

Longhorsley Parish Council Newsletter December 2006

Financial Affairs

Although we are only three-quarters of the way through the financial year, it is time to think about the Council's budget for the year beginning 1 April 2007. Most of this will be for the next Council.

Not all expenses can be foreseen, so it is important to have some leeway, but it seems likely that there will be about £2,000 surplus to be carried forward from this financial year.

We have set a budget of £19,750, which includes £1,000 to pay for the May 2007 election should there be a poll. It also reflects increased costs, and some increase in responsibilities which have an effect on spending.

It will be partly financed by the £2,000 surplus, and by transferring £7,000 from the Capital Interest Account. The precept has therefore been set at £10,750, and this will be collected by Castle Morpeth Borough Council as part of the Council Tax next spring.

We must also repeat our warning of previous years that interest on capital is steadily running down. There will still be some interest on bank deposits, but in another year or two most of the budget will have to be met by the precept. This will lead to a significant increase, but Longhorsley Parish has been fortunate to have had so many years with a low precept, or even none.

The 2005-06 Audit was successfully completed. There were no financial issues, and the administrative suggestions made by the Auditor have been dealt with.

Road Safety

We had another meeting with Highways and Cllr Glen Sanderson to look at outstanding matters.

These include drainage problems, footpaths in poor condition and the barriers near the Old Forge. Inevitably the amount of work which can be done is dependent on the County's budget.

Village Green

Our discussions with the Land Registry are almost complete, and the Council will have legal title to the areas of Village Green under its control. Care has been taken to identify clearly the parts which are in private ownership. They are still registered as Village Green, but the Parish Council has no responsibility for them. We have acted throughout on the advice of our solicitor, with very helpful guidance from the Registry, and additional information from the legal department of the County Council.

Church View Play Area

Work is almost complete, and the fund-raising group was so successful that the Parish Council did not have to contribute as much as expected. Congratulations to all who have worked so hard, and we are grateful to the neighbours for their co-operation and understanding.

Longhorsley Moor

A considerable amount of scrub has been removed, along with intrusive tree growth. The aim of all this work, which was funded by DEFRA as part of the new management agreement, is to preserve existing heather, and to allow for more to be planted. To provide water for the ponies would be very costly, and unless there is an assurance of

funding, and a guarantee they will stay there for a considerable time, it may not go ahead.

Changes

This Council is in the final six months of its term of office. There will be an election on 3 May 2007. Not all of the present members will be standing for office again, so new people are needed. No one can be guaranteed election, but if you feel you would like to be part of the Council, please give the matter serious thought. The Council is over 50 years old in its present form. Please make sure it can continue to serve the community.

It is almost certain that there will soon be changes in Local Government. Instead of County and Borough Councils there would be a single tier. The County may be divided into its rural and urban parts, but in any case the distance between the people and their representatives will be greater than now. The Parish Council can help to bridge the gap and may be granted extra powers.

After 22 years of loyal and efficient service, Kate has decided to retire from the post of Parish Clerk. Ruby, after more than 10 years as our able Finance Officer, intends to go at the same time. Their experience will be impossible to replace, but the Council needs someone with administrative skills to enable it to function. Their combined roles involve about 500 hours per year, and payment is according to nationally agreed scales. The vacancy will be advertised in the new year, and in the mean time, details are available from Kate.

Please consider applying for this important role.

Village Day

Village Day has been a popular feature in Longhorsley for a long time. It is always well supported, and greatly enjoyed by all who come along. It does not just happen—it takes planning and organisation.

This is done by a committee, and inevitably people retire from time to time. **The number of members is now so small that there is a serious possibility that there will be no Village Day in 2007.** Please do not let this happen. We are all grateful to those who have served in the past, and to those who continue, but new members are needed. The next meeting is on 16 January. Please contact Maureen Taylor on 788508 for more information.

Junk Mail

Did you know you can stop addressed advertising mail by contacting the Mailing Preference Service, and phone selling by registering with the Telephone Preference Service? You can stop un-addressed advertising matter by requesting an application form from Royal Mail.

Old Year's Night

Do not forget the lighting of the Beacon on the Village Green on 31 December. Look out for details.

Longhorsley Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs K S Foreman, Glen View, Longhorsley MORPETH NE65 8UU. Council Telephone Number: 01670-788998

Email: ksforeman@longhorsley.pc.fsnet.co.uk

Website: www.longhorsley.pc.org.uk

Councillors:

Mary Hughes, 17 Church View, Longhorsley, NE65 8UH

Andy Kelcher, South Linden Farm, Longhorsley, NE65 8TB

Jack Robinson, 7 Whitegates, Longhorsley, NE65 8UJ

Paul Savage, 15 Drummonds Close, Longhorsley, NE65 8UR

Oliver Staines, 1 Whitegates, Longhorsley, NE65 8UJ

Wendy Truscott, 52 Whitegates, Longhorsley, NE65 8UJ

Liz Walker, 35 Church View, Longhorsley, NE65 8UH

Borough and County Councillor:

Glen Sanderson, Eshott South Farm, Felton NE65 9ES Tel 01670 787242. Email:
glen.sanderson@castlemorpeth.gov.uk