

## **NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held at Park View School, Lombard Drive, Chester-le-Street on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

PRESENT: Chairman: Cllr. Elsie Forrester.  
Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Jackie Gregory, Maureen May,  
Dennis Hall, Patrick Driscoll, John Murray,  
Colin Noble-Nesbitt, David Snaith, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 6.30pm and welcomed everyone

### **Item 1. 17/70 Apologies for Absence**

There were no Apologies for Absence.

### **Item 2. 17/71 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Margaret Caygill declared an interest as a Governor of Park View School. Cllr. Jackie Gregory declared an interest as Chairman of North Lodge Residents Association. Cllr. John Murray declared an interest as Chairman of North Lodge in Bloom.

### **Item 3. 17/72 Report of the County Councillor**

The Chairman invited County Councillor Craig Martin to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

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# **County Councillor's Report**

## **North Lodge Parish Council July 2017**

### **Cllr Craig Martin North Lodge and Chester-le-Street**

#### **BOC Site Building**

Surrounding residents continue to be deeply distressed by the effects of building work on their homes. I took their key concerns and questions to the regional manager of Avant directly and challenged them on an inability to communicate with residents. Tim Ellis apologised and provided reasons as to why the residents suffered so badly:

- No initial plan had been created on how to manage the site and how to mitigate the negative effects of the site on residents.
- Contractors started the site off that only care about the job rather than the public (Tim Ellis stated that they have acted and a contractor had been removed from the site).
- Nesting birds have meant all work has been located around residents' homes.

Tim Ellis stated that as Avant take control of the site things would get better and communication would improve. They've also spent £20,000 on putting in a relief road for haulage vehicles and moved their site HQ away from homes now that birds are no longer nesting. I've taken the complaint to a higher level in Durham County Council and continue to liaise with all those effected.

#### **Teaching Assistants**

Initially TAs wrote to cllrs requesting that the vote on their pay and conditions is put back so that more time is given to consider the proposal. This was rejected by councillors. Upon further investigation, the numbers had been massaged and looked better than what they were. If implemented today, TAs would lose £1.8 million without compensation. I cannot support any measures that result in a loss, any solution must be cost neutral. The council voted this unfair motion through, which the TAs have now rejected after a ballot of recognised union members.

#### **Chester-le-Street's Retail Occupancy Rate**

Recent performance indicators the council have produced provided evidence of the depressing state Front Street is in. The percentage of open shops dipped below the national average and categorised as a high risk at preventing the area from becoming wealthier (along with Stanley). Retail occupancy is at 88% as of March 2017. I questioned what extra provision would be provided to support both Chester-le-Street and Stanley. There will be a master plan created but with no extra funding attached to it.

**Cllr Craig Martin**  
**North Lodge and Chester-le-Street**  
[craig.martin@durham.gov.uk](mailto:craig.martin@durham.gov.uk)  
03000 268 745

In addition, County Cllr. Martin will follow up various matters raised by Councillors - the sinkhole at Merlin Drive, the possible loss of trees due to road widening for the Avant housing development at Vigo Lane, road markings on estate roads following the recent accident at the junction of Low Flatts Road and Wear Lodge, the poor quality of re-seeding at Barley Mow related to the Avant development and the future upkeep of the trees between the existing two fences at Barley Mow alongside the Avant development.

**Item 4. 17/73 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 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 5. 17/74 Chairman's Report**

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 17/58 section b). Cllr. Gregory advised that the wildflowers on North Road had not come through. Some areas had in any case been dug up by a utility company and had been re-seeded only.
- b) Re Minute 17/59 section b2). The 30mph and 40mph road surface markings on North Road still awaited re-painting by the County Council. Although this matter had previously been reported to the County Council and therefore would be on the work schedule, the Clerk will again report it.
- c) Re Minute 17/59 section b3). The damaged edge of the path at Caxton Way/Picktree Lodge still awaited repair by the County Council. Although this matter had previously been reported to the County Council and therefore would be on the work schedule, the Clerk will again report it. Cllr. Murray advised that the lighting for signs at the entrance to Picktree Lodge was still not working. Although this matter had previously been reported to the County Council and therefore would be on the work schedule, County Cllr. Martin kindly agreed to chase it up.
- d) Re Minute 17/59 section d). Re trees needing attention in Low Flatts Road, Cllrs. Caygill and May will meet on site to identify the work required. Cllr. May will also contact the County Council re overhanging trees on North Road. Re tidying of the bridle path between Low Flatts and Drum Industrial Estate, there had been no response yet from the Co-op volunteers.
- e) Re Minute 17/61. Councillors offered congratulations to Cllr. May for all her good work on the production of the Newsletter.
- f) Re Minute 17/69 section b). Re the flower bed in the grounds of Park View School, Councillors agreed that sustainable planting was now required. Cllr. Caygill will cost out a possible planting scheme to see if the previously agreed £50 funding from the Parish Council will be sufficient.

