

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council due to be held at Park View School, Lombard Drive, Chester-le-Street on Tuesday 17th March 2020.

PRESENT: Chairman:

Councillors:

County Councillor:

Clerk:

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and taking into account HM Government advice, this meeting was cancelled.

Subsequent to the meeting, the following matters were approved -

Item 1. 20/23 Day to Day Parish Council Business

The Chairman proposed the following, sent by email to all Councillors, in order that the Parish Council could continue to function on a daily basis -

Coronavirus

You will appreciate that it is not possible to fix a date when the next Parish Council meeting will take place.

The Government is currently considering passing legislation to allow Council meetings to be held 'virtually'. This would mean that we all communicate via telephone, skype, face time, e-mails etc. instead of physically attending a meeting.

However, this has not yet been decided. So presently Parish Councillors cannot discuss or decide council issues unless they attend an arranged council meeting.

Therefore, I propose that the clerk David Murrell will be solely responsible for dealing with the day to day business side of the Parish Council.

I suggest that he be authorised to enter into individual financial transactions no greater than £1000. Anything over that amount will need the joint authority of both the Clerk and the Chairman. This does not alter the need for two signatories on council cheques.

In normal times, an extra ordinary meeting should be convened to transfer such power to the Clerk. However, the prevailing circumstances preclude both extraordinary and scheduled council meetings from physically taking place.

It would be most helpful that all Councillors give their support to this course of action, until circumstances change.

Including the proposer, five Councillors sent in their agreement to the proposal.

(Resolved by email communication - that until further notice the Clerk is authorised to carry out the day-to-day business of the Council subject to the terms set out in the Chairman's proposal).

Item 2. 20/24 The Annual Risk Assessment

The Annual Risk Assessment had been prepared by the Clerk and draft copies had been previously circulated.

(Resolved by email communication - that the Annual Risk Assessment be approved).

Item 3. 20/25 Contract with Durham County Council for the Provision of Flower Beds

The contract for approval had been previously circulated by the Clerk.

(Resolved by email communication - that the contract with the County Council be approved).

Item 4. 20/26 Job Descriptions for a Gardener and an Environment Caretaker

Draft job descriptions had been previously circulated by the Clerk.

(Resolved by email communication - that the Job Descriptions be approved).

The following reports had been submitted to the Clerk, other Councillors having advised that they had no matters to report -

Item 5. 20/27 Report of the County Councillor

Budget

Since the beginning of austerity this is the first budget where we've had an increase in Government funding. A series of one off spending commitments meant the Council had around an additional £17 million to use. Particularly aimed at dealing with the funding issues around care of the elderly, higher needs funding, and looked after children. The challenge being what do you spend this money on when you have no certainty that you'll have it next year.

The governing political group proposed one off commitments on improving highways, leisure centre redevelopment, climate emergency proposals, and town and village regeneration. They also provided long term funding commitments for an additional 11 neighbourhood wardens and the setting up of a youth parliament.

The general theme of opposition group amendments centred around the towns and villages regeneration reserve. An original £10 million pot of money that has been topped up to a total of £20 million in this budget, where only £1.25 million has been allocated for spending. I put forward proposal to allocate £10,000 per County Councillor to ensure some of it is equally shared out to every community for regeneration projects. While also trying to get it spent, which is something that isn't happening. While other groups attempted to get this money given directly to AAPs, which I equally supported but were all voted down. Also during the debate I spoke on the poor management of finances by the lead political group that has been demonstrated in this budget. Despite the massive increase in funding the budget was not balanced. Reserves were used to top spending up in an unplanned manner. I have been campaigning for years that the Council should be using them and welcome it. But key criticism is there isn't a real need to use them this year but there was in previous years.

I was unable to support the budget with the extra government funding while around 4% increase in council tax and without any guarantee that the community I represent would reap any direct benefits.

County Plan

The independent planning inspector has concluded their review. There are two big changes that have been recommended.

