

LONGHIRST LEADER

December / January 24



*We wish you all a Merry Christmas
and a Very Happy New Year*



LONGHIRST VILLAGE HALL GRAND CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

In aid of St. John's Church

Saturday 9 December

10.30am – 12.30pm

Christmas Hamper Raffle



Tombola with a twist Enjoy our bacon butties

Admission to include tea/coffee and mince pie £3 (Children 50p)

All welcome. Please come and support us.

CAROL SINGING



We are going to **Micklewood and Lawson Villas** on **Tuesday 19 December** and to **Old Moor** and around the **Village** on **Thursday 21 December**. We will again be collecting for the Air Ambulance.

We will meet at the Village Hall at 6.30pm. Please come to help us sing, or join in when we come knocking on your door. Everyone is very welcome and we need your support.

Carol Robson (f)

LONGHIRST WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY TRUST FREE EVENTS

The following free events are planned in December and January:

Friday 8 December, 9.30am -1pm: Winter Bird Watch, Gosforth Nature Reserve

Thursday 14 December, 7.30pm: Talk - Trees in Winter, Longhirst Village Hall.

Includes hot drinks, mince pies and a Christmas raffle!

Friday 19 January, 10.30am: Winter Ladybirds, Havannah Nature Reserve

Hazelrigg, Newcastle, NE13 7AP

If you would like to book a place on any of these, please contact Pauline Gilbertson at pauline.gilbertson@gmail.com or 07717 224072. Lifts will be available if needed.

Once we have confirmed dates for further events we will let you know.

Kim Woolhead (y)



PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



Longhirst Parish Council

Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 November.

Woodland Trust - The Northern Area Officer for the Woodland Trust has again been contacted to try to arrange a site visit to discuss the future management of Paddock (Millennium) Wood.

Ashington Road Flooding - this issue has still not been resolved. A report has been submitted to the Castle Morpeth Local Area Committee and Peter Coates will attend the next meeting in person to request urgent action by NCC and Advance Northumberland. (NB. At the Area meeting NCC Highways reported that the ditch clearance work and a drainage investigation are already underway and funding for the raising of the road is being sought).

Annual Donations – The Council agreed to contribute £660 towards the maintenance of the churchyard, £100 to the Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust and for the first time a donation of £50 to the Parish Association to cover the cost of room hire and refreshments for the Remembrance Day Service.

Precept for 2024/25 - The Clerk called for suggestions for activities and expenditure for next year. Priorities included reducing the impact of flooding on the roads and maintaining access to walking routes around Longhirst. Possible actions include additional gully cleaning (either via Northumberland County Council or a private contractor); installing drainage along the ditch adjacent to Ashington Road (in conjunction with Advance Northumberland); Public Rights of Way maintenance and improving the footpaths in Paddock Wood (requiring the permission of the Woodland Trust). Potential costs are to be investigated.

Potland Park - the Parish Council agreed to draft a joint letter with Ashington Town Council raising concerns about the lack of progress on clearing the obstructions and opening up the public rights of way across Potland Park.

Flooding on road between Longhirst Hall and the Village - the road and pavement in the dip of the main road by the Church now flood regularly, effectively blocking pedestrian access between the Village (including the bus stop) and Micklewood. (NB: since the meeting NCC have now cleared the gullies, including the use of CCTV to detect the blockage).

All residents are encouraged to use the new NCC 'FixMyStreet' system to report this and similar road defects (see article on page 3).

Public Rights of Way maintenance – the NCC Countryside Officer responsible for our area has moved to a new job within the County Council and there is no replacement yet. Repairs are therefore likely to be delayed even further. Jenny Ames (a resident) helped to inspect and compile the current list of repairs needed and will continue to carry out periodic inspections and report back to the Parish Council.

Slow Ways national campaign - this is a national campaign to compile online records on the condition of Public Rights of Way across the country. It is open to any individual to highlight those routes that are in good order, and those that require maintenance (or may be impassable). The campaign does not have any ability to report to local authorities, nor to push for repairs to be done, but it is a useful resource for walkers. Resident, Jenny Ames, offered to upload our local data to this online portal.

