

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE CANNOCK WOOD AND GENTLESHAW VILLAGE HALL, BUDS ROAD, CANNOCK WOOD, ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2009

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews;  
Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. A. J. Juxon;  
Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; Cllr. K. C. Taylor; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present were the Clerk and Cllr. N. J. Roberts.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Mrs. G. A. Duckett; and County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Taylor, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) The Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The Chairman reported that he had been advised that only an affected individual could lodge a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman, against a District or County Council

He had further established that it had been the intention to exclude parish councils altogether from the provision of the Planning Act of 1990 and that their entitlement to be consulted was included only as the result of the intervention of the National Association of Local Councils.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was agreed that the Parish Council should pursue its complaint about the way this planning application was handled by Lichfield District Council, and a working group composed of the Chairman, Cllr. Clarke and Cllr. Mrs. Meere should be set up to consider a response.

This group was free to co-opt other members, and no quorum was needed for its meetings.

(ii) Potholes in Longdon lanes

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Rayson, Community Highway Liaison Manager, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009, in which he informed the Council that arrangements had been made for the lanes to be inspected and action to be taken to repair potholes,

He thanked the Council for bringing them to his attention.

A second letter from Mr. Rayson, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, confirmed that the work was in hand.

It was noted that most of the potholes in Borough Lane had been filled in and it was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Mr. Rayson, acknowledging the prompt and thorough way in which this work had been carried out.

(iii) Traffic Calming in Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, after consulting with Cllr. Butler, he had written to Richard Rayson, asking him to consider laying traffic-calming cushions at four key points along Upper Way indicated on an attached plan.

A discussion ensued in which alternative measures such as a fixed radar speed sign were proposed, but Cllr. Butler insisted that these were not the measures wanted.

The Chairman doubted whether speed cushions were effective in reducing speed, a view to which Cllr. Butler objected, and after a sharp exchange of views with the Chairman, he left the meeting.

It was agreed that the Council should await Mr. Rayson's reply before entering into further discussion.

(iv) Vacancy in the Office of Councillor for Longdon Ward

The Clerk reported that this was being advertised on the parish notice-boards, but, so far, no response had been received.

(v) Law and Order

Councillors were reminded that PC Brown's next visit would be on Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, when he would be at the Village Hall, between 10.00 a.m. and 11.15 a.m.

5. PLANNING

(i) For Consideration

09/01139/COU: Miss S. Boston & Mr. H. Reynolds: Change of use of traditionally-constructed barn to a five-bedroom dwelling house and conversion of Dutch barn to form stables, garage and art studio (ancillary to dwelling house): Brereton Cross Farm, Bardy Lane, Upper Longdon

In introducing the plan, the Chairman said that it had only just been received, but he had had the opportunity of looking at the structural report, which suggested that a lot of remedial work needed to be done to the building if it was to be retain the character of a barn and a re-build avoided.

He felt, too, that more information was needed about the recreational purposes intended for the other barn and a reassurance that it was not to become part of a business.

It was agreed that the plans should be circulated amongst the other members of the Planning Committee before the Council's comments were formulated.

(ii) Approved by Lichfield District Council

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

09/00937/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Phillips: Erection of car port/garage and store, stables, kennels, fencing and entrance gates: The Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The following conditions were imposed:

1. No development should be commenced until amended details of the entrance gates and piers showing a reduction in the width of the piers, and full details of the exterior facing materials to be used for the construction of the car port/garage and stables had been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

2. Before the paddock areas are occupied by any horses, a means of separating the horses from the protected trees to the east of the Lodge should be installed.
3. The approved landscape and planting scheme should be implemented within eight months of the development being brought into use unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. Any hedge, tree or shrub planted as part of the approved landscape and planting scheme (or replacement tree or hedge) on the site which dies or is lost through any cause during a period of five years from the date of first planting should be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
5. The garage accommodation should be used for the garaging of private vehicles and/or for ancillary domestic storage purposes only and should not be used to provide additional living accommodation without the prior written permission, on application, to the Local Planning Authority.

The Clerk further reported that he had received from Claire Billings, Development Control Manager, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council, a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009, in which she had said that, contrary to the view of the Parish Council, the District Council had considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the special character or setting of the Listed Building and that sufficient justification was present to ensure that any harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt by definition would be outweighed by other material considerations.

Furthermore, it had been considered that there would be no detriment to the character of the Cannock AONB.

