item agenda meeting should be convened at which the work of this Partnership could be presented in greater detail by the agencies involved.

Finally, Steve McQuade, Performance and Policy Manager, Organisational Development, Lichfield District Council, gave an update on the new licensing regime, which came into force on November 1st. Deep concern had been expressed over the impact that the new regulations would have in rural areas, especially over temporary events, and more guidance was needed.

8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

- (i) East Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership Evaluation Review: Tuesday, April 26th, 2005, at Abbots Bromley Village Hall, at 2. 15 p.m.

Notice of this meeting had been short, and it had taken place on the same day as the Annual Assembly.

- (ii) Cannock Chase AONB Annual General Meeting: Thursday, May 19th, 2005, at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Headquarters, Wolseley Bridge, from 10. 00 a.m. to 4. 30 p.m.

The keynote speech would be given by Jim Dixon, Chief Executive, Peak District National Park, who would be outlining the issues and solutions for managing visitors. Cllr. Welch said that he would be attending this meeting.

- (iii) CPRE (Staffordshire Branch) Annual General Meeting: Saturday, May 21st, 2005, at the Uttoxeter Racecourse, commencing at 2. 00 p.m.
The speaker would be Jane Chapman, Head of Conservation, Peak District National Park Authority.
It was unlikely, however, that the Council would be represented at this meeting.
- (iv) Society of Local Council Clerks – South West Regional Conference for Clerks and Councillors: Friday, June 17th, 2005, at The Queen Country Hotel, Quorn, Loughborough, from 10. 30 a.m. to 3. 30 p.m.
The key topics would be reducing anti-social behaviour within communities; community partnerships to tackle vandalism; the conduct of meetings; how risky is your Council business?; and a professional update.
Key speakers would be Rory Wallace, DEFRA’s Local Environmental Quality Unit; Peter Clark, Hatfield Town Council; John Arthur, Peterlee Town Council; and Nick Randle, Chief Executive, Society of Local Council Clerks.
The cost would be £38. 00 for members, plus £35. 00 for subsequent delegates from the same Council.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) A51 Route Management Strategy

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Andrews, when Chairman, had received from Neil Vyse, of Laurel Cottage, Stockings Lane, Longdon, a letter dated 9th March 2005, in which he had, on behalf of the residents’ action group L-A-S-T, thanked the Council for listening to the concerns of villagers and for their efforts towards securing the improvement of the safety of road users in and around Longdon.

(ii) Cast-Iron Roadside Direction Signs

The Clerk reported that he had received from Ted McAvoy, of Leander Architectural, Fletcher Foundry, Buxton, a letter dated 5th May 2005, in which he had quoted a total of £3147. 00 ex VAT for repairing and renovating the four cast-iron roadside signs in Longdon, Longdon Green and Gentleshaw.

He had confirmed that two of the posts had fingers and collars made by his firm many years ago.

The Clerk pointed out that this quotation compared very favourably with the latest quotation submitted by Malcolm Lane & Son, which had been in excess of £5000.

It was agreed to wait for the third quotation expected from Dorothea Restoration Ltd., and, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were given the authority to make the final choice on behalf of the Council when the third quotation had been received.

(iii) Post Box at Bradley Lakes

The Clerk reported that he had received from Cheryl Matthews, Collection and Network Support Manager, Royal Mail North West Midlands, a letter dated 12th April 2005, accepting the Council’s view that the post box at Bradley Lakes was causing a viewing obstruction and asking for the Council’s assistance if finding a suitable alternative.

It was agreed that the Clerk should consult local residents on the choice of a new site.

(iv) Notice of Inquest

The Clerk reported that he had received from Shirley Gregussey, of the Coroner's Office, Martin Street, Stafford, a letter dated 4th May 2005, notifying him that the inquest into the death of the late Maureen Alice Rolls, killed in a traffic accident on the A51 at Longdon Green, would take place on Wednesday, 18th May 2005, at the Coroner's Court, Beech Tree Lane, Cannock, at 2.00 p.m.

