

**Approved Minutes for the Annual Meeting of
LONGHOPE PARISH COUNCIL
Held on Wednesday 10th May 2023 at 7pm
At The Latchen Room, Longhope**

Present: Parish Councillors – Cllr Gary Nicholas (Retiring Chair), Cllr Richard Gough, Cllr Dave East, Cllr Lee Haines, Cllr Brobyn, Cllr Jackie Barker and Cllr Ant Moverley
5 members of the public in attendance.

Members were reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and any disability) crime and disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

1. Welcome from Incumbent Chair of Council (including Safety Evacuation Notice)

Cllr Nicholas, as Clerk, confirmed that all duly elected Council Members had signed Acceptance of Office papers, and all members had been provided with declaration of interest forms to be completed and signed, these will be forwarded to the FOD DC Monitoring Officer, by the Clerk, in due course.

2. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair for the 2023/24 Council year.

- *Cllr Nicholas, as outgoing Chairman, explained that whilst it was an entirely lawful situation, he did not feel it was appropriate to hold the position of both Council Chairman and Clerk to the Council. Given that the Council had asked him to fill the role of Clerk, Cllr Nicholas once again wished to make clear that he had not sought nominations for re-election to the position of Chair. He therefor encouraged other members to come forward.*
- *Cllr Richard Gough was duly nominated to the position of Council Chairman for the 2023/24 year ahead.*
- *Cllr Dave East was duly nominated to the position of Vice-Chairman for the 2023/24 year ahead.*

3. Signing of Chairmans and Vice Chairs Declaration of Acceptance of Office Forms

Cllr Gough and Cllr East signed their acceptance of office forms, and they were duly countersigned by the Councils Clerk/Proper Officer.

4. Apologies for absence

*Apologies had been received from County Councillor Phillip Robinson.
No Other Apologies received.*

5. Members declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & other Registerable Interests for items on the agenda.

None

6. To receive requests for Dispensations

None

7. Public Forum

A Resident enquired about the state of an external wall at a property facing onto Old Monmouth Road. This matter had been raised in a previous meeting, with Cllr East subsequently contacting the property owner. Whilst the matter is, apparently, being dealt with, Cllr East offered to 'chase' the owner, and will update Council at its next meeting.

8. Verbal report from County Councillor Philip Robinson, if in attendance

Cllr Robinson not in attendance, but apologies were received well in advance of the Councils Meeting.

9. Verbal report from newly elected District Councillors if in attendance

District Councillors John Francis and Dave Tradgett not in attendance, no apologies received.

10. To approve the Minutes of the meeting, of Longhope Parish Council, held on the 3rd of April 2023, as well as the extraordinary meetings of Longhope Parish Council held on the 13th and 25th of April 2023.

The Council resolved to accept the draft minutes, as circulated, as an accurate record of those meetings. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

11. Annual Meeting agenda items from standing orders:

i. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.

No Committees were formed at this time. As such, no matters were discussed. No powers or responsibilities are delegated, by the Council, to any external Committees or Local Authorities.

ii. Review of the terms of references for committees.

Subsequent to item 11 (ii) no committees were formed. As such, no terms of reference were required or discussed at this time.

iii. Appointment of Members to existing committees.

Subsequent to item 11 (ii) no committees were formed. As such, no terms of reference were required or discussed at this time.

iv. Appointment of any new committees, in accordance with Standing Order 4, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.

Subsequent to item 11 (ii) no committees were formed. As such, no terms of reference were required or discussed at this time.

v. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.

Council reviewed its existing Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, previously adopted in October 2022 and November 2022 respectively. Council agreed that no amendments were required at this time, and re-approved both policies in their currently published form.

vi. **Review and adoption of the Councils Code of Conduct.**

Council reviewed its existing Code of Conduct Policy Document, previously adopted in December 2022. Council agreed that no amendments were required at this time and re-approved the document in its currently published form.

vii. **Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.**

The Councils only arrangement with another local authority is its street cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Forest of Dean District Council (FOD DC). Under the terms of the SLA, Longhope Parish Council (LPC) will fulfil the FOD DC'S role/responsibility for street cleaning/litter picking of public areas within the Parish of Longhope. Under the four year agreement FOD DC will pay LPC £1217.70 per annum in consideration for the work it undertakes. 2023/24 will be the final year of the agreement, and FOD DC should have made the due payment by the 30th of April, this remains outstanding at this time (the Clerk will chase).

