

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Elsie Forrester.  
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Jackie Gregory.  
Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll,  
Dennis Hall, David Snaith, John Waugh.  
  
County Councillor: Craig Martin.  
  
Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming everyone.

### **Item 1. 19/23 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Colin Noble-Nesbitt.

### **Item 2. 19/24 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Margaret Caygill declared an interest as a Governor of Park View School. Councillor John Waugh declared an interest as a Trustee of the YMCA.

### **Item 3. 19/25 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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#### **Budget 2019**

Another Council Budget brought forward with warnings of further cuts and increasing pressures. Although there were several last minute injections of funding to plug gaps in highways and adult social care. Council tax will increase by the maximum it can across the board.

Main uncertainties going forward are Fair Funding Review not being favorable for County Durham. While the movement towards greater Business Rates retention disadvantages the County, comparatively with local authorities that have major employment centres in them. With it being linked into public health funding, which will lead to reduction in this service.

Although positively the Council are using their reserves on projects that will benefit County Durham, such as education provision, the History Centre, and investments in Businesses. Even though they don't want to admit it.

Myself and my political group proposed an amendment to spend an extra £5 million on unclassified road, 20 mph zones, and clearing the dropped kerb backlog. This was to be funded by utilising new powers from government to increase council tax on empty homes. 200% premium on properties left unfurnished for 5 years and 300% premium on properties left unfurnished for 10 years.

Other opposition groups proposed amendments to prevent the building of the new county hall, extra funding for community buildings, and free WiFi for town centres. Sadly, the governing political group rejected all of these fully funded ideas.

#### **Work in Improving Opportunities for Local Businesses and Supporting Them**

Predominately I've been acting as a middle man, putting organisations in touch with those that can support their goals. Also supporting local companies to get access to Durham County Council's procurement processes, giving them a chance to be a supplier to one of the biggest organisations in the area.

This accumulated into a new shop opening, filling an empty space in St Cuthbert's Walk. A group that brings together different crafters to sell their products. The owners hard work and passion pulled this off. Helped along the way by Graham Soult of Canny Insight's knowledge of retail and involvement in Chester-le-Street's Front Street.

This is a job that really should be done by the Local Authority. Business Durham do their best but are mainly focused on larger organisations, rather than smaller independent chains. That are instead coming to me as their County Councillor to fulfil that role. Demonstrating how useful it is to just have someone in a coordinating role, putting organisations in touch with the right people.

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In addition, 1) Re re-instatement of the grassed area at Merlin Drive, the County Council continued to pursue Northumbria Water. 2) Re ownership of the verge under the Sustrans bridge at North Road, Councillors will make further enquiries through the AAP. 3) Before the date of the next Parish Council meeting, there will be a meeting of the Drum Business Group at which an up-date should be available on the court hearing re the occupancy of the pond area. 4) Re litter in the Low Flatts area apparently blowing down from units on the Drum Industrial Estate, this was a matter that the County Councillor hoped to raise at the forthcoming Drum Group meeting. 5) Highways England work at the entrance to Picktree Lodge estate was expected to re-commence towards the end of this month. 6) Cllr Caygill advised that Park View School was the most over-subscribed school in the County. The School was now reviewing buildings and accommodation. Cllr Caygill will provide further details whenever they become available. 7) In reply to a request from Cllr Gregory, the County Cllr agreed to provide the Parish Council with an advance copy of any literature he would be circulating to residents.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

#### **Item 4. 19/26 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 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. 19/27 Chairman's Report**