In a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Paul Harris, Planning Officer (South Team), who had handled the application, had confirmed that the applicant had supplied Land Registry Title Plan No. SF236520 showing that the extent of his land ownership was to the back of the highway verge for its entire length along Horsey Lane, though the Clerk went on to point out that this did not fully address the appropriation of highway verge to create the new bell-mouth entry to the property.

## 6. REPORT OF MEETINGS

### (i) Lichfield Area Committee

The Clerk gave a short report on a meeting of the Lichfield Area Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which had taken place in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, on Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, immediately before the meeting of the Lichfield District Parish Forum.

Only six parish councils had been represented, and it was thought that this might have been because a number of Councils may not have been advised of the meeting by their Clerks.

Viv Evans, Chief Executive of the Association, had also been present, and, at her suggestion, it was agreed that, prior to the next meeting, which was scheduled to take place on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2010, she should write to all Parish Councils in the District, inviting them to submit nominations for the four offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and suggest items of business for inclusion on the agenda.

While it might be possible to invite outside speakers, it would be important to avoid duplication with the District Parish Forum, and past experience had shown that such invitations could be embarrassing if attendance were low.

### (ii) Lichfield District Parish Forum

The Clerk reported that there had been three items of business at this meeting, at which both he and the Chairman had been present: climate change, changes in the District Council's waste and recycling system, and parish plans and the planning system.

The first speaker had been Mike Kingham, of the Whittington and Fisherwick Energy Group, who had talked about the efforts being made in Whittington to get the message across to residents and to show them ways in which they could contribute to carbon reduction in their domestic arrangements.

Christine Cole, Recycling and Street-Scene Officer, had then spoken about the changes which were being introduced to the way that the District Council would be collecting recyclable waste from households following a successful trial carried out in Armitage and Kings Bromley.

Finally, Neil Cox, Planning Policy Officer, had given a presentation on parish plans and their place in the planning system.

The date of the next meeting was given as Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010, though this was subsequently amended to Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>.

### (iii) Other Meetings

Cllr. Welch gave a brief report on the Annual General Meeting of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, which he and Cllr. Butler had attended.

The main item of business had been an attempt to draw up a map of areas of tranquillity and 'hotspots', though it was discovered that what one person thought of as tranquil another might think overcrowded.

Cllr. Welch had won the balloon debate, for which one of the prizes had been a balloon!

There had also been a meeting of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership that morning, at which there had been a presentation on changes in the classification of scheduled monuments and buildings by English Heritage; these two categories, hitherto classified separately, would, in future, be included under a single classification.

The site of the wartime Army camps on Cannock Chase would be included.

## 7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

(i) SPCA Training Seminar – Excel Training: Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in The Peel Building, St. Chad's Place, Stafford, from 2. 00 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m.

(ii) Act of Remembrance: Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at the corner of Brook End and Swan Close, Longdon, at 10. 45 a.m.

Following a short service, refreshments would be available at St. James School.

(iii) Beau Desert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust Annual General Meeting: Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in the Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall, Buds Road, Cannock Wood, at 8. 00 p.m.

(iv) Cannock Chase AONB - Parish Councils' Meeting: Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at Brocton Village Hall, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

## 8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

### (i) Footpath No. 50

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Collins, Rights of Way Officer – Maintenance and Enforcement (South) Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009, informing the Council that he had recently inspected the footpath network that crossed land owned by Longdon Stud.

He confirmed that the definitive line of all the routes was free and available, though a number of stiles required remedial work, which the owner would attend to in the near future.

He reported that some of the stiles had a high top rail that was hinged to improve access where required; this facility had been agreed with the landowner as the best solution to access the network across his land, having regard to his business.

(ii) 2, The Grange, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had now received from Steve Clarke, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a copy of the letter, dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009, which he had sent to Mark Lewis, the owner of this property.

In it, Mr. Clarke had stated his Council's position regarding the maintenance liabilities of the retaining walls in Grange Hill, which were, in the view of his Council, the responsibility of the adjacent landowners.

He justified this position on the grounds that the beneficiaries of the retaining walls were the adjacent landowners and not the highway authority.

(iii) Mowing of Highway Verges

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Rayson, Community Highway Liaison Manager, Lichfield Highways Office, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009, in which he stated that he had no objection to the Council's instructing its grass-cutting contractor to cut the grass at the junction of the A51 and Brereton Hill Lane.

In Mr. Rayson's view, it seemed sensible that these areas should be added to the urban grass-cutting schedules which the Parish Council already undertook on behalf of his Department, since they would then be mowed eight times a year as opposed to twice, the frequency with which his Department mowed rural areas.