That the two relief roads around Durham City should be scrapped. On the basis that any benefits from them would not out way harm done to the countryside around Durham. It is predicted that these multi million pound projects would only shave a few minutes off travel times.

All future developments should have a 66% allocation of homes aimed towards the older generation. I expect that means bungalows or managed flats.

Item 6. 20/28 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Play Areas

The play equipment in both areas appear to be in good order.

The money has been received and the order placed for the new seat to be situated within the fenced area at Low Flatts.

At Low Flatts the branches and debris from the hedge cutting are still lying around.

This, together with trimming around the waste bins needs to be carried out.

As the DCC seem reluctant to do this, should NLPC arrange to have it done?

b) Horticulture

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Council on 17 March 2020

Subject: ENVIRONMENT CARETAKER

Portfolio: HORTICULTURE

Prepared by: Maureen May

Sent to Clerk on: 23 March 2020

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1. Resignation/Retirement of Parish Environment Caretaker.

2.0 DETAIL

2.1. Background: Replacement of Environment Caretaker required ASAP

2.2. *Key Issues:* Portfolio Holders, Clerk and Chairperson are working together to formulate a new Job description, a new Contract of Employment and an advertisement for the new post.

2.3. *Conclusions:* When complete, these documents will be put forward to Councillors for perusal.

2.4. Key Issues:

2.5. Conclusions:

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS (Select as appropriate)

☒ To agree above proposed documents

☐ For decision and to consider the following recommended actions:

(Specify below)

4.0. IMPLICATIONS (Select as appropriate & give details)

4.1 Financial, Precept or Procurement implications: ☐

4.2 Staff or Other Resource implications: ☐

4.3 Consultations with others: ☐

4.4 Risk Assessment: ☐

4.5 Other Identified Implications: ☐

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OR APPENDICES

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Council on 17 February 2020

Subject: Parish Gardener

Portfolio: HORTICULTURE -

Prepared by: Maureen May

Sent to Clerk on: 23 March 2020

SUMMARY

1.0 Resignation/Retirement of longstanding Parish Gardener.

2.0 DETAIL

Background: Replacement Gardener required ASAP

Key Issues: Portfolio Holders, Clerk and Chairperson are working together to formulate a new Job description, a new Contract of Employment and an advertisement for the new post.

Conclusions: When complete, these documents will be put forward to Councillors for perusal.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS *(Select as appropriate)*

☒ To agree above proposed documents

☐ For decision and to consider the following recommended actions:

(Specify below)

4.0. IMPLICATIONS *(Select as appropriate & give details)*

4.1 Financial, Precept or Procurement implications: ☒

4.2 Staff or Other Resource implications: ☐

4.3 Consultations with others: ☐

4.4 Risk Assessment: ☐

4.5 Other Identified Implications: ☐

Report to Council on: 17/03/2020

Subject: Tree Planting

Prepared by: Councillor Patrick Driscoll

Sent to Clerk on: 14/03/2020

Detail: Tree planting response from senior County Council Tree Officer, Simon Chivers, as per outline in Parish Council Meeting Minutes of 18/02/2020.

Officer to speak to Clean and Green Department for possible donation of plants for Baffle Mound between Picktree Lodge and A1M. Current

tree planting elsewhere would mean any work would be in next season.

Parish Council can also apply for National Tree Week in November, with grants of up to £150 available for Parish Councils for planting projects

in their area. Completed application forms required no later than Friday 13th December, and grants allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Recommendations: To note for future consideration.

