

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

PRESENT: Cllrs. M Phelps, S Collins, R Noblett, A Toomey, G Nicholas, L Isko and C Griffiths

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Maliphant (Clerk) and County Cllr. B Robinson

1. There were no apologies for absence
2. There were no declarations of interest
3. **Planning**

The circulated planning report was received with thanks. After discussion, it was agreed there were no objections to the following proposal:

P0456/20/TCA The Barn House, Station Lane – tree felling and replacement

It was also agreed that while there no objections to planning application P0293/20/FUL, proposed changes at the Richard Read Transport site, in light of the proposed changed aspect of the site frontage the parish council would suggest that the neighbour notification list be extended to properties opposite the site, and that owners of those properties be given an extended period to make comments.

4. The minutes of the meeting on March 16th were agreed as a true record, to be signed when conditions permit.
5. **Members' Reports**

GN said there had been a Facebook message raising an issue with dog fouling, to which he had replied pointing out the provision of dog waste bins. He wondered about the possibility of stencilled messages for dog owners to be placed on pavements as elsewhere in the Forest of Dean District.

AT added she had also had complaints about 40 bags containing dog waste being left along the footpath from the water tower up towards the summit of May Hill, and suggested there might be a sign along that path pointing out the nearest dog waste bin at the Yartleton Lane crossroads. There had also been people camping again in the copse at the summit.

RN reported that the road speed sign had been righted by a parishioner before he got to it, and he would be putting the battery back in place.

CG advised that work around the environment was on hold at the moment, but she was concerned that while there had been a focus on the elderly under the current crisis, nothing proactive was being done for young people. She had been very impressed with activity being supported by parents, such as rainbow signs in windows, but asked for any other suggestions to be sent to her around ideas that could benefit youth mental health.

BR reported that the county council had set up a health hub for co-ordinating work by community organisations. 15,000 people in the county had received the letter from Government saying they were entitled to food parcel delivery. The District Council had also been calling some vulnerable people to ensure they didn't fall through the loop. The District Council was additionally paying out the Government grants to businesses, £11M so far.

The County Council would be holding an online question and answer session the following Thursday, the first such as a health review, including talking about hospitals. The council Leader had said local hospitals were coping so far, with twenty Covid-19 bed patients in the Dilke. 400,000 items of personal protective equipment (PPE) had been delivered into the county the previous week, for hospitals, care homes and key workers, but were being used up quickly. Food parcels were being delivered to all free school meal students, managed locally by Dene Magna School (now part of a multi-academy body, the Forest of Dean Trust, including Drybrook Primary School).

County Highways were still working where they have the materials, doing what they can on quiet roads. They needed to plan local work, particularly as the Lengthsman's scheme is now restarting, and BR asked for any issues to be reported. AT said that while the new reservoir on May Hill was now up and running, the lane to it had been left in an atrocious condition, and BR agreed to chase the issue of when Severn Trent would be putting it right. He also noted RN's comment that the Blaisdon end of Velthouse Lane was very bad for potholes. LI suggested that local people could be asked via the parish council's Facebook page to report potholes directly to County Highways. **ACTION: GN**

CG wished to commend Lena Maller and her team at the District Council for their lead on community engagement during the pandemic, personally ringing local people and following up any requests. She wondered whether any Forest-based charities might be at risk of going under financially, and BR offered to take that point back to the District Council.

At a time when protecting children was even harder, CG also asked whether the level of committee scrutiny we had come to expect was being maintained. BR replied that children's services were operating as well as possible, with some meetings on the doorstep and some contact by telephone. Officers were being given PPE, but he felt we shouldn't expect things to run as smoothly as usual, nor would we wish scrutiny to get in the way of good delivery under the current circumstances. Once the county council had got the practice of online meetings working, regular scrutiny would be brought back in.

The clerk asked whether a county highways officer could carry out the previously planned Hobbs Lane site visit on their own, and BR agreed to pass that suggestion along.