(iv) Highway Verge outside No. 71 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Richard Rayson, Community Highway Liaison Manager, Lichfield Highways Office, a letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, in which he informed the Council that he had instructed his Network Inspector to serve notice on the owner of the above property regarding what he described as 'the illegal crossing' on the highway and for a licence to be issued for such use.

The Clerk explained that his letter had drawn attention to the continuous use of part of the highway verge outside the property as a parking area and to the recent change in the surface from grass to gravel.

He felt that some uncertainty had been created by the terminology used by Mr. Rayson and clarification was needed so as to ensure that Mr. Rayson was clear as to the nature of the Council's complaint.

(v) Cast Iron Roadside Sign outside The Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, in the same letter, Mr. Rayson had reported that Steve Clarke, his Department's Development Control Manager, had visited the site and would be reporting back to Cllr. Lewis.

(vi) Erection of Notice Board in Upper Way, Upper Longdon

The Clerk reported that, in a further letter, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, Mr. Rayson had informed the Council that, following a visit to the proposed site for this notice board, he had no objection to its erection there.

He stressed, however, that that Parish Council would be responsible for its erection, maintenance and insurance, and the Parish Council must indemnify the County Council against any claims for its placement, use and maintenance.

In an email to the Clerk dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett had reported that she had spoken to a carpenter regarding the notice board and was waiting for him to give her a quotation for the work.

The Chairman commented that his enquiries had indicated that an open notice board made of hardwood and of a sufficient size to display six A4 posters would cost in the region of £600. 00, while a closed and hinged notice board of similar size would cost at least £1000. 00. To this should be added a further £600. 00 to cover the cost of the posts.

(vii) Footpath Survey – Footpath No. 14

The Clerk reported that he had received a report from Will Rose, Co-ordinator of the Parish Footpath Survey regarding the above footpath, which leaning fences and encroaching vegetation made difficult to use.

He had forwarded Mr. Rose's report to Richard Collins, the Rights of Way Officer at Stafford handling such complaints.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Report of meeting of Greens and Open Spaces Committee

Cllr. Welch, Chairman of the Greens and Open Spaces Committee, presented a written report on a meeting of the Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 (*Appendix A*).

(ii) Report of meeting on Gentleshaw Green

The Chairman gave a short report on a site meeting which had been held on Gentleshaw Green on the morning of Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, at which he, Cllr. Butler, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett, Cllr. Juxon, Cllr. Welch and the Clerk had been present and from which a general picture of the development had emerged,

It had been agreed that, as a first step, the area from the pavement to the notice board should be paved with flagstones. Cllr. Mrs. Duckett had offered to approach D. McCarthy Brothers, the firm which had laid the footpath through the Glebe Field, and ask them for a quotation.

(iii) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received an eighth and final report from Graham McCulloch in which he had reported that, while there had been no problems apart from the wetness of the grass, he had observed that the moles were once again active on Longdon Green.

10. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that he had now received the judges' comments, copies of which had been distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting (*Appendix B, Appendix C*).

Of Longdon and Longdon Green, the judges had commented: "This was another good effort overall, and there was clear evidence of excellent BKV awareness and community effort"; of Upper Longdon, they had commented: "Upper Longdon is a small village with a very pleasant feel to it. It is clearly very well looked after, the residents seem to care for it and have been very well aware of BKV."

11. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Vacancy for LEA Governor – Gentleshaw Primary School

The Clerk reported that he had received from Wendy Maddox, Administrative Assistant, Governor Services, Children & Lifelong Learning Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, advising the Council of a vacancy for a Local Authority Governor at Gentleshaw Primary School and inviting the Council to submit a nomination.

However, the Council was unable to propose a candidate.

(ii) Membership of Committees

The Chairman invited the two new members of the Council to indicate which of the Council's Committees they wished to join.

Cllr. Clarke expressed a wish to join the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Highways and Footpaths Committee, while Cllr. Taylor expressed a wish to join the Greens and Open Spaces Committee.

