



LONGWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared by the

LONGWOOD ACTION GROUP

LONGWOOD

Shire of Strathbogie

June 2018

The Longwood Community Plan

Greetings from the Longwood Community Planning Reference Group or as you better know it, the Longwood Action Group.

Our new 'grown-up name' has come about as a result of changes to the way that our Shire, the Shire of Strathbogie, is now interacting with its communities when it comes to community planning. But don't worry, for all intents and purposes we will remain the 'Action Group'.

According to the Shire of Strathbogie, community planning is 'about enabling communities to identify, find solutions and implement projects that address social, environmental, health and wellbeing, infrastructure, cultural and economic goals, issues and opportunities'.

According to 'us', those of us who proudly call Longwood home (whether that's full-time or part-time) it means thinking and talking about what we want Longwood to look and feel like into the future, writing it down and submitting it to Council for endorsement. A vision and plan that in turn can be picked up by the Shire and incorporated into their 'plans'.

But why you may ask do we want to do this?

With a Community Plan in place we can access funding through the Shire's Community Planning program to make some of the things we would like to see happen in Longwood actually happen.

We can also support other groups in our community in their quest to get funding from the Shire under things like the Community Grants Program or in their applications to other funding bodies like the State Government.

Importantly we can be a 'voice' that can talk directly to Council about things that matter to our community, to raise our concerns with them and to work together to get things done.

Our Community Plan is also an opportunity for us – anyone, any property in, around or near the town itself that identifies as being part of the 'Longwood Community' to have a vision for Longwood that we can all share and be proud of and work towards.

After all....not everyone is lucky enough to live in 'God's Own Country' - our very own 'Dirty Old Town.....Dirty Old Town.....Dirty Old Longwood Town'.

Steve Tobin

President
Longwood Action Group

One more thing - If you would like to know more about the Longwood Action Group, how it works or how you can get involved.....it doesn't mean you have to come to meetings unless you want to, maybe you are more a 'working-bee' type of person or just interested in a particular project.....feel free to contact me via longwoodlookout@gmail.com

You've told us why you like living in Longwood.....

It's very much about the sense of community and the people; the fact that it's friendly, peaceful, quiet and safe.

It's the close proximity to Melbourne but the open spaces, fresh air, stars, birds and trees we always want to come home to. And it's the events that we have and the fun that we have at them.

Add in the things that we value – our Community Centre, school, pub, shop and our much loved Fire Brigade and it is easy to see that there are plenty of reasons to like living in Longwood.

Did we mention how important the people are to us?



You also told us what would 'improve' Longwood.....

More things need to happen. The overwhelming priority is for the return of RV friendly 'camping' to the Recreation Reserve.

You also want more events and activities. More arts and cultural things. Walking tracks, exercise options and a solution for the BMX track.

Big picture (think Council responsibilities) things such as the quality of roads, storm water drainage, trees and lack of transport are high on the list.

Add also town beautification more generally. And for the dreamers – a supermarket, cinema, swimming pool and a train station with trains that stop!

The Plan, Plans and More Plans.....

The Shire has a top level document called the 'Strathbogie Shire 2017-2021 Council Plan' that sets out their vision to 'build flourishing communities'.

It sets out six goals:

- To enhance community health and well being
- To sustainably manage our natural and built environment
- To provide quality infrastructure
- To support and drive economic development
- To be a high performing Shire
- To advocate on behalf of the community.

We like the idea of being a 'flourishing' community. A community that is thriving, successful, healthy and doing well according to how we define it, shape it and collectively make it happen as residents working together with the Shire.

If we are able to 'align' our thinking to the goals of the Shire, then life will be much easier when we seek funding, support good ideas from groups in our community and put forward our case or point of view on whatever.

So the challenge for us is how we take what we want to see for Longwood and match it up to the broader priorities of the Shire, so we have re-worded the Shire's goals a little and come up with:

- Enhance the health and well-being of the Longwood Community
- Sustainably care for our natural and built environment
- Have and maintain quality infrastructure
- Support economic development
- Advocate on behalf of the Longwood community
- Function as an effective Action Group

The ideas under them are deliberately broad so that we can capture any opportunities that come along during the 'life' of the Plan (that's 2017-2021 by the way).

