

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 15th October 2019.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Jackie Gregory.
Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll, Colin Noble-Nesbitt, John Waugh.
County Councillor: Craig Martin.
Clerk: David Murrell.

Before the start of the meeting, Councillors were pleased to receive a visit by Mrs. Pam Hall, Head of Park View Lower School. Mrs. Hall outlined her objectives for the School and answered Councillors' questions. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Hall for introducing herself to the Council.

The Chairman then commenced the meeting.

Item 1. 19/93 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Dennis Hall and David Snaith.

Item 2. 19/94 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Margaret Caygill declared an interest as a Governor of Park View School.

Item 3. 19/95 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 -

Spend Our Surplus

Following the Council's 2018-2019 financial year, it reported an underspend of £11 million. This resulted in an increase in earmarked reserves of £5.6 million, with the rest being held within the individual departments. This money is being held for the Aykley Heads development, PFI costs, Academisation of schools, and Capital projects.

I questioned the Council and requested that they find a way to get this back into the hands of the public. This idea was rejected by the portfolio holder, they felt this money served the community better held in the Council's bank accounts.

We are reminded constantly about the difficult situation Durham County Council is in with reducing budgets. That their financial planning is excellent and prudent. But I would argue that if their planning is so good there wouldn't be a sudden need at the end of the year for additional essential reserves. That actually they're being overtly prudent to generate such a large underspend.

In addition, 1) The County Cllr was gathering information and possible options re repair of the footpath between Lyndhurst Avenue and North Road. 2) Re overhanging trees on the A693 (lamppost 2373), despite a further request having been made by the County Cllr, the County Council had still not addressed this issue considered by the Parish Council to be a dangerous one.

The County Cllr will again press the County Council for urgent action. 3) Re the pond area at Drum, the County Cllr advised that responsibility for the land had reverted to the land owners. The County Council Planning Enforcement Department was satisfied with the current use and occupation of the land. Councillors expressed concerns that this created a situation of community land being removed from public use. This matter is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting. 4) Councillors discussed the on-going problem of speeding traffic in Picktree Village and Blind Lane. The Chairman considered that there was increased and regular attendance by the Traffic Police in Blind Lane. 5) Re artwork for the Drum Industrial Estate, the County Cllr was hoping to gain the input of school pupils in producing possible designs.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 19/96 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th September 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. 19/97 Chairman's Report

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

Welcome everybody.

I am sure you will agree that the 2hrs 30 minutes allocated for the Parish Council meeting can 'run away' and issues can be rushed. Therefore, I have given much consideration to the time allowed for the presentation of the monthly reports given by the County Councillor Craig Martin and the Parish Council's Portfolio holders. I have decided to follow the Parish Council Standing Order, Rules for Debate section 29, as reports can turn into a Council debate. This rule allows for 5 minutes for each member to speak. One important exception I have made, is for the County Councillor to be allowed 10 minutes. Questions to all Councillors will be monitored and if need be the answers can be brought back to Council at the next meeting. I will assess over a period of time to see if this arrangement needs to be altered in anyway and review the Standing Order. I will bring my observations back to Council.

If the Portfolio Holder (PH) identifies an issue within their particular responsibility that needs to have a full council discussion, details of the issue should be sent to Councillors before the meeting for their information and the PH should make a request to the Clerk to have the topic placed on the Agenda.

I attended a very interesting CDALC training course for Councils regarding Value Added Tax (VAT). It mainly dealt with responsibilities and claims for refunds. The course revealed that this is a complicated issue and my understanding was that councils should seek professional help regarding VAT from qualified people or companies. Councillors and staff should not use personal or other business knowledge in the belief that the same rules apply to Councils. I also attended a meeting detailing the arrangements for the Chester-le-Street Remembrance Service. I was informed of where I should stand in order to place a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

