

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, JULY 10TH, 2012

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett; Cllr. R. A. G. Clarke; Cllr. P. M. Couchman;
Cllr. M. J. Nash; Cllr. K. C. Taylor; Cllr. C. J. Webb; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

Also present was the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. B. J. Butler; Cllr. C. D. Cherry; Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere;
Cllr. N. J. Roberts; 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, Ford Lane, Longdon, on Tuesday, June 12th, 2012, were, on a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. Webb, approved and signed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Computer Course

Cllr. Clarke said that he was searching for a suitable teacher.
To date, four parishioners had signed up for the course.

(ii) Wall at No. 19, The Grange, Upper Longdon

The Chairman said that she had found emerging from The Grange hazardous because the new wall was restricting vision in the direction of Startley Lane.

The Clerk pointed out that the wall had not been part of the planning permission for the conservatory, but he would ask the Community Highway Liaison Officer for his opinion.

(iii) Formation of Residents' Association in Longdon Green

Cllr. Webb reported that he had found that there was some interest in setting up a Residents' Association in Longdon Green and would call a meeting to assess its strength.

(iv) Closure of Dark Lane

The Clerk reported that he had, as instructed, written to Richard Rayson, the Community Highway Liaison Manager, confirming the Parish Council's support for the proposal to close Dark lane to through traffic.

Cllr. Nash expressed concern that this decision might set a precedent for other closures as a saving on maintenance, citing Giddywell Lane as a possibility, but the general view was that circumstances in this case were exceptional, particularly since the banks on each side of Dark lane were in danger of collapsing.

Cllr. Welch also pointed out that any closure would have to be publicised in advance.

5. PLANNING

(i) Report of Planning Committee

12/00555/FUL: Mr. J. Anders: First-floor extension and alterations to form bathroom and study: 12 Upper Way, Upper Longdon

It was noted that the purpose of this planning application was to replace a flat roof and that there would be no increase in the footprint.

The Council had no objection to this application.

12/00637/LBC (Listed Building Consent): Mr. and Mrs. R. Marson: Works to listed building to enable the erection of a single-storey rear extension to form garden room: 24 Brook End, Longdon

It was pointed out that this building had already been extended but assumed that the planning authorities would be aware of this and would have to be satisfied that the latest extension would not result in the original footprint being extended beyond the permitted limit.

It was noted, too, that the proposed extension would not affect the front elevation.

The Council therefore had no objection to this application.

(ii) For Consideration

There were no further plans for the Council to consider.

(iii) 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:

12/00409/FUL: Mr. A. Moore: Erection of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling (3 bedroom) with associated works: Benbrook Farm, Stoneywell Lane, Longdon

12/00410/FUL: Mr. and Mrs. N. Betteley: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a five-bedroom detached dwelling and a detached triple-car garage:

The Spinney, Lysways Lane, Longdon Green

12/00411/CON: Mr. & Mrs. N. Betteley: Demolition of existing dwelling:
The Spinney, Lysways Lane, Longdon Green.

12/00438/Mrs. D. Hodson Walker: Single-storey side and rear extensions to form
laundry room, study, WC, kitchen and breakfast area: 4 Brereton Hill Lane,
Upper Longdon

12/00453/Mr. A. R. Baskerville: Erection of building to store agricultural
machinery: Field at Lysways Lane, Longdon Green.

(iv) 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 in relation to the Parish of Longdon.

(v) Other Planning Matters

(a) Refusal of Certificate of Lawful Use or Development

Applicant: Mr. & Mrs. J. Ashby
Site: Fern House, Brereton Hill Lane, Upper Longdon
Development: Two-storey extension

“The proposal does not conform to the requirements of Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A, of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008 in that the enlarged part of the dwelling-house would be two storey and would fall within 7m of the rear boundary of the dwelling house and the first-floor windows within the side elevations (north and south) would not be obscure-glazed and fixed shut”.

Signed B. Nahal and dated 30th March 2012.

6. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(i) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty Advisory Partnership:
July 5th

Cllr. Welch reported that he had attended a meeting of the Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership the previous Thursday.

Efforts were being made to co-ordinate the involvement of interested parties, particularly in the area of information centres, of which there were five, all under different ownership.

Ways were also being explored of disseminating information to information through other outlets such as parish councils.

