

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF LONGDON HELD IN THE W.I. HALL,
LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2009

Present: Cllr. R. C. Hemmingsley (Chairman); Cllr. The Rev. J. R. Andrews;
Cllr. N. J. Bird; Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett;
Cllr. A. J. Juxon; and Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere.

Also present were the Clerk; County Councillor F. W. Lewis, MBE;
and four parishioners – Mr. Richard Clarke, of Brook End, Longdon;
Mr. Mark Lewis, of The Grange, Upper Longdon; Mr. Richard Meere,
of Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw; and Mr. Kenneth Taylor, of Upper Way,
Upper Longdon.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. S. K. Welch; and Cllr. N. J. Roberts, of Lichfield District Council.

(The Chairman announced that a letter of resignation had been received from Cllr. Norman Stanfield, to take immediate effect)

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 14th, 2009, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Bird, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed the parishioners to the meeting and asked if any wished to address the Council. *Mr. Lewis* asked whether the Council had any further information about the legal status of the embankment below his property in Grange Hill. He added that the embankment had been condemned by an independent surveyor.

The Chairman said that this had been raised with Richard Rayson, the County Highways Department's Community Liaison Officer, when he visited the site earlier in the summer. At that meeting he had promised to see what progress had been made, but there had been no response so far.

Cllr. Lewis agreed to ask the County Council's Legal Department for a definitive statement on the County Council's position.

It was recognised that arbitration might be needed to settle the dispute.

Mr. Meere said that he had a number of concerns over the decision by Lichfield District Council to approve the planning application submitted by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Phillips for extensions to The Grand Lodge, not least the decision of Cllr. Roberts not to read out the statement from the Parish Council listing its objections, but, instead, to second the motion to accept the planning officers' recommendation to approve.

The Chairman said that he had prepared a statement which he intended to read out to the Council later in the meeting, when he would again open the meeting to public participation.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Pot-Holes in Borough Lane and Thorleys Hill

Cllr. Lewis agreed to bring the presence of the pot-holes to the attention of the Highways Authority, but he thought that the problem of the raised metal cover in Borough Lane was the responsibility of the South Staffordshire Water Company.

(ii) Grassed Area opposite Gentleshaw School

The Chairman reported that there had been a meeting at this site on the morning of Thursday, August 13th, when he, Cllr. Welch and the Clerk had met Graham McCulloch to assess the work of clearing and maintaining the area.

Mr. McCulloch had subsequently submitted a detailed tender for clearance of £540. 00, and further tenders of £360. 00 for scything an area of bracken and removing debris and of £90. 00 per visit for mowing and keeping the area tidy.

It was agreed that further tenders should be sought for the regular mowing of the area.

5. PLANNING

(i) For Consideration

The following observations were approved:

09/00762/FUL: Mr. J. Howells: Extension to existing building for storage of livestock and materials: Hill Top Farm, Hill Top, Longdon Green.

The Parish Council had no objection to this proposed development.

09/00783/FUL: Nick Burden: Conversion of garage to garden room and erection of screen wall: The Stables, Mill Bank Farm, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon.

The Parish Council had no objection to this proposed development.

09/00798/FUL: Wayne Thompson: Two-story extension to form garage, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom: 11, The Croft, Longdon.

The Parish Council had no objection to this proposed development.

09/00823/FUL: Dr. John Ellis: Erection of a conservatory: Hanch Hall, Lyways Lane, Longdon Green.

The Parish Council had no objection to this proposed development provided that it conformed to the District Council's policy on Listed Buildings.

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

Car port/Garage, Store: It was felt that the proposed building, which would be replacing a garden shed, would, by reason of its setting, size and massing, have an adverse and detrimental impact on the Green Belt and openness of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Consequently, the Parish Council objected to this proposal.

Stables, Kennels: It was felt that this building too would, by reason of its setting, size and massing, have an adverse and detrimental impact on the Green Belt and openness of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Consequently, the Parish Council objected to this proposal as well.