Then once a year, we will draw -up an Action Plan of a few concrete, achievable things that collectively we can make happen and get on with doing them.

Our Plan for Longwood.....

Enhance the health and well-being of the Longwood Community

- * Support community groups and activities that get us moving and shaking no matter if fast or slow, for old or young, formal or informal – things like the footy netball club, indoor bowls, playgroup and walkers – and encourage people to get involved.
- * Encourage involvement in our community groups - it might be the Longwood East Landcare Group, CFA, Red Cross, Senior Citizens, Greyhound Club or even the Action Group - whatever is your thing.
- * Keep our community safe – continue to value our CFA and its magnificent volunteers and all that they do for our community – and encourage everyone to do their bit.
- * Recognise that our community businesses do more than ‘sell’ or ‘do’ things – they act as places to get together, exchange news, support each other and help a friend out – and support them.
- * Ditto for the community assets that we have - the Community Centre, School, Pub Paddock, and Open Spaces - and value the important role that they play in our community.
- * Provide opportunities and occasions for the community to come together - such as the Annual Picnic, CFA Christmas Party, Red Cross Trivia Night, ANZAC Day, Hairy Lassos @ The Pub, Working Bees, Longwood Golf Day, and the School Concert– and come up with other new ideas to get people together.
- * Keep the community connected and informed - through the Longwood Community Facebook Page, the Longwood Lookout in the Gazette, the Action Group Notice Board for example - so that everyone has a chance to know what’s going on.

Sustainably care for our natural and built environment

- * Motivate the community to take pride in how our town looks - keep the Working Bees going, report issues of concern to the Shire, encourage our neighbours to do their bit - and continue the good work.
- * Improve things in our little patch - lighting, walking tracks, signage, plantings, town mowing and fire protection are just some things - to ensure that the town continues to be welcoming and safe for all.
- * Look for ways to ‘green’ our world - think water tanks, solar, more trees, recycling, reusing, swapping and sharing - and care and value our natural environment.

- * Value those few remaining things that have links to our past as we treasure our history and heritage - like the Boer War Memorial, the old Longwood Fire Shed and the Cemetery for example - and care for, improve and maintain them.

Have and maintain quality infrastructure

- * Support the maintenance and improvement of our community assets - including the Community Centre, Recreation Reserve, School and the Pub Paddock - and encourage their use, including for new things.
- * Update and improve those things that we already have - BMX Track, Kids Playground, Community Centre Walking Track, Pub Paddock Barb-q are just some - and work towards having more and better facilities.
- * Lobby for a higher standard of asset maintenance - like better roads and improved storm water, the Telstra Exchange and the railway land - we might be a small town but we deserve better.
- * Dream big - maybe an amphitheatre, swimming pool or a train station - you don't know what just might be possible.

Support economic development

- * Let RV Camping happen at the Recreation Reserve - caravans, motor homes and campers are all welcome - by working with the Shire to remove the current blockages.
- * Encourage the staging of events in Longwood that will bring visitors to town - think events like Carriage Driving, The Beer, Wine and Cider Festival, the Waterloo Cup for Greyhounds that are already on the calendar - and look for new opportunities.
- * Support all of our local businesses in town to be profitable and thriving - but particular the Pub, the Shop and the Rockery - in the best way the community can.
- * Search out ways to encourage new business to town - let's only be limited by imagination - and never say never to exploring any idea.

Advocate on behalf of the Longwood community

- * Work out the big picture things that matter most to the community - thinking lack of transport, gutters and curbs and condition of roads as a starting point and others like sewerage and natural gas - and lobby to whoever we have to.
- * Ensure that our 'voice' is heard by the Shire of Strathbogie on things that matter to Longwood - as best as our limited resources will allow - and celebrate any successes.

- * As an Action Group provide support to other groups when they apply for funding or other things - to the Shire, State or Federal Government or other sources - that's lined up with the Community Plan.
- * Talk up the town to everyone - new residents, those with business ideas, campers, visitors and anyone who will listen - and try to capture any opportunities that arise.

