

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held at Park View School, Lombard Drive, Chester-le-Street on Tuesday 16th May 2023.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Patrick Driscoll.

Councillors: Sue Brown, Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester, Jackie Gregory, Maureen May, Dennis Hall, Craig Martin, Chris Veitch, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The outgoing Chairman, Councillor Dennis Hall, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor Craig Martin was not in attendance at the start of the meeting.

Item 1. 23/45 Election of Chairman

Nominations were requested for the office of Chairman for the year 2023/2024. Cllr Patrick Driscoll was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. Cllr Driscoll was duly elected, therefore, as Chairman.

(Resolved - that Cllr Patrick Driscoll is duly elected as Chairman for 2023/2024).

The Chairman thanked Councillors for placing their confidence in him and thanked Cllr Hall for his work as Chairman over the past two years which had seen great success in increasing community engagement.

Item 2. 23/46 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Craig Martin for his expected late arrival to the meeting.

Item 3. 23/47 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Sue Brown, Margaret Caygill and Jackie Gregory declared interests as members of the Cestrian Flower Club (see Minute 23/56, below).

Item 4. 23/48 Election of Vice-Chairman

Nominations were requested for the office of Vice-Chairman for the year 2023/2024. Cllr Craig Martin was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. Cllr Martin was duly elected, therefore, as Vice-Chairman.

(Resolved - that Cllr Craig Martin is duly elected as Vice-Chairman for 2023/2024).

Item 5. 23/49 Election of Portfolio Holders

The following Councillors were elected as Portfolio Holders - a) Communications and Media Development - Cllr Chris Veitch, b) Crime and Community Safety - Cllr Jackie Gregory, c) Finance - Cllr John Waugh, d) Highways and Community Assets - Cllr Patrick Driscoll, e) Horticulture - Cllr Maureen May, f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations - Cllr Elsie Forrester, g) Planning - Cllr John Waugh, h) Play Areas - Cllr Margaret Caygill, i) Policy and Governance - Cllr Dennis Hall, j) Project Development, Business and External Relations - Cllr Craig Martin.

In the absence of the County Councillor, Councillors agreed to take Item 7 next.

Item 7. 23/50 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th April 2023, draft copies of which had been previously circulated, were adopted as a true and accurate record of the Meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

Item 8. 23/51 Chairman's Report

The Chairman invited Cllr Hall, the outgoing Chairman, to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

Friday 28 April: Park View Upper School: Arts Department:

I attended the judging of the Arts Awards with fellow councillors Patrick Driscoll and Margaret Caygill to choose the award winners, together with Mrs Wright, Head of Art at the School.

Wednesday 3 May: Park View Lower School Assembly:

I attended the Assembly to make a speech and present Coronation Commemorative Badges to Year 7 students, together with Mrs Hall, Head of the School.

Thursday 4 May: Park View Lower School Assembly:

I attended the Assembly to make a speech and present Coronation Commemorative Badges to Year 8 students, together with Mrs Hall, Head of the School.

Friday 5 May: Park View Lower School:

Along with fellow councillors, I attended the School to present winners of the Community Arts Awards with prizes.

In addition, Cllr Hall advised that the Head of Lower School had been effusive regarding the success of various partnership projects between the Council and the School. Regarding the remaining badges, Councillors agreed that partners and grandchildren of Councillors should have a badge each to help promote the work of the Council. The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall for the many ways in which he had brought progress to the Council and the Chairman stated that it would be his aim to maintain the high standards that had been set by Cllr Hall. Councillors and the Clerk thanked Cllr Hall for all his work.

Regarding outstanding matters -

Re Minute 23/39 section e). Re the Wheatsheaf area project, Cllr Gregory advised that the land in question appeared not to be owned by Sustrans. This matter is to be discussed at the next Horticulture sub-group meeting.

Item 9. 23/52 Portfolio Holders' Reports

The Chairman invited Cllr Veitch to give his report which included the following matters -

a) Communications and Media Development

Cllr Veitch outlined the many recent posts to the Council's Facebook and Twitter pages which were receiving an increasing number of views. All Councillors were welcome to submit items to be posted.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch for his report and invited Cllr Gregory to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

b) Crime and Community Safety

Police

1 x vehicle crime - Picktree Lodge

2 x burglaries - Drum Industrial Estate.

Community Safety

Operation Sceptre, a national campaign.

Co Durham and Darlington area has one of the lowest rates of knife crime in the country. However, from Monday, 15th May, knife bins are once again being fitted inside police stations across the county as part of a week long campaign.

Although the amnesty is strictly anonymous, it is not a means to dispose of weapons used in crime.

Stalking

National Stalking Awareness Week (24th April).

This national campaign aimed to raise awareness of the issue of stalking and the importance of personal safety.

