



Longridge Town Council

Estates Committee - Agenda

You are hereby summoned to attend the Estates Committee of Longridge Town Council on Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 18:30 in the Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

To elect a Chair of the Estates Committee for the civic year 2026/27, elect a Vice-Chair for the same period.

2. Welcome by the Chair.

3. To receive apologies.

4. Declarations of Interest.

Councillors are responsible for declaring any personal / prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest pertaining to matters on this agenda.

5. To consider and approve the minutes of:

27 November 2024 meeting.

6. Public Participation.

This 30-minute session (time limit of three minutes per item/per person) provides members of the public an opportunity to indicate interests in an agenda item and put questions to the Executive Committee. Such questions may be answered after the meeting or become an agenda item at a future Executive Committee meeting.

ITEMS for DECISION/DISCUSSION

7. Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee.

Report of the Clerk inviting members to review and recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee for the civic year 2026/27, including the Committee's purpose, scope, delegated authority, membership, quorum, frequency of meetings and reporting arrangements.

8. Use of Weed Killer on Council Land.

Report of the Clerk on the use of weed killer on Council land.

9. Memorial Bench Plaque Policy.

Report of the Clerk for members to consider the implementation of a Memorial Bench Plaque Policy, including establishment of a bench register, confirmation of fees, an application form, and arrangements for ongoing administration of the scheme.

ITEMS for INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

10. Consideration of matters not on the agenda.

An opportunity for members and the Clerk to provide updates, raise matters and suggest agenda items for future meetings.

11. Schedule of Future Meetings.

To be confirmed

Mike Hill

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council.

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Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors. Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.



Agenda Item 5

Longridge Town Council

Estates Executive Committee – Draft Minutes

Date:	27 November 2024		
Place:	Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.		
Present:	Councillors: L. Jameson (Chair), P. Smith, R. Walker and N. Stubbs.		
In attendance:	Town Clerk.		
Meeting started:	14:00	Meeting closed:	14:50

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1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs. Jackson, Spencer and Rogerson.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTEREST DISPENSATION

None.

4. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2024.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Two members of the Longridge Heritage Centre and one member of the Longridge Environmental Group (LEG) were in attendance.

The representative of the LEG spoke at length on how the Town Council and the LEG could work together for the benefit of the Longridge Residents and how the Longridge High Street and other parts of Longridge could be 'greened up'.

6. LONGRIDGE HERITAGE CENTRE TRUST (LHCT)

The Clerk submitted a report asking members to consider comments provided by the Longridge Heritage Centre Trust (LHCT) on a revised Licence Agreement.

Members were reminded that the Clerk had submitted a report to the 30 October Estates Committee, requesting members consider a revised Licence Agreement for the LHCT and it was resolved at that meeting that the Clerk would contact LHCT and ask them to consider the Committee's resolutions.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

- a. Agree a license period of three years, after which time the Town Council would allow the licence to run on, unless terminated by either party on giving the other party a minimum of six months' notice in writing.
- b. Agree to set a licence fee of £1,000 for a three-year-licence, to be payable in year one and to be renewed after each three-year period.

- c. Agree to remove Section 1.9 (page 3) '*The Licensee's Voluntary Services*': as LHCT are no longer responsible for maintaining the garden areas and other outside space at the building.
- d. Page 3, Section 2, lines 6-7. Agree to remove '*and the Licensee's Voluntary Services*'. This is no longer relevant.

7. **LONGRIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP.**

The Clerk submitted a report asking members to consider how the Town Council and the Longridge Environment Group (LEG) could work together to improve the town centre for both people and nature.

During the Public Participation session, a representative of the LEG spoke at length on the matter.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Request the Clerk to submit the Report to the next meeting of the Full Council for their considerations.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Request the Clerk to investigate the use and financial considerations of installing bollards at the entry to Remembrance Gardens.

9. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS.**

The next meeting is to be confirmed.

SIGNED BY CHAIR FOR THE MEETING:

DATE:

A signed copy is on file.

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Agenda Item 7

For Decision/Discussion

Meeting:	Estates Committee
Meeting Date:	19 May 2026
Title:	Estate Committee – Terms of Reference
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose of the report.

Report of the Clerk (enclosed) for members to consider the Terms of Reference for the Estate Committee as set out in Appendix 1

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Estates Committee reviews the draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) to ensure they accurately reflect the committee's responsibilities regarding the management, maintenance, and strategic development of Longridge Town Council's land and property assets.

