

LONGHIRST LEADER

June & July 2025

Mike Elphick 1942-2025

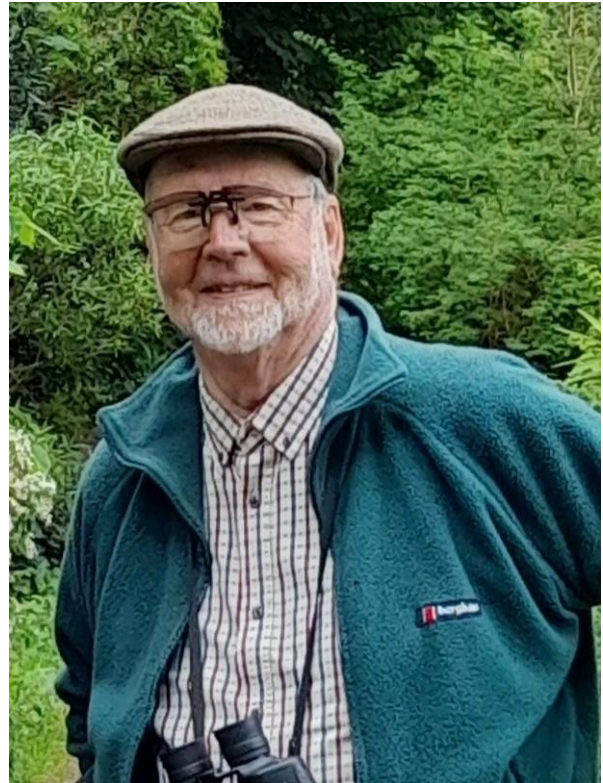
Everyone who gets the Longhirst Leader will have known Mike in one way or another, if only as the person who circulated emails to the community. He contributed to life in Longhirst in so many ways that we will start by apologising for anything that is missed out.

Mike had a pivotal role in many aspects of Longhirst life. St John's Church, the village hall, Open Gardens, the Luncheon Club and the Wildlife and Community Trust: Mike could always be relied upon to get things happening. He was a trusted presence in the village and is greatly missed by all who knew him; that the village hall is such a well-run, high-quality facility is in no small part due to Mike's efforts over the years.

In 2002 Mike was instrumental in forming the Longhirst Parish Association as a registered charity and he recruited a team of trustees to manage the village hall. He used his skills to obtain a large sum of money from the National Lottery which enabled the Association to update all the facilities in the hall which benefit us now. His work at the hall was never-ending, finding and commissioning specialists to maintain the fabric of the building until he became a reluctant expert in Listed Building planning applications. He worked just as hard to update the technology and oversaw the installation of film projection equipment in the meeting rooms. In 2023 he obtained another large sum from the Community Trust which enabled the reading room and the library to be totally refurbished and the air conditioning to be installed.

He also undertook a lot of the day-to-day management of the hall: bookings, invoicing, making sure the heating was on, the kitchen was clean, the tables and chairs were put out – pretty much everything, in fact.

As well as the practical organisation, he supported activities in the hall as a participant, joining in with village pub nights, Tai Chi and Pilates, coffee mornings, fayres and so much more.



Mike helped set up the Luncheon Club in 1995 and until his death continued to organise the cooking rotas, encourage volunteers in the cooking teams and keep the register of who was attending. The club is still an important part of village life, maintaining and building social relationships.



Litter picking was yet another of his services to Longhirst. Once a month, he would be there doing his own litter picking route and then doing the extras as well – picking up the full bags and making sure they were in the right place to be collected.

Mike also played a big role in the church-going community, working tirelessly as church warden and latterly as secretary, again obtaining funding and recruiting craftsmen to maintain the building and especially the organ.

The Open Gardens was another area where Mike made a great contribution. For over 20 years he worked to help organise these events, initially with his wife Jill, and continuing alone after her death five years ago. Once again much of his work was behind the scenes, from practical things like the temporary signage around the village to using his links within the community and beyond to ensure the event was always a success. His ice cream connections were particularly appreciated!

More recently he was instrumental in the founding of the Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust, writing the grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund which won the Trust its start-up funding. As always, he was an enthusiastic participant in the Trust's events; his own garden teemed with wildlife, which he loved to feed and observe.



Many of us can't help expecting still to see Mike, travelling between his many tasks around the village. His loss is immeasurable, and we honour him for all he did to make Longhirst what it is today.

Mike Elphick's Funeral Service

Mike's funeral will be at 13:30 on Monday June 2nd at The Church of St John the Evangelist, followed by a committal at Felton Crematorium, Northumberland, at 15:00.

We will gather to remember and celebrate Mike's life in the Longhirst Village Hall from 4pm.

