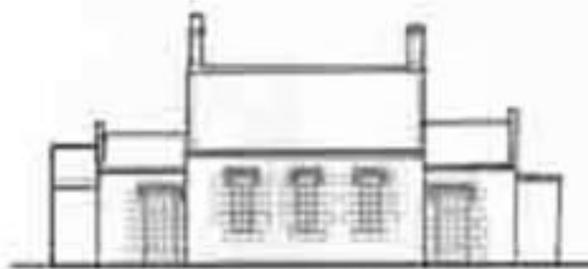


Welcome to Longhirst



Longhirst is a lovely little parish with a good old fashioned community spirit. You will find lots of events and activities throughout the year and we are delighted to welcome you to all of those. This booklet is designed to provide some useful information for you as a new resident, along with a very brief outline of the history of the village and information on some of the notable buildings. We hope you will have many happy years in your new home.

The Parish of Longhirst

Longhirst Village lies 3 miles north east of Morpeth on the B1337 road which runs more or less north/south through the village from St. John's Church in the south to the war memorial in the centre and, at the north end, the village hall. Originally built as an estate village to support the Longhirst Hall, most of the cottages in the centre of the village are early 19th century, remodelled c1880. The parish of Longhirst extends to Broomhaugh to the north, ½ mile to the west of the B1337, and 2½ miles to the east as far as Potland Farm, taking in Longhirst Colliery and former Longhirst Station. The population of the whole parish is around 500 adults. For more information on the history and notable buildings in the parish see page 5.

USEFUL INFORMATION

There is a **parish newsletter** - the Longhirst Leader - produced bi-monthly and delivered free to every household. This keeps residents up to date with the latest news, events and activities within the community and provides a list of key contacts on the back page.

There is also a **village website** www.longhirstvillage.co.uk

There are **bus stops** towards the north end of the village, outside and opposite the village hall, as well bus stops on either side of the road to Pegswood, which is called Butchers Lane. The village is on the main bus route between Berwick and Newcastle (currently Arriva Bus X18 which runs approx every hour). There is a smart phone app available showing the timetable and real time information. For more information go to www.arrivabus.co.uk

There is a **post box** attached to the garden wall of No.13 The Village, opposite the village hall, with collections at 4.45pm on weekdays and 8.30am on Saturdays. The nearest **post office** is in Morpeth, housed inside the T&G Allan shop on Newgate Street. There is also a useful post office, open 7 days a week, inside the Co-op at Widdrington.

The main **train station** closest to Longhirst Village is Morpeth, which sits on the main London to Edinburgh line. LNER, Cross Country and Northern trains currently operate from Morpeth train station. There is also a small local train station in Pegswood, from where you can catch a very limited number of trains that run between Alnmouth and Newcastle. See the various train provider websites or www.thetrainline.com for further information.

The nearest **supermarket** is a local Co-op store in Pegswood, open 7 days a week from 7am-11pm. There are larger supermarkets in Morpeth and Ashington. A van selling fresh fish calls into the village each Friday at 8.00am, stopping near the war memorial.

Daily (excluding Sunday) **newspaper and milk deliveries** can be arranged with Beaumont Newsagent in Morpeth (01670 512429).

The **bin collection** is every Thursday and this alternates between black bin (general waste) and blue bin (recyclable waste, excluding glass). Garden waste (brown bin) collections are every other Wednesday, for which Northumberland County Council impose an annual charge.

The nearest **household waste and recycling centre** is on Whorral Bank, which is on the road from Longhirst to Morpeth.

Superfast **broadband** is available to the majority of properties in the parish. To benefit you will need to contact an internet service provider of your choice. For more information contact www.inorthumberland.org.uk

The nearest **ATM** is outside the Co-op store in Pegswood. There are several high street **banks** in Morpeth (e.g. HSBC, Barclays, Lloyds, Santander).

The main **GP surgeries** in Morpeth are: Wellway Medical Group, also with a surgery in Pegswood, (tel. 01670 502333); Greystoke (tel. 01670 511393) and Gas House Lane (tel. 01670 513657). A **pharmacy** is attached to some of these practices. Additional high street pharmacies are in Morpeth town centre.

The nearest **A&E hospital** is the 'Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital' in Cramlington - post code NE23 6NZ.

