Longhirst Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at Longhirst Colliery Hall, on Thursday, 2nd July 2026

Present	Cllr Glen Fahy (Chair)	Cllr Andrew Robson (Vice Chair)	Cllr Bill Climson
	Cllr David Jordon	Cllr Janet Quinn	Cllr Richard Tordoff
			Barry Flux (Clerk)
In Attendance	6 members of the public		

Public questions / speaking
Public Forum: The public session was opened for 10 minutes. Key issues raised included:
Highways & Speeding Update: In the absence of County Cllr Ed Dungait, the Chairman shared notes from Highways. A decision in principle on the site evaluation and the engineer's report is expected in August, to be formally presented at the September meeting. Crucial updates included:

Junction Visibility on the B1337
Residents reported difficulty safely exiting residential access points onto the B1337 due to narrow lanes and parked cars. A request for a double yellow line restriction was previously denied by Highways without justification. The Council will explore the feasibility of installing a traffic mirror, noting that planning permission or landowners' permission would be required depending on placement.

Speeding and HGVs
Concerns were raised regarding excessive traffic speed and large HGVs using the B1337 as a diversionary rat-run when the A1 is closed. HGVs are frequently observed crossing the central white lines on the tight bends near the church.

Highways Restrictions
Highways have refused a 20mph zone restriction and sleeping policemen.

Speed-Calming Approvals
Highways are willing to look into applying 'dragon's teeth' road markings and installing an automated digital speed monitoring camera in the center of the village (which automatically downloads 24/7 telemetry).

Funding Pledges
The Parish Council and Cllr Dungait have each provisionally pledged £5,000 (totaling £10,000) toward physical speed-calming measures, but will refuse to fund simple paint markings like dragon's teeth, which are considered the County's responsibility.

Chicane Relocation
Highways are actively assessing the relocation of the entry chicane right to the village boundary to force traffic to reduce speed significantly upon entrance.

Agenda Item

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
   County Councillor Ed Dungait

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
   Cllr Jordon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 5 (Planning Application 26/02046/FUL relating to Old Moor Farm) as the applicant. It was noted that he would refrain from speaking or voting on this item during official council deliberations.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**
   The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 7th May 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following formal corrections:
   - Clarification that Cllr Andrew Robson was nominated and selected as Vice-Chairman, not Chairman.
   - Correction to the Clerk's Report to reflect that the AGAR certificate and report were fully presented to the Parish Council as required.

4. **CLERK'S REPORT**
   Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations Other Policies and Terms of Reference

   AGAR Follow-Up Actions
   The Clerk reported that the AGAR process is successfully finalised. The preparation of a comprehensive risk register is underway over the summer recess and will be submitted at the September meeting.

   Financial Report
   The Clerk presented the financial update. The ordinary current account balance stands at £8,620.64 (notable outlays included £100 to the auditor and annual insurance).

   The business savings account stands at £15,107.51

   Websites & Electronic Mail
   The transition to the compliant public sector domain is fully resolved. The official website is active at www.longhirst-pc.gov.uk and the correct clerical email address is clerk@longhirst-pc.gov.uk. Legacy mailboxes are set to forward seamlessly. Difficulties had been encountered contacting the provider of the village history website regarding outstanding payments and account administration.

   Members agreed that, if necessary, reimbursement could be made to Chris Marr for payment of the history website renewal to ensure continuity of service.

5. **PLANNING**
   26/00498/COU Fairwinds, Ulgham Lane, Longhirst, Northumberland, NE61 3NE
   Change of use from a private residence (Class C3) to a supported home (Class C2)

   It was noted that following structural and legal review by the planning department, a proper site notice has now been posted and adjacent neighbors notified, extending the comment window to mid-July. All original public objections and comments from Network Rail remain valid. Both the Parish Council and County Cllr Dungait have requested that this application be referred to the full planning committee rather than delegated to an officer.