Family Flowers only at the Funeral. The family would welcome donations to any of the three charities that were all important to Mike: St John's Church, Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust, and Cedarwood.

WHAT'S ON...

Coffee morning at Longhirst Village Hall

Saturday June 14 & Saturday July 12 10.30am

Our regular monthly coffee morning. £1.50 for coffee and cake. All welcome.

The Sound of Simon at Longhirst Village Hall

Friday June 27 at 7.30 pm

Members of The West Coast Band perform the music of Paul Simon, including some of his hits with Art Garfunkel. This is a new, and already very popular, venture for our friends, the West Coast Band.

It is essential for hall regulations that we know how many people are coming.

As usual, pay on the door (£10 per person) and bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Here's how to reserve a seat:

email or phone Judy Smith, stating the number of places required, with names (this helps colleagues "on the door") judysmith2810@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07944 816807

LONGHIRST NEWS

County Council Election Results

Congratulations to Ed Dungait (Conservative) who was elected as our County Councillor in the local council elections in May.

Parish Council

Barry Flux

Longhirst Parish Council met for their first meeting following the recent local elections on Thursday 8th May. The elections were uncontested, although there have been some changes to the parish council. Andrew Robson is a new member of the parish council and will serve alongside Bill Climson, Glen Fahy, Julie Murray, Janet Quinn, and Richard Tordoff.

Chris Marr the former chair of the parish council has stood down as a councillor and the Parish Council wish him all the very best for the future. Glen Fahy was elected as the new chair of the parish council at the first meeting.

There is still one vacancy on the Longhirst Parish Council, and we welcome any interest in filling this vacancy. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to be considered for this role.

Longhirst Parish VE Day Celebration at Longhirst Colliery

Mary Climson

We had a super VE Day celebration. A big thank you to all who attended and supported our Recreation Hall and thanks to the Parish Council for their support. We had a visit from councillor Ed Dungait; it was great to get to know him and to thank him for his kind donation.

Update on Traffic

John Young

It might be useful to update you on where we are in relation to the process of getting the council to put traffic calming changes in place in the village:

We met our county councillor earlier this year and then carried out a survey of Longhirst residents and requested a new traffic survey (which has now been completed).

Our e-petition is open on the council's website and paper copies will also be available. A separate email will be sent out with details of this.

If just 50 people sign the petition we will be invited to attend a Local Area Committee of the County Council. This is where we can make our case for traffic calming measures.

Field to the Northwest of Longhirst Village (Domino's Field)

Peter Coates

Twenty residents attended the public meeting held in Longhirst Village Hall in early April. It was noted that the valuable research carried out by Peter McKenzie clearly established that a large number of horses were kept in the field immediately northwest of the Village, adjacent to the houses commonly known as "The Barracks" and to Paddock Wood, from the 1850s until 1939. The animals were cared for by soldiers billeted in the barracks and then served the British Army in several wars across the world.

Residents agreed that this previously unrecognised chapter of Longhirst's heritage should be celebrated, and some form of memorial created, ideally by the acquisition of the field and the establishment of a wildlife haven taking advantage of the burn and the adjacent community wood

Various options should now be examined with a view to acquiring the site from its current owners and recognising its history. All residents are invited to comment on these proposals. To do so please contact Peter Coates from the Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust at pandccoates@gmail.com

Longhirst Village Hall

Janet Quinn

It's hard to write, or say, or do, anything about Longhirst Village Hall without having to face anew the fact that Mike Elphick won't be there to help and advise - or more likely, to do it for us. Those who are trying to continue the running of the Hall with the same efficiency are only beginning to grasp just how much he did for the village, and what an unsung hero he was. He is sorely missed.

To enable the remaining Trustees to take stock it was decided to close the Hall for a brief period. The Hall has now been reopened and can be used as normal. However, inevitably there have been a few hiccups while the Trustees put systems in place to ensure the Hall can be run smoothly and efficiently. We thank you for your patience.

To facilitate the access, heating, booking and payments we have introduced some new technology which we hope will facilitate the use of the Hall.

Entry We've installed a keypad entry system to allow group leaders/anyone booking the Hall to enter the code and gain access. The door can be 'latched' so it stays unlocked whilst the Hall is in use. The door will lock automatically on exit, provided it hasn't been left on the latch. Full instructions will be given to the person booking the Hall, please ensure it is locked when you leave. The key to manually open the door is in the original key safe (the number hasn't changed).

Heating We have installed a Hive system to control the heating. One of the Trustees will programme it to come on at least half an hour before the Hall is booked. The heating will also go off automatically.

Booking We have investigated electronic booking systems and hope to have a system ready for use in the near future. This will allow users of the Hall to check availability and book the room they would like to use. The payment rates will also be simplified and payment can be made on-line.

