

Boulmer Howick & Longhoughton

THE SILVER LINING OF THE CORONAVIRUS CLOUD

Living where we do here in north Northumberland we have had the advantage of watching the approach of the virus across the world, still enjoying our coastal fresh air. The advice we have now in Britain gives us the best chance to stay well, and in our parish we have the benefit of a little time to prepare ourselves and to keep direct contact with each other to a minimum and to practice social distancing. If we all follow the guidelines we should come out of it just fine. Many community assets like the village halls are closed until further notice, so we are already experiencing the effects of isolation. We know isolation is difficult, especially for older people and for families, but helping each other, especially supporting the vulnerable, has never been more important.

The parish council is prioritising support for those in most need by coordinating a Covid-19 Volunteers Support Group to help with food shopping, prescription collection, friendly chats, an accompanied walk but at the recommended social distance, dog walking for people who cannot get out, and contact with others via social media or phone.

If you would like help along these lines, please contact us by phone or email:

Covid-19 Volunteers' Support Group phone 01665 572315

Ellie Phillips 01665 577563 or mobile 07843 380886

Email eleanorphillips1@gmail.com

You can also contact any Parish Councillor listed on the right. If you would like to volunteer some of your time, maybe in your own street, please contact us.

Other important support in Longhoughton village includes Charlotte Boulter's Company 'B' Café, which is providing a freshly cooked takeaway meals service, with free delivery within a 10-mile radius for those people who are self-isolating, or perhaps more vulnerable or simply fancy someone else to cook for a change. Meals are 4 for £10 or £3 each. Charlotte's amazing cakes and tasty bites are still on offer too. Menus change daily, so please call Charlotte on 07539 774 844 to place your order.

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[Please contact the Clerk about the parish councillor vacancies.](#)

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Please let us have your newsworthy items for the next edition before the next **deadline on 21 May**. Thank you.

Disclaimer: The Boulmer, Howick and Longhoughton Community Newsletter is published by Longhoughton Parish Council. The views expressed represent the understanding of the editors or of any named person contributing to the Newsletter.

Howick & Boulmer News

NEW LIFE FOR HOWICK POND

In Howick, there is a small pond close to the village hall that has been neglected over the years. If renovated it could have great potential for improved biodiversity, so a team of locals and Coast Care volunteers set about its re-establishment.

The pond is small and scarcely bigger than some garden ponds. It is situated on a site that was a buried rubble dump that drains well, so it needs topping up in dry spells. Over the years it has deteriorated, becoming a wet boggy area with a small patch of open water that has attracted some wildlife.

Standing fresh water pools, no matter how small, are very important in North Northumberland

because they are generally few and far between. We do not have the mining subsidence ponds that dot the south east of the county so it is an important habitat. A few amphibians use the shallow waters for breeding and each spring common toads can be heard in the dark as they look for a mate. Smooth newts have been seen too and it was hoped that any habitat improvements would increase the numbers and breeding of both of these species.

Other than the amphibians, there are two species of moth in decline that are associated with this type of habitat. They are the chunky, beige coloured Bulrush Wainscot and the tiny micro moth *Limnecia Phragmitella*. The latter breeds in the cigar shaped heads of the bulrushes. The damp edges and surrounding trees are good for small birds that come in to feed and drink early in the mornings and from late summer, parties of small warblers can be found feeding up before their migration south in autumn, while glittering dragonflies hunt the edges on the warmer days.

The renovation involved pollarding the willows and coppicing the hazel and dog wood. Both of these pruning methods look a bit extreme but do not harm the plants and are great for encouraging more manageable growth. The brushings were used in the creation of a 'dead hedge': essentially the sticks laid in a long pile retained by hazel stakes hammered into the ground. This forms a good barrier and hibernation sites for small creatures, while getting rid of the rubbish in a relatively tidy manner. The increased light being allowed in will also encourage the growth of more flowering wild plants around the edges that are beneficial to all kinds of insects.

Volunteers from Coast Care along with locals Stewart Sexton and John Spark kindly lent their enthusiasm and expertise to achieve the end result. Thanks to all involved.

After the work had finished it was great to see how we had worked together to create a not-too-tidy area where more wildlife can colonise. It was good to create a quiet place to help increase the biodiversity of the area.



LONGHOUGHTON & BOULMER WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Having last enjoyed a crafting evening at our March meeting it was then decided the following monthly meetings and outings should be postponed due to Coronavirus. The next few months' events are to be postponed. These are: in March our booking to see Jesus Christ Superstar has been moved to 26 September 2020; in April the Annual Meeting; in May the 'Get to Know You Evening'; in June an evening of musical entertainment. The boat trip to Coquet Island has also been deferred. The WI Committee look forward to advising members of the recommencement of our programme and meanwhile express our thanks and appreciation to those local residents who have volunteered to deliver supplies to those in need.

BEES TALK

Professor John Hobrough of Warkworth presented a fascinating talk on bees and other pollinators at Howick Village Hall on 11 March. The forty people present heard how important bees and other pollinators are in our food chain and how their numbers have deteriorated in the last century.

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She prefers BACS transfers or cash on delivery by way of payment. The Longhoughton Food Bank is running from the café, and store cupboard basics are available if you get stuck.

Longhoughton Coop delivery service can also help. As a store at the centre of our community, it would like to offer a home-delivery service to members of the public who may feel safer in isolation or are following Government quarantine advice. Please call the store direct on 01665 577025 and give your order over the phone. If you can get online, an email shopping request form is available by emailing the store manager tammyrobson@coop.co.uk.

