

**Minutes of the Meeting of
LONGHOPE PARISH COUNCIL
held online on Monday 15th June 2020**

PRESENT: Cllrs. S Collins, G Nicholas and C Griffiths

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Maliphant (Clerk), County Cllr. B Robinson and 16 local residents

1. Election for Chair and Vice-chair

Following the resignation of the previous chairman between meetings, SC was unanimously elected as chairman and GN as vice-chairman.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. A Toomey

3. There were no declarations of interest

4. Co-option of a new parish councillor

Two local residents had put their names forward for the current vacancy. After discussion around a difficult choice it was agreed to co-opt Lee Haines to the post, while encouraging the unsuccessful candidate to put their name forward for the future by-election.

5. Public Forum

A proposal for a Lockdown Memorial on the Recreation Ground in memory of village activity during the Covid-19 pandemic was presented by one of the project organisers. The proposal was welcomed, not least due to its involvement of young people, and it was agreed that the details would be confirmed at a forthcoming Recreation Ground Trustee meeting on Monday 22nd June.

Concerns were also raised about the burning of plastic at the north end of the village, and it was agreed to raise the issue with Environmental Health officers. **ACTION: AM**

6. Planning

The circulated planning report was received with thanks. After discussion, and further to a recent site visit by the parish council's planning committee, it was agreed there were no objections to the following proposals:

- P0585/20/FUL proposed car port at The Anchorage, Station Lane
- P0635/20/FUL conversion of attached outbuilding at Zion House, Hopes Hill
- P0636/20/LBC listed Building Consent for the conversion at Zion House, Hopes Hill

It was agreed there were no objections to P0559/20/FUL for a new dwelling at Stoneleigh, May Hill, but the parish would like to suggest that external lighting should be low wattage and directed towards the ground, without any spotlights, that if the driveway is to move 20 feet along the hedgerow, there should be replanting of native hedgerow species along the redundant entrance, and that bird and bat boxes should be placed on site to benefit wildlife

During discussion about a proposed footpath diversion at Nag's Head Cottages concerns were expressed that vehicles come round the nearby bends on the A40 quite fast, it had always been a dangerous crossing point. The proposed crossing point on the plan was considered a bit too near one bend in the road, and the current crossing point had always been a bit close to the other bend, so it was agreed to suggest a crossing point somewhere

between the two, perhaps with a dropped kerb or other markings to make the crossing point clear.

ACTION: AM

7. Minutes of previous meetings

There was considerable discussion around the need to rebuff a previous untrue statement made by a member of the parish, that GN had lied when saying there was no agreement in place to rent out the tennis courts to a club outside the parish. It was made clear that the subject of hiring the courts had indeed come up at the May meeting, but in a passing mention only, there had been no further negotiations or hiring agreement. The following revised wording for draft minute 9(c) of the May meeting was unanimously approved accordingly (the clarifying additions are given in bold print):

*SC reported that a three-year business plan for the Recreation Ground was being drafted for discussion **by a businessman with local connections who is currently on furlough**. SC advised that the plan's author had maybe nearly rented out the tennis courts to Longford tennis club, adding that if we could rent the tennis courts out, we could generate maybe £6,000 per year. GN reported that he had been successful in gaining a £10,000 grant from the District Council, which he hoped could be used to improve the revenue potential of the Recreation Ground.*

A number of other items and opportunities were raised in discussion, including:

- *The whereabouts of the posts and net for one of the tennis courts*
- *The need for a stocktake within the pavilion*
- *Need to change the locks to secure the pavilion as it was not known who had keys*
- *Value of having WiFi in the pavilion*
- *Completion of the basket swing project*
- *Whether the Recreation Ground charity could reclaim VAT*
- *Option of buying a ride-on lawnmower*

None of these matters could be reviewed or agreed at the current meeting, nor could any rental agreements be proposed or agreed without the proper authority. The clerk suggested that all these items should be discussed at a Recreation Ground Trustee meeting, and it was agreed to meet online on Monday 1st June from 7pm.

The minutes of the meetings on May 18th and June 3rd were then agreed as true records, to be signed when conditions permit.

8. Members' Reports

BR gave an update about the work by Gigaclear installing fibre optic cable, noting that May Hill and Taynton would now be included in the programme.

A mobile Covid-19 test facility was in Cinderford for four days, and was expected to return to the area in future, part of the County Council's role in supporting testing and tracing.

Church Road was due to be resurfaced this financial year. BR noted local concerns about the road verges, and would be glad of feedback around any suggested solutions.

