

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 2022



SUMMARY AND THANKS

It has been another intense year of activity for Longhoughton Parish Council (LPC). This report illustrates the range of activities and projects that Councillors are developing and implementing to meet the needs of residents and deal with changes in the economy and environment. LPC has had to find ways to operate despite COVID and in all, nine full meetings were held.

Four new members joined LPC earlier in the year and it is very appropriate to thank the whole Council for their dedication and commitment in serving the community and giving their time as volunteers. Thanks are also due to Elizabeth Taylor the Clerk to the Council, Councillor Wendy Pattison and Ayshea Lewis the representative of the RAF. It is also appropriate to thank all the people in the community who give their time in helping to run community groups and those who deliver Newsletter. Our community would be impoverished without all these people.

COUNCILLORS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

Parish Councillors. The following Councillors held office during the year:

Adrian Hinchcliffe (Chair from 17.05.21); Bryan Ellis*; Caroline Bradshaw*; Carole Green; David Hindson*; Eleanor Phillips (to 19.04.21) Jacqueline Barras*; John Haughie (to 07.02.22). Katie Middlemist (from 21.06.21); Peter Bromley (Vice Chair from 17.05.21). **Clerk to the Parish Council:** Mrs Elizabeth Taylor, **County Councillor:** Wendy Pattison, **Representative of the RAF:** Fit Lt Ayshea Lewis. * From 17.05.21

IMPACT OF COVID

The continuation of lockdowns throughout the early part of the year made it difficult for many residents. Support for the elderly continued by a team led by Eleanor Phillips, for which we are very grateful. All Parish Council meetings were held by ZOOM until October 2021 when face to face meetings re-commenced. Many community organisations were finding it difficult to re-commence their activities. People's confidence in attending meetings was low and the outbreak of high infection levels in the early months of 2022 did not help.

PRECEPT WHAT RESIDENTS PAID: £34.80 for each household at the Band D level.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENTS New methods of communicating with residents were implemented including the use of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The popular Community Newsletter has been extended to six pages and is issued every two months. Noticeboards are maintained at Howick, Boulmer and in Longhoughton outside the Co-op and the Running Fox. The Parish Council has two websites:

General information: www.northumberlandparishes.uk/longhoughton

Neighbourhood Plan: www.longhoughtonndp.co.uk

ROUTINE BUSINESS

Throughout the year LPC conducted the following routine business:

- Considering and commenting on planning applications (12 in the year).
- Dealing with various incoming consultations.
- Dealing with queries, complaints and requests from residents.
- Arranging services and paying invoices.
- Financial grants to community organisations of £3,596 were awarded.
- Routine correspondence.

OTHER ISSUES WORTHY OF NOTE

Storm Arwen. Storm Arwen devastated our area at the end of November. Boulmer, and parts of Longhoughton were badly affected due to the loss of electricity supply, and Howick village was off for ten days. Members of the Parish Council helped by contacting and assisting residents especially who needed support and in liaising with Northern Powergrid. The Community and Sports Centre in Longhoughton opened for refreshments, warmth, showers and phone charging. The payment of compensation for the loss of electricity supply by Northern Powergrid was chaotic. Guidance on how to claim was given to many residents and some cases were taken up individually. At the end of March 2022 there were still some cases outstanding.

Longhoughton Community Hub. Discussions were held with Northumberland Communities Together for Longhoughton and the Community and Sports Centre to become a **Community Hub**. This would benefit the whole community and bring many services to the Parish.

RAF. Discussions on the welcome for the many new servicemen and their families coming to RAF Boulmer. Liaison discussions on training exercises and a karting facility. Other areas for greater co-operation considered including the Parish signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Celebration. This unique event on 5 June 2022 is to be celebrated by the Parish with a major fair come fete come picnic. To incorporate the RAF Families Day. An organising Committee has developed the proposals and sincere thanks are due to everyone involved.

Support for Elderly Residents. One hundred nominated residents throughout the Parish were given a small gift at Christmas thanks to grants from the Parish Council and COVID funds. This was done in association with the Community and Sports Centre.

Longhoughton Quarry. Mineral extraction at the western end of the quarry ceased and is being prepared for release

as a nature reserve. Extraction operation moved back to the eastern quarry where a new set of Planning regulations was established. The lake was drained before blasting and the removal of minerals re-commenced. Vibration from blasting has become an issue and the cause of some complaints. The Parish Council and the County Council have been working with Longhoughton Quarry on this issue which is ongoing. Thanks are expressed to the Quarry for supporting the community in various ways during the year.

