



Longridge Town Council

Estates Committee - Agenda

You are hereby summoned to attend the Estates Committee of Longridge Town Council on Wednesday 24 June 2026 at 18:30 in the Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.

1. Welcome by the Chair.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest.

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

4. 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.

5. Approval of minutes from previous meetings.

To approve the minutes from the Estates Committee held on 19 May 2026.

ITEMS for DECISION/DISCUSSION

6. Placement of Memorial Plaques on Council Owned Benches – Draft Policy

For members to consider a revised Policy and recommend its approval to Full Council on 8 July 2026

The revised policy incorporates amendments regarding bench capacity caps, duration, maintenance responsibilities, decorative items and other changes suggested at the Full Council meeting held on 10 June 2026.

7. Schedule of Future Meetings.

It was agreed that the Estates Committee will meet every month during 2026-27 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.

Mike Hill

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council.



Longridge Town Council

Estates Committee – Draft Minutes

Date:	19 May 2026		
Place:	Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.		
Present:	Councillors: N Stubbs (Chair), J. Rogerson (Vice Chair), P. Smith and Andrew Wallbank.		
In attendance:	Town Clerk.		
Meeting started:	18:30	Meeting closed:	19:20

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1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2026-27 CIVIC YEAR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair of the Estates Committee for the 2026-27 civic year. Councillor Stubbs was proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Stubbs be elected as Chair of the Estates Committee for the 2026-27 civic year.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2026-27 CIVIC YEAR

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chair of the Estates Committee for the 2026-27 civic year. Councillor Rogerson was proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rogerson be elected as Vice-Chair of the Estates Committee for the 2026-27 civic year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Jameson.

Cllr. Spencer was absent.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda. None were recorded.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

The minutes of the previous Estates Committee held on 27 November 2024 were considered.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No members of the public were present.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DELEGATED SPENDING AUTHORITY

The Committee considered the Terms of Reference and a proposal to increase the delegated spending authority for maintenance and emergency works from £1,000 per item to £2,000 per item.

Members noted that the existing £1,000 limit was no longer sufficient to deal with routine items at current price levels

It was also noted that an increase to £2,000 would enable the Committee to authorise necessary emergency and maintenance works between Council meetings without requiring Full Council to be convened, while remaining proportionate to the Council's overall budget.

Members also considered a corresponding amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference to reflect Full Council's role in reviewing rather than retaining decisions on relevant matters. The language "Full council which will review" was agreed in substitution for "retain the decision".

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends to Full Council:

- a. That the delegated spending authority of the Estates Committee for maintenance and emergency works be increased from £1,000 per item to £2,000 per item; and
- b. That the Terms of Reference of the Estates Committee be amended accordingly, including the substitution of the phrase "full council which will review" for "retain the decision".

ACTION:

Town Clerk to prepare a report and revised Terms of Reference for ratification by Full Council on 10 June 2026, and to attach the Asset Register list to the Terms of Reference.

8. WEED CONTROL POLICY

The Committee considered the officer report on weed control on the Council's hard surfaces and adopted assets.

Members reviewed the options presented and agreed to adopt Option A: to maintain the current targeted use of glyphosate on hard surfaces, subject to appropriate licensing and operator competence.

It was noted that:

- The caretaker would require the appropriate certificate for the commercial application of pesticides.
- As an alternative, the Council could contract with RVBC where their contractor's schedule covers the Longridge area;
- Alternative non-chemical methods remain available and were discussed, including jet washing, hot-water/steam treatment and acetic acid (vinegar-based) solutions; and
- The current HSE authorisation arrangement relating to glyphosate is due on 15 December 2026, and a final decision on the operational model should be aligned with that timeline.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee adopts Option A (targeted glyphosate use on hard surfaces) as its preferred approach, and that a further decision on the delivery model (in-house following certification, or contracted via RVBC be deferred pending the HSE renewal due on 15 December 2026.

ACTION:

Town Clerk to research the availability of the RVBC weed control contractor for the Longridge area and report back.

9. MEMORIAL BENCH PLAQUE POLICY

The Committee considered the draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy (LTC/POL/006), prepared following the request from the family of the late Mr Paul Byrne, twice former Mayor of Longridge, for a memorial plaque on a Council bench.

Members reviewed the proposed fee structure and agreed that the draft fee of £150 did not adequately reflect the full cost to the Council. A revised fee of £250 (ex VAT) was agreed, to cover:

- Supply of the plaque;
- Inscription;
- Installation; and
- A contribution towards the ongoing maintenance of the bench.

Members noted that plaque agreements would run for a period of 10 years from installation, with the option of renewal on application. The fee is to be presented as a contribution to bench maintenance rather than as a charge solely for the plaque.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends to Full Council the adoption of the Memorial Bench Plaque Policy (LTC/POL/006), as drafted, subject to the fee being amended to £250 total cost (inclusive of plaque, inscription, installation and contribution to maintenance), and with agreements running for a period of 10 years subject to renewal.