Both he and Cllr. Hemmingsley hoped to attend.

10. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Footpath Leaflets

The Clerk reported that he had received from Crispin Percival-Hughes, Rights of Way Improvement Plan Officer, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, to whom he had sent copies of the Parish Council's new footpath leaflets, a letter dated 19th April 2005, in which he had expressed the view that they would encourage folk to use the footpath network in the area and thanked the Council for its interest in public rights of way.

The Clerk informed the Council that he had spoken to Catherine Higham, of Lichfield Tourism, who had requested five hundred copies of each of the leaflets to sell at the Lichfield Tourist Information Centre.

Any difficulty resulting from the fact that parish councils could not enter into any kind of trading would be avoided if money received from the sale of these leaflets were donated to St. Giles Hospice, one of whose collecting boxes was on display at the Centre.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Andrews and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, it was unanimously agreed that the proceeds from selling the leaflets in the Centre should be donated to the Hospice and those from the sale of the leaflets at Longdon Post Office should continue to be donated to the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee's Refurbishment Fund.

(ii) Management of Verge at Side of No. 12 Berkeley Way, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Portia Howe, Arboricultural Officer, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 19th April 2005, acknowledging receipt of the Parish Council's application for permission to carry out work on the robinia in the verge at the side of No. 12 Berkeley Way, and informing him that it was the policy of her Council to give local Councillors an opportunity to comment on such applications.

She expected a response within two weeks.

However, Cllr. Roberts had already assured him that he would raise no objection to work recommended by one of the District Council's own Arboricultural Officers.

The Clerk added that he had since received a letter from the Corporate Director Development Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 5th May 2005, in which he had given consent for the work to be carried out.

The Clerk further informed the Council that he had written to two tree surgeons – A. Dunford & Son, of Hednesford, and Acme Tree Services, of Burntwood – and had received a quotation for £193.87 from the latter.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was agreed that this quotation should be accepted.

The Clerk warned the Council that to cover this verge with shredded bark and to plant it with shrubs could prove expensive; Cllr. Mrs. Nichols suggested that the Council should consider planting ground-cover such as cotoneaster instead.

(iii) Community Paths Initiative 2005/06

The Clerk reported that he had received from Noreen Moore, Countryside and Rights of Way Group Leader, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 13th April 2005, informing the Council that £390.00 had been allocated to support the

replacement of stiles with kissing-gates as indicated in the Parish Council's grant bid, the grant being subject to the agreement of the relevant landowners to the installation of kissing-gates.

The Clerk added that Cllr. Mrs. Meere would now be identifying the landowners who should be approached.

(iv) Planting of Trees on land at Longdon Hall

The Clerk reported that he had received from Christine Hibbs, Principal Planning Officer, Planning, Development, Business Control and Investment, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 19th April 2005, in which she had informed the Parish Council that this matter was being pursued with the developers, and she would write again and advise if formal enforcement action was to be pursued.

(v) Gentleshaw Common SSSI

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that there was very strong local objection to the proposal to graze cattle on Gentleshaw Common, and he had been informed that a petition was being drawn up objecting to the fencing off of part of the Common, which this would entail.

Fencing off part of a common would require the permission of the Government Minister, anyway, would be very expensive and was likely to be pulled up, so strong was the feeling against the proposal.

Consultation was at an early stage, and a more acceptable proposal such as the introduction of cattle grids might be considered.

11. PARISH WEBSITE

Cllr. Hemmingsley reported that the parish website had received 147 'hits' in April, the busiest day having been April 23rd.

The website could now be accessed through Googol.

He reminded the Council that, while the original quotation had been for fifteen pages, the website actually had finished with nineteen.

Cllr. Hemmingsley then detailed the final account: the agreed figure had been £635. 00, of which a deposit of £100. 00 and a first instalment of £350. 00 had already been paid, leaving a payment of £185. 00 outstanding.

