

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 these. This booklet is designed to provide some useful information for you as a new resident, along with a 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 former Longhirst Hall estate, most of the cottages in the centre of the village are early 19th century, remodelled c1880.

The parish of Longhirst includes Broomhaugh to the north, Longhirst Hall (now residential housing), Lawson Villas, Micklewood and extends 2½ miles to the east as far as Potland Farm taking in Longhirst Colliery, former Longhirst Station, Ulgham Lane, Old Moor, High Steads, Middle Steads and a mile south as far as Highlees taking in Fawdon, Longhirst Grange and its cottages.

The population of the whole parish is around 500 adults. For more information on the history and notable buildings in the parish see page 7.

USEFUL INFORMATION

The **village website** is www.longhirstvillage.co.uk. There is also a Longhirst Village facebook page.

There is a bi-monthly **parish newsletter** - the Longhirst Leader – which 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. Copies are posted on the village website and can also be emailed to you directly.

The **village database/email circulation list** is used to issue regular copies of the Longhirst Leader and to keep residents informed of any additional information and events. If you would like your contact details to be added to the database please complete a consent form which is enclosed with this booklet or available from the Longhirst Village website and return the form to longhirstleader@gmail.com .

There are **bus stops** towards the north end of the village, outside the village hall (southbound) and on the opposite side of the road outside No.11 The Village (northbound), as well bus stops on either side of the road leading 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). It is also worth noting that there is a direct bus (no. 777) from Morpeth bus station to Newcastle Airport. The websites www.bustimes.org and www.arrivabus.co.uk both show bus timetables along with real time information.

There is a **post box** attached to the garden wall of No.13 The Village, opposite the village hall, with morning collections on weekdays and Saturdays. The nearest **post office** is in Morpeth, housed inside the T&G Allan shop on Newgate Street. There is also a post office service, operating 7 days a week, inside the Co-op at Widdrington and a mobile post office in De Walden Terrace, Pegswood which calls every Thursday from 11.45am –12.45pm.

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

The nearest **supermarket** is a local Co-op store in Pegswood, open 7 days a week from 7am-10pm. There are larger supermarkets in Morpeth and Ashington. A van selling fresh fish calls into the village each Friday from approx 8.30-9.00am stopping near the war memorial.

The usual **bin collection** is every Thursday and this alternates between black bin (general waste) and blue bin (recyclable waste, excluding glass). Food waste bin collection is every Monday. Garden waste (brown bin) collections are every alternate Wednesday, for which Northumberland County Council impose an annual charge. There are glass recycling bins in Morpeth.

The nearest **household waste and recycling centre** is on Whorral Bank, which is on the road leading from Longhirst to Morpeth and is open 8.00am-6.00pm Friday to Monday only. There is also a household waste and recycling centre in Ashington which is open 8.00am-6.00pm 7 days a week.

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. Plans are in place to further improve digital connectivity in Northumberland. For more information visit www.northumberland.gov.uk .

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

The main **GP surgeries** in Morpeth are: Greystoke Surgery (tel. 01670 511393), Gas House Lane Surgery (tel. 01670 513657) and Wellway Surgery which also has a surgery in Pegswood (tel. 01670 502333). A **pharmacy** is attached to some of these GP practices and 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. For **minor injuries** there is an Urgent Treatment Centre at Wansbeck Hospital, Ashington - post code NE63 9JJ, which is open 8.00am to 10.00pm 7 days a week.

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

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 is a combined service at St. Margaret's Church, Pegswood. For more information and service times please go to <https://longhirstchurch.chessck.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 leading from Longhirst to Morpeth, NE61 3BN (tel. 01670 512275). There are other veterinary practices in and around Morpeth.

The nearest **library** is housed inside the Morpeth Sport & Leisure Centre, Gas House Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1SR. A **mobile library** comes to the village once a month, stopping in the centre of the village and at Longhirst Colliery. See the village website for latest information on dates/times www.longhirstvillage.co.uk .