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26/02094/TREECA Land North East Of Micklewood Close Micklewood Close Longhirst, Northumberland Trees in a Conservation Area: T2,T3,T5,T6,T7,T8,T9,T10,T11,T12,T13,T14,T15,T15,T16,T18,T19,T20,T21,T22,T 22,T23,T24,T25,T26,T27,T29,T30,T33,T34,T36,T37,T38,T38A,T39,T44, T46,T55,G40,G54,G56,G59,G60 - Various species, see application and Tree Report for schedule of works

Various tree management works in a Conservation Area. RESOLVED: No comment.

26/02046/FUL Old Moor Farm Longhirst, Morpeth Northumberland, NE61 6PR Proposed wash down machine shed 56m2 ,replacement concrete hardstanding area 740m2 with new road access (All part of work associated with Countryside Stewardship Capital Grant)

It was noted that this application significantly increases highways safety by moving the primary heavy agricultural machinery entrance 50+ meters away from an extremely tight 60mph blind bend. RESOLVED: To submit a robust and fully supportive comment to the Planning Authority.

26/01950/FUL The Crossing House, Ulgham Lane, Longhirst, Northumberland NE61 3NF Timber built L-shaped stable-block comprising of three boxes (1 main stable, 1 equipment/tack room, 1 feed/bedding store) with concrete base, area of hardstanding and fencing.

The site is secluded, non-intrusive to neighbors, and well-managed. RESOLVED: To submit a supportive comment.

6. GENERAL ITEMS

Resurfacing of Road

The main carriage works through the village were executed to a high standard, incorporating recycled plastic elements. However, the associated pedestrian footpath was excluded from the resurfacing. The Clerk will escalate this anomaly to County Cllr Dungait to determine why the pathway was omitted.

Speed Sign

Maintenance checks by Cllr Tordoff confirmed that clearing moss off the solar panels did not fix the faulty electronic speed sign. Major repairs are placed on hold pending the August Highways report, as a new sign may be provided under the proposed chicane relocation scheme.

Millennium Wood Path

Progress on the boggy path entrance has faced logistical issues regarding wood chipping deliveries via grab-wagons. Following discussions, it was agreed to utilize a multi-layered approach: installing a firm stone base layer to stabilize the mud, topped with decorative wood chippings. Cllr Jordon offered to assist by receiving bulk drops onto his adjoining land and utilizing a front-loader tractor to transfer the material over the fence line. New regulatory 'dog fouling' signs have been successfully erected within the woods.

Hedge Cutting

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The boundary hedges down to the school have been cut back. Attention was drawn to wild brambles encroaching onto pedestrian footpaths near the corner; Cllr Jordon will coordinate localized trimming.

Land in Front of Village Hall

Remedial landscaping works and planting commenced ahead of the Open Gardens event. A previously approved allocation of £500 for decorative wood chippings is maintained on hold until planting is fully completed post-event.

Christmas Lights & Churchyard

A previous full village illumination quote exceeding £8,000 was rejected as unfeasible. Alternative localized solutions will focus on the Village Hall, the bus stop, and the church. It was RESOLVED to provisionally approve a £500 expenditure to establish an external power commander unit on the lamppost adjacent to the church, with logistical arrangements and liability terms to be formalized in the September session. It was noted that the churchyard grass has been cut.

7. AOB

Path to Pegswood

Northumberland County Council has granted permission in principle to restore and clear the overgrown pedestrian path running down toward the 30mph boundary zone. A mini-digger with rubber tracks will be hired this summer to scrape away built-up sod and encroaching mud. Disposal of waste material will be coordinated to minimize haulage costs.

Fly tipping

Concerns were raised regarding localised fly-tipping in the church car park. While the car park island is managed by the local wildlife group, the main lot is public council property. Residents are encouraged to document and report incidents promptly using the council application, which ensures rapid response times.

8. ITEMS FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

The agenda for the next meeting will include the formal Highways Engineer's Report on traffic monitoring, speeding, and chicane relocation (If complete and available) as well as the adoption of the Parish Council Risk Register.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 3rd September 2026 at Longhirst Village Hall.

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