Quite a lot of work was being done in researching and recording the Chase's military history; few people knew of the existence of a now-buried model battlefield near Freda's Grave, which it was hoped to uncover, photograph and then cover up again to ensure its continued survival.

The Parish Council might like to consider organising a presentation at Longdon Village Hall.

(ii) Other meetings

Cllr. Taylor reported that, since the last meeting, he had, in his capacity as School Governor, attended a meeting of the **Finance Committee at St. James School**.

Cllr. Clarke reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the **School Governors at Gentleshaw School** at which the Head Teacher had reported excellent results and no problems, though she assured the meeting that she and her staff would not allow themselves to become complacent.

Unfortunately, heavy rain had necessitated the cancellation of the School Sports Day, but the end-of-term concert would be going ahead on July 17th.

Miss Davies, the Class 1 teacher, would be leaving at the end of term, but her replacement would be appointed in September.

The Chairman reported that, at the **Annual General Meeting of the Longdon Village Hall Management Committee**, Neil Vyse had been elected Chairman and Hugh Reynolds had been elected Treasurer, while she had been elected Secretary.

Finally, Cllr. Nash reported that he had attended **the opening of the Rugeley Food Bank** on June 12th.

7. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

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

(i) "Water Security & Risk – understanding the issues for your business": Tuesday, July 17th, 2012, at the Mercure Stafford South Hatherton House Hotel, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge, from 9. 15 a.m. to 1. 05 p.m., including lunch. Admission free.

(ii) Cannock Chase AONB Parish Councils' Meeting: Thursday, September 20th, 2012, at 7. 00 p.m. Venue to be announced.

(iii) SPCA Training Seminars

(a) Chairmanship Skills – Module 1: Thursday, July 12th, 2012, in The White Room, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.

(b) Chairmanship Skills - Module 2: Thursday, July 19th, 2012, in Room 3, The Peel Building, St. Chad's Place, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m. to 9. 00 p.m.

(c) New Councillor Training: Wednesday, July 25th, 2012. in The Trentham Room, Staffordshire Place 1, Tipping Street, Stafford, from 7. 00 p.m to 9. 00 p.m.

Cost: Affiliated Councils - £20. 00 for first delegate, £15. 00 for second delegate, and £10. 00 for each additional delegate from the same Council.

Prices are doubled for unaffiliated Councils.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

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

Councillor Welch presented a written report on a meeting of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee which had taken place in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, July 3rd, 2012 (*Appendix A*).

On a motion proposed by Cllr. Taylor and seconded by the Chairman, he was authorised to spend up to £100. 00 on hornbeam transplants for screening the wall at the back of Gentleshaw Green.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place in the W. I. Hall on Tuesday, September 4th, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.

9. GREENS AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Registering Brook End Green

Cllr. Clarke reported that the process of registering the Council's ownership of Brook End Green had now been successfully completed.

(ii) Gentleshaw Green

Cllr. Clarke told the Council that Gentleshaw School was waiting for directions on what they should do for maintenance or replacement, particularly planting for the Spring. It was suggested that Cannock Wood Flower Club could be asked to advise.

10. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) New Code of Conduct

The Clerk reminded Councillors that, with the introduction of the new Code of Conduct, they were required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests.

He would ensure that each Councillor received a copy of the registration form, which should be completed and returned to him for submitting to the District Council's Monitoring Officer.

11. LAW AND ORDER

(i) Report by PC Andy Brown

The Clerk reported that PC Brown had phoned him shortly before the meeting to update the Council on criminal activity in the parish.

There had been two incidents: the roadside signs put out by the mobile canteen in the Cleat Hill layby had been stolen; and a window had been broken at the rear of “The Red Lion on the Green”.

It was noted that some large boulders had now been placed at the entrance to the pub car park, it was believed to prevent itinerants setting up camp, and, following complaints from local residents that they were unsightly, the Clerk had written to Enterprise Inns asking how long they were likely to be in place and pointing out that the boulders had not, in fact, been placed within the curtilage of the premises.

(ii) Retirement of PC Brown

The Chairman reminded the meeting that PC Brown would be retiring at the end of November and asked whether, in view of his exemplary service to the community, the Council would like to hold a reception as a farewell gesture.

