

# LONGHIRST LEADER

## December 2020 / January 2021



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



### VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Work on the Village Hall is progressing well although for various reasons it has not been quite as speedy as had been planned. The replacement of the lead in the roof valleys between the original schoolhouse and the 1930's sports hall extension is complete. The insulated false ceiling and a new projector screen have been installed as can be seen from the image below.



The new hot water system serving the kitchen and toilets is in place. There is still some work to be completed on new lighting in the main Hall and some minor touch-up redecoration is needed in the toilets, the main Hall, and the library.

The final element of the work is the boxing in of the new pipework in the kitchen together with a full redecoration of that room. It is hoped that this can be completed before Christmas, but the contractor has had health problems within his family and as there is no prospect of the kitchen being needed in

the near future, the Trustees are relaxed about the timing for completing this final element of the project.

**Jigsaws.** Thanks to a recent donation of 13 jigsaws there is now a good selection in the library. If you would like to borrow one contact Mike Elphick(c) for access to the Village Hall and please make a small donation in the pot. Further donations of jigsaws will also be gratefully accepted.

The Longhirst Parish Association Trustees

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY MAUREEN

Many congratulations to Maureen Lowes who will be 90 on 29<sup>th</sup> December. We wish her a very happy birthday and all the very best for many years to come.



## PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



At the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November a resident from Station Cottages requested the support of the Parish Council in objecting to what he believed to be an **unauthorised development** adjacent to his property. The Council agreed to the request and to raise the matter with the County Council.

County Councillor David Towns was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but had advised that 16 families in the Longhirst/Pegswood Division are eligible for **free school meals** and he was proposing to fund their provision during the school holidays from his Small Schemes Allowance. If this is not permitted, he will cover the costs himself.

On behalf of Longhirst Hall residents Andy Robson reported that a section of metal fencing belonging to the property opposite the 'hole in the wall' on **Dairy Lane** has been damaged by construction vehicles as they reverse out. This has been taken up with the developers and the construction company (as well as the Health & Safety Executive) with the result that all damage is promised to be fixed once the construction is complete.

He also reported that **construction traffic** is using Dairy Lane and when he queried this with the Planning Department was told it was allowed. Councillors were concerned to hear this as it was their understanding that the Lane was not to be used. They requested a copy of the notification so that this issue could be taken up with the County Council.

Jon Mills was welcomed to his first meeting as a representative of Micklewood residents. He raised the lack of a **footpath from Micklewood to the Village**. He was assured that the Parish Council is very aware of this issue and is anxious to see a resolution. The understanding is that once the two properties on Dairy Lane are complete the developer will construct a footpath.

Maureen Carrick from **The Colliery** was also welcomed to her first meeting. She would like further work done on the section of footpath between the railway and North East Grains as it is very narrow and dilapidated and forces pedestrians into the road. The Parish Council is requesting that a tarmac footpath is laid close to the level crossing as part of the NCC Local Transport Plan and the section of path opposite The Old Schoolhouse is widened. Regarding the 'Longhirst Colliery' name plate sign she confirmed that residents will be happy with a simple sign, and were never looking for a large 'welcome' style sign as those on the approaches to Longhirst Village. The Council agreed to this request.

Peter Coates reported on the **first liaison meeting with North East Grains** and this is detailed on page 3.

Glen Fahy outlined the drainage work that was being carried out by Advance Northumberland in the fields east of the **Ashington Road flooding site** and members expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on the road. Further contact will be made with NCC on this issue.

A decision from NCC for the planning application for **Domino's Field** ( 19/00991/FUL ) is still awaited.

The proposals for a slimmed down Covid-19 secure **Remembrance Service** at the war memorial on 7<sup>th</sup> November were noted and Catherine Farrell would attend on behalf of the Council.

Maureen Lowes had mentioned that the property at the east end of The Barracks in the Village was being used as a holiday let and guests were parking their **cars on the footway** outside. It was agreed to seek to identify the new owners and request that this practice should be avoided.

Richard Tordoff requested that a **letter of thanks be sent to NCC** for the installation of a new drainage gully on the Pegswood Road. This was agreed.

The Council AGM will be held in May 2021 and residents will be requested to submit **suggestions for improvements in the Parish** at that meeting.

The **next meeting** is to be held on the evening of **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January** (time to be arranged) and all residents are invited to attend/observe the meeting by Zoom or send issues for discussion at the meeting in writing to the Clerk (a) at least 24 hours in advance.

### **FIRST LIAISON MEETING WITH NORTH EAST GRAINS**

Following the recent successful planning application from North East Grains for the installation of an anaerobic digester County Councillor David Towns and I met Matthew Curry via Zoom. Matthew will become Managing Director of NEG at the end of the year when Neil Carr retires.