However, to this should be added £50. 00 for the diary page (not part of the original specifications) and £125. 00 for the four additional pages, making a final figure of £360. 00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Stanfield and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, it was agreed that a final payment of £360. 00 should be made to Eric Roy upon receipt of his invoice.

12. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols, the minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting, held in St. James School on Tuesday, April 26th, 2005, were approved and signed.

While there had been no burning issues, the absence of a designated play area was still a matter of concern to some residents. Cllr. Andrews reported that he had now spoken to Lynn Hill, of the Early Years and Childcare Unit, Staffordshire County Council, who had assured him that her Department would be willing to advise on location, equipment, safety surfaces, insurance and funding if the Parish Council were to decide to proceed with such a scheme.

The possibility of commissioning a Chairman's badge of office and a village sign had also been raised, and the Clerk was instructed to make some enquiries into the cost of providing either of these.

13. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

(i) Progress Report

The Clerk reported that he had purchased five half-barrel flower-tubs, which were now located in Stockings Lane, Lower Way (at the top of Grange Hill), outside St. James School and in Brook End, at its junction with Church Way (two).

All except the one outside the School had been replacements.

Two more had been requested, one for Lower Way and the other for Brook End.

The first team of judges had visited both villages on May 3rd.

(ii) Children's Poster Competition

The Clerk reported that he had collected a substantial number of posters from St. James School, and these had been judged by Cllr. Mrs. Nichols and Cllr. Juxon before being put on display throughout the villages in time for the judges' visit.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed that, as last year, prizes should be awarded in three categories – Junior, Senior and Computer-Generated.

In each of the three categories, prizes should be awarded as follows – first prize £7. 00, second prize £5. 00 and third prize £3. 00.

Such was the excellence of these posters, it was further agreed, as part of the same resolution, that, in addition, the Council should recognise the efforts of the entire school by donating £50. 00 to the School Library.

14. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF COUNCILLOR

The Clerk reported that he had been advised that the Council could not, as it had intended, delay the announcement of the vacancy until after the General Election, and he had therefore posted notices of the vacancy on all five of the parish notice-boards.

The deadline for requesting a poll was midnight on May 11th, and up to 3. 00 p.m. that afternoon, no request had been received.

However, the Returning Officer had received a letter signed by ten parishioners nominating a candidate, and he himself had received a phone call from one of the signatories asking him to advise the Council that a poll would not be requested if the Council were prepared to co-opt the candidate nominated in the letter.

However, the Council summarily rejected this offer and instructed the Clerk to take no further action over the matter.

15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall	£ 10. 00
Allianz Cornhill	Insurance Premium	£508. 26
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – April	£200. 00
W. B. Sullivan	<u>BKV Competition Expenses</u>	
	Printing:	£18. 96
	Flower Tubs & Compost:	£77. 99
		£ 96. 95
J. R. Andrews	Presentation to Clerk (Chairman’s Allowance)	£ 89. 95

(ii) Payments Received

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

Lichfield District Council	Precept 2005/2006	£10500. 00
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(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£471. 55	The Halifax d/a:	£20968. 65
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(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Open Spaces Society

The Clerk reported that he had received from Rodney Legg, Chairman of the Open Spaces Society, a letter dated 21st April 2005, drawing the Council’s attention to a measure in the Clean and Neighbourhoods and Environment Act which allowed local authorities to close pathways by gating orders on the grounds of reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

While most of these pathways would be in towns, the legislation allowed for them to be closed in rural areas as well, and the Council was therefore being invited to make a donation towards the Society’s campaign for an amendment to this measure.

However, the Council decided that the threat was of insufficient significance locally and declined to make a donation.

(b) The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Smith, Biodiversity Officer, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, a letter dated April 2005, inviting the Council to make a donation to its appeal in support of its programme to protect declining mammal populations in the County.