Discussion centred round whether the reception should be held jointly with the other parishes he had served, or, notwithstanding what neighbouring parish councils decided, a reception should be held in Longdon to which representatives of local organisations could be invited.

It was agreed that a decision should be made at the September meeting.

12. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Cllr. Couchman reported that the residents of Bradley Lakes were complaining to him about the unreliability of the bus service, in which the buses were either arriving prematurely or late or not at all.

He thought that the problem stemmed from two sources: the need of the company to be prompt in fulfilling its schools contract; and the apparent lack of a sufficient number of vehicles or drivers to provide cover in the event of breakdown.

He wondered whether the terms of the company’s contract with the County Council allowed it to vary times according to exigencies.

The Clerk was instructed to write to the Transport Department of Staffordshire Council drawing attention to this problem.

13. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Clerk reported that judges had visited both villages for a third time, and the results of the Competition would be announced at a presentation ceremony in Weston Village Hall on Monday, August 6th, though it was unlikely that he would be there.

The Chairman suggested that, once the results were known, it might be a time to assess the value of the Competition to the community.

Cllr. Webb said that the state of Church Hill, where the gutters were full of weeds and other detritus, might well have detracted from the village’s chances of success, and it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the District Council drawing attention to their condition.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Accounts for Payment

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

Longdon W.I.	Hire of Hall - June 26th: £12. 00 Hire of Hall - July 3 rd : £12.00	£ 24. 00
Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee	Hire of Room – July 10 th	£ 20. 00
Aqua Jet Services	Replacing notice-board: £180. 00 constructing & erecting bench: £230. 00	£ 410. 00
Open Spaces Society	Subscription renewal	£ 40. 00
G. C. McCulloch	Mowing – June 6/8/9	£ 370. 00

(* confirmation # payment made under Section 137

(ii) Payments Received

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

(iii) Current Balances

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

NatWest c/a:	£2722. 68	The Halifax s/a: £7889.33
<u>less uncleared cheques</u>		
	1705: £1500. 00	
	1720: £ 50. 00	
	1723: £ 280. 00	
	1725: £ 260. 00	
	1726: £ 12. 00	
	1728: £ 210. 00	
	<u>1729: £ 370. 00</u>	
	£ 40. 38	

(iv) Requests for Grant Aid

The Clerk reported that no requests for grant aid had been received since the last meeting.

(v) Report on meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee

Only Cllr. Cherry, Cllr. Clarke and the Clerk had been present at this meeting, and, while the meeting had been quorate, it was decided that two was not a sufficient number of Councillors to take important decisions.

(vi) Financial Statement for the first quarter of the current financial year

The Clerk presented a financial statement for the first quarter of the current financial year ended 30th June 2012 (*Appendix B*).

Scrutiny of the figures suggested that the Council was on course to remain within budget, though the Clerk warned that future budgeted expenditure meant that the Council would have to show caution in making any expenditure which was not already budgeted for.

The Chairman pointed out that an unchanged precept had resulted in an erosion of the Council's reserves, and she doubted whether the Council would be able to hold its 2013/14 precept at the same level, particularly if it wished to implement any of the projects it had been considering.

15. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

(i) The Clerk reported that he had received from Rachel Holyhead, Secretary of Longdon Pre-School, a letter dated 31st May 2012, in which she thanked the Council for its donation of £50. 00, adding that the children had enjoyed preparing the Best Kept Village Competition and hoped to see them on display around the village.

16. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 1st July 2012;
Calendar of Meetings, fortnight ending 15th July 2012;
Forward Plan – Version 1 – Issued 15. 06. 2012 – Effective for the Period
01. 07. 2012 – 30. 10. 2012.

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

Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 15th June 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 22nd June 2012;
Licensing Act Applications registered during w/e 29th June 2012.

(iii) From Karen Travers, Admin Officer, Electoral Services, Lichfield District
Council:

Register of Electors - Notice of Alterations (July 2012).

(iv) From Jan Wright, Administration Assistant, Lichfield and District Community and Voluntary Support Sector:

S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 21/12 - 13th June 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 22/12 - 21st June 2012;
S3SN - E Bulletin - Issue No. 23/12 - 28th June 2012.

(v) From Andy Goode, Environment Group Leader, Staffordshire County Council:

Heritage Update.