Subject to any agreed amendments, the Committee should move to formally adopt these terms to provide a clear framework for decision-making and financial oversight for the ensuing civic year.

3. Draft Resolution

The Estates Committee RESOLVES:

- a. To approve and adopt the Terms of Reference as presented [or as amended] for the 2026/27 municipal year.
- b. To submit the adopted Terms of Reference to the next meeting of the Full Town Council for formal noting and inclusion in the Council's Standing Orders.

Appendix 1



For Information

Estates Committee Terms of Reference

Adopted: 19 May 2026





Chair: Cllr.

Minute Ref.:

The policy is administered by the Town Clerk and will be reviewed annually.

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Mission Statement

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Purpose:

The Estates Committee is a Standing Committee of Longridge Town Council, constituted under the Council's Standing Orders. The Committee is responsible for the oversight, maintenance and management of the Council's land, buildings and other physical assets, and is authorised to make decisions on estate matters within the budget and expenditure limits agreed by Full Council. Where proposed expenditure would exceed those limits, the Committee shall make a recommendation to Full Council, which will retain the decision.

1. Membership of the Committee shall be appointed by Full Council at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council each May
2. The Committee shall elect a Chair at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council.
3. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair at its first meeting, who will deputise for the Chair when the Chair is absent or unable to act.
4. The Committee shall comprise a minimum of four and a maximum of seven Councillors. Members are expected, where possible, to bring building, property or other practical knowledge relevant to the Committee's remit. The Town Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk shall be in attendance at meetings as officer to the Committee.
5. The quorum for a meeting will be a minimum of three Councillors.
6. Councillors who are not members of the Committee may be invited to attend meetings in an advisory capacity, but only appointed Members may vote, and a meeting that is not quorate cannot transact business.
7. The Committee shall meet in accordance with the schedule of meetings agreed by Full Council, and otherwise as required. A minimum of three clear days' notice of each meeting, together with the agenda, shall be given in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Standing Orders.
8. The Town Clerk, or in the Clerk's absence the Deputy Clerk, shall take the minutes of each meeting. Approved minutes shall be reported to Full Council.
9. All correspondence should be conducted through the Town Clerk.

10. The Committee shall oversee all land, buildings and physical assets owned, leased or maintained by the Town Council, including (but not limited to) the Station Building, the Millennium Cross, the War Memorial, play areas, the skate park, the allotments, and any further assets recorded in the Council's Asset Register from time to time.
11. Powers and Budget — The Committee shall operate within an annual budget for maintenance and scheduled works on Council-maintained land and buildings, as approved by Full Council. The Committee shall review budget provision at regular intervals throughout the financial year and report on its position to Full Council.
12. The Committee is delegated authority to authorise expenditure of up to £1,000 per item on servicing, maintenance, repairs and emergency works, subject to compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Expenditure above this limit shall be referred to Full Council for approval, save where the Council's Financial Regulations provide otherwise (for example, in respect of genuine emergencies affecting the safety or security of Council property).
13. To maintain, service and keep under review the items recorded in the Council's Asset Register and any associated Estates Management documentation.
14. To make recommendations to Full Council on relevant statutory and non-statutory policies relating to the Council's estate, including (where applicable) health and safety, inspection regimes, and risk assessments.
15. Emergencies — In the event of an emergency affecting Council property, the Town Clerk shall act in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, and shall consult the Chair (or in the Chair's absence the Vice-Chair) of the Committee at the earliest opportunity. Any emergency expenditure shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee and to Full Council.
16. These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by the Committee, with any proposed amendments recommended to Full Council for adoption at the Annual Meeting.
17. Members and the Clerk shall observe the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in all proceedings of the Committee, including the declaration of interests.

18. Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public and press, save where the Committee resolves to exclude them under section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

End

Agenda Item 8

For Decision/Discussion



Longridge
Town Council

Meeting:	Estates Committee
Meeting Date:	19 May 2026
Title:	Use of Weed Killer on Council Land
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose of the Report

To invite the Estates Committee to consider the Town Council’s current practice in relation to the use of weed killer (herbicide) on Council-owned and Council-maintained land, with particular reference to the land immediately surrounding the Station Building, and to consider whether any change of practice or formal policy is appropriate.