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 19/17 section b2). Re the grassed areas between the two shrub beds on North Road, the Chairman had attempted to contact the residents but without success. Councillors were aware that the grassed areas were the responsibility of the County Council to whom any further matters should be addressed. Concerns were expressed at the poor standard of responses from the County Council to requests for matters to be taken forwards. Cllr Hall asked that the County Cllr ascertains from the County Council what they require from Parish and Town Councils in order to provide a meaningful response to matters raised.
- b) Re Minute 19/17 section e1). The County Cllr advised that formal notification of the programme for road repairs has not yet been issued but should be available in the next few weeks.
- c) Re Minute 19/17 section e2). Cllr Noble-Nesbitt had advised the Clerk that the three faulty lights at Picktree Lodge were now working again.
- d) Re Minute 19/17 section e3). Cllr Noble-Nesbitt had advised the Clerk that he had again seen the off-road biker at Picktree Lodge.
- e) Re Minute 19/17 section f). The replacement waste bin for Low Flatts play area had not yet been installed. The Clerk will chase this up with the County Council. Re condensation on the new noticeboard at Merlin Drive, the Clerk advised that the supplier was working on a solution to the problem.

f) Re Minute 19/19. Re the available £6,000 Section 106 money, Cllr Caygill had discussed with the County Council Leisure Services Technician the possibility of installing an additional item of play equipment at Low Flatts play area. However, this would require substantial additional investment by the Parish Council and this had not been budgeted for. It seemed likely that the £6,000 would be awarded by the County Council to Northlands play area.

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

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NORTH LODGE PARIH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019.

CHAIRMANS REPORT.

AAP INFORMATION .

- 1.County Durham Plan Pre-Submission Draft and County Durham Housing Strategy.
- 2.Schemes being developed by Local Councillors from their Neighbourhood Budget Resources, Resurfacing of Play Area-Benson Street. / Wooden Coal Tub at Waldrige this will reflect the areas heritage,/ Purchasing of equipment for 1507 Squadron Air Cadets,this will help them to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. / Durham Dash 2019 to increase more local schools to become involved in this event which is to be held at Beamish Museum. / To supply 5 Speed humps at Bradley Close Ouston.
- 3.AAP Priority Survey in local schools.Children aged 11-18 years.The top three priorities were Children,young people and families./Health and well being/ Community Safety.This result was broadly reflective of the county as a whole.Currently the work of the AAP in this area is split into three distinct Task Groups. "Supporting Chester le Street"-looking at Children,Young People,Families,Heath.Older People and Social Isolation. "Thriving Chester le Street "looking at Town and Village Centre issues and Training and Employment opportunities. "Taking pride in Chester le Street" This group looks at a range of Environmental issues and Crime safety prevention initiatives.
4. Sgt Luke Terry has taken up his post at Pelton. The new electric bikes have still not arrived, still awaiting funding then they can be ordered.!!!!!!!. Discussions are taking place in connection with Community Road Shows, Maybe in a different way,and in different areas,maybe link in with schools and get parents involved.
- 5.Fire and Rescue Service, 3 Primary Fires consisting of 1car,1 van1 shed.- and others were loose refuse,tree scrub,scrub land.Fire brigade officers are prepared to come to council meetings if they are available.
- 6.Market area.Work is progressing well.Hope to to have the first stage finished soon.No further information with regard to interested parties wishing to operate the market on a five year contract.

7.Classic Car Rally – Riverside Park Prov.Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

CDAC information, Meeting 21.2.2019.Horden. County Durham Plan Pre-Submission-Draft and Housing Strategy.Many comments were made as to the amount of housing, where exactly would they be.When houses are being build have schools and medical facilities been thought of before planning permission has been given.???????.(not a very good answer was received)

Steve Ragg informed that Parish Councillors should have trainings so that they are up to date with all that is happening. Parish Clerks also.(Legal matters).

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Steve also informed everyone that they should be very careful what they say and what they discuss when in public, because it may be taken as council policies !!!.

Steve is to start "Job Share" doing 16 hours per week over three days. Interviews are now taking place to find a person to take on the other 16 hours over three days.

He also made comments about the very poor attendance at the annual AGM held at County Hall Durham in October 2018.

