

**LONGDON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Highways and Open Spaces Committee of Longdon Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 28 July 2015 at the WI Hall Longdon**

**Present:** Councillors: C Cherry, Mrs J Cleaver, P Couchman, Mrs H Meere, K Morgan and K Taylor, plus Steve Welch (co-optee) and Irene Kemp (observer).

**In attendance:** County Councillor Martyn Tittley, Mr P Young (Clerk).

No.	Item	Action
1.	<p><b>Chairman</b> <i>Resolved: That Cllr Cherry be appointed Chairman of the Committee.</i></p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Clarke. Leave of absence was granted to Cllr Clarke on the grounds that he could not attend the meeting due to mobility problems.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that District Councillor Ian Pritchard had been invited, but had submitted his apologies due to other commitments.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Declaration of Interest</b> None</p>	
4.	<p><b>Terms of Reference</b> Cllr Morgan reported that this was a lengthy agenda, but the intention was to make greater use of the committees, and for the Council meetings to be shorter because more work was being done in the committees.</p> <p>The Council needed to be seen to deliver the three objectives of a parish council as summarised by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representing their community</li> <li>2. Delivering services to meet local needs</li> <li>3. Striving to improve the quality of life of the people in their community.</li> </ol>	
5.	<p><b>Highway matters</b></p> <p>a) <u>Potholes</u> County Cllr Tittley reported that potholes in Borough Lane had been repaired. Due to financial pressures on the County Highway authority urgent repairs needed to be prioritised. People reporting potholes should do so where possible using the online reporting procedure, which would issue them a reference number for the matter, and could copy in the parish council. He would investigate whether the new Highway contractors, Amey, could notify the parish of matters reported in their parish, but felt this was unlikely to be possible.</p> <p>He informed members that the Area Highways Officer, Richard Rayson, had now moved to another post, and from 27 July his successor was Tim Heminsley, to whom highway issues should be reported, with a copy to himself as County Councillor covering the parish area.</p> <p>The Parish Council to request a summary report from Amey for all potholes and highways reference numbers for the Parish.</p>	Clerk and Cllr Tittley
	<p>b) <u>Parish Wide Road Safety Review</u> County Councillor Tittley suggested that the parish council should submit a formal request to Tim Heminsley, (with copy to him) for a parish wide road safety review. He stressed that safety issues were the key matter on which highway concerns would be prioritised.</p>	Clerk to make request

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	<p>c) <u>Speeding review – update re: Upper Way in Upper Longdon</u>  County Councillor Tittley reported that after 4 years this was now in the ‘top ten’ matters in the Divisional Highway Programme (DHP), but due to limited resources it was not known when the review would commence.</p> <p>Clerk to request formal project update from SCC.</p>	Clerk
	<p>d) <u>Lay-by waiting time</u>  County Councillor Tittley reported that a Road Traffic Order (RTO) would be implemented next month for all the lay-bys on the A51 between Constitution Island and Brereton Hill (excluding Cleat Hill lay-by). This would limit waiting time in the lay-bys to a maximum of one hour with no return within three hours. This would be enforced by the Police, and should resolve problems of HCV’s parking overnight in the lay-bys.</p> <p>Members expressed their appreciation for the actions that had been taken to introduce the RTO.</p> <p>County Councillor Tittley further reported that on 25 September the County Council would be holding a consultation event on problems caused by HCVs in rural areas, and he would arrange for an invitation to be sent to the parish council to send a representative.</p>	
	<p>e) <u>Winter Gritting consultation</u>  As agreed by Council a response had been prepared by Cllrs Morgan, Couchman and Cherry, and submitted to SCC by the deadline of 27 July.</p>	
	<p>f) <u>Roadside pavements - A51 north require cleaning and hedges cutting back</u>  There was discussion about ownership of the hedge requiring to be cut back. Investigations to be made by members and the owner to be written to.</p> <p>The cleaning of the pavements was a highway issue. It was suggested that a list be prepared of all such issues and then Tim Heminsley be invited by the Council to visit the parish and be shown the various matters of concern.</p>	
	<p>g) <u>Hedge of 'Sunny Corner', Upper Way, Upper Longdon</u>  Cllr Taylor reported that the house was now displaying a “sold” sign so he would contact the new owner, once resident, and request that the overgrown hedge be cut.</p>	Cllr Taylor
	<p>h) <u>Cast iron sign posts – vintage fingerposts</u>  These were the heritage signs owned by the Parish Council. It was noted that the sign at Gentleshaw was in need of repair.</p> <p>Steve Welch agreed to investigate and report back.</p>	Steve Welch
	<p>i) <u>X25 service bus stops</u>  County Councillor Tittley reported that bus stop locations had been identified and that County Highways would be liaising with the bus company to erect bus stop signs, which may need to be funded by the County Council.</p>	
	<p>j) <u>Priorities at T junction Horsey Lane and Borough Lane by Grand Lodge</u>  It was reported that the priorities at this junction needed to be altered with Horsey Lane to be the ‘give way’. Clerk to write to SCC Highways (copy to Cllr Tittley) for SCC to investigate this matter, stressing that this was a highway safety issue.</p>	Clerk

