

LONGSDON PARISH COUNCIL.

Minutes of Meeting held in The Rez Country Café on Thursday 2nd. November 2006.

Present: Councillor T. Beastall (Chair)

Councillors R. Dawson, J. J. Leah, J. F. Sargeant & S. R. Weston.
Three Members of the Public.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Kent.

2. Declarations of Interest.

Councillor J. Leah declared a prejudicial in planning applications received for Stonelow Hall and would take no part in the discussions.

3. Chairman's Address.

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

4. Public Comment.

A member of the public reported on a complaint about horses, and dog walking, along Sandy Lane, Longsdon. Enquiries had been made with Staffs. County Council as to the status of this lane and it was reported that it was not a public highway or bridle path and there should be no public access. A further complaint was received concerning a waterlogged public footpath near to Grove Cottage which was becoming impassable. The Chairman reported that the County Council was aware of the problem.

5. Minutes of Last Meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28th. September 2006 had been circulated. It was agreed that they be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

6. Matters Arising.

A letter had been sent to the Area Manager regarding the actual site of the missing reflector post in School Lane, and also asking for the possibility of siting a sign, warning of horses, on the blind bend in School Lane adjacent to the property known as Stackstones, after some near misses with traffic.

Letter had been sent to St. Chad's Parochial Church Council asking for permission to site the Gordon Hansell bench in the church grounds. The Rev. Tomlinson had replied verbally that there was no objection to the seat being sited in the church grounds and he would meet with representatives from the Council, as and when necessary, to fix the actual location.

The Council's bankers had been informed of the resignations of three Councillors and had sent the necessary forms to amend the Council's signing mandate.

A reply had been received from Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries stating that they would look into the situation with the Council's comments regarding the state of the New Inn. It was reported that various renovation works appeared to have commenced.

The friction between residents and boating people in the vicinity of the Holly Bush Inn appeared to have been resolved. It was agreed to keep the matter under observation.

The completed Annual Audit Form had been sent to the Audit Commission with a covering letter explaining the delay in submission. Various explanations etc. had also been forwarded.

It was reported that:

letter had been sent to Cheddleton Parish Council regarding boundary signs - reply awaited.
the footpath from the Wheel to the New Inn had been resurfaced.
the notice boards had received attention.
the survey on children's play and recreational facilities had been returned to S. M. D. C.

7. Correspondence.

A letter had been received from Councillor J. Kent giving his apologies for absence and also setting out complaints which he had received regarding the use of The Rez Country Café as a meeting place for the Parish Council meetings. They considered that the use of a private venue on the edge of the village was not suitable when the Memorial Hall could benefit from the letting fees. He also stated that a room in a building maintained out of Council Taxes could be used for free. These comments were made in the light of the increase of over 14% in the precept the previous year. The Clerk reported that he had received an anonymous telephone call, followed by a letter, setting out exactly the same comments. He had made enquiries at Staffs. Moorlands District Council, and also at The Community Council of Staffs., to verify the legal position of the hiring of rooms. If the Council did not own its own building it was empowered to hire any suitable room subject to it not being a licensed premises. The free room in a school etc. was also mentioned as a possibility. It was agreed that anonymous complaints could not and should not be considered.

Councillors discussed the matter fully and unanimously agreed to reply to Councillor Kent on the lines that, due to problems encountered previously with the Parish Room and the apparent difficulties fitting in with the programme of events held at the Memorial Hall, the Council were justified in looking for another venue for its meetings. There was no public maintained building which could be used locally which could mean holding the meetings in Endon or Leek which Councillors felt would not be suitable for members of the public wishing to attend meetings. Mention was also made that the Council had supported the Memorial Hall with a grant of £500.

It was agreed that the next meeting be held at the same venue but should there be many more than the normal number of members of the public attending meetings then another venue would need to be considered.

With regard to the complaint about the rise in the precept for last year, this could not be amended at this stage after the decision had been made.

Information had been received of possible grants available from the Rural Community Chest administered by the Community Council of Staffs. The Chairman had obtained the necessary application forms but the Parish Council was not eligible to apply. It was agreed that these be passed to the Management Committee of the Memorial Hall for possible use by them.

A letter had been received from the Returning Officer reminding the Council of the possible charges for any elections which may need to be held on 3rd. May 2007.

Other information received was

details of a competition for grant for Christmas decorations from Central Networks – no action.
further details of requirements for installation of seasonal attachments over public highways.
notification of the appointment of Tony Bruce as Chief Executive of North Staffs. N.H.S. P.C.T.
notification of results of Police Performance Assessment for Staffordshire Police.
Staffs.Parish Council Association Newsletter – distributed to Councillors.

8. Planning Matters.

A report was given that an Approval Notice had been issued for the proposed Polytunnels on land at Leek Road, Endon which was contrary to the Council's comments. However, two weeks later a Refusal Notice had been issued for the same application. The Clerk had made enquiries and it appeared that an error was made in issuing the first notice.

Information had been received on the proposed footpaths diversions at Stonelowe Hall. The Staffs. Moorlands District Council Countryside Office was recommending that objections be sent to Staffs. County Council against the proposals on various grounds.

Notice was received of a Tree Preservation Order which had been made on woodland at Devils Lane near to its junction with Dunwood Lane.

The following planning applications were considered and it was agreed to forward no objections, subject to the normal planning guidelines, to:-

0908 Erection of Timber Stables & Feedstore at Thorn Tree Farm, Leek Old Road, Longsdon.
1081 Create Private Drainage System and Biodisc at Stonelowe Hall. Leek Road, Longsdon.
1114 Erect Overhead Line on Wooden Poles at Stonelowe Hall, Leek Road, Longsdon.

9. Orders for Payment.

There were no orders for payment.

It was reported that the second half of this year's precept had been paid into the bank.

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the need to consider the amount of the precept for the forthcoming financial year. It was agreed that this be an agenda item for the next meeting.

10. Public Comment.

There were no further comments.

11. Any Other Business.

Items raised by Councillor Kent in his letter were dangerous trees at the junction of Denford Road and Micklea Lane, and also overgrowth of hedge obstructing the footpath at Hillwyn Farm, School Lane. It was agreed to report these to the County Council's Divisional Area Manager. The need to clean out the pond on School Lane was also mentioned and it was agreed to arrange for a local contractor to carry out this work. Hawthorne bushes overhanging Devils Lane were also mentioned. Councillor Weston volunteered to contact the owner regarding this complaint.

A suggestion was made that the Council could possibly pay for the re-siting of the speed camera at the top of Ladderedge to a more southerly point. This was not taken up.

12. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 11th. December 2006 at 7 – 30p.m. in The Rez Country Café in Sutherland Road, Longsdon.