

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 17th January 2023.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Item 1. 23/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Chris Veitch and John Waugh.

Item 2. 23/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Craig Martin declared interests as a County Councillor and as a Governor of Park View Academy.

Item 3. 23/03 Report of the County Councillor

The Chairman invited the County Councillor to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

Ecological Funding From Drum Business Park

An application for new industrial units has a commitment to spend just over £100,000 of S106 in Sedgfield. I attempted to amend this application so the funding would be earmarked for the Chester-le-Street area.

During the debate planning officers stated that following my intervention 'best efforts' would be made to spend this money in the Chester-le-Street area. Best efforts are not good enough for those I represent and pushed for my amendment to be part of the application.

Councillors from the all the other political groupings rejected this amendment based on concerns that restricting the funding's use geographically might mean it won't get spent. Whereas I believe if the Council put their mind to it they could easily find a project somewhere in the Chester-le-Street area to spend ecology funding on.

During the application I spoke on Environmental Health needing to be on top of whatever comes to occupy these new units to ensure residents are protected. As it stands we do not know what kind of businesses will be in them and what kind of noise they will generate.

In addition, a) Cllr Gregory asked why the "Santa Bus" had not stopped in North Lodge. The County Cllr will enquire about this. b) Cllr Gregory asked for an update on the Remembrance Group memorial project. In the absence from the meeting of Cllr Veitch, this is to be an Agenda item at the next meeting of the Council. c) Cllr May enquired about progress in the restoration of flower beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge. The County Cllr advised that he has a meeting planned with an officer of the County Council at which he will raise this issue. d) Cllr Brown advised

that she is waiting for an update from the County Council re tree planting on the Baffle Bank. Cllr Driscoll advised that he had received a leaflet from the County Council giving outline information on the project. The County Cllr will ask the County Council officer leading the project for details of the feedback from their residents' consultation.
The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 23/04 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th November 2022, 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. 23/05 Setting the Precept for the Financial Year 2023/2024

Copies of financial forecasts prepared by the Clerk for the financial year 2023/2024 had been previously circulated. These formed the basis for extensive discussions by Councillors. It was agreed that, in the current challenging financial circumstances being experienced throughout the country, it would be desirable to again set a Precept of £31.53 Band D equivalent property (no increase since 2018/2019) provided that service levels could be maintained and, following detailed negotiations with Portfolio Holders, budgets were set to achieve this.
(**Resolved** - to set a Precept of £31.53 per Band D equivalent property for 2023/2024).

Item 6. 23/06 Chairman's Report

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

The North East Devolution Deal

Members will have seen the announcement concerning the NE devolution deal which includes Durham County Council and spans an area from Northumberland down to County Durham which will be under the governance of a new mayoralty for that area

I will refer to a newspaper article setting out the main detail of the new arrangements

What is not clear to me so far, is precisely how decisions will be made concerning the spending of the huge funding that has been announced: will this be under the control of the new mayor or will it be under new governance arrangements with the constituent local authorities?

Another question is how this arrangement impacts upon town and parish councils and where do they fit into the governance of these new arrangements, if at all?

There is to be a consultation. And the final decision is yet to be made on the new mayoralty in Parliament. However in the coming months I believe that these questions are important to us as councillors and we need to be monitoring the position and getting the answers to these questions.

Portfolio Review

A review of portfolios took place during February/March last year. We had a number of new members and it was reasonable to review them then. For clarity, I do not propose that there should be an annual review nor should there be any further review at this point.

Clerk's Annual Appraisal

One item that we did agree should take place annually is the Clerk's appraisal and this will be done during March, with a Report to the April Council Meeting.

Item: 7 (i) Reports: Policy and Governance Portfolio

Government:

DLUHC: Policy paper; North East devolution deal: (28 December);

Proposed agreement for a devolution deal between the government and the local authorities of the North East. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-east-devolution-deal--2>

NALC/LGA:

The Civility and Respect Project team established by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations

has revised the Local Government Association (LGA) Code of Conduct supporting guidance “to better reflect the sector's needs”.