It was a positive meeting and we agreed that Matthew, his Chairman, David Towns and 3 members of the Parish Council should meet 4 times a year in future.

Matthew explained that NEG have no immediate plans to install a digester but will review this at a later date.

He also assured me that NEG do NOT import any grain from Scotland and that the vast majority of incoming grain is grown within 20 miles of North East Grains and supplied by their members.

I reported that Longhirst residents' main concern was over the volumes of traffic going to and from the plant, especially through the centre of the Village. I pointed out that the actual width of the road between The Old Vicarage and Byways (kerb to kerb) is 5.5m and not 6m as claimed in the NEG consultants' report as part of the planning application. This makes it impossible for 2 large grain lorries to pass each other without riding up onto the footpath.

Matthew said that NEG would endeavour to ensure that their delivery lorries abide by a (currently) voluntary agreement to turn right when leaving the plant to avoid the centre of Longhirst Village. NEG have warning signs in place instructing vehicles to turn right when leaving the plant and have CCTV equipment that can be used to monitor vehicle movements.

The **next liaison meeting** is scheduled for January 2021.

**LONGHIRST PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE (x)**. If you wish to report fly tipping, a pothole or a blocked road gully to the County Council it is quite easy to do so by opening the website, choosing "Links" and then clicking the appropriate heading.

The NCC Planning Portal references of **current Parish planning applications** are also listed.

**COVID-19 UPDATES**. NCC has an on-line Covid-19 "dashboard" that is updated daily giving the latest virus news and numbers of current cases in the County and in the Pegswood ward which includes Longhirst.

The link is <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/COVID-19-in-Northumberland.aspx>.

Peter Coates

## COLLIERY CORNER

Unfortunately, all Longhirst Colliery Recreational Room events planned for December have been cancelled due to the ongoing Covid-19 regulations.

We would however like to take the opportunity of wishing everyone a Happy if not Merry Christmas and hopefully a better New Year 2021.

Norah Dryden, Secretary of Longhirst Colliery Residents Association

## CAN WE RUN AN OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND IN 2021?



The response to the article in the last issue of the Longhirst Leader was heartening because we had two offers to become involved in the organisation of an Open Gardens Weekend in the areas of catering and stewarding. We also had a positive response from someone who did not leave their name and contact details. Our sincere thanks to those who responded and if you forgot to leave your contact details, please get in touch.

However, there were insufficient offers from people willing to open their gardens and, in the light of the current depressing predictions about progress in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, it has been decided that we must postpone an Open Gardens Weekend until 2022.

In coming to this decision, we have established with David and Audrey Jordan, that they see no reason why we cannot use the hard standing adjacent to the Brocks for car parking in the early summer of 2022 for which we offer our sincere thanks. If anyone strongly disagrees with this decision, please feel free to get in touch as we are open to discussion.

Jill McManus and Mike Elphick (c)

## WILDLIFE ALERT

Every week, as part of a research project, I count the birds in my garden in Stable Close. Since the beginning of November the numbers have reduced considerably, and my neighbours have begun to find dead birds in their gardens. Several species are involved, all ground-feeders; the birds are not diseased, malnourished or injured, and the possibility of poisoning has to be considered.

Vermin are always around and we have to control them, but if you are putting out rat poison please make sure that it is accessible only to rats. Hedgehogs are still active, so poison blocks should be in hedgehog-proof containers. Granules scattered on the ground are likely to be mistaken for the bird food that many of us put out; they are best left in the opened bag so the rats can drag it away.

We've all been grateful for nature and wildlife during the lockdown - please continue to give them the help they need!

On a more cheerful note, here is a photo of a young, male roe deer taken from my living room window in mid-November. It's dad has also been visiting the garden.

Mo Dewar



## WELCOME



Chris and Melanie Collins and their three boys Ryan (14), Lewis (10), and Owen (8) are now living at Middle Moor. They moved from Capheaton and have been here since early August. They have so far put an extension on the rear of the farm house and carried out extensive internal work. Further work is planned to convert the attached barns.

Any residents of the Parish who may have an interest in Middle Moor are welcome to go and view the changes made thus far and discuss the plans for the works that are on-going.

We welcome you to Longhirst, hope you will be very happy here and look forward to the time when we can meet at Village events.

## ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL TOY SERVICE CANNOT TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR BUT WE ARE STILL COLLECTING PRESENTS

Because of the current Covid-19 lockdown we are unable to hold our annual Toy Service at Longhirst Church on Advent Sunday this year. However, we still plan to collect toys as usual in support of the Cedarwood Trust, a Church of England community outreach organisation working in one of the lowest income communities in North Shields. If you wish to support this programme, please provide a wrapped Christmas present and indicate whether it is suitable for a boy or a girl and an approximate age. Presents for teenagers are also very welcome.