12. LAW AND ORDER(i) Joint Operations Group

The Clerk reported that he had received by email summaries of the main points discussed at meetings of the Group which had taken place on Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

A copy of the Autumn issue of "cityspeak" had been attached to the former.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS(i) Accounts for Payment

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

≠*The Open Spaces Society	Membership Subscription	£ 40.00
*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – October 15 <sup>th</sup>	£ 225.00
Longdon W. I.	Hire of Hall: October 20 <sup>th</sup>	£ 12.00
Toplis Associates Ltd.	Independent Internal Auditor's Fee: Fee: £80.00 VAT:£12.00	£ 92.00
Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee	Hire of room: November 10 <sup>th</sup>	£ 16.00

(\* Confirmation ≠ Payment made under section 137)

(ii) Payments Received

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

C. T. Marshall	Advertisements: "Longdon Life"	£ 10.00
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(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£246.27	The Halifax s/a: £17016.21
less uncleared cheque:		
	1409: £ 36.00	
	£210.27	

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) The Beau Desert Sports Field & Recreation Ground Trust

The Clerk reported that he had now received a completed Grant Application Form from the Trust's Treasurer in support of the Trustees' request for a donation towards the cost of installing a cradle swing in the play area on the field.

The cost of the project, which included supplying (£760.00) and installing (£535.00) the swing and a further £1848.00 for supplying and laying a safety surface, amounted to £3143.00.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Welch, it was agreed nem. con. that the Council should meet the cost of installing the swing (£535.00), Cllr. Taylor abstaining.

An amendment to the motion proposed by Cllr. Bird and seconded by Cllr. Taylor that a grant of £200.00 should be made was withdrawn without a vote.

14. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from David Benge, Staffordshire Third Sector Network Development Manager, Lichfield and District CVS, an email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009 to which was attached an invitation to the Staffordshire Compact Champions Scheme launch events.

Also attached was the latest N17 newsletter outlining what had been happening since the Compact and Commissioning launch event in June.

15. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

(i) From Heather Gibbons, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009 (revised);  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009;  
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009 (revised);  
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 16. 10. 2009 – Effective for the Period 01. 11. 2009 – 28. 02. 2010.

(ii) From Sally Duckett, Licensing Officer, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 09. 10. 2009;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 16. 10. 2009;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 23. 10. 2009;  
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 30. 10. 2009.

(iii) From Jan Wright, S3SN Administration Assistant, Lichfield & District CVS:

E Bulletin – Issue No. 101, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009;  
E Bulletin – Issue No. 102, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009;  
E Bulletin – Issue No. 103, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009;  
E Bulletin – Issue No. 104, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

- (iv) From Julie Harris, Development Officer, Lichfield & District Community and Voluntary Sector Support:

Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and Surrounding Areas (09/10/2009)

*(“You could get £300 - £10.000 for a project which will result...in healthier and more active people and communities”)*

- (v) From The Integrated Transport and Planning Unit, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council:

Bus and Rail Timetable – Lichfield and Rugeley Area.

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

Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and Surrounding Areas (22. 10. 2009);  
Green Grants.

- (vii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Annual Report 2008 – 2009;  
Questionnaire.

- (viii) From The Staffordshire County Council’s Ranger Service:

Countryside Events – November 2009.

- (ix) From Emma Jane Beaman, Assistant AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB Unit:

Minutes of Parish Councils’ Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009;  
Agenda for Parish Councils’ Meeting to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

- (x) From The Open Spaces Society:

“Open Space”: Volume 29, No. 6 – Autumn 2009.

- (xi) From The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:

“from Time 2 Time”: Issue 21, Autumn 2009.

- (xii) From Record RSS, Selby, Yorkshire:

Information Card: Inspection, Maintenance and Repairs.

## 16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Juxon appealed for articles for the next issue of “Longdon Life”, due to be published at the beginning of December.

(ii) Cllr. Taylor asked whether the Council held a copy of the map of protected trees in Upper Longdon and, if so, whether it needed updating.

Cllr. Welch said that he did indeed have a copy, which had not recently been updated, although there were not many protected trees in Upper Longdon.

Nonetheless, he thought that this could well be a project for the Greens and Open Spaces Committee.

(iii) Cllr. Clarke presented a draft of a risk management plan which he had drawn up following the last meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Clarke and said that it would be considered at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(iv) The Clerk said that, in her email of November 6<sup>th</sup>, to which he had referred earlier in the meeting, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett had reported that several parishioners had drawn to her attention to the presence of parked lorries in the lay-by on the A51 near Bradley Lakes.

She understood that these lorries were from Eastern Europe and their drivers were resting there for days at a time before continuing their journey to or from Armitage-Shanks.

While there was no time limit to how long they could remain, there was concern over possible hygiene problems, and she had asked PC Brown to investigate.

However, Cllr. Welch said that, as far as he could see, the drivers were being scrupulous in maintaining acceptable standards of hygiene.

#### 17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7.30 p.m.