These systems have been installed to minimise the disruption and allow the Hall to continue to be used by the community. Please bear with us while we iron out the inevitable issues.

Hundred Club

The running of the Hundred Club is under review and new arrangements will be made in due course. This explains why we are not publishing a draw in this issue. The draws which are due will take place as soon as possible so please don't think we have absconded with your money!

Lunch Club

As of now, there will be only one lunch per month. This will normally be on the first Wednesday of each month, rarely we may have to change this to another Wednesday, but we will give you plenty of notice.

The cost will be going up to £7.50 each which we hope you agree is still great value.

Cash only – and feel free to bring Tupperware to take home what you can't finish.

We will not ring you in advance anymore but rather just book you in for the next session when you attend the next Lunch Club.

Please get in touch for cancellations, new bookings etc.

Team Leader Contact numbers:

Primary: Helen McCabe 07964 159957

Secondary: Diane Milmore 07962 138788

Longhirst Leader and email notices

From time-to-time Mike used to send out email notices between editions of the Longhirst Leader. Going forward, if you have notices that need circulating between editions of the Longhirst Leader please send them to longhirstleader@gmail.com

JUNE DIARY

| | | | |
|----|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| 4 | Wednesday | 11.45am | Lunch Club in the Village Hall |
| 14 | Saturday | 10.00am 10.30am-12noon | Litter pickers Coffee morning in Village Hall |
| 20 | Friday | 9.45am approx. | Mobile library |
| 27 | Friday | 7.30pm | The Sound of Simon in Village Hall |

JULY DIARY

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|----|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| 2 | Wednesday | 11.45am | Lunch Club in the Village Hall |
| 3 | Thursday | 7.00pm | Parish Council Meeting |
| 11 | Friday | 9.45am approx. | Mobile library |
| 11 | Friday | | Deadline for August/September Longhirst Leader |
| 12 | Saturday | 10.00am 10.30am-12noon | Litter pickers Coffee morning in Village Hall |

CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

| Date | Time | Service |
|---------|---------|--|
| 1 June | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst |
| 8 June | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal |
| 15 June | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst |
| 22 June | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal |
| 29 June | 10.15am | Holy Communion at St Margaret's Chapel, Pegswood |
| 3 July | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst |
| 10 July | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal |
| 17 July | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst |
| 24 July | 9.30am | Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal |
| 31 July | 10.15am | Holy Communion at St Margaret's Chapel, Pegswood |

LONGHIRST VILLAGE HALL REGULAR EVENTS

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|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Pilates | Fridays | 9.30-10.30am | charlotte@charlottewoodpilates.com |
| Sewing Group | First & Third Tuesdays | 10am-2pm | helenpotts65@gmail.com |
| U3A | Check Village website for information | | www.longhirstvillage.co.uk |

Reminder

The fish van from Eyemouth stops by the war memorial every Friday around 9am.

CONTACTS

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|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| Parish Council Clerk | Barry Flux | 07472002538 | longhirstpc@gmail.com |
| Parish Council Chair | Glen Fahy | 07752 279939 | glenfahy06@aol.com |
| Parish Council website | https://northumberlandparishes.uk/longhirst | | |
| County Councillor | Ed Dungait | | ed.dungait@northumberland.gov.uk |
| | | | |
| Churchwarden & Parochial Church Council | Heather Jackson | 07756 690027 | siriusa1998@aol.com |
| Church website | https://longhirstchurch.chessck.co.uk/ | | |
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| Longhirst Parish Association | Janet Quinn | | quinnjanet@sky.com |
| Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust | Kim Woolhead | 07749 811937 | kim.woolhead@gmail.com |
| Longhirst Hundred Club | tbc | | |
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| Longhirst Colliery Recreation Room Bookings | Mary Climson | 07727 198108 | maryclimson67@gmail.com |
| Longhirst Village Hall Bookings | tbc | | |
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| Lunch Club | Helen McCabe Diane Milmore | 07964 159957 07962 138788 | |
| Litter Picking | Pauline Gilbertson | | paulinegilbertson@gmail.com |
| Coffee Mornings | Helen McCabe | 01670 790494 | mccabe_paul1@sky.com |
| | | | |
| Village Website www.longhirstvillage.co.uk | Chris Marr | 01670 790196 | chrismarr@btinternet.com |
| Village Facebook Group | https://www.facebook.com/longhirstvillage/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel | | |
| | | | |
| Longhirst Leader | Jill McManus | 07837 525634 | longhirstleader@gmail.com |
| | Mo Dewar | 01670 791149 | dewarms@btinternet.com |
| | Janet Quinn | | quinnjanet@sky.com |
| | Kim Woolhead | 07749 811937 | kim.woolhead@gmail.com |