

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Longham Parish Council held on Monday 20th July 2026, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Clare Mitton (Chair)
Cllr Paul O'Brien
Cllr Paula Verden

District Cllr Roger Atterwill
County Cllr Tom Dickerson
Three Members of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr O'Brien proposed that Cllr Mitton be elected as Chair for the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Verden and unanimously agreed by Council. Cllr Mitton took the chair.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Douglas were approved.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none declared.

3. Election of Vice Chairman and signing of declaration of acceptance of office.

With only three members present, it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2026.

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

5. To receive an update regarding the one council vacancy and consider the co-option of a new Council member.

Council noted that a member of the public had expressed an interest but was unable to take office until next year.

6. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

7. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

County Cllr Tom Dickerson, who is now the Cabinet Member for Highways, reported the following matters:

- Potholes continue to be dealt with and new equipment is being considered.
- Electrical items can again be taken to the recycling centres.
- A national group is being established to fight the solar farms and George Freeman, MP, has been invited to join. Approval for the larger farms lays with Government but Norfolk County Council will resist them. The site at Beeston will be decided by Breckland. The delays in approval is predominantly due to the lack of connections to the national grid. In response to a query, he said that the Reform Administration are looking at the objections to the Norwich Link Road, in respect of bats, and using the same criteria to block solar farms. Cllr O'Brien said that alternative energy sources are required, before solar farms are blocked.

The County Cllr advised to contact him regarding any issues as soon as they arise but he will attempt to attend every Longham meeting.

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

District Cllr Roger Atterwill reported the following matters:

- New, blue, food waste bins will be delivered to every household in time for the weekly collections commencing in September. The waste will be used for bio-mass energy. The D/Cllr said he was against the scheme and felt the money would be better used to educate regarding food waste.
- The next Local Plan consultation is due shortly and this will be the last chance for Council to comment. Another call for sites has gone out in respect of sites for the traveller community.
- In response to a question, the D/Cllr confirmed that Unitary elections are due to take place in May 2027, with the Unitary Authorities taking full control in 2028. In respect of the Judicial Review requested by the Reform Administration at County, this was not to overturn the decision but to have one single unitary authority at County level. It is likely, however, that the new Prime Minister will be keen to move forward with local government reorganisation, which should save millions in the long term.

The Chairman thanked the D/Cllr for his input.

8. Planning Matters.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no applications for consideration.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted that no decision has 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 Breckland Local Plan.

This item had been dealt with at item 7 above.

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

Council noted the following updates:

- Overgrown hedge on Honeypot Lane, near Wendling turning. The hedge was identified and the landowner will be requested to cut it back.
- Obscured signs on Honeypot Lane, near Wendling turning - Highways unable to locate problem. Cllr Mitton confirmed that the signs are visible and this will be removed from the agenda.
- Highways requested to install SLOWs before the Old Rectory bend on Honeypot Lane – informed these must be the subject of a parish partnership application. Council agreed to contact the County Cllr regarding this request as the parish partnership scheme may be cancelled.
- Bittering Road – crumbling, wet, muddy road surface – again reported to Highways who will clean mud with the road now being considered for top-dressing in 2027. The condition of the road is improved due to the dry weather and because some potholes, although not all, have been repaired. The Chairman said that the Parish Council will continue to report potholes and other damage and advised members of the public to do the same.

10. To receive a report in respect of the Playing Field and Play Area, including the Annual Inspection report recommendations.

Cllr O'Brien reported that the annual inspection had not raised any urgent issues. The only matter of moderate concern was the gate, which could be a 'finger trap'. He will approach a play equipment contractor for advice and a quote. All other issues raised will be monitored, as advised in the report.

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

Cllr O'Brien reported that a group of volunteers had attended that day and cleared all the footpaths for access around the site and strimmed round the ponds, which are all dry.

For the benefit of new residents, he said that the site had been managed proactively by the Parish Council for six years, with the aim of opening it safely for members of the public. Further funding is required to complete the walkways, entrance, safe stairs and an information board. An application to the Anglian Water Community Fund has been submitted and a decision is awaited.

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

Cllr O'Brien reported that the unit is fully functional but the battery is losing power and a replacement will be purchased.

13. 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, in addition to the update at item 7, no meetings of the George Freeman group had been held.

14. To receive an update regarding matters raised in the annual inspection of assets:

- **Backless benches on Playing Field.**
- **Bench on the Green, Chapel Road.**

A volunteer kindly volunteered to clean the benches on the playing field, following which Cllr O'Brien will obtain a quote to make repairs and paint the benches, where required.

15. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2027.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider approval of the following policy documents:

- Financial Regulations
- Publication Policy
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy
- Asset Register
- Complaints Procedure

Council noted the updated documents, which included the recommendations made by the Internal Auditor, and Cllr Mitton proposed approval of the documents, this was seconded by Cllr Verden and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) 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 O'Brien and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

P11	Clerk Salary & Allowance – June	£157.92 (SO)
P11	HMRC PAYE	£37.00
P13	Clerk Salary & Allowance – July	£157.92 (SO)
P13	HMRC PAYE	£37.00
P14	Donation to Longham Village Hall	£1,000.00
P14	Donation to Norfolk Citizens Advice	£25.00
P14	Donation to Dereham Cancer Care	£25.00
P15	Annual Play Area Inspection	£104.40
	Bank Charges (June/July)	£14.00

RECEIPTS

Bank Interest	£41.28
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16. Correspondence for circulation

There was no correspondence for consideration.

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

There were no new items received.

18. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 21st September 2026, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.16pm.

Signed:

Date:

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2027 FINANCIAL REPORT - JULY 2026						
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	To date	% Spend	Balance at 01.04.2026	8,971.96
					Plus Receipts at 30.06.2026	4,551.83
					Less Payments at 30.06.2026	2,488.42
PAYMENTS*					TOTAL	11,035.37
Admin	1,192	1,274	757	59%		
Salary	2,164	2,310	740	32%	Bank Balance at 30.06.2026	
Open Spaces	3,068	2,542	808	32%	Unity Trust Current Account	2,689.78
Clay Pits	900	1,500	1,500	100%	Unity Trust Instant Access	8,532.59
Donations	1,050	1,050	1,050	100%	TOTAL	11,222.37
Defibrillator	72	50	50	100%	Less outstanding payments	187.00
TOTAL	8,446	8,726	4,905	56%	Plus outstanding receipts	0.00
					TOTAL	11,035.37
RECEIPTS						
Precept	7,500	8,300	4,150	50%	including:	
Bank Interest	168	50	41	83%	Defibrillator*	77.81
Wayleaves	-	225	-		Clay Pits Reserve*	1,595.33
Recycling	244	150	-	0%	Village Hall Reserve	1,700.00
TOTAL	7,912	8,725	4,191	48%	General Reserve	7,662.23
					(*includes 2026 budget)	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(534)	(1)	(714)			
*includes payments as listed on agenda.						