6. Committee Reports

(a) Latchen Room Management Committee

RN reported that the Latchen Room was still closed to the public under the lockdown rules, but he was making regular visits to check the building was OK.

(b) Longhope Emergency Fund

CG reported that the owners of the local shop were happy to work with the parish council on a mooted food parcel scheme for people who were financially stranded while waiting for their first Universal Credit payments. After discussion it was agreed to keep to the draft proposals discussed at a previous special meeting, but the clerk was asked to contact the Mitcheldean Pharmacy for a similar discussion around prescriptions. **ACTION: AM**

7. Clerk's Report & Correspondence

The clerk presented the Government's new regulations permitting parish councils to meet online, rather than in person. The previously circulated protocol for managing online parish council meetings was agreed. It was also agreed that as the Annual Parish Meeting could not be held in the Latchen Room as usual, then the relevant annual reports including one

on the local response to the pandemic would be posted on the parish council website with a link from the Facebook page.

The clerk presented an email from a resident asking for the parish council's support in restoring verges along Church Road. After discussion it was agreed there were no parish funds for this purpose, but the county Lengthsmen could be asked to look at the matter. It was also agreed to remind County Highways of the need for Gigaclear to restore any roadways disturbed while laying fibre optic cables. **ACTION: AM**

The appointed tree surveyor had been in touch advising he was able to safely carry out surveys under the current conditions, and it was agreed to permit this provided social distancing was maintained. There had also been a message from the District Council about a "Dig For Victory" campaign, and it was unanimously agreed as previously discussed to plant fruit trees on the land behind the Latchen Room.

8. Finance

The following invoices were approved for payment:

Longhope PCC	200.00	Grant for churchyard management
GAPTC	405.76	Annual subscription
Longhope CLT	1000.00	Transfer of grant from FODDC
HB Digital Printing Ltd	30.00	Coronavirus leaflet
Merlin Waste	109.20	Dog waste collection
PATA (UK)	30.95	Payroll costs
HMRC	326.20	PAYE
Andrew Maliphant	541.27	Salary - March
Andrew Maliphant	122.44	Expenses - March

It was also agreed to move from the current cheque signature process to online banking, and the clerk advised that cheque signatories needed to ask for this facility as individuals, rather than a central request from the parish council. **ACTION: AM/GN/LI/SC**

The monthly financial report was received with thanks. The clerk advised that the District Council had yet to confirm whether the street cleaning contract would be renewed, and presented a proposal for a parish handyman to work a similar two hours per week. After discussion it was agreed to consider combining both roles in a single contract.

The clerk presented some proposed changes to the 2020/21 budget, partly to reflect the parish handyman proposal and partly in anticipation of a revised budget for Longhope Recreation Ground, for which the parish council was now the sole corporate trustee. After discussion several changes were agreed, and the clerk was asked to get some quotes for the proposed fruit tree planting. **ACTION: AM**

9. Community Land Trust

MP reported that Longhope Community Land Trust Ltd (the CLT) had now been formally incorporated as a community benefit society, and that solicitors had been appointed to start work on the legal agreements between the CLT, the Aster Group housing association and the site landowners. The final report of the Longhope Housing Needs Survey had been circulated, and MP pointed out that the demand for affordable housing was still there, the numbers partly drawn from the survey and partly from the District Council's Housing Register.

As the project was now being run by a separate legal entity rather than a parish council working group, a request had come in from the CLT for the secretarial support from the clerk to be continued through a grant to cover an estimated four hours per week. The clerk left the meeting for the ensuing discussion, as did MP, GN and LI as members of the CLT board and working group. Councillors agreed unanimously that a fuller request for funding was needed, using an application form to be devised by them, but in the meantime the clerk's salary would be increased for the next three months to the extent of an extra four hours per week. On his return, the clerk thanked the parish council for their support.

10. Next Meeting - Monday 18th May 2020 at 7 pm

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