The nearest **dental practices** are in Morpeth.

Regular combined **church services** are held in St. John's Church in Longhirst Village on the 1st and 3rd Sunday and at St. Andrew's Church in Bothal Village on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. On the occasional 5th Sunday there is a combined service at St. Margaret's Church, Pegswood. For more information and service times please go to www.longhirstchurch.btck.co.uk

The **local authority** for Longhirst is Northumberland County Council www.Northumberland.gov.uk

The nearest **veterinary practice** is Robson & Prescott on Whorral Bank, which is on the road from Longhirst to Morpeth, NE61 3BN (tel. 01670 512275).

A mobile **library** calls at the village on alternate Friday mornings, stopping in the middle of the village. The nearest main library is in the Morpeth Library & Customer Information Centre in Manchester Street, Morpeth.

Longhirst is a vibrant community with a number of **village events and activities**, full details of which can be found in each copy of the village newsletter - the Longhirst Leader. All our groups are delighted to welcome new members (and helpers) so please come and join us! Some examples are:-

Events

- Spring Fayre
- Church Fete
- Village Show
- Open Gardens
- Wildlife Watch
- Christmas Coffee Morning

Regular activities

- Badminton
- Yoga
- Coffee mornings
- Lunch club
- U3A activities (see page 5)
- Junior activities group
- Pub nights

Sporting activities which are not run by the village, but are located within it are 'Morpeth Cricket, Hockey & Tennis Club' and 'Longhirst Hall Golf Club'. Both are located in the grounds of Longhirst Hall.

We are very proud of our parish and work hard to keep it looking pretty. Some villagers kindly keep the flower tubs stocked and some volunteer as **litter pickers** once a month.

Paddock Wood - Planted in 1998 as a community based Millennium project, this 14 acre wood is maturing well and will increasingly provide an important landscape feature that complements the surrounding area. There is an area for picnics in the middle of the wood and it sits on a network of footpaths for leisurely walks. Dogs welcome, but please pick up after your pet.

A number of **committees** exist in the village for various purposes. These are:

- **Longhirst Parish Council** - the first tier of governance and the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue in the parish
- **Longhirst Parish Association** - a registered charity that manages and develops Longhirst village hall
- **Parochial Church Council** - the organising committee for St. John's Parish Church, elected from the congregation at its annual meeting. Working with the vicar to oversee all aspects of church life, it meets four times per year plus occasional special meetings as necessary
- **Longhirst Village Show Association** - the committee which plans, organises and runs the annual village show
- **Open Gardens Working Party** - an informal group drawn together of volunteers responsible for various aspects of the Open Gardens Weekend which takes place every two years
- **Longhirst Leader Editorial Group** - produces and distributes the bi-monthly village newsletter
- **Mid Northumberland U3A Group** - a member of the national U3A organisation, this group uses Longhirst as its base. For more info. see <https://u3asites.org.uk/mid-northumberland>

HISTORY AND NOTABLE BUILDINGS

The history of Longhirst goes back a good 6000 years, but much of the archaeological data has been obliterated by extensive opencast mining during the 19th and 20th centuries. From the Norman Conquest Longhirst was in the medieval parish of Bothal. In 1875 Longhirst Parish was formed.

A smithy and tiler (tile works) were part of the Longhirst estate in the 19th century, at a time when Longhirst also had a pub called the Half Moon Inn, which was eventually closed by Edward Lawson. The building later became the village post office and is now a residential home (no.13) which bears the name "The Old Post Office".

Longhirst also once had its own train station, on the Morpeth to Berwick line, which opened in 1847. As well as transporting coal, it incorporated a lime depot, allowing locally quarried lime to be transported by rail to neighbouring areas as fertiliser. The station was closed to passengers in 1951 and closed permanently in 1964.

From 1824 until 1937 Longhirst was dominated by two names: Lawson and Joicey. The discovery of coal in the area brought wealth to the Lawson family who held the manorial rights. This led them to build for themselves the much praised Longhirst Hall (see below).