Now that Autumn is upon us, the flower beds, barrels and bus shelter plinths are being prepared for winter plants hopefully, they will contain a warm winter design. Thank you to all Councillors who, continue to observe the area and report any concerns to the necessary bodies via the Clerk. It can only improve this area to a high standard for residents and workers. This is something I am sure that all Councillors want and strive for. The important aim is to continue to attract people who wish reside in this Parish.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 19/87 section c). The Clerk advised that the supplier had now provided and installed the replacement notice board at Merlin Drive.
- b) Re Minute 19/88 section b2). The Chairman had advised Cllr Hall to discuss his concerns with the Thriving Chester-le-Street AAP Group.
- c) Re Minute 19/88 section c2). With the help of Cllr Caygill, pupils from Park View Lower School had assisted in the planting up of the barrels in Lombard Drive.
- d) Re Minute 19/88 section c3). Cllr Driscoll advised that some fallen leaves at the entrance to Lambton Park had been cleared although it was not known by whom.
- e) Re Minute 19/88 section g). The Chairman advised that Steve White, the acting Police and Crime Commissioner, would be attending the November Parish Council meeting.
- f) Re Minute 19/89 section 1). Re a possible new site for a replacement notice board in Picktree Lodge, the Chairman had contacted the neighbouring residents who had been in agreement with the proposition.
- g) Re Minute 19/90 section a). Re roles and duties of the Gardener and Environment Caretaker, the Chairman advised that she had been researching this matter and would provide a report to Councillors in advance of the Parish Council meeting in January.

Item 6. 19/98 Portfolio Holders' Reports

The Chairman invited Cllr Noble-Nesbitt to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

a) Highways and Website

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- The school time flashing lights on North Road are still operating at incorrect times, grossly misleading for passing motorists.
 - The footpath at lamppost 2373, A693 just west of Northlands Roundabout, continues to be blocked by overhanging vegetation, producing a **dangerous** situation.
 - The Highways England instigated diversion (with signs) at the exit from Picktree Lodge Estate was reintroduced on Friday 11/10/2019 and three days later the first sign of action was noted in the form of a large heap of sand. Further activity has been noted today. November 2020 is signed as the time for reinstatement but indications are that the motorway bridge repairs will take longer than this. Full details of the planned for Sustrans cycleway diversion along Vigo Lane are awaited.
 - After all the efforts to alert the responsible bodies, it is positive to note the clearance of overhanging vegetation on the North Road footpath opposite the Wheatsheaf, close to the bridge; similarly with the full scale clearance of the snicket behind 66 Picktree Lodge. These cases and others have highlighted some major shortcomings inherent in the way DCC operates its 'do it online' system when users alert DCC as the highway authority with the power to make things happen.
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In addition, Cllr Noble-Nesbitt advised Councillors of changes to be implemented by September 2020 re website accessibility regulations.

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

b) 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 and invited Cllrs May and Driscoll to give their reports which included the matters contained in the written reports below -

c) Horticulture

**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HORTICULTURE REPORT
15 October 2019**

Durham County Councils Responsibilities

- **Flower Beds**

All flower beds are in the process of being planted up with winter bedding.

- **Merlin Drive Play Area**

As requested by the Parish Council, shrubs and over hanging branches were cut down and shaped by the County Council on 19 September 2019 in Merlin Drive play area.

This was followed up on the 23 September when remaining undergrowth in the same play area was strimmed and fallen branches were removed (following the repair of the Council Strimmer.)

Parish Council Responsibilities.

- **Christmas Tree in Picktree Village**

As reported in September's Horticulture report (Further investigations ongoing.) the following information has now become available"

a) A meeting was held with Steve from Down to Earth Landscapes plus two residents from Picktree Village to discuss putting battery operated lights within one or two existing trees. However Steve felt this was not feasible as they would not serve a good purpose – being not totally visible coming along the road and the tree branches being very flimsy which could distract drivers.

b) Discussions with other Parish Councils in Chester le Street – most Councils have a cut real Christmas tree which is dug into the ground first week in December and removed in January. Battery operated Lights are placed around tree. If Councillors were to re-consider this project, the approximate cost for this project would be £275.00.

Environmental Caretaker

- **Graffiti**

Graffiti observed in North Lodge bus shelter (going south) Caretaker will remove this within his rota.

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

**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL
YEAR 3 AUDIT**

Parish Council/Gardeners Responsibility.

DATE 09/09/19 – 06/10/19

Description	Comment	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
	Total Hours	25	61
Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.			6.5
Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.	Weeded and cleared out, applied compost, replanted, fed and watered.	3.5	4.5
Bus Shelter –Northlands (North Bound)	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	0.75	2.25
Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides).	Watered and fed.	1.0	2.0
Checking of Low Flatts Play Area – Hawthorn Hedge.			
Flower Bed at entrance to Longdean Park.			
Shrub Bed within Longdean Park.			
Bus Shelter North Road – opposite Lambton Worm pub (South Bound).	General maintenance.	0.5	1.5
Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub (North Bound). No flowers	Tidying bus stand. Cleaning seat.	0.75	2.25
Raised Shrub Beds North Road			1.5
Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).	Tidied right side of Lambton Lodge entrance.	3.0	9.5
Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.	Weeded and cleared out, applied compost, replanted, fed and watered.	2.0	2.75
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (South Bound). No flowers.	Tidying and maintenance.	0.5	1.5
Tubs in North Road. Near to the Living Christmas Tree.	Weeded and cleared out, applied compost, replanted, fed and watered.	4.0	5.0

Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.	Watered and fed.	1.0	1.75
Description	Comment	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
	Total Hours		
Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.			
Tubs in Lombard Drive, - near school	Watered, fed and weeded.	1.0	1.5
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (North Bound). (Flowers on north side).	Cleaned bus stand and seat, watered and fed flowers.	1.5	4.0
Bus Shelter. Barley Mow Inn (South Bound).	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	0.5	2.0
Bus Stop. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers.			
Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Laurel on West side)	Tidying bus stand and cleaning seat.	0.5	2.0
Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Weeded plinth, applied compost, replanted, fed and watered.	2.5	6.0
Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.			
Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	General cleaning.	0.5	1.5
Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	General cleaning.	0.5	1.5
Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs xxxxx).	Watering flowers and feeding.	1.0	1.5
Heather Bed at Picktree Village.			
Daffodil planting.			
Handyman.			

Re Christmas lights in Picktree Village, Councillors discussed the proposal and agreed to the proposition. The County Cllr offered funding up to £300 and Councillors accepted this with thanks. The Chairman thanked Cllrs May and Driscoll for their reports and invited Cllr Caygill to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

d) Play Areas

LOW FLATTS

Equipment appears to be in good order.

There are several dog waste bags at the Sustrans entrance. We need to expedite an order for a notice.

MERLIN DRIVE

Equipment appears to be in good order.

The safety surfacing appears to have had some repair.

Re the possibility of installing a seat inside the play equipment fence at Low Flatts, the County Council Leisure Services Technician had advised of conditions for siting a seat. The County Councillor offered to fund the purchase and installation of a seat and this was accepted with thanks by Councillors.

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

e) Publicity

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL. MEETING 15.10.2019.

AAP INFORMATION/CDAC INFORMATION.

1.SCHEMES BEING DEVELOPED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD BUDGET RESOURCES.

2.AREA BUDGET POSITION.

3.YOUTH FUND – PELTON FELL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FIT FUTURES,£3461.25. PELTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ROOM 14. D.O.E RESIDENTIAL EVENT £3000.00.

4.OLDER PEOPLES ISOLATION FUND- PROPOSALS BULLION HALL EVERGREEN ELDERS PROJECT YEAR 2 £6036.00 REQUESTED. CORNETSONES CENTRE.MEMORY LANE CRAFT GROUP.£5545 00 REQUESTED. MASONIC TEMPLE ASSOCIATION PENSIONERS AGAINST LONELINESS £5860 REQUESTED. WOODSHED WORKSHOP C/C KNOCKIN ON WOOD. £6750.00 REQUESTED.

5.POLICE. COMMUNITY ROAD SHOWS.WORK PROGRESSING ON THESE.BULLION HALL,GREAT LUMLEY AND PELTON DATES TO BE CONFIRMED. YOUNG HEROES AWARDS POSSIBLE POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER YOUNG HEROS AWARDS SCHEME IN THE CHESTER LE STREET AREA, WATCH THIS SPACE.

6.FUNDING. 106 MONIES. "GET THE MUCK" GET THE MONIES. MANY COUNCILS ARE NOT APPLYING FOR FUNDING,IF APPLYING COUNCILS MUST HAVE GOOD PLANS AS TO HOW THE MONEY WILL BE USED. SOME NEW HOUSING ESTATES HAVE FOUND THAT "PLAY" AREAS ARE NOT WANTED. (CHILDREN MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE AND RUBBISH).

7.POTENTIAL ART WORK A167 ROUNDABOUT PROJECT. ON GOING.ART WORK MUST BE A WAY OF SHOWCASING THE ENTRY POINT INTO THE TOWN. MEETINGS WITH THE DCC CLEAN AND GREEN TEAM HIGHWAYS AND GRAEME HOPPER (ARTIST).

In addition, Cllr Forrester reported on the recently held CDALC Annual General Meeting.
The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her report.

f) Crime and Community Safety

Cllr Gregory gave her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

Crime and Community Safety report 15th October 2019

Current Crime

Please check the Police UK web site for information.