This matter is referred to the Estates Committee from the Staffing Committee, which resolved that a report on the use of weed killer on Council land should be brought forward for members’ consideration. The matter has further relevance given recent correspondence received by Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) from a member of the Longridge Environmental Group (LEG) requesting that RVBC cease spraying public realm areas in Longridge with weed killer.

2. Background

The Town Council has historically used a combination of hand-weeding and the spot application of glyphosate-based herbicide products to control weed growth on its land and on hard surfaces adjacent to its buildings. The principal area of treatment in any given year is the forecourt, paths and planted areas immediately outside the Station Building, where weed growth on the stone flag and at the base of the walls is a recurrent issue and a frequent matter of public comment. The active substance most commonly used is glyphosate.

Shown below are the areas the Town Council is responsible for.

Location	Description	Current weed control practice
Station Building forecourt and surrounds	Paved forecourt, planted borders and paths outside the Council offices.	Periodic spot treatment with glyphosate-based herbicide by the Council’s gardener, augmented by hand-weeding.
War Memorial	Hard-surfaced areas, paving joints and planted surrounds.	Targeted treatment to prevent weed growth that would detract from the civic appearance.
Millennium Cross	Walled grassed area.	Hand weeding, weed and feed grassed area.
Allotments	Communal paths and perimeter.	Treatment limited to communal areas.
Other Council land	Community Garden.	No weed killing currently undertaken.

3. Land falling to other authorities

- **Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC)** — maintains a range of public realm assets within Longridge under its borough functions, including aspects of grass cutting and weed control on adopted parks and public spaces not owned by the Town Council.
- **Lancashire County Council (LCC)** — as Highway Authority is responsible for weed control on the adopted public highway, including footways, kerbs and channels. Highways weed treatment in Lancashire is delivered under a county-wide programme using glyphosate-based products applied by qualified contractors.

It is important members understand that the Town Council has no direct control over either RVBC's or LCC's spraying programmes. The Council can, however, express a view and engage with both authorities about the management of weed growth in Longridge.

4. The Regulatory Position

Glyphosate is currently an authorised active substance in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as competent authority, has extended the approval of glyphosate until 15 December 2026 to allow a renewal assessment to be completed. A public consultation on the HSE's draft recommendation is anticipated during 2026, which may inform a renewal of up to 15 years or a phased withdrawal.

Use of glyphosate-based products by, or on behalf of, the Council is therefore lawful at the present time, provided that:

- Products are authorised by HSE and used strictly in accordance with the product label and approval conditions;
- Operatives hold the required NPTC certificates (PA1 and PA6 as a minimum for hand-held application). Note: our current gardener does not hold this certificate.
- A COSHH assessment is in place;
- Application is targeted, weather-conditions-dependent, and conducted with appropriate signage and PPE where the public may be present;
- Records of application (date, location, product, rate, operative) are retained.

Members should also note the Council's wider duties under the Environment Act 1995 and section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the biodiversity duty), which require public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.

5. Cost and Practicality

Comparative cost data indicates that non-chemical alternatives are typically more expensive in unit terms than chemical treatment, although figures vary substantially with the scale and frequency of treatment. Indicative cost comparisons reported in the trade press suggest:

- Hand-weeding: highest labour cost, lowest equipment cost, but slow and labour-intensive — generally feasible only on small, well-defined areas;
- Hot foam (Foamstream) and hot-water systems: high capital cost (equipment), moderate consumables cost, typically 3–5 times the cost per square metre of glyphosate treatment, requires trained operative;

- Electric / thermal: lower consumable cost than hot foam but slower throughput;
- Glyphosate (targeted spot application): lowest cost per square metre, fastest application, well-established workflows.

Given the relatively small areas of hard standing in the Council’s direct ownership, the absolute cost difference would not be material at the Council’s overall budget level. However, any decision to move to a non-chemical regime would have implications for the Gardener’s workload, the Estates budget, and the visual standard achievable around the Station Building during the growing season.

6. Longridge Environmental Group — Correspondence with RVBC

The Town Clerk has been made aware that a member of the Longridge Environmental Group has written to RVBC requesting that the borough council cease spraying public realm areas in Longridge with weed killer. The correspondence is understood to raise concerns about the impact of glyphosate on insect life, soil health, and the wider biodiversity of the parish, and to invite RVBC to consider non-chemical alternatives.

