

LONGHIRST LEADER

June / July 2024

OPEN GARDENS AND CHURCH FLOWER FESTIVAL WEEKEND SATURDAY 29 AND SUNDAY 30 JUNE



Most of you will already know about the Open Gardens weekend; indeed, many of you will have already volunteered to help in one way or another. Here's a brief outline of the weekend:

Saturday & Sunday 11am to 5pm

12 gardens will open in the Village starting at 11am. The charge this year will be £7.50p per person per day. Accompanied children are free and well-behaved dogs are welcome.

The North-East N Gauge Model Railway group will again set up their exhibition layout in Cherryburn garage over the whole weekend.

Barnacre garden will host **stalls of plants, local honey, beeswax candles and art & crafts.**

As always, there will be delicious **home-made food** served at the Village Hall and **ice cream** will be on sale after lunch in the front garden of No 7. The gardens close at 5.00pm.

Parking in the Village

The Village is very busy during the Open Gardens weekend. It would be very helpful, and make it safer for visitors crossing the road, if people who normally park on the main street could park elsewhere between 11am and 5pm on both days. Those of you who have no alternative parking spots are welcome to park around Howarth Cottage (Dairy Lane) where there is room for eight cars or you could use the park and ride car park next to NE Grains.



Volunteers

If anyone else would like to volunteer to help with the weekend please contact Jill McManus (o)

PREPARING FOR THE WEEKEND

The Community Skip initiative organised by the Parish Council will now take place in mid June. Hopefully this will help with the final preparations for the Open Gardens Event as we tidy up the area. Final details will come nearer the time. If you have any questions please contact Richard Tordoff on 07750 066633.

We all want to showcase Longhirst as much as possible for the Open Gardens weekend. Please do all you can, especially on the main street, to tidy your front gardens and remove any weeds growing along your frontage at the back of the pavement.

Your co-operation will be very much appreciated.

Longhirst Parish Council

WELCOME



Gareth Bowden and Toni Herberson recently moved into Pipersfield House with Freya and Harriet (both 19), Kane and Rufus (both 16) and Seth (15). We hope they will all be very happy living in Longhirst and look forward to meeting them at village events.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



Longhirst Parish Council

The Annual General Meetings of the Council were held in the Recreation Room at Longhirst Colliery as the Village Hall was booked for the mayoral election.

In his annual report the Chairman, Peter Coates, started by thanking the Clerk, Helyn Douglas, for all her work over the year and highlighted how much the Council benefitted from her expertise in dealing with all the statutory requirements facing local authorities, however small, in the modern age.

He then thanked all the volunteers working throughout the Parish including members of the Council, the trustees of the Parish Association (Village Hall) and the Wildlife and Community Trust, members of the Parochial Church Council and the management team of the Open Gardens and their many helpers. He also included Lawrence Carey for all his work in the centre of the Village, the litter pickers, sign cleaners, those running the Lunch Club, Coffee Mornings and Pub nights and the editorial group publishing the Longhirst Leader.

In terms of the more major issues facing the Parish he reported that N.B. Clark had commenced installation of their recycling facility at the former Butterwell washing plant and early indications suggested there was every hope of a good working relationship with the company in future. The adjacent extensive tree planting scheme (apparently by the Crown Estate) was also welcome.

The Parish Council had presented a report to NCC's Castle Morpeth Area Committee about the flooding on Ashington Road in December. We now need to ensure that NCC lives up to the promises made at the time and the first test will be to see when the ditch downstream of the area is cleared this year before the onset of winter.

The long awaited restoration of the Church lychgate is finally complete and (at the time of writing) NCC have also carried out tarmacking work outside the entrance and installed three protective bollards. Cllr. David Towns has met the cost of the latter from his NCC members' fund.

The Woodland Trust continue to show little interest in the future of Paddock (Millennium) Wood but active discussions about footpath improvements are underway with Groundwork North East and it is hoped to have further news on this shortly.

