

## **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 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

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

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

A Resident.

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 6.30pm by welcoming everyone, in particular the resident.

### **Item 1. 18/14 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Margaret Caygill.

### **Item 2. 18/15 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Jackie Gregory declared an interest as Chairman of North Lodge Residents Association and an interest in Agenda Item 7, section 6b). Cllr. Maureen May declared an interest as a member of North Lodge Property Owners' Association and an interest in Agenda Item 7, section 6c).

### **Item 3. 18/16 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  
February 2018**

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

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

## **Christmas Tree Planting**

A young lady from the division has been questioning myself and Council on why the Northlands Roundabout Christmas Tree is not fixed. She is concerned about the lack of sustainability of a disposable tree and that a planted fir tree would be better for the environment.

Following correspondence the young lady was not happy with the Council's multiple reasons as to why this isn't a good idea. Being able to provide simple solutions to solve the problems raised.

I arranged a site visit with a member of the Council's Horticulture team so that she could question them directly. As a result, there will be a cost analysis to further investigate the feasibility of this project. I will be seeking further advice on whether this project can be delivered.

## **Council Cannot Bank Reserves**

Due to the Council having over £200 million in reserves, it has been unable to put the cash into secure bank accounts. Durham County Council's own treasury management policies prohibit any more than £60 million invested in government backed banks and £50 million in triple A rated banks. This has left large sums of money in funds gaining interest at little as 0.25%. This clearly demonstrates that having such large reserves is not in the public's interest. A better return on this money could be gained from improvements in our infrastructure and local economy.

## **Redevelopment of County Hall**

This project comes in three parts. County Hall will be knocked down and rebuilt on the Sands car park in the centre of Durham. This will be a smaller building, having most of the staff redistributed across the other civic buildings across County Durham. It will cost approximately £25 million less than refurbishing the asbestos riddled County Hall, to a 21<sup>st</sup> century working environment.

The Council will buy the old manor house at Mount Oswald, with the intention of creating a history centre. It will be extended to hold the archives and is expected to hold DLI collection.

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In addition, 1) the County Councillor apologised for misleading information re North Road speed signs on his Twitter account. 2) He agreed to provide information re his Neighbourhood Budget spending. 3) Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt asked that the County Councillor continues to press the County Council for repairs to road surfacing on North Lodge Estate. 4) Cllr. Murray asked that the County

Councillor puts pressure on Highways England for road repairs at the entrance to Picktree Lodge.  
5) Councillors considered that the choice of some words used by the County Councillor in the item re the opening up of the culvert in the Market Place in his report to last month's Parish Council meeting was inappropriate.  
The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

**Item 4. 18/17 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 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. 18/18 Chairman's Report**

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 18/06 section d). The new A-Board for use by the Gardener was on display and was well received by Councillors.
- b) Re Minute 18/06 section e). Cllr. May confirmed that the litter at Low Flatts play area had been removed.

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

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**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 20.2.2018.**

**CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATION TO DATE.**

1, Durham County Council information from Steve Howell Head of culture and sport. He reported that the DCCC had had 4.3K invested through share holder rights. The debt it is hoped will be paid back in full in ten years. It is hoped that more people in the County would take a much greater interest in DCCC and use its facilities. The ground gives a great opportunity for young people to become involved in cricket both male and female.

DCC are in the process of working to have an Academy which will involve younger children 5/9 years. Also Chester le Street Athletic Club and Park View School.

2. Dave Harker Chief Executive DCCC. Gave information of plans and ideas for the future. The Emirates Riverside Ground received funding from ECB to help in the developing of young England players. A girls academy was launched and partnerships formed with Northumberland, Cumbria and Durham Universities to develop woman and girls cricket. 1 Day 20 over matches are to be arranged. Would like more musical events, new wickets, pitch, changing facilities. Classroom workshops. Hope that more organisations would use the facilities. He stated that Chester le Street and County Durham should be very proud of DCCC.

3. Ron Hogg Police Crime & Victims Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington. Police Funding for 2018/2019. He stated that whilst he deeply regretted the need to ask local people to pay an increase in the precept of 7.15% which equates to an additional £8 a year for a household in a band A property, he must ensure that he has the funding to operate an efficient and effective police force in County Durham and Darlington.

4. Fire Brigade. 14 incidents in the last month. Most of it through fly tipping. Please report to the police if you see fly tipping taking place.

