

LONGHIRST LEADER

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2026

WHAT'S ON...

u3a Ceilidh at the Village Hall Friday 6 February 7-10pm

£6 paid at the door but you **must** pre-book tickets by emailing nenglishfamily@aol.com

Open to u3a members and Longhirst Village Residents

Please bring your own refreshments

Coffee mornings at the Village Hall Saturdays 14 February and 14 March 10.30am

Our regular monthly coffee mornings. £1.50 for coffee and cake, and Hundred Club winners drawn. All welcome.

(Litter pickers meet at 10am)

Pub Nights at the Village Hall Friday 20 February & Friday 20 March 8 – 11pm

All welcome.

Longhirst Wildlife & Community Trust will present two talks by inspirational speakers affiliated to Northumberland Wildlife Trust plus a third by one of our popular event leaders, at the Village Hall. email paulinegilbertson@gmail.com to reserve a place for each event; £3 per person (under 18s free). Cash only please.

Pond Life Saturday 7 February 2-3pm (1.50pm for coffee/tea & biscuits)

Mike Jeffries is passionate about this subject, having surveyed many of our local ponds. He will help us understand how invaluable they are as wildlife hotspots. Bring questions about your garden ponds too!

Ratty Restored Saturday 14 March 2-3pm (1.50pm for coffee/tea & biscuits)

Mel Rockett has spent years working on the introduction of water voles at Kielder and will talk us through the challenges he has faced to help save this very endearing but highly endangered mammal. His anecdotes fill a book - copies for sale afterwards.

An Avian Asian Odyssey Thursday 26 March 7.30-8.30pm (7.20pm for coffee/tea & biscuits)

Mark Welfare will take us on a photographic journey around Asia showing us the amazing birds he encountered on his trip last year.

LONGHIRST NEWS

Open Gardens & Flower Festival

Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 July 2026

Longhirst Open Gardens is a big biennial community event which in 2024 attracted over 700 visitors and raised around £7000. It is a great communal effort not only from gardeners but from the many volunteers who give their time to make the event a success.

If you would like to join in, come along to the coffee morning on 14 February in the Village Hall from 10.30am, or to find out what you can do to help, email the organisers at longhirstopengardens@gmail.com

Longhirst Hundred Club Draw Results

Month	First prize £60	Second prize £40	Third prize £20
December	Alvaro Villabona (for Florence Gallagher)	Amanda Bonner-Davis	Alan Woolhead
January	Family of Mike Elphick	Dorothy McMillan	Linda Mowbray

Parish Association (Village Hall)

Andrew Robson (Secretary)

The Hall continues to be a well-used resource, but we are finding numbers declining for a couple of our social activities. Luncheon Club used to be very popular indeed, and while we still welcome a good number of regulars, we can cater for up to 30 – so if you fancy coming along for a lovely lunch and a good natter, all for £7.50, then please put your name down for the first Wednesday of the month. Similarly with the coffee mornings, £1.50 buys a drink and biscuits/cake, no booking required, please wander along if you are free, on the second Saturday of each month.

The Christmas trees in the Hall windows were very well received, and we hope to add to the display this year. The library also benefited from Christmas, with a few more jigsaws and books to enjoy.

We are still waiting on planning permission for a number of improvements, which is frustrating, but I am sure we will get there soon.

Parish Council Report

Glen Fahy (Chair)

Public Forum

A resident asked for clarification regarding maintenance and improvement of the area near the bus stop outside the Village Hall, emphasising that the request was for enhancement rather than basic weeding. The Parish Council intends to consult the Village Hall gardener in the spring for appropriate, maintainable improvements. The bench at this bus stop has been moved to enable residents to see approaching buses.

A request was received for a bus shelter and bench for elderly residents along the road to Pegswood. The Council agreed that a bench could potentially be installed, taking care not to affect private properties. A bus shelter may require planning permission and consultation

with Arriva and Northumberland County Council. Costs and feasibility will be investigated via NCC and reported at the next meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding unsafe parking on the road near junctions, making it difficult for residents to exit drives safely. A possible solution would be double yellow lines.

Agenda items

1 Financial Report

The Clerk presented the full financial report with balances as of 31 December 2025 which were: Community Account: £7,511.16; Business Instant Account: £14,995.73

The precept was proposed to remain at £8,000, unchanged from previous years.

2 Churchyard Maintenance Grant

The annual £700 contribution for churchyard maintenance was discussed and agreed. Any request above this amount would require invoices for justification.

3 Police

Correspondence from the police suggested there are no manoeuvres or training etc. taking place for which blue light speeding police cars should be travelling through the village.

Therefore, all blue lighted police cars are travelling to an emergency.

The Parish Council requested that officers attend a future meeting.

4 Traffic Issues

The Chair provided a detailed update on meetings with the County Councillor and Highways officers. Key points included:

- Highways officers visited the village and observed at first hand significant speeding issues.
- Multiple potential traffic-calming measures were discussed, including chicanes, raised tables, and junction treatments.
- Highways agreed to commission an engineering reassessment of the village, to identify suitable solutions.

The Chair reported that a contribution of £5,000 from the Parish Council had been offered in principle, to be matched by £5,000 from the County Councillor's budget.

5 TSS Garage, Whorral Bank

This is outside the Parish but parking issues on council-owned land, caused by garage visitors, were discussed. The area has been churned up and become unsightly. The council agreed to correspond with the relevant authorities to raise concerns about pedestrian safety and verge damage.

6 Christmas Lights

The council supported plans to explore a Christmas lights project. The Village Hall will coordinate arrangements and submit a plan and invoice for approval. Funding may be supplemented by community fundraising. Placement of lights will depend on electric points and safety considerations.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 5 March 2026 at 7 pm at Longhirst Colliery.

I hope the festive season was a pleasant one and I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Thank you for welcoming me to your Carol Singing in the village at Christmas.

Speeding

Thank you to Jill for presenting the petition report at the Community Partnerships Meeting in Morpeth Town Hall in November, and to the other residents who came along too.

As Neil Snowden from NCC Highways reported at the meeting, the data from the speed survey in May did not show a significant speeding issue that would trigger NCC to enact speed reduction measures. Some minor measures were proposed, which would require funding from me and the Parish Council.

However, I managed to secure a meeting with Neil on site in December, to stress the strength of feeling and discuss any extra measures that could be possible. There were just four of us who met Neil, as we felt a small meeting would be more productive than too large a one. I believe Jill, Glen & Richard conveyed all the concerns of the village very well.

I felt it was productive and we left Neil to assess various options along the main street.

He is sending these ideas to the Design Team at NCC who will come back with specific design options and prices.

I have pledged some funds towards this, as have the Parish Council. NCC may fund part of this centrally, but we do not know that yet, and the lack of evidence on the speed survey data means they do not have to.

When we have the available options back from the Design Team, we can decide whether any of these offer value for money, and the desired outcome for residents. I propose that these will be shared via the Longhirst Leader and at an event open to all residents when there will be a chance to discuss the options. We will aim for a consensus of approval before any work is done or money spent.

I am not certain that we will be able to achieve a desired solution here, but we are going through the process as best as is possible.

The C125 Longhirst Colliery Road is scheduled for carriageway repairs in March 2026.

Please get in touch to report issues of any kind ed.dungait@northumberland.gov.uk

Background Information on Traffic Issues

Jill McManus

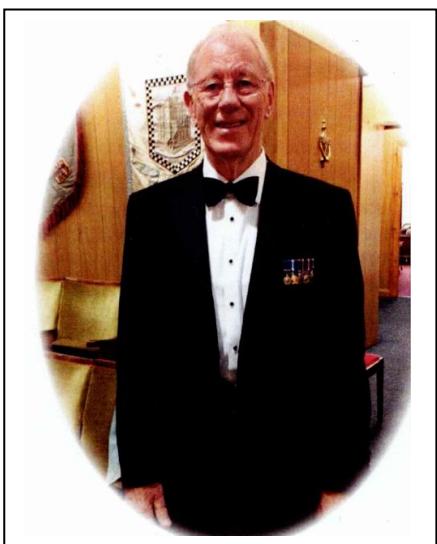
Speed data show that previous traffic calming measures (flashing speed signs, village name boards and the chicane) have resulted in a reduction in speeds through the village and there is evidence that some of the other options that have been discussed, e.g. removing the central white line, have been effective in other places.

Please contact longhirstleader@gmail.com if you would like us to send you any of the following information we have about traffic issues

- 20 mph speed limits
- Removing central white lines
- Longhirst speed data
- Residents traffic survey
- Community Partnership presentation and reports

Remembering Ian Armstrong

Chris Marr



Many of you will remember Ian, who lived in Ancroft House, Longhirst for 20 years from 1996 until 2016. Ian was a very active member of the Longhirst community.

He was Church Warden and also attended and helped at many village events. He particularly enjoyed the flower and produce show and Open Gardens. He missed his many Longhirst friends when he moved south. He last visited the village on the sad occasion of Mike Elphick's funeral in May 2025.

Ian was born in Sleaford, Lincolnshire in 1942 and went to boarding school in Plymouth. In 1961 he started in the TA, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, then REME for three years, and then the Royal Army

Medical Corps in regular service until 1991.