The Chairman's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

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## **NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 18.7.2017.**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.**

#### **1. AAP INFORMATION.**

Chairman for 2017/2018. Cll Tracy Smith. Vice Chairman Jake Rawlings.

New members to the AAP Board were welcomed. Some new faces and some old faces.

Business Association Relaunch took place 20.6.2017.

The Association is a very proactive organisation working in partnership with many agencies in the area.

And is always involved in many projects around the town.

And hope to continue in the future. But also hopes that more businesses will be come involved.

Brass Festival 12.7.2017 12.30pm Market Place.

Chester le Street Heritage Group. Exhibition to be held in the Lambton Arms Hotel from 12 noon until 4pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

Autism Assessment time for local children.

Lack of availability. Can take up to 2 years for a child to be assessed.

Children have to travel to either Tees Esk and Wear Valley for assessment

Mr Andrew Megginson to research this problem and work with the parent.

Support your neighbour scheme.

Task Groups were asked to help with this.

Check that neighbours are well. Do they need shopping. Medicines. Transport to hospitals or doctor.

Do they have smoke/fire alarm.

Police, Chester le Street still a safe place to live. Lock cars. Lock homes.

Report quad and motor bike problems asap.

Lumiere 2017. Talks are still ongoing about some type of exhibition in the area.

Fire Service. Check that all your smoke alarms are working.

St. Peters Court Sacriston. (Single home action initiative in Durham Ltd)

Supports ex-forces personnel.

#### **YOUTH TASK GROUP.**

Have Your Say events to be ongoing with schools and youth organisations

Possibility of schools being approached to involve the children in a Christmas Art Project.

Proposed date for "DIDDYCON" 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in Park View Community Centre  
Chester e Street. 10am until 4.30pm.

No final decision made until final costings are known.

Chester le Street Youth Centre Charitable Trust has now been resolved with the remaining funds being shared between the Duke of Edinburgh Trust (£7.000) Pelton and Pelton Fell Community Centre (£3.000)

#### ENVIRONMENTAL TASK GROUP.

Northumbria in Bloom. Work ongoing around the area.Help always needed.

Judging to start in July

Chester Best. More applications would be good.

Riverside Park. Lots of work being done and some work has been completed.

Splash Pad is open 3.7.2017 until 10.9.2017 10am until 6pm.

Fake Festival 5.8.2017.Noon until 11.15pm Cost £11 to £20.[www.fakefestivals.co.uk](http://www.fakefestivals.co.uk)

Funfair.11.8.2017 until 20.8.2017.

Park entry is free,parking charges apply.

REMEMBER THE LAWS REGARDNG DOGS IN THE RIVERSIDE AREA.

E.Forrester BA.

Chairman N.L.P.C.

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Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

**Item 6. 17/75 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

**a) Horticulture**

The Chairman invited Cllr. May to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

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**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL  
HORTICULTURE REPORT  
18 July 2017**

**County Councils Responsibilities (16 Flower Beds)**

All Flower Beds have now been planted up. Unfortunately the geraniums which were planted in some of the flower beds did not look good quality. Last week Martin Briscoe was contacted and did investigate. He thought the geraniums had possibly suffered from the recent wet weather but they should recover. As of today, improvement of the flowers has been seen.

**Parish Council/Gardener Responsibility**

Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.	Gardener poisons weeds e.g. ground elder monthly. Weeds bed when necessary.
Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.	Cllr Caygill is still maintaining these tubs until October.
Bus Shelter -Northlands Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides).	Cllr Caygill is still attending to these beds until October. Gardener cuts grass in immediate vicinity.
Checking of Low Flatts Play Area – Hawthorn Hedge.	This hedge requires trimming. Councillor May will contact Durham County Council to request a price for this work.
Flower Bed at entrance to Longdean Park	Planted up with summer bedding. Gardener will feed once a week.
Shrub Bed within Longdean Park.	This requires cutting back and weeding in Autumn.
Bus Shelter North Road – opposite Lambton Worm pub. No flowers	Gardener keeps clean and removes graffiti when necessary.
Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub. No flowers	Gardener keeps clean and removes graffiti when necessary.
Raised Shrub Beds North Road	Both beds will be cut back and weeded next month.

Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).	These beds are fed approx. weekly
Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.	Councillor May helps to water tubs.
Bus Shelter – Lombard Drive	Ok.
Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.	Planted up. Bed to be re-vamped in Autumn. Tree will be trimmed
Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.	Cllr Caygill attends this bed presently with the school children.
Bus Shelter - Kingsmere (Flowers on north side).	In Bloom team have attended to these flowers
Bus Shelter. Barley Mow.	Shrubs in both sides. Attention will be given in Autumn.
Bus Shelter. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers	No issues
Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Ivy on West side)	Laurel is kept trimmed.
Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Planted up. Needs weeding
Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Under discussion.
Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	No problem
Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	Flowers have been planted by In Bloom team
Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs Kirkup).	Shrubs to be trimmed
Heather Bed at Picktree Village.	Gardener attends to only a small area of this shrub bed. Unclear who owns it. Cllr May to investigate.
Daffodil planting.	Autumn/Springtime
Handyman.	Seat at Low Flatts play area to be varnished

### **In Bloom 2017**

We have now had the second and final judging of our area for **North Lodge in Bloom**. (14 July 2017). Although we have not received any feedback yet, we believe the judges had a pleasant and enjoyable morning and seemed to be very happy with the presentation of our area.

The Award Ceremony is on 16 September 2017

Horticulture Portfolio Holders

Cllr M May

Cllr P Driscoll

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In addition, Cllr. Gregory advised that three flower tubs were presently unused and in storage. An offer had been received to purchase them for £25 each. Councillors discussed this and agreed to the sale. Following the disposal, the Parish Council will have 25 barrels remaining, 20 of which will stay in the care of the Residents Association.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. May for her report and invited Cllr. Waugh to give his report.

#### **b) Finance**

Cllr. Waugh confirmed that he had received the most recent bank statement and he was satisfied that the finances were in order.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Waugh for his report and invited Cllr. Gregory to give her report.

#### **c) Crime and Community Safety**

Cllr. Gregory's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

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#### North Lodge Parish Council

#### **Crime and Community Safety report 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017.**

##### **Current**

No incidents reported for this month.

##### **Community Safety.**

Blind Lane and North Road. Community Speed Aware team identified two areas for the police speed monitoring van to attend.

Picktree Village. Residents have raised concerns over speeding vehicles through the village. County Councillor Craig Martin to meet an official from Durham County Council to discuss speed advisory signs. Will update the Parish Council.

Picktree Lodge, Sound Baffle. Off road bikes causing a nuisance. Any reports should contain the time of any sightings or noise caused by these bikes.

The Guide Dogs campaign to stop parking on pavements. Update from the meeting of MP's and campaigners at the Houses of Parliament to be circulated to Councillors.

'In the Know' email updates, Thanks to David for circulating this information.

When finding any article you may think police need to know about, telephone police using 101, to report.

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



#### **d) Play Areas**

Cllr. Caygill's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

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##### **MERLIN DRIVE**

All equipment appears to be in order. The new covered waste bin has been installed and sorry to say we still are experiencing quite a lot of litter.

##### **LOW FLATTS**

The play equipment appears to be in order.

The repaired safety surface which was vandalised seems to be holding but other edging areas are crumbling. We need to discuss a solution.

We still have not had a sign fitted and David and I are experiencing great difficulties with Interplan. Hope to solve in near future. No further reports of youth nuisance have been reported.

Marg.

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In addition, a resident had reported bird dirt on equipment at Merlin Drive play area. Cllr. Caygill had advised this to the County Council which had cleaned the equipment.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Caygill for her report and invited Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt to give his report.

#### **e) Highways and Website**

Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt's report included the following matters.

Potholes at Sinclair Drive and at the Leander Avenue/Lombard Drive junction had been reported using FixMyStreet as hazards to cyclists.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt for his report and invited Cllr. Snaith to give his report.

#### **f) Planning**

Cllr. Snaith advised that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Snaith.

#### **g) Publicity**

Cllr. Forrester advised that all matters had been contained in her Chairman's Report earlier in the meeting.

Councillors thanked the Chairman.

#### **Item 7. 17/76 Correspondence**

##### **1) From npower**

Letter re electricity account.

##### **2) From a resident**

Email re use of land at the entrance to Picktree Lodge.

The resident had been made aware of a plan to use an area of the land as a temporary compound during nearby motorway bridge repair work. The Chairman advised that she had contacted the County Council Planning and Highways Departments both of which were unaware of any such proposal although as it would be a motorway project Highways England would take precedence over the County Council. Any further information would be advised to the Parish Council by the County Council as it became available.