The County Council would be holding its first online meeting in June, and would return to full scrutiny meetings in July. The "Growing The Community" Fund was being repurposed in response to the pandemic, and applications could be made via BR for support for the parish, for example to provide IT equipment to allow inclusion in online meetings.

GN raised the issue of a safety report to County Highways that had been logged online but then no reference to the site had been found on the system. BR asked for the reference number so he could pursue the matter, and he would also pursue the question of what reinstatement of grass verges Gigaclear should be implementing. **ACTION: AM/BR**

GN added a concern about posts on the allotment fence damaged by vehicle access, and it was agreed to get quotes for necessary repairs. **ACTION: AM/GN**

SC noted the need for a heavy duty battery charger for the vehicle-activated speed sign, and LH offered to assist, also to consider the potential for a solar panel to recharge the VAS batteries. SC added that a suitable ladder was needed for use when moving the VAS equipment from one village site to another. **ACTION: SC/LH**

9. Committee Reports

(a) Latchen Room Management Committee

LH volunteered to become the parish council representative on the committee – approved unanimously.

(b) Longhope Emergency Fund

CG reported attendance at a meeting of all Covid-19 parish volunteer groups, organised by the District Council. The purpose had been to share methodologies – what helped, what hindered – and she was very proud that the work of the 70 volunteers in Longhope had been considered exemplary, with many questions asked. She remained concerned about residents of Hopeswood Park, who were also cut off by the lack of a bus service, and she would keep in weekly contact with them. The volunteers were anxious about social distancing easing, and some residents would be too anxious to leave their homes – CG wished to reassure people that volunteer support would continue as long as it was needed.

(c) Recreation Ground Management Committee

CG said she was keen to find a way forward for the basket swing project, and after further discussion about work carried out so far and the need to ensure safety regulations were met, it was agreed to organise a project meeting of interested parties including the young people who had raised the funding.

The clerk reported that the annual play safety inspection had been booked. Other health and safety issues were raised, including ongoing electrical safety work, the need for an asbestos survey, woodworm treatment and concern about a fire door. It was agreed to cover all these points at the forthcoming Recreation Ground meeting on June 22nd.

10. Clerk's Report & Correspondence

The clerk reported concerns from a local resident about a fire left burning amidst the trees at the top of May Hill. The parish council noted that the past attempt to place fire safety signs on the site had only resulted in the signs being taken away by persons unknown.

Another resident had rung in with concerns about young people building dirt jumps for bikes on land at the rear of the Latchen Room, while not observing social distancing. In discussion it was noted that litter was also being left on site, but the arrival of people in cars suggested that those concerned might not be from the village. CG commented it was necessary to clear the rubbish, but also to find a way to speak to the young people

informally to remind them to be respectful of the site and also Covid-19 restrictions. It was agreed to ask the local PCSO to keep an eye on the area. **ACTION: GN**

Other correspondence included:

- Regular Covid-19 updates from District and County Councils
- Weekly bulletins from County Highways
- New book published - 100 Years of Bathurst Pool in Lydney
- Phone call regarding footpath stiles near the A4136 and an email concerning the footpath steps off School Lane, both issues referred to County Highways
- Email concern about garden fires during lockdown, which councillors noted could only be reported to District Council environmental health officers as a nuisance once monitored over a three-week period

11. Finance

The following invoices were approved for payment:

National CLT Network	325.00	Longhope CLT incorporation fee
Merlin Waste	136.50	Dog waste collection
Glebe Contractors	121.07	Parish grass cutting
Water Plus Ltd	68.82	Allotments water supply
Information Commission	40.00	Data protection fee
HMRC	33.12	National Insurance
Andrew Maliphant	789.32	Salary - May
Andrew Maliphant	37.33	Expenses - May

It was also agreed to transfer £3,000 from the reserve to the treasurer's account.

The monthly financial report was received with thanks. SC raised the issue of dog waste being left in the ordinary bins by the pavilion, and it was agreed to reposition one of the two bins from the front of the recreation ground. The clerk was asked to contact Merlin Waste to confirm there were no problems about clearing a bin by the pavilion. **ACTION: AM**

The clerk advised the timetable for the Annual Return had been extended due to the pandemic – the annual statements would be considered for approval at the July parish council meeting, and the period for the exercise of public rights to review the accounts would begin on or before September 1st.

12. Next Meeting - Monday 20th July 2020 at 7 pm, to include consideration of a budget for the agreed project to plant fruit trees on land behind the Latchen Room.

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