

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Longham Parish Council held on Monday 19th May 2025, at 7.22pm in the Village Hall. This meeting followed the Annual Parish Meeting.

Present: Cllr Susan Douglas (Chair)
Cllr Clare Mitton
Cllr Roddy McLeod

County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Six Members of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Election of Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

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

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

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

3. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllrs Paul O'Brien and Donna McLeod were approved. Apologies were also received from District Cllrs Roger Atterwill and Richard Duffield.

4. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2025.

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

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

The Chairman reported that, from the recent leaflet drop, there has been interest in one vacancy although the candidate was not eligible until later in the year. Anyone interested in the second vacancy is advised to contact the Clerk.

At this point in the meeting, the Chairman brought forward item 17 and asked the Regener8 representative to give his presentation; he took questions throughout. He advised on the amended location, with part of the original proposed site being removed because of existing archaeological features. The 96 hectare site will be on an existing brownfield, ex-airfield, site and not easily visible from any nearby properties and roads. Where necessary, wildlife buffer zones will be planted together with some perimeter hedge planting.

The application will shortly be submitted to Breckland and there is another opportunity for residents to comment at this stage. It was hoped that the build will commence in 2027 and be operational in 2028. Transport access to the site is on good roads and none will need to go through the villages. Once operational, just two to three visits per month will be required. A glint and glare assessment is being carried out. The location of the grid connection, although secured, is yet to be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked him for his input which had been helpful. Cllrs Clare Mitton and Donna and Roddy McLeod will continue to monitor progress on behalf of Council.

7. Meeting open for public participation.

A member of the public notified Council that they hoped to submit their planning application for a new dwelling on Hoe Road, opposite the tile site, and which Council had previously supported. Council continued to support the application, in principle, pending further detail.

8. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

County Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported on Devolution with a Norfolk/Suffolk Mayor due to be elected in May 2026.

Local Government reorganisation is also ongoing with either one, two or three unitary councils set to replace existing City, Borough and District Councils.

The Local Plan progresses and the call for sites has ended – these can be viewed on the Breckland website. Parish Councils are invited to a briefing on the 20th May. The County Cllr said it is likely that Longham will be allowed development of up to 7% although this has not been confirmed.

Nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain issues continue to delay applications.

In response to a query, the C/Cllr said that Government has advised that NCC should look at alternative routes for the Western Link.

The Chairman thanked the C/Cllr for his input and the C/Cllr then left the meeting.

9. Planning Matters.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no new applications to consider.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following application has been approved.

- 3PL/2021/1460/F – Meadow, Hoe Road - change of use of land from Agricultural to residential & the erection of 1No. self-build home and provision of 1 No. Self Build Plot with associated car parking and landscaping.

Council noted the following application has been refused.

- PL/2025/0411/OMIN - Land Off Ostrich Lane outline Planning Permission for Construction of 1No Self Build Dwelling & Associated Works with some matters reserved.

10. Highway Matters - to receive updates on any matters previously reported and to consider any new highway issues.

The potholes adjacent to the road alongside the Village Hall will be reported to Highways.

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

Council noted that the equipment repairs have been completed, including the fence painting. A bench and the bus shelter have also been painted.

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

Council noted that maintenance works continue until such time as further funding is available to improve access to the site, including a viewing area for anyone with mobility issues.

13. To receive an update in respect of the Village Appraisal.

The Chairman reported that the document has been circulated to all households in the village together with flyers regarding community resilience and parish council vacancies. To date just one response had been received.

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

Council noted that regular checks are taking place and all is in order.

15. To receive an update regarding an additional dog bin on Hoe Road.

Council had been unable to identify a suitable site and it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

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

See item 13 above.

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

In addition to the presentation earlier in the meeting, Cllr McLeod reported on the recent meeting of the George Freeman, MP, solar farm group where he, George Freeman, seems to accept the solar farms will go ahead and parish councils must look for mitigation and compensation. There is also a large solar farm proposed at Swaffham/Castle Acre.

18. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the years ending 31st March 2025 and 2026.

Council noted the financial reports (attached).

b) To consider a request for a donation from Dereham Meeting Point.

With no further information available, Council agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

c) To receive an update regarding the Council insurance renewal.

Council noted that the insurance was due to renew on 1st June 2025 and one further quote was awaited. There had been no increase in the renewal quote.

d) To consider approval of a Health & Safety policy.