Entrance Gates: It was considered that the proposed gates, by reason of design, size and bulkiness, would be unsympathetic and obscure the visual character of the historic building. It was also considered that the drawing submitted by the artist, due to its raised elevation, gave a totally misleading impression of the impact which the proposed gates would have on the visual character of the historic building, which, at ground level, they would obscure.

Furthermore, it was not clear from the submitted drawings whether the recessed wings of the proposed entrance gates were within the curtilage of the property or, as the Parish Council believed, would encroach on the highway verge.

Consequently, the Parish Council objected to this proposal as well.

(ii) 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:

09/00106/FULM: Andrew Moore: Formation of new farmstead comprising 2 no. livestock buildings, silage/forage store, manure store and machinery/feed store: Benbrook Farm, Stonywell Lane, Longdon

09/00440/FUL: Mrs. Dee Power: Various alterations to form a three-bedroom dwelling including the addition of a conservatory: Millers Barn, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon

09/00441/LBC: Mrs. Dee Power: Works to Listed building to enable various alterations to form a three-bedroom dwelling including the addition of a conservatory: Millers Barn, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon

09/00474/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Ray Archer: Proposed underground dining cellar to rear of existing dwelling: Tithe Barn, Tithe Barn Lane, Gentleshaw

09/00615/FUL: Phillip Hulme: Single-storey rear and first-floor side extensions to form lounge and bedroom: 25 Church Way, Longdon

09/00690/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. Phillips: Two-storey rear extension to form kitchen, dining-room and bedroom with ensuite: Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

09/00691/LBC: Mr. and Mrs. Phillips: Works to a listed building to enable the refurbishment and the erection of a two-storey rear extension forming a kitchen, dining-room and bedroom with ensuite: Grand Lodge, Horsey Lane, Upper Longdon

09/00709/FUL: Mr. Mark Lewis: Demolish existing garage and construct new two-storey side extension forming new double garage and bedroom: 2, The Grange, Upper Longdon

(iii) Refused by Lichfield District Council

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, Lichfield District Council had issued no Notices of Refusal of Planning Permission relating to the Parish of Longdon.

(iv) Other Planning Matters

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

The Chairman then read out a statement regarding the approval by Lichfield District Council of extensions to the above property in which he made the following points:

(i) The package containing the plans and other documents relating to this important planning application took seven days to be delivered to the Clerk owing to the envelope's being incorrectly addressed, even though correspondence had been sent to the Clerk, invariably correctly addressed, by different departments of the District Council over decades.

(ii) Nonetheless, Longdon Parish Council submitted, within the time allowed for public consultation, a detailed response objecting to the submitted application on several grounds. The Council was, considering the contentious history of these applications, very surprised to learn that this application was scheduled to be discussed at the meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee scheduled for August 3rd, giving the distinct impression of haste.

(iii) Time being of the essence, the Chairman emailed the Chairman of the Planning Committee, setting out the issues and requesting that the matter be deferred to a later meeting, which would allow adequate consideration to be given to all observations not yet included in the planning officer's report.

He received no reply to this email

(iv) The Parish Council then asked for its representative to be called to speak at the meeting, but was told by Claire Billings, the Development Control Manager, that, "as the Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee", it could not speak at a Planning Committee meeting. The Chairman did not agree that the Parish Council was a Statutory Consultee and asked Mrs. Billings to identify the relevant legislation on which she had relied on arriving at her decision.

(v) Mrs. Billings then conceded that the Parish Council was NOT a Statutory Consultee, justifying her earlier misinformation on the grounds of "ease of reference"!

The Chairman suggested that Mrs. Billings' earlier conclusion had been either the result of ignorance on her part or a conscious attempt to lead the Parish Council into believing that it was excluded by law from participation in the discussion. Either way, it encourages the belief that parish councils are considered peripheral or even irrelevant in the District Council's planning procedures.

(vi) Additionally, Mrs. Billings drew our attention to Lichfield District Council's policy which excludes Parish Councils from addressing Planning Committee meetings, whether Statutory Consultee or not, suggesting that representations should be made on their behalf through their Ward Councillors, who were permitted to speak at Planning Committee meetings. A statement was prepared and emailed to Longdon's Ward Councillor with the request that he read it out at the meeting; this he did not do, merely stating that the Parish Council had expressed concerns over the application before speaking in its support and seconding the motion to approve it, having earlier declared a personal interest on the grounds that the applicants were acquaintances .

