

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 21st January 2020.

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

The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Item 1. 20/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor John Waugh.

Item 2. 20/02 Declarations of Interest

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

Item 3. 20/03 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 -

Western Relief Road Call In

Durham County Council's Cabinet have put forward a funding proposal so that work can begin on building a Western Relief road around Durham City. This is a project included within the County Plan predicted to cost £35 million, it will connect A691 at Sniperley Park and Ride with B6302 Broom Lane. A colleague of mine attended the meeting to quiz officers and portfolio holders, specifically relating to how it will be funded, but did not receive appropriate responses.

Myself and number of other opposition County Councillors from different political groupings requested that this decision is brought into scrutiny for further discussion. On the basis that this is a funding approach the Council has never used before, paying for it up front and claiming the money back as section 106 funding gradually becomes available.

The call in request was rejected by the Chair of Scrutiny on the basis that this decision by cabinet is only a provisional one. I will be pushing for further open and public discussions to be had on it. As I am concerned that future changes in the law could result in the general taxpayer picking up the bill for yet another multi million pound project that helps the City.

In addition, 1) The County Cllr had received complaints from residents re the condition of the circular shrub bed at Picktree Lodge Estate. The County Council had drawn up proposals for the bed but these had not been agreed by residents. The bed will, therefore, remain as it is. 2) Re the condition of the footpath between 20/21 Lyndhurst Avenue and North Road, following intervention by the County Cllr the County Council will renew the path and this is now scheduled for mid-May. 3) The County Cllr is making representations against a cutting back of bus services between

Chester-le-Street and Durham. 4) Cllr Noble-Nesbitt reported that a set of traffic lights at the motorway roundabout was pointing at a wrong angle. The County Cllr and Cllr Noble-Nesbitt will meet on site to consider what action should be taken. 5) Cllr Caygill reported that many waste bins were full to overflowing during the Christmas break. The County Cllr advised that the relevant County Council department was short-staffed at that time of year but he had already made known to the department his dissatisfaction at the situation.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 20/04 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th November 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. 20/05 Chairman's Report

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

Welcome everyone and best wishes for 2020

In both December/January, there were no significant Council activity to report on.

During this period, I have been monitoring the crime statistics for the North Lodge area. All Councillors received details regarding Community Safety issues. These issues will be detailed in the crime and safety portfolio report.

I am pleased to say that this is the first year for a Christmas tree erected in Picktree Village. A full report will be given on the success of this project in a report by the horticulture portfolio holder.

In the coming year, it is hoped that the Council will undertake an active role in promoting environmental issues. All ideas can be discussed at future meetings.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 19/108 section f). Re fallen leaves, the Clerk will contact the County Council to ascertain when they will be cleared.

b) Re Minute 19/110 section a). Re communicating with the County Council, Cllrs Forrester and May advised that this matter had been raised at the Smaller Councils Forum and was to be continued at the next Forum meeting.

Item 6. 20/06 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

NLPC Highways Report for 21 January 2020

- The school time 20mph flashing lights on North Road and Lombard Drive continue to operate at wildly incorrect times, as reported in November, and further attempts to alert DCC to this are needed. [for Action]
- The footpath at street lighting column 2373, A693 just west of Northlands Roundabout, continues to be blocked by overhanging vegetation, as reported in November – presumably still awaiting on a DCC schedule for its attention. [for Checking with DCC]
- The semi-permanent pavement pool on the east side of North Road, opposite to the gable end of 4 Kingsmere, has been eliminated with very effective attention by DCC, as scheduled.
- The footpath behind 66 Picktree Lodge continues to be particularly badly affected by fallen leaves decaying and sticking. [DCC now needs alerting for Action]
- Attention to the Lyndhurst Avenue footpath link to North Road appears to be scheduled by DCC for 3 February.
- The Blind Lane road surface, driving eastwards towards the motorway roundabout, around the area where the single lane becomes two lanes, appears to have potentially dangerous deep rutting and other wear that needs to be brought to DCC attention [for Action]
- The motorway roundabout itself now presents a dangerous situation because of the worn out nature of important white lining on much of it. This appears to be scheduled for attention by Highways England in March. It may be worth asking Highways England to bring this date forward. [for Action]
- When approaching the motorway roundabout from the sliproad, travelling north, the traffic lights column on the inside of the roundabout itself appear to be facing at a wrong angle and therefore needs checking by DCC or Highways England. [for Action]

CN-N 21/01/2020

Re the school flashing lights, the footpath near Northlands roundabout, the Blind Lane road surface and the white lines at the motorway roundabout, the County Cllr will contact the responsible authorities. Re leaves on the footpath behind 66 Picktree Lodge, the Clerk will report this to the County Council. Cllr Driscoll was concerned at the number of vehicle accidents at the central traffic lights on Northlands roundabout. The County Cllr advised that he was pressing for traffic lights to be installed at the Park Road North/Picktree Lane roundabout.

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

b) Horticulture

**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HORTICULTURE REPORT
21 January 2020**

Durham County Councils Responsibilities

- **Flower Beds**
No issues to report
-

Parish Council Responsibilities.

- **Christmas Tree in Picktree Village**
The Christmas tree was planted as planned at the beginning of December and dismantled and removed immediately following New Year.
Passing residents seemed to be delighted with the tree.
 - **Low Flatts Play Area**
Durham County Council (DCC) have cut Hawthorn Hedge at Low Flatts along Black Path. Unfortunately lots of branches have fallen over into Play Area vicinity. DCC have been informed. In the meantime Councillor Driscoll has removed branches from gap in fence – beside new Hawthorn whips, in order to prevent choking and damage to whips.
-

Environmental Caretaker

- **Overflowing Waste Bins**
During the Christmas/New Year period, the caretaker observed the following bins –outside the Lambton Worm Pub and at Picktree Village – totally full and overflowing.
Durham County Council were informed and dealt with situation.
-

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

**NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL
YEAR 3 AUDIT**

Parish Council/Gardeners Responsibility.

DATE 11/11/19 – 05/01/20

Description	Comment Total Hours	Present Month/Hrs 17	Accumulation 99
Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.			7.25
Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.	Started on weeding	0.75	6.0
Bus Shelter –Northlands (North Bound)	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	1.5	5.0
Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides).			4.0
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.	1.0	3.0
Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub (North Bound). No flowers	Tidying bus stand. Cleaning seat.	1.5	5.0
Raised Shrub Beds North Road			1.5
Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).	Starting on leaf clearance.	2.0	12.25
Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.	Weeding and feeding.	0.75	4.25
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (South Bound). No flowers.	Tidying and maintenance.	0.75	3.0
Tubs in North Road. Near to the Living Christmas Tree.	Started on weeding.	1.25	7.0

Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.	Cleared leaves from flower bed	1.25	8.0
Description	Comment Total Hours	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.			
Tubs in Lombard Drive, - near school			2.0
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (North Bound). (Flowers on north side).	Cleaned bus stand and seat.	1.0	7.0
Bus Shelter. Barley Mow Inn (South Bound).	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	1.25	4.0
Bus Stop. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers.			
Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Laurel on West side)	Tidying bus stand and cleaning seat.	1.25	4.0
Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.	Cleared weeds and leaves from plinth	1.25	8.0
Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.			
Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	General cleaning.	0.5	2.5
Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	General cleaning.	1.0	3.0
Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs Kirkup).			2.25
Heather Bed at Picktree Village.			
Daffodil planting.			
Handyman.			

In addition, 1) Re the extra set of lights bought by a resident for the Picktree Village Christmas Tree, Councillors agreed to reimburse the resident. The Clerk is to send a letter of thanks with the payment. 2) The Clerk is to obtain from the County Council details of the County Council's bid for funds from the Government's Urban Tree Challenge, particularly in regard to any projects for North Lodge Parish. 3) The roles and conditions of the Gardener and Environment Caretaker are to be included for discussion on the Agenda for the March meeting of the Council. 4) The Chairman advised that metal bands on barrels at the Northlands bus shelter were rotting. The Chairman thanked Cllrs May and Driscoll for their reports and invited Cllr Hall to give his report.

c) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall advised that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall and invited Cllr Forrester to give her report which included the following matters -

d) Publicity

Cllr Forrester advised on a review of the structure of AAP Board meetings, the It's Up To U grant scheme and the Holocaust Memorial Day.

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

e) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

Equipment appears to be in good order apart from the punctured tyre under the See Saw.

Moles are once again busy in and around the fenced area.

LOW FLATTS

Equipment appears to be in good order.

The BAG IT BIN IT sign has been erected at the Sustrans entrance and only one bag dumped there so far.

The hedging on two sides of the field perimeter has been flayed but a large amount of branches remain lying around. As I consider this a hazard I have asked David to contact the Clean and Green team at DCC. to have this removed.

The waste bin is being well used and I am glad to report no litter in the fenced area, however, during the holiday the bins have been left unemptied causing waste to be strewn around. I know many residents have reported this.

We will discuss the new seat at the meeting.

Re a new seat for Low Flatts, Councillors agreed the purchase. The Clerk will submit to the County Council a Neighbourhood Budget application.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

f) Crime and Community Safety

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

CRIME.

Please refer to Police UK website for North Lodge crime issues.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Correspondence received from Durham Constabulary, relating to Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). Cannabis and Dog Fouling.

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

Operation Stay Safe

Recently youth related ASB and disorder has been reported in the Chester-le-Street and surrounding areas. Focus has been directed to the safe guard of vulnerable young people, whilst tackling those intent on causing nuisance and disorder.

Police request that parents and guardians ensure they know where their children are, especially at weekends, making sure they are safe, accounted for and keeping out of any trouble. Part of the operation involved informing parents of teenagers who have come to the attention of the police and other partner agencies.

Cannabis Awareness.

Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in the UK. Research shows that 10% of regular cannabis users become dependant on it. Regular cannabis use increases the risk of developing a psychotic illness.

As a result of community intelligence, Police Officers from Chester-le-Street Neighbourhood Policing team have conducted searches at several addresses in the area. These searches revealed cannabis 'farms' with the plant at various stages of growth. All plants and other drug paraphernalia were seized and destroyed.

Any information you wish to pass onto police, please contact them on telephone number 101 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

Dog Fouling

Concerns have been raised across the county regarding dog fouling. This issue spoils the environment, upsets local residents and can cause serious health risks, particular to children.

It is an offence under the Public Space Protection Order. To report dog fouling on line refer to www.durham.gov.uk/dogfouling

Green Dog Walkers scheme aims to change attitudes towards dog fouling.

For more information on this scheme refer to www.durham.gov.uk/greendogwalkers

Thank you to David for circulating 'KEEP IN THE KNOW'

For non emergency telephone calls to police, use telephone number 101

For emergency telephone calls to police, use telephone number 999

Councillors thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

g) Finance

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

h) Planning

In the absence of a Portfolio Holder, no report was made.

Item 7. 20/07 Correspondence

1) From David Snaith

Letter of resignation from the Council.

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

- a) Application for first floor and front extension and associated external alterations, at 27 North Lodge.
- b) Application for tree works, at 12 North Lodge.
- c) Approval for first floor and front extension and associated external alterations, at 27 North Lodge.
- d) Approval for erection of storage unit, Unit 5, Drum Road.
- e) Approval for demolition of garage and reinstatement with 2 storey extension to north elevation. New first floor extension above existing flat roof to south, rear single storey ground floor extension and new window fenestration and change of external material appearance, at 59 Longdean Park.
- f) Approval for single storey side and rear extension, at 91 Picktree Lodge.

Item 8. 20/08 Items Requested by Councillors

a) Review of signatories to the Bank Accounts

Councillors agreed that an additional two signatories were needed to ensure that financial payments would not be unduly delayed.

(Resolved - that Cllr Gregory and Cllr Hall are to be added to the list of signatories to the Bank Accounts).

b) Planning Portfolio Holder

Following the resignation of David Snaith from the Council, the Planning Portfolio was vacant. Cllr Waugh had indicated to the Clerk his willingness to be considered for the role.

(Resolved - that Cllr Waugh is to be the Planning Portfolio Holder).

Item 9. 20/09 Requests for Donations

Councillors considered all outstanding requests for donations and agreed to make payments of £50 each to the following -

Great North Air Ambulance

County of Durham School Benevolent Fund

Police Activity Week

Citizens Advice County Durham

Item 10. 20/10 Setting the Precept

Copies of financial forecasts prepared by the Clerk had been previously circulated. These formed the basis of extensive discussions by Councillors.

The following budgets, changed from those in the forecasts, were approved -

Christmas Tree Lights - increase amount from £730 to £1000.

Horticulture - increase amount from £6,100 to £10,000.

Donations - increase amount from £250 to £300.

Training Fees - increase amount from £216 to £500.

Environment Care - increase amount from £2,016 to £2,500.

These increased amounts changed the Total Projected Expenditure for 2020 / 2021 from £21,792 to £26,780.

The following projects did not receive approval -

A .gov email address for each Councillor.

Adult fitness equipment at Merlin Drive.

A seat at the junction of Longdean Park/North Road.

An interim leaflet.

A VE Day celebration (considered to be out of the scope of the Council at present).

The following projects are to be taken forwards as follows -

Chairman's Allowance - to be reviewed at the June meeting of the Council.

Leaf clearing at the entrance to Lambton Park - to be considered at the March meeting of the Council.

Christmas Trees - to be reviewed at the March meeting of the Council.

Renovation of the Sustrans bridge at North Road - the Clerk is to contact Sustrans to establish their position.

Taking into account the agreed amended budgets together with the Clerk's forecasts, Councillors agreed to set a Band D equivalent charge for 2020 / 2021 of £31.53 which is the same figure as the current financial year.

(Resolved - to set a Precept of £31.53 per Band D equivalent property for the financial year 2020 / 2021).

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

Item 11. 20/11 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries December 2019	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses December 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care December 2019	
Pot-It-On	£ 144.00	Horticulture December 2019	
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries January 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses January 2020	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care January 2020	
Pot-It-On	£ 102.00	Horticulture January 2020	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 405.80	P.A.Y.E.	
J. Gregory	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Association of Local Council Clerks	£ 40.00	Annual Subscription	
Society of Local Council Clerks	£ 126.00	Annual Subscription	
CDALC	£ 27.00	Training Fee	
Signs Direct	£ 69.54	Sign for Play Area	£11.59
DSJ Property Services	£ 30.00	Fixing Sign to Post	
D. Murrell (via Currys)	£ 12.99	Memory Stick	£ 2.17
D. Murrell (via Maxwells)	£ 12.00	Batteries for Tree Lights	£ 2.00
D. Murrell (via Keen Gardener)	£ 29.28	Tree Lights	£ 4.88
Formoss	£ 120.00	Christmas Tree	£20.00
Down to Earth Landscapes	£ 95.00	Erect and Dispose of Tree	
S. Kirkup (via Yorks. Trading Co.)	£ 26.99	Tree Lights	£ 4.50
Great North Air Ambulance	£ 50.00	Donation	
County of Dharm School Benev Fund	£ 50.00	Donation	
Police Activity Week	£ 50.00	Donation	
Citizens Advice County Durham	£ 50.00	Donation	

Total Payments £2991.70

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 12. 20/12 Other Matters for Information

There were no other matters raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.52pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th February 2020.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries February 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses February 2020	
Pot-It-On	£ 152.00	Environment Care February 2020	
Pot-It-On	£ 84.00	Horticulture February 2020	
Durham County Council	£ 336.07	Putting Up Tree Lights	£56.01
Information Commissioner	£ 40.00	Annual Data Protection Fee	
D. Murrell (via Internet Ink)	£ 6.98	Printer Ink	£ 1.16
D. Murrell (via Costco)	£ 13.67	Copier Paper	£ 2.28
Total Payments	£1173.77		

Balance to 31st January 2020

Balance b/f	£33963.61	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Jan. 2020	<u>£ 2991.70</u>	Current	£ 715.14
	£30971.91	30 Day	<u>£30554.40</u>
		Total	£31269.54
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 2.63</u>		
	£30974.54	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 295.00</u>
Balance c/f	£30974.54		£30974.54