Members are asked to note that:

- The request was made directly to RVBC and not to the Town Council;
- The Town Council does not directly control RVBC’s public realm spraying programme, nor does it control LCC’s highways programme;
- Nevertheless, the Town Council is a legitimate voice for the views of Longridge residents on matters affecting the local environment and may, if it so resolves, communicate a view to RVBC on the question;
- Whatever view the Town Council takes on RVBC’s practice, the question of the Council’s own practice on its own land is logically prior — it would be difficult to lobby a neighbouring authority on an issue on which the Council had not first reached its own settled position.

7. Options for Members’ Consideration

Members are invited to consider the following options in respect of the Council’s own land:

Option A — Maintain current practice

Continue with targeted, qualified application of glyphosate-based products on hard surfaces adjacent to the Station Building and other Council assets, supplemented by hand-weeding. No formal written policy adopted at this stage; reconsider in light of HSE’s 2026 renewal decision.

Option B — Adopt a written “Integrated Weed Management” policy

Retain glyphosate as one tool among several, but formalise the practice in a written policy that prioritises manual and mechanical methods, restricts glyphosate to targeted application only, removes “cosmetic” applications around street furniture and signs, and requires record-keeping of every application.

Option C — Move to a pesticide-free regime on Council land

Cease the use of glyphosate-based products on all Council-owned land, in favour of hand-weeding, hot-foam or other non-chemical methods. Members should note that this would have budgetary implications (additional gardener hours and/or equipment costs) and may result in a reduced standard of presentation around the Station Building and other hard-surfaced areas during the growing season.

Option D — Defer decision pending HSE renewal outcome

Take no decision at this stage; await the outcome of the HSE renewal assessment (due by 15 December 2026) and revisit the question once the regulatory position has been clarified. Continue current practice in the interim.

8. In respect of RVBC and LCC

Members are separately invited to consider whether the Town Council wishes to:

- Write to RVBC noting the LEG correspondence, sharing the Council's view (whatever it may be) on the use of weed killer in the public realm in Longridge;
- Write to LCC seeking information on the Lancashire highways weed-control contract and any opportunity for the Town Council to express a view on its operation within the parish;
- Take no action at this stage in respect of either authority.

9. Risk, Equality and Financial Implications

- **Risk** — Maintaining current practice carries reputational risk if community sentiment moves further against glyphosate. Moving to a fully pesticide-free regime carries operational and reputational risk if standards of presentation visibly decline.
- **Equality** — No specific equalities issues identified. Members are entitled to take into account public health concerns expressed by residents, including children, pregnant women, pet owners and those with chemical sensitivities, when reaching a view.
- **Financial** — Options A, B and D have no material additional cost. Option C would require either additional gardener hours (estimated at modest cost) or capital expenditure on hot-foam or similar equipment (indicative range £7,000–£12,000), or a service contract with a specialist provider. Any such expenditure would require Full Council approval under the Council's Financial Regulations.

10. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the report and the regulatory context, including the HSE's renewal assessment of glyphosate due by 15 December 2026.
- b. Determine which of Options A to D the Council wishes to adopt in respect of the use of weed killer on Council-owned land.
- c. Decide whether the Council wishes to communicate a view to Ribble Valley Borough Council in response to the correspondence received from a member of the Longridge Environmental Group, and if so, instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.
- d. Decide whether the Council wishes to write to Lancashire County Council in respect of the Lancashire highways weed-control programme as it affects Longridge, and if so, instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.
- e. Where members resolve in favour of Option B or Option C, instruct the Town Clerk to bring a draft written policy and any associated budget proposal to a future meeting of the Committee for formal adoption and onward recommendation to Full Council.

Agenda Item 9

For Decision/Discussion



Longridge
Town Council

Meeting:	Estates Committee
Meeting Date:	19 May 2026
Title:	Memorial Bench Plaques – Draft Policy
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose of the Report

To present to the Estates Committee a draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy for members' consideration, and to invite the Committee to recommend its adoption (with or without amendment) to Full Council.

2. Background

At its meeting on 10 December 2025, Full Council resolved that the Town Clerk should draft a policy concerning requests from members of the public to place commemorative plaques on benches in and around Longridge. The resolution arose directly from a request received from the family of the late Mr Paul Byrne, a former Mayor of Longridge Town Council, who wished to place a memorial plaque on a bench outside the Station Building.