(vii) The suspicion of haste arose from the fact that the application was brought before the Planning Committee for a decision before the expiration of the statutory period allowed for public consultation, which actually expired at midnight that day. When this was pointed out, it was justified on the grounds that the period expired when the office closed earlier that day, an assertion which the Parish Council strongly challenged. As a compromise, the Chairman of the Planning Committee said at the meeting that if any significant comments were received before midnight they would be considered, though he did not seek the consent of the Committee for this and did not explain how such comments could be considered once a decision had been taken and the meeting had closed!

(viii) All twenty-two members of the Planning Committee were emailed a copy of the Parish Council's objections before the weekend prior to the meeting, but none responded and none referred to them in the course of the discussion, encouraging the conclusion that a decision to approve had already been reached.

(ix) The Chairman ended his statement by suggesting that there were several important procedural issues which the Parish Council might wish addressed and pointed out that one course of action would be to make a formal complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should register an official complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman, and the Chairman was asked to establish the procedure to be followed.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust

The Clerk gave a brief report on a meeting of the Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust which had taken place at The Park Gate Inn, Park Gate Road, Cannock Wood, on Thursday, August 20th, 2009, and at which Mr. John Tonks, Chairman and Treasurer of the Trustees, Mrs. Sue Holliday, Honorary Secretary, and Cllr. Mrs. Pat Ansell, of Cannock Chase District Council, had also been present.

A Statement of Accounts for the twelve months ended 28th February 2009 had shown income of £3099. 06 and expenditure of £1830. 71.

It was agreed that grant aid should be sought from a number of sources, including Longdon Parish Council, to enable the Trustees to provide extra children's play equipment, including a baby swing.

The Annual General Meeting of the Trust would take place at Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall on Thursday, November 12th.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

- (i) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association Planning Project: Thursday, 16th July 2009, at the SPCA Office, Martin Street, Stafford, from 2. 00 p.m. to 4. 00 p.m.
There was no charge for this course.
- (ii) Swine Flu Pandemic Conference: Wednesday, 29th July 2009, at Uttoxeter Racecourse from 9. 30 a.m. to 1. 00 p.m.
- (iii) ESF Country-wide Economic Development Reference Group: Friday, 31st July 2009, at the Pakistani Community Centre, 228-231 Uxbridge Street, Burton-on-Trent, at 10. 00 a.m.
- (iv) Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association New Planning Framework Training Course: Wednesday, 26th August 2009, in the Village Hall, Conygreave Lane, Whitmore, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.
- (v) Lichfield District Parish Forum: Wednesday, 2nd September 2009, in the Council Chamber, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, commencing at 7. 15 p.m.
Agenda: County Highways Programme of Road Improvements and how Parish Councils can be involved in prioritising work to be done; Flood Related Issues.
- (vi) Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - Annual General Meeting: Thursday, 10th September 2009, at the Westport Lake Visitor Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.
Following the AGM there would be a presentation by a senior representative of British Waterways about Westport Lake Visitor Centre and its importance in the canal network of north Staffordshire.
- (vii) Staffordshire Children's Trust – "Aiming High for Disabled Children in Staffordshire": Friday, 18th September 2009, at the Yarnfield Conference Centre

from 9. 30 a.m. to 1. 00 p.m. (followed by lunch).

(This event is “primarily aimed at service providers who may be interested in supporting and providing services to deliver the Aiming High Programme in Staffordshire”. There is no charge, but places must be booked by September 9th)