Closure of the Forge Inn - The Forge Inn at Ulgham closed some years ago, but has since been formally listed as an 'Asset of Community Value' and a Community Benefit Society created by Ulgham residents (see article on page 6). On the basis that The Forge offers an opportunity to revive a business that would offer a great benefit to the local community and one that is widely welcomed, the Parish Council agreed to purchase £500 worth of shares in support of the project.

NE Grains meeting feedback - there were no major issues.

Councillor vacancy co-option appointment - Colleen Anderson from Ulgham Lane was appointed.

Planning Consultation Morpeth Caravan Park - The application is for a change of use from a holiday let to a permanent residence for four of the holiday cottages at Morpeth Caravan Park. Councillors felt that if these properties were permanently occupied this would not adversely affect the infrastructure of the Parish. Having no strong opinion either way they agreed to offer no comment.

NEXT MEETING: 7pm on **Thursday 4 January** at Longhirst Village Hall. All residents are invited to attend.

Janet Quinn (q)

FIXMYSTREET

A number of residents have now used the online "FixMyStreet" road defect recording system provided by NCC and are reporting that it is easy to use, generates a meaningful response and has even resulted in repair work being done quite promptly in many cases.

The Parish Council encourages everyone to make use of it to report potholes, blocked drains, loose kerbs, fly tipping and faulty street lights, etc.

FixMyStreet can be accessed online via the NCC website at fix.northumberland.gov.uk or via an app downloaded to a smart phone (both Apple and Android versions are available).

Peter Coates

REQUEST FOR NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCILS ELECTION STAFF

We require a number of extra staff to assist us for the May 2024 elections at the polling stations. The possible positions available include Presiding Officers currently paid £324.41 and Poll Clerks currently paid £223.76.

If you are interested or know of anyone else who may be please pass this information on to them. You do not need to be a Northumberland Council employee and full training will be given in advance, particularly for the Presiding Officer, as this role carries a greater level of responsibility.

Please note there would be no guarantee that we could employ you at the station near your home, but we would endeavour as always to employ staff as close to their home as possible.

If this is something you may be interested in taking part in or if you would like any further information please contact electionstaff@northumberland.gov.uk.

NCC

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of one of our oldest residents, Tom Pigg. Our thoughts and sympathies are with his family and friends at this very difficult time.

NEW RESIDENTS



Kayleigh and Mark Mccullock have recently moved into Lilac Cottage (No. 3 Main Street) with their two daughters Chelsea, 13 and Nicole, 11. Both girls are autistic and have learning and some physical difficulties.

We hope they have all settled in well, enjoy living in Longhirst and we look forward to seeing them at Village events.

VILLAGE PUB NIGHTS



Our Christmas pub night is on **Friday 15 December** and the first of the New Year will be on **Friday 19 January**, both from 7.30pm.

Everyone is very welcome and we look forward to seeing you.

Allison (h), Richard, Kathleen, Susan and Phil



VILLAGE HALL NEWS



It is with a deep sense of sadness that we must report the resignations of our Chairperson, Margaret Lediard, and one of our longest serving Trustees, Beryl Gibson, both on grounds of their deteriorating health. Margaret has served as a Trustee for the past 20 years and as Chairperson for the past 5 years. Beryl has served as a trustee for 16 years having first been elected in 2007. Margaret's contribution to the development and maintenance of the Village Hall has been second to none and Beryl has been tireless in holding Trustees and officers to account. Both will be sorely missed.

We are happy to report the election of four new Trustees to the Board at the AGM on Thursday 23 November. They are Paul McCabe, Diane Millmore, Ian Loudon and Andy Robson. We are also pleased to report the election of Janet Quinn as our new Chairperson.

The Lottery funded redevelopment of the Hall still has a few niggly bits of finishing off to be completed but we are assured that these will be done in the near future. The Board then plans a large social event in the spring for the whole Village when we will be seeking residents' ideas about the next set of development priorities, so watch this space!

The Longhirst Parish Association Trustees

FREE N GAUGE MODEL RAILWAY OPEN DAY

Sunday 10 December 12noon - 4pm Longhirst Village Hall

Following our very popular displays at the last two Open Garden Weekends we hope you will come along with your family and friends to a Free Open Day organised by the Northumberland Area Group of the N Gauge Society.