#### 8. Support Chester le Street Task Group. County

Durham Food Bank is part of the charity Durham Christian Partnership., Helping many refugees who live in the area. along with , many other residents, Information available and help contact County Durham Foodbank. Mile Hiouse, Bridge End. Chster le Street. Tele. 01913037559. This organisation also has a Social Recovery Group which helps everyone who may have major problems (Drugs. Alcohol, Abuse. and Social Isolation and much more)

Volunteers are needed to help the "Side by Side" service that works with residents who have dementia. For more information contact Carole on 01`913890400.

Suicide Prevention – Chester I Street Train Station. To support a potential project to "target harden" the area. to be on going. County Durham has the highest suicide rate in the country. The AAP must do work to try and get people away from the station area. Talk to local groups of all ages and organisations. Must involve the British Transport Police.

YMCA Chester le Street. Major extension being build to their property in the Market Place.. More young people to be helped. Hub. Mr David McCreedy will be the Executive in charge. David is well known to the AAP as he was in charge of the YMCA when it first opened in the area. And he did much work then before moving on with promotion. Everyone was delighted to see him back.

9. Durham County Cricket Foundation – Chester Fest 2019 (Request for £10.000). This request was voted for by the AAP and was agreed that this request be supported as it was hoped that this "Chester Fest" would bring many visitors to the town !!!!!!!!!.

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Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

**Item 6. 19/28 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

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

**a) Crime and Community Safety**

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North Lodge Parish Council

**Crime and Community Safety report 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Crime-current**

Burglary x 1.

Ambleside Court, entry gained by rear french doors, enquiries still ongoing.

Anti- Social Behaviour x 2.

Merlin Drive Park, Youth nuisance.

Picktree Lodge, neighbour dispute.

Blind Lane roundabout. Two car incident at the junction with Picktree Lane (road leading to the village). Enquiries on going, witnesses sought.

**Community Safety**

Operation Sceptre (dealing with knives), finished on the 17<sup>th</sup> March. Council to obtain feed back regarding the success of the operation.

Police Commissioner has expressed an interest in attending a Parish Council meeting. A date will be arranged.

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

## **b) Play Areas**

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### **MERLIN DRIVE**

Equipment appears to be in good order and two swing chains appear to have been renewed.  
More Mole holes have appeared.  
A residents fence is damaged and is overhanging the Play Area perimeter.

### **LOW FLATTS**

Equipment appears to be in good order.  
The waste bin has not yet been replaced.  
The seat has still to be treated and is very dirty.

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Re the damaged and overhanging fence, the Clerk will advise the County Council.  
The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report and invited Cllrs May and Driscoll to give their reports which included the matters contained in the written reports below -

## **c) Horticulture**

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### **NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HORTICULTURE REPORT 19 March 2019**

-----Durham

#### **County Councils Responsibilities**

- **Flower Beds**  
All look healthy and pretty.
  - **Blind Lane Flower Beds**  
Costings for supplying extra flower beds have now been received from Martin Briscoe:-  
“Cost to supply and maintain 2 new 2.5m circular flower beds between Nursery and Blind lane bungalow cul-de-sac is £713.42. There would also be a one off installation cost of £154.32.”
  - **Early Planting of Flower Beds**  
The Horticulture team asked Martin Briscoe (DCC) if it was possible for North Lodge flower beds to be planted up first in preparation for the World Cup Cricket Match in June. Martin said there was no problem planting up the flower beds first, however the plants will not be ready until the first week in June.
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#### **Parish Council Responsibilities.**

- **Christmas tree in Picktree village.**  
Following many negotiations and communications within different County Council departments and with Officers, Councillors May and Driscoll finally met with Jonathon Hughes from Strategic Street Lighting.  
He advised that cables etc. would need to be trunked under the road, which could prove to be very costly. Jonathon suggested using battery operated Christmas tree lights. He was aware that some Parish Councils used these and promised to make enquiries to these Councils and feed back information to us.
  - **Hawthorn Hedge Low Flatts Road**  
Discussion needed to replacing gap in Hawthorn hedge with ?Pyranantha
  - **Summer planting**  
Suggestions required for preference of summer bedding plants.
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## Environmental Caretaker

No issues reported.

