

TERMS OF REFERENCE

LTC Does Christmas 2026 Working Group

Draft for consideration by Full Council



Longridge
Town Council

Status:	Approved by the Working Group at its meeting on 02-10-2026 and to be recommended to Full Council.	
Parent body:	Longridge Town Council	
Duration	From appointment until a final report after Christmas 2026 (or such later date as Full Council determines)	
Adopted:	Chair: Cllr. M. Gornall	Minute ref: 2026-10-02/3
	Full Council 14-10--2026	

1. Background and purpose

1.1 Longridge Town Council (“the Council”) wishes to plan early and coherently for Christmas 2026.

Festive activity in the town has for several years been delivered in partnership with Love Longridge, the group that organises Longridge Does Christmas, with the Council supporting lighting, the town tree, civic presence and community entertainment.

1.2 Christmas 2026 may be different from previous years. The Towneley Garden Event Space — being created on the former bowling green at Towneley Gardens — is intended to provide a dedicated outdoor venue for markets, performance and community gathering. If available as planned, it opens options that did not exist when festive activity was confined to Berry Lane, the Old Station Buildings, school sites and the Civic Hall.

1.3 The Working Group is established to consider preparations for Christmas 2026; to coordinate the Council’s own contribution; to work constructively with Love Longridge and other community partners; and to make recommendations to Full Council.

2. Aims

The Working Group shall aim to:

- a) Deliver a safe, welcoming and well-publicised Christmas in Longridge that supports residents, families, local businesses and community groups.
- b) Make good use of the Towneley Garden Event Space if it is available, without diminishing the established festive character of Berry Lane and the Old Station Buildings.
- c) Align Council activity with Love Longridge’s programme so that dates, locations and offers are complementary.
- d) Secure in good time the practical elements of a town Christmas: trees, festoon and column lighting, band, choir, Father Christmas, nativity and market traders.
- e) Operate within the Council’s budget, Financial Regulations and insurance arrangements, and leave a written record that can inform Christmas 2027.

3. Scope

3.1 The Working Group is authorised to consider, plan and oversee the following, and to make recommendations to Full Council:

- a) Programme and dates — the Council's festive calendar for November and December 2026, including lights switch-on and any activity through to Christmas Eve.
- b) Love Longridge liaison — dates, shared publicity, division of roles, and any Council support for Longridge Does Christmas.
- c) Towneley Garden Event Space — festive uses of the space, layout, power, access, stewarding and weather contingency, subject to the space being ready and to any conditions set by the Event Space project.
- d) Christmas trees — number, locations (including the principal tree at the Old Station Buildings, Berry Lane, and any tree at Towneley Gardens), specification, contractor, dressing, switch-on and removal.
- e) Festoon lighting and illuminations — review of Berry Lane and Derby Road displays; any extension of festoon lighting to Towneley Gardens; contractors; column sockets; installation and removal windows.
- f) Band — invitations to Longridge Band (and any other ensemble) for switch-on, Event Space performances and Christmas Eve carols at the tree.
- g) Choir — invitations to school, church and community choirs, including performance slots and PA.
- h) Father Christmas — grotto location and operating model, arrival / switch-on, safeguarding and insurance.
- i) Nativity — whether and where a live nativity or tableau is staged, and liaison with churches and schools.
- j) Market traders — festive markets and food / craft pitches, including any market on the Event Space, and the split of responsibility with Love Longridge.
- k) Budget, risk, licences and communications — a single costed plan, risk assessment, permissions schedule and public communications plan.

3.2 The Working Group may not commit the Council to expenditure, enter contracts, or make public announcements that bind the Council, except where Full Council has already delegated that authority or has approved a specific recommendation.

4. Out of scope

Unless Full Council directs otherwise, the following remain outside this Group:

- a) Design, construction and capital delivery of the Towneley Garden Event Space itself (which sits with the existing Event Space Working Group).
- b) The commercial programme of individual shops, pubs and restaurants, except where coordination with Love Longridge is required.
- c) Civic Hall hirings that are not part of the Council's own festive programme.
- d) Matters of general town-centre policy that are not specific to Christmas 2026.

5. Membership

5.1 Composition. The Working Group shall comprise:

- a) Councillor members appointed (number to be determined on appointment; a working number of three to five is recommended).
- b) The Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer, who shall provide administration and financial advice and shall not vote.
- c) Up to three co-opted, non-voting members who can contribute practical knowledge — for example a Love Longridge representative, a market organiser, and a representative of Longridge Band, a choir, a church or a school.

5.2 Chair and Vice-Chair. A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed from among the Councillor members at the first meeting, and reported to Full Council.

5.3 Substitutes. A Councillor member unable to attend may send another Member of the Council, with prior notice to the Clerk.