The star of the Show will be a 20' x 12' modular layout with full digital control. In comparison, a small starter layout will have simple analogue controls.

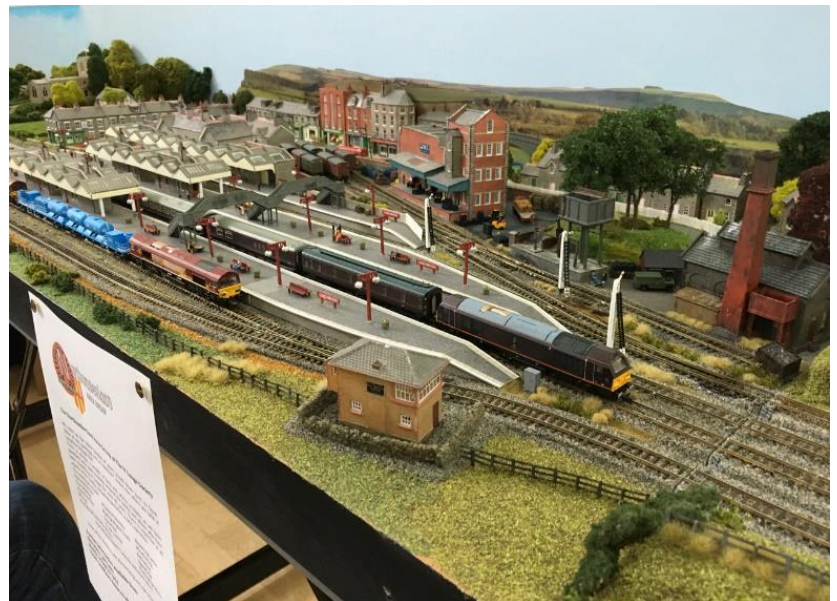
The beauty of N Gauge model railways is that they are half the size of the 00 Gauge ones that most people are familiar with. That means they take up far less space and can be more readily accommodated in modern houses.

It is easy to start the hobby in a simple way with a small layout. Then, over time, it is possible to develop skills in design and planning, constructing and painting scenery and buildings, electrical wiring and electronics including digital control of the locomotives.

The Group includes members from as far afield as Newcastle and Prudhoe in the south to Chirnside and Selkirk in the Scottish Borders. Regular meetings take place on the third Sunday of each month from 2 - 5pm in Longhirst Village Hall. Anyone interested in N Gauge modelling is very welcome to join.

Further Information is available from:

Secretary: Jon Laws Mobile: 07948 277852 Email: jon@laws-home.co.uk



CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

December and January's Services



Date	Time	Service
3 December	9.30am 2.00pm	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst Advent Toy Service at St. John's, Longhirst
10 December	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal
17 December	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
24 December	9.30am 6.00pm 11.30pm	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal Christmas Eve Carol Service at St. John's, Longhirst Midnight Service at St. Andrew's, Bothal
31 December	10.15am	Holy Communion at St. Margaret's, Pegswood
7 January	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
14 January	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal
21 January	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
28 January	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal

Rev. John Park's Retirement Lunch

On Saturday 4 November, well over 80 church and community members gathered at Longhirst Village Hall to thank John, his wife Jane, his children Tom and Alice and seven other members of his family for seventeen years of faithful service to the churches and communities of Bothal with Pegswood and Longhirst and to wish John and Jane a long and happy retirement.

Everyone had brought a contribution to a shared lunch and the whole occasion was very enjoyable for all concerned.

There had been a voluntary collection around both parishes in the weeks leading up to the event and John and Jane were

presented with a case of Bordeaux red wine, a large bouquet of flowers and a cheque for £1,000. The number of people who attended the event and the amount of money collected bore witness to the respect, love and esteem in which John and his family have been held over the past seventeen years.

Mike Elphick, PCC Secretary



Our New Lay Minister – Heather Jackson

Heather has lived in the area for 40 years and been a Churchwarden at St. John's for over 3 years, having taken up the post just before the Covid outbreak. With the help of the PCC and the congregation this role involves cleaning the Church, ensuring that services run smoothly and that the grounds are maintained.