Function as an effective Action Group

- * Sign up to the Shire of Strathbogie Charter of the Longwood Community Planning Reference Group - hold the meetings that we have to, take the Minutes we must, make sure they are distributed as they need to be - and make sure we do all the things that the guidelines require.
- * Be squeaky clean in dealing with our finances - no matter where the funds come from - so that everything is clear and transparent for all to see.
- * Think about how we can get others involved in the Action Group - in particular younger people, new residents and those that are not here all the time - making it clear that you don't have to attend meetings to get involved.
- * Leave Longwood in a better place - at the end of the life of this Plan - than it was before we started.

In Case You Were Wondering.....What Have We Already Done?

The Longwood Action Group has been around for about eleven years and over that time it has achieved a lot of things. Actually it's the Longwood Community that has done a lot - after all we are all in this together.

Here's just a snapshot of what's happened recently:

- * Worked with the Shire to get rid of the derelict house in Hill Street
- * Held regular Working Bees to keep things looking good
- * Got some action on the future of 'The Flats'
- * Fenced the Kids Playground at the Community Centre
- * Upgraded the Pub Paddock barb-q area
- * Revived the Boer War Memorial area
- * Re-introduced the Longwood ANZAC Day Service
- * Put in new 'Welcome to Longwood - Prime Lamb Country' signs
- * Built a new scoreboard for footy/stewards box for the greyhounds
- * Introduced a new tradition - the Annual Longwood Picnic in the Pub Paddock.

For Anyone Who Would Like A Little More Detail.....

The Longwood Action Group set out on this Community Planning 'journey' late in 2017.

We have talked to people, gathered information and tried our best to pull it all together in this document. Then we shared it around all over again it get more thoughts and ideas to come up with the 'official' 2017-2021 Longwood Community Plan.

So if you are one of those people who like the nitty gritty, here's a quick summary of what we did:

- Talked with the Shire about the changes they were making to Action Groups and why and what we needed to do to respond.
- Made some decisions about what that meant for us and how we would go about it.
- Decided to keep it simple. Two questions, three things:
 - ✓ You like about living in Longwood?
 - ✓ What we can do to 'improve' Longwood?
 - ✓ And a spot for any other comments.
- Started talking and chatting to people at the Annual Longwood Picnic - think butchers paper and felt pens and people writing up ideas.
- Put out the Action Group Survey through the Shop and to any email address we had.
- Asked for ideas via the Longwood Community Noticeboard Facebook Page.
- Put it in the Longwood Lookout, talked about it at Working Bees, over at the Pub, talked at Action Group meetings or just whenever people got together.
- In the meantime, read up on the Shire's documents, went to a Community Grants meeting, talked to people in the Shire to find out 'stuff'.
- Put together a draft Plan, talked again about it at an Action Group meeting and decided we would give it a 'shot' and throw it out to anyone or everyone for comment and ideas - think the same sort of way that we did with the survey.
- Considered the feedback, tweaked things where we needed to.
- Declared 'job well done' and gave it to the Shire for it to become a 'Council endorsed and supported Community Plan' for Longwood.

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May 2018

To See What Everyone Had To Say, Keep On Reading.....

What are the top three things that you like about living in Longwood?

Community Picnic – November 2017:

- We are regular visitors. Love the amenities and friendly people.
- As a regular visitor I am always enjoying talking with the locals. Take care and god bless.
- The people, the people, the people.
- The people, the atmosphere, the place.
- Where else do you find such a wonderful diverse community?
- Community events.
- Love the people and the peace and quiet.
- Cause I love the Redda's, Weatherills, the 'Dicks', Robins and Cate Moore.
- What about the Tobin's? And others that are awesome.
- Welcoming, friendly, fun & great.
- Picnics and the pisswacker cicadas in summer.
- The wonderful support and friendships within the community.
- We love Longwood and the best General Store and Post Office.

Surveys – Feb / March 2018:

- The quietness, safe place to live
- The environment – well maintained open space
- Proximity to transport, larger centres.

- The community (friendliness)
- The peacefulness
- The school.

- I like living in Longwood because it is a friendly community*
- I like helping with events.
- I like friends and family.

- There is singing and dancing at the pub*
- There is a fishing lake.

- Trees*
- School
- Playing.