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

e) To receive the internal auditors report and consider any recommendations.

Council noted the report and agreed that:

- An annual inspection of assets will be carried out and recorded in the minutes.
- Electors rights will be recorded in the minutes.
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will be updated at the next review.

f) To approve the annual governance statement in the 2024-25 Annual Return.

Cllr Douglas proposed approval of the annual governance statement, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the statement.

g) To approve the Statement of Accounts in the 2024-25 Annual Return.

Cllr Douglas proposed approval of the statement of accounts, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the statement.

h) To approve the certification of exemption from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

Cllr Douglas proposed approval of the certificate of exemption, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the certificate.

Council noted the dates of Electors Rights, 3rd June to 14th July 2025.

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

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

PAYMENTS

P3	Painting Works – Railings & Bench	£824.00
P4	Bus Shelter Restoration	£274.00
P5	Clerk – Salary/Allowance (April) (including incremental salary increase)	£149.77 (SO)
P5	HMRC – PAYE	£35.00
P7	Play Equipment Repairs	£540.48
P6	Bank Charges (April)	£6.00
P8	Clerk – Salary/Allowance (May)	£160.57 (SO)
P8	HMRC PAYE	£24.20
P11	Bank Charges (May)	£6.00
P9	Internal Auditor	£40.00
P10	Grass Cutting – Church (1 of 2)	£685.00
P12	Conservation Volunteers – Clay Pits	£408.00

RECEIPTS

Breckland – Precept	£3,750.00
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19. Correspondence for circulation

There was no correspondence to note.

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

There were no new items for the next agenda.

21. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 21st July 2025, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.39pm.

Signed:

Date:

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL						
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2025						
FINANCIAL REPORT - YEAR END 31ST MARCH 2025						
BUDGET UPDATE	Budget 2024/25	To date	% Spend			
PAYMENTS*					Balance at 01.04.2023	9535.39
Admin	1,225	964	79%		Plus Receipts at 31.03.2025	8295.42
Salary	2,095	2,063	98%		Less Payments at 31.03.2025	8,219.38
Open Spaces	2,565	2,105	82%		TOTAL	9,611.43
Donations	1,025	1,075	105%			
Defibrillator	50	-	0		Bank Balance at 31.03.2025	
Dog Bin	-	190			Unity Trust Current Account	2,287.73
TOTAL	6,960	6,207	89%		Unity Trust Instant Access	7,323.70
					TOTAL	9,611.43
RECEIPTS					Less outstanding payments	0.00
Precept	7,500	7,500	100%		Plus outstanding receipts	0.00
Bank Interest	100	224			TOTAL	9,611.43
Wayleaves	-	-			including:	
Salary/HMRC	-	-			Clay Pits Reserve	573.33
Recycling	150	263	176%		Painting- Railings/Bus Shelter etc	1,098.00
TOTAL	7,750	7,987	103%		Village Hall Reserve	1,700.00
					General Reserve	6,240.10
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	790	1,780				

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL						
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026						
FINANCIAL REPORT - MAY 2025						
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	To date	% Spend		
PAYMENTS*					Balance at 01.04.2023	9,611.43
Admin	964	1,239	259	21%	Plus Receipts at 30.04.2025	3,750.00
Salary	2,063	2,199	350	16%	Less Payments at 30.04.2025	2,046.31
Open Spaces	2,105	2,525	1,135	45%	TOTAL	11,315.12
Clay Pits	1,445	900	900	100%		
Donations	1,075	1,050	-	0%	Bank Balance at 30.04.2025	
Defibrillator	-	50	-	0	Unity Trust Current Account	4,566.90
TOTAL	7,652	7,963	2,644	33%	Unity Trust Instant Access	7,323.70
					TOTAL	11,890.60
RECEIPTS					Less outstanding payments	575.48
Precept	7,500	7,500	3,750	50%	Plus outstanding receipts	0.00
Bank Interest	224	50	-	0%	TOTAL	11,315.12
Wayleaves	-	-	-		including:	
Recycling	263	250	-	0%	Defibrillator	50.00
TOTAL	7,800	7,800	3,750	48%	Clay Pits Reserve*	1,475.33
					Village Hall Reserve	1,700.00
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(7,652)	(163)	1,106		General Reserve	8,089.79
					*includes 25/26 budget £900	
<i>*includes payments as listed on agenda.</i>						