

**ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**1900 MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019 IN LONGSTOCK VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Cllr Sophie Walters (SW) – chair  
Cllr David Burnfield (DB)  
Cllr Ivan Gibson (IG)  
Cllr Charles Grieve (CG)  
Cllr Rebecca Griffiths (RG)  
Cllr John Milne (JM)  
Cllr Selina Musters (SM)

Clerk Mark Flewitt, ex-Clerk John Musters, and three members of the public .

**Apologies.** Colin McIntyre (Leckford Estate) County Councillor Andrew Gibson, District Councillor Daniel Busk, District Councillor Peter Boulton.

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed our electors present,
2. The **Minutes** of the Annual Assembly of 2018 were approved and signed.
3. **Matters Arising.** As last year the one matter arising from the previous APA concerned speeding traffic past Test Lodge. It was confirmed that speed tests were carried out at various points through the village. The speeds recorded were not excessive, and therefore no further action was deemed necessary. Matter CLOSED
4. **Police: PCSO Williams's** report reviewed how our area is policed, with the Test Valley neighbourhood team based in Stockbridge and Romsey, supported by Response teams out of Hedge End and Andover for 999 calls and more urgent matters reported via 101.

With the current resources, the Police focus their attention on “the right places and on High Risk and High Harm people and places”, and rely completely on the public reporting what is happening. Although there may be an impression that “crime is so bad these days”, crime figures do not support that perception. In the 90 days before the APA there was no reported crime in Longstock.

Although it is recognised that the 101 service may be “clunky”, the public is asked to be patient and it is worth the effort to make the call. Alternatively there is an on-line reporting system which works very well, and the Police emphasise “please tell us what is happening”. We are also encouraged to follow the Police on HantsAlert and Twitter.

The Local Police Team resources are slowly coming up to where they should be, and they hope to be able to get out to local engagements more often in the future.

5. **Hampshire County Council:** In his expected absence **County Councillor Andrew Gibson** had e-mailed his report which the clerk read out.

Local Government is unlikely to receive any additional funding from Central Government over the next few years, with any extra resources being directed to other areas such as NHS and the Police. Council Tax increased by 2.99% this year (1.99% HCC, 1% Adult Social Care). Large cuts up to 2017 were able to be absorbed with minimal service cuts, but all the slack within HCC has now gone, and further cuts will transfer directly to the loss of front line service in these “difficult times”.

Cllr Gibson reported on the decision of the Governors of Test Valley School to close the Swimming Pool because of the £12k annual maintenance cost. Subsequent to the APA the closure decision has been reversed, and the PTA are currently working on funding and sponsorship proposals to ensure the pool remains open in the long term.

Cllr Gibson also reported on the proposed traffic calming project in the Wallops. There will be an initial trial period before the solution is fully adopted, but one of the potential consequences may well be an increase in traffic on the Danebury Rd above Longstock.

Cllr Gibson has been able to pledge £1500 for the street-lighting in Longstock. This is the only village in his area that owns its own lighting and is not covered by the HCC lighting, and he has been very pleased to support the Parish Council in this respect.

Finally, Cllr Gibson thanked the Parish Councillors for their support over the last 10 years, and with special thanks to the retiring Parish Clerk John Musters for his efficiency and organisation.

Chairman thanked Cllr Gibson for his interest in and support of our parish council.

**6. Test Valley Borough Council: Councillor Daniel Busk** had previously emailed a report on behalf of himself and **fellow-councillor Peter Boulton**, which the clerk read out.

In Test Valley the local taxation level has been frozen at £141.41 for an average Band D property. TVBC will run a balanced budget via a combination of savings and extra income, which will “enable us to grow our potential, continue to invest in Test Valley, and prepare us well for the major changes ahead”.

There have been significant improvements at the Romsey Rapids, and the brand new Andover Leisure Centre is now open, at no capital cost to the rate-payers. Work continues by Andover Vision and Romsey Future to rejuvenate our town centres.

TVBC delivered 217 affordable homes against a target of 200, and Councillors Busk and Boulton have been able to award small grants to deserving projects in their Ward, including the recent £707 towards the Longstock Street Lighting.

Both Peter Boulton and Daniel Busk have stood down from their Borough Councillor roles as at the May elections, and Longstock will now form part of the much larger Mid Test Ward, with 3 Borough Councillors representing over 7,500 electors.