The Council acknowledged at the time that:

- The Byrne family's request was a sympathetic one and concerned a person of considerable significance to the town and to the Council itself;
- The Council had no settled written policy to govern such requests, and was conscious that any decision taken in respect of one request would set a precedent for future requests;
- Other towns and parish councils in Lancashire and beyond have well-established memorial plaque policies, and Longridge should have one in place before further requests are received.

The Town Clerk has accordingly prepared a draft policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, for the Committee's consideration. If recommended by the Committee, the policy would be put to Full Council for formal adoption.

3. The Byrne Family Request

Members will be aware that the Byrne family request remains pending. The Town Clerk has been in contact with the family to confirm that, while the Council was sympathetic to the request, the absence of a written policy meant that a considered response could not be issued immediately. The family have been advised that a policy is being developed and that their request will be processed in accordance with that policy once it is adopted.

The draft policy at Section 4 below has been written with the Byrne family's request specifically in mind, in the sense that it provides for the types of cases the Council is most likely to receive: a deceased person of significance to Longridge, a family-initiated request, and a preferred location near a Council building or amenity. The policy does not, of course, single out the Byrne request for special treatment; rather, it sets out a framework that will apply equally to all such requests.

Members may wish to give consideration to whether, on adoption of the policy by Full Council, the Town Clerk should be authorised to determine the Byrne family's application under the policy's standard procedure, without further reference back to the Committee.

4. Key Features of the Draft Policy

The draft policy attached at Appendix 11 is structured around the following principles:

4.1 Scope

The policy applies only to benches owned or maintained by the Town Council. It does not extend to benches owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, or any other body, although it sets out a procedure for cases where applicants approach the Town Council in respect of benches that turn out to be owned by another authority.

4.2 Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by an immediate family member or legal next of kin, by a close friend or associate where no surviving family exists, or by an organisation or community group commemorating a person of local significance. Applications in respect of living persons are not permitted.

4.3 Application process

Applications are made on a standard form (Appendix A of the policy) and determined by the Town Clerk under delegated authority. The Town Clerk may refer unusual cases to the Estates Committee. The Council aims to acknowledge applications within five working days and reach a decision within 28 days. A right of review by a panel of two councillors not involved in the original decision is provided where an application is refused.

4.4 Inscription rules

Plaques are to be of a standard size and specification (typically 100mm × 50mm in cast aluminium or brushed stainless steel) and supplied and installed by the Council to ensure visual consistency across the bench stock. Inscriptions are limited to three lines and must not include promotional, political, religious-controversial, or offensive content.

4.5 Fees

The draft sets out illustrative fees of:

- £20 application fee (non-refundable, payable on submission);
- £150 supply, inscription and installation of the plaque;
- £100 replacement of a plaque during the agreement period;
- £50 transfer of an agreement to another applicant.

These figures are illustrative only and members are asked to consider whether they are appropriate, or whether confirmation against current supplier quotes is needed before adoption. The Town Clerk's view is that the figures are broadly in line with comparator councils, but that supplier quotes should be obtained promptly after adoption to allow the Council's charges to be reviewed at the next annual fees review.

4.6 Duration and renewal

Agreements are for ten years from the date of installation. The Council will write to the applicant six months before expiry to invite renewal. If no renewal is requested, the plaque may be removed by the Council and the bench made available for a new application. This avoids any "permanent" commitment by the Council and provides a structured way to manage finite bench capacity over time.

4.7 Maintenance and removal

The Council retains responsibility for the bench itself; the applicant is responsible for keeping their contact details up to date and for renewing the agreement. The policy sets out the circumstances in which a plaque may be removed (e.g. damage beyond repair, bench replacement, expiry without renewal, breach of the policy) and requires 28 days' written notice to the applicant wherever practicable.

4.8 Equality, data protection and review

The policy includes the standard provisions on the Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and is subject to a three-year review cycle.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- **Income** — Each application generates £170 in fees (£20 + £150). The Council does not expect a large volume of applications and the policy is not anticipated to be a material income line.
- **Costs** — Plaque supply and installation is intended to be cost-recovery in nature. Supplier quotes will need to be obtained shortly after adoption to confirm the £150 figure is sufficient. Staff time for processing applications can be absorbed within the existing Clerk and Deputy Clerk workload, assisted by the standard application form.
- **Capital** — No capital expenditure is required at this stage. If demand exceeds the available bench stock, the Council may wish to consider provision of additional benches in a future budget round.

