

## **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 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Jackie Gregory.

Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll,  
Dennis Hall, Colin Noble-Nesbitt, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

A Resident.

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

### **Item 1. 20/13 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Elsie Forrester.

### **Item 2. 20/14 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **Item 3. 20/15 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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#### **Reduced Bus Service to Durham**

A revision of the bus timetables has resulted in the 21 service running between Durham and Newcastle to be reduced in half during the day on weekdays. While the X21 is to be increased in return, a service that does not operate from any bus stop within the North Lodge area.

I cannot support such a significant drop in our bus service. Remember that this isn't just about getting to Durham, it's a reduction in service for anyone wanting to travel beyond the bottom of Front Street.

I've raised my objections with the Council and Go North East while also requesting that North Lodge gains a bus stop for the express service. This only fair when communities like Framwellgate Moor have this service while our part of County Durham is put at a disadvantage.

The Council are not objecting to these changes, showing understanding users preferences for faster services. While Go North East will not give us an express stop indicating that it would cause too much disruption to the timetables for them to see it as being worthwhile. I will continue to campaign on this issue.

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In addition, 1) The County Council was carrying out a County-wide review of Leisure Centre provision. The County Cllr believed that this could have a positive effect for Chester-le-Street. 2) Re the potential for a defibrillator within the Parish, the County Cllr advised that the availability of a suitable electric supply was an unsolved issue. However, he was in discussion with an interested local business. 3) Re the timings of the flashing lights on North Road, the County Cllr was still pursuing this with the County Council.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

#### **Item 4. 20/16 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020, 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. 20/17 Chairman's Report**

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

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##### Chairman's Report 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Welcome everyone.

##### Parish notice boards update

Greenbarnes Ltd has supplied an acceptable quote for the boards. It was clear, concise and showed value for money.

With regard to the locations of the boards, David is in the process of applying on behalf of the Parish Council, for the necessary permission from Durham County Council (DCC). The Parish Council's insurance will increase by £12 per year to cover these boards. I will keep the Council updated with the progress. At the Avant Homes Vigo Lane development, the large perimeter fence near Durham Road has been removed. DCC planning officer, Mr Graham Blakely has assured me that this fence will eventually be replaced with a decorative one. The land and trees east of the new fence will come under the care of a landscape company.

My thanks go to Councillor Driscoll for pursuing enquiries with DCC regarding the National Urban Tree Challenge. Councillor Driscoll will give an update regarding this project in his monthly report.

Included will be information about a future Parish Council tree planting project on the sound baffle at Picktree Lodge. Regular updates on this will be given to Councillors.

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Councillors thanked the Chairman for her report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 20/03 section 4). Re traffic lights pointing at an incorrect angle at the motorway roundabout, the County Cllr confirmed that he was pursuing this matter with Highways England.
- b) Re Minute 20/05 section b). Cllr May had attempted, via CDALC, to obtain a list of contact details for County Council officers. However, CDALC had advised that the County Council does not issue such a list.
- c) Re Minute 20/06 section b4). Cllr May advised that the decayed metal bands had now been removed from the barrels at the Northlands bus shelter. The Chairman thanked Cllrs May and Driscoll for attending to this.
- d) Re Minute 20/08 section b). The Chairman and Councillors thanked Cllr Waugh for accepting the Planning Portfolio.
- e) Re Minute 20/10. Re renovation of the Sustrans bridge over North Road, Sustrans advised that the bridge would be inspected in 2021 by its engineers and in the meantime some self-seeded vegetation would be removed.

## **Item 6. 20/18 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

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

### **a) Play Areas**

#### **MERLIN DRIVE**

Play equipment appears to be in good order apart from the punctured tyre under the See Saw which I reported to DCC after our last meeting. Lots of Mole activity around the fenced area.

#### **LOW FLATTS**

Play equipment appears to be in good order. A lot of the recently cut perimeter hedge branches are still lying around despite DCC having been contacted about this. Branches need to be cut around the bin area.

A few dog litter bags were lying around the Sustrans exit from the field despite our new notice.

Once again we have Mole activity on the field.

I met Tom, the DCC technician for Play Areas and mentioned the above concerns. He contacted Graham Cozens re branches and he is going to visit tomorrow (18th) and Tom will speak to Barry Alderson about the tyre at Merlin Drive.

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 -

### **b) Horticulture**

## **NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

### **HORTICULTURE REPORT**

**18 February 2020**

## **Durham County Council Responsibilities**

### **Flower Beds**

No issues to report

## **Parish Council Responsibilities.**

### **• Low Flatts Play Area**

There still appears to be branches lying around near to hedge. Graham Cozens (Durham County Council) contacted, and has agreed to assess area and give feedback ASAP

### **• Flower Barrels**

One of the three flower barrels close to Northlands roundabout was found to have a broken metal band. Offending band was removed and barrel appears to be satisfactory.

There are two further barrels near living Christmas tree which each have a loose band but on assessment do not appear to be dangerous.

All barrels will be checked on a regular basis.

Discussion with Parish Councillors required to keep or replace all barrels within next 12 months

### **• Parish Gardener – Resignation**

On Tuesday 11 February at the meeting for Horticulture/Environmental Care, Frank Leighton - the Parish Gardener/ Environmental Caretaker verbally offered to resign from his roles with effect from 29 February 2020.

Frank felt that he was finding it increasingly difficult to perform his duties and responsibilities and felt that this decision was in the best interest for both parties.  
Councillors May and Driscoll accepted his offer and now look to replace these two roles as quickly as possible for the Parish.

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## Environmental Caretaker

Nothing untoward to report.

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

### NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL YEAR 3 AUDIT

**Parish Council/Gardeners Responsibility.**

**DATE 06/01/20 – 09/02/20**

Description	Comment	Present Month/Hrs	Accumulation
	Total Hours	6	105
Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout.			7.25
Tubs at North Road near to Northlands Roundabout.	Tidying and weeding	0.5	6.5
Bus Shelter –Northlands (North Bound)	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	0.5	5.5
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.	0.5	3.5
Bus Shelter North Road –Lambton Worm pub (North Bound). No flowers	Tidying bus stand. Cleaning seat.	0.5	5.5
Raised Shrub Beds North Road			

			<b>1.5</b>
Flower Beds at entrance to North Lodge (Lambton Park).			<b>12.25</b>
Tubs at Lambton Park entrance.	Tidying and Weeding.	<b>0.25</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (South Bound). No flowers.	Tidying and maintenance.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Tubs in North Road. Near to the Living Christmas Tree.	Tidying and weeding.	<b>0.75</b>	<b>7.75</b>
Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive.			<b>8.0</b>
<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment Total Hours</b>	<b>Present Month/Hrs</b>	<b>Accumulation</b>
Jubilee Tree at Entrance to Lombard Drive.			
Tubs in Lombard Drive, - near school			<b>2.0</b>
Bus Shelter – North Lodge Estate (North Bound). (Flowers on north side).	Cleaned bus stand and seat.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Bus Shelter. Barley Mow Inn (South Bound).	Tidying bus stand, cleaning seat.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Bus Stop. Barley Gate, Vigo Lane. No flowers.			
Bus Shelter. Ambleside Court Vigo Lane. (Laurel on West side)	Tidying bus stand and cleaning seat.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Flower Bed around plinth – bottom and top at entrance to Picktree Lodge.			<b>8.0</b>
Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge.			

Bus Shelter (Glass) in Picktree Village.	General cleaning.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Bus Shelter. Ash Meadows, Picktree Village Flower/shrub bed both sides.	General cleaning.	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Small Shrub/Flower Beds in Picktree Village (opposite Mr & Mrs Kirkup).			<b>2.25</b>
Heather Bed at Picktree Village.			
Daffodil planting.			
Handyman.			

#### Urban Tree Challenge:

The Parish Council did not qualify for any further tree planting, under this scheme. The reason being that it did not fit the criteria for low tree cover and areas of deprivation required in the application window of June 2019.

Other tree planting programmes are still possible, and an enquiry has been left with the Tree Officer for County Durham, Simon Chivers ,regarding the area of the Picktree Lodge to A1 section of the Baffle Mound. This would be for the possible planting of 250 tree whips, plus protective covers, as per a similar community plant a few years ago from the now disbanded Residents Association. A response to this enquiry is now awaited

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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 Waugh to give his report.

#### **d) 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 him to give his Planning report.

#### **e) Planning**

Cllr Waugh advised that he had not yet received any planning lists from the County Council. Councillors discussed making more effective use of the planning application lists and of applying for Section 106 monies.

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

## **f) Highways and Website**

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### **North Lodge Parish Council - Highways Report for 18 February 2020**

- The operational times of the school time 20mph flashing lights on North Road and Lombard Drive will need checking after the present school half term holiday. [for Action]
- The footpath behind 66 Picktree Lodge has been effectively cleared by DCC. [issue Closed]
- Attention to the Lyndhurst Avenue footpath link to North Road appears to be scheduled by DCC for March, changed from the original February intention. [for Noting]
- The deep rutting and other wear on the Blind Lane road surface, driving eastwards towards the motorway roundabout, around the area where the single lane becomes two lanes, has been rectified, at least to some extent, presumably by DCC. [issue Closed]
- The motorway roundabout itself continues to present 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. [for Noting]
- When approaching the motorway roundabout from the sliproad, travelling north, the traffic lights column on the inside of the roundabout itself continues to appear to be facing at a wrong angle and therefore needs checking by DCC or Highways England. [for Action]
- The footpath running between 164 and 166 Picktree Lodge, adjacent to Lamp Standard 475, has received very effective remedial attention through DCC's construction of a new drain and renewed/levelled tarmac, giving much hope that the long standing muddy section has been eliminated. [issue Closed]

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Cllr Waugh advised of graffiti on fences alongside the northbound carriageway of the motorway near the eastern end of North Lodge, Lambton Park. The Clerk will report this to Highways England.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Noble-Nesbitt for his report.

## **g) Crime and Community Safety**

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

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### **Crime and Community Safety report 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

#### **Crime**

Refer to the Police UK web-site.

(The web-site is to be revamped in April 2020).

#### **Community Safety**

One male has been arrested in connection with a number of car crime related incidents in Chester-le-Street, over the Christmas period.

One male from Pelton area, has been arrested for illegal money lending.

Speed monitoring data for North Lodge area has been received and circulated to Councillors.

The Council received a list of police community activities for the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> February. Included on the list was a visit to Castle View Nursery, Blind Lane, North Lodge to chat to the children. Activities included fun finger printing and dressing up in police uniforms. From reports, a very successful day.

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Councillors thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

#### **h) Publicity**

In the absence of Cllr Forrester, no report was made. However, Cllr Forrester had provided the most recent Agenda, Minutes and Reports from the AAP together with a copy of the recently revised timetable for trains from Chester-le-Street station.  
The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester.

#### **Item 7. 20/19 Correspondence**

- 1) From Great North Air Ambulance Service  
Letter of thanks for donation.
- 2) From Citizens Advice County Durham  
Letter of thanks for donation.
- 3) From Sustrans  
email re bridge over North Road.
- 4) From County Durham Association of Local Councils
  - a) Agenda for the Smaller Local Councils Forum meeting to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
  - b) email re identifying far right extremism.
  - c) email re Royal Garden Party 2020.
  - d) email re campaign to raise awareness about scams.
  - e) email re free Play Area Training.
- 5) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following were within North Lodge Parish:-
  - a) Application for demolition of existing single storey extensions (x2) and construction of 2 storey extension to provide additional living area and first floor bedroom over. Increase size of smaller bedroom at front. 2m fence to be erected along boundary, at 24 Leander Avenue.
  - b) Application for tree works: T1 - Larger conifer. Removal of large branch very close (1m) to roof; T2, T3, T4 - Beech trees. Remove large branches close to house and crown lifting, at woodland adjoining 19 Blind Lane.
  - c) Approval for change of use to open storage (use class B8), at land to the east of the Business Village, Drum Road.
  - d) Approval for tree works, at 12 North Lodge.
  - e) Approval for tree works, at 10 North Lodge.

#### **Item 8. 20/20 Items Requested by Councillors**

##### **a) A template for reports by Portfolio Holders**

The Chairman invited Cllr Hall to present his proposal for a template. Cllr Hall outlined the proposed use of the template and the reasons for the proposed introduction. Councillors discussed these and agreed to trial the template for three months.

**(Resolved on a show of hands - that the template introduced by Cllr Hall is to be trialled for three months commencing with the next meeting of the Council).**

##### **b) Proposed change to the relationship between the Parish Council and the Gardener**

Following the verbal resignation of the Gardener and Environment Caretaker, Cllr Driscoll advised of the need to clearly define the two roles. The Chairman, Cllr May and Cllr Driscoll are to prepare a report for presentation to Councillors in advance of the next meeting of the Council and to be discussed at that meeting.



**Item 9. 20/21 Payment of Accounts**

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**

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

**Item 10. 20/22 Other Matters for Information**

There were no other matters raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

## North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries March 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses March 2020	
HM Revenue & Customs	£	P.A.Y.E.	
J. Gregory	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£</b>		

## Balance to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Balance b/f	£30974.54	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Feb. 2020	<u>£ 1173.77</u>		
	£29800.77	Current	£ 346.37
		30 Day	<u>£30174.75</u>
		Total	£30521.12
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 1.35</u>		
	£29802.12	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 100.00</u>
Add Grant Received	<u>£ 619.00</u>		
Balance c/f	£30421.12		£30421.12