viii. **Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.**

Former Council member Geoffrey Bick had previously been appointed to the Hobbs Quarry Nature reserve. As this was a LPC related role, this post would now be vacated by Geoffrey Bick. It was agreed that the Trust would be contacted to enquire whether they would like another Council member appointed to their group/charitable Trust, to act as a point of contact with the Council.

ix. **Consider arrangements required for the Council to become eligible for the General Power of Competence in the future.**

The Clerk explained the purpose of the general power of competence, and also explained that whilst the Council had, at times, in the past been eligible for that power, it had not exercised that right, seemingly as the Council would have had little purpose for doing so. The Clerk also explained that whilst the Council met the requirement of having a two-thirds elected majority, its Clerk was not currently CiLCA qualified. As such the Council was not eligible for the General Power of Competence at this time. As the Councils Clerk will likely be qualified within the next 8-12 months, Council could revisit this matter at a later time.

x. **Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.**

Council reviewed the Asset Register, dated April 2023, as circulated by the Clerk. Council approved the document without amendment. Therefore, the agreed purchase value of the Councils assets stands at £74,074. The increase, on the previous year is a result of the Play Park refurbishment. Items held in trust are given a notional value of £1, as they can not be readily disposed of, and have no realisable value for the Council as a local authority.

xi. **Review of Councils Risk Management Measures, and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.**

Council reviewed its existing Financial and General Risk Assessment documents, previously adopted in February 2023 and November 2022 respectively. Council

agreed that no amendments were required at this time, and re-approved both policies in their currently published form.

The Council currently holds sufficient insurance, by way of a policy with Hiscox insurance, to indemnify itself against all foreseeable risks arising from public liability & employers/Members liability, all Council owned Assets are sufficiently covered against generally accepted risks. The Council's current policy expires in September – Council will administer a full policy review nearer the time as part of the new policy quotation process.

xii. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships/Subscriptions to other bodies.

Council agreed to continue its annual membership with the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) and The Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association.

The Clerk proposed that the Council consider membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). It was explained that this would provide a source of useful information and advice for the Council and its Clerk, including updates on changes to Legislation, and advice on Good Practices. Discounts are also offered on certain publications, such as that to be discussed under item 13, the discount on which would more than cover the annual membership fee.

It was explained that GAPTC assist Councils and its members, whilst SLCC assist Clerks – however any benefit gained by the Clerk ultimately benefits the Council. However, whilst SLCC provide an element of union membership, this would not be relevant to the current Clerk, who is also a Council Member. The Clerk made clear he had no interest in union membership.

Membership, in future years would be approximately £65, however as a CiLCA student, the current Clerk may be entitled to a discounted rate of £15.

SLCC Membership was approved by majority vote.

xiii. Review the Council's complaints procedure.

Council reviewed its existing Complaints Policy, previously adopted in September 2022. Council agreed that no amendments were required at this time and re-approved the policy in its currently published form.

xiv. Reviewing the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Council reviewed its existing Data Protection policies for the Public, as well as staff and Councillors, previously adopted in September 2022, and its Freedom of Information Policy as adopted in December 2022. Council also acknowledged its CCTV & ANPR management system policies, approved December 2022 and March 2023 respectively, remained current. Having recently approved its Publication Scheme and Document retention and disposal policy, in April 2023, the Council remain happy that the policies are up to date. Council agreed that no amendments were required at this time and re-approved all policies in their currently published form.

xv. **Reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media**

Council reviewed its existing Communications Policy, which was previously reviewed and reapproved, without change in February 2023. Council acknowledged that some amendments were now required at this time, specifically in relation to social media usage. It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a separate social media Policy, and present this at the next meeting.

xvi. **Review of the Councils employment policies and procedures**

Whilst the Council does not currently have any employees, the Council remains happy that they have sufficient, and up to date policies (having recently been drafted and approved) covering all applicable HR/Staffing as well as Health and Safety Matters. All agreed policies remain published on the Councils website.

xvii. **Review of the Councils expenditure incurred under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the General Power of Competence.**

No spending has occurred under the General Power of Competence, as the Council has not been eligible to do so.

A grant of £200, was made to the Forest Edge Newsletter, to support its publication, in May 2022. A second payment, for the same amount and purpose, has been approved by Council and will be paid to the Forest Edge Newsletter forthwith. Both payments are made under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972. No other such payments have been made.