Alternatively, hard copies of the form will be available in the shop for friends or relatives to collect. The store will inform you of the cost and cash payment is made on collection of the goods. Staff will bring the appropriate change and let you know when they will deliver. A mutual arrangement will be made between the customer and the store staff about the exchange of money and produce in order to comply with personal safety arrangements. Shopping times for the vulnerable, their carers and NHS staff are 8-9am on Monday to Saturday and between 10-11 on Sundays.

It may well happen soon that residents run out of cash and simply can't get to a cashpoint because they are self-isolating and there is no alternative cash source available. If you can make a BACS payment through your internet banking, then a trusted alternative payment arrangement can be made via Longhoughton Community and Sports Centre. Please phone Ellie Phillips, Chair of Trustees on 572315/07843380886 for further details.

Share in a Prayer? Covid-19 has forced us to think about how to manage the practicalities of our lives in a different way, but what about our emotional and spiritual life? If you have a Christian faith and would appreciate joining in a prayer, then Rev Ian Knox (retired) is offering a telephone prayer with you and a word of encouragement. Please contact Ian on 01665 572939 or 07855323987

Parish Council News

LONGHOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Parish Council will continue to deal with urgent business each month. The Parish Councillors are in touch with each other daily; also with Councillor Wendy Pattison and County Council officials. If you have an issue please contact the Chair or any of the Parish Councillors listed on page 1.

DOG POO EPIDEMIC - PLEASE PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG!

Following recent complaints from residents, the Parish Council investigated the areas that people complained about. The investigation took place in February and demonstrated that we have a significant health problem. It showed the Boulmer area, especially around the car park revealed 150 piles and poo bags; Longhoughton displayed 55 and Howick 30. The lane from Crowlea Road to Low Steads Farm is another area of special concern.

Most dog owners pick up their dogs' waste and we do thank them for it, but we cannot be complacent and some may need to know that Northumberland County Council Dog Wardens have been asked to visit the area and will hand out fines on the spot of up to £1000 to offenders.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Steering Group met on 4 March to discuss the initial allocation of land for Local Green Spaces, (equivalent to Green Belt), Protected Open Spaces and areas for future house building. This also included suggestions on the settlement boundary for Longhoughton and Boulmer and other green routes. These issues will be considered further at a future meeting before they are subject to full consultation by residents. Coronavirus is going to slow progress as face to face meetings are prohibited, but the group are considering other ways of coming together to make progress.

CORONAVIRUS HEALTH INFORMATION SOURCES



Go to 111 online **first** <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Call 111 if no internet

Call 999 in an health emergency

For all advice go to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Longhoughton News

LONGHOUGHTON COMMUNITY AND SPORTS CENTRE TRUST

The Trust's recent Annual General Meeting was not held due to Coronavirus. The Annual Report and Accounts were circulated to all members and they voted by email. Eleanor Phillips, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Shaun Hastings, David East and Louise Dawson were elected as Trustee/Directors for a three-year term. Fiona Nelson Van Loon and Scott Rowntree continue as Trustee/Directors for another year and Lynsey Punton, Andrew Crosby and Chris Thomas have stepped down. Those stepping down were thanked for the service they have given to the Trust and the community.

NEW PROJECTOR PRESENTED

Longhoughton Community and Sports Centre Trust have received a generous donation from Northumbria Police Benevolent Fund. Inspector John Swan and colleagues from Alnwick Police recently presented a Panasonic Projector for community use to Adrian Hinchcliffe, Trustee and Secretary. Adrian commented, "This new piece of equipment will be invaluable to users within the centre for presentations and other events and we very much appreciate Northumbria Police's commitment to our local community".

CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP

The group, that now has ten members, is to be constituted as sub-committee of the Parish Council and a constitution was agreed at the last meeting held on 24 February 2020. Suggestions for an Action Plan included too many items to include here. Some examples are glass recycling, school contact and involvement; water dispensing machines and re-filling bottles; green routes; electric vehicle charging points; public Transport to Alnmouth station; car share; vegi-boxes or farmers' market; Northumberland County Council Climate Change initiative.

Coronavirus is going to slow progress by not allowing face to face meeting, but the group are considering other ways of coming together to make progress.

FOOTPATHS GROUP

The work of the community footpaths group has hit a new phase in 2020. Having walked all the paths in the parish in 2019, the group are working with the NCC Countryside Officer for our area to improve the rights of way that they prioritised earlier. Some would say that it is common sense to improve the paths that link together all the villages, but we also thought that paths to important heritage and geological sites, like the impressive eight-pot lime kilns near Littlemill and Howick Fault, should be preserved and developed. We are intending to respond to the community's declared wish to see more permissive linking paths and routes through the village of Longhoughton but these will take more time.

While this work has been going on, there have been regional and national developments to keep abreast of and take an interest in. On 20 March Durham County Council launched an initiative known as The Saints Trails (<http://northernsaints.com/>) which may well link up with some in our area. St Oswald's Way may be familiar to you

and it is one of the six existing Saints' Trails in the north east of England. The mission is to extend the network of Saints Trails which are deemed 'journeys with purpose and significance' and the director Craig Wilson is urging organisations and volunteers to get involved. They say that although some walkers may indeed be pilgrims, walkers' rewards can also be cultural, scientific, engaging with nature, or just for walking's own sake.

The Ramblers' Association have been on a mission to uncover and record ancient and lost routes. They have been urging the public to help them discover routes by the deadline in 2026. The image here shows four paths that once existed in our parish that have been rediscovered and recorded by this means. Just before the publication of this newsletter the Ramblers announced that this process has been carried out and completed for the entire country. Apparently one couple completed 20,000 squares of the map! Passionate about preservation of the landscape, obviously!