Last year she undertook a course with the Diocese to become a Lay Minister authorised to lead worship. Having passed, she attended a celebration service at St. Nicholas' Cathedral in Newcastle in September and hopes to receive her certificate soon. She can now, for example, conduct Morning and Evening Prayer, Remembrance and Carol Services. An ordained Minister will take Church services until Christmas but arrangements for next year have not yet been finalised. If necessary, Heather can lead community and non-eucharistic services and until we have a new vicar she (d) is the contact for St John's for pastoral care, funerals, wedding and baptisms.

Heather is very grateful for the help and support she receives from the PCC and the congregation in all areas of her work.

Peter and Claire Coates

SAVING THE FORGE INN, ULGHAM



History of The Forge Inn

The Forge Inn has been a thriving pub in the past and more recently a filming location. Sadly, it has been closed for business since 2019 and the premises have fallen into a state of disrepair.

The Forge Inn was placed on the Asset of Community Value register with Northumberland County Council (NCC) in November 2019 by Ulgham Parish Council on behalf of the residents.

A survey of 174 households in Ulgham village conducted in August 2023, with a fantastic 60% response rate, resulted in an overwhelming 87% (203 adults) supporting a Community Bid to purchase and save the pub from future change of use/redevelopment.

On 4 September 2023 the current owner informed NCC of her intention to dispose of the asset as per the Localism Act 2011. This triggered two “Moratorium Periods”. The first is the *Interim Moratorium Period*, which is six weeks, during which time community interest groups can decide if they want to be considered as a potential bidder. If none do so, the owner is free to sell their asset at the end of the six weeks. The other is a *Full Moratorium Period*, which is six months, during which a community interest group – having declared they wish to bid – can develop a proposal and raise the money required to bid to buy the asset. On 29 September 2023 the Ulgham Community Benefit Society Limited (UCBS) was incorporated with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), to allow a Community Share Sale and subsequent Bid to be progressed. On the 3 October 2023, UCBS formally expressed an interest with NCC to submit a Bid from the Community to purchase the Forge Inn by the Full Moratorium End Date of 5 March 2024.

The race is now on to raise the funds to save and restore The Forge Inn and guarantee for future generations a welcoming community hub for locals and visitors to enjoy.

The future for The Forge at Ulgham

Our aim is to purchase and refurbish The Forge Inn in order to regain our pub in the village, but also make the asset a social hub, providing a warm and friendly facility with services that bring the community together and embrace the diversity of our community. We have a vision that we will build a sustainable multi-purpose community facility, reflecting the results of the village survey. We wish to create a welcoming environment for all ages, to support those who wish to volunteer and to provide inclusive employment and training for those looking for work. Our services will be offered to our local community and visitors alike and will include:

- Pub offering traditional pub food.
- All day café including gallery for local artists
- Local shop
- Holiday accommodation

What can you do to help?

We are looking for volunteers of all skills and abilities to help us bring The Forge back to life from DIY to Architects, from cleaners to gardeners, from baristas to bar managers. Let us know about your skills! Shares will be on offer from 13 November until 31 December 2023 for anyone in the surrounding communities and further afield. We aim to raise between £300,000 and £450,000 to buy The Forge building and land and refurbish the property, supplementing this figure and any shortfalls with grants, crowdfunding and sponsorship. Buying shares makes you a Society Member and gives you a right to vote on the future of The Forge. If UCBS is unsuccessful in its bid, share investments will be refunded.

To volunteer or for more information visit www.the-forge-at-ulgham.co.uk

Jenny Ames (Secretary of Ulgham Community Benefit Society)

THE LONGHIRST HUNDRED CLUB

The winners of the last two 'Hundred Club' draws are:

Month	1 st Prize (£60)	2 nd Prize (£40)	3 rd Prize (£20)
October	Ticket No. 35 Linda Mowbray	Ticket No. 60 Audrey Jordon	Ticket No. 204 Peter McKenzie
November	Ticket No. 64 Peter Anderson <i>for Grace</i>	Ticket No. 152 Anne Carey	Ticket No. 202 Sibell Pigg <i>for Rachel</i>