They can be dropped off at various places:-

At St. John's Church on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December between 9.30 and 11.00am;

At Linda Mowbray's house, No. 10 The Village, Longhirst at any time up to the 6<sup>th</sup> December;

At Keith and Dorothy Launchbury's house, 16 Micklewood Close, before 6<sup>th</sup> December (e);

At Bothal Rectory, Longhirst Road, Pegswood, no later than Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December (b).

If you are unable to purchase a present but would like to support regardless, Cedarwood will accept cash or a cheque made payable to "The Cedarwood Trust".

St. John's PCC

## TENTATIVE PLANS FOR CAROL SINGING AROUND THE PARISH

As with so much of our normal Christmas activities this year, the Covid-19 pandemic rules are likely to preclude normal carol singing around people's houses in the Parish. However, there may be a possibility of a few members of the Mid Northumberland Chorus coming to four or five large locations around the Parish during the week leading up to Christmas where both the singers and listeners can be appropriately social distanced. Of course, we may not be able to organise this safely but at present we are hoping that Barnacre garden, Stable Close, Micklewood Close and John Dobson Drive may be locations for the Choir to perform, possibly together with Pendemore Mews, Old Moor and/or somewhere around the Colliery. If this plan proves to be viable, we will make sure you are all informed of the dates, times and locations of these events.

St. John's PCC

## CHURCH NOTICE BOARD



**CHRISTMAS SERVICES.** While none of us can be completely sure what the pandemic rules will be in this area during the week leading up to Christmas, as things stand at present, it seems extremely unlikely that we will be able to hold our usual carol service on Christmas Eve. It is also likely that the current limits on the numbers of people we can accommodate in our churches (currently 32 at Longhirst and 30 at Bothal) will remain in force. There will therefore be just two services in the benefice over the Christmas

Eve/Christmas Day:-

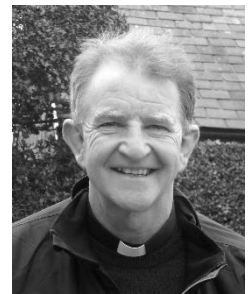
- 11.30pm - Midnight communion service at St. John's, Longhirst
- 9.30am - Christmas morning communion service at St. Andrews, Bothal

Those of you who wish to attend one or other of those services, will need to book your places by ringing the PCC secretary, Dorothy Launchbury (e) so that we can ensure we keep within limits on our numbers.

St. John's PCC

## VICAR'S LETTER

Thanks to all who have supported and encouraged me in one way or another with my fund-raising indoor rowing stint in October and it was good to chat with those who were able to come down to Bothal Church that Wednesday to watch for a while, have a good laugh and offer some light relief from the tedium. Some interesting conversations took place mostly about the rowing machine itself but also about fitness and preparation. One or two people asked how I had come up with the idea. Had I perhaps been inspired by the example of Captain Tom Moore, the hundred-year-old who raised millions for the NHS simply by walking up and down his back yard? To their surprise I said that it wasn't Captain Tom in fact, great man though he is, my inspiration came, (appropriately enough you may think) from the Bible. There is an incident from the life of Jesus where a woman pours a jar of expensive ointment on Jesus' head at a dinner party and is promptly criticized for wasting a precious resource which could have been sold and the money put to better use. Jesus rounds on her critics, "Let her alone", he growls. "She has done what she could: she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial" and adding that her action will live on in memory wherever stories about Jesus are told. She is sometimes simply known in the Bible as the woman who did what she could.



As may know the use of our church buildings have been greatly reduced over the past few months and lots of services have been cancelled. However, the people and buildings still needed looking after and the bills still have to be paid. So, inspired by the woman who did what she could, I asked the simple question, "What can I do?" to help our situation. An unlikely answer eventually dawned - sponsored indoor rowing - in church. No you have to be joking! Nobody will go for that! But I couldn't ignore the nagging thought which wouldn't go away and when I tentatively suggested it at a Church Council meeting it was met, to my astonishment, with great enthusiasm. So it came to pass and all because a woman is commended by Jesus for doing what she could.