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Councillor M May & Councillor P Driscoll (Horticulture Portfolio Holders)

### NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL YEAR 2 AUDIT

ish Council/Gardeners Responsibility.

DATE 11/02/19 – 10/03/19

No.	Description	Comment	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
		Total Hours	16	171
1	Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.	Tidying of Shrub bed.	2.0	28.0
3	Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.	Fed and watered.	0.75	7.25
1	Bus Shelter –Northlands (North Bound)	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	1.0	6.75
3	Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides).	Fed, watered and shaped shrubs.	1.5	10.0
1	Checking of Low Flatts Play Area – Hawthorn Hedge.			
1	Flower Bed at entrance to Longdean Park.			0.5
1	Shrub Bed within Longdean Park.			5.0
1	Bus Shelter North Road – opposite Lambton Worm pub (South Bound).	General tidying.	0.5	3.25
1	Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub (North Bound). No flowers	Tidying bus stand. Cleaning seat	1.0	6.25
2	Raised Shrub Beds North Road			
2	Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).			17.0
2	Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.	Fed and watered	0.75	3.0
	Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate	Tidying and cleaning.		



	(South Bound). No flowers.		<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.75</b>
6	Tubs in North Road. Near to the Living Christmas Tree.			
1	Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.	Fed, watered and cleared.	<b>1.5</b>	<b>20.0</b>
<b>No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment Total Hours</b>	<b>Present Month/Hrs</b>	<b>Accumulation</b>
1	Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.	Weeded and cleared around tree.		<b>2.5</b>
3	Tubs in Lombard Drive, - near school			
1	Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (North Bound). (Flowers on north side).	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat, fed and watered flower bed.	<b>1.75</b>	<b>12.0</b>
1	Bus Shelter. Barley Mow Inn (South Bound).	Tidying bus stand and cleaning seat.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
	Bus Stop. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers.			
1	Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Laurel on West side)	Tidying bus stand and cleaning seat.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
2	Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Fed, watered and cleared.	<b>1.5</b>	<b>20.75</b>
1	Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.			
1	Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	General cleaning.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>
2	Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	General tidying.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>
3	Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs Kirkup).	Fed and watered.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>9.5</b>
1	Heather Bed at Picktree Village.			
	Daffodil planting.			
	Handyman.			

1) Re the proposed two new flower beds for Blind Lane -

**(Resolved on a show of hands with 7 in favour and 1 abstention** - to accept the quote of the County Council and proceed to have the new beds installed).

2) Re Christmas lights for Picktree Village, consideration is to be given to using battery operated lights on an existing tree. The Chairman kindly agreed to investigate the practicality and cost of battery lights. 3) Re the gap in the hedge at Low Flatts play area, Councillors considered

Pyracantha to be unsuitable. Cllr Caygill asked that the weeds be cleared to allow the existing plants to grow. 4) Councillors are to consider for the next Council meeting what plants they would like in the Parish Council flower beds. 5) Councillors were asked to begin consideration of items for

this year's Newsletter.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs May and Driscoll for their reports and invited Cllr Snaith to give his report.

**d) Planning**

Cllr Snaith advised that there were no matters to report. However, he will contact the builders of the Vigo Lane housing development for an up-date on progress to present to the next Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Snaith and invited Cllr Hall to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

**e) Policy and Governance**

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**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Meeting on Tuesday 19 March 2019**

**Governance and Policy Portfolio**

**Briefing Note/Update from Councillor Dennis Hall**

**General Items of Interest since previous Meeting:**

Press release; Government sets out plans to overhaul waste system: (18 February):

The government launches a series of consultations to overhaul the waste system.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-overhaul-waste-system>

New report highlights the state of rural services in England: (15 February):

