



Longridge Town Council

Estates Committee – Draft Minutes

Date:	24 June 2026		
Place:	Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.		
Present:	Councillors: Stubbs (Chair), Rogerson, Smith and Wallbank.		
In attendance:	Town Clerk.		
Meeting started:	18:30	Meeting closed:	19:40

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1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Jameson.

Cllr. Spencer was not present; and no apologies were received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda.

None were recorded. Members were reminded to declare any interest that might arise during the course of discussion.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 19 May 2026 were considered.

Members noted that the resolution recorded under Minute Item 8 (Weed Control Policy) required amendment to clarify the circumstances in which glyphosate would continue to be used pending the HSE renewal decision due on 15 December 2026. It was agreed that the wording “targeted glyphosate use on hard surfaces as its preferred approach” be amended to read “targeted glyphosate use on hard surfaces as its preferred approach when necessary”, to address concerns raised by some members that the original wording was unclear as to whether glyphosate use would continue as a default, and to reflect that several newly elected members wished to see weed treatment avoided wherever practicable.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 be approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment to Minute Item 8 set out above, and signed by the Chair.

6. PLACEMENT OF MEMORIAL PLAQUES ON COUNCIL OWNED BENCHES – DRAFT POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the amendments to the draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy requested by Full Council on 10 June 2026, together with the revised policy shown as tracked changes against the version recommended by the Committee on 19 May 2026 (Appendix 1 to the report).

Having considered the policy as returned by Full Council, the Committee resolved that the following further amendments be made before the policy is referred back to Full Council:

6.1 Title and Framing

Members agreed that the policy, and the plaques themselves, should be described as a “memorial plaque on a council-owned bench” rather than a “memorial bench” throughout. It was noted that the “memorial bench” framing had given rise to concerns regarding an expectation that decorative items, flowers and other tributes would accumulate at the bench, and that the revised framing more accurately reflects that the bench itself remains a normal public asset.

6.2 Bench Cap

Members unanimously rejected the proposed cap limiting plaques to 50% of the bench stock in any given area. It was noted that a number of existing benches, including those outside the Council Offices, already exceed this proportion. The Committee agreed that the Council should retain discretion to manage demand for plaques as it arises, rather than operating under a fixed numerical cap.

6.3 Maximum Plaques per Bench

The maximum number of plaques permitted on a single bench was set at three, reflecting existing practice and the Committee's view that three plaques can be accommodated appropriately on the backs of the Council's standard benches.

6.4 Eligibility

Members agreed that there should be no requirement for the commemorated person to have made a “significant contribution” to the community in the policy. All members of the community are to be treated equally for the purposes of eligibility, with the Council retaining discretion to determine the suitability of individual applications.

6.5 Fees

The existing fee structure was confirmed: a non-refundable application fee of £20, together with a supply and installation fee of £250, giving a total of £270.

6.6 Duration of Agreement and Renewal

Members agreed that the original ten-year agreement term should be retained, and rejected the amendment proposed by Full Council to qualify the term by reference to “the remaining useful life of the bench, whichever ends sooner”. Members noted that, where a bench fails or requires replacement during the agreement term, the Council will replace it as a community asset and the applicant should not be liable or disadvantaged as a result.

Members agreed to introduce a new renewal option, allowing agreements to be extended for a further five years on payment of a £50 renewal fee. It was noted that this also addresses concerns that the original ten-year term was too short relative to the life expectancy of the families concerned, and that renewal may be transferred to a different living family member where necessary.

This renewal option will not be applied retrospectively to plaques already installed on Council benches. Following one such renewal (giving a maximum total term of fifteen years), the agreement will end, allowing the bench to be made available for future applications.

6.7 Plaque Replacement

Members agreed that the Council should continue to bear the cost of plaque replacement where damage is attributable to the Council, its contractors, or normal weathering of the plaque material, on the basis that the Council supplies and specifies the plaque and that the quality of the plaque is therefore the Council's responsibility. The Committee rejected the amendment proposed by Full Council that the cost of weathering-related replacement should instead fall to the applicant's family. Members confirmed that the applicant will continue to be responsible for the cost of replacement if damage results from vandalism or accident, with the Council offering replacement on payment of the replacement fee.

6.8 Decorative Items

Members agreed that specific examples of decorative items (flowers, wreaths, ribbons) should be removed from the text of the policy, on the basis that listing such examples risks encouraging the practice. The clause is to be simplified to provide that the Council reserves the right to remove any items left at or near a bench, without notice, where they obstruct seating, present a trip hazard, or affect maintenance of the area.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- a. Rejects the 50% bench cap proposed by Full Council;
- b. Approves the maximum number of plaques per bench to be set at three;
- c. Confirms that no "significant contribution" eligibility requirement is to be included in the policy;
- d. Retains the ten-year agreement term without reference to the remaining useful life of the bench, and approves a new five-year renewal option at a fee of £50;
- e. Confirms the existing approach to plaque replacement costs, rejecting the proposal that weathering-related replacement costs should fall to the applicant's family;
- f. Approves the simplified decorative items clause described above; and
- g. Approves the reframing of the policy and plaques as relating to a "memorial plaque on a council-owned bench" rather than a "memorial bench" throughout,

and that the Town Clerk be authorised to update the draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy to reflect the above amendments and take the revised policy back to the July Full Council for final ratification.

7. SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted that the Estates Committee will meet every month during the 2026-27 civic year, with the option to cancel a scheduled meeting where there are no substantive items, and that future meetings will be confirmed by the Town Clerk in the light of urgent items arising.

Other Action:

Town Clerk to send hard copies of future agenda papers to those members who require them.

Signed as a correct record.

X

Chair, Estates Committee. Date:

A signed copy is on file.