Ian had three sons from his first marriage, Tony, Robert and Richard. Ian then married Sue and moved to Northumberland. Jen his daughter, was born in 1993. He left the regular army but stayed in the TA until 2001, first in the Yorkshire Air Ambulance and then 201 Hospital Unit, Newcastle. He worked in Environmental Health and at one stage started his own company, 'Ancroft Associates', which allowed him to continue his love for travel. He did some amazing work in Ukraine, speaking to NATO after being part of an investigation into Chernobyl, but he also travelled widely, from Germany to Dubai and to his favourite places like the Philippines and the Seychelles. Work even took him to Florida where he had a contract with Disney World. Ian and Jen had five holidays in Disney World, the last being a big family trip at the age of 79.

Ian loved dogs, from his first beagle called 'Sam' to his last black Labrador 'Millie'.

About 10 years ago he moved back to Colchester to be closer to his sons and grandchildren. He enjoyed life there and loved how close it was to London for West End shows and army reunions.

He enjoyed working, so even in his 70's he helped out at the army barracks in Colchester with their health and safety lessons. The rest of his time he ticked off some major bucket list items. He went on an Orient Express trip from Bangkok to Singapore and completed a Spitfire flight. He was able to fly himself for 10 minutes because of his previous flying experience. One of his favourite things to do was just to go out to Mersea Island with his black Labrador Millie, have a walk and then sit together and look out at the sea. Jen and her husband David had a beautiful baby girl in October 2025, Ian's sixth grandchild. He was absolutely delighted to meet little Charlotte and was so proud of Jen.

Over the past year Ian had many health problems and from September he had a prolonged spell in hospital followed by a hospice admission. He died peacefully in his sleep at home. He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends.

If anyone would like to donate in memory of Ian, here is a link to his two chosen charities:
<https://charlesarmstrong.muchloved.com>

FEBRUARY DIARY

4	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club
6	Friday	9.30-10.00am	Mobile library
7	Saturday	2.00-3.00pm	LWCT talk – “Pond Life”
14	Saturday	10.00am 10.30-12.00am	Litter picking Coffee morning
20	Friday	8.30-11.00pm	Pub night
tba	Friday	9.30-10.00am	Mobile library

MARCH DIARY

4	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club
14	Saturday	10.00am 10.30am-12noon	Litter picking Coffee morning
14	Saturday	2.00-3.30pm	LWCT talk – “Ratty Restored”
20	Friday	8.30pm	Pub night
tba	Friday	9.30-10.00am	Mobile library
26	Thursday	7.30-8.30pm	LWCT talk – “An Avian Asian Odyssey”

Unless stated otherwise, all events are held in the Village Hall. The mobile library parks opposite the Village Hall near the bus stop. Dates of Library visits after 6 Feb will be announced by email.

CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

Date	Time	Service
1 February	9.30am	Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst
8 February	9.30am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal
15 February	9.30am	Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst
22 February	9.30am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal
1 March	9.30am	Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst
8 March	9.30am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal
15 March	9.30am	Holy Communion at St John's, Longhirst
22 March	9.30am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Bothal
29 March	10.15am	Holy Communion at St Margaret's Chapel, Pegswood

LONGHIRST VILLAGE HALL REGULAR EVENTS

Pilates	Fridays	9.30-10.30am	charlotte@charlottewoodpilates.com
Pilates	Tuesdays	5.45-7.00pm	Jillates-Pilates with Jill
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

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
Member of Parliament	David Smith	01670 704099	david.smith.mp@parliament.uk
Churchwarden & Parochial Church Council	Heather Jackson	07756 690027	siriusa1998@aol.com
Church website	https://longhirstchurch.chessck.co.uk/		
Longhirst Parish Association	Janet Quinn	07791543657	quinnjanet@sky.com
Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust	Kim Woolhead	07749 811937	kim.woolhead@gmail.com
Longhirst Hundred Club	Pauline Gilbertson		paulinegilbertson@gmail.com
Longhirst Colliery Recreation Room Bookings	Mary Climson	07727 198108	maryclimson67@gmail.com
Longhirst Village Hall Bookings	https://longhirstvillagehall.co.uk		
Lunch Club	Helen McCabe Diane Milmore	07964 159957 07962 138788	
Litter Picking	Pauline Gilbertson		paulinegilbertson@gmail.com
Coffee Mornings	Helen McCabe	07964 159957	mccabe_paul1@sky.com
Village Website www.longhirstvillage.co.uk	Chris Marr	01670 790196	chrismarr@btinternet.com
Village Facebook Group	www.facebook.com/longhirstvillage		
Longhirst Leader	Jill McManus	07837 525634	longhirstleader@gmail.com
	Mo Dewar	01670 791149	dewarms@btinternet.com
	Janet Quinn	07791543657	quinnjanet@sky.com
	Kim Woolhead	07749 811937	kim.woolhead@gmail.com