- (viii) Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association Lichfield Area Committee:
Thursday, 24th September 2009, in Kings Bromley Village Hall, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.
- (ix) Community Council of Staffordshire Annual General Meeting: Thursday, 24th September 2009, at Gnosall Memorial Hall, Lowfield Lane, Gnosall, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.
- (x) Presentation of Locality Working: Monday, 28th September 2009, at the Peel Building, St. Chad’s Place, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m.
The Chief Fire Officer, the Acting Chief Constable and the County Council’s Deputy Head of Policy will be present to discuss the benefits of locality working.
- (xi) South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust Annual General Meeting:
Wednesday, 30th September 2009, in The Cedar Tree Hotel, Main Street, Brereton, commencing at 6. 00 p.m.
- (xii) Staffordshire Police Neighbourhood Watch Annual Conference: Saturday, 3rd October 2009, at Staffordshire University, Beaconside, Stafford, between 10. 00 a.m. and 4. 00 p.m.
Theme: “Communities Taking Control”.
- (xiii) Society of Local Council Clerks Training Day – “The Essential Guide to Employment Management: Monday, 5th October 2009, at The Moat House, Festival Way, Stoke-on-Trent (no times given). Cost: £95. 00.
- (xiv) Beaudesert Sports Field and Recreation Ground Trust Annual General Meeting:
Thursday, 12th November 2009, in the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall, Buds Road, Cannock Wood, commencing at 8. 00 p.m.
- (xv) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Parish Councils’ Meeting:
Tuesday, 17th November 2009, commencing at 7. 00 p.m (venue to be arranged).
On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Butler, it was agreed that the Parish Council should offer the use of Longdon W. I. Hall for this meeting..

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

(i) Diversion of Traffic – Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Tradewell, Director of Law and Governance, Staffordshire County Council, a copy of a Notice dated 27th August 2009 that Staffordshire County Council intended, not less than seven days from that date, to make an Order the effect of which would be to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Lysways Lane, Longdon Green, from its junction from Hill Top in an easterly direction for approximately 100 metres unless the vehicle was being used in connection with the works, or for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes.

The Order would come into operation on 7th September 2009, and the said works would commence on or as near as practicable to that date. It was anticipated that the works would be completed by 17th September

2009. The Order would remain in force for a period of eighteen months, or until the water mains work, which it was proposed to carry out on or near the road, had been completed, whichever was the earlier.

(ii) Extension of Footpath across Glebe Field into Churchyard

The Clerk reported that he had received from John Shand, Churchwarden of the Parish Church of St James the Great, Longdon, an email dated 26th August 2009, in which he reported that there had been a meeting with the Archdeacon the previous day, as a result of which it seemed likely that permission would be given, subject to conditions, for an extension of the footpath across the Glebe Field gate to the tarmac path from the church to the vicarage; and he asked whether a meeting between the churchwardens and members of the Parish Council would be helpful.

It was agreed that such a meeting should be arranged.

(iii) Rights of Way Survey – Footpaths 32 (Hill Top) and 59 (Stonywell Lane)

The Clerk reported that he had received from Dominic Willmore, Rights of Way Assistant, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, two letters, both dated 21st August 2009, informing the Council that both these footpaths had been inspected and job-sheets issued to carry out the necessary works.

Both land-owners had agreed to re-instate the paths and had also been sent letters reminding them of their responsibilities.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

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

The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Greens and Opens Spaces Committee had taken place on Tuesday, July 21st, 2009. A written report had been distributed to Councillors prior to the present meeting (*Appendix A*).

(ii) Mowing Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received two reports from Graham McCulloch, the first dated 22nd July 2009, in which he reported no problems, and the second dated 19th August 2009, in which he reported that a lot of grass had kept him busy.

He had also reported that the long grass at the centre of Longdon Green had been cut and collected.

(iii) Provision of Children's Play Area in Parish of Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from Andrew Mason, Property Manager, Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance, a letter dated 19th August 2009, confirming that the Glebe Field was presently tenanted, but inviting the Council to indicate on a plan the approximate amount of land it would require so that he could take the proposal to the next meeting of the Glebe Committee in November.

Councillors were encouraged that the Council's approach had not been rejected and agreed that a plan should be drawn up to present to the Committee.

10. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2009

The Clerk reported that Longdon & Longdon Green had come second in the Large Village Section of the Lichfield & Cannock District, and Upper Longdon had been designated "Highly Commended", the same results as 2008.

He now awaited the judges' comments.

In the meantime, a letter of thanks had been sent to all participating parishioners.

11. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) Vacancies in the Office of Councillor (Longdon Ward)

The Chairman reminded the Council that the two vacancies brought about by the disqualification of Cllr. Parsons and the resignation of Cllr. Mrs. Russell remained to be filled.

Both vacancies had been advertised, but in neither case had there been a request for a poll, and it was now the duty of the Council to fill them by co-option.

The Council had published invitations by poster and in "Longdon Life" for eligible members of the public to put their name forward for co-option, and two parishioners had done so – Mr. Richard Clarke, of Brook End, Longdon, and

Mr. Kenneth Taylor, of Upper Way, Upper Longdon, both of whom were present at the meeting. Both had supported their applications with a curriculum vitae, copies of which had been distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Juxon and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, Mr. Clarke was unanimously co-opted as a member of the Council.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Butler, Mr. Taylor was unanimously co-opted as a member of the Council.

It was agreed that both would sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and take their place on the Council at its next meeting.

In welcoming Mr. Clarke and Mr. Taylor to the Council, the Chairman stressed that it was important to recognise that a Parish Council was more than a voluntary organisation; it was a branch of local government, and membership brought with it the need for a very high level of commitment, which both Mr. Clark and Mr. Taylor both acknowledged.

(ii) Resignation of Cllr. Norman Stanfield

The Council heard with great sadness of the resignation of Cllr. Stanfield, who, in a letter to the Chairman, said that, in view of his family and business commitments, he felt unable to give the time to the work of the Council which he felt was needed.

The Chairman reminded the Council that Cllr. Stanfield had been both Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council and Chairman of the Highways and Footpaths Committee and that, consequently, both offices would now have to be filled.

It was agreed that the election of a Vice-Chairman should be deferred to the next meeting, while the election of a Chairman of the Highways and Footpaths Committee should be left to the Committee to make at its next meeting.

The Clerk would advertise the vacancy for a Councillor for the Longdon Ward in the prescribed manner.

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr. Stanfield thanking him for his hard work during the time he was a member of the Council.

(iii) Re-appointment of LEA Governor for St. James C. E. (V. C.) School, Longdon

The Clerk reported that, during the summer recess, he had received notice of the expiration of the term of office of Mrs. Ann Oliver as LEA Governor for St. James School.

After consulting the Chairman and other Councillors, he had contacted Mrs. Oliver to ask her if she wished to be re-appointed. Mrs. Oliver having indicated that she did, he had submitted a completed nomination form on her behalf.

He added that her re-appointment already had the support of the School.

12. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(i) Bus Services in Longdon

The Clerk reported that he had received from David Heath, Passenger Transport Assistant (West), Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, a letter dated 6th August 2009, in which he acknowledged receipt of the petition submitted by Mrs. Kathleen Worrall, but added that the County Council would not currently look at increasing the level of service provided through Longdon.

He pointed out that the target service provision for a locality of the population size of Longdon, as set out in the County Council's "Strategy for Passenger Transport", was already being met by the County Council's subsidised Eagle Travel 14 service.

The County Council were under an obligation to make the best use possible of public funds when planning subsidised services, and Longdon would not provide the patronage levels required to justify a more frequent service.

It was agreed that a copy of Mr. Heath's letter should be sent to Mrs. Worrall.

13. LAW AND ORDER

The Clerk reported that he had received by email a summary of the main points discussed at a meeting of the Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, 16th July 2009. Amongst the attachments accompanying this summary was an environmental report listing the number of incidents of fly-tipping to June 2009, but neither Longdon nor Gentleshaw had appeared on the list.

The Clerk further reported that he had received by email a summary of the main points discussed at a meeting of the Joint Operations Group held on Thursday, 13th August, 2009, including attachments, but there was no information of direct relevance to the Parish.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Duckett and seconded by Cllr. Juxon, payments of the following accounts was approved:

*Aqua Jet Services	Remaking and installing bench; repainting bus shelter	£261. 00
*Lichfield District Council	Hire of Eurobin & Collection of Rubbish – Gentleshaw Church	
	Net Total: £257. 50	
	V. A. T.: £ 38. 62	
		£296. 12
*G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – July 20 th	£225. 00
*Instaprint, Rugeley	700 Newsletters, 600 inserts	£330. 87
*Hazel Crosbie	Delivering "Longdon Life" and inserts	£ 45. 00
*A. J. Juxon	Editor's Expenses	£ 15. 00
*Lichfield District Council	Hire of Eurobin & Collection of Rubbish – Longdon Church	

