

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Longham Parish Council held on Monday 15th September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Susan Douglas (Chair)
Cllr Donna McLeod (Vice Chair)
Cllr Roddy McLeod
Cllr Clare Mitton
Cllr Paul O'Brien

County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
District Cllr Richard Duffield
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting Apologies were received from District Cllr Roger Atterwill.

2. Election of Vice Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

Cllr Douglas proposed that Cllr Donna McLeod be elected as Vice Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council. Cllr McLeod signed her declaration of acceptance of office form.

3. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2025.

Cllr Douglas proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

5. To receive an update regarding the two council vacancies and consider the co-option of new Council members.

The Chairman reported that there had been no interest other than that previously reported; from a resident who would be eligible in January. She will put a notice in the next magazine.

6. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

7. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

County Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported on the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution which are both moving forward. In respect of Devolution, Council will vote in October whether to proceed or not: details of the funding proposals are now available.

In respect of Local Government Reorganisation, there are three options on the table, one, two or three unitary councils, replacing the existing district and county councils. The decision is taken at Government level and will replace existing councils fully in 2028.

The C/Cllr also reported that he has asked the Highways safety team to look at the Bittering Road junction, where there had recently been two accidents, one of those serious. They will consider measures such as STOP signs and painted SLOWs on the road.

He was pleased to learn that the bus service is being regularly used by four residents and occasionally by others.

In response to a query, he said a new Mayor would be responsible for strategic planning, infrastructure improvements, training and apprenticeships etc. There would be no cross-over with the new unitary authorities.

District Cllr Duffield reported that he had concerns regarding Local Government Reorganisation in that he feared rural villages would not get adequate representation but it will go ahead, with the transition being challenging. Additionally, the Breckland Council Tax, currently the lowest in the county, will increase. He also said he was concerned that any Mayor could favour one county over the other.

The Chairman thanked both Councillors for their reports and C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris then left the meeting.

8. Planning Matters.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no applications for consideration.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted that no decision has yet been made on the following application.

- PL/2025/0998/FMAJ – land at Dykewood Farm, Beeston - proposed construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure.

c) To receive an update regarding the Local Plan.

Council noted the Local Plan was ongoing.

9. Highway Matters

a) To receive updates on any matters previously reported and to consider any new highway issues.

Council was pleased that the Bittering Road crossroads was being looked at (see item 7 above). There were no other issues raised.

b) To consider any projects for funding under the Parish Partnership Scheme.

There were no ideas identified for funding under the scheme but it will remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

10. To receive a report in respect of the Playing Field and Play Area.

Cllr O'Brien reported that he continues his regular checks and has concerns regarding the timber on the climbing tower and will be sending photos to the manufacturer's for advice. The annual inspection is due to take place shortly.

11. To receive an update regarding the Clay Pits (a county wildlife site).

Cllr O'Brien reported that a volunteer day took place on the 28th July and another is planned for October.

Council noted that the site currently remains fenced off and agreed there was a need to get it open to members of the public, which would assist in keeping the footpaths clear if they were being used. Funding is required to build the disability platform but a handrail for the stairway can be installed and safety notices displayed. Cllr O'Brien will obtain a cost for the handrail and advice from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust regarding safety notices.

Cllr Donna McLeod suggested the installation of a donation box.

12. To receive an update in respect of the Village Defibrillator.

Cllr O'Brien reported that regular checks continued and all is in order.

13. To receive an update regarding Community Resilience – Emergency & Civil Contingencies.

Cllr Mitton had prepared a draft plan and concerns were raised regarding members of the public using machinery without the relevant public liability insurance. Cllr Mitton will investigate further and report back to the next meeting.

14. To receive an update regarding the proposed High Grove Solar Farm, the Regener8 site at Beeston, and the George Freeman Action Group.

Council noted that the planning submission for High Grove has been delayed due to the lack of a connection to the grid.

15. To receive a report regarding the annual inspection of assets.

Council noted the following matters had been raised at the recent inspection.

- The bench near the Village Sign is not currently a council asset but Council agreed to adopt it as the family were no longer able to care for it.
- Cllr Douglas will look at the cleaning and repainting, if necessary, of the two backless benches on the playing field and the bench on the Green, Chapel Road.

In respect of the land adjacent to the playing field, Council agreed that regular checks should be carried out on the large trees as they were adjacent to a public footpath. Cllr Roddy McLeod was appointed to carry out regular checks and inspections including after any period of stormy weather.

16. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Council noted the financial report (attached).

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Cllr Douglas proposed that Mrs Dann be appointed as internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026 at a cost of £40, this was seconded by Cllr Donna McLeod and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To authorise financial payments as set out below and note any receipts.

Cllr Douglas proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council.

PAYMENTS

P18	Clerk – Salary/Allowance (August)	£160.37 (SO)
P18	HMRC – PAYE	£24.40
P20	Clerk – Salary/Allowance (Sept)	£187.29 (SO)
	- Includes Pay Award arrears backdated to 01/04/2025.	
P20	HMRC PAYE	£31.00
P21	Clerk – Expenses	£16.20
	Bank Charges (Aug/Sept)	£12.00
P22	Clay Pits – Volunteers	£408.00

17. Correspondence for circulation

Council noted the correspondence from Norfolk Constabulary regarding scams and agreed to receive trigger alerts which can then be circulated to residents via the Village Hall FB page.

18. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

There were no new items for the next agenda.

19. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 17th November 2025, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.17pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL						
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026						
FINANCIAL REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025						
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To	%	Balance at 01.04.2023	9,611.43
	2024/25	2025/26	date	Spend	Plus Receipts at 31.08.2025	4,413.63
					Less Payments at 31.08.2025	5,415.39
PAYMENTS*					TOTAL	8,609.67
Admin	964	1,239	794	64%		
Salary	2,063	2,199	1,082	49%	Bank Balance at 31.08.2025	
Open Spaces	2,105	2,525	1,820	72%	Unity Trust Current Account	1,267.53
Clay Pits	1,445	900	900	100%	Unity Trust Instant Access	7,366.54
Donations	1,075	1,050	1,025	98%	TOTAL	8,634.07
Defibrillator	-	50	-	0	Less outstanding payments	24.40
Maintenance	-	-	1,098		Plus outstanding receipts	0.00
TOTAL	7,652	7,963	6,719	84%	TOTAL	8,609.67
RECEIPTS					including:	
Precept	7,500	7,500	3,750	50%	Defibrillator	50.00
Bank Interest	224	50	43	86%	Clay Pits Reserve*	1,135.33
Wayleaves	-	-	-		Village Hall Reserve	1,700.00
Recycling	263	250	244	97%	General Reserve	5,724.34
TOTAL		7,800	4,037	52%	*includes 25/26 budget £900	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(7,652)	(163)	(2,683)			
*includes payments as listed on agenda.						