



**Longhirst
Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting (public)**

MINUTES

**7pm on Thursday, 04 May 2023
Longhirst Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllr Peter Coates, Cllr Glen Fahy, Cllr Peter Lovering, Cllr Chris Marr,
Cllr Jon Mills

APOLOGIES: Cllr Janet Quinn, Cllr Richard Tordoff, Cllr David Towns (NCC)

IN ATTENDANCE: Helyn Douglas (Clerk)

1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION TO PARISH COUNCILLORS

There were no members of the public present.

2 PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT – [Update from the Action Plan](#)

As well as the update from the action plan, the Chair gave his report of highlights from the past year:

Domino's Field

Councillors were delighted with the outcome of the Planning Inspectorate Appeal that effectively prevents house-building on that area of green-belt land. He hopes that further contact with the land owners about alternative uses of the land will be possible in due course.

Wildlife & Community Trust

The Trust is now established and has a strong membership. It has secured c£10k from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and there will be another public meeting on 22 May to discuss proposals for activities, including a presentation by the Natural History Society of Northumbria.

Butterwell Disposal Point

A public meeting had been arranged and was well-attended. We now await a decision from Northumberland County Council.

Volunteers

The Longhirst Litter Pickers celebrated their 20th Anniversary and made front-page news in the Morpeth Herald. The Chair also thanked those involved in other volunteering activities in the parish, including the Open Gardens, bar nights, coffee mornings, flower tubs and general repairs. In particular he wanted to thank Mike Elphick for his dedication. The Chair noted that village life is greatly enhanced by the commitment of a handful of people.

But he also noted that there is a risk to this continuing if new people do not come forward to take over as others leave and that some people end up over-burdened by the amount of work involved. He was disappointed that only one person from the village had come forward to offer one hour per year to help clean the signage around the village.

Parish Council Clerk

And finally, the Chair thanked the Clerk for her hard work organising the meetings and administering the Parish Council affairs so well.

3 PARISH COUNCIL PLAN

Councillors reviewed the plan and updated it:

- The Church Lychgate repairs are due to start soon.
- The hole in the Longhirst boundary wall is now repaired.
- Stobswood Haul Road - some new activity has been seen on site and the Chair will chase this up with NCC.

4 OPEN DISCUSSION

Cllr Marr raised a query regarding succession planning for local community groups. He noted that some regular activities are struggling as new volunteers are not coming forward, and that there is a danger of the village splitting the collective resources that it does have across too many groups.

Cllr Marr was keen to explore ways to raise awareness of the need for volunteers, and to discuss new operating models for how the village groups could work together. The Chair felt that the semi-regular Parish Groups' meeting was one way to deal with these issues.

Further discussion will be had at a future meeting about ways to develop community spirit.

Close of meeting at 7.45pm