

Longnor

Longnor is a village in Staffordshire, 35 miles of SE Manchester. It has a population of 350 people and is in the Peak District National Park.

It has numerous problems such as shortages of work, affordable housing and poor access to services.

With the village of Longnor lying on the edge of the Peak District National Park, it attracts many tourists and holiday makers. These tourists and visitors travel long distances to visit the national park and need to stay somewhere when they arrive. There are no hotels in the village and very few bed and breakfasts, so one of the main sources of accommodation are holiday cottage rentals. Families and homeowners have second homes in Longnor, often which they rent out and visit. With many of the houses in Longnor being brought as holiday homes, second homes or retirement homes, there is a distinct lack of housing for the local people.

As Longnor is within a commuting distance for Manchester and the houses are much cheaper than Manchester, villages like Longnor are attracting more and more YUPPIES and commuters. Also villages like Longnor are attractive to retirees as they are quiet and peaceful, they have places to walk and relax with lots of open spaces and greenery and clean air. They are far enough out of busy cities and younger generations but are within distance of local towns. With so many commuters and retirees buying many of the houses in Longnor, they are raising the prices of all houses in Longnor. Also the houses have doubled in price during the property boom of the 80s and keep on rising. There is a lack of affordable housing and most locals and young families can't afford the prices of the houses, with many unable to afford to live in Longnor, they have to find homes elsewhere, often out of the village. Also there is a shortage of social housing available to buy or rent as council houses have been sold off. As there is such a shortage of affordable housing and very little other properties available, this is causing other major problems in the village. The numbers of pupils attending the village primary school are declining and have gone down from 80 to 36 in the last 25 years. Also the number of young people and families moving into the area has declined, yet the number moving out has increased. Both of these problems are due to the lack of housing and so families have to leave the area to find new homes.

Another major problem in the village of Longnor is the shortages of jobs and work. The biggest decline in jobs and work is in agricultural employment. Dairy farming was the main source of income and jobs for many of the villagers, however due to the large decline in agriculture and due to the increased mechanisation, this has declined. Before mechanisation over a dozen men were needed to milk 270 cows, now due to the new machines and technology, it only takes 2 and is far quicker. Also the recent milk quotas have hit the dairy farmers as there are now restrictions on the volume of milk produced. These milk quotas have meant a large drop in the farmer's income and so many have had to sell off land and the farm buildings, with many farm buildings being turned into holiday homes.

There are few other jobs available as many of the shops have closed down, there were 12 shops in the village but now only a couple remain. This is due to the competition from the large hypermarkets being built in the surrounding area. These large hypermarkets sell everything from clothes and food to furniture, whereas the local shops only sell basic items and so can't compete against them. Working in the restaurant is one of the only jobs available in Longnor, but it is poorly paid, unsociable hours and the work is seasonal. So once again due to the lack of work

available in the village, people have to commute to other towns and villages to find some.

The final problem that Longnor has is the poor access to services and transport. There has been a large decline in bus services and buses in or out

Of Longnor are few and far between. There is 1 bus per week that goes to North Staffordshire and Leek and 1 bus to Buxton everyday. With there being so few buses it makes it very hard to go to hospital and medical appointments. The local hospital only books appointments for Tuesday and Friday, however the bus travelling there, is only on a Wednesday. This means the locals have to miss their appointments or travel even further to have an appointment on the days of the buses. Also with the decline in numbers at the school, they have had to close the secondary school in Longnor and so children have to go to Leek. However this takes 10 miles by bus and makes it a very long journey and long day for the children. Young people can't rely on the buses and most need to commute onto town for work or school each day and so most won't and need a car, however due to the lack of work they can't afford one.

All of these issues are causing major problems in Longnor, with many of the locals having to move out of the area. All of these problems are caused by each other and it's like a vicious circle. The people who live in Longnor don't have work and so try and find work in other towns and villages, however they can't because of the lack of public transport and so can't afford to buy houses, and so leave and so on etc etc. once one of these issues has been tackled, the others should improve. However if nothing is done to improve the situation, the future could be bleak for Longnor.