5. Police problems across the area,

6. Children, Young People and Families Task Group. Project funding applications. 1. Pre School Learning Alliance. This is needed to try to reduce childhood obesity. 6 Voluntary and community groups 150 children. 16 healthy cooking sessions 30 sessions within identified local toddler groups. Total cost £5,748 request from AAP £5,328. /// 2 Free School Meals. Many children are entitled to free school meals in the area 90 identified children and young people to be given free meals during 6 holiday periods. Total cost £12,391. request from AAP £5,311. /// 3. Great Lumley Community Association. The project is to address the promotion of mental health and resilience in young children, young people and families. There is much anti-social behaviour, (5 incidents per month in 2017), drugs, alcohol, self harm and bullying 50 young people to be involved. The aim is to kick start diversionary positive generic youth activities in the village for the first time in many years. Total cost £5,000 request from AAP £5,000.

7.Environmental Group Information. The DCC Civic Pride Officer Chris Hindmarch informed the group the next Operation Spruce Up in this area will take place in Pelton & Pelton Lane Ends .Newfield.This is to spruce up and refresh the area.This area will see lots of activity by DCC.De-greasing of pavements removal of chewing gum,removal of graffiti,Painting of street lights,replacing of flower beds,removal of litter,prune trees,repair and paint street furniture,.Work with local schools assemblies,poster competitions to explain to children and young people the importance of environmental pride.

The Northumberland in Bloom grant applications ,closes Friday 16<sup>th</sup>. There are to date only three applicants Newfield,Waldrige and Town Centre for this competition. Meetings will start next week.with AAP staff and Civic Pride.

DCC Big Spring Clean starts around the county 19.2.2018 and finishes mid April. It is hoped that everyone will get involved in the area that they live.

Memory Garden.Work is progressing well and is on time for finishing. Everyone working on this project are delighted with it to date.Artist Graham Hopper will be installing a water themed art piece in the spring.

Marks and Spencers roundabout.Cost for this to be cleaned and made tidy will cost in the region of £7000.00. Cll Beaty Bainbridge has intentions to invest in this work.

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In addition, 1) The Chairman advised that the railway station would close at the end of March although the platforms would remain open for passengers of trains. 2) Cllr. Gregory considered that the County Council presentation re the cricket club at the AAP meeting had been a very good one. 3) Re Operation Spruce Up, the Chairman advised that areas to benefit from this work were selected by officers of the County Council on the basis of greatest need. Cllr. Murray proposed that consideration be given to a volunteer day to carry out a clean in North Lodge Parish. 4) Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt advised that a piece of the adult exercise equipment at the riverside park had been damaged for some considerable time. The Chairman kindly agreed to contact the County Council on this matter.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

### **Item 6. 18/19 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

#### **a) Planning**

The Chairman invited Cllr. Snaith to give his report which included the following matter.

Cllr. Snaith advised that a planning application had been submitted for a replan to provide an additional 41 houses at the Vigo Lane development. The County Council had concerns regarding the replan and were seeking revisions from the developer.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Snaith for his report.

#### **b) Publicity**

Cllr. Forrester advised that all matters had been contained in her Chairman's Report earlier in the meeting. The Chairman then invited Cllr. Hall to give an update regarding the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulations. Cllr. Hall advised Councillors of progress towards appointments of Data Protection Officers and suggested that the County Councillor should approach the County Council to request support to Parish and Town Councils in this matter.

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

#### **d) Crime and Community Safety**

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North Lodge Parish Council

## **Crime and Community Safety report 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018.**

### **Crime Update**

Burglary- Wheatsheaf Pub (reported in council Minutes 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2018), two persons arrested no further action taken due to insufficient evidence. Investigations still on going for the motor vehicle crimes reported in the same Minutes.

### **Crime current**

Fly tipping reported to Durham County Council (DCC) in two areas, Low Flats Road and Picktree Lodge. DCC attended and rubbish was removed. PCSO Christine Taylor to liaise with the Council to consider if further action should be taken.

### **Community Safety**

Police initiative preventing drivers from using mobile phones is continuing. Results to be collated and forwarded at a later date. Other driving offences will be reported as appropriate.

Extensive damage caused to street sign on grass verge in Blind Lane, no witnesses and no information regarding how this damage happened. Durham County Council deals.

A speed monitoring report was received from Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations, Traffic Management dept regarding Blind Lane. This road along with North Road to have regular visits from the police monitoring van and the community speed watch team.

