



Minutes are draft until approved at
the following meeting

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council held on
Monday 7 March 2022 at Longdon Parish Hall**

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

District Councillor: Bronwen Behan

In Attendance: Mark Ball, Neil Faram

- 1. Apologies:** The meeting began with a round table of introductions. There were no apologies. The Chair informed the Council that the Clerk had resigned and that the Chair and Vice Chair would ensure Council meetings continue until a new Clerk is appointed. Other matters will be prioritised and dealt with as appropriate. The Council agreed unanimously that Cllr Mullins take the minutes for this meeting.
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** A declaration of interest was made by Chair, Cllr Austin, relating to Agenda Item 10 (Resident's Correspondence). The Chair requested that he 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 with reference to Agenda Item 9 (Boundary Commission). Neil and Mark stressed that many residents of Queenhill and Holdfast were very anxious about the Boundary Commission proposal that Queenhill and Holdfast parish should, in future, be part of Ripple Ward rather than Longdon Ward. It was felt that such a proposal took no account of the physical barrier provided by the River Severn, particularly in times of flooding. By road, a round trip from Queenhill to Ripple was estimated to be 12 miles. Concern was also expressed that the sand and gravel extraction currently in Ripple Ward might be extended to include Queenhill and Holdfast.
- 4. Boundary Commission:** It was agreed that Agenda Item 9 should be brought forward in the meeting so that the residents attending could hear the Parish Council's discussion and decision relating to its proposed reply to the boundary commission. The District Councillor outlined concerns expressed to the Boundary Commission by the Chief Executive of the District Council that the Boundary Commission had not visited the local area before shaping its recommendations and that the parishes concerned had not been consulted sufficiently. In carrying out the review, the Commission had three main considerations:
 - Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents;
 - Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity;
 - Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.



The District Councillor and the Parish Council agreed that the last two of these tests had not been met by the proposals. It was agreed unanimously that the draft response from the Parish Council should be amended to include the additional points raised in the meeting discussion. The responses from the Parish Council and that from Queenhill and Holdfast residents would be shared across both the Longdon and Queenhill/Holdfast WhatsApp groups. The Chair and the District Councillor encouraged all those with concerns to submit responses to the review (deadline 21 March).

5. Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on 7 February 2022 were considered. It was agreed unanimously to accept the draft minutes as a correct record.

6. Progress Reports:

- a) **Play Equipment Inspection:** Following Cllr Unwin's agreement to undertake three monthly inspections of playground equipment on the Village Green, the Parish Council had received information relating to playground safety training. The Parish Council had been notified by RoSPA that its yearly inspection of the play equipment will take place during April 2022 and has requested that RoSPA provide an agreed date for this inspection to allow Cllr Unwin to attend and observe the inspection;
- b) **Lengthsman Scheme:** The Parish Council is waiting for written confirmation from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) of the amount of yearly allowance it will receive under the Lengthsman Scheme. The District Councillor confirmed that the yearly budget has now been set by WCC and that, due to a WCC initiative, funding for the Lengthsman Scheme is to be increased by 15%;
- c) **SSE Electricity:** The Council had confirmed that, although it was being billed for two streetlights, there was only one streetlight in the parish (in The Badhams) that was being supplied by SSE. SEE would be contacted to request a site visit to resolve this issue;
- d) **Playground equipment:** A play equipment brochure had been circulated to Councillors to allow further consideration at a future meeting. Councillors were reminded that there was no provision in the budget for this or next year for such equipment;
- e) **Traffic Report:** It was confirmed that the traffic report would be available for consideration at the next (April) meeting. Cllr Gray was to attend a Speed Camera Partnership meeting on 8 March and would report on this at the April meeting.

6. District/County Councillor Reports: District Councillor Behan outlined the Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) Destination Zero Community Fund that was available via the MHDC Space Hive portal (online). This initiative was to support community-led projects designed to reduce carbon emissions (e.g. environmental issues, reducing waste, climate change). Successful projects would be eligible to receive match funding of up to 50% or £10k, with the remaining funding contributed via the Space Hive. Proposals were also being invited via the Space Hive for up to £2k funding for community events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Applications could be submitted from 15 March until 29 April. Funding for environmental Jubilee projects such as tree planting should be sought via the Destination Zero route.



7. Finance:

- a) The Council received and approved unanimously a report on the financial position on 28 February 2022;
- b) There were no fees and invoices presented. The Council noted that all payments were up to date;
- 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 was still ongoing;
- d) The Council is obtaining more information before appointing an auditor for the 2021/22 accounts.

8. Resident's Correspondence: The Chair declared a disclosable interest. As agreed, he remained in the meeting room but took no part in the discussion. The Vice Chair chaired the item.

A resident had requested access to the Village Green (playing field) to remove compost from his garden using a skip or grab truck. The Parish Council felt that allowing heavy traffic onto such a public area would create significant health and safety risks, which carried liabilities for the Council. It might also result in damage to the fabric of the field (boundary and grass). In addition, the Council wished to prevent any precedents that would establish rights of way through boundaries onto the Village Green. The Council felt this was inappropriate use of the Village Green and could see no justification for agreeing to the request.

After consideration of Agenda Item 10 the Chair conducted the remainder of the meeting.

9. Queen's Platinum Jubilee: The Council considered how it might work with the community to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, focussing on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend (2-5 June). The Council wished to support a community event, although it was not in a position to organise such an event. The Council would seek advice on how a financial contribution to an event could be made under Section 137 (of the Local Government Act, 1972). As an element of this contribution, the Village Hall would be made available for the event. This was approved unanimously.

10. Annual Parish Meeting: The Parish Council is legally obliged to hold an Annual Parish Meeting where parishioners can voice their opinions and suggestions on the operation of the Council. It has been suggested that this might also be a social occasion when parishioners could better understand the functions of the Council and how they might work together for the benefit of the whole community. Council considered options for the Annual Parish Council meeting (APCM) and Annual Parish meeting (Annual Meeting of Parishioners). The APCM focussed on financial regulations. It was recognised that, if the Annual Meeting of Parishioners was a social event, it might not be feasible to hold both meetings on one evening. One option was to hold the APCM first. It was agreed that the Longdon Support WhatsApp group would be used to test whether there was an appetite in the parish for a social parish event.



11. Future agenda items: A number of items were raised for future discussion:

- It was noted that the notice board in Queenhill was in a poor state and should be repaired or replaced;
- A note of the main issues raised in the meeting would be prepared for publication in the parish magazine;
- Council meeting papers were available from the Worcestershire County Council site. To improve communication across the parish, this link would, in future, be circulated on both the Longdon Support and Queenhill/Holdfast WhatsApp groups.

12. Future meeting schedule: The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as:

4 April 2022.

Upcoming Meetings:

9 May 2022 Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Meeting of Parishioners

13. The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chairman, Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council