

## LONGSDON PARISH COUNCIL.

**Minutes of the Longsdon Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 in the Upstairs room of The Wheel Public House, Leek Road, Longsdon.**

**Present:** Chair J. Sargeant. (Chair of the Parish Council).

**In Attendance:** Four Electors.  
John Bourne, Clerk to the Council.

### **1. Apologies for Absence.**

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

### **2. Approval of Minutes of Last Parish Meeting.**

The minutes of the last Parish meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup>. May 2021 had been circulated and it was now agreed that they be signed as a true and correct record.

### **3. Matters Arising.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered the following comments:-

Being a Parish Councillor is a largely thankless task so in defiance of that it's time to say "Thank You" to each of you Councillors for giving up your time for meetings, reviewing and commenting on planning applications, listening to parishioners, keeping your eyes open for issues around the parish and reporting road condition problems directly to Staffordshire County Council. These may sound like small contributions but they are cumulative and they do matter.

Special thanks to Councillor Richard Lovell for all his continuing, valued support as vice chair or deputy chair as he prefers to consider it and for his admirable diplomacy demonstrated this year.

Although we have not attended many Parish Assembly meetings recently for various reasons I thank Councillor Keith Shaw once again for his contribution as our representative to that body.

I think it's probably also appropriate to applaud our lengthsman. Even though we pay him for his work he has responded quickly and efficiently to the eclectic demands that we have placed on him and his tub planting in particular has brightened up the parish.

My sincere thanks to Clerk John Bourne for his meticulous work, keeping us well informed about our finances and crafting professional minutes, agendas, emails and letters on our behalf. His many years' experience gained in Council matters in other parishes has often been informative during our discussions of uncommon topics.

The ever worsening eyesore of the New Inn is a disgrace to the parish and our efforts to bring about improvement continue to be thwarted or ignored. Having been described as a "Heritage Asset" in 2016 it's shameful that nothing has been done to protect the building from destruction due to neglect. It certainly no longer looks like an asset so without any powers of our own we will have to continue to lobby others to bring an end to this sorry saga.

### **4. To Receive a Report for the Year 2021 / 2022.**

The first meeting of the year held in May was held remotely via Zoom but subsequent meetings were held in the normal meeting place, the upstairs room of The Wheel public house.

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

Councillors J. Sargeant and K. Shaw were elected as representatives on the Staffs.Moorlands Parish Assembly.

Councillor C. Hawthorne 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 D. Sargeant then tendered her resignation from the Council due to pressure from her work employment. Also received was notice of resignation from Councillor B. Bromley. Both were sent letters of thanks for their service to the Council.

After consultations with the Electoral Office the vacancies were advertised for co-option. Four applications were received and after one ballot Jacquetta Bode and Simon Dickinson were duly co-opted to serve as Parish Councillors.

During the year Councillor Hawthorne withdraw her consent to be the Council's representative on the Longsdon Memorial Hall Management Committee. This position was then taken up by Councillor Bode who also withdrew her consent later in the year. This matter was left in abeyance until the A.G.M.

Then Councillor Hawthorne also resigned from the Council and the Electoral Office was informed.

Estimates for the coming financial year were prepared. Councillors agreed that the precept requirement would be £5,000.00, which was unchanged from last year.

It was agreed that the Clerk's salary be increased by £120.00 in the new financial year.

The annual accounts of the Council were audited by a new internal auditor. There were no adverse comments from him.

As the Council's turn-over was less than £25,000 it could be exempted from an external audit. This option was pursued and the necessary forms were certified, signed and forwarded to the external auditor.

A grant of £100.00 was forwarded to the Douglas Macmillan Hospice after a request was received.

After numerous efforts to try and get repairs done to the wooden bus shelter opposite the old New Inn, it was agreed to purchase a new metal shelter similar to the one recently installed by the Memorial Hall, at a total cost of £2,855.00 (excl.V.A.T.).

The Council's insurance was again renewed with the Zurich insurance company with its quotation being only very slightly more than last year. The new bus shelter was added as an asset.

Due to the Data Protection Regulations the Council again registered with the Information Commissioner in the sum of £40 – 00.

Rather than purchasing a wreath for the Remembrance Day service materials and ties were obtained and the Chairman produced large poppies which were placed on signs, trees etc around the village.

The village flower tubs were again planted twice for the summer and winter periods by the Council's lengthsman with one new tub in Denford Road. During the year he also re-painted all the public seats in the parish and coated the two wooden bus shelters green to match the new metal shelters.

The notice board assembly in Denford Road had been damaged and left in a dangerous condition. The lengthsman repaired this at short notice.

He also remodelled the collapsed Sutherland Road nameplate at the junction with Micklea Lane using salvaged ironwork from an old map stand which was no longer required.

The Council contacted the new owners, by letter, regarding the dangerous state of the old New Inn building and whether there were any plans to start work on the site but no reply was received.

St. Chad's Church administrator was contacted regarding the non operation of the Church clock for which the Parish Council usually paid the annual maintenance cost. She reported that the estimated cost of repairs would be in the region of £14,000.00 but suggested that a public appeal would be launched.

A complaint had been received about the school which was now operating on the Memorial Hall. The owners of the school involved were contacted and all the relevant information was received.

Concern was expressed about the small number of persons serving on the Memorial Hall Management Committee and/or trustees. The current members of the Committee were contacted by the Parish Council offering any help with advertising the current vacancies around the village. A reply is awaited.

It was agreed that a memorial bench seat should be purchased and installed in memory of the late Parish Councillor Richard Weston. His family were to be consulted on the type of bench seat and the inscription for an attached plaque.

An application was made to District Councillor Norma Hawkin's Community Fund for a grant towards the bench seat and fortunately a sum of £175.00 was received.

After numerous requests the pedestrian crossing on Leek Road, adjacent to Sutherland Road was eventually re-painted and the beacons cleaned,

Numerous planning applications were discussed with no major objections being forwarded.

**5. Any Other Business.**

There was no business under this item.

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