

LONGSDON PARISH MEETING.

Minutes of the Longsdon Parish Meeting held on Thursday 3rd. May 2018 in the Upstairs Room of the Wheel, Leek Road, Longsdon, Staffordshire Moorlands.

Present: Chair: J. F. Sargeant.

Seven Electors Present.

In attendance: District Councillor N. Hawkins.
John Bourne, Clerk to the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for Absence:

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of Last Annual Parish Assembly.

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd. May 2017 were read and approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising.

Chairman, Councillor J. Sargeant, addressed the meeting:

He stated that he was pleased that we had been able to finish the year with a full complement of Councillors again. It is good to know that people do care about our village and while it was unfortunate to lose Councillor Bills and Councillor Taylor in the same year, it has been a pleasure to have Councillors Shaw and Bromley to join us.

He thought that the enforced change of venue from the Church Room has worked out well and the Upstairs Room at The Wheel now feels like home for our meetings,

Great attendance from everyone this year with special thanks to District Councillor Norma Hawkins for coming to more than half the meetings and an exemplary record of Councillors Beastall and Weston who for the fourth year in a row have attended all the meetings. Looking back it has been hard to find a meeting when Councillor Weston has sent apologies. May 2003 may have been the last time.

Thanks to Councillor Lovell for stepping in as Vice Chair and for representing the Council on the Memorial Hall Management Committee again this year. Also he expressed a general "thank you" to each of the Councillors for the effort that they have all put in keeping a watchful eye on our beautiful village.

He also thanked the Clerk, John Bourne, who has steadfastly looked after us at every meeting, generating excellent financial reports and comprehensive concise minutes. Carefully kept accounts allowed the Internal Auditor to make no adverse comments year after year.

One very frustrating outstanding issue that can only be looked at with great disappointment is the continuing sorry state of the old New Inn. Despite our best efforts and promise after promise from the owners, we still see an eyesore as we approach the village from Endon. I do hope that this coming year we will be able to effect a change to that and see a long overdue improvement to its appalling and sad state.

4. To Receive a Report for the Year 2017 / 2018.

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

Councillors J. 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.

Councillor Bills was forced to step down from the Council due to her work commitments taking her away from home and not being able to attend meetings of the Council. A letter of thanks for her work on the Council and as Vice Chairman and also the Council's representative on the Memorial Hall Management Committee was sent to her.

Councillor Keith Shaw was co-opted onto the Council to fill the vacancy.

Later in the year Councillor Taylor moved out of the area and was, therefore, obliged to resign from the Council. Again a letter of thanks for his service on the Council and also as the Council's representative on the Moorlands Parish Assembly was sent to him.

Councillor Beverley Bromley was co-opted onto the Council to fill the vacancy.

Councillor Richard Lovell was elected as Vice Chairman of the Council.

The Council was informed that St. Chad's Church Room was no longer available for meetings due to the fact that the premises had been put up for sale. Enquiries were made with Dunwood Hall who would be prepared to provide accommodation for meetings subject to planning approval on the number of public events which could be held on the premises. This resulted in the Hall not being available so as a result the only other suitable venue was the upstairs room at the Wheel, Leek Road. It was agreed that future meetings should be held in the room.

Estimates for the coming financial year were prepared. Councillors agreed that the precept requirement would be £4,485 – 60 which would result in the Band D property parish rate remaining unchanged at £16 – 02.

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 external auditors, and were certified with no official comments. There was no charge for the official audit. A new external auditor, Mazars, has been appointed for this year's audit but Councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 could be exempt from an external audit. It was agreed that this option be pursued.

The Council's reserve was re-invested in a One Year Fixed Term Bond with Leek United Building Society with the addition of a further £1,000 – 00.

The Council's insurance was again renewed with the Zurich insurance company with its quotation being considered with one more.

Information had been received that, under new legislation, a Data Protection Officer would need to be appointed in May 2018.

A wreath was again purchased for the Remembrance Day service and the village tubs were again planted for the summer period with some of the tubs replaced with new. All the tubs would eventually be replaced.

The Council's normal contractor was again employed under the lengthsman scheme of Staffs. Moorlands District Council. Staffs. County Council's scheme had been discontinued.

The Staffs. Moorlands District Council Local Plan had been put out for consultation. This showed infill areas but with all the village area being classed as Green Belt.

The Council contacted the owners of the old New Inn site on numerous occasions regarding when work on the site would commence etc and also the County Council regarding the screen fencing put up around the site which was causing visibility problems.

Efforts to try to re-instate a dog waste bin on the towpath of the canal near to the bridge in Sutherland Road which had been removed came to nothing.

After receiving numerous complaints about the erosion of the entrance to the private road, Wood Road, they were passed to the County Council without much action Eventually the residents surfaced the road themselves.

Questions were asked about the legal ownership of the Memorial Hall due to the fact that the responsibility could, in future, fall on the Parish Council. However, the Council was assured that a list of Trustees was in place and the ownership had been established.

The front panel of the defibrillator cabinet at the Memorial Hall had been damaged but a new panel was obtained locally and was fitted. It was agreed, after seeking advice, that the cabinet should not be locked.

A report had been received from Staffs. County Council's Highways Superintendant that the "Longsdon" village sign opposite to City Lane had fallen over and had been deposited in the authority's depot. A quotation had been obtained for a new wooden support post which had rotted and the work was now being undertaken.

A reported dangerous situation with a collapsed fence in Micklea Lane, opposite Sandy Lane, was reported to the owners of the land and they erected a new fence.

5. Any Other Business.

There was no business under this item.