(vi) From The Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association:

SPCA Update (15th June 2012);
Rural broadband grant applications;
Weekly Update (26th June 2012);
Weekly Update (9th July 2012).

(vii) From The National Association of Local Councils:

“LCR”: Summer 2012, Volume 65, No. 1.

(viii) From Staffordshire Police:

Transition Update – June 2012.;

(ix) From The Secretary, Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall Management Committee:

Minutes of meeting held on 28th May 2012;
Agenda for meeting to be held on 25th June 2012;
“Trustees’ Roles and Responsibilities” (published by ACRE).

(x) From The Rural Services Network, Tavistock, Devon:

Weekly Email News Digest – 2nd July 2012;
Rural Opportunities Bulletin – July 2012

(xi) From The Open Spaces Society:

Notice of Annual Meeting;
Agenda;
Proxy Voting Form;
Annual Report and Accounts 2011;
“Open Space”: Summer 2012, Volume 30, No. 4.

(xii) From Nottssport, Lutterorth, Leics.:

“Get your play area ready for the summer”.

(xiii) From The Institute of Groundsmanship:

“IOG SALTEX 2012 continues to be the hub for buying decisions, debating and network”;
More New Products at IOG SALTEX 2012.

(xiv) From SSP Water & Play, Odiham, Hants.:

“SSP Water & Play can provide YOUR COMPETE SOLUTION”.

(xv) From Cyan, Coulsdon, Surrey

“Action required for Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Benches”.

(xvi) From J. Parker Bulbs (Wholesale) Ltd.:

Wholesale Catalogue – Autumn 2012.

17. DOCUMENTS

The following documents were available for Councillors to consult:

- (i) “Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing” – English Heritage, May 2012.

18. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that the farewell service for the Rev. Martin Butt would be taking place at Christ Church, Gentleshaw, on Sunday, August 19th, at 11. 00 a.m.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 11th, 2012, in the W. I. Hall, Ford Lane, Longdon, commencing at 7. 30 p.m.

Appendix A

REPORT ON MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES
COMMITTEE OF LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE W. I. HALL,
LONGDON, ON TUESDAY, JULY 3RD, 2012

Present: Cllr. Mrs. G. D. Duckett (Acting Chairman); Cllr. C. D. Cherry;
Cllr. R. A.G. Clarke; Cllr. P. M. Couchman; and Mr. Will Rose.

Also present was the Clerk.

APOLOGIES

Cllr. A. J. Juxon; Cllr. Mrs. H. A. Meere; and Cllr. S. K. Welch.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of any nominations, Cllr. Mrs. Duckett agreed to act as Chairman for the current meeting.

2. REVIEW OF PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES AGAINST RISK
ASSESSMENT REGISTER

It was agreed that the risk involved in implementing any decision taken by the Committee would be assessed item by item.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee, held in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, on Tuesday, January 3rd, 2012, could not be adopted, since no two members of the Committee attending this meeting had been present at the previous meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public was present.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Footpath across Glebe Field

It was agreed that the current wet weather prevented the use of weed-killer but that Kevin Healey, the tenant of the Glebe Field, should be asked to cut back vegetation encroaching on the footpath as soon as conditions allowed.

(ii) Footpath Leaflets

It was reported that the new footpath leaflets had been well received.

However, delivery of the dispensers was now outstanding, and the Clerk would contact the firm about the delay.

6. FOOTPATHS REPORT

Mr. Rose presented a report on action which had been taken since the Committee last met and on the current state of the parish footpaths.

Footpaths 27/0.394 (Hill Top)

In October 2011, the stile at the junction of these two footpaths had been partially demolished together with the removal of the finger post when two pairs of new farm gates were erected. The landowner had previously been given a new kissing-gate by the Rights of Way of Staffordshire County Council which was to replace the old stile. Despite the prompting by and Paul Rochfort, the Principal Rights of Way Officer, by this week the work had still not been done.

This has again been reported to the County Council's Rights of Way Department, who had supplied the land-owner with a galvanised metal kissing-gate. However, this had not yet been erected, and the Principal Rights of Way Officer had written to the land-owner on June 25th of this year, giving him fourteen days to reinstate the stile or insert the kissing-gate and re-erect the finger post.

Footpath 32 (Lysways Lane)

The house-holder had re-directed this footpath, which had previously been entered through his driveway, but had not received official sanction for his action.