The four key signs of stalking are (when behaviour becomes)

- a) Fixated
- b) Obsessive
- c) Unwanted
- d) Repeated

Stalking is a crime and it can have a devastating impact on those who experience it.

Please report stalking to police using telephone number 101 or

telephone the National Stalking helpline on 0808 802 0300

For non-emergencies to police, please use telephone number 101

For any emergency to police, please use telephone number 999.

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

Smoke Alarms

Remember to test your smoke alarms.

Domestic smoke alarms available. Contact the Community Safety team on 0345 2234 221

For all emergencies to the Fire Brigade, use telephone number 999.

Items re reporting motorbikes on the Sustrans route and knife bins are to be put on the Council's Facebook and Twitter pages.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report and invited Cllr Waugh to give his Finance report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

c) Finance

I have reviewed the financial information for the previous 2 months supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm everything appears to be in order.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Finance report. Cllr Driscoll then gave his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

d) Highways and Community Assets

The monthly bus shelters inspection was undertaken on Saturday the 6th of May 2023. All appeared satisfactory, with very little littering, but a consistent need for seat cleaning. The additional service required was to replace the current Queen's Platinum Jubilee art posters in the bus shelter glass cabinets, with the new coronation of King Charles winning and commended posters. These became available after the prize winners presentation at Park View School lower site , the previous day. They are also on display in the "Lambton Worm" and "Wheatsheaf" public houses, plus Parish Council notice boards.

Councillors thanked Cllr Driscoll for his report and the Chairman invited Cllr May to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

e) Horticulture

Summary

There is nothing to report this month.

We are awaiting for new summer bedding to be planted in May/June

In addition, a) Cllr May reported on a site meeting with the Gardener to view and measure the flower beds, b) Cllr May will chase up with the Gardener suggestions for the planting of the two former shrub beds on North Road.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report and invited Cllr Forrester to give her report which included the matters below -

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Cllr Forrester reported on a Mental Health & Emotional Support meeting and advised that many regular meetings of the AAP and CDALC were being reduced in frequency.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her report and invited Cllr Waugh to give his Planning report which included the matters below -

g) Planning

Cllr Waugh advised that he continued to report to Councillors on a weekly basis on planning applications made within the Parish.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Planning report and invited Cllr Caygill to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

h) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

All equipment appears to be in good order.

Both the bulb planting issue and the planned new seat are being dealt with.

It has been necessary to remind residents that dogs are not allowed within the fenced area.

LOW FLATTS

The remaining equipment appears to be in good order.

The refurbishment is underway but seems to be taking a long time. I have let James Young know this.

There have been two very concerning incidents in the area.

A resident reported two youths with a dog killing wildlife with a high powered rifle. this was reported to the Police.

Also, a person using a metal detector has been causing considerable damage to the ground both within the fenced area and on the football field. Coun. Veitch and I inspected these holes and he kindly filled most of them in.

Coun. Martin has arranged a meeting with the Neighbourhood Warden re these matters.

Councillors thanked Cllr Veitch for filling in the holes at Low Flatts.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report and invited Cllr Hall to give his report.

i) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall advised that here were no matters to report.

At the request of Cllr Gregory, Cllr Hall is to review the wording of the Council's Donations Policy regarding the timing of consideration of requests.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall.

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

In the absence of Cllr Martin, no report was made at this point.

Item 10. 23/53 Correspondence

Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following was within North Lodge Parish:-

Application for proposed rear single storey dining room extension, at 14 Wanstead Crescent.

Item 11. 23/54 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Litter and Dog Waste

Cllr Veitch advised that he had submitted an application to the County Council for litter-picking equipment which was now awaited. Re dog waste, Councillors expected to discuss this with the Neighbourhood Wardens at a forthcoming meeting.

b) W heatsheaf Area Project

This matter had been discussed earlier in the meeting (see Minute 23/51, above).

c) The Local Government Boundary Commission Draft Recommendations

The Commission had accepted the Council's proposal that the Parish boundary should remain unchanged although there would be a slight change to the boundary of North Lodge Ward. The Clerk is to write to the Commission welcoming the draft and re-iterating the Council's arguments towards the Commission's final decision.

d) The Annual Newsletter

Cllr May outlined progress to date and Councillors discussed further ideas for consideration for inclusion.

At this point, Cllr Martin arrived at the meeting.