09/110

Net Total: £175. 10

V. A. T.: £ 26. 26

£201. 36

*G. C. McCulloch Mowing – August 13th & 18th: £225. 00
Mowing centre of Longdon
Green and collecting and
removing rubbish: £170. 00
£395. 00

Longdon W. I. Hire of Hall – July 21st: £12. 00
Hire of Hall – July 27th: £12. 00
Hire of Hall – September 8th: £12. 00
£ 36. 00

W. B. Sullivan Clerk's Salary: £300. 00
Photocopying: £104. 51
Postage: £ 41. 00
£445. 51

≠Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Membership Subscription £ 36. 00

(*confirmation ≠payment made under Section 137)

(ii) Payments Received

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

HM Revenue & Customs V. A. T. Refund £1152. 79

Staffordshire County Council Highway Maintenance Agreement £ 693. 50

Mrs. Margaret Dutton Advertisements: "Longdon Life" £ 15. 00

Mrs. Anne Walters Advertisement: "Longdon Life" £ 7. 00
("The Swan with Two Necks")

Aqua Jet Services Advertisement: "Longdon Life" £ 6. 50

Paul Adams Advertisement: "Longdon Life" £ 5. 00
(Bloxwich Chiropody)

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a: £2280. 78 The Halifax s/a: £17016. 21
less uncleared cheques
1492: £ 395. 00
£1885. 78

(iv) Appeals for Grant Aid

(a) Lichfield, Cannock & Districts Cruse Bereavement Care

The Clerk reported that he had now received a completed Grant Application Form from Mrs. Avril Green, Fund Raiser for the Lichfield, Cannock and Districts Cruse Bereavement Care, in support of her earlier application for grant aid.

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Butler and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Meere, it was agreed that a donation of £75. 00 should be made to the organisation.

(b) MENCAP

The Clerk reported that he had received from Phil Hetherington, Senior Community Fundraiser, MENCAP, a letter dated 18th August 2009, inviting the Parish Council to make a donation towards the cost of providing MENCAP services to the district of Lichfield.

However, Councillors were doubtful whether this appeal was sufficiently local for the Council to support under Section 137, particularly as, judging from the letter, the regional office appeared to be in Coventry.

It was agreed, therefore, not to make a donation.

(v) Meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee

It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should meet before the next meeting of the Council.

The Chairman said that he would consult members of the Committee about a mutually convenient date.

15. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Sue Venables, Head of Communications, South Staffordshire NHS Primary Care Trust, an undated letter enclosing a poster conveying information about combating swine 'flu which she asked to be displayed in a public place.

The Clerk added that he had placed a copy of this poster on each of the Parish Council's notice-boards.

(ii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Douglas Robertson, of HUCK Play, Bridport, Dorset, a letter dated 30th July 2009, informing the Council that his company had been designing and manufacturing children's play equipment for over twenty years and inviting the Council to contact him if it wished to receive a brochure.

The Clerk said that he would file the letter for possible future reference.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Simon Hackett, Policy Officer, Regional Action, West Midlands, via an email from the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association dated 30th July 2009, a letter informing the Council that, at a recent meeting with Play England and Growing Up in the West Midlands to discuss a response to the West Midlands Spatial Strategy – Phase Three Revision, there had been very little reference to play, the children and young people's agenda and the agendas of walking, cycling and physical activity, and his organisation was seeking sector support to address this, including comments from the Council.

However, Councillors felt unable to contribute to this consultation.

(iv) The Clerk reported that he had received from John Shand, Church Warden, St. James the Great, Longdon, a letter dated 1st August 2009, informing the Council that, thanks to its support, the recovery and re-ordering of the South-East section of the churchyard had been completed.

Mr. Shand had also referred to the meeting with the Archdeacon which had been referred to earlier in the meeting and had promised to keep the Council informed of the outcome.