Implications: Staff or other resource implications

c) Finance

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Council on (Date of meeting): TUESDAY 17th MARCH 2020

Subject: Portfolio Holder Monthly Update Report

FILAXER

Portfolio:

Prepared by: JOHN WAUGH

Sent to Clerk on: 17th MARCH

1.0 SUMMARY (Type brief details in 2/3 lines here)

2.0 DETAIL (Type fullest relevant information here)

- 2.1. Background: } I HAVE STUDIED THE FINANCIAL
2.2. Detail: } INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE CLERK
2.3. Key Issues: } & EVERYTHING APPEARS IN ORDER.
2.4. Conclusions: } AS WE APPROACH THE END OF THE
FINANCIAL YEAR WE HAVE
AROUND £30,000 IN THE BANK.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS (Select as appropriate)

☐ To note or

☐ For decision and to consider the following recommended actions:

(Specify below)

4.0. IMPLICATIONS (Select as appropriate & give details)

4.1 Financial, Precept or Procurement implications: ☐

4.2 Staff or Other Resource implications: ☐

4.3 Consultations with others: ☐

4.4. Risk Assessment: ☐

d) Planning

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Council on (Date of meeting): TUESDAY 17th MARCH 2020

Subject: Portfolio Holder Monthly Update Report

Portfolio: PLANNING

Prepared by: JOHN WEAVER

Sent to Clerk on: 17th MARCH

1.0 SUMMARY (Type brief details in 2/3 lines here)

2.0 DETAIL (Type fullest relevant information here)

2.1 Background:

2.2 Detail:

2.3 Key Issues:

2.4 Conclusions:

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS (Select as appropriate)

☐ To note or

☐ For decision and to consider the following recommended actions:

(Specify below)

4.0 IMPLICATIONS (Select as appropriate & give details)

4.1 Financial, Precept or Procurement implications: ☐

4.2 Staff or Other Resource implications: ☐

4.3 Consultations with others: ☐

4.4 Risk Assessment: ☐

I HAD A MEETING WITH CLERK MARTIN & GRAHAM BLAKEN, PLANNING OFFICER, AT COUNTY HALL TO GO OVER THE ARIZONA / AVANT PHASE 2 PLANNING APPLICATION. THE ITEMS SHOWN ON THE OUTLINE PLANNING APPROVAL HAVE BEEN LOST. VERY LITTLE OPEN SPACE. MINOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS OUTSIDE SITE.

NO LINK WITH COAST TO COAST TRACK. PEDESTRIAN LINK WITH PHASE 1. DECENT ROAD FRONTAGE. POOR LAYOUT LACKING CHARACTER & IDENTITY.

NO SOCIAL HOUSING. ABOUT £600,000 SECTION 106 MONEY.

Item 7. 20/29 Payment of Accounts

Having regard to the authorisation given in Minute 20/23, the Clerk approved the following payments -

	TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries		£ 450.85	Salaries March 2020	
Expenses		£ 90.00	Expenses March 2020	
HM Revenue & Customs		£ 405.80	P.A.Y.E.	
J. Gregory		£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Total Payments		£1111.65		

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the months of April, May and June 2020 as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th June 2020.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries April 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses April 2020	
D. Murrell (via Cartridge Shop uk)	£ 45.49	Printer Cartridges	
CDALC	£ 366.02	Annual Subscription	
Npower Northern Ltd	£ 157.60	Power for Tree Lights	£7.50
Salaries	£ 451.05	Salaries May 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses May 2020	
I Herberson	£ 50.00	Internal Audit Fee	
Zurich Municipal	£ 692.72	Annual Insurance Premium	
Salaries	£	Salaries June 2020	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses June 2020	
D. Murrell (via Amazon .co.uk)	£ 17.99	Computer Mouse	£3.00
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Fee	£2.40
HM Revenue & Customs	£	P.A.Y.E.	
J. Gregory	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Total Payments	£		

Balance to 31st March 2020

Balance b/f	£30421.12	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - March 2020	<u>£ 1111.65</u>		
	£29309.47	Current	£ 684.72
		30 Day	<u>£28675.90</u>
		Total	£29360.62
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 1.15</u>		
	£29310.62	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 50.00</u>
Balance c/f	£29310.62		£29310.62