Julie Murray and Bill Climson then explained the initiatives underway at The Colliery and were delighted to be able to report that NCC have carried out extensive tree planting replacement work in the wood following the devastation caused by Storm Arwen (see below). They were warmly thanked for providing the facilities for the evening's meeting.

Peter Coates and Chris Marr were re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

The **next meeting** will be held at 7pm on **Thursday 4 July** in Longhirst Village Hall and all residents are invited to attend.

COLLIERY CORNER

Northumberland County Council has planted 2,200 trees in our wood. There is a mix of ash, oak, holly, blackthorn, bird cherry, elm, Scots pine, hawthorn and rowan. We are now waiting for the paths to be replaced and an orchard to be planted in October.

Also, sadly, John Barns passed away. He was a pillar of the community, admired for his strength while struggling with his health conditions. He enjoyed the company of his neighbours, had a very dry sense of humour and was loved by all in Straker Terrace.

Mary Climson (j)

LONGHIRST WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY TRUST FREE EVENTS

The following **free** events are planned in June/July/August:

Thursday, 20 June, 10.30-13.00. Local Nature Walk. A nature walk around Longhirst starting at the Village Hall and taking in the Millennium Wood and Micklewood. A great opportunity to find out what lives and grows in our neighbourhood in the summer months!

Friday, 12 July, from 10.15. Northumberland Zoo Visit. FREE day tickets to the zoo available! At 10.30 we will have a talk about the harvest mouse breeding programme at the zoo, after which you will be free to explore on your own. The zoo closes at 17.00.

Sunday, 28 July, 10.30am. Clark's Bog Nature Reserve. A guided visit to a hidden nature reserve in Morpeth. The manager, Peter Matthewson, gave us an excellent talk on the site early on in our event programme – now is your chance to see the reserve for yourselves!



Sunday, 11 August, 10.00-13.00. West Chevington Nature Reserve. A guided walk around this Northumberland Wildlife Trust reserve.

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

Kim Woolhead

VILLAGE HALL NEWS



The final reports on the long running Village Hall redevelopments have now been submitted to the Lottery. There remain a few issues which are still outstanding including the replacement of the warped windowsills and the final boxing-in of all the electrical gear in the Reading Room and the erection of a fence around the ventilation equipment at the rear of the Hall. These matters will be completed by the end of June at the latest.

In general terms, the ventilation system and the photo-voltaic cells on the roof are working well. When there are 10 people or more using either of the rooms the ventilation system now kicks in automatically and, if 30 or more people are present, the air in the space is completely replaced every ten minutes. This not only massively improves the atmosphere but will make it a much safer environment in the event of another pandemic.

The Longhirst Parish Association Trustees

MANY THANKS TO LAWRENCE CAREY

For a number of years, the most eye-catching feature of Longhirst glimpsed by passing motorists has been Lawrence Carey's ever-changing floral display around the war memorial. Residents can enjoy longer views and many have commented on how the most recent tulip display using fifteen containers was particularly spectacular.

Peter McKenzie



CHURCH NOTICE BOARD



THE REDEDICATION OF THE LYCHGATE

On Sunday 3 May a group of Longhirst residents joined the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne around the St. John's Church lychgate to celebrate its repair and refurbishment. It had been almost completely destroyed by the impact of a vehicle in the early hours of the 19 June 2021.

The lychgate was erected by the family of the Reverend Edward Lawson, the first Vicar of Longhirst, in 1885 and stood for 136 years until the accident. It was noted that although the repair has been a long time coming, almost all the original stone and main timbers have been retained in the refurbished

structure. Only the surface timbers of the roof and the roof tiles are completely new.

The Archdeacon rededicated the refurbished structure and prayed that it may serve as the entrance to the Church and Churchyard for at least another 136 years.

The gates will soon be refitted and the County Council have laid a new tarmac surface in front of the lychgate and erected three bollards for future protection.

