

LONGSDON PARISH COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Longsdon Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday 3rd. May 2016 at St. Chad's Church Room, Leek Road, Longsdon, Staffordshire Moorlands.

Present: Councillors T. Beastall, L. Bills, R.P.A.Lovell, D. Sargeant, J. F. Sargeant, C. Taylor & S. R. Weston.

In attendance: John Bourne, Clerk to the Council.

1. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor N. Hawkins.

2. Minutes of Last Annual Parish Assembly.

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 14th. May 2015 were read and approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising.

Chairman, Councillor Sargeant, stated that once again it had been pleasing to see good natured and positive discussion of the topics under consideration this year and the occasional spark of humour has brightened meetings which could otherwise have been numbingly dull.

It feels like the past year has been dominated by planning matters and the battle to sensibly restrict an unwelcome, ill-considered and unwarranted housing increase in the village unfortunately looks set to continue.

He thanked all for their solid attendance and noted a 100% record from Councillors Beastall & Weston. District Councillor Norma Hawkins had attended nearly 60% of the meetings and worked hard to press our cause with the District Council and keep us informed of progress.

He thanked, again, Councillor Bills as Vice Chair and for consistently opening up the meeting room, even when we didn't notice that she had !. Thanks also to Councillor Lovell for representing the Council at the Memorial Hall meetings providing useful feedback and to Councillor Taylor for his attendance at Staffs. Moorlands Parish Assembly meeting on our behalf.

As usual the Clerk, John Bourne, has recorded and delivered excellent minutes, kept us informed with timely financial reports, written and despatched numerous concise and pertinent letters on our behalf and as Responsible Financial Officer kept the records in good order, sufficient to make the Internal Auditor's job simple. Great work, John, thank you.

Lastly, and for the first time in five years, it is good to finish the year with a full complement of Councillors and I hope that will continue throughout the coming year.

4. To Receive a Report for the Year 2015 / 2016.

Councillor John Sargeant was again re-elected as Chairman with Councillor Bills again re-elected as Vice Chairman at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

Councillors Sargeant and Taylor were again elected as representatives on the Staffs. Moorlands Parish Assembly.

Councillor Lovell was appointed as the Council's representative on the Longsdon Memorial Hall Management Committee.

John Bourne, Clerk to the Council, was appointed as the Responsible Financial Officer.

After an uncontested election in May 2015, with costs to the Council of £50 – 00, there still remained a vacancy for a Councillor. However, at the August 2015 meeting Daral Sargeant was co-opted on to the Council to fill the vacancy.

Estimates for the coming financial year were prepared together with figures, showing the Council Tax Support grant, from Staffs. Moorlands District Council. Councillors agreed that the current Band D property parish rate should remain unchanged and the precept adjusted accordingly.

As in the previous year the annual accounts of the Council were audited by the usual internal auditor. He commented that the accounts had been kept to a high standard and were in good order. There were no adverse comments. The accounts were then submitted to Grant Thornton, the official auditors, and were certified with no official comments. There was no charge for the official audit.

Under new guidelines, the Council, having a turnover of less than £25,000 – 00, would need to conform to a new Transparency Code which means that the Council must publish all its financial transactions and accounts on its website for public information. This has been adhered to. In future years there may be no need for the Council to submit its accounts to an external auditor. The Council agreed to opt out of appointing its own external auditor.

The Council's One Year Bond with Leek United Building Society matured and this was re-invested into a Two Year Bond with the same Society.

The Council's insurance was renewed with the Zurich insurance company with its quotation being the lowest of three received.

A wreath was again purchased for the Remembrance Day service and the village tubs were again planted for the summer period.

The grant for the replacement bench seat for the canal towpath was received from the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Project.

The defibrillator at the Memorial Hall had been registered with the Ambulance Service and was now operational.

The Council's normal contractor was again employed under the lengthsman schemes of Staffs. County Council and Staffs. Moorlands District Council. Both budgets were overspent.

The replacement postal box for the one stolen at the junction of Leek Road and Sutherland Road has been fixed on the agreed site near to the telephone box in Sutherland Road.

After numerous requests the repairs to the bus shelter opposite to the old New Inn are still awaited.

A major Core Strategy programme was set up by Staffs. Moorlands District Council to set out the required number of properties needed for Longsdon from 2011 to 2031. This proposed a major development of 20 houses on three adjacent sites from Sutherland Road to Leek Road, around the Memorial Hall. The Parish Council sent in its objections to the proposal which stressed that the required housing could be achieved by infill sites. Councillors attended a meeting with officers and also invited parishioners to a meeting of the Parish Council to inform them of the proposals and how individuals could send in objections. Some confidential information on changes to the original proposals has been received.

The Planning Enforcement Department of Staffs. Moorlands District Council investigations into a possible breach of planning at a property in Sutherland Road have been curtailed by Staffs. Moorlands District Council without any satisfaction to the Parish Council.

The Staffs. County Council's Highways Community Team visited the parish on two occasions to complete requested work.

Various minor items reported to the County Council's online service were attended to.

5. Any Other Business.

There was no business under this item.