Mike Elphick (c)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

3	Sunday	2pm Annual Toy Service at St. John's	(c)
6	Wednesday	11.45am Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
8	Friday	9.45am Mobile Library in the Village	
9	Saturday	10.30am – 12 noon GRAND CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING in Village Hall	(i)
10	Sunday	12noon - 4pm Model Railway Open Day in the Village Hall (see page 4)	
15	Friday	7.30pm Pub Night in the Village Hall	(h)
19	Tuesday	6.30pm at V Hall for Carol Singing around Micklewood and Lawson Villas	(f)
20	Wednesday	11.45am Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
21	Thursday	6.30pm at V Hall for Carol Singing at Old Moor around the Village	(f)
24	Sunday	6pm Christmas Eve Carol Service at St. John's, Longhirst	(c)
27	Wednesday	Late food bin collection	
29	Friday	Late blue bin collection	

JANUARY

2	Tuesday	Late food bin collection	
3	Wednesday	11.45am Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
4	Thursday	7pm Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall. All welcome	(a)
5	Friday	9.45am Mobile Library in the Village Late black bin collection	
12	Friday	Deadline for February / March Longhirst Leader e-mail to clairecoates32@gmail.com	Ed. Group
13	Saturday	10am Litter pickers meet at the Village Hall 10.30am – 12noon Coffee Morning in the Village Hall	(n) (r)
17	Wednesday	11.45am Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
19	Friday	7.30pm Pub Night in the Village Hall	(h)

REGULAR EVENTS

- Church services as detailed on page 5
- The Fish Van stops at the War Memorial every Friday between 8.30 and 9.00am
- Mobile Post Office in De Walden Terrace, Pegswood every Thursday from 11.45am – 12.45pm

FUTURE EVENTS

- **Open Gardens Weekend – June/July 2024**

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information about the various activities and events mentioned in this Newsletter contact:-

Parish Council Clerk – Helyn Douglas 826803 / e-mail : longhirstpc@gmail.com **(a)**

County Councillor – David Towns 07985 012012 / e-mail : david.towns@northumberland.go.uk **(g)**

Vicar - **(b)**

Churchwarden - Heather Jackson 07756 690027/ e-mail : siriusa1998@aol.com **(d)**

PCC Secretary – Mike Elphick 790764 / e-mail : mike.elphick1@gmail.com **(c)**

Longhirst Parish Association – Janet Quinn 790630 / e-mail : quinnjanet@sky.com **(q)**

Village Hall Bookings - Mike Elphick 790764 / e-mail : mike.elphick1@gmail.com **(c)**

Longhirst Wildlife and Community Trust- Kim Woolhead 07749 811937 / e-mail : kim.woolhead@gmail.com **(y)**

Lunch Club – Linda Rudd 790116 / e-mail : barnacrelmr@aol.co.uk **(i)**

Longhirst Hundred Club - Mike Elphick 790764 / e-mail : mike.elphick1@gmail.com **(c)**

Parish Voluntary Litter Clearance – Chris Lediard 790268 / chris.lediard@tiscali.co.uk **(r)**

Village Coffee Mornings – Helen McCabe 790494 / e-mail : mccabe_paul1@sky.com **(n)**

Village Pub Nights – Allison and Richard Tordoff 790364 / e-mail : rtordoffs@gmail.com **(h)**

Longhirst Colliery Recreation Room bookings – Mary Climson 07727 198108 / maryclimson67@gmail.com **(j)**

Red/Grey Squirrel Sightings – MADRS 07570 897979 / enquiries@madresquirrels.com **(s)**

Village Website – www.longhirstvillage.co.uk - Chris Marr 790196 / e-mail : chrismarr@btinternet.com **(u)**

Village Facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/longhirstvillage/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel **(v)**

Longhirst Parish Council Website - <https://northumberlandparishes.uk/longhirst> **(x)**

Church Website - www.longhirstchurch.btck.co.uk **(b)**

Longhirst Leader Editorial Group:

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Carol Robson - Rose Cottage, Ulgham Lane: 07773 738442 **(f)**

Mo Dewar - 7 Stable Close : 791149, dewarms@btinternet.com **(w)**

Janet Quinn – 38 Micklewood Close : 790630, quinnjanet@sky.com **(q)**

Kim Woolhead – 3 Broomhaugh: 07749 811937, kim.woolhead@gmail.com **(y)**