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	<p>k) <u>Maps</u></p> <p>During several of the above items it was felt that a large map of the parish would be useful at future Committee meetings to help identify the exact locations where action was required.</p>	Clerk
6.	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan</b></p> <p>Cllr Morgan reminded members that the Neighbourhood Plan contained various policies on highway and transport matters. Members had all been circulated with a copy of the draft Plan and he urged them to submit their comments.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Open Spaces</b></p> <p>a) <u>Annual Maintenance Plan</u></p> <p>It was considered that a comprehensive annual maintenance plan was needed for all routine issues. This would take some time to prepare, but would then hopefully avoid many issues being raised as 'one offs' and would facilitate employing a contractor to undertake the works, without requiring individual works instructions.</p> <p>Cllr Cherry agreed to lead this work, and Cllr Taylor to work support Cllr Cherry.</p>	Cllrs Cherry and Taylor
	<p>b) <u>Glebe Field</u></p> <p>It was reported that there had been no further communication regarding any development proposals. It was noted that the path needed clearing, but it was unclear how to tackle this.</p>	
	<p>c) <u>Longdon Green</u></p> <p>Steve Welch reported that the site was a registered site of biological importance. The recent survey had confirmed that a mowing regime was required to foster the ecology of the site. This regime to be included within the mowing contracts.</p> <p>Cllr Cherry reported on the ongoing investigations as to ownership. The land was unregistered but it was thought that ownership may have passed with the Lordship of the Manor. Cllr Mrs H Meere was to seek some clarification, via Mrs G Nichols, with the potential owner.</p>	
	<p>d) <u>The Green in Longdon</u></p> <p>This was another area which required a maintenance regime, e.g. the robinia tree.</p>	
	<p>e) <u>Best Kept Village Competition</u></p> <p>Members considered the improvements that would be needed for success in the BKV competition. This was an area where a committed team of volunteers was required to undertake the work, with financial support from the parish council. Cllr Cherry to explore various options in consultation with Chris Webb and the Community Group, and the organisers of the Plant Produce show, etc.</p> <p>Cllr Cherry to contact residents in Brook End regarding maintenance of flower tubs.</p>	Cllr Cherry
	<p>f) <u>AONB</u></p> <p>Cllr Taylor reported that he has attempted to attend the recent meeting, but unfortunately he had been given the wrong location of the venue. Cllr Taylor confirmed that he would represent the PC at further AONB meetings.</p>	
	<p>g) <u>Other areas</u></p> <p>It was reported that the green area outside Longdon Hall School needed a single mow (with removal of cuttings) to maintain its 'hay meadow' vegetation. Clerk to contact the School (Acorns Ltd) requesting that they cut the field, or suggesting that the Council could undertake the work on a rechargeable basis.</p>	Clerk

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	h) Mowing regimes on other areas such as the verge at the top of Cleat Hill were discussed to maintain flora such as the wild orchids. Graham McCullough who undertook the grass cutting contract for the Council to be requested for next year to provide a price for removal of cuttings, (which may be additional cost) or as an alternative undertake more frequent cuts.	Clerk
	i) Gentleshaw Common Steve Welch reported that ownership of Gentleshaw Common was likely to transfer from Lichfield District Council to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, and it was felt this would be beneficial for the ongoing sensitive management of the Common.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Footpaths and Bridleways</b> a) Members welcomed Mrs Irene Kemp who had volunteered to report on footpath matters.	
	b) Irene Kemp reported that mesh being placed on stiles to keep in livestock was presenting an issue for walkers with dogs which then had to be lifted over the stiles. She had contacted the Rights of Way Officer at SCC, but been informed to report this for the Parish Council to pursue. Members considered that this was a matter for the County Council to pursue as Highway authority, and the matter to be referred back to the Rights of Way Officer, Paul Rochford.	Clerk
	c) Footpath 25 This item to remain on the agenda pending some investigation of possible options which would allow removal of the concrete block placed on the footpath/bridleway to restrict access by horses.	
	d) Footpath Leaflets It was reported that the spare stock of leaflets was with Alan Juxon. Various locations, such as 'The Swan' needed restocking with leaflets.  Cllr Mrs Meere to speak to Alan Juxon regarding new locations for storing the boxes of leaflets.	Cllr Mrs Meere
<b>9</b>	<b>Action on Jobs</b> There was a wide ranging discussion on the best means to get jobs actioned. A combination of approaches was needed with routine task undertaken by a paid contractor, and other tasks arranged by the Parish Council or by harnessing willing volunteers.  Improved communications between the council and residents would be needed for this, and this would be part of the considerations of the 'Communications' working group.  Better use could be made of the SCC highway gangs and through the Lengthsman agreement with SCC. Cllr Cherry and Cllr Taylor agreed to jointly prepare a skeleton of a maintenance schedule for the Lengthsman.	Cllrs Cherry and Taylor
<b>10</b>	<b>Date of next Meeting</b> Tuesday 29 September, 7.00pm WI Hall, Longdon.	

***There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:40 pm***

*Signed (Chairman):*

*Date:*