5.4 Interests. Members shall declare any pecuniary or other interest in traders, contractors or performers under discussion, in line with the Council's Code of Conduct.

6. Roles

- a) All members are expected to attend, prepare, contribute constructively and act in the interests of the town as a whole.
- b) The Chair shall convene and lead meetings, keep the Group within these Terms of Reference, and present reports to Full Council.
- c) The Vice-Chair shall deputise for the Chair.
- d) The Town Clerk shall issue agendas (at least three clear days before each meeting), keep notes, hold the action log and budget monitor, and implement decisions that fall within existing delegated authority and Financial Regulations.
- e) Lead members may be appointed for trees, lighting, entertainment, Event Space use, Love Longridge liaison, and communications.

7. Decision-making and reporting

7.1 The Working Group shall seek consensus. Where a vote is needed, only Councillor members may vote. The Chair shall have a casting vote.

7.2 The following must be recommended to Full Council for decision:

- a) These Terms of Reference and any later amendment.
- b) The overall Christmas 2026 programme and principal dates.
- c) Any new or increased budget provision.
- d) Award of contracts above the Clerk's delegated limit.
- e) Any proposal that would restrict ordinary public use of Towneley Gardens or require a road closure.

7.3 The Chair shall provide a short-written progress report to each ordinary meeting of Full Council from appointment until the Group is discharged.

7.4 After Christmas 2026 the Group shall submit a short review (what worked, costs, partner feedback, recommendations for 2027) and shall then stand down unless Full Council extends its life.

8. Meetings

- a) Frequency. Monthly from establishment until October 2026, then as often as the programme requires through November and December. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair.
- b) Quorum. One half of the appointed Councillor members, subject to a minimum of three.
- c) Venue. Council Offices, Station Buildings, or such other place (including the Event Space for a site meeting) as the Chair shall notify.
- d) Notes. The Clerk shall circulate draft notes with the next agenda. Notes are a working record, not formal minutes of the Council.
- e) Openness. Meetings of the Working Group are not meetings of the Full Council. The Chair may invite named partners. The Group shall not exclude the public from any session at which a decision reserved to Full Council is merely being prepared, but it may hold a closed discussion on contractor prices or personal information.

9. Resources and budget

- 9.1 The Group shall work to the Christmas / festive events budget approved by Full Council, together with any earmarked reserve or grant specifically allocated for this purpose.
- 9.2 All spending shall comply with the Council's Financial Regulations and procurement rules. No member other than the Clerk (within delegated authority) may place an order.
- 9.3 A simple budget monitor — committed, spent, forecast — shall be a standing item from the second meeting onwards.

10. Working with others

- 10.1 Love Longridge. The Group shall treat Love Longridge as the Council's principal business partner for Longridge Does Christmas. Dates, lighting switch-on, late-night shopping, market traders and shared publicity should be agreed early and recorded in writing (an exchange of emails is sufficient).
- 10.2 Event Space Working Group. Use of Towneley Gardens for Christmas shall be agreed with the Event Space Working Group / Town Clerk so that festive plans do not cut across remaining works, maintenance or grant conditions.
- 10.3 Other partners. The Group may liaise with Longridge Band, local choirs, churches, schools, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council (highways / lighting columns), the Civic Hall, and emergency services as required.

11. Safety, safeguarding and inclusion

- a) No Council-led element of Christmas 2026 shall be publicised until a written risk assessment has been prepared and the Council's insurer has been notified of any material change from previous years (including first use of the Event Space).
- b) Father Christmas, grotto helpers and any activity involving children shall follow the Council's safeguarding policy. Appropriate DBS checks and a chaperone arrangement shall be confirmed before the event.
- c) Plans shall consider accessibility of trees, grotto, nativity and market pitches, including step-free routes into Towneley Gardens.
- d) The Group shall plan for adverse weather, particularly if the Event Space is used for traders or performance.

12. Indicative timetable

When	Focus
First meeting 02-10-2026	Establish Group; agree Terms of Reference; map Love Longridge dates; first view of trees, lighting, band, choir, Father Christmas, nativity, traders and Event Space use.
Autumn 2026 (by end Oct)	Confirm programme and dates with Full Council; place orders for trees and lighting; issue invitations to band, choirs and Father Christmas; agree market layout with Love Longridge.
November 2026	Installation of trees and festoon lighting; licences and risk assessments complete; joint publicity with Love Longridge; lights switch-on and Longridge Does Christmas.
December 2026	Ongoing displays; any Event Space activity; Christmas Eve carols at the tree; monitoring and issue log.
January 2027	Removal of trees and lighting; budget outturn; review report to Full Council; Group discharged unless extended.

13. Review

These Terms of Reference may be amended only by resolution of Full Council. The Working Group may recommend changes at any time. They shall be reviewed as part of the January 2027 report.