However, since the route had not been obstructed as a result, Rights of Way would not be treating this as a priority.

Footpath 37 (Rear of Beech Walk)

The field at the side of which this footpath ran now had cattle in it.

Footpath 46 (Giddywell Lane - A51)

A loose stile on this well-used footpath had been reported in April of this year.

Footpath No. 48 (Red Hill – Borough Lane)

This footpath had been walked as part of the Jubilee Walk, and two stiles had been reported as in need of attention.

Rights of Way had now issued a job sheet for this work.

Footpath 32 (Hill Top – Lysways Lane)

A new farm gate had been erected at the side of White House and a metal kissing-gate put alongside it.

Footpath 52 (Lower Way – Upper Way)

This footpath, accessed by “The Kennels”, had been overgrown and was now clear.

Footpath 53 (Lower Way – Stockings Lane)

It had been reported that the top rail on the stile at the rear of “The Kennel” was too high; as a result, an extra step would be put in.

The land-owner had moved the route of this footpath, but had been required to return it to its original route.

Footpath 56 (Bradley Lakes – High Street)

A kissing-gate which had dropped and become obstructed by vegetation had been replaced.

Bridleway 58 (Upper Way – Batesway)

This was shown as a bridleway but was, in fact, an unsurfaced, unclassified road open to all traffic, which was once the coach road.

It had been cleared in March, but was now impassable owing to a fallen tree.

Footpath 59 (Stoneywell Lane)

Stiles at either end of this footpath had been repaired in May 2011.

Footpaths 62 & 63 (Stoneywell Lane)

Walkers taking part in the New Year’s Day Walk had reported a missing finger-post. This had been replaced.

Footpath 66 (Redhill – Bardy Lane)

Homemade stiles erected by the land-owner had been replaced by Rights of Way and the correct route of the footpath re-established.

Footpath 69 (Smithy Lane)

A loose stile had been repaired in January of this year.

Footpath 72 (Brook End –Hood Lane)

Two double fences had been erected at right angles to this footpath to facilitate the passage of horses from the field on one side to the field on the other, which had had the effect of considerably narrowing the footpath.

The Principal Rights of Way Officer was waiting for a Ranger's report before taking any action.

In addition to this report, other matters raised were as follows:

Footpath 55 (Bradley Lakes – Armitage)

Cllr. Couchman reported that this footpath had been made impassable by a number of holes dug by foxes and rabbits and that, as a result, walkers were making an unauthorised diversion through the adjoining field.

In addition, the footpath was not adequately signed.

Mr. Rose said that he would pursue the matter.

Footpath 73

Mr. Rose said that he had contacted the Senior Executive of The British Horse Society to ask whether they could be of any assistance in securing the proper designation of this bridleway.

He had been referred to Brian Smith, the Access and Bridleways Officer for Staffordshire, who would be happy to meet Mr. Rose and Mr. Rowe on site, but had warned that the support of the land-owner would be vital to the success of the application.

Mr. Rose added that it was his impression that the land-owner was not adamantly opposed to the proposal but would want the security of his cattle guaranteed.

Information Board at Gentleshaw Common

Mr. Rose said that, the last time he had looked, the information board outside the church at Gentleshaw was overgrown with vegetation and was very dirty, and he asked whether it remained so.

Cllr. Clarke replied that it had been clearly visible when he had last noticed, but said that he would check the next time he visited the School.

Bridleway 21 at Holly Farm, Gentleshaw

Mr. Rose reported that, so far, the owner of the farm had, on October 31st, 2008, been advised by Paul Rochfort to apply to divert this bridleway, part of which at present went through his garden.

It was not known whether this had been done.

The Committee was very impressed by the extent of the work carried out by Rights of Way in Longdon, only one of the County's parishes, and agreed that it reflected well on the County's commitment to maintain its footpath network.

7. REGISTRATION OF BROOK END GREEN

Cllr. Clarke reported that the process of registering the Parish Council's ownership of Brook End Green had now been successfully completed.

The Clerk said that ownership had been registered in the name of "Longdon Parish Council" and the official name of the green was "Brook End Green", which Cllr. Clarke confirmed as the historically-correct name.

8. CLOSURE OF DARK LANE, LONGDON

The Chairman reported that, at a site meeting attended by two officers of the County Council's Highway Department, Richard Rayson, the Principal Highway Liaison Manager, and Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Principal Highway Liaison Officer, Cllr. Clarke, the Clerk and herself, Mr. Rayson outlined proposals which entirely met local concerns.

These were:

- (a) to erect fixed bollards at either end of the middle section of Dark Lane to prevent vehicular access, but to allow access by pedestrians and horse-riders;
- (b) to permit vehicular access from Borough Lane but not through Thorley's Hill;
- (c) to erect a gate at the Thorley's Hill end which would allow access to the adjacent fields but prevent vehicular access to Borough Lane
This gate would be kept locked to prevent itinerant trespass and fly-tipping and the land-owners provided with keys.

These proposals, which had been set out in a letter from Mr. Rayson to Mr. Philip Hammersley, one of the affected land-owners, dated 14th June 2012 and copied to the Clerk, were entirely in line with the Parish Council's own suggestions, and it was agreed the Clerk should write formally to Mr. Rayson, confirming the Parish Council's support for them and at the same time ask him whether he proposed to re-classify the road as a bridleway.

9. GENTLESHAW GREEN

The Clerk reported that Cllr. and Mrs. Clarke had cleared the two triangular flower-beds of well-established dandelions, docks thistles and stinging nettles which had overrun these flower beds.

It appeared that, though the School had been maintaining the flower tubs, they had not been maintaining these beds.

Cllr. Clarke said that he believed that the School were waiting for guidance on what to put in them, and he was sure that they would be happy to plant and maintain them once the Council had supplied the plants.

It was suggested that the Cannock Wood & Gentleshaw Gardening Club should be asked to provide the School with such guidance, and Cllr. Cherry said that he would ask Mrs. Cherry to raise the suggestion at the next meeting of the Club, which would be taking place at the same time and at the same venue as the Parish Council's.

Cllr. Cherry also pointed out that Great Barr Sawmills supplied bird boxes in kit form, which the Council could offer to the School, and it might even be possible to obtain the small number required through the Sutton Coldfield Branch of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

He also suggested that the hornbeam whips required by the Council for planting along the wall at the rear of the Green might be purchased at a bargain price through specialist nurseries which advertise in the gardening journal, "The Garden".

10. IDEAS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Council had already spent a substantial part of the current precept and would not be able to fund a major project.

Cllr. Clarke suggested that funding might be available from agencies such as Sustainable West Midlands, Cannock Chase AONB, the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust as well as through the County Council's Community Paths Initiative Bid, although the opportunity to apply for funding from the last of these had passed for this year.

The Committee was reminded that two footpath leaflets for walks in Gentleshaw already existed in outline, and the Council could at least go ahead with preparing a dummy and getting it priced.

Cllr. Couchman pointed that there were at the moment no leaflets covering walks in Upper Longdon.

The Chairman confirmed that the projects to lay out floral gateways at the entrance to Brook End and to regenerate Church Hollow had been shelved owing to the cost, but urged members to look for smaller projects which could be adjusted to the funding available.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) The Clerk reported that the planter at the top of Church Hill had finally been emptied and removed.

(ii) The Chairman read out an email from Kevin Wawrzynczyk, Principal Highway Liaison Officer, to the Clerk, informing him that he had called on Mrs. Gardner, of 14 St. James Close, following Mrs. Mary Gardner's anxiety over a tree rooted in Church Hollow which was overhanging her property.

He had informed Mrs. Gardner that the tree was, in fact, a boundary tree and therefore her responsibility, not the County Councils.

(iii) The Clerk reported that he had had a phone call from Mrs. Elizabeth Caudwell, of Berkeley Way, asking for the Parish Council's permission to remove branches from the robinia which were overhanging her bungalow.

He had reminded her that the tree was covered by a Tree Preservation Order and urged to contact one of the District Council's Arboricultural Officers.

(iv) Cllr. Cherry reported that the large pot-hole in St. James Close had at last been filled.

(v) Cllr. Cherry drew attention to a tulip tree in St. James Churchyard, believed to be only one of three or four in the County.

He had also heard that there were only 460 churchyard yews left in the entire country, some of which were in St. James Churchyard.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 4th, 2012, in the W. I. Hall, Longdon, commencing at 7. 00 p.m.