

LONGSDON PARISH COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Longsdon Parish Meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023 in the Upstairs room of The Wheel Public House, Leek Road, Longsdon.

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

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

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Shaw.

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Parish Meeting.

The minutes of the last Parish meeting held on 5th. May 2022 had been circulated and it was now agreed that they be signed as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising.

The Chairman took the opportunity to express his appreciation for the work and effort put in by Councillors over the past year, so he gave a hearty “thank you” to members for giving up their time to attend our meetings and for caring enough to do the job.

Vice Chair Richard Lovell has thankfully always been highly proactive and a strong influence ever looking for the sensible way forward. His efforts trying to resolve the placement of the past Councillor’s memorial seat and particularly the provision of an eloquently inscribed anodised commemorative plaque for the seat in Sutherland Road have been inspiring. He continues to actively explore ways to address our shortage of members. It’s great work, thanks Richard.

Thanks were also expressed to Keith Shaw and Simon Dickinson, our representatives on the Staffs. Moorlands Parish Assembly. That body provides insight into what the District Council and other parishes are doing and consider important. Attendance there is another drain on free time- so thank you.

We are also reliant on the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, John Bourne. Comprehensive, concise meeting minutes and clear, frequent statements of accounts are his hallmark but his behind the scenes organising, purchasing and communicating go on largely unnoticed and yet are the lifeblood of the Council. Thanks very much John.

It seems that Councillor Tim Beastall chose the 4th. May elections to exit membership of the Council. In tribute to the man it should be known that he first became a Councillor in 1979 and, although not continuously, has been on the Council in almost every decade since, sometimes as Chair. That is undoubtedly commendable service to this community.

Lastly, it is with rekindled hope that we review another planning application for the New Inn. Numerous applications have come before us for comment and have generally been supported although none have materialised. Following a decade of neglect and an ever worsening eyesore it would be a relief to finally see the site improved.

4. To Receive a Report for the Year 2022 / 2023.

Councillor John Sargeant was again re-elected as Chairman with Councillor Richard Lovell re-elected as Vice Chairman at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.
Councillors S. Dickinson and K. Shaw were elected as representatives on the Staffs. Moorlands Parish Assembly.

Due to the depleted number of Councillors the post of the Council’s representative on the Longsdon Memorial Hall Management Committee was left in abeyance.

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

Councillor J. Bode had tendered her resignation from the Council.

Since the recent resignations the Electoral Office of S.M.D.C. had issued statutory notices and the Council had then advertised the vacancies on the Council on two occasions. Eventually Mr. C. Hogan forwarded his name, and he was duly co-opted. The remaining vacancy was continued to be advertised.

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.

The annual accounts of the Council were audited again by the 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.

The Re-enrolment & Re-declaration of the Council had been forwarded to and confirmed by the Pensions Regulator.

No requests for S 137 payments were received.

The Council's defibrillator machine had new replacement pads fitted and was then sent away for a free software update.

A report was received about an update being required for the machine at the Holly Bush, Denford but this was passed to Cheddleton Parish Council.

Cheddleton Parish Council were also given the history of Longsdon Parish Council's efforts with HGV signs in the village, after a request from them.

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.

The website provider's contract was changed from the Chairman's address and would in future be paid by Direct Debit from the Council's Bank Account.

The large Remembrance Day Poppies were again displayed around the village on signs, trees etc.

The village flower tubs were again planted twice for the summer and winter periods by the Council's lengthsman.

An agreed letter had been sent to the Longsdon Memorial Hall Management Committee offering any help possible and asking it to produce a current financial statement. A reply stated that three new members had joined the Committee and gave details of the number of bookings etc etc. The requested financial statement had been posted on the Charity Commissioner's website.

It was agreed that an oak Memorial Bench be purchased in memory of the late Councillor Richard Weston. A grant of £175.00 had already been received from District Councillor Hawkins' Community Fund. Sites and an inscription plaque would be finalised. After much delay this has now been ordered. Various sites for the seat were discussed with one site being refused permission by the landowner. It was then agreed that it should be sited at the junction of Denford Road and Micklea Lane.

The oak rails in the public seat in Sutherland Road were showing signs of rot and these were replaced with new. After a request to parishioners for suggestions which received no replies, a new plaque commemorating the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was also affixed to this seat.

Numerous planning applications were discussed with no major objections being forwarded. One report was received asking if planning permission was required for two mobiles in the parish. This was passed to the Chief Planning Officer who stated that none was required.

Other items passed on to other authorities were:

Road defects in Mickea Lane, School Lane, narrowing of the canal towpath, grass verges and speed and road safety issues on the main A53 Leek Road.

5. Any Other Business.

There was no business under this item.