All those present agreed that the lychgate has been beautifully restored and paid tribute to the skills of the masons and joiners who undertook the work.



JUNE AND JULY'S SUNDAY SERVICES

Date	Time	Service
2 June	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
9 June	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal
16 June (Father's Day)	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
23 June	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal
30 June (Open Gardens Weekend)	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
7 July	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
14 July	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal
21 July	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. John's, Longhirst
28 July	9.30am	Holy Communion at St. Andrew's, Bothal

We are very grateful to Carol Robson and her team of helpers for making her Wildlife Watch Day such a pleasant and successful event. It raised £350 for Church funds. Mike Elphick

LONGHIRST HALL BICENTENARY

The builders began work on Longhirst Hall in June 1824, exactly 200 years ago. The house had been designed by John Dobson following a commission by William Lawson.

The Lawsons were an old-established Northumbrian landowning family whose earliest connection with Longhirst dates from the late 16th Century. No trace remains of the house they occupied prior to 1824, located between the site of the present Hall and Church.

William's ability to pay for the new house is attributed to coal found beneath his land although one source suggests that his marriage in 1821 to Jane Hester Clark, of Haddington, may have brought a dowry which helped his decision making.

The Hall was completed by 1828 and was one of Dobson's earliest country houses. The honey-coloured, watermarked stone came from a quarry near Fawdon House. Some of the individual blocks weigh eight tons and are fitted with impressive accuracy. Dobson gave the house a classical style inspired by the architecture of ancient Greece yet in a form that acknowledges its Northumbrian location.

From its earliest days, the Hall gained a great deal of praise. Tomlinson, in his *Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland* (1888), noted the very effective



The earliest known photograph, ca 1870



View from the churchyard, 1887

“variety of outline and harmony of decorative detail....the beautiful fluted columns.” *Country Life* magazine of 17 February 1966 described “probably the most impressive interior designed by Dobson.... stairs, floor, gallery, columns, walls and ceiling are all constructed of richly-veined sandstone”. A later architectural reviewer described the entrance hall as “the *piece de resistance* of ... an especially fine villa”.

The accommodation comprised 6 reception rooms, 11 principal bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, 7 bachelor bedrooms, 5 servants' bedrooms, day and night nurseries and school room, but only 1 bathroom and 2 W.C.s.

Three generations of Lawsons lived at Longhirst, until 1887, when the family moved to Dorset. The house and estate were then bought by James Joicey.

The sales brochure of 1887 describes the house as an elegant Grecian mansion, surrounded by beautiful pleasure gardens and with excellent stabling for fourteen horses. There was “a lofty conservatory, two capital tennis courts, a natural rookery and an undulating park. Romantic woodland ... intersected by several rapid streams, spanned at intervals by rustic bridges ... widening out into two ornamental



The Stable, approx. 1890 with a coachman and cat

sheets of water stocked with trout.” James Joicey (a Baronet in 1893 and peer in 1906) moved to Etal but Longhirst Hall remained in Joicey ownership until 1936. Subsequent owners include W S Sanderson (of Morpeth’s Sanderson Arcade) and Henry Moore (of Moore’s Stores). It was requisitioned by the Army during World War 2. Afterwards, it served as a Home Office Approved School and became a Community

Home for 60 boys in 1973.

The Hall returned to private ownership in 1982. In 1992 it was bought by a private investment company which developed it into a 77-bedroom hotel combined with a new-build management training and conference centre and adjacent accommodation for up to 200 students (now Micklewood Close). The training centre and accommodation was let to Northumbria University and used as a business school for UK and overseas students until 1994. The University moved out in 2004 and the vacant lecture rooms were taken over by Castle Morpeth Borough Council which remained until 2009.



An aerial view from 1984, also showing the school sports hall (later demolished)

The hotel and business centre closed in 2014. It returned to private ownership from 2016 and was converted into a number of private residences. All the features which made it a distinguished building in 1824 have been retained.