**7. Longstock Parish Council: Cllr Sophie Walters**, Chair of the LPC, presented her report on the past 12 months.

There have been no changes to the seven members of LPC in this past year, but Cllr John Milne is not seeking re-election after 32 years service. Enormous thanks and much appreciation are offered to John Milne for his contribution to Longstock over these many years.

Good byes and very many thanks were also extended to John Musters as clerk and finance officer of LPC, who “has kept the ship off the rocks and moving ahead for 15 years”.

Thanks also to our County and Borough Councillors, Andrew Gibson (HCC), and Peter Boulton and Daniel Busk (TVBC) for their support over the past year. Good wishes were extended to Peter and Daniel on their retirement at the forthcoming elections.

Roads – potholes continue to be a major concern, and it remains to be seen whether the new “quick fix” techniques lasts any longer than before. The worst cases have been along the Bunny and at Bottom Road, together with the road beyond Longstock Park (actually in Wherwell parish and which has been now been dealt with). Our roads were never designed for the size and weight of modern vehicles, and we did put up an “unsuitable for HGVs” sign on the Bunny to discourage the worst offenders.

Traffic speed in the village is a running concern, and the size of modern agricultural and industrial vehicles, especially in narrow spaces such as Test Lodge. The Police installed a speed data recorder in April last year, but speeds were overall below the level they would install enforcement cameras. This was disappointing, but we should all spread the word and “lean on” local employers to tell their drivers and deliverers to ease up.

Our street lights are in need of replacement, and huge thanks are due to Cllr Selina Musters for her hard work in dealing with this far from straightforward task. LPC has agreed on “heritage” lights in the main part of the village plus the Carbery crossroads as phase 1, with the remaining nine to be replaced in due course with a modern design. Thanks to our County and Borough Councillors for their grants towards the lights’ replacement.

The Lengthsman has done good work through the parish, and we are big fans of this scheme. Many thanks to Cllr Charles Grieve, who is now the contact point for the lengthsman, and has kept abreast of all footpath matters. We now have fingerposts in all the right places.

On Planning, the LPC has considered 9 new planning and 2 tree applications. After some “head-scratching” at some recent TVBC decisions, we welcomed Paul Jackson to the July LPC meeting to try to understand better their processes. We try very hard to preserve the character of this very pretty village, but are sometimes overridden by TVBC who take advice from “Experts”. They don’t have to live with the consequences of their decisions.

Affordable Housing – no progress on this as per the past 25 years. It seems we either have to sell our souls to allow Daniel Busk to build 46 houses behind Roman Road or go without. If only we had a philanthropic landowner who would donate ½ acre to the

village for this purpose. Many thanks to Cllr David Burnfield for all his efforts on this and all he does for the village.

The Longstock Newsletter is under new editorship. Jan Greep did 2 years till Summer 2018, then Tim Needas stepped up for one edition. Heli Cole and Rosie Flewitt have now picked up the baton. This is such an important organ of village life. Big thanks to all involved in editing, contributing, and distributing. Compliments and huge thanks and appreciation also to Jan Greep for continuing to manage the website despite her move to Broughton. Another essential organ as all LPC material has to be carried on websites where they exist.

Following GDPR last May, Colin McIntyre, Leckford Estate's non-voting rep on LPC, donated a laptop for the Parish Clerk to dedicate to LPC work. The Clerk and Councillors now have dedicated Gmail addresses. Thanks also to David Parkinson setting up the laptop.

We continue to have excellent relations with Leckford Estate with Colin attached to the LPC.

Our lovely playground continues to be widely used. The annual RoSPA inspection found a few minor repairs needed, covered by self-help by councillors. Volunteers carry out weekly safety checks (please don't lose the check list!). Thanks to all volunteers and to Leckford for cutting the grass.

Thanks to Cllr Ivan Gibson for maintaining the cemetery and keeping this haven of tranquillity so beautiful. Thanks also to Peter Moore who keeps the cemetery garden such a picture, and to Dave Watts who tends the memorial garden so well.

The Allotments continue to be well run and enthusiastically supported, and in March 2019 the Diocese renewed the lease for a further 3 years. Many thanks to Gareth Evans as Chair of the Society, and to Ivan who reports back to LPC.