(v) The Clerk reported that he had received from Anne Walker, Office Manager, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Milford, an email dated 7th August 2009, asking for help in finding a venue for the next Parish Councils' Meeting.

It had already been agreed that the Parish Council would offer the W. I. Hall as a venue for the meeting, subject to its availability.

(vi) The Clerk reported that he had received from Viv. Evans, Chief Executive, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, an email dated 13th August 2009, informing the Council that affordable rural houses in thousands of newly-designated 'protected' areas would be safeguarded for future generations of first-time buyers under new provisions announced by the Housing Minister, Ian Austin.

The Clerk reported that he had received further emails from Mrs. Evans dated 13th August 2009 and 14th August 2009, the first informing the Council of the need for flood watch volunteers and the second giving information about "Talk About Local", a project to help give people in their communities a powerful online voice and inviting anyone interested in this project to get in touch with her.

(vii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Sally Rimmer, Area Fundraising Manager, Staffordshire and Shropshire, an email via the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association dated 14th August 2009, asking for help in promoting The World's Biggest Coffee Morning, which was taking place on Friday, September 25th, for which posters would be distributed.

(viii) The Clerk reported that he had received from Chris Welch, Chief Executive, The Community Council of Staffordshire, a letter dated 27th August 2009, informing the Council that the Community Council might, in view of increasing interest in Parish Planning, be able to establish a Staffordshire Parish Planning Support Service for those parishes wishing to undertake a plan.

(ix) The Clerk reported that he had received from Steve Shaw, Local Works Coalition, an email dated 28th August 2009, asking the Council to write to or email its local MP asking him to sign Early Day Motion No. 1545, which called for an amendment to the Sustainable Communities Act which would allow for the inclusion of Local Council in the process, from which they had been omitted.

(x) The Clerk reported that he had received from the West Midlands Local Government Association an undated card advising the Council of a change of name to West Midland Leaders Board.

A new decision-making body for local government in the West Midlands, it had taken over the role formerly undertaken by the West Midlands Local Government Association and brought together the leaders of all thirty-three local authorities in the West Midlands.

16. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

(i) From Heather Gibbons, Democratic, Development and Legal Services,

Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 2nd August 2009;

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 16th August 2009;

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 13th September 2009;

Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 17. 07. 09 – Effective for Period 01. 08. 2009 – 30. 11. 2009;

Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 17. 08. 09 – Effective for Period 01. 09. 2009 - 31. 12. 2009;

Forward Plan – Version 2 – Issued 17. 08. 09 – Effective for Period 01. 09. 2009 – 31. 12. 2009.

- (ii) From Jenny Moore, Personal Assistant – Strategic Director, Democratic, Development, and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ended 5th July 2009 (updated).

- (iii) From Dawn Everitt, Democratic, Development and Legal Services, Lichfield District Council:

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 30th August 2009.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 10. 07. 2009;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 17. 07. 2009;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 24. 07. 2009;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 31. 07. 2009

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 07. 08. 2009:

It was noted that, during this week, an application had been registered for a temporary event involving the sale of alcohol and the provision of regulated entertainment and late-night entertainment at Benbrook Farm, Stoneywell Lane, Longdon Green, the venue which had been the site of a planning application for a new farmstead for which planning consent had only just been granted. In addition, no date had been given for the event. The Clerk was instructed to seek clarification on these two points.

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 14. 08. 2009;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 21. 08. 2009;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 28. 08. 2009.

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

Register of Electors – Monthly Applications for 3rd August 2009.

- (vi) From Stephanie Cartwright, S3SN Admin Assistant, Lichfield & District CVS:

E Bulletin – Issue No. 89, 9th July 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 90, 16th July 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 91, 23rd July 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 92, 30th July 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 93, 6th August 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 94, 13th August 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 95, 20th August 2009;
E Bulletin – Issue No. 96, 27th August 2009.