Councillors felt that the campaign was insufficiently localised to justify its support.

(c) St. James Church, Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from the Rev. Michael Jefferson, Vicar of

St. James Church, Longdon, a letter dated 29th April 2005, in which he thanked the Parish Council for the donation of £500. 00 towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard, which, on the assumption that the Council automatically made such a grant each year without prior application, he believed had been for the year 2004, and asking if the Council would make a similar donation for 2005.

It was agreed that the only regular commitment which the Parish Council had made to either parish church was to meet the cost of hiring and emptying the Eurobin located in each churchyard.

However, Cllr. Juxon offered to meet Mr. Jefferson before the next meeting of the Council to establish with him the annual cost of maintaining the churchyard.

16. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mrs. Val Heseltine, Honorary Secretary of the Longdon Produce and Flower Show Committee, a letter dated 25th April 2005, in which she had thanked the Council for its help with the cost of hiring the W. I. Hall and Village Hall for various shows throughout the year.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Mr. and Mrs. Barry Overton, of Longdon Post Office and Store, a letter dated 27th April 2005, thanking the Council for agreeing to meet the cost of a road sign on the A51 indicating that there was a post office within the village.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Bruno Peek, Chairman, the Trafalgar Weekend, Lowestoft, Suffolk, a letter dated April/May 2005, enclosing a copy of the "Guide to Taking Part" in The Trafalgar Weekend, which was taking place from 21st to 23rd October this year and inviting the Council to take part in the commemoration/celebration.

17. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Report of Corporate Director of Development Services for meeting of Council on Monday, 25th April 2005;
Report of Corporate Director of Development Services for meeting of Council on Monday, 16th May 2005;
Minutes and Reports for the Meeting of the Council to be held on Tuesday, 26th April 2005;
Agenda for Meeting of the Council to be held on Tuesday, April 26th 2005;
Addition to Report of Chairman of Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee;
Executive Arrangements - Forward Plan 2004/2005 – April - Version 1 (to take effect on 1st May 2005);
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 1st May 2005;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 15th May 2005.

(ii) From The Passenger Transport Unit, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council:

Public Transport News – May 2005 (2 copies).

(iii) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

Chief Executive's Circular 26;
Booking Form: SPCA Seminar Workshop – Health and Safety Awareness Day
at Werrington Village Hall on Friday 20th May 2005, from 10. 00 a.m. to
3. 00 p.m.;
“Building Communities, Beating Crime” Home Office leaflet (16 copies);
Staffordshire County Council Scrutiny News: Issue No. 5, March 2005.

(iv) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Entry Form: Calor Gas Village of the Year.

(v) From The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership:

Minutes of Parish Councils' Meeting held on 15th March 2005;
Minutes of Meeting of Arson/Crimestoppers Initiative held on 22nd
February 2005;
Annual Action Plan 2005-2006;
Information Leaflet and Questionnaire.

(vi) From The Campaign to Protect Rural England (Staffordshire Branch):

Agenda Report 2005;
Agenda for Annual General Meeting;
Nomination Form;
Trips and Visits 2005;
Application Form: 300 Club.

(vii) From The Sustainable Staffordshire Forum:

“Sustainable Staffordshire”: Issue 15, Spring 2005.

(viii) From The East Midlands Regional Assembly:

The East Midlands Regional Plan: Consultation on Proposals for a Review.

(ix) From Fusion Credit Union Limited:

Credit Union News: Spring 2005.

(x) From The Helping Hand, Ledbury:

Leaflet: Spring Offers.

(xi) From The National Association of Local Councils:

Local Council Review: Volume 57, No. 1 – May 2005.

(xii) From Public Sector Software Limited, Warwick:

Leaflets: Kompan Unique Playgrounds/Playtop Safe Surfacing.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Butler asked that reminders be sent to the owners of the two properties in The Grange where trees rooted within their curtilages were overhanging Upper Way.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, June 14th, 2005, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.