

**Minutes of the Meeting of
LONGHOPE PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 20th January 2020**

PRESENT: Cllrs. M Phelps (Chair), S Collins, R Noblett, A Toomey and G Nicholas

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Maliphant (Clerk) and twenty-six local residents

1. Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr. B Robinson
2. There were no declarations of interest
3. **Presentation on the future of the Richard Read site**

Dr Roger Head thanked the parish council for the opportunity to tell local people about plans for the Richard Read site he had recently acquired in partnership with Jim Ruddy. There would be three phases to the work:

1. Restore and renovate the existing buildings, taking 3-4 months
2. A small development to tidy the front of the site, part of the change from a transport depot to a business hub – this phase would start in six months' time, taking 3-4 months of construction
3. There is outline planning permission for 50,000 square feet of new commercial space, the exact nature of which will be market-led. This phase may not complete for a number of years, and will need full planning approval in due course

In answering questions from the floor, a number of points were added, including:

- The intention is to make the site aesthetically pleasing, with minimal light pollution
- Neighbours will be spoken to at each stage of the development
- About 400 jobs are anticipated overall (but with less traffic)
- Environmentally-friendly forms of site heating will be looked at

MP thanked Dr Head for his presentation on behalf of the meeting.

4. Public Forum

Lenette Isko made a statement on behalf of the Friends of Longhope Recreation Ground that they had been formed to help raise the profile of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion and to help improve the community spirit. They had hoped to achieve this by holding events which would involve villagers of all ages. Events arranged by the "Friends" included a Village Christmas Tree, a Bingo night and several Pop Up Pub evenings. Any profits made during these events were paid into a 'Friends' Account' and were used to re-invest in arranging further events, and the purchase of materials and supplies where needed.

Following the events surrounding the recent breakdown of the Recreation Ground Committee the group felt it could not continue its activities and decided to disband. The "Friends" have met to dissolve the group and to decide what to do with the assets and the remaining funds of £1413.73. All the funds have now been distributed as follows (and only one cheque has not yet cleared):

£250 - Longhope Church towards its Organ Fund
£250 – Longhope and District British Legion
£250 – Hope Brook School
£250 – MacMillan Trust

£250 – to a local Girl Guide raising funds for the Guides trip to Canada
£120 – Rental Fees to Longhope Recreation Ground Management Committee

The remaining funds after the accounts have been settled will be given to the Longhope Youth Fund. Items purchased by the Friends have been given to the local “Rainbows” and to a group raising funds for the James Hopkin Trust.

All monies referred to above are totally separate and unconnected with the ‘The Longhope Youth Fund’. This fund is in the process of being passed to the Parish Council to be ‘ring fenced’ for the sole use of youth projects.

5. Co-option of new councillors

Cathy Griffiths had come forward in response to the recent public notice about councillor vacancies, and AT proposed the return by co-option of Lenette Isko, seconded by GN. Both were unanimously co-opted and invited to take their seats at once.

6. Planning

The circulated planning report was received with thanks. After discussion, it was agreed there was no objection to proposal P0015/20/FUL for a replacement bungalow at Ashfield, Velthouse Lane.

7. The minutes of the meetings on October 21st and November 18th were agreed as true records.

8. Members’ Reports

BR had sent a report advising that the County Council draft budget had been published and would be agreed in February. The draft budget provides additional funding of £12.9m for Children Services to cover additional demand and rising cost of care, while the overall budget increases by £31m to £468m. Capital spend for roads will continue with a further £49m of road resurfacing projects planned as part of the £150m road investment plan. Council tax was expected to rise by 3.9% made up of 1.9% council tax rise and 2% levy on adult care. £1m has been earmarked to support climate change issues.

The District Council budget is likely to increase by fractionally over 2% but within the limit imposed by government. The District Council proposed budget currently has a £500k shortfall that will be made up from the future deficit reserve. This will however exhaust this reserve meaning that additional income or service cuts will be needed in 2021. In addition, car park charges will rise to 50p for two hours and green waste charges will also increase.

Feedback into the consultation into the District Local Plan up to 2042 suggests broad support for the plan to include new settlements for up to 3,000 homes rather than simply squeezing them into existing towns and large villages. One landowner has put forward land south of Huntley for such a scheme but other sites might also be considered. The plan and feedback are public and available via the district council website. After considering the feedback councillors will be bringing forward a revised plan during 2020.

The Local Transport Plan refresh is now out for consultation on the county council website. A public event will be held in Newent Market Place on 23rd March.

AT advised that the May Hill Society would like the parish council to take responsibility for cleaning the Silver Jubilee plaque on May Hill, and the clerk said he would carry out a site visit.

ACTION: AM

The clerk spoke to the issue of an existing allotment holder who lived outside the parish, but had managed an allotment well for several years and had asked to take on another plot. After discussion it was agreed that this would be permitted, but only for a fixed term of 5 years in light of the policy that the allotments should be for Longhope parishioners.