Thank you to David for circulating 'In the Know'

Any non-emergency calls to Police, use telephone no. 101  
Any emergency calls to Police use telephone no. 999

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The Chairman thanked Cllr. Gregory for her report and invited Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt to give his report which included the following matters.

**e) Highways and Website**

1) Faded road markings required renewal at the junctions of Lombard Drive/Leander Avenue, Lombard Drive/Park View School and Low Flatts Road/North Road. The Clerk will advise the County Council.

2) The surface of the Public Right of Way under the Sustrans bridge at Low Flatts was in a very poor condition as were the steps alongside the bridge. The Clerk will report the surface to the County Council and Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt asked that the steps be kept in mind when considering future projects.

3) The agreed alteration to the school leaving time of operation of the 20mph flashing lights on North Road had not been implemented by the County Council. Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt had advised this to the County Council and he was awaiting a response.

4) Cllr. Waugh advised that, after some considerable time, graffiti alongside the A1(M) motorway had now been overpainted.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt for his report.

**f) Play Areas**

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

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**PLAY AREAS REPORT**

**MERLIN DRIVE**

On inspection all equipment appears to be in good order. The Mole hills are increasing and I feel they may be a trip factor. I have once again reported this to Barry Alderson, DCC

**LOW FLATTS**

All equipment seems to be in order. I understand the hedge cutting and planting is planned. I have reported the now missing NO SMOKING ZONE sign to Barry Alderson, DCC. I have once again enquired about the safety surface estimates. I note that there has been no further deterioration.

Margaret Caygill

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

**g) Horticulture**

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**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL  
HORTICULTURE REPORT  
20 February 2018**

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

- **Vigo Lane Flower Bed**

Due to damage of this flower bed from the road spray, Martin Briscoe (DCC) has asked if we would like the bed to be removed completely or moved to another location. Maybe under the County Durham sign! However one suggestion was made to have the bed moved to Longdean Park (?? cost), and Durham County Council to take over planting and maintenance. Discussion required.

**Parish Council Responsibilities**

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

This has now been completed by A & B Landscapes. Many nice comments have been received. Durham County Council have stated that there is nothing that can be done to the tree to prevent shading of the bed.

**Trees overhanging North Road**

Robbie Aberdeen (DCC) has inspected these trees. Presently the trees are no danger to a vehicle, the size of a double decker bus. However, Robbie will examine these trees again when they are in leaf.

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

Email from Martin Briscoe: Durham County Council will cut this hedge next week.

- **Hawthorn Whips in Low Flatts Play Area**

Email from Martin Briscoe: Hawthorn trees have arrived at Morrison Busty. Councillor May will collect them.

**Shrub Beds (2) in North Road**

To trim, shape and reduce height of trees by Durham County Council - cost would be £597.22p. Quotes will be requested from three independent landscapers.

- **Jubilee Tree**

Confirmation required if school children will continue with the maintenance and planting around this tree. (Deferred from last month's meeting due to absence of Councillor Caygill.)

- **Picktree Village Heather Bed**

Discussion needed for the future of this bed.

## **Barrels 20** (?responsibility returned from North Lodge Residents Association)

Discussion required

- **Parish Gardener Sign**

The sign has now been printed, ready for the Parish Gardener to display during his work time.

- **Hostas (approx. 12)**

Discussion required. Re: Re-usage.

- **Fly Tipping**

A large amount of Fly Tipping occurred -? Overnight Monday 12 February 2018 at the lay-by at top of Picktree Lodge and just outside Low Flatts play area. Due to the vigilance of Residents, Durham County Council were informed and the offending material was removed immediately. DCC have thanked the Residents for their swift action in reporting this.

- **Advertising Boards**

Approx. 3 weeks ago a local Estate Agent erected a "For Sale" sign on the strip of grass at entrance to North Lodge, Lambton Park. When the company was contacted and asked to remove it, they refused to do so.

Following a lot of discussion with themselves and Durham County Council, they eventually removed it after the intervention of the Enforcement Team at DCC.

## **Environmental Caretaker**

A trail of broken glass bottles has been observed near to the bus shelters in North Road and Picktree Village. Durham County Council has been informed and action taken.

