

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

PRESENT: Chairman: Cllr. Elsie Forrester.  
Councillors: Jackie Gregory, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll,  
Dennis Hall, David Snaith, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 6.30pm by welcoming everyone and wishing everyone a Happy New Year. Mr. Ken Rollings, a visitor recording the meeting, was invited to introduce himself.

### **Item 1. 18/01 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Margaret Caygill, John Murray and Colin Noble-Nesbitt.

### **Item 2. 18/02 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Jackie Gregory declared an interest as Chairman of North Lodge Residents Association.

### **Item 3. 18/03 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 -

---

# County Councillor's Report

## North Lodge Parish Council January 2018

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

[craig.martin@durham.gov.uk](mailto:craig.martin@durham.gov.uk) – 03000 268 745

#### **Deculvert of the Market Place**

The Cong Burn will be opened in the centre of Chester-le-Street, from Tesco to the war memorial. This is a £6.2 million flood prevention scheme with the Council contributing £1.5 million. The flood defence wall will be extended, and the burn will be made a feature of the town centre.

This is a visionary scheme that will bring natural beauty into the heart of the town. Hopefully stimulating growth in the local economy. The market will have to be relocated, but this gives us the chance to rebrand and revitalise it. Also demonstrates that when you give the secure ruling political party a thrashing they take notice. This is a massive victory for all residents of Chester-le-Street.

#### **Virgin Media and Lintfort**

Several residents living on Lintfort expressed concerns about the work Virgin Media would be doing in their street. Due to the unique nature of the street they were worried that irreversible damage would occur.

I arranged a special surgery for the residents to question a representative of Virgin Media along with a walk around the street with plans. As a result residents feel less concerned and have been given the ability to suggest alternative routes for the cables.

---

In addition, the County Councillor advised that the repair of the land around the sink hole at Merlin Drive will be carried out when there is better weather.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

#### **Item 4. 18/04 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 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. 18/05 Chairman's Report**

Regarding outstanding matters -

Re Minute 17/108. Cllr. Hall provided an update re the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulations.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Hall and advised that she had no matters to report.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr. May, gave a report on matters discussed at the most recent meeting of the Chester-le-Street Area Action Partnership.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. May.

**Item 6. 18/06 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

**a) Crime and Community Safety**

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

---

**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Crime and Community Safety report 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

**Crime Update.**

Burglary - Ambleside Court on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 (reported in Council Minutes 21<sup>st</sup> Nov 2017).

Vehicle recovered same day, due to having a tracker monitor fitted.

**Crime- current**

Burglary x 2 at Wheatsheaf Pub, North Lodge.

Theft from motor vehicle - Caxton Way.

Damage to motor vehicle - Lombard Drive

Investigations into the above reported incidents are still on going.

**Community Safety**

Residents raised concerns regarding drivers using mobile phones travelling in Picktree Lane towards the Blind Lane roundabout. Police were made aware of this.

Thank you to David for circulating 'In the Know'

Any non-emergency calls, please use telephone number 101

Any emergency calls, please use telephone number 999.

---

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

**b) Planning**

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

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Snaith and invited Cllr. Waugh to give his report.

**c) Finance**

Cllr. Waugh advised that he had received the most recent financial information and he was satisfied that the finances were in order.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Waugh for his report and invited Cllrs. May and Driscoll to give their reports which included the matters contained in the written reports below -

**d) Horticulture**

---

**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL  
HORTICULTURE REPORT  
16 January 2018**

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

Flower bed at bottom of Vigo Lane appears to have suffered the same fate as last winter, not flourishing, perhaps due to salty spray from the road. Discussion needed for its future survival.

**Parish Council Responsibilities**

• **Low Flatts Road Trees**

We are still awaiting Durham County Council's acknowledgement of the Parish Council's Authority for the trees.

• **Hawthorn Hedging in Low Flatts Play Area**

Discussion with Martin Briscoe yesterday, hawthorn trees should arrive next week. Trees will be 60/90cm tall.

• **Cutting of Hedging around field of Low Flatts Play Area**

Durham County Council's new cutting machine is due to arrive very shortly.

• **Flower bed at top of Longdean Park**

See Agenda item

• **Trees overhanging North Road**

Martin Briscoe has been contacted again and photographs of offending trees have been sent as requested.

• **Jubilee Tree**

Confirmation required if school children will continue with the maintenance of and the planting around this tree.

• **Picktree Village Heather Bed**

The owners of this raised bed (Miller Homes) do not wish to be involved actively with the care and maintenance of this bed.

A thought for the Parish Councillors could be: 'If Durham County Council could adopt this bed, would the Parish Council be willing to take responsibility for the planting and maintenance of it'.

• **Parish Gardener Sign**

Councillor May has purchased a sign board to be displayed by Parish Gardener during his duties, The sign company has given an example of signage which could be displayed. Cost £30 plus Vat. Agreement from Parish Councillors required

**Environmental Caretaker**

No issues of concern.

## NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council/Gardeners Responsibility.

13/11/17 –07/01/18

Description	Comment	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
	Total Hours	28	129
Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.	Clearance of leaves throughout shrub bed.	3.0	10.5
Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.		_____	1.0
Bus Shelter –Northlands (North Bound)	Bus shelter tidying.	0.75	2.75
Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides).	Cut back shrubs around shelter.	3.0	7.0
Checking of Low Flatts Play Area – Hawthorn Hedge.		_____	4.0
Flower Bed at entrance to Longdean Park.	Cleared leaves, cut grass and edged bed	2.5	16.5
Shrub Bed within Longdean Park.		_____	_____
Bus Shelter North Road – opposite Lambton Worm pub (South Bound).	Minor Clearing/ maintenance.	0.5	2.5
Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub (North Bound). No flowers	General tidying	0.5	2.5
Raised Shrub Beds North Road		_____	6.0
Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).	Weeding, re-aligning borders, re-planting bulbs.	7.0	12.5
Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.		_____	_____
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (South Bound). No flowers.	Cleaning and tidying	1.0	3.0
Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.	Cleared leaves, cut grass and edged bed.	2.5	15.5
Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.		_____	_____

Description	Comment Total Hours	Present Month/ Hours	Accumulation
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (North Bound). (Flowers on north side).	Tidying bus shelter.	0.75	3.75
Bus Shelter. Barley Mow Inn (South Bound).	Graffiti cleaning, plus general tidying.	1.0	3.25
Bus Stop. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers		_____	1.0
Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Laurel on West side)	Bus shelter tidying.	0.25	1.25
Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Re planting at plinth, cleared leaves, cut grass, edged borders.	4.0	15.0
Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.		_____	_____
Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	Cleaning and tidying	0.25	1.25
Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	Graffiti cleaning, shelter tidying plus shrubs	1.0	4.25
Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs Kirkup).		_____	4.5
Heather Bed at Picktree Village.		_____	8.0
Daffodil planting.		_____	_____
Handyman.		2.25	3.0

---

Re the flower bed towards the west end of Vigo Lane, Councillors agreed that it should be removed and grassed over. Cllr. May will obtain an estimate for this from Durham County Council. County Cllr. Martin kindly agreed to consider financing this work from his Neighbourhood Budget. Re a Parish Gardener signboard, Councillors discussed options for the wording. A colour scheme of yellow or red was preferred for visibility reasons. Cllr. May will obtain designs for further discussion at the next Parish Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. May and Driscoll for their reports.

**e) Play Areas**

In her absence from the meeting, Cllr. Caygill had provide a written report and this was read out by the Clerk.

---

**PLAY AREAS REPORT**

**MERLIN DRIVE**

All equipment appears to be in order. The area is covered in mole hills and I have once again reported this to DCC in the hope that they will address this problem long term!

**LOW FLATTS**

All equipment appears to be in order. The No Smoking zone notice was lying on the ground and I have mentioned this to DCC. Perhaps our handyman could attach this again to the fence.

There is still a gap in the hedging.

I have asked DCC to expedite the estimates for replacing or part repair of the safety surfacing as previously discussed.

Margaret Caygill

---

In addition, there was a large amount of litter at Low Flatts play area. Cllr. May will ask the Environment Caretaker to clear this.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Caygill for providing the report.

**f) Highways and Website**

In the absence of Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt, no report was made.

**g) Publicity**

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

Councillors thanked the Chairman.

**Item 7. 18/07 Correspondence**

1) From a resident

Email re street lighting at Picktree Lodge.

2) From Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments

Notification of appointment of Mazars LLP as external auditor.

3) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

a) Email re internal audit reports.

b) Email re Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party 2018.

Councillors agree to nominate Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt for attendance at the Royal Garden Party.

c) Email re possible pay awards for 2018 / 2019 and 2019 / 2020.

d) Update re General Data Protection Regulations.

e) Email re consultation on extending the disqualification criteria for Councillors.

f) Email re Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972.

g) NALC Chief Executive's Bulletins 46 & 47.

h) Email from the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner re Police element of Council Tax.

i) Notification of the Smaller Councils Forum meeting to be held on Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.

j) Notification of the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group meeting to be held on Wed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

- 4) From Durham County Council
  - a) Notification of Temporary Road & Footpath Closure Order, Vigo Lane / Picktree Lodge.
  - b) Email re Street Lighting Energy Reduction Programme, lighting column removal A693.
  - c) Notification of AAP Environment Task Group meeting to be held on Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018.
  - d) Notification of AAP Board meeting to be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.
  
- 5) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following were within North Lodge Parish:-
  - a) Application for porch to front, at 20 Longdean Park.
  - b) Approval for single storey extension to rear, at 25 North Lodge.
  - c) Approval for reserved matters application relating to DM/16/04052/FPA, at British Oxygen Co, Vigo Lane.
  - d) Approval for detached garage to rear and porch to front (retrospective), at 48 Lyndhurst Avenue.
  - e) Approval for change of use from industrial unit to fitness facility, at Unit 27, Third Avenue, Drum Industrial Estate.
  - f) Approval for felling of 1 no. Horse Chestnut, at 16 North Lodge.
  - g) Approval for two storey extension to side, at 72 Lyndhurst Avenue.
  - h) Approval for T1 Beech remove lower limb over driveway and T2 Sycamore fell, at 17, North Lodge.