Community Safety

The North Lodge Parish Council has authorised a letter to be sent to the Chief Constable of Durham for comments regarding the contents of the Police UK website for the North Lodge area.

Thanks to David for circulating 'In The Know' to Councillors.

Any non-emergency calls to Police, use telephone number 101

Emergency calls to Police, use telephone number 999

Re a letter to the Chief Constable regarding the revised Police reporting system, Councillors agreed that it should be sent as outlined by Cllr Gregory. Re the recent incident of young people cycling on footpaths at Lombard Drive, Cllr Caygill advised that the Head of Park View Lower School will address this in School assembly. Cllr Gregory advised Councillors of the Police response to this matter.

Councillors thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

g) Planning

In the absence of Cllr Snaith, no report was made.

h) Policy and Governance

In the absence of Cllr Hall, no report was made.

Item 7. 19/99 Correspondence

1) From Rt. Hon. Kevan Jones MP

Letter enclosing surgery poster and cards.

2) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

a) email re ATM provision in rural areas.

b) email re planning training session.

3) From Durham County Council

email re Chester-le-Street 2019 Traffic Regulation Order.

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

a) Application for single storey flat roof extension to rear of dwelling and 2no. bay windows to be added to front elevation, at 30 North Road.

b) Application for change of use to open storage (use class B8), at land to the east of the business village, Drum Road.

c) Application to crown clean and deadwood 2 no. sycamores and crown thin 1 no. beech, at 5A North Lodge.

d) Application for single storey side and rear extension, at 91 Picktree Lodge.

- e) Approval for single storey extension to side of house, at 29A Lyndhurst Avenue.
- f) Approval for pruning works to weeping willow (T1) - Re-shape crown (approximately 33% of the height and spread taken off) with some crown raising and dead boughs to be removed, at 1 North Road.
- g) Approval for extensions and alterations (height and pitch) to the existing flat roof to provide first floor living accommodation (granny annexe), single storey extension to side to replace existing garage and creation of terrace area (with screen) to rear, at 1 North Road.
- h) Approval for retrospective change of use of land for the keeping of a single horse, erection of a stable block, boundary treatments and hard landscaping (amended 30 July 2019), at land to the north of Low Flatts Road and west of 92 Kingsmere.

Cllr Waugh declared an interest in the following item.

- i) Approval for outline application for the erection of 6 houses with details of access (all other matters reserved), at site of former Pelaw Grange Cottage, North Road.
- j) Approval for two storey side and front extension, single storey rear extension, partial garage conversion, replacement roofing and replacement windows, at 22 Lyndhurst Avenue.

Item 8. 19/100 Items Requested by Councillors

a) Communicating with the County Council

Due to the absence of Cllr Hall from the meeting, this matter is to be held over to the next meeting of the Council.

b) Planning Application for the former Arizona Chemical site

The County Cllr advised Councillors of his discussions with the Planning Department. Councillors discussed the application and agreed matters to be submitted to the Planning Department.

c) The Winter Newsletter

Cllr May kindly offered to compile a winter newsletter. However, Councillors considered that there was now insufficient time to produce one this year but will consider this again at an earlier time next year.

Item 9. 19/101 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries October 2019	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses October 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care October 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 446.00	Horticulture October 2019	
Poppy Appeal	£ 50.00	Donation for Wreath	

Total Payments £1189.05

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Re a wreath for Remembrance Sunday, Councillors endorsed the procurement process used by Cllr Forrester and the Clerk.

Item 10. 19/102 Other Matters for Information

The Chairman advised of a proposal for VE Day celebrations next year. The Clerk will circulate an email on the topic.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th November 2019.

	TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries		£	Salaries November 2019	
Expenses		£ 90.00	Expenses November 2019	
Pot-It-On		£	Environment Care November 2019	
Pot-It-On		£	Horticulture November 2019	
Cty Dhm Assn of Local Councils		£ 27.00	Fee for Training Course	

Total Payments £

Balance to 31st October 2019

Balance b/f	£36196.43	Balances at Bank:-		
Deduct Payments - October 2019	<u>£ 1189.05</u>		Current	£ 508.67
	£35007.38		30 Day	<u>£34550.20</u>
			Total	£35058.87
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 1.49</u>			
	£35008.87	Deduct cheques not yet presented		<u>£ 50.00</u>
Balance c/f	£35008.87			£35008.87