6. Risk Considerations

- **Reputational** — Adopting a clear, written policy reduces the risk of inconsistent or perceived-unfair decisions, and provides a respectful framework within which sensitive family requests can be handled.
- **Operational** — The Council's bench stock is finite and the policy must manage applications over the long term. The ten-year agreement model is the principal mitigation: it avoids commitments in perpetuity and refreshes capacity periodically.

- **Legal** — Memorial plaque schemes are well-established within local government practice. The draft policy reflects standard provisions and does not raise novel legal issues. The Council's power to provide benches and to permit commemorative plaques derives from sections 137 and 144 of the Local Government Act 1972 and from its general well-being functions.
- **Equality** — The policy is open to all applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and contains express provision for the Equality Act 2010 duties.

7. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the background to the request, and in particular the resolution of Full Council on 10 December 2025 and the pending request from the family of the late Mr Paul Byrne.
- b. Consider the draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and any amendments members wish to propose.
- c. Determine whether the illustrative fee schedule (£20 / £150 / £100 / £50) should be adopted as set out.
- d. Recommend the draft policy (as approved or amended) to Full Council for formal adoption.
- e. On adoption of the policy by Full Council, authorise the Town Clerk to determine the Byrne family's application under the standard procedure set out in the policy, and to report the outcome to the next meeting of the Estates Committee.
- f. Authorise the Town Clerk to compile and maintain the Bench Register at Appendix 2 of the policy as part of the Council's wider Asset Register, and to report periodically on its status to the Estates Committee.

Appendix 1



For Information

Draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy

Adopted: 19-05-2026

Chairman: Cllr. L. Jameson

Minute Ref.: 260311/10

Administered by Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council. To be reviewed every three years or sooner if circumstance's chance.

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Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors. Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.

1. Introduction and Purpose

Longridge Town Council recognises that memorial bench plaques provide a meaningful and lasting tribute to loved ones, and at the same time contribute to the character and amenity of the town's public spaces. This Policy establishes a clear, consistent and compassionate framework for the consideration of requests to install commemorative plaques on benches owned or maintained by the Town Council.

This Policy was developed following a resolution of Full Council on 10 December 2025, which directed the Town Clerk to prepare a written policy on memorial bench plaques. The resolution arose from a sympathetic request received from the family of a former Mayor of Longridge Town Council. The Council determined that, given the likelihood of further such requests in future, a written policy should be in place to ensure consistency of decision-making and fairness as between applicants.

This Policy applies to all applications received on or after the date of its adoption by Full Council. Any application that was received before the date of adoption and was awaiting determination will be considered under this Policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all benches owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council within the parish of Longridge. It does not apply to:

- Benches owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, or any other public or private body;
- Benches located on private land or land that is not under the ownership or control of the Town Council;
- Memorials other than plaques on benches (for example, dedicated benches in their entirety, memorial trees, or memorial inscriptions on other Council assets), which fall outside the scope of this Policy.

Where the Town Council receives an application that relates to a bench not under its ownership or control, the Town Clerk will write to the applicant within 10 working days to advise them and, where possible, to signpost them to the responsible authority.

3. Policy Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Provide a dignified and accessible process for families and others wishing to commemorate a loved one;
- Maintain the visual amenity and structural integrity of public benches and open spaces in Longridge;
- Ensure equitable and transparent administration of all applications, irrespective of the applicant's circumstances;
- Recover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, installation, and ongoing maintenance through the fees set out in this Policy;
- Manage the finite capacity of the Council's bench stock responsibly and fairly over time.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Who may apply

Applications may be submitted by:

- An immediate family member or legal next of kin of the deceased;
- A close friend or associate where no surviving family members exist, provided reasonable evidence of the connection is supplied;
- An organisation, community group, or charitable body wishing to commemorate a person of local significance.

The Council reserves the right to request supporting information to verify the applicant's relationship to the person being commemorated.

4.2 Persons who may be commemorated

Memorial plaques may be installed to commemorate:

- A deceased individual who had a connection to Longridge (for example, resided, worked, or had a strong community association with the town);
- A deceased individual of significance to the applicant, where a Longridge location holds special meaning to the deceased or to the applicant.

Applications will not be considered in respect of living individuals.

5. Bench Availability and Location

Memorial plaques may only be affixed to benches that are owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council and that have capacity for a plaque. The Council will maintain a register of bench locations and their plaque availability (the "Bench Register"), which will form part of the Council's wider Asset Register and be reviewed periodically.

