



*Longwick-cum-Ilmer
Parish Council*

**LONGWICK-CUM-ILMER PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025/2026**

Introductory Remarks:

Eleven months ago a completely new Council of 9 members, all representing shared values and aims, were elected to work directly for all of our Community for its benefit and improvement.

This time is an opportunity to reflect on the activity and achievement over that time.

Importantly it will not be claimed that all issues from the recent past will have been completely resolved, nor, that there is not more which is to be achieved. However it should be seen that your Council has stimulated considerable beneficial action and direct involvement with residents and Buckinghamshire Council.

Your Council decided that more effective and direct dialogue with residents was vital, and set out early to cement that as a priority. To that end we held an open Public Meeting in July which focussed much of our approach, and identified priorities. In further action, our website has received a redesign, giving access to reports and information throughout the year, as and when it is made available. Additionally we have reinforced the communication by the production of a detailed monthly Newsletter and a Council Facebook page. Accordingly many of the things addressed in this report may have familiarity.

Finance:

Whilst we have a number of items which will still affect our year end we can present the following as our current situation:

Opening Balance	£679,291.21
Expenditure	£146,333.76
Receipts	£98,216.93
Projected Closing Balance:	£631,174.38

The Precept requirement for 2026/27 for Band D was increased from £39.04 to £40.60 which results in the Parish Council receiving £41,085.93.

The annual increase was set at 4% vs a national average for England of 8.2%.

No additional CIL Funds were received in the financial year and £53,675.31 was spent from that historical source of funding.

Grant expenditure for the year amounts to £103.04, for groups supporting community projects and volunteering, and in addition we have held an accrual grant of £16,000 (subject to match funding) for the Longwick C of E School project to implement an ecologically friendly system for electricity generation and use.

Planning:

Your Council has received 41 applications for consideration during 2025-2026:

Comments were made as appropriate and the following are the confirmed changes of status which occurred:

Permitted	12
Refused	4
Details not required for submission	1
Withdrawn	1
Certificate granted for proposal of development	2
Not to make tree preservation order	5
Refuse detail Reserved by Condition	2
Permit – detail Reserved by Condition	5
Details required to be submitted	1
Appeal allowed	1
Appeal dismissed	3



Longwick-cum-Ilmer
Parish Council

As per your Councils policy, applications are all considered in the light of our “Made” Neighbourhood Plan which is a position endorsed by both our Ward Councillors and local MP.

We have, in development, at present the new Bucks Local Plan, and we responded accordingly to the initial consultation on the first published draft. This response is included on our website information.

We continue, at present, to be the target of speculative or opportunistic development proposals and our responses are published on our website as they occur, or within our normal Council meeting minutes.

Neighbourhood Plan:

We are aware that as our plan ages, it is less robust, and accordingly we have initiated a review and update process to reinforce its future resilience. Suitable budget has been made, provisionally, and we are grateful that a number of our residents and Councillors have agreed to work on this important project.

Traffic and Transport:

This thorny issue has been ongoing for a while and is still getting focus. The previous traffic calming plans were substantially subsumed by a focus on the new Toucan Crossing intended for the Sportsmans island junction in Longwick. We supported this development, investing circa £35k in a feasibility study, and the project could now move forward. Unfortunately we are not likely to see development in the immediate future.

Your Council subsequently has sought other measures which can be implemented, subject to final cost approval, hopefully within the summer of this year. These measures will improve the situation for both the Thame Road in Longwick and the Stockwell Lane / Meadle position.

Bus services are still under discussion and we are pressing for implementation, as funding is available. This initiative, however, rests with Bucks Council.

Playing Field:

Your Council responded to requests that this asset be better utilised with the restoration of the opportunity for team sport to be played. We therefore took action to restore the quality of the grass areas, through appropriate treatments and also to provide new football equipment for the use of our youngsters. We also took a policy decision that enables more “free use” of the grass area by our own residents and their families.

Playground Facilities:

We have taken advantage of available funding to extend the area for play equipment and install items which enable greater accessibility and appeal to wider age groups. Suitable maintenance and safety regimes have also been supported.

The Council also organised and paid for two “Play in the Park” sessions for youngsters to enjoy in the summer holidays.

Public Footpaths & Bridleways:

In response to the public meeting consultation, we received overwhelming requests for major improvement of the bridleway / pathway which leads from the top of Walnut Tree Lane to the Phoenix Trail via the Bledlow Mill. We have therefore taken action to provide clearance and appropriate resurfacing which will enable better access and usage by pedestrians, push chairs, cyclists and wheelchair users as well as horse riders. Motorised vehicles will be prohibited unless authorised.

General Community Areas:

- The War Memorial received its full renovation and has been reinstalled.
- All of the kissing gates on our Public footpaths have been examined and repaired as required.
- We have improved the Dog Waste management in accord with Resident requests.
- We have financed the installation of a further defibrillator in the Parish, at Meadle.
- We have facilitated the protection & renovation of the verges and Village Green in Ilmer, as well as arranging for village entrance gates and signage, for traffic slowing, to be installed.



*Longwick-cum-Ilmer
Parish Council*

- We have finalised, and paid for, the legal acquisition of the Owlswick Village Green, for the Parish.
- We have launched a Photographic competition designed to help enhance the image of Longwick-Cum-Ilmer as a typical English Rural Community, with a distinct character and image, making it “Special”.
- We have funded 6 new Picnic tables for villager use at local events.

Thanks:

We set out last May saying that there were only 9 of us and we would need volunteers and help to achieve the change wanted. That position remains, but it is appropriate that we thank so many who have shown both support and interest in what we have been doing. We regularly have a strong resident presence at our meetings and that involvement is encouraging.

As we started, we had to pick up the VE Day celebration at short notice, and whilst the previous Council had put most arrangements in place, we found ourselves lacking in delivery of a catering facility and also children’s entertainment promised – it would be remiss of us as a Council, not to recognise a number of long term residents and our Councillors, who rallied round, at short notice, to help the setting up of the day and ensure we did have the required services to guarantee a successful celebration, which was also supported by the presence of our MP Greg Smith and our Ward Councillors Mat Walsh and Gary Hall.

Thanks, are also due to a Councillor and a resident who do a wonderful job presenting our “Flower Adorned” planters at the entrances to Longwick.

We also need to recognise, and thank, a happy band of about 30 residents and Councillor who act as our Litter Picking Group, doing much to keep our surroundings pleasant.

In addition, each year we can offer thanks to Penns Nursery and the ladies of Longwick Ladies WI for helping us to celebrate the Christmas Festival at the Village Hall sing along.

One other mention at this point, generous thanks are due to our Councillor (s) and his team of residents who participated and organised, again, our Annual Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial. A moving Service, well conducted and with due reverence.

There are others who help, so any missed, please forgive – we are grateful. Our Community will not prosper without these valuable and supportive contributors.

Finally, thanks are due to all Councillor colleagues for their support and good work, and especially to our hard working and diligent Parish Clerk, Tracey Martin, who does a great job at keeping us on the straight and narrow.

Going Forward:

As mentioned at the outset there is plenty still to be done:

- Playing Field new perimeter pathway
- Traffic Calming measures: costing agreement and delivery before summer is out
- Community Development: Social and Youth opportunities, New junior football club, a Community Hub / Pop Up Café
- Our response to Bucks Local Plan (July): A follow up Public Meeting
- Neighbourhood Plan: Update / Upgrade

If YOU CAN HELP in any way please come forward – We also have a Councillor vacancy to fill.

Keith Smith

Chair – Longwick-Cum-Ilmer Parish Council 2025-2026