Council have now commenced using Scribe accounts. As such, s137 will be accounted for as a specified line item within the 2023/24 accounts.

xviii. **Determining the dates, times and location of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.**

Council made no changes to its current meeting schedule. As such, meetings shall take place at 7pm, at the Latchen Rooms, Longhope. Meetings shall occur on the first Monday of each month, except August and January.

xix. **Review and confirmation of the list of regular payments made by Direct Debit**

A list of current Direct Debits was submitted to the Council. The list includes an annual payment to the Information Commissioners Office for £35. A monthly payment to 99 Web Media for £30 for the maintenance of the Councils website. And a monthly payment of approximately £30.19 to EE for the Clerks Mobile.

The Council provided authorisation for these payments to continue.

12. Adoption of the Scheme of Delegation, under s101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Council agreed, by majority vote, to adopt the Scheme of Delegation Policy Document as circulated by Cllr Nicholas.

13. Council to consider purchasing the new addition of the Arnold Baker Handbook on Local Council Administration.

As the Councils currently used edition was now out of date, by several years, the Council approved the purchase of the current edition. The cost would ordinarily be £163.00, however with SLCC membership, as approved, the cost should be £137.00.

14. Council to consider any changes required to its Banking Mandate, including the addition of further signatories.

The Clerk advised that the Councils current banking mandate was now significantly out of date. Several past Clerks had failed to remove past Council members once they left the Council. This has resulted in a large number of redundant signatories remaining on the account. Council agreed that these individuals should be removed, the Councils mailing address should be updated to that of the current Clerk and Cllr Haines and Cllr Moverley added as new signatories. The Clerk will arrange the necessary paperwork.

15. To Consider Planning Applications Received:

- P0519/23/AG | Prior notification for the erection of a livestock feed storage and agricultural equipment hut. | Land East Of Lonehead Little London Gloucestershire
The Council had no substantive objections to this application, given that it is stated to be for agricultural use only.
- P0516/23/FUL | Change of use of agricultural building to car storage (B8 use). (Retrospective) | Preecemoor Farm School Lane Longhope Gloucestershire GL17 0LJ
The Council had no substantive objections, given that the vehicles are already on site, and there is unlikely to be an increase in traffic to and from the site. However, the Council felt it should request a condition limiting the number of vehicles to 15. This would allow the current vehicles to remain whilst limiting any sizeable increase in their number.
- P1775/22/FUL | Erect a new dwellinghouse, the majority of which would be within the envelope of the extant walling (i.e., ruins). The existing extant walling would be repaired and / or partially reconstructed and /or completely reconstructed to form low cladding to the new dwellinghouse. | Land Adjoining Lonehead Little London Gloucestershire GL17 0PH ***(This item is a re-consultation, following the receipt of additional information)***

The Councils position on this application remained unchanged. The Council had previously stated that it felt this was a new build, rather than a rebuild, the new engineers support (submitted by the applicant) supports this view. It was considered that the site is well outside the defined settlement boundary and so far from public transport links. The Council feels it can not support such development in the open countryside, and therefore decided to object.

- P0220/23/FUL | Reconstruction and conversion of existing outbuilding to annex. Erection of detached garage. | Portway Villa Ross Road Longhope Gloucestershire GL17 0LP
Council had no objections to this application and were happy to support it.

16. Receive Councillors Reports

Cllr Haines had installed the VAS sign at the mid Church Rod location. Cllr Gough still has a charger available for the sign's batteries. Cllr Gough will attempt to download the data currently stored on the device.

Cllr East has arranged a meeting with several youths, to discuss the land at the rear of the Latchen Room and a proposed bike track. This has been scheduled for 18:30 on the 11th of May at the Pavilion. Cllr East shall update the Council at its next meeting.

17. Council to receive update on the status of its annual internal audit.

Clerk advised the Council that he had spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the forthcoming audit, this work had included locating numerous documents and invoices that were missing following the departure of past Clerks. A substantial amount of data had been uploaded to the Councils website, to ensure compliance with relevant guidance/regulations. All being well, the independent auditor, whose appointment had previously been agreed (see item 26, Minutes for LPC Meeting held on 3rd April 2023), shall commence their review in the coming weeks. This should allow the Clerk to draft the 2022/23 AGAR for review by Council at its next meeting. Therefore, the publication of public notices and submission should be well within schedule.

18. Council to Consider the need for any further Policies or Procedures required for the regulation of its business.

No additional matters raised, note 11(xv) above regarding a Social Media Policy.

19. Public Forum

No matters raised.

20. Next meeting of the Council scheduled for the 5th of June 2023.

21. Any Other Business

No Matters Raised.

22. Meeting Closed at 21:10

Agreed by Council as being a true and accurate record of the above meeting:

Signed:

Dated: