



Minutes are draft until approved at the following meeting

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council held on Monday 4 April 2022 at Longdon Village Hall

Present: Chair Cllr Austin, Vice -Chair Cllr Mullins, Cllr Cook, Cllr Gray, Cllr Unwin

In Attendance: Mark Ball, Neil Faram

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from the District Councillor, Cllr Behan, who had provided a written briefing for the meeting. The Council agreed unanimously that Cllr Mullins take the minutes for this meeting.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** A declaration of interest was made by Cllr Mullins relating to Agenda Item 10 (Resident's Correspondence) as she is a member of the Parochial Church Council for St Mary's church. Cllr Mullins requested that she be permitted to remain in the meeting room but take no part in the discussion or voting. This was agreed unanimously.
3. **Public Session:** The Chair welcomed to the meeting Neil Faram and Mark Ball who had attended to represent residents in Queenhill and Holdfast. As a number of vacancies exist on the Parish Council, it was agreed unanimously that they be co-opted onto the Parish Council. The Chair agreed to confirm the formal process for this co-option. The Parish Council welcomed its new members.

The Chair confirmed that he would not be standing for re-election as Chair of the Parish Council at the upcoming Annual Parish Meeting in May. He would also be standing down from the Parish Council. The Parish Council extended its sincere thanks to Cllr Austin for his hard work, leadership and support during his time on the Parish Council.

4. **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on 7 March 2022 were considered. It was agreed unanimously to accept the draft minutes as a correct record.
5. **Progress Reports:**
 - a) **Boundary Commission Review of MHDC Ward Boundaries:** Following the discussion at the last (7 March) meeting, the Parish Council's draft response to the Boundary Commission proposals had been amended and approved by email by the Parish Council. This response was submitted within the deadline to the Local Government Boundary Commission electoral review (LGBCE). For completeness, it was copied to Neil Faram (for circulation within Queenhill/Holdfast) and to the District Councillor, and circulated on the Longdon Support Group WhatsApp. An acknowledgement of the input from the LGBCE review had recently been received;
 - b) **Play Equipment Inspection:** Following Cllr Unwin's agreement to undertake three monthly inspections of playground equipment on the Village Green, he is now booked onto a "Routine Visual Inspection" course to be held on 20 October. The Parish Council has been



notified by RoSPA that its yearly inspection of the play equipment will take place during April 2022. The Parish Council has requested that RoSPA provide an agreed date for this inspection to allow Cllr Unwin to attend and observe the inspection. A date has not yet been confirmed;

- c) **Lengthsman scheme:** Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has confirmed that the allocation for the lengthsman scheme for 2022/23 will be £3,389. This is an increase on the allocation for 2021/22 which was £2,950 and is also greater than the Parish Council precept/budget request of £3,039.

The sole signature permitted on invoices for the lengthman's payment is that of the clerk and, in the absence of a clerk, the Parish Council has sought clarification from WCC of whose signature would be acceptable. The advice from WCC has been that the only other acceptable signature is that of our County Councillor, Tom Wells. The Parish Council expressed concern that it would be difficult for the County Councillor to sign the invoice without knowledge that the lengthman's work had been completed satisfactorily and that it would be preferable for the Chair to sign invoices.

The Parish Council has been asked by WCC to sign a new contract for the lengthsman's scheme. Cllr Unwin agreed to work with the lengthsman to improve the Parish Council's knowledge and involvement with the lengthsman's role;

- d) **SSE Electricity:** The Parish Council continues to seek clarification from SSE regarding the increased standing charge and the location of the streetlights to which the charges relate. The Parish Council believe there is only one streetlight although the two extant contracts may both refer to this streetlight (one possibility being that the lamp and its associated photocell were billed separately). The new contracts from SSE had been approved by the Parish Council via email and would be progressed as soon as clarification of the charges were received;
- e) **Annual Parish Meeting(s):** As agreed at the last meeting, the Longdon Support Group WhatsApp had been used to test the appetite in the parish for a more social parish event and the response had been very positive. The Parish Council agreed that it would not be practical to hold the Annual Meeting of Parishioners social event on the same evening as the Annual Parish Meeting and separate dates were suggested. The parishioners meeting would include an overview of Parish Council activities (over two years due to Covid) to allow parishioners to better understand the work and functions of the Parish Council and how parishioners and the Parish Council might work together for the benefit of the community;
- f) **Parish Magazine:** As agreed at the last meeting, an article was prepared and published in the April parish magazine and on the Longdon Support WhatsApp. An article would be prepared for the May magazine. It was noted that the delivery of some magazines was delayed and it was agreed that the magazine publishers would be informed of this;
- g) **Clerk Vacancy:** An application for the clerk post has been received. It was agreed that Cllrs Austin, Gray and Mullins should arrange a date to interview the candidate as soon as possible;
- h) **Jubilee Event:** The Parish Council noted that an event was to be organised in Longdon on Sunday, 5 June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Parish Council was asked to



support the event by providing funding for a 'cream tea' for attendees. The Parish Council agreed unanimously to provide funding to contribute to this event. The Parish Council was also updated on the Summer Social and BBQ to be held in Queenhill on 11 June.