Applicants may express a preference for a particular bench location. The Council will endeavour to accommodate reasonable requests, but cannot guarantee a specific location. Bench availability will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to application approval.

Where a preferred bench is unavailable, the applicant will be offered an alternative of comparable character. The applicant may accept the alternative or withdraw their application, in which case any application fee paid will be refunded.

The Council may, from time to time, install new benches specifically to meet demand for memorial plaques, at its discretion and subject to funding.

6. Application Process

6.1 How to apply

Applicants should complete the Council's Memorial Bench Plaque Application Form (Appendix A), available from the Town Council office and the Council's website, and submit it to the Town Clerk together with:

- The non-refundable application fee of £20 (see Section 9);
- The proposed plaque inscription for approval (see Section 7);
- Any additional information requested by the Town Clerk.

6.2 Consideration of applications

Applications will be considered by the Town Clerk under delegated authority. The Town Clerk may refer any application to the Estates Committee or to Full Council where the circumstances are unusual, where a decision of principle is required, or where the applicant or the person commemorated has a connection to the Town Council such that a decision by an officer alone might give rise to a perception of conflict.

The Council will acknowledge receipt of applications within five working days, and will aim to communicate a decision within 28 days of receipt of a complete application.

6.3 Right of review

Where an application is refused in whole or in part, the applicant may request a review by writing to the Town Clerk within 21 days of the decision. The review will be conducted by a panel of at least two councillors who were not involved in the original decision. The outcome of the review panel is final, save for any matter that may properly be the subject of complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

7. Plaque Inscription and Design

7.1 Permitted content

Inscriptions must be respectful, dignified, and appropriate for display in a public place. All inscriptions are subject to approval by the Town Clerk. Inscriptions should typically include:

- The full name (or commonly used name) of the person commemorated;
- The year of birth and year of death (e.g. 1945–2022), or dates in another clear format;
- A short tribute, dedication, or phrase (see character limit below).

7.2 Character limits and format

The standard plaque size is 100mm × 50mm, or such standard size 200mm x 50mm or 152 x 75mm as the Council adopts from time to time. The total inscription, including name, dates, and tribute, must not exceed three lines of text. The Town Clerk will advise on character limits based on the standard plaque template.

7.3 Restrictions

Inscriptions must not include:

- Promotional or commercial content, including business names or website addresses;
- Political statements, or religious statements likely to cause offence to members of the public;
- Content that is defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise contrary to law;
- Content that conflicts with the Council's equality and inclusion obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council reserves the right to decline or require amendment of any inscription that does not meet these requirements.

7.4 Plaque specification

Plaques will be supplied and installed by the Council, or its appointed contractor, to a consistent specification. Privately sourced plaques will not normally be accepted, in order to maintain a consistent visual appearance across the bench stock. Plaques will generally be manufactured from cast aluminium or brushed stainless steel, or such other durable material as the Council determines from time to time.

8. Duration and Renewal

Plaque agreements will run for a period of ten years from the date of installation. The Council does not enter into agreements in perpetuity.

The Council will write to the applicant (using the contact details supplied at the time of the most recent renewal or application) approximately six months before the expiry of the agreement to invite renewal.

If the applicant wishes to renew, a renewal fee will be payable in accordance with the fee schedule then in force, and a fresh ten-year agreement will commence.

If no renewal is requested within three months of the expiry of the agreement, the plaque may be removed by the Council and the bench made available for a new application. The Council will retain the removed plaque for a period of six months, during which time the applicant may collect it. After that time, the Council may dispose of the plaque at its discretion.

9. Fees and Charges

A fee is payable to cover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, inscription, installation, and administration. The current fee schedule is set out below. Fees are reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process.

Item	Description	Fee
Application fee	Payable on submission of the application; non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.	£20
Plaque supply and installation	Supply of the plaque to the Council's standard specification, inscription, and installation on the agreed bench.	£150
Replacement plaque	Replacement of a damaged or unreadable plaque during the agreement period (where damage is not attributable to the Council).	£100
Transfer of agreement	Transfer of an existing agreement to a different family member or applicant.	£50

The fees set out above are payable to Longridge Town Council and are inclusive of VAT where applicable. Fees may be reviewed by Full Council from time to time, and the version in force at the date of application or renewal will apply.