Longhirst is a vibrant community with a number of **village events and activities**, full details of which can be found in 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 include but are not limited to:-

- Spring Fayre
- Church Fete
- Open Gardens
- Wildlife talks and outings
- Christmas Coffee Morning

Activities include:-

- Coffee mornings
- Lunch club
- Pub nights
- U3A activities (see page 7)
- Pilates
- Sewing group

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 of which 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 there are bird feeders, a bird hide and a network of footpaths for leisurely walks. Dogs are 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 local government which meets bi-monthly and is the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue in the parish. See <https://northumberlandparishes.uk/longhirst>
- **Longhirst Parish Association** - a registered charity that meets bi-monthly to manage and develop Longhirst village hall
- **Parochial Church Council** - the organising committee for St. John's Parish Church, elected from the congregation. Working with the vicar to oversee all aspects of church life, it meets four times a year plus occasional special meetings as necessary

- **Open Gardens Organising Group** - an informal group drawn together of volunteers responsible for various aspects of the Open Gardens Weekend which takes place every two years. See www.longhirstopengardens.org
- **Longhirst Leader Editorial Group** - produces and distributes the bi-monthly village newsletter. See longhirstleader@gmail.com
- **Longhirst Wildlife & Community Trust** – a registered charity that aims to involve as many residents of all ages as possible in the enhancement of wildlife (animals and plants) throughout the Parish. This group runs various events and talks which are advertised on the village website and in the Longhirst Leader
- **Mid Northumberland U3A Group** - a member of the national U3A organisation, this group uses Longhirst village hall as its base and runs a very wide range of activity and interest groups. For more information 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 tilery (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 (now Sydney Cottage), a Co-operative Store with buildings (now 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, which is 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 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 and converted them into homes. That whole area of the village is now made up of Longhirst Hall, Lawson Villas and Micklewood; a total of 85 homes.

Longhirst Hall itself was 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 became 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, Mike Elphick at mike.elphick1@gmail.com

- **Bookings Diary**

There is a web-based bookings diary, a paper 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, Mike Elphick at mike.elphick1@gmail.com

- **Facilities**

Longhirst Village Hall is well equipped with efficient heating and lighting, disabled access, disabled toilet, kitchen including cooker, dishwasher, coffee making machine and hot water geyser. The hall has projector screen, tables and chairs. 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, Mike Elphick at mike.elphick1@gmail.com

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 clarion of eight bells. The Lychgate was added in 1885.

Longhirst War Memorial

The war memorial is Grade II listed and was unveiled on 31 July 1921 by Col. E.P.A. Riddell, CMG, DSO and dedicated to local men lost in the First World War. It was also later dedicated to a local man lost in the Second World War. On Remembrance Sunday each year there is an Act of Remembrance held at the War Memorial.

Key Contacts

Parish Council Clerk	Barry Flux	longhirstpc@gmail.com
Parish Council website		https://northumberlandparishes.uk/longhirst
County Councillor	David Towns	david.towns@northumberland.gov.uk
Churchwarden	Heather Jackson	siriusa1998@aol.com
Church website		https://longhirstchurch.chessck.co.uk
Parochial Church Council Secretary	Mike Elphick	mike.elphick1@gmail.com
Longhirst Parish Association	Janet Quinn	quinnjanet@sky.com
Longhirst Wildlife & Community Trust	Kim Woolhead	kim.woolhead@gmail.com
Longhirst Colliery Recreational Room Bookings	Mary Climson	maryclimson67@gmail.com
Longhirst Village Hall Bookings	Mike Elphick	mike.elphick1@gmail.com
Longhirst Leader	Jill McManus	longhirstleader@gmail.com
Village Website	Chris Marr	www.longhirstvillage.co.uk
Coffee Mornings	Helen McCabe	mccabe_paul1@sky.com
Pub Nights	Allison & Richard Tordoff	rtordoffs@gmail.com
Litter Picking	Chris Lediard	chris.lediard@tiscali.co.uk
Lunch Club	Linda Rudd	barnacrelmr@aol.co.uk
Open Gardens	Jill McManus	longhirstopengardens@gmail.com
Welcome Booklet	Carol Benbow	coralprivate@gmail.com

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