- 6. District/County Councillor Reports:** District Councillor Behan had extended her apologies and had provided a written briefing outlining changes to the planning process. A joint scheme of delegation for planning services was to be created across the two councils of Wychavon and Malvern Hills. The key change is that, for the request to go to the Planning Committee, it will now need to identify a 'substantial conflict' between officer recommendation and local views and/or technical advice. For an application for a household, substantial conflict is defined as five representations.

The revised South Worcestershire Development Plan is approaching consultation in the next few months and there are likely to be new policies and amendments to existing plans that need to be considered.

7. Finance:

- a) The Council received and approved unanimously a report on the financial position on 31 March 2022, noting that it was not possible currently to reconcile the bank account or cashbook balance (due to lack of authorised signatories for the bank);
- b) Fees and invoices totalling £625.87 were presented. It was agreed that, with the exception of the lengthsman invoice (see agenda item 5 (c)), these should be paid as soon as practical (proposer Cllr Austin; seconder Cllr Unwin);
- c) Forms to remove previous signatories from the Council's bank account had been accepted at the branch on 24 January. However, no confirmation had been received that this had been resolved by the bank. The process to add new signatories (Cllrs Gray and Mullins) was still ongoing. The bank had not been helpful in this respect;
- d) The Parish Council noted that it had not been possible to obtain sufficient information about potential auditors for the 2021/22 accounts. It was agreed that, given the clerk vacancy and the current workload of Councillors, it would be difficult to resolve this issue for this year. It was agreed to retain the current auditor, with a fuller review next year.

- 8. Baseline Traffic Survey:** Cllr Gray introduced the report by reminding the Parish Council of the background to the six-month survey, the aim of which had been to provide accurate data on the traffic volume and speed on the B4211 as it passed through the parish. Two Elan Cite Evolis Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) had been purchased by the Parish Council for this purpose.

The main report of the survey was detailed and, as a result, a cover note had been provided to summarise the main findings of the survey. These included:

- Speeding issues had been identified in both Buckbury and Yardbridge that may require further survey work. There had been a number of limitations in the survey data



because of the need to mount the Evolis devices on existing poles. Additional poles may be required to provide further supporting information;

- The fact that traffic through Longdon village is shown to comply with the P85 standard (the standard measure applied by the police when considering enforcement proceedings) does not mean that there is no danger to other road users, particularly pedestrians, or that other measures should not be considered to reduce the speed of traffic;
- The solar panels purchased for the Evolis units mean that it may be preferable to install these in permanent positions and the Parish Council would need to determine the optimum positions;
- The older VAS unit owned by the Parish Council could be installed permanently to supplement the newer units. It was noted that this unit only measured speeds of up to 40 mph so would only be effective within Longdon village (that is, where the speed limit was lower than this). If permanently mounted, the current battery operation could be replaced by solar panels.

The Parish Council acknowledged the invaluable expertise of a former Councillor, Andy Young, who had continued to work on the survey. The Parish Council thanked both Councillors who were involved in the survey for their continued support. The “flashing” of the device display showing the speed of traffic had a noticeable effect on reducing the speed of traffic. As a result, there might be a case to purchase a third Evolis unit (costs ~ £3,000).

CLLr Gray reported on his attendance at the Speed Camera Partnership meeting on 8 March and his subsequent correspondence with the Upton Safer Neighbourhood Team. The latter had previously conducted speed monitoring in Longdon (outside Manor Farm and opposite Corner House). Due to the “landscape of the B4211 with all the bends running through the village and there being no safe area for officers to stand and pull drivers over” it was not possible for the police to “enforce the speed” (sic) limit. Concern was expressed by the Parish Council that the current 30 mph and 40 mph speed limit signs aligned with the historical village boundary and did not adequately reflect the road conditions.

The Parish Council agreed unanimously to:

- follow up on the assistance offered by the Safer Neighbourhood Team and invite them to a future Parish Council meeting;
- explore working with Worcestershire County Council to extend the areas covered by speed restrictions;
- explore the installation of additional poles for the Evolis units;
- explore the purchase of a solar panel for the existing VAS unit;
- publish the full traffic survey report to allow residents to see the results of the six-month survey.



- 9. Resident’s Correspondence:** Cllr Mullins declared a disclosable interest. As agreed, she remained in the meeting room but took no part in the discussion (no voting took place). The Parish Council noted correspondence from the vicar of St Mary’s church, Longdon, and St Nicholas church, Queenhill, regarding the removal of Parish Council funding towards the upkeep of these churchyards. This funding had been provided by the Parish Council over many years and it was accepted as an important contribution to maintaining the churchyards. To keep the precept request for 2022/23 to a reasonable level, a number of previously funded items had been reduced or removed. The Parish Council hoped that this pressure would not be repeated in the 2023/24 budget consideration with the result that it might be possible to reinstate this funding for that year.
- 10. Future meeting schedule:** The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as: 29 April 2022 (Annual Meeting of Parishioners) – this was confirmed after the meeting 9 May 2022 (Annual Parish Council Meeting)

Upcoming Meetings were provisionally set for the remainder of 2022:

6 June 2022

4 July 2022

No meeting in August

5 September 2022

3 October 2022

7 November 2022

No meeting in December but possible social event 5 December 2022

9 January 2023

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed:

Chairman, Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council

Date: