

LONGHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 16th May 2022 in the Village Hall.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Sue Douglas, was present, together with D/Cllrs Roger Atterwill and Richard Duffield, four parish councillors and the parish clerk.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Paul O'Brien Collins and County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris.

2. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th May 2021.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

3. To receive reports from:

a) The Parish Council Chairman

The report presented by the Parish Council Chairman is attached.

b) District & County Councillors.

The report presented by D/Cllr Atterwill is attached.

D/Cllr Duffield apologised for his recent absences which had been out of his control. He reported that in respect of the current planning hold, caused by restrictions imposed by Natural England in respect of nutrient neutrality, the main cause was the water companies who needed to update their treatment plants which currently, at times, disposed of raw sewage into the rivers. Housing is badly needed and it is unfair to blame development and farmers, who are not the main cause of the problem. The hold will put the five year housing supply in jeopardy which could, once again, lead to unsuitable development.

The Chairman thanked the D/Cllrs for their hard work on behalf of Longham.

The report from C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris is attached.

c) Village Hall Committee.

The report presented by Mrs Douglas is attached.

d) St Andrews & St Peters Church.

The report presented by Mrs Douglas is attached.

e) The Hastings Charity Lane

Mrs McLeod reported that the charity had been set up years ago in memory of Mr Hastings. There is currently £6,000 in the fund and it was hoped to develop the land in the future to assist single parents in need. New Committee members are needed to take

matters forward. The fund can also assist Longham residents in-need, if no help is available elsewhere.

The Chairman thanked Mrs McLeod for presenting the report.

f) The Parish Council Clay Pit Project.

The report presented by Mrs Douglas is attached.

4. To discuss Parish Council forward-planning.

No ideas were forthcoming but will be considered during the forthcoming year.

5. Open Forum – an opportunity for residents of the parish to express their views on matters of interest or concern relating to the village and to suggest ideas for the future.

D/Cllr Atterwill suggested that a Village Questionnaire be prepared to increase community engagement and look for ideas for the future, and creating an action plan. Council members agreed this was worth looking at and D/Cllr Atterwill will share a template.

6. To note the date of the next Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 16th May 2022.

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.18pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chairmans Report 2022

Although Covid is still around the amazing vaccines that have been manufactured has meant that life has more or less returned to normal after 2 years. I want to say once again thank you to everyone for looking after friends and neighbours and making sure that people had their medication and shopping or just a friendly ear for a chat.

The work of the Parish Council continued but I'm glad that we can meet face to face and not on Zoom any more. Councillor Phil Collins resigned from the council as he has moved out of the village and we welcomed Clare Mitton and Dawn Dewar onto the Parish Council.

There have been a few planning applications for new properties and the Parish Council were pleased to add their support for these. We felt that a few new houses would be beneficial by bringing new life and families to the village.

We have also started the process of looking into the possibility of a small group of affordable homes with Breckland Council and Broadland Housing association. The first stage of which will be a questionnaire that will go out to each house in the village.

Councillor Paul O'Brien has been working very hard on bringing Clay Pits wildlife site back into good order. He has been working with the Norfolk Conservation Volunteers and they have cleared the ponds and rotting vegetation. New hedgerows have been planted and board walks are going to be installed around the ponds, further work will be carried out, if we get further funding, thank you Paul for all your hard work.

We have been looking into getting some safer routes for people walking around the village. The footpath from the back of the playing field to New Road has been cleared and the hedges cut back. We are investigating getting a trug installed round the Rectory bends to make it safer for people walking that way.

The Parish Council have contributed to the resurfacing of the football pitch this year and planted 200 daffodil bulbs on the green by the sign, which looked lovely. We have agreed to plant two flowering cherry trees on the playing field to commemorate the Queens 70 year reign.

I would like to thank Mark Kiddle-Morris and Roger Atterwill for all their help and support and for keeping us up to date with what is happening at Breckland and Norfolk County Council.

My fellow councillors for all their support and the work they do in the village, especially Margaret Dye for organising the heating oil syndicate, not an easy task and our Clerk Sheryl Irving for making sure we do things correctly.

Village Hall Report 2022

The village hall committee were very grateful for the covid grants they received from Breckland Council, which has enabled them to carry out repairs and projects to improve the hall. The lights in the main hall have been replaced and the ceiling decorated, the bar area has been opened up and refurbished. The main junction box has been updated and rationalised, and labelled up. The fire doors have been replaced and some minor updates have taken place in the toilets and kitchen. The hall looks much more inviting and because of this we are starting to get more private hires. There are a core of regular activities, keep fit, dog training but unfortunately the Zumba classes have just stopped, we are still trying to get further long term hirers especially for the daytime.

The football pitch has been resurfaced, there is still some work to be done on it, to get it ready for matches and we hope it will be ready for the new foot team in the autumn.

The playing field is used by many people in the village, for walks or exercising their dogs, without the help of the Parish Council we would not be able to maintain the area and would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support with the grass cutting and mole control costs.

Longham Church 2022

It is with great sadness that I have to inform the meeting that Longham Church is closing, Nationally over the past 40 years attendances have declined by over 50% and unfortunately Longham is no exception.

The benefice of Launditch and the Upper Nar, of which we are apart, consists of 18 churches.

Regular attendance is relatively low and due to a reduction in the number of clergy we only have one service per month. However, the church is there for local people for christenings, weddings and funerals

The basic running costs to run and maintain the building and churchyard averages out at £4000 per year, we no longer have the income to cover these costs. This does not include our contributions towards the rector's salary, housing or retirement fund which at present is a further £2500 for this year, this amount increases each year.

The support from the village has decreased over the years and things such as the Harvest and Carol services have seen the numbers drop away quite dramatically. The 18 churches have one minister and 4 unpaid ministers who take some of the services, but realistically it is impossible for the Rev Miriam to provide services for every church, let alone give pastoral support to the inhabitants in 18 villages.

The members of the PCC, of which there are five, have done their best to keep things going but without the support of the village they have come to the conclusion that the church should close.

They are applying to a new scheme called the Diocesan Church Trust, which enables a limited number of church buildings to be leased to it and holds them on behalf of their local community. In practical terms this means that the church is still available for the occasional service and will continue to have a basic level of insurance and maintenance. This enables such a church to come back into regular use in a way which would be almost impossible if the building was formally closed and declared redundant.

We are very grateful that the Parish Council recognises that the churchyard is a community area and at the moment pay about 90% of churchyard costs. A resident has offered to pay the other 10% but hope the Parish Council will take on the whole cost when the time comes that they are no longer able to do this, rather than let the churchyard fall into disrepair.

Longham Clay Pits – Restoration Project Update May 2022

The Project aims to restore the site to its most beneficial and manageable level, and make it safe and accessible for the public as well as ensuring its Flora and Fauna are protected. It is estimated this could take 2/3 years.

It is being managed by Mid-Norfolk Wildlife Trust through The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). Advice and support is being given by Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

The second stage of the project involves the creation of boardwalk and gravel pathways around the site. TCV volunteers, led by Mark Webster, have cut through a circular path round the edge of the site, and laid 20 metres of boardwalk. The boardwalk is made of reconstituted plastic called Plaswood, and has a longer life expectancy than wood. It is estimated to last at least 50 years. The volunteers have also so far laid 2 tonnes of 10mm gravel on 25metres of pathway. There is still a further 2 tonnes to be laid. The fact that there has been hardly any rain for the last month has made the tasks easier.

The site is still not safe for public access, but is well prepared for the next stage of work which is expected to take place in Autumn/Winter 2022/23.

Further works will include:

- **Completion of Boardwalks, and a small bridge to allow full circular access of the site**
- **Clearance of Himalayan Balsam which is infesting part of the site (1day May/June)**
- **Further tree removal from the ponds (1 day Autumn)**
- **A viewing platform with disabled access near Hoe Road access point**
- **Parking/Pull-in on Hoe Road (costs met by Breckland DC)**
- **Improve fencing/access from Howe Road**
- **Site 'story board' and map**
- **Planning for annual maintenance**

Costs so far this year are as follows:

- **TCV costs 3 days @ £300 + 2 days @ £250 = £1400 (plus VAT)**
7. **(4 additional day given free)**
- 8.
- **Tree planting day - £240 plus VAT**

- **4 tonnes 10mm gravel – £140 + VAT**
- **Boardwalk materials - £2771.90 + VAT**

Estimated costs of Stage 3:

- **!0m2 platform @ £100 per square metre - £1000**
- **Site Board - £250**
- **TVC days – 5/6 @ £300 + VAT**
- **Fencing costs unknown as linked with pull-in**
- **Annual maintenance – TCV and volunteer days – estimated @ 2/3 days @ £300**

The majority of Stage 2/3 costs can only be met by accessing support grants through routes such as Awards for All (National Lottery funded), Breckland DC and Notts CC. A small amount of funding has already been offered by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, which is likely to cover the cost of the information boards. So far Breckland Council have generously granted the project £5000. Thanks to Cllr Roger Atterwill for his support for the project and the grant application. Thanks too to Barry White from the Longham White Horse who allowed us to offload, store and process the Boardwalk materials (all 1.8 tonnes of it!) in his car park. Thanks to Neil McLeod for providing the Tele-porter to offload the materials.

Paul O'Brien,
Longham Parish Council
May 2022

Longham Annual Parish Meeting 16th May 2022

Dear Resident,

The last year has been a busy one for Breckland Council. In addition to its normal work it has helped communities get through the Covid 19 pandemic with additional staff resources and the distribution of Government grant funding to assist businesses and community groups. I believe that its communication and support for ward members and communities throughout this period has been very effective and I commend the Leader and senior management team for this. The council has achieved some notable work such as:

- **The opening of the £1.8M Elm house project in Thetford to provide temporary accommodation to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. I fully support this scheme and it is my hope that we can soon identify a development opportunity for a similar project here in the north of the district.**
- **Provide £100K through its Community Green Grants Scheme to community projects aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. I know this funding has been well received by those communities applying for grants. I was pleased that the Longham Clay Pits project received a grant award of £5,000 as part of this scheme.**
- **Providing mental health training for 100 community mental health champions. Here in the Lincoln Ward myself and representatives from two parish councils have undergone extensive mental health first aid training provided free of charge by this scheme to help us assist any residents in need.**
- **Work with partners such as the Daisy project to provide support for survivors of domestic abuse. This work is vitally important especially as incidents of domestic abuse increased during the period of the pandemic restrictions.**
- **Develop its 'Future Breckland' initiative to identify significant projects that can be delivered for our five market towns to help them thrive. I have actively engaged in the work relating to Dereham and made representations about the need for better and more public toilets, a new bus terminal to help devise a better public transport strategy for the town and better road links for villages north of Dereham to be able to access the A47 easier.**
- **Development of the Ellenor Fenn Garden in Dereham to transform old waste ground for public use. This is clearly a considerable improvement in this location which I welcome.**
- **Development of a new Food Bus service which will be visiting certain communities throughout the district. This service will commence in early May and will be a membership service offering discounted food products to help those people in most need. The nearest location to Longham is Litcham. The initial locations have been chosen based on identified need. This service will I feel be especially important as the cost of living crisis bites harder as we head into next winter.**
- **New household waste, street cleaning and grasscutting contract with Serco. Despite getting off to a difficult start I am now confident that the new service has**

bedded down and that the service is considerably better now in 2022. I suggested to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission that a Task and Finish Group of Councillors should be set up to oversee this contract. I am delighted that this was agreed and I am one of the group's members. Our discussions with Breckland Council officers and Serco have been very productive and this scrutiny will be ongoing over the coming months.

I am a member of the Planning Committee which continues to meet monthly to deliberate on the larger and more contentious development proposals as opposed to the majority of applications which are determined by planning officers under delegated powers. There continues to be a great deal of uncertainty around at the moment because the Government has for some time now been promising significant changes to the planning system. The indications coming from Whitehall is that they wish to reform the system to make it easier for developers to get planning permission and remove the requirement for developers to provide a percentage of new build homes as 'affordable' type homes. Instead, developers would be required to pay a levy to Breckland Council and it would be for the Council to build the affordable homes. I have serious misgivings about these proposals and I believe it would result in less local accountability and fewer affordable homes being built. Over the last ten years Breckland residents like the rest of the country have been subjected to what feels like constant top down planning policy changes designed to try and achieve arbitrary housing number targets. The term 'affordable homes' means different things to different people. It covers social rented, shared ownership and first homes. In reality our young people earning wages in Norfolk's rural economy are finding it increasingly difficult to become homeowners as the gap widens between house prices and mortgage affordability.

Recently a stop has been placed on all planning permissions containing overnight accommodation in Breckland because Natural England provided advice to around 40 Local Authorities on 16th March 2022 that high levels of nutrients (mainly phosphorus and nitrogen) in protected water bodies were resulting in poor water quality. The sources of nutrients generally include sewage treatment works, septic tanks, livestock, arable farming and industrial processes. Where sites are already in unfavourable (poor) condition, extra wastewater from new housing developments can make matters worse. This affects the Broads and River Wensum tributary areas. Work is underway to more accurately define and map the areas affecting the River Wensum. Breckland Council is also working with other Norfolk councils to come up with suitable mitigation requirements to allow new developments to proceed. I am advised by Breckland Council's Planning Director that this could take a couple of years to properly resolve although it is hoped that areas outside the defined tributary maps could commence much sooner. Longham is very much affected by this at this time.

Work has commenced on the review of the Local Development Plan. I am pleased this work is underway but I continue to have misgivings about the approach being taken and the timetable proposed. At the present time the Council has not produced a draft development strategy. Instead, it has decided to first carry out a public call for more development sites and once the outcome of this is known it will produce a development strategy designed around these sites. In my view this is just an easy exercise in development by numbers, making policy fit the available land. I believe that a well considered strategy should be making clear where is the best place to build new homes in the district taking account of current infrastructure, utilities and services and identifying what improvements to these would be needed to accommodate the new homes. Once the strategy is devised, landowners in key identified development areas should then be approached. I am appalled at the

timetable given to complete this Local Plan review with a proposed adoption date of 2027. It was clear from the Cabinet meetings I attended that this was done primarily for financial and resource reasons. My concern is that if the Local Plan is not reviewed and updated in a more timely manner a number of existing key planning policies will start to carry less 'weight' in the determination of planning applications and developers will find it much easier to obtain planning permission, sometimes to the detriment of local communities. I believe that this work can and should be carried out faster.

This year Breckland Council's community grant scheme is once again open for applications of up to £5000 match funding and I would be pleased to support applications for projects in the village.

I was also pleased to be able to help with the recent litter pick in the village and I would like to place on record my thanks to the volunteers who helped on the day.

As always, I am available to help residents where I can and would encourage anyone who needs assistance with a Breckland Council related matter to either call or email me.

Yours Sincerely

Roger Atterwill
Ward member – Lincoln Ward

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County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division

Report for 2021/2022

Overview 2021/22

- 70% of Norfolk streetlights converted, or work underway to convert to LED
- 96.7% of highways inspections completed within timescale
- 99.6% of dangerous highway defects dealt with within timescales set out in the Transport Asset Management Plan
- 94% of Looked after Children (LAC) with an up-to-date Personal Education Plan
- Completed 51,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for 20,700 people.

Highways: Maintenance of Norfolk's 9000km of roads and associated infrastructure was allocated £42m (revenue and capital) in the budget set in February 2021. The backlog of maintenance has largely been addressed by the team led by the local highway engineer. This has allowed for quicker resolution of defects, especially those which are urgent.

The public examination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the dualling of the A47 between Tuddenham and Easton concluded in February. The Planning Inspectorate will submit a report, with recommendations, to the Secretary of State (SoS) within 3 months. The SoS will then determine the DCO. If approved the scheme will relieve the daily congestion between Dereham and Norwich and allow sustainable economic growth and development.

Norfolk County Council has continued to work towards building a new road between the A47 (hopefully dualled) and the A1067 near Taverham at the junction with the Broadland Northway. This will stop the "rat running" through the villages between the 2 roads and reduce the traffic levels (especially HGVs) using the B1145 to access Kings Lynn.

Broadband: Hard to reach premises in Norfolk are to receive between £115m and £195m of funding as part of the Government's Project Gigabit to provide 1GB per second broadband to up to 119,000 premises. Contracts will be awarded from February 2022.

Rural homes and businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk will get next-generation gigabit broadband brought to them under a £5 billion plan to level up internet access across the UK. It means families no longer having to battle over bandwidth and will give people in rural areas the freedom to live and work more flexibly, with the speed and reliability needed to start and run businesses.

Flooding: A new single point of contact for flooding in Norfolk has been launched, allowing residents to report any sort of flooding quickly and efficiently. In the event of flooding residents can call 0344 800 8013 to report it. Alternatively, residents can continue to report flooding on NCCs website. The new number gives residents a single point of contact and allows reports to be made swiftly.

Different agencies respond to different types of flooding, which has historically made reporting a flood by telephone more complicated when and where it is not possible to ascertain the source of floodwaters. Where there is a potential risk to life from flooding people should still call 999 immediately.

Norfolk's Cabinet considered the allocation of the council's £1.5m Flood Reserve Fund to support urgent works, repairs and to enable recommendations from flood investigation reports. The Reserve Fund was set up in the annual budget for 2021/22 agreed by the County Council in their budget meeting in February.

The Cabinet meeting, held on 6th September, discussed the proposed allocation of the funding, including £695k for additional highway and ditch maintenance and £365k for drainage asset improvements. This funding will be used for work on the 285,864 metres of drainage grips and 31,037 metres of kerb drains on Norfolk's highways, as well as operations to clear some of the county's 145,305 gullies that help drain rainwater.

The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA), under the Chairmanship of General Lord Dannatt, has formally adopted an overall Strategy, designed to enable county wide responses to flooding across all agencies involved. The Strategy, which lays out the NSFA's vision, objectives, approach and structure, is a major milestone in the development of the Alliance, which was founded earlier this year by the Council to bring together all agencies and partners involved in planning for and responding to flooding in Norfolk.

Adult Social Care: Plans to support Adult Social Services with the expected "winter pressures" have been unveiled.

A report was heard by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet in December saying that Adult Social Services across the country are facing unprecedented challenges. However, here in Norfolk practical solutions are being put in place.

The report said: 'Norfolk Adult Social Services face a level of unprecedented challenge in 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic, with national and local workforce shortages, rising demand in hospitals and the community and the continued infection risk posed by COVID-19 as well as other recurring respiratory viruses such as flu. Adult Social Services received 20,279 calls for

support between April and October this year – an increase of 9,400 over four years.

Action taken by the Council includes:

- Expanding action to support people at home or, where appropriate, in short term residential settings
- Stepping up the council's care recruitment campaign, to tackle staff shortages
- Providing wrap-around support for care settings
- Providing assistive technology, with 100 video phones sent out to homes
- Improving capacity in the Norfolk First Response service
- Supporting mental health services, with three new services
 - Norfolk County Council is taking a step closer to establishing a new integrated approach to health and care by agreeing their support for new local Health and Wellbeing Partnerships, putting local communities at the heart of health and care in their area. Under the new Health and Care Bill, Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are being established in all areas of the country to drive changes that are intended to lead to better, more joined-up care for the population. Much of the activity to deliver integrated health and care and improve the population's health will happen more locally in the places where people live and work, meaning the new Health and Wellbeing Partnerships will play a key role in driving forward this activity.
- **Schools and Children's Services:** More than a dozen new primary schools could be needed in Norfolk in the next decade, to cater for growing pupil numbers in areas of development. A report to Norfolk County Council's Cabinet highlighted the scale of school development that is likely to be needed to support Norfolk's growing communities. It addresses both demographic changes and population growth from new housing. The report, discussed by members on 31st January, provided a snapshot of the council's plans to ensure there are sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged four to 16. Alongside district councils, the County Council expects to secure nearly £100m in developer contributions for the proposed new and extended schools but if all the places are needed, a further £191m would need to be found. Some of this will be met by Community Infrastructure Levy and government grant contributions. Most children in care in Norfolk are well looked after and receive good support for their emotional and mental health and education, Ofsted inspectors have found. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited Norfolk County Council in October for a two-day focused visit of the

council's services for children in its care. In a letter detailing their findings, inspectors said that social workers know their children well, listen to them and help them to understand their experiences. Ofsted's visit follows a similar focused visit in 2019, which looked at how the council responds to child safeguarding calls and referrals. Following that visit, inspectors described the quality of decision making as "consistently strong".

The 2022/23 Budget: Council tax was set at the meeting of Council in February and was increased by 2.99%; 1.99% increase in the general rate and a 1% increase in the adult social care budget.

Adult social services will see an additional £35.4m of investment against savings of £10.5m. Children's services will receive a further £23.2m, with a further £10m this year for the SEND school programme.

Community and Environmental Services will receive an additional £11.2m; there will be a £10m pothole fund, new recycling centres across the county, £5m on library upkeep and extension of services and £12m on the Better Broadband project.

The councilors personal budget of £10k will continue for 22/23.

Your County Councilor: The Necton and Launditch division covers around 80 square miles of rural Norfolk and is the 3rd largest division in the county. It consists of 22 parishes which have between them 19 parish councils, 2 parish meetings and one parish administered by the district councilor.

As well as attending as many parish council meetings in the evening as I am able, I also attend meetings at County Hall and other informal meetings from home using Teams. At County Hall I attend meetings of full Council, and am a member of the Scrutiny Committee, the People and Communities Select Committee and the Audit Committee. Additionally, I am Chair of the Councils Standards Committee and Chair of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel. I am also a substitute member of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee. Using Teams, I attend the Adult Social Care Performance Review Panel and regularly have conference calls with officers and other members to discuss matters affecting my division.

Mark Kiddle-Morris,

Member for Necton and Launditch Division.
Norfolk County Council.