ACTION:

Town Clerk to present the revised Memorial Bench Plaque Policy to Full Council on 10 June 2026 for ratification.

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Councillor Smith presented an update on the development of a new comprehensive asset management database for the Council's adopted assets.

Members noted the following key features of the proposed system:

- Records for each individual asset, including photographs, location descriptions and What3Words references;
- Scheduling of routine maintenance and inspections, with records retained for audit purposes;
- Tracking of planned replacement and end-of-life information; and
- Integration with the existing statutory asset register for the purposes of AGAR compliance.

The system will accommodate forthcoming additions to the portfolio, including:

- Eight new benches arriving during the current week; and
- The £28,000 playground equipment, with installation scheduled for 15 June 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the update on the asset management database and supports its further development.

ACTION:

Town Clerk to coordinate with Councillor Smith on the implementation of the database and its integration with the statutory asset register.

11. CONSIDERATION OF INFORMAL MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

No informal matters were raised for future consideration.

12. FUTURE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

The Committee considered its meeting frequency for the forthcoming civic year.

RESOLVED:

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

ACTION:

Town Clerk to confirm the date of the next Estates Committee meeting and circulate the indicative schedule for 2026-27.

Signed as a correct record.

X

Chair, Estates Committee. Date:

A signed copy is on file.

Agenda Item 6

For Decision/Discussion



Meeting:	Estates Committee
Meeting Date:	24 June 2026
Title:	Memorial Plaques on Council Benches. Amendments Requested by Full Council (10 June 2026)
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose of the Report

To report to the Estates Committee the amendments requested by Full Council on 10 June 2026 to the draft Memorial Bench Plaque Policy; to present the revised policy incorporating those amendments, shown as tracked changes against the version recommended by the Committee on 19 May 2026 (attached as Appendix 1); and to invite the Committee to endorse the revised policy and recommend its adoption to Full Council for final ratification.

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.

At its meeting on 19 May 2026, the Estates Committee considered an initial draft of the policy and resolved to recommend its adoption to Full Council, subject to the application/plaque fee being revised to a total of £250 (inclusive of supply, inscription, installation and a contribution to ongoing bench maintenance), with agreements running for a period of ten years from installation.

The policy, as recommended by the Committee, was brought before Full Council on 10 June 2026 for ratification. Having considered the policy, Full Council resolved that it should be referred back to the Estates Committee, with the policy to be amended in the seven respects set out at Section 4 below, before being brought back for final 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, a considered response could not be issued until the policy is finalised. The family have been advised that the policy is being amended in light of Full Council's comments of 10 June 2026 and that their request will be processed in accordance with the policy once it is adopted.

The framework set out in the revised policy continues to be capable of accommodating the Byrne request alongside any future applications; the amendments at Section 4 below do not alter the basis on which that request would be determined.

4. Amendments Requested by Full Council (10 June 2026)

Full Council asked that the policy be amended in the following respects before being brought back for final adoption:

4.1 Responsibility for weathered or damaged plaques

Responsibility for replacing a plaque that has weathered or deteriorated during the agreement period is amended to sit with the applicant's family, rather than the Council (policy clause formerly numbered 10.3).

4.2 Cap on plaque density

A new provision caps the proportion of benches in any given area at 50% of the total bench stock in that area that may carry a memorial plaque, in order to preserve the recreational and amenity character of public spaces.

4.3 Two plaques per bench

Where the 50% cap has been reached in a given area, up to two plaques may be permitted on a single bench, allowing further applications to be accommodated without reducing plaque-free bench provision.

4.4 Waiting list

A new clause provides for a waiting list to be maintained where no suitable bench, or no available capacity, exists in the relevant area at the time of application.

4.5 Removal of decorative items

A new sub-clause permits the Council to remove flowers, wreaths and other decorative items left at a bench, without notice, where they obstruct public use of the bench or surrounding area.

4.6 Bench remains Council property

An express statement confirms that the bench remains Council property in full public use at all times, irrespective of any plaque or memorial agreement attached to it.

4.7 Duration of agreement

The fixed ten-year term is amended to read "ten years or the remaining useful life of the bench, whichever ends sooner", reflecting that a bench may need replacement before the ten-year term expires.

Members should note that the insertion of the new decorative items clause (4.5 above) shifts the numbering of subsequent sub-clauses within Section 10 of the policy.

The full revised policy text, with all seven amendments shown as tracked changes against the version recommended on 19 May 2026, is attached at Appendix 1.

5. Key Features of the Revised Policy

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 Fees

The fee schedule is as follows:

- a. £20 application fee (non-refundable, payable on submission);
- b. £250 supply, inscription, installation and maintenance of the plaque – confirmed by the Estates Committee on 19 May 2026;
- c. £100 replacement of a plaque during the agreement period (subject to 5.6 below);
- d. £50 transfer of an agreement to another applicant.

The £250 figure was set by the Committee's resolution of 19 May 2026. The remaining figures are illustrative and members are asked to confirm whether they remain appropriate, or whether confirmation against current supplier quotes is needed before final adoption.

5.6 Plaque density and waiting list

In line with the amendments at Section 4 above, no more than 50% of benches in a given area may carry a plaque; once that threshold is reached, up to two plaques may be permitted per bench. Where no bench or capacity is available, applicants will be placed on a waiting list and notified as capacity arises.

5.7 Duration and renewal

Agreements run for ten years from the date of installation, or the remaining useful life of the bench, whichever ends sooner. 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.

5.8 Maintenance, removal and bench ownership

The bench remains Council property in full public use at all times, regardless of any plaque attached to it.

The Council retains responsibility for the bench itself; the applicant's family is responsible for the replacement of a plaque that has weathered or been damaged during the agreement period, and for keeping contact details up to date and renewing the agreement. The Council may remove flowers, wreaths and other decorative items without notice where they obstruct public use. The policy otherwise sets out the circumstances in which a plaque may be removed (e.g. bench replacement, expiry without renewal, breach of the policy) and requires 28 days' written notice to the applicant wherever practicable.

5.9 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.

6. Financial and Resource Implications

- a. **Income** – Each application generates £270 in fees (£20 + £250). The Council does not expect a large volume of applications and the policy is not anticipated to be a material income line.
- b. **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 £250 figure is sufficient. Shifting responsibility for weathered-plaque replacement to the applicant's family (Section 4.1) reduces the Council's ongoing cost exposure during the agreement term. Staff time for processing applications, including the new waiting list, can be absorbed within the existing Clerk and Deputy Clerk workload.
- c. **Capital** – No capital expenditure is required at this stage. The 50% density cap and waiting list provide a structured way to manage demand against the existing bench stock; if demand persistently exceeds capacity, the Council may wish to consider provision of additional benches in a future budget round.

7. Risk Considerations

- a. **Reputational** – Adopting a clear, written policy reduces the risk of inconsistent or perceived-unfair decisions. The density cap and waiting list further reduce the risk of any one area being seen to be dominated by memorials, while still allowing requests to be accommodated over time.
- b. **Operational** – The Council's bench stock is finite. The combination of the ten-year-or-useful-life term, the 50% density cap, the two-plaques-per-bench provision, and the waiting list together provide the principal mitigation, avoiding open-ended commitments and managing capacity over the long term.
- c. **Legal** – Memorial plaque schemes are well-established within local government practice. The amended provisions reflect standard practice elsewhere and do 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.
- d. **Equality** – The policy remains open to all applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and contains express provision for the Equality Act 2010 duties.

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the amendments requested by Full Council on 10 June 2026, as set out at Section 4 of this report;
- b. Consider and endorse the revised Memorial Bench Plaque Policy attached as Appendix 1, incorporating the amendments, together with any further amendments members wish to propose;
- c. Confirm the fee schedule (£20 / £250 / £100 / £50) for adoption, subject to supplier quotes being obtained to confirm cost-recovery;
- d. Recommend the revised policy (as endorsed or further amended) to Full Council for final ratification;
- e. On final 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.



For Information

Draft Policy: Placement of Memorial Plaques on Council Owned Benches

Adopted: 24-06-2026

Chairman: Cllr. N. Stubbs

Minute Ref.: 260624/

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.

In any area of Longridge where several benches are located, no more than 50% of the benches in that area will be made available for the placement of a memorial plaque. This cap is intended to prevent any one area from taking on the character of a dedicated memorial garden, which could otherwise compromise the enjoyment of the space for general recreational use by the wider community.

Where the 50% cap for an area has been reached, the Council may offer applicants the option of adding a further plaque to a bench that already carries a memorial plaque, up to a maximum of two plaques on any one bench.

Where no suitable bench is available, whether because the cap has been reached or because no bench in the applicant's preferred area carries fewer than two plaques, the Town Clerk will place the application on a waiting list. Applicants on the waiting list will be offered the next available bench, or capacity on an existing memorial bench, in order of application date, and will be kept informed of their position on request.

A bench on which a memorial plaque is displayed remains, at all times, a public asset owned by Longridge Town Council and available for use by any member of the public. The presence of a plaque does not reserve the bench for the exclusive or preferential use of the applicant, their family, or any other person.

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.~~ Plaque agreements will run for a period of ten years from the date of installation, or for the remaining useful life of the bench to which the plaque is affixed, whichever ends sooner. 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.	£250
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 Decorative items and continued public use

Although a bench may carry a memorial plaque, it remains in full use by the public at all times and remains the property of Longridge Town Council. Decorative items such as flowers, wreaths, ribbons, or similar tributes may be placed at or near a memorial bench, but the Council reserves the right to remove any such items, without notice, where they obstruct seating, present a trip hazard, affect maintenance of the area, or otherwise interfere with the bench's availability for unobstructed public use.

10.2.10.3 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.

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

As the plaque was originally purchased by the applicant or their family, responsibility for the cost of replacing a plaque that has become weathered or unreadable through age rests with the family, in the same way as for damage arising from vandalism or accident.

10.410.5 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.