

Statement by Longhope Parish Council

Following recent events there has been significant inaccurate facts discussed on public social media pages. Whilst the following information is a brief summary of the events, further information is available at www.longhopeparishcouncil.com

Longhope Parish Council

1. Mike Phelps and Roger Noblett have resigned from the Parish Council, and we thank them for all their work for the Parish. Both Mike and Roger wish to continue to be involved and have volunteered their help in the future.
2. Parish Council elections were held last April. Members of the PC were returned uncontested due to the lack of candidates and two vacancies were filled by co-option.
3. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public. At the moment meetings are on Zoom, the joining instructions together with the agenda are posted on the Longhope Parish Council Facebook page and the PC website, with a poster on notice boards
4. With the exception of Confidential meeting, Minutes of all Parish Council meetings are posted on the Parish Council website.

Longhope Recreation Ground Charity and Pavilion.

1. Longstanding legal irregularities were discovered in the charity trusteeship, which together with any mistakes in managing the Recreation Ground could have led to the members of the Recreation Ground Management Committee becoming personally responsible for any debt incurred, and/or the loss of the Recreation Ground to the village. As this would have been a matter for the Charity Commission, the Parish Council would have been powerless to help.
2. The seriousness of the situation was outlined to the existing trustees who were more than happy to relinquish responsibility. As a result, the committee was disbanded and the Parish Council voted to accept the Trusteeship as originally intended in 1947, as per the original property trust deed.
3. This meant a new Management Committee, as a sub-committee of the Parish Council, would have to be formed. This committee would be subject to the same code of conduct and standing orders as the Parish Council and have the added protection of its insurances, resolving the long-term issue of uninsured Committee members. New rules were agreed and then passed to the previous trustees.
4. The main changes to the rules were:
 - i) Regular user groups would no longer be automatically allocated a seat on the committee, but would need to be elected by the parishioners attending the AGM. They would be obliged to declare any conflicts of interest where necessary.
 - ii) Moving forward all meetings would be open to the public and the minutes published on the Parish Council website.
5. The previous trustees were offered a meeting with the council to discuss matters and have the changes explained. They were invited to continue as part of the committee until the AGM, but declined to meet with the council or continue in their role.
6. Based on the accounts given to us by the previous committee, The Pavilion and Recreation Ground are running at a huge loss. Over the last 4 years, the average cost per year is £10,000 to maintain the facility. At least £3000 of which is already met by the parish council for grass cutting, insurance and playground inspection. The income from hiring the facility is less than £1000 per year; recent trading activities run by the previous committee have run at a loss. The shortfall will need to be raised by a fundraising arm of the Management committee rather than subsidised by the taxpayer.
7. The future of this facility is dependent on a new committee working together with the Village towards a cost neutral basis.
8. In the interests of transparency, it is the intention of the Recreation Ground Trustee to make public archive material relating to the Longhope Recreation Ground.

Statement by Longhope Parish Council

Because of Covid 19, the pavilion has been closed and bookings cancelled until the government confirm otherwise. Although the field, tennis courts and playground can be used if government guidelines are followed.