- Community spirit
- Beautiful open spaces, fresh air and scenery
- Ability to slow the pace down and discover what's truly important in life.

- Friendly community
- Peace and quietness, fresh air and sun
- Beautiful birds (feathered)

- Dedicated fire brigade
 - Helpful shop keeper.
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- It's so peaceful
 - Love the trains they remind me that we are not alone
 - I've only just moved to the area though: From those I've been introduced seem very caring and community minded.
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- The peace and quiet
 - The Community Centre and surrounding grounds
 - The people.
-
- Community support and friendliness.
-
- Community spirit
 - Views, gardens, overall feel
 - Lovely neighbours.
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- Friendliness, comradre and the way residents care about each other
 - Town pride – residents putting in to have the town looking nice and cared for (town mowing etc)
 - The service/s provided by local businesses! The shop (café)/Post Office & Hotel.
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- It's quiet (mostly)
 - Familiar
 - The birds.
-
- The people
 - The location
 - The sense of community – community support.
-
- The people
 - Sense of safety
 - General environment – trees, stars, open spaces, sunsets etc.
-
- Supportive community
 - Peace full
 - Great to have community centre, pub, shop, school and garage.
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- The people, always willing to get in and help make this the town what it is, be it fire brigade, Action group, Community Centre and the list goes on. Friendly people. Our greatest achievement was the construction of the Community Centre some 35 years ago when the whole town became involved in its construction. A huge effort for our little township.
 - Our position on the map where we are only a short drive to Euroa, Shepparton and 1 ½ hours from Melbourne.

- No graffiti, no house invasions, no stabbing, just the nice little attractive place to live.

What could we do to help ‘improve’ Longwood?

Community Picnic – November 2017:

- Low cost and free camping.
- Camping – This needs to happen! Yes to that.
- RV Friendly.
- More cultural activities arts and music.
- Community noticeboard.
- Playground in the Pub Paddock.
- Yes please to playground in Pub Paddock.
- Pallet Maze.
- BMX track needs to be complete circuit/loop.
- Let’s see this happen with the BMX track.
- Amphitheatre.
- Art Gallery.
- Hedge maze.
- Music and dance.
- Botanical garden in the park – great idea.
- ‘Activate’ – use the Community Centre more.

Surveys Feb | March 2018:

- Longwood needs a landmark. The large pine tree at pub corner could be lit up by a solar panel system – marking the main intersection for everyone – including train passengers.
- Have the ‘flats’ issue settled – it seems unbelievable that there is a perfectly decent place unused.
- Hurley Street – the attempt to improve edges has made them worse – esp. on the west edge
- Encourage tourism by allowing free camping – not ‘using’ the facilities @ LCC. Free campers are self-contained.
- A skate park
- A pool
- Revamp the bike track
- More variety at the store
- Better maintenance by the Shire of the Community Centre play equipment.
- Make it more fun by expanding the BMX track*
- Nothing else.
- In the Rokare they could add a little cave with glow in the dark gems*
- More people*
- A shopping centre*

- A swimming pool.
- A supermarket*
- A pool
- A playground in the pub paddock
- A skate park
- A cinema.
- Put in a foot path so I can ride my bike to school*
- Build a supermarket so my family and friends don't have to go to Euroa to get food.
- A pool so me and my family not have to go so far to cool off.
- Yearly barn dance
- Singing group – happy to lead
- Organising bodies deciding activities in Longwood to work together.
- I would like to see a group of women and men who are prepared to share skills, may-be a wood club for both men and women. Women seem to be excluded from sheds for men.
- To link us ie Bus PS: Longwood would be really on the Map if we could build an historical little station (stopping).
- Train stop –station or bus between Seymour and Euroa.
- Stronger development and planning laws. Let's not create a suburban environment
- Improve the conditions of the roads
- Provide a rail bus service to Avenel/Euroa.
- We need to get more people to use the parks.
- Mini golf area would attract many. Plus volleyball/batman courts.
- Encourage some property owners to tidy their nature strips/road sides.
- Lighting in the pub paddock - eg solar may be a shire issue?
- Utilize our Community Centre area for camping – I understand negotiations are underway with the S Shire.
- Get the shop to open on weekends
- More community events
- Walking path on Hill Street to Pub corner.
- Open the shop more
- 'Green' the Community Centre
- Improve the environs of the Cemetery.
- Improve the entrance and signage to the town eg Longwood sign and add Prime Lamb
- Clean up west side of Down Street. Clean up along railway line in Maxfield Street