##### **3) From County Durham Association of Local Councils**

a) Email re Neighbourhood Protection team event to be held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

b) Email re Dementia Seminar to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

c) Email re draft revised Durham Local Councils Charter.

d) Email re CDALC Secretariat proposals for 2018/19 onwards.

e) Email re Smaller Councils Forum meeting to be held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

- 4) From Durham County Council
- a) Letter re AAP Board Meeting to be held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
  - b) Email re AAP Environmental Task Group meeting to be held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
- 5) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following were within North Lodge Parish:-
- a) Application for detached garage to rear (retrospective), at 48 Lyndhurst Avenue.
  - b) Application for erection of extension to southern elevation, detached garage to rear and alterations to boundary treatments, at 5 North Lodge.
  - c) Outline Application for the erection of a detached bungalow, with appearance, layout and scale matters reserved, at 7 Eastlands.

#### **Item 8. 17/77 Items Requested by Councillors**

##### **a) Review of the Gardener's working hours, wages and expenses**

Cllr. Hall considered that it was important to bear in mind that discussions in Parish Council meetings, and the reporting of them, are a matter of public record and also, to avoid repeated discussions, that the opportunity must be taken now to reach a Council position on the performance of the Gardener.

A report into the duties and conditions of the role of the Gardener had been prepared and circulated by Cllrs. Forrester, May, Driscoll and Murray. This report formed the basis of a discussion by Councillors, including comments received from residents, commercial rates for the work, allocation of the Gardener's hours of work and the need to obtain value for public money. It was agreed that, to ensure best performance, the Horticulture Portfolio Holders are to more actively manage the Gardener's workload. It was also agreed that the rate of pay of the Gardener is to be increased with immediate effect by £1 per hour worked, other terms and conditions remaining unchanged.

**(Resolved on a show of hands by 7 votes to 3 - to increase the rate of pay of the Gardener by £1 per hour worked with immediate effect).**

The Clerk is to advise the Gardener of the new rate.

Councillors also suggested that the Council should keep in view for 12 months time the possible future need for more hours to be worked, the possibility of introducing a bonus scheme and the desirability of sending a letter of appreciation of work done.

##### **b) Permanent role of Environment Caretaker**

Cllr. May outlined the role and performance of the current Environment Caretaker. Councillors discussed whether or not the role, which had been introduced for a trial period just over a year ago, should be made a permanent one.

**(Resolved - to continue the role to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 with a further review by then).**

**(Resolved on a show of hands by 7 votes to 3 - to increase the rate of pay of the Environment Caretaker by £1 per hour worked with immediate effect).**

The Clerk is to advise the Environment Caretaker accordingly.

##### **c) CDALC Secretariat proposal for 2018 / 2019 onwards**

Councillors discussed the proposal, copies of which had been previously circulated, and were in general agreement with the proposal. The Chairman is to present this view to CDALC but also to seek further information re the investing of the reserves.

##### **d) Bus shelters for refurbishment**

The Clerk advised that refurbishment of two bus shelters had been budgeted for in this financial year. Councillors agreed that the shelters on either side of North Road near to the Lambton Worm hotel should be attended to. The Clerk will make the arrangements with the contractor.

**Item 9. 17/78 Payment of Accounts**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries July 2017	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses July 2017	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions July 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 604.88	Horticulture July 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 140.00	Environment Care July 2017	
JAK HQ Ltd	£ 396.00	Newsletters	£66.00

**Total Payments    £1844.54**

**(Resolved** - the payments be approved as submitted).

**Item 10. 17/79 Other Matters for Information**

The following matters were submitted for information.

- a) Councillors agreed with Cllr. Gregory that the power kiosk for the tree lights needed to be painted and should be painted in a dark green colour. The Clerk will make the appropriate arrangements.
- b) Councillors thanked the North Lodge In Bloom team for all their hard work to date.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

## North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries August 2017	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses August 2017	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions August 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 252.00	Horticulture August 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care August 2017	
D. Murrell (via Maxwells DIY)	£ 9.18	Paint and Brush	£ 1.53
D. Murrell (via Post Office Ltd)	£ 16.16	Postage Stamps	
D. Murrell (via The Sign Maker)	£ 224.49	Metal Sign	£ 37.41
Salaries	£	Salaries September 2017	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses September 2017	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions September 2017	
Pot-It-On	£	Horticulture September 2017	
Pot-It-On	£	Environment Care September 2017	
E. Forrester	£ 150.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
HM Customs and Revenue	£	P.A.Y.E.	
Interplan	£ 144.00	Play Area Sign	£ 24.00
D. Murrell (via HM Land Registry)	£ 6.00	Register Search	
St. Astier Ltd	£5174.32	Works to Bus Shelters	£862.39

**Total Payments    £**

## Balance to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Balance b/f	£42193.72	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - July 2017	<u>£ 1844.54</u>		
	£40349.18		
		Current	£ 254.64
		30 Day	<u>£40094.54</u>
		Total	£40349.18
		Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ Nil</u>

Balance c/f	£40349.18	£40349.18
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