**Item 8. 18/08 The Raised Bed at Picktree Village**

The Clerk advised that the owner of the raised bed, Miller Homes Ltd, was not prepared to enter into a formal agreement for the Parish Council to access the bed for planting purposes, although a representative of the company had advised verbally and informally that Miller Homes would not object to access by the Council. Councillors considered that this would not provide sufficient surety should an insurance claim need to be made. The Clerk will now contact the County Council to ask if they would give consideration to adopting the land, with the Parish Council maintaining the planting at its own expense.

**Item 9. 18/09 The Flower Bed near to the Entrance to Longdean Park**

Cllrs. May and Driscoll had obtained quotations for a new flower bed. These were discussed and it was agreed to accept the quote from A and B Landscapes for a bed constructed from sleepers, 4 sleepers high at the back dropping to 2 high at the front. County Cllr. Martin kindly agreed to fund from his Neighbourhood Budget the installation of the bed. Councillors thanked Cllr. Waugh for producing the initial designs for the bed.

**Item 10. 18/10 Requests for Donations**

Councillors discussed the outstanding requests and agreed to make a donation of £50 to each of the following, the donation to Citizens Advice being decided on a show of hands with 6 in favour and 1 against -

Great North Air Ambulance, Citizens Advice County Durham, The Children's Foundation, Durham Cathedral.



### **Item 11. 18/11 Setting the Precept**

Copies of financial forecasts prepared by the Clerk had been previously circulated. These formed the basis for extensive discussions by Councillors. Regarding the forecast reduction of £1,212 in Clerk's remuneration, which would provide a substantial saving for residents in the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax, the Clerk advised that this could be achieved by the Clerk taking flexible retirement and opting out of the Durham County Pension Fund at his Normal Retirement Age in April. Under Local Government Pension Scheme Rules, this would require a reduction in the Clerk's hours, suggested by the Clerk at 5% to ensure that Council business would continue to be satisfactorily carried out, together with a change to, or waiver of, the Council's Employer Discretion re flexible retirement. The Clerk left the room while Councillors discussed this proposal.

**(Resolved** - to approve the Clerk's request for flexible retirement and opt-out from the Durham County Pension Fund at Normal Retirement Age with a reduction in working hours of 5%. The Employer Discretion on flexible retirement is waived in this instance).

The Clerk thanked Councillors for their deliberations on this matter.

Taking into account the need to continue the programme of renovations to bus shelters, the maintenance of the horticultural and environmental appearance of the Parish and the need to repair or replace safety surfacing at Low Flatts play area, Councillors agreed to increase the Band D equivalent charge by £2.

**(Resolved** - to set a Precept of £31.53 per Band D equivalent property for the financial year 2018/2019).

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for all his work in the production of the financial forecasts.

### **Item 12. 18/12 Payment of Accounts**

<b>TO</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries December 2017	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses December 2017	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions December 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 339.50	Horticulture December 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care December 2017	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 239.40	P.A.Y.E.	
E. Forrester	£ 150.00	Chair's Allowance	
Society of Local Council Clerks	£ 115.00	Annual Membership Fee	
Association of Local Council Clerks	£ 30.00	Annual Membership Fee	
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries January 2018	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses January 2018	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions January 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 36.00	Horticulture January 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 76.00	Environment Care January 2018	
D. Murrell (via W.H. Smith)	£ 23.40	Postage Stamps	
Great North Air Ambulance	£ 50.00	Donation	
Citizens Advice County Durham	£ 50.00	Donation	
The Children's Foundation	£ 50.00	Donation	
Durham Cathedral	£ 50.00	Donation	

**Total Payments £2768.62**

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

### **Item 13. 18/13 Other Matters for Information**

There were no other matters submitted for information.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

<b>TO</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries December 2017	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses December 2017	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions December 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 339.50	Horticulture December 2017	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care December 2017	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 239.40	P.A.Y.E.	
E. Forrester	£ 150.00	Chair's Allowance	
Society of Local Council Clerks	£ 115.00	Annual Membership Fee	
Association of Local Council Clerks	£ 30.00	Annual Membership Fee	
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries January 2018	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses January 2018	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions January 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 36.00	Horticulture January 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 76.00	Environment Care January 2018	
D. Murrell (via W.H. Smith)	£ 23.40	Postage Stamps	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£2568.62</b>		

**Balance to 31<sup>st</sup> November 2017**

Balance b/f	£30338.98	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Nov. 2017	<u>£ 1527.48</u>		
	£28811.50		
		Current	£ 862.26
		30 Day	<u>£28094.54</u>
		Total	£28956.80
		Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 145.30</u>
Balance c/f	£28811.50		£28811.50