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

- DEFRA Biodiversity Survey;
- “Youth Today” (letter from David Clark, Head of Programmes and Policy, British Youth Council);
- “Young Roots” (Funding Scheme);
- Staffordshire Local Community Fund (replacing SCC Local Member

Initiative Scheme);

- New £4m. fund to tackle anti-social behaviour in England and Wales;
- Free Infrared Thermography CPD Seminar;
- Bogus Callers (warning with regards to signs being used by bogus callers);
- “Welcome to Our Village” Signs (letter from Chairman of Hixon Parish Council);
- Consultations RSS Revision Phase Three: Rural Services, Housing, Culture, Sport and Tourism; Environment, Minerals;
- Funding – Yorkshire Bank;
- Audit Commission – issue regarding extra fees;
- Green Community Heroes (new award scheme);
- Funding Opportunities for Voluntary and Community Groups in Lichfield and surrounding areas;
- “Strengthening Local Democracy” (NALC Policy & Parliamentary Consultation P12-09, 4th August 2009);
- Newsletter – September 2009;
- Annual Report and Accounts 2008-2009;
- Notice of 70th Annual General Meeting and Conference;
- Forms for nomination for election of senior officers and to Executive Committee;
- Delegate Booking Form;
- Appeal on behalf of Vitalise (essential breaks for disabled people and carers);
- Leaflet: World’s Biggest Coffee Morning;
- NALC Briefing Note P13-09;
- NALC Update;
- Third Sector Leaders’ Board e-Consultation;
- Free day course: “Finding out about Energy”;
- SCIO awareness-raising events.

(viii) From The Community Council of Staffordshire:

Notice of Annual General Meeting;
Minutes of 2008 Annual General Meeting;
Statement of Financial Activities;
Notes on Nomination of Board;
Nomination for Election Form 2009;
Voting Slip/Form of Proxy;
Attendance Form.

(ix) From The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

“Staffordshire Wildlife”: No. 106, August 2009;
“Natural World”: Issue No. 86, Summer 2009;
Annual Review 2008;
Notice of 39th Annual General Meeting;
Membership Questionnaire;
Cannock Group: Diary Dates for September – December 2009.

(x) From The AONB Officer, Cannock Chase AONB:

Minutes of the Parish Councils’ Meeting held on 17th March 2009;
Management Plan 2009-2012;
AONB News: Summer 2009.

(xi) From Staffordshire County Council's Ranger Service:

Countryside Events – September 2009.

(xii) From The Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:

“from Time 2 Time”: Issue 20, Summer 2009.

(xiii) From Shaw & Sons Ltd., Crayford, Kent:

Catalogues: Forms, Records and Registers for Local Councils,
SLCC Bookshop (“The complete range of books for the Local
Council Sector”).

(xiv) From Proludic Ltd., West Bridgford, Nottingham:

“AboutPlay” – Issue 11.

(xv) From Earth Anchors Ltd., Croydon, Surrey:

Sales Promotion: Rootfast Anchored Posts.

17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) Cllr. Andrews informed the Council that, following a recent OFSTED inspection, Gentleshaw Primary School had described as “outstanding in every subject”.

It was, he said, a remarkable achievement which placed the school amongst the top schools in England.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the School on its success.

(ii) Cllr. Mrs. Duckett drew the attention of the Council to the unkempt appearance of the verges at the junctions of Borough Lane and High Street with the A51.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Richard Rayson, the Community Liaison Officer, asking for his permission to instruct the Council's mowing contractor to cut these verges when he visited the parish in October.

(iii) The Chairman reported that the Clerk had received a letter from “A Friend of Gentleshaw Common”, dated 1st September 2009, drawing the Council's attention to new building works taking place on land close to Brook Farm and Holly Farm for which planning permission did not appear to have been granted.

It was agreed that, while it was generally the Council's policy to ignore anonymous letters, the issue being raised by this particular correspondent seemed serious enough to be referred to the Planning Department at Lichfield, and the Clerk was accordingly so instructed.

(iv) Cllr. Mrs. Meere suggested that, in view of his interest in and knowledge of planning matters, the Council might like to co-opt her husband, Mr. Richard Meere, onto the Council's Planning Committee, following the precedent set by the Highways and Footpaths Committee.

It was agreed that Mrs. Meere's suggestion should be considered at the next meeting of the Council.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 13th, 2009, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7.30 p.m.