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1) Re the flower bed towards the west end of Vigo Lane, Councillors confirmed that it should be removed and grassed over, and agreed that funds which would have been spent on planting this bed are to go towards the cost of planting of the new Longdean bed. A quote from the County Council for this is awaited. When received, it is to be considered for acceptance by the Chairman, Cllrs. May and Driscoll and the Clerk. 2) Re the Picktree Village raised bed, the County Council had declined to adopt the land. The Clerk is now to ask the land owners to consider sale of the land to the Parish Council. 3) Re the barrels, Cllr. Gregory confirmed that future funding for the planting would rest with the Parish Council. 4) Re the Hostas, Cllr. Gregory kindly agreed to help the Gardener pot up the plants pending sites being found for planting out. 5) Cllr. Murray advised of a proliferation of dog waste not being picked up. The County Councillor advised that there were few Neighbourhood Wardens available to tackle this problem although the County Council was willing to train volunteer wardens.

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

Councillors agreed to take Agenda Item 8 next.

**Item 8. 18/20 Proposal to Install a Hard Surface at the Entrance to Lambton Park**

Cllr. May gave details of a request received from the North Lodge Property Owners' Association for the Parish Council to replace the grassed areas at the entrance to Lambton Park with tarmac due to the difficulties of grass maintenance and leaf clearance there. Councillors discussed this and agreed in principle to carry out the work subject to a suitable planting scheme being agreed for the remainder of the site and also subject to funding being available. Cllr. May had held a site visit with a County Council officer and a design scheme and cost was awaited. The County Councillor kindly agreed to consider providing part funding for the project. The Clerk will provide an update to the Property Owners' Association.

**Item 7. 18/21 Correspondence**

1) From Great North Air Ambulance

Thank you for donation.

2) From The Children's Foundation

Thank you for donation.

3) From Citizen's Advice County Durham

Thank you for donation.

4) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

a) Email re Local Councils Charter Review.

b) Email re Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party 2018.

c) Update re General Data Protection Regulations.

d) Agenda for the Smaller Councils Forum meeting to be held on Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.

e) Letter from the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner.

Councillors discussed the desirability of the attendance of Police officers at Parish Council meetings. Cllr. Gregory proposed that attendance at one meeting per year would be beneficial to both the Council and the Police and this should be put to the Police. Councillors agreed that Cllr. Gregory is to make this request to the Police.

5) From Durham County Council

a) Email re air quality in Chester-le-Street.

b) Email re adoption of roadside land.

c) Notification of AAP Board meeting to be held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

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

a) Application for Replan of part of permission DM/16/04052/FPA comprising 113 dwellings, incorporating 41 additional dwellings (total of 244 dwellings), at Site of former British Oxygen Company, Vigo Lane.

b) Application for felling of 2 no. trees and works to 6 no. trees, at 23 Blind Lane.

c) Application for felling of 1 no. Sycamore protected by a TPO, at Hollydene, Lambton Park.

d) Approval for porch to front, at 20 Longdean Park.

**Item 9. 18/22 Payment of Accounts**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries February 2018	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses February 2018	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions February 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 162.00	Horticulture February 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 190.00	Environment Care February 2018	
Signtech UK Ltd	£ 30.00	Supply of A-Board	£ 5.00
Durham County Council	£2783.82	Annual Bedding 2017 / 2018	£463.97
A & B Landscapes	£ 825.00	Construction of Flower Bed	
Durham County Council	£ 320.27	Christmas Tree Lights	£ 53.38
Information Commissioner	£ 35.00	Annual Registration Fee	

**Total Payments £5049.75**

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

**Item 10. 18/23 Other Matters for Information**

1) Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt outlined the history of the collapsed ground at Merlin Drive and its subsequent repair and restoration.

2) Cllr. Snaith advised of the death of former Parish Councillor Joan Straker. The funeral had been very well attended including by Cllrs. Caygill and Snaith.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.23pm.

## North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 478.36	Salaries February 2018	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses February 2018	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 145.30	Pensions February 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 162.00	Horticulture February 2018	
Pot-It-On	£ 190.00	Environment Care February 2018	
Signtech UK Ltd	£ 30.00	Supply of A-Board	£ 5.00
Durham County Council	£2783.82	Annual Bedding 2017 / 2018	£463.97
A & B Landscapes	£ 825.00	Construction of Flower Bed	
Durham County Council	£ 320.27	Christmas Tree Lights	£ 53.38
Information Commissioner	£ 35.00	Annual Registration Fee	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£5049.75</b>		

## Balance to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018

Balance b/f	£28811.50	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Dec 17/Jan 18	<u>£ 2768.62</u>	Current	£ 498.34
	£26042.88	30 Day	<u>£25594.54</u>
		Total	£26092.88
		Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 50.00</u>
Balance c/f	£26042.88		£26042.88