Then it began to make sense. While indoor rowing isn't a "religious" activity, not something you'd expect to find the vicar doing in the church, it was something I could certainly do. I constantly make time to keep fit, indoor rowing has been an important part of that, and all it needed on my part was some adjustments to how I train. The fitness came first, then the idea. It was like God taking hold of what I actually enjoy doing, the bit of me that the church and parishioners generally don't see, and using it for good purposes. In offering what I had, again my mind turned to another more famous story in the Bible where a little boy who is brought to Jesus with his five loaves and two fishes to feed 5000 people. The lesson I learned was that when you offer what you have, however small or unlikely, to Jesus, the moral of the story seems to be, that a little can go a very long way. So far £4,358 has been raised from all sources for only 4 hours, 27 minutes and 7 seconds of sweat and toil.

With the prospect of us keeping the Christmas season in a very different way from what we are perhaps used to, some may be asking "What can I do?" In uncertain times it is reassuring to know that some things don't change. I am reminded of these simple words of a carol celebrating what the visitors to the stable at Bethlehem had to offer Christ in the cradle: they did what they could:

"What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man I would do my part. Yet what I can I give him, give my heart."

May the joy of the Angels, the eagerness of the Shepherds, the perseverance of the Wise Men, the love of Mary and Joseph and the peace of the Christ child, be yours this Christmas.

John Park

**TRADESMAN RECOMMENDATION - CARPETS and FLOORING**

We've recently had new carpets provided and fitted by Wansbeck Carpet & Floor in Pegswood Industrial Estate and recommend them to anyone thinking of doing the same. Scott Bousfield and his team were amazing, great quality, great service, great prices and nothing was too much trouble for them. Excellent in every way and local too. They were an absolute pleasure to have around!

Dorothy and Keith Launchbury

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

December

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Deadline for delivery of childrens' presents for Cedarwood Trust (see P5)	(b)
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Black bin collection as usual	
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>	11.30pm Midnight communion service at Longhirst (see P6)	(b)
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am Christmas communion service at Bothal (see P6)	(b)
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup>	Blue bin collection as usual	

January

Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council meeting on-line (time to be arranged - see P3)	(a)
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Deadline for February / March Longhirst Leader</b> e-mail to <a href="mailto:clairecoates32@gmail.com">clairecoates32@gmail.com</a>	Ed. Group

The Fish Van stops at the War Memorial every Friday between 8.30 and 9.00am

## THE LONGHIRST HUNDRED CLUB

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

Month	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize (£60)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize (£40)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize (£20)
October	Ticket No. 155 <i>Craig Penfold for Gabrielle</i>	Ticket No. 147 Keith Launchbury	Ticket No. 98 Dennis Hodges
November	Ticket No. 137 Sandy Egan-Fowler	Ticket No. 169 Alvaro Villabono	Ticket No. 165 Andrew Robson

Mike Elphick

## 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](mailto:longhirstpc@gmail.com) (a)

**Vicar** - Rev. John Park 510793 / e-mail : [johnp2910@gmx.co.uk](mailto:johnp2910@gmx.co.uk) (b)

**Churchwardens** - - Mike Elphick 790764 / e-mail : [mike.elphick1@gmail.com](mailto:mike.elphick1@gmail.com) (c)

Heather Jackson 07756 690027/ e-mail : [siriusa1998@aol.com](mailto:siriusa1998@aol.com) (d)

**PCC Secretary** - Dorothy Launchbury 790491 / email: [launching1@outlook.com](mailto:launching1@outlook.com) (e)

**Mothers' Union** - Angela Mason 517872 / e-mail : [angela148@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:angela148@hotmail.co.uk) (g)

**Longhirst Parish Association** - Margaret Lediard 790268/ e-mail : [margaret.lediard@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:margaret.lediard@tiscali.co.uk) (t)

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

**Luncheon Club** - Linda Rudd 790116 / e-mail : [barnacrelmr@aol.co.uk](mailto:barnacrelmr@aol.co.uk) (i)

**Longhirst Village Show Association** - Carol Benbow 790194 / e-mail : [carol\\_benbow@hotmail.com](mailto:carol_benbow@hotmail.com) (p)

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

**Parish Voluntary Litter Clearance** - Chris Lediard 790268 / [chris.lediard@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:chris.lediard@tiscali.co.uk) (r)

**Village Coffee Mornings** - Helen McCabe 790494 / e-mail : [mccabe\\_paul1@sky.com](mailto:mccabe_paul1@sky.com) (n)

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

**Longhirst Colliery Recreation Hall** - - Bill Dryden 817862. / email : [drydenx2@btinternet.com](mailto:drydenx2@btinternet.com) (m)

**Red/Grey Squirrel Sightings** - MADRS 07570 897979 / [enquiries@madredsquirrels.com](mailto:enquiries@madredsquirrels.com) (s)

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

**Village Facebook page** - [https://www.facebook.com/longhirstvillage/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](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](http://www.longhirstchurch.btck.co.uk) (b)

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