9. Committee Reports

(a) Latchen Room Management Committee

RN reported that the road sign at the entrance to the village had been repaired by the Latchen Room Men's Club and reinstalled. There were still some guttering and damp issues in the Latchen Room itself, and there was now a date for the electrical testing site visit. The dog waste bin behind the Latchen Room was not being cleared, and the clerk said he would contact the contractors to remind them. **ACTION: AM**

(b) Recreation Ground Management Committee

Les Meadows the new chair of the Committee was invited to speak, and reported that the new committee was working well, and developing an action plan. Local young people had been invited to come to speak to the Committee on February 17th.

RN added that the Committee had agreed to take back paying the pavilion electricity bill, and by changing the supplier expected to save £60 per month. There had been two "pop-up pubs" which had gone well, as had the placing of a Christmas tree on the recreation ground. There would be another fun day to take place on the first Saturday in July.

There was discussion about the history and future management of the Longhope Youth Fund, and it was agreed that the question of new signatories would come to the March parish council meeting, after the discussions with local young people on February 17th and the subsequent Recreation Ground Management Committee meeting on February 24th.

The clerk advised that £674.11 in cash raised for the proposed path project had been paid into the parish council's account for safe keeping, and it was agreed it would stay there for the time being pending a revival of the project. GN added that after discussions with the clerk about a new lease for the Recreation Ground, he was awaiting a model lease from Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), and it was agreed this could come to the February parish council for review before sharing with the Committee.

10. Clerk's Report & Correspondence

The clerk presented the issues around having a parish council Facebook page, including a policy for what posts would be permitted. GN had started the process of setting up the page, and CG felt it was a good way of having a dialogue with parishioners, though AT noted that any responses from the parish council would need to be agreed by councillors before posting. After discussion it was agreed to start with a sub-editor group of SC, CG and GN who could communicate swiftly via Whatsapp.

The clerk opened a discussion about councillor portfolios, with the results to be shared with parishioners via the "Your Council" page on the parish council website. **ACTION: AM**

In discussions about a response to the climate change emergency, RN asked GN to send his earlier research around electric vehicle charging points for the Latchen Room Committee to consider, and AT suggested the car parking area might be extended, with possibly some tree planting as well. It was agreed to put a broad review of a climate change response on the agenda for the February meeting. **ACTION: AM**

The clerk gave a review of the annual returns to the Charity Commission. It was agreed to discuss the annual Rose Barton & Margaret Skelton party at a charity meeting in February.

Correspondence included:

- Concern from a resident about the state of the roads following the Gigaclear installations of fibre optic cables – it was agreed that the parish council would inspect the finished result when all the work was completed
- The District Council had instigated a review of the street cleaning contract managed by the parish council, which the clerk would respond to
- GAPTC had circulated a note of their training courses, and it was agreed GN would join the clerk on the charitable trusts course on February 11th while CG would go on one of the courses for a new councillor

11. Finance

The following invoices paid in December were formally approved:

SLCC Enterprises Ltd	47.50	Clerks Manual 2019
Utilita Energy Ltd	113.67	Pavilion electricity
Water Plus Ltd	29.46	Allotments water
HMRC	315.40	PAYE
Andrew Maliphant	522.86	Salary - November
Andrew Maliphant	37.33	Expenses – November

The following new invoices were approved for payment:

Latchen Room	549.26	Building insurance (replacement cheque)
Merlin Waste	90.00	Dog waste collection
Utilita Energy Ltd	163.78	Pavilion electricity
PATA (UK)	23.25	Payroll costs
Andrew Maliphant	536.52	Salary - December
Andrew Maliphant	37.33	Expenses – December

The monthly financial report was received with thanks. It was agreed to transfer £3,000 from the parish council reserve account to the current account, and to write to Utilita Energy confirming the parish council would cease to pay pavilion supply invoices from January 1st.

The clerk reported that tenders had been requested for the second phase of tree surgery on parish land, and it was agreed to delegate to the clerk powers to resolve the tenders so that work could be completed before the start of the bird-nesting season. The brief for a new tree survey would be on the agenda for the February meeting. **ACTION: AM**

The clerk presented the bids received to date for improvement works to Hobbs Lane, and added that the required third bid would arrive shortly. After discussion it was confirmed unanimously that the parish council would go forward with the project if the county council agreed to cover half the costs, and the clerk was asked to send in the expression of interest in match funding accordingly. **ACTION: AM**

The clerk presented a revised budget for 2020–21, including income projections based on the taxbase figures provided by the District Council. After discussion, it was agreed to put the Recreation Ground mowing out to tender for one year only, with some attention to wild flower areas, while the question of continued parish council financial support was reviewed.

It was also agreed to add three cuts of the allotments verge on the Latchen to the annual parish grass cutting contract. **ACTION: AM**

In conclusion of the discussion, the parish precept for 2020-21 was agreed at £24,000.

12. Community Land Trust

The clerk asked whether the parish council could hold the anticipated £1,000 grant from the District Council until the Community Land Trust (CLT) had its own bank account, which was unanimously agreed. MP reported there was continued progress with agreeing a constitution for incorporating the CLT as a community benefit society, and the owners of the preferred site for the affordable housing remained pleased with the way the project was going. The clerk added that the new housing needs survey would be reaching parishioners by the end of the month.

13. Next Meeting - Monday 17th February 2020 at 7 pm

Signed:.....Chairman. Date:.....