Longhirst Colliery employed 478 men at its peak. The shaft was sunk in 1868 and was operated by the Lawson family until sold to James Joicey in 1887. Eight men died in the pit during its period of operation. Although the pit closed in 1896, the cutting of Longhirst coal was continued from Pegswood Colliery until 1935. In the 19th century 74 miners' cottages with gardens were built close to the pit, along with a Viewer's house with garden (Sydney Cottage), a Co-operative Store with buildings (Kyloe) and a Reading Room. The colliery and many of the associated buildings were sold by auction in 1921 including a Methodist Church (now demolished). A number of the cottages and houses still remain. The reading room was replaced by the Longhirst Colliery Institute Hall in 1936, still used for social functions and activities.

Longhirst Hall

William Lawson, from a farming family, was one who was blessed. The coal beneath his land enabled him to commission leading regional architect John Dobson to design him a grand home in Northumberland. The result was Longhirst Hall, a Grade II Star listed hall sitting in 75 acres, described as Dobson's finest classical design with the foundation stone being laid in 1824.

John Dobson was a significant figure whose architectural designs include Grainger Market, Grey Street and Central Station in Newcastle.

Longhirst Hall has a five bay, two storey front with three middle bays projecting as a large bow. The magnificent pedimented portico is supported on giant Corinthian columns. The doors open into a spectacular ashlar-faced central hall, which has apsed ends and a circular glass dome over the middle. The staircase starts in one arm and returns in two, with a beautiful cast iron balustrade. (*Pevsner*).

In the 1880's Longhirst Hall was sold by the Lawson family to another wealthy coal owner, Sir James Joicey, who owned it until 1937 when he sold it to William Sanderson. In 1939 the hall was sold to Moore's Stores owner, Harry Moore, but was requisitioned by the Army during the Second World War as military accommodation.

In 1948 the Moore family sold the property to the Home Office which converted the building into an approved school and then a Community Home with Education (CHE) for up to 72 boys, a use which continued until 1982.

The hall remained vacant until purchased by a private investment company in 1992 which completed extensive renovations to convert it into a hotel combined with a new build management training and conference centre and adjacent accommodation for up to 200 students. The training centre and accommodation was let to Northumbria University and used as a university business school accommodating UK and overseas students until 2004.

In 2004 Morpeth Borough Council leased those buildings and used them for council offices until 2009 when the new Northumberland County Council was created, at which point the council offices relocated from the hall to premises in Morpeth, leaving the hotel and business centre still open.

In 2014 the hotel and business centre closed. The hall and adjoining buildings remained empty once again until a private development company bought them, converting the former student accommodation into 40 modern homes in what is now Micklewood Park.

Longhirst Hall itself has been converted into three luxury homes, one of which retains the original main entrance, with its internal Ionic columns and central glazed dome, sweeping staircase and wrought-iron balustrade which wraps around the galleried first-floor landing.

Longhirst Village Hall

Longhirst Village Hall, which is a Grade II listed building, was built by the Lawson family in 1847 as a reading room for the village. It then became the first school building in the village and then the church hall. It was subsequently leased by the church to Longhirst Parish Association, a secular charity.

- **External Hire** - Longhirst Village Hall (location NE61 3LX) can be hired out for suitable occasions such as private parties, weddings, ceilidhs, etc. by contacting the secretary of the Longhirst Parish Association
- **Bookings Diary** - There is a web-based bookings diary, a copy of which is hanging in the foyer of the village hall. Anyone wishing to book the village hall for a meeting, activity or event should contact the secretary of Longhirst Parish Association

- **Facilities** - Longhirst Village Hall is well equipped with efficient heating and lighting, disabled access, disabled toilets, kitchen including cooking, dishwashing, coffee making and hot water geyser. The hall has a badminton court, projector screen, tables, chairs and a hearing-loop sound system. There is a limited number of off-road parking spaces available for bona fide users of the premises or by arrangement with the secretary of the Longhirst Parish Association

Church of St John the Evangelist

The Parish Church of St. John the Evangelist is a Grade II listed classic Victorian building, paid for by the Lawson family and opened for worship in 1875. The Joicey family subsequently financed some of its later ornamentation. Noteworthy features include stained glass windows depicting Northumbrian Saints and bible scenes; a reredos depicting Christ's resurrection, carved from Caen stone and alabaster; a beautiful carved chancel screen and the north west tower has a clavier of eight bells. The Lych-gate was added in 1885.