Longhoughton Surgery Proposed Closure. In January 2022 Alnwick Medical Group issued a consultation on the proposed closure of Longhoughton Surgery. The Parish Council had not had any prior consultation on this proposal and called a public meeting which was held on 10.02.22. The meeting was well attended with many good arguments on why the surgery should remain open. The Parish Council decided to consult all residents with a questionnaire. 164 residents responded and all but 6 were strongly in favour of retaining medical facilities in Longhoughton and put forward many examples of the difficulties of having to go to Alnwick or Embleton for health services. The results of the survey were sent to Alnwick Medical Group and the Clinical Commissioning Group. AMG said that the main reason for closure was that the premises used in Longhoughton were not fit for purpose. Alternative premises have been found to negate this argument. A response is awaited.

Vandalism. Longhoughton has seen an outbreak of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The Police have been involved and have stepped up their patrols, publicity and vigilance.

PROJECTS

Four Year Project Plan. At the start of the year LPC agreed a listing of projects that will be pursued over the next four years. Progress is given against each project so that all Councillors can see the up to date position. The listing will be published on LPC website.

Neighbourhood Plan. The Consultation on the evidence and background papers took place in June 2021. Due to COVID special films were recorded for residents to view rather than meet in public. The consultation produced 118 responses that were largely supportive of the direction of the Plan and a summary of the responses was distributed to all households. From the evidence the first draft of the Pre-Submission Plan has been compiled. The sites for future housing have been narrowed down to four in Longhoughton and one in Boulmer. The Steering Group applied for the assistance of AECOM to do a detailed multi-design of the five potential housing sites and this will be available in late spring. A further consultation took place on the settlement boundaries for Howick and Boulmer and these have now been approved for inclusion in the Plan. Also, a possible network of green routes between Longhoughton, Lesbury and Alnwick was issued for inclusion in the Plan.

Longhoughton Traffic Review. Progress has been slow due to waiting for the AONB Design Guide to be completed and a Landscape Architect appointed. Several meetings have been held with Highways and AONB representatives to define the changes necessary. Amended speed restricted zones have been defined and are to be highlighted by road markings and the use of physical features to control vehicle speed. Following consultation it is expected that the changes will be implemented in 2023. Heavy vehicles operators have been contacted to ask them to observe the speed limits.

Howick Burn Bridge and Permissive Footpath. A specification for the bridge was compiled and quotations invited and a 'preferred supplier' has been appointed. Discussions have taken place with the landowner on an amended route for the permissive footpath and agreement has been reached. An application for funding is to be made with view to the project being undertaken in Summer 2022.

Longhoughton Dunes and Low Steads. The Parish Council has been working with Howick Trustees, the landowner of the dunes, Low Steads Farm and the AONB to find a solution to stop the damage being done to the dunes and headland by vehicles and to reduce the volume of vehicles that use the lane through Low Steads Farm. The proposal was to reduce the parking area so that the dunes and headland, which are a Site of Special Scientific Interest, are allowed to recover. The scheme was approved by the County Council and Natural England. Howick Estates obtained funding to reduce the parking area by the use of stones which were put down in March. The next stage is to consider the introduction of charges for parking linked to signage and an overflow car park at the Longhoughton end of the lane. The scheme will operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Longhoughton Vehicle Parking. The arrival of the Running Fox and other attractions such as the Coast and Castles camping and caravan site on Boulmer Road, has led to increased volumes of traffic in Longhoughton especially in the Lacey street area. Additionally, the restrictions on parking at Longhoughton Beaches may result in more vehicles wishing to park in Longhoughton. LPC is pursuing the use of the former recreation ground as a car park to meet these needs.

Boulmer Vehicle Parking. Boulmer continues to be congested with visitor traffic throughout the year. The existing car park is full most mornings and vehicles overflow onto the road side making it difficult for residents. The County Council carried out a consultation on future parking which resulted in 81% of residents responding and 67% preferring a new car park next to the village hall. NCC is designing the car park which will be subject to planning permission.

Community Development and Cohesion. To encourage community organisation to recover from COVID the offer of grants were made and a new website is being developed for their joint use.

Other Projects. Numerous other projects and initiatives were taken during the year. Some are listed here – Green Dog Walker's Code, War memorial discussions; Sat/Nav. issues; Responsibility for dead/overhanging trees; second Homes/Holiday lets; Tedder Place MUGA; Need for more allotments; Support for the AONB; Requirements for 'permanent occupation of new homes; Superfast Broadband.

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IS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

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