



Minutes are draft until approved at
the following meeting

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council held on Monday 5 September 2022 at Longdon Village Hall

Present: Chair Cllr Mullins, Cllr Cook, Cllr Faram, Cllr Davey

County Councillor: Cllr Wells (agenda items 1-4 and 7)

In Attendance: Bill Austin, Dave Mullins

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Vice-Chair Cllr Gray and Cllr Unwin. County Councillor Wells was welcomed to the meeting.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** No declarations of interest were made.
3. **Consideration of any dispensation requests:** There were no dispensation requests.
4. **Public Session:** The members of the public did not wish to make any representation.
5. **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 4 July 2022 were considered and unanimously approved as a correct record.
6. **Progress Reports:**
 - a) **Village Hall Committee:** The meeting of the Parish Council acting as Sole Trustee of the Longdon Village Hall was now scheduled for 3 October. The Council recorded its thanks to the working group convened by Cllr Gray who had tidied the Village Hall grounds on 24 August. Cllr Unwin's update on the condition of trees would be considered at the next Council meeting;
 - b) **Bear Lane Play Equipment Safety Inspection:** An update would be considered at next meeting;
 - c) **Lengthsman Scheme:** An update would be considered at the next meeting;
 - d) **Clerk Vacancy:** Considered under agenda item 8;
 - e) **Community Website:** An update would be considered at the next meeting;
 - f) **Meeting with West Mercia Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner:** The Chair and Vice-Chair met Paul Middlebrough, one of the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) for West Mercia on 29 July. In a positive meeting, topics raised by parishioners were discussed, including speeding traffic and the theft of



machinery. Subsequently, a representative of the Upton Safer Neighbourhood Team has agreed to attend a Council meeting, provisionally scheduled for 3 October.

7. Report from District and County Councillors: Cllr Wells reported:

- a) He was first elected as County Councillor covering this area 27 years ago; an area of 80 square miles with thirteen other Parishes. An Independent Councillor, he is Leader of Malvern Hills District Council and chairs the Worcestershire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board. One of his responsibilities includes “community engagement and development including parish councils”. Cllr Wells made it clear that he was available at any time to help or answer questions via email or phone as well as when he attends Parish Council meetings;
- b) To engage with Parish Councils the County Council runs regular three monthly meetings for Parish Council representatives who also determine the agenda for those meetings;
- c) An Asset Based Community Strategy had been created to enable better and more sustainable ways to support outcomes for communities, for example a Parish Plan outlining what a community could look like in 20 years and what was needed to achieve this;
- d) £0.5M had been set aside to enable community led ventures. Funding requests need to be matched 1:1 by community-raised funds through the Spacehive crowdfunding platform;
- e) Traffic was one of the biggest issues of concern for village communities in Worcestershire. Cllr Wells outlined the various solutions tried in past years. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to implement them mainly because of the road layout in Longdon village together with the fact that a police survey at the time showed that the vast majority of vehicles were under the speed limit. This result had been confirmed in the recent surveys conducted by the Parish Council. Vehicle activated speed systems (as installed in the parish) were a recognised benefit. Other successful interventions used locally include 30mph roundels on highway and white roadside gates, sometimes with planting. Another approach would be to create a Community Speedwatch Group;
- f) Cllr Wells suggested that the Parish Council consider inviting the Worcestershire Highways Liaison Officer to visit Longdon to discuss what measures might be possible to reduce traffic speed and improve safety for pedestrians;
- g) Subsequent to this, the Council could develop a costed suite of appropriate interventions and consider an approach to both District and County Councils for financial support;



h) Cllr Wells indicated that he will provide some financial support to the Parish Council in the next financial year from his personal County Council allocation. This money is to be used specifically to assist in implementing whatever traffic scheme is agreed by the Parish Council.

8. Clerk Vacancy: The relationship between the available budget, hourly salary and number of hours worked was discussed, together with the requirement to allow for an annual salary increase and mileage allowance within the budget. Councillors were invited to make final comments on the Job Description and draft Advertisement. It was agreed to advertise the vacancy locally in the first instance as well as through Worcestershire CALC.

9. Finance:

- a) The Council received and unanimously approved a report on the financial position on 31 August 2022. Few transactions had taken place in July and August. The electricity bill for the streetlight on The Badhams (Longdon) had increased significantly. The external auditor's invoice had yet to be paid as the correct bank details were still awaited;
- b) The Council unanimously approved the payment of fees and invoices as presented. As the Chair was effectively acting as Responsible Financial Officer (in the absence of a Clerk), the invoices were signed by an alternative authorised signatory. One invoice was deferred for further discussion at the October meeting;

Invoice:	Amount (£):
Google Workspace (Andy Young) 1 June - 30 June 2022	28.98
Google Workspace (Andy Young) 1 July - 31 July 2022	28.98
Google Workspace (Andy Young) 1 Aug - 31 Aug 2022	28.98

- c) The Council discussed whether to 'opt out' of the SAAA central external auditor arrangements for the period until 31 March 2027. Cllr Davey proposed to remain within the SAAA auditor arrangements, seconded by Cllr Cook. The Council unanimously approved the proposal;
- d) The Council discussed the preparation of the 2023/24 precept. Council agreed to set up a Finance Working Party to review expenditure and consider the amount of precept required for 2023/24. At the October meeting Council would discuss the scope of activity and individuals would be identified to lead on



specific elements. The Finance Working Party would meet in late November or early December.

10. To Consider the Adoption of the MHDC Councillor Code of Conduct: Cllr Davey proposed adoption of the MHDC Councillor Code of Conduct, seconded by Cllr Cook. The Council unanimously approved the proposal.

11. 20's Plenty Draft Motion:

- a) The Chair Cllr Mullins reported on a presentation from the 20's Plenty for Us organisation that advocates 20 mph speed limits in towns and villages;
- b) Cllr Cook proposed a vote of support for normalising 20mph in our parishes and to write to Worcestershire County Council on this issue, seconded by Cllr Davey. The Council unanimously approved the proposal.

12. Future Meeting Schedule: Councillors were invited to submit items for the agenda of the next or subsequent meetings. The date of the next ordinary meeting of Council was confirmed as Monday, 3 October 2022. This will include a meeting of the Parish Council acting as the Sole Trustee of the Longdon Village Hall with an update on potential new membership for the Village Hall Committee (a number of individuals had come forward offering to engage with village hall activities). This would be followed by an Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council to include updates from the Upton Safer Neighbourhood Scheme, updates deferred from the 5 September meeting and initial discussion of the precept for the next financial year. The dates of upcoming meetings were:

7 November 2022

No meeting in December but potential for Finance Working Group in late November/early December

9 January 2023

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chairman, Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council