While the Hall was being designed, just prior to 1824, work started on Longhirst Village. One of its unique features is that it is an estate village, built almost entirely for people who worked at the Hall and on the estate.

A close relationship between villagers and the Hall grew up early in its story. Existing houses in the village were reconstructed in stone and slate and new ones built. The Lawsons also built St John’s Church and a school as well as the present village hall, which started life as a reading room, schoolroom and, until the church was built, was used for Sunday services.

Cricket and other sporting events took place in the grounds as well as fetes and other events involving villagers. When it was a school, the boys put on entertainments for village children. When it was a university campus many of the students, including a large number from overseas, formed lasting friendships with local people. In later years villagers initiated a variety of activities at the hotel, including celebrations for the Queen’s Golden Jubilee, a series of dinners with guest speakers, birthday parties and other social events.

Peter McKenzie

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)
April	Ticket No. 166 Jackie Loudon	Ticket No. 98 Luke Vale	Ticket No. 31 Anne Errington <i>for Harvey</i>
May	Ticket No. 29 Anne Errington	Ticket No. 163 Wendy Whitton	Ticket No. 127 Jill McManus

If you would like to join the Hundred Club please contact Mike Elphick (c).

NEW COMPILER(S) NEEDED FOR THE LONGHIRST LEADER

Peter and I are regretfully planning to move to Morpeth and when we do one, or maybe two, new compilers will be needed for the Leader. If you think you may be interested and would like to discuss what is involved please do not hesitate to contact me.

The Leader was first published in September 2002 and I hope you have found it useful and informative. I would be very disappointed if it does not continue and will help as much as I can in the handover.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Claire Coates (k)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JUNE

5	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
8	Saturday	10am 10.30am – 12noon	Litter pickers meet at the Village Hall Coffee Morning in the Village Hall	(r) (n)
19	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
20	Thursday	10.30am – 1pm	LWCT free local nature walk	(y)
21	Friday	9.30 – 10.15am 7.30pm	Mobile Library in the Village Pub Night in the Village Hall	(h)
29	Saturday	11am – 5pm	Open Gardens and Church Flower Festival	(o)
30	Sunday	11am – 5pm	Open Gardens and Church Flower Festival	(o)

JULY

3	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
4	Thursday	7pm	Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall.	(a)
12	Friday	From 10.15am	LWCT free visit to Northumberland Zoo Deadline for August / September Longhirst Leader e-mail to clairecoates32@gmail.com	(y) Ed. Group
13	Saturday	10am 10.30am – 12noon	Litter pickers meet at the Village Hall Coffee Morning in the Village Hall	(r) (n)
17	Wednesday	11.45am	Lunch Club in the Village Hall	(i)
19	Friday	7.30pm	Pub Night in the Village Hall	(h)
28	Sunday	10.30am	LWCT free visit to Clark's Bog Nature Reserve, Morpeth	(y)

NB. The Mobile Library will not be visiting the Village in July

REGULAR EVENTS

- Church services as detailed on page 4
- Holistic Health 'Sound Bath' in Village Hall on first Friday of the month 5.30 – 7.30pm
(rachel.holistichealth@gmail.com, www.lifeholistictherapies.co.uk)
- 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

- Sunday 11 August, 10am – 1pm. LWCT free visit to West Chevington Nature Reserve

CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

County Councillor – David Towns 07985 012012 / email : david.towns@northumberland.gov.uk **(g)**

Vicar - **(b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Open Gardens Weekend – Jill McManus 07837 525634 / email : jemcmanus@hotmail.co.uk **(o)**

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

Red/Grey Squirrel Sightings – Bedlington and District Red Squirrel Group, Paul Brannan 07961 937304,

Carole Neesam 07488 286434 / email: badrsg@btinternet.com **(s)**

Village Website – www.longhirstvillage.co.uk - Chris Marr 790196 / email : 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:

Peter and Claire Coates - The Old Farmhouse, Broomhaugh: 791088, clairecoates32@gmail.com **(k)**

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)**