- Improve drainage around the town.
- Community garden next to bike track
- Introduce community meals
- Transport service to Euroa.
- Continue the above (town pride) – especially town moving. Continue to pick branches and rubbish (as is done – working bees)
- Plant some nice flowering red gums thoughtfully strategically placed/planted around the streets (especially through roads)
- Railway station – better trains! More punctual!
- V Line Bus stop
- Old flats in Pub paddock – are there any plans for them
- Foot path over rail crossing.
- Open the shop more.
- Get rid of Down St flats or get them up and running, more pressure on Council. Some pressure to upgrade the old Hurley St shop, it's an eyesore.
- More trees planted to replace ones that have died and the old Silky Oaks opp Bim Mitchell cut back or removed and something like flowering red gums to replace them. More trees planted in Cox's paddock.
- Railway yards tidied so it can be slashed without hitting rocks or steel scraps and concrete to reduce the need for burning. Too dangerous for grass slashing in its present conditions.

Facebook

- Signs opposite pub need fixing. Pain in the bum to get corflute signs in you have to keep cutting them.
- To get things started- petition Shire to remove the huge strip of loose gravel on the corner of Maxfield and Down St.
- Get lines on roads all repainted.
- Lines definitely, when driving home at night in winter if foggy can't see a thing without the white lines to follow.
- Storm water drainage throughout the town!
- Totally agree with this one. When there's a lot of rain we get a lot of run off from community centre. Floods Mill paddock and is gradually washing away the old mill road.
- Drainage along dog track where Community Center waste runs can't mow there and gets very smelly, also water sits further up run off from oval, been talking about putting proper

drain there for years.

- And my middle shed – HH.
- Swimming pool at the community centre.
- The ugly mound of dirt that I have looked at for many years in the pub paddock...needs removing or improving on.
- Grass in gutter on main crossroad in front of Longwood sign opposite pub, rest is well groomed and looks great except for gutter.
- Plant township roadsides in a cohesive and future thinking manner – think Bright, flame tree avenue etc.

Other Comments

- The hypocrisy of a council allowing camping for the pony club and not for the public speaks volumes to me. Council and some bodies and people in the community do not want Longwood to be anything but a backward sleepy town. Fine, so be it.
- Would like to access to Longwood community centre squash court. Would like access to gym. Apparently there is only one key available to access community centre. I would like a list of contactable people who can give access to the squash court and gym. Why aren't these facilities available to Longwood residents?
- It's great to see that community ideas matter! Kind regards.
- Love Longwood – God's own country.
- Thanks to the Action Group for wonderful work.
- I love Longwood.
- I feel the golf course park is one of Longwood's most beautiful assets. I would like more people to utilize it but there is little there to use. I suggest an exercise trail, ending or beginning with exercise equipment centres. This equipment would have to be well designed to consider Longwoods demographic (consider all ages teenagers too). There have been new advances in stationary exercise equipment to suit the aged and teenagers.
- L.A.G. – congratulations you do a great job. Thank you. I am very happy to participate in working bees when I can.
- Bring back camping to the community centre. It could easily pay for itself.
- Use the Pub Paddock for more social events.

- Well done to the action group – you have made so many improvements to the town.
- Would like to see the Shire support the town more by improving road surfaces through town (pristine) to enhance (support) the public's work in keeping the town nice. Hume Freeway signs at "Pub" corner.
- Allow camping at the Community Centre.
- Resolve issues with the 'flats' and make them useful again.
- Just like the town the way it is.
- We really like Longwood the way it is. That is why we retired here eighteen years ago. We appreciate what the community do and we are always interested in new developments. Just keep on keeping on as you are and we will remain happy here until we are no more.

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Total No. of Surveys: 21

Other responses - Facebook and Email – 10 responses.

Community Picnic 'Butchers Paper' – Estimated around 20 contributors.

*Denotes from Longwood Primary School students.