Item 6. 23/55 Report of the County Councillor

The Chairman invited the County Councillor to give his report which included the following matters

a) Cllr Martin accepted his nomination for Vice-Chairman (see Minute 23/48, above) and thanked Councillors for their support.

b) Cllr Martin advised that he was willing to retain the Project Development, Business and External Relations Portfolio (see Minute 23/49, above) and had no matters to report.

c) Councillors discussed the recent email from Cllr Martin following his discussion with the County Council's Ecology Team re S106 funding.

d) Cllr Martin confirmed that he was arranging a site meeting at Low Flatts with the Neighbourhood Wardens.

e) Cllr Martin advised that he continued to chase for improvements to the condition of some roads and footpaths in the Vigo Lane area.

f) Councillors discussed a proposal from Cllr Gregory for a change of style to the appearance of Northlands roundabout. The County Cllr will take this forward to the Clean and Green Team.

g) Councillors discussed the lack of grass cutting by the County Council making many areas of the Parish look very untidy. The County Cllr will take this forward to the Clean and Green Team.

h) Cllr Gregory advised that the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service had held events around the County re water safety but had not yet visited Chester-le-Street. The Clerk is to write to the Service to ask what plans they had for the town.

i) Councillors discussed the current demolition of the former bus depot in Picktree Lane. Cllr Waugh advised that this had opened up views of the Church. The County Cllr agreed to contact the Planning Department for advice re protecting a view.

j) Cllr Brown requested an additional waste bin for Picktree Village. The County Cllr will take this forward with the County Council.

k) Cllr Gregory considered that the waste bin near to the W heatsheaf pub was in a poor condition and unhygienic. The County Cllr will take this forward with the County Council.

l) Cllr May advised of fly-tipping at Drum Road. The County Cllr advised that he had contacted Network Rail who will clear the rubbish.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 12. 23/56 Requests for Donations

Councillors agreed to consider first the request from the Market Activity Week

b) Cllr Gregory outlined the reasons behind this request. Councillors discussed this and agreed to donate £250 to the Market Activity Week.

a) Cllr Gregory outlined the reasons behind the request from the Cestrian Flower Club.

At this point, Councillors Brown, Caygill and Gregory, members of the Club, left the room.

Councillors discussed the request and agreed to donate £100 towards the Club's rent cost, conditional on the Club first raising from other sources the other £500 it required for the rent.

Item 13. 23/57 Payment of Accounts

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Salaries | £ 570.74 | Salaries May 2023 | |
| Expenses | £ 100.00 | Expenses May 2023 | |
| Zurich Municipal | £ 811.08 | Annual Insurance Premium | |
| DSJ Property Services | £ 260.00 | Painting Goal Posts | |
| Makepeace Landscapes | £1022.40 | Horticulture | £ 170.40 |
| First Prize Winner | £ 150.00 | Community Arts Awards | |
| Second Prize Winner | £ 100.00 | Community Arts Awards | |
| Third Prize Winner | £ 50.00 | Community Arts Awards | |
| Durham County Council | £ 808.49 | Website Hosting | £ 134.75 |
| Durham Constabulary | £ 250.00 | Donation - Market Activity Week | |
| Total of Above Payments | £4122.71 | | |

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|-----------------|----------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Zoom inc | £ 15.59 | Monthly Subscription - May 2023 | £ 2.60 |
| ANS Group Ltd | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - May 2023 | £ 7.71 |
| Cash Withdrawal | £ 160.00 | Prizes for Community Arts Awards | |

Total Card and D/D Payments £ 221.84

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 14. 23/58 Other Matters for Information

There were no other matters for consideration.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.34pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th June 2023.

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Salaries | £ | Salaries June 2023 | |
| Expenses | £ 100.00 | Expenses June 2023 | |
| Ian Herberson | £ 50.00 | Internal Audit Fee | |
| Kompan Scotland Ltd | £44003.75 | Refurb of Play Area | £7333.96 |
| Makepeace Landscapes | £ | Horticulture | £ |
| P. Driscoll | £ | Chair's Quarterly Allowance | |
| HM Revenue & Customs | £ | P.A.Y.E. | |
| HM Revenue & Customs | £ | Employer's N.I.C. | |
| Total of Above Payments | £ | | |

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Zoom inc | £ 15.59 | Monthly Subscription - June 2023 | £ 2.60 |
| ANS Group Ltd | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - June 2023 | £ 7.71 |
| Morrisons | £ 9.50 | Stationery | £ 1.58 |
| Total Card and D/D Payments | £ 71.34 | | |

Balance to 31st May 2023

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance b/f | £80836.41 | Balances at Bank:- | |
| Deduct Payments - May 2023 | <u>£ 4122.71</u> | Treasurers Account | £ 1622.95 |
| | £76712.70 | Instant Account | <u>£75423.01</u> |
| Deduct Card and D/D Payments | <u>£ 221.84</u> | Total | £77045.96 |
| | £76491.86 | | |
| Add Bank Interest Received | <u>£ 44.10</u> | Deduct cheques not yet presented | <u>£ 510.00</u> |
| | | | |
| Balance c/f | £76535.96 | | £76535.96 |

Two cheques not yet presented -

1) £260.00 cheque number 1562 dated 16/05/23 for painting of goal posts payable to DSJ Property Services. 2) £250.00 cheque number 1563 dated 16/05/23 for donation to Market Activity Week payable to Durham Constabulary.