We enjoy excellent relations with the Peat Spade. We appreciate their welcome to councillors after each monthly LPC meeting, and especially their generous support of Remembrance Sunday commemoration. Thanks to Team Shelley.

Last November marked the centenary of Armistice. In preparation we had the memorial professionally cleaned, and as an additional tribute we placed large poppies on 13 telegraph poles, each with a short bio, to commemorate the 13 men of Longstock who died in WW1.

The Henry Smith charity continues its annual generous grant of £2k, which once more enabled us pass on £250 to help those who needed it, £500 to help school children to join field trips, and £815 for the annual seniors' lunch – always a highlight in the calendar!

The Village Hall is as ever well maintained and run as a village focal point and a venue for wider groups. It doesn't look nearly 30 years old – a tribute and thanks due to the management committee.

“Our” school, Test Valley, has had some challenges with falling numbers, with hopes for a bigger intake in September. LPC once more sponsored a prize for academic achievement. There was concern at the scheduled cost-saving closure of the swimming pool, but a 13,000 strong petition to the Governors has saved it. A lottery 250 club crowd-funding is in place, but they are looking for sponsors. If you feel you could help please contact our clerk ([longstockparishcouncil18@gmail.com](mailto:longstockparishcouncil18@gmail.com)) or talk to Cllr Becky Griffiths, the LPC contact for the school. LPC has expressed our support for the pool as a continued asset of the school. Thanks to Becky for keeping the lines of communication open.

The LPC finances continue in good shape, well controlled by the Clerk aka Finance Officer. The 2019/20 Precept increased to £8k to allow for street lights replacement and in case of a contested election in May, which did not in fact happen. Only one person stepped forward, and one councillor resigned. “So I guess you all think we are doing a fabulous job and you couldn’t do any better!!!!”

The audit again achieved a clean bill of health. Thanks to Patrick Coates, local chartered accountant, for the internal audit.

We have a new Clerk, Mark Flewitt, who has kindly stepped up and is busy trying on John Musters’ shoes for size. It is really appreciated Mark – many thanks.

Finally, warm thanks once more to all our councillors who continue to give freely of their time and effort to the good of this very special village.

## 8. Longstock Parish Council Finance

Retiring Clerk **John Musters** presented his final report on the LPC’s Finances.

After 15 years as Finance Officer John Musters was able to report once more a satisfactory state of affairs and a comfortable balance to hand on to his successor.

Patrick Coates carried out the internal audit of the LPC 2017/18 accounts, and because both income and expenditure was less than £25k we are exempt from external audit requirements.

For this accounting year our opening balance was £4,888, and we ended the year on £6,988. The additional £2k was related to contributions for the two replacement streetlights – one already underwritten by the village hall committee, and the other through an anonymous donation to the hall for another. So a more true and satisfactory comparison shows an increased balance of just £100.

Some details:

- The precept rose from £6.5k to £7k in anticipation of the streetlight project
- The Newsletter generated a small surplus of advertising income over production costs
- Income from cemetery burials once again down on last year
- A generous £250 donation from Leckford Estate via their Community Giving towards the cleaning of the War Memorial for the Armistice Centenary
- Electricity expenditure appears to more than double (£218 to £485), but this was principally due to delayed receipt of the final SSE bill for the previous

year. Additionally the electricity unit charged was increased twice in the current year

Overall, after discounting the distortions of the £2k streetlight income from the Village hall, income exceeded expenditure by 1.1% in line with forecasts.

Patrick Coates will once again carry out the internal audit. Longstock electors will be able to review the accounts between 17<sup>th</sup> June and 26<sup>th</sup> July if they wish.

With regard to the Henry Smith charity funds administered by the LPC, the Chair has taken over responsibility for local grant awards and will be the contact with the London head office.

Future plans and the coming year? The precept was increased to £8k, partly to cover the eventuality of a contested LPC election, and to cover the entire cost of the streetlight replacement project, due to reach fruition this year. We are grateful to our County and Borough Councillors from their grant schemes towards the streetlights (£1.5k from HCC due in June, and £707 already received from TVBC)

The new LED streetlights need little or no maintenance, so the non-renewal of the SSE contract should save us several hundred pounds a year.

9. **Questions/Comments from the Public.** Nil.

10. **AOB.** Nil.

The Chairman closed the Assembly at 19.50.