10. Maintenance, Replacement and Removal

10.1 Maintenance of benches

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and structural integrity of all Council-owned benches. The Council does not warrant that any particular bench will remain in any particular location, condition, or configuration for the duration of an agreement.

10.2 Responsibility of the applicant

The applicant is responsible for:

- Keeping the Town Clerk informed of any change to their contact details;
- Considering the renewal invitation issued at the six-month point before expiry of the agreement, and confirming whether or not they wish to renew;
- Notifying the Town Clerk of any visible damage to the plaque that they observe.

10.3 Replacement of plaques

Where a plaque becomes damaged or unreadable during the agreement period, the Council will:

- Replace the plaque at its own cost where the damage is attributable to the Council, its contractors, or normal weathering of the plaque material;
- Offer replacement to the applicant on payment of the replacement fee set out in Section 9, where the damage is attributable to vandalism, accident, or other cause not within the Council's responsibility.

10.4 Removal of plaques

A plaque may be removed by the Council in any of the following circumstances:

- On expiry of the agreement without renewal, in accordance with Section 8;
- Where the bench is to be replaced, relocated, or removed from the Council's estate, in which case the Council will work with the applicant to identify an alternative bench wherever practicable;
- Where the plaque has become damaged beyond reasonable repair and the applicant has declined to fund replacement;
- Where, exceptionally, the Council determines that the plaque is no longer appropriate (for example, on grounds of legal change, public sensitivity, or breach of this Policy).

The Council will give the applicant at least 28 days' written notice of any intended removal under the second, third, or fourth bullet above wherever practicable, using the contact details last supplied by the applicant.

11. Equality and Inclusion

Longridge Town Council is committed to providing a fair and accessible service to all members of the community. In administering this Policy, the Council will have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty under section 149 of that Act.

The Council will make reasonable adjustments to its processes to assist applicants who may have difficulty in using the standard application form (for example, by providing the form in an alternative format, or by accepting an application by telephone or in person).

12. Data Protection

Personal data submitted as part of an application will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Council’s lawful basis for processing is the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR). The Council’s Privacy Notice applies to all data collected under this Policy.

Application records, including the applicant’s contact details and the inscription approved, will be retained for the duration of the agreement and for a period of six years following its expiry, in accordance with the Council’s Document Retention Policy.

13. Complaints

Where an applicant or member of the public is dissatisfied with the way in which the Council has administered this Policy, they may use the Council’s Complaints Procedure, which is available on the Council’s website and on request from the Town Clerk.

14. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if there is a material change in the Council’s circumstances, in relevant legislation, or in best practice. The first review will be due three years after the date of adoption shown in the document information table at the front of this Policy.

15. Adoption

This Policy was recommended for adoption by the Estates Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2026, and was adopted by Full Council at its meeting on [date to be inserted].

Signed: _____

Chair of Council

Signed: _____

Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Date: _____

APPENDIX A

Memorial Bench Plaque — Application Form

Please complete all sections of this form. Continuation sheets may be attached if required.

Section 1 — Applicant

Full name of applicant:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Relationship to the person to be commemorated:

Section 2 — Person to be Commemorated

Full name:

Year of birth:

Year of death:

Connection to Longridge:

Section 3 — Proposed Inscription

Please provide the exact wording you would like on the plaque. The total inscription must not exceed three lines.

Line 1:

Line 2:

Line 3:

Section 4 — Preferred Location

Preferred bench location (if any):

Reason for preferred location (if any):

Section 5 — Declaration

I confirm that the information given on this form is true and complete, and that I have read and accept the terms of the Longridge Town Council Memorial Bench Plaque Policy. I understand that the application fee is non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.

Signed:

Date:

Please return the completed form, together with the application fee, to: Town Clerk, Longridge Town Council, The Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3JP.

APPENDIX B

Bench Register

The Bench Register is maintained by the Town Clerk as part of the Council's wider Asset Register. The Register records, for each bench owned or maintained by the Town Council:

- A unique bench identifier (e.g. LTC-B-001);
- Its location, with a brief description;
- Its material and condition;
- Whether a memorial plaque is currently fitted, and if so, the inscription, the applicant's name, and the date the agreement expires;
- The date the bench was installed or last inspected.

The Register is available for inspection by Members of the Council at any reasonable time, and is reported to the Estates Committee periodically. Personal data is held in accordance with Section 12 of this Policy and is not published on the Council's website.