

Appendix 1

Longstowe Parish Council

Report from Barbara Cooper - Chairperson

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we gather here for the Longstowe Parish Open Meeting, I extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you. Your presence here tonight is testament to the strength and unity of our community, and I am grateful for the opportunity to address you on matters of importance to our parish.

Tonight's meeting serves as the Annual Parish Open Meeting, where your voices are not only welcomed but encouraged. Following this, we will proceed with the normal Parish Council Meeting, and I invite you all to join us for that discussion as well.

I trust that you have all had the chance to review the agenda, which has been readily available on our noticeboards throughout the village and on our website. Our agenda includes reports from myself, other village organisations and, of course, an opportunity for parishioners to share their thoughts and concerns.

Before we dive into the agenda, I'd like to extend my gratitude to the dedicated individuals who serve on the Longstowe Parish Council or other voluntary capacity in the village and parish. The tireless efforts of all and commitment to our community are truly commendable, and I am honoured to work alongside everyone. These include, but are not limited to, the publication and delivery of the Skylark, the Village Hall, the Sports/Cricket Club, the Longstowe History Society, our Footpaths, the Speedwatch team, and the Neighbourhood Plan team.

Now, let's turn our attention to some key initiatives and developments within our parish:

Speed Limit Campaign: Our continued efforts to reduce the speed limit on the A1198 reflect our commitment to safety and well-being. By advocating for change, we aim to create a safer environment for all parishioners, particularly our elderly and children. The Chair attended a meeting last week with Anthony Brown MP to discuss the junction and speed on the Old North Road.

As part of this effort, we have been encouraged to collate video footage of some of the junction concerns. This footage will be invaluable in providing visual evidence of the challenges we face and will assist us in advocating for necessary improvements.

One proposed solution that has been discussed is the installation of a roundabout at the junction. Roundabouts have been proven to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and enhance safety for both motorists and pedestrians. By collecting video footage, we can strengthen our case for the implementation of a speed reduction and junction safety strategy.

I urge all residents who have witnessed or experienced safety concerns at junctions within our parish to contribute video footage to this important effort. If you have video footage to share or would like more information on how you can participate in this initiative, please reach out to us. Together, let us work towards creating safer roads and a brighter future for our parish.

Playground Equipment: We received requests to improve or replace the playground equipment located in the Parish Playing Field behind Longstowe Village Hall. To address this, we attempted to set up a working group to coordinate efforts and explore funding opportunities. If you are interested in joining this group, please do let me know.

Village Sign Restoration: Thanks to the efforts of Bobbie Coe, plans are underway to restore our village sign using oil-based paint. This project will help preserve an important piece of our community's history and identity.

Aircraft Noise Concerns: Many of you have noticed an increase in aircraft noise over Longstowe in recent months. This is due to changes in aircraft stacking for Luton Airport, which have raised concerns among residents. Longstowe have provided feedback on your behalf in an attempt to make your voices heard on this matter.

Community Involvement: Our parish thrives on community involvement, and I am pleased to highlight several upcoming events, village hall quizzes, and afternoon teas. Additionally, the Community Chest grant scheme offers funding opportunities for projects that enhance the quality of life for our residents. We encourage you to share your ideas and apply for grants to support our community. We have recently applied for funding to support defibrillator / village sign refurbishment / and other projects in the village.

Planning Matters: Our Parish Council plays a vital role in reviewing planning applications and representing the interests of our community. We welcome your input and encourage you to attend our meetings to discuss planning issues affecting our parish and our efforts to engage with the planners on behalf of our parish. Despite our best efforts and impassioned pleas, it seems that our voices have fallen on deaf ears, with the views of the Parish Council not being adequately considered.

This is a disappointing setback, but it will not deter us from advocating for what we believe is in the best interest of our community. We remain steadfast in our commitment to represent the opinions and concerns of our parishioners, and we will continue to push forward, taking into account comments from the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan serves as a crucial document that reflects the aspirations and priorities of our community. We will draw upon its insights and recommendations as we press on with our advocacy efforts, ensuring that the voices of our residents are heard and respected.

While the road ahead may present challenges, I am confident that together, we can overcome them. By standing united and speaking with one voice, we can make a meaningful impact and shape the future of Longstowe.

Volunteering

As we gather here tonight, I am reminded of the incredible spirit of volunteerism that defines our community. Time and time again, I have witnessed the selfless dedication of individuals who step forward to lend a helping hand and make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Tonight, I want to extend a heartfelt invitation to each and every one of you to join us in our efforts to enhance our community. There are numerous opportunities for volunteers to get involved, whether it's assisting with health and safety initiatives, helping with applications for grants, or contributing in other meaningful ways.

Health and safety is a top priority for our community, and we are always looking for volunteers who are passionate about ensuring the well-being of our residents. Whether you have expertise in health and safety protocols or simply a willingness to learn, your involvement can make a significant impact in keeping our community safe and secure.

Additionally, applications for grants play a crucial role in funding projects and initiatives that benefit Longstowe. If you have a knack for writing, research skills, or a passion for community development, we invite you to join our efforts in securing grants that will support Longstowe's growth and prosperity.

Your involvement as a volunteer is invaluable, and it is through the collective efforts of dedicated individuals like you that we can build a stronger, more vibrant community.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information on how you can get involved, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Your contributions, no matter how big or small, will make a difference.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to effective communication, community engagement, and collaborative action. Together, we can address challenges, celebrate achievements, and continue building a vibrant and resilient Longstowe Parish.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to a productive and enriching discussion tonight.

Please remember to stay informed by visiting the Longstowe Parish Council website at longstoweparishcouncil.co.uk.

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