

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Longham Parish Council held on Monday 21st September 2026, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

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

D/Cllr Roger Atterwill
D/Cllr Richard Duffield
Eight Members of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome, apologies for absence, and notice of resignation.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and there were no apologies for absence. The Chairman reported that Cllr Donna McLeod had resigned and thanked her for all her hard work on behalf of the Parish Council.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

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

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

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2026.

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

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

Council noted that there are now two vacancies, with possible interest in one of those.

6. Meeting open for public participation.

A query was raised regarding the Church PCC and was advised regarding contacts.

The development in Low Road was raised as a matter of concern and D/Cllr Atterwill reported that Breckland are aware and a planning application is anticipated. However, should that application be refused then Enforcement will take action. It was noted that the barking dog has been referred to Environmental Health.

7. To receive County and District Councillors reports.

D/Cllr Duffield reported that, in regard to the previous matter discussed, Gressenhall Parish Council is also dealing as the development is on their boundary.

D/Cllr Atterwill reported:

- The food waste bin collections have commenced and those present confirmed there are no issues.
- The Tuesday bus service continues and the Chairman confirmed that it was being used regularly.
- He had attended the George Freeman Solar Summit which had been interesting. The Drovers hearing is ongoing and likely to go ahead. There is doubt surrounding High Grove due to the problems with a connection to the grid.
- Breckland has approved Dykewood solar farm, which will be well-screened and 60% is on poor agricultural land.
- Local Government Reorganisation has been paused, with a review now being carried out. The D/Cllr is in favour as he believes it will bring benefits to Norfolk and cost-savings in the long term.
- Breckland elections will be held in May 2027, although a decision regarding ward boundaries is awaited.
- The majority of planning applications will now be dealt with by a single planning officer, with only the larger developments going to Committee. Ward members will no longer be able to call in contentious applications although they will be able to speak to the officer making the decision.
- The current Local Plan consultation ends on 23rd September 2026.
- There are no grants for septic tank upgrades.
- In respect of a press report regarding a matter surrounding business rates, the D/Cllr said a one-year discount was given to a local company who wished to expand and create more jobs and he considered this to be a good deal made by Breckland.

The Chairman thanked both D/Cllrs for their inputs.

8. Planning Matters.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no applications for consideration.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following application has been approved.

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

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

- PL/2026/0984/VAR – Development Site 594497 316115 Hoe Road - variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 3PL/2021/1460/F to add a further detailed block plan for the eastern dwelling, showing its updated layout, building footprint, floor plans and elevations within the eastern part of the approved red line boundary.
- PL/2026/1131/PIP - Land East Of Berties Rest, Hoe Road – permission in principle for 1 no proposed self build dwelling with garage.

c) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan.

This item had been dealt with at item 7 above.

9. Highway Matters.

a) 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. Confirmation was received regarding the location of the problem and the landowner will be contacted.
- Highways requested to install SLOWs before the Old Rectory bend on Honeypot Lane – these must be the subject of a parish partnership application.

b) To consider an application to the Parish Partnership Scheme.

Council agreed to request a costing for the installation of two SLOWs, as set out above.

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 all was in good order. He was having difficulties in finding a contractor to alter the entrapment issue on the play area gate.

Council considered a quote to restore the basketball net and Cllr O'Brien proposed approval of the quote for £329, this was seconded by Cllr Verden and unanimously agreed by Council.

11. To receive a report from Cllr O'Brien regarding a recently attended Tree Inspection course and the way forward for tree inspections.

Cllr O'Brien reported that he had attended a Tree Inspection Course where it was advised that Council should commission a survey of those trees where the Council has a responsibility. A schedule of inspections/tree risk assessment surveys can then be carried out. Council agreed to obtain two quotes for this work.

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

Cllr O'Brien reported that the ongoing project continues and it is still hoped to open the site safely to members of the public. Unfortunately, no grant applications have been successful. Cllr Verden agreed to assist Cllr O'Brien with grant applications.

Cllr McLeod suggested that the site be abandoned but the other Council members were opposed to this as it is an important site for biodiversity and will be an interesting asset for the village once completed.

D/Cllr Atterwill suggested a Public Works Loan may be suitable if grant funding cannot be obtained.

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

Cllr O'Brien reported that a new battery has been purchased and will be installed.

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

This item had been dealt with at item 7 above.

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

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

Council expressed their thanks to a member of the public who had cleaned the backless benches on the playing field.

A quote to repair the bench on the green was considered but it was agreed to wait until the next meeting to make a decision, when the cost of a recycled, replacement bench could also be considered.

16. Finance and Governance

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

The financial report (attached) was noted. Council encouraged residents to use the bottle bank as it was a useful source of income for the parish.

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2027.

Cllr Douglas proposed the appointment of Mrs Dann as internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2027 at a cost of £40, this was seconded by Cllr Mitton and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To remove Cllr Donna McLeod and appoint a replacement signatory to the bank accounts.

Cllr Douglas proposed that Mrs McLeod be removed as a signatory and that Cllr Mitton be appointed as the replacement, this was seconded by Cllr Verden and unanimously agreed by Council.

d) 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. The receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

P17	Clerk Salary & Allowance – August	£157.92 (SO)
P17	HMRC PAYE	£37.00
P18	Footpath clearance	£45.00
P19	Conservation Volunteers (Clay Pits)	£432.00
P21	Clerk Salary & Allowance – Sept	£157.92 (SO)
P21	HMRC PAYE	£37.00
P19A	Defibrillator Battery (£77.81 from reserves)	£251.99
P22	Clerk – Expenses/Mileage	£19.80
	Bank Charges (June/July)	£14.00

RECEIPTS

R3	Breckland – Recycling	£212.69
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17. Correspondence for circulation

- Dereham Cancer Care – Thank you letter – noted.

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

No new items were received for the next meeting.

19. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 16th November 2026, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Signed:

Date:

LONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL						
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2027						
FINANCIAL REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2026						
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To	%	Balance at 01.04.2026	8,971.96
	2025/26	2026/27	date	Spend	Plus Receipts at 31.08.2026	4,764.52
					Less Payments at 31.08.2026	4,775.65
PAYMENTS*					TOTAL	8,960.83
Admin	1,192	1,274	804	63%		
Salary	2,164	2,310	1,110	48%	Bank Balance at 31.08.2026	
Open Spaces	3,068	2,542	853	34%	Unity Trust Current Account	1,615.24
Clay Pits	900	1,500	1,500	100%	Unity Trust Instant Access	7,532.59
Donations	1,050	1,050	1,050	100%	TOTAL	9,147.83
Defibrillator	72	50	211	422%	Less outstanding payments	187.00
TOTAL	8,446	8,726	5,528	63%	Plus outstanding receipts	0.00
					TOTAL	8,960.83
RECEIPTS						
Precept	7,500	8,300	4,150	50%	including:	
Bank Interest	168	50	41	83%	Defibrillator*	0.00
Wayleaves	-	225	-		Clay Pits Reserve*	1,235.33
Recycling	244	150	213	142%	Village Hall Reserve	1,700.00
TOTAL	7,912	8,725	4,404	50%	General Reserve	6,025.50
					(*includes 2026 budget)	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(534)	(1)	(1,124)			
*includes payments as listed on agenda.						