Rural England's *State of Rural Services 2018* report draws attention to the difficulties rural households face in accessing services such as broadband, public transport, libraries, healthcare, shops and young people's services. The State of Rural Services reports, the first published in 2016, are a response to concerns about gaps in the rural evidence base and aim to inform policy debate and help those making or delivering policies to take decisions which ultimately benefit rural communities.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1153-new-report-highlights-the-state-of-rural-services-in-england>

Local road maintenance in England - Commons Library briefing: (19 February):

This paper describes the governance and funding framework in which local authorities in England maintain and repair the local road network

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8383>

Report: High Streets & Towns in 2030:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomloc/1010/1010.pdf>

Consultation description: Conservation Covenants;

We want to know what you think about our plans to introduce legislation for conservation covenants in England. Conservation covenants would allow landowners to set legally binding obligations on their land for themselves and subsequent owners. This will allow landowners to secure environmental benefits for the long term. Closing Date: 22 March: 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/conservation-covenants>

**Councillor Dennis Hall**

**Date 11 March 2019**

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The County Cllr is to ascertain what the County Council is doing, and planning to do, in support of high streets throughout the County, and in particular at Chester-le-Street.  
The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall for his report and invited Cllr Waugh to give his report.

**f) Finance**

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

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his report.

**g) Highways and Website**

Cllr Noble-Nesbitt had asked that a proposal be made to have Chester-le-Street registered as a smoke control area. Councillors wished to await the outcome of the Government's forthcoming Clean Air Strategy before deciding how to proceed.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Noble-Nesbitt in his absence.

**h) Publicity**

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

**Item 7. 19/29 Correspondence**

**1) From The Pensions Regulator**

Letters re re-declaration of compliance under the Pensions Act 2008.

**2) From County Durham Association of Local Councils**

Email re review of polling districts and polling places.

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

- a) Application for demolition of garage and erection of two-storey extension to north elevation, first floor extension above existing flat roof to south, new window fenestration and change of external material appearance, at 59 Longdean Park.
- b) Application for extension to rear, at 111 Picktree Lodge.
- c) Application for erection of single-storey extension at rear of dwelling to replace existing conservatory, at 66 Picktree Lodge.
- d) Approval for demolition of existing house and erection of detached house and detached garage, at Oaklea, North Road.
- e) Approval to demolish conservatory, replace with ground floor rear extension, at 15 Lintfort.

**Item 8. 19/30 The Annual Risk Assessment**

Councillors discussed the Annual Risk Assessment, draft copies of which had been prepared by the Clerk and previously circulated, and agreed to approve the Assessment in the form provided except that the section "Condition of Play Equipment" is to read "Inspected twice monthly by Portfolio Holder. Findings documented and reviewed by Council for action as required. Inspected weekly by County Council which submits an annual report to the Parish Council for review and action as required".

**(Resolved** - to approve the Risk Assessment with amendments to the section "Condition of Play Equipment").

**Item 9. 19/31 Payment of Accounts**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 495.09	Salaries March 2019	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses March 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care March 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 232.99	Horticulture March 2019	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 231.40	P.A.Y.E.	
E. Forrester	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	

**Total Payments £1366.48**

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

**Item 10. 19/32 Other Matters for Information**

Cllr May will investigate if the Council is receiving best value in the purchasing of plants for the Parish Council's flower beds.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.18pm.

## 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> April 2019.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries April 2019	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses April 2019	
Pot-It-On	£	Environment Care April 2019	
Pot-It-On	£	Horticulture April 2019	
Durham County Council	£ 338.46	Dress/Undress Christmas Tree	£56.41
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils	£ 330.46	Annual Subscription Fee	

**Total Payments    £**

## Balance to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

Balance b/f	£25296.08	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - March 2019	<u>£ 1366.48</u>		
	£23929.60	Current	£ 269.17
		30 Day	<u>£23661.41</u>
		Total	£23930.58
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 0.98</u>		
	£23930.58	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ Nil</u>
Balance c/f	£23930.58		£23930.58