The LGA produced a revised code of conduct in December 2020, supported by a guidance document it first circulated in July 2021.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/civility-and-respect-project#code-of-conduct-supporting-guidance>

Re the Devolution Deal, the Chairman and the County Cllr outlined the current position. It was considered that, in respect of governance, the proposal would have no direct effect on County or Parish/Town Councils. However, Councillors agreed that there was a need to be kept advised and aware of developments. It was agreed that the Chairman and Cllr Martin together were authorised to respond to any consultations on this matter on behalf of the Parish Council.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 22/105. Re pollution data for the Northlands roundabout area, the County Cllr is to find out from the County Council why the collection of data has been withdrawn.

b) Re Minute 22/107 section b). Cllr Gregory, in her capacity as a Parish resident, advised that the MP is now in contact with Sustrans.

c) Re Minute 22/108 section d). Re new posters for the bus shelter display boards, Cllr Caygill advised that she expected to provide details at the next Council meeting.

d) Re Minute 22/110 section b). Re production of crime leaflets, Cllr Gregory advised that, after consultation with the Clerk, it was decided to use social media rather than leaflets to promote the information and advice.

Item 7. 23/07 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

In the absence of Cllr Veitch from the meeting, he had provided this written report -

Social media update. Over the last couple of months there has been numerous posts on our 2 platforms. These have been about Home Safety and Security, Christmas Events and information regarding DCC. I have found that there is usually between 20 and 30 views per Twitter post with 2 to 3 likes on the posts.

Facebook tends to get around 40 views per post and similarly 2 to 3 likes.

This suggest people are viewing the posts but not many people are engaging to a point that they “like” the posts, this is normal activity and I believe people do actually read them.

If any of you have any ideas or suggestions about future posts please let me know.

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

b) Crime and Community Safety

Crime

No crimes reported for North Lodge 15th November 2022-17th January 2023.

Community Safety

Kick Off at 3

Durham Constabulary will be holding a 7 aside football competition for age group 13-14 years (mixed genders).

The tournament will take place on Friday, March 24th at Maiden Castle in Durham. The winning team will get the opportunity to participate in the finals in London at a later date.

Contact Shazad.sadiq@durham.police.uk

Romance Fraud. Contact Crime Stoppers for more information, telephone 0800-555-111 (100% anonymous)

Recruitment. Campaigns and Marketing Officer . Please visit Durham Constabulary Facebook for more information

For all emergencies, use telephone number 999

For non emergencies, use telephone number 101

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFS).

Candles. Always extinguish candles before you leave a room. Never go to sleep with a candle still burning. Going out? Put it out.

Contact the community safety team on 0345 223 4221. They will arrange a visit to fit smoke alarms.

Helping Hoarders. Accumulating and collecting items in your home increases the risk of fire in your home. There is a dedicated team who work with vulnerable members of the community to help with their home safety.

Recruitment. CDDFS is recruiting 'on call' firefighters for various fire stations in Co Durham.

Congratulations to the Ops Assurance Section, who won the Resilience & Learning from Major Incidents award at the excellence in Fire and Emergency awards 2022. Also CDDFS won the #Public Service Award at the The Northern Echo County Durham Together Awards.

For more information on any of the above, visit County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Facebook account, or telephone no. 0345 305 8383 or send an email to servicehq@ddfire.gov.uk

For all emergencies, use telephone number 999

In addition, Cllr Caygill advised of raw food being dumped in wooded areas alongside the A693 road. The Neighbourhood Wardens had been contacted and had visited the sites.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

In the absence from the meeting of Cllr Waugh, he had provided this written Finance report -
c) Finance

I have studied the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm everything appears to be in order.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Finance report and invited Cllr Driscoll to give his Highways and Community Assets report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

d) Highways and Community Assets

The monthly bus shelters inspection was carried out on Monday 9th of January 2023. All appeared in good condition, with just some minor leaf clearance and seat cleaning being required. In addition, all the glass cabinets were given a thorough clean.

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

e) Horticulture

SUMMARY

1. Durham County Issues

- a) Work has begun on the two large shrub beds - North Road
Ian Harland has informed us that the work on the two large
Beds should be complete, probably within two weeks

 - b) Still no further decisions have been made regarding entrance
to Picktree Lodge
-

2. Horticulture Sub Group

Future Projects

- a) Tree Planting on Baffle Bank. - Consultation going out to Residents -
Ongoing
 - b) Tree Planting in Honour of Queen's Canopy - *Ongoing*
 - c) Plinth at Entrance. Quotation has been accepted from our Parish Gardener
Makepeace Landscapers to Jet wash stonework and re-paint lettering.
 - d) Barrels - due to the age and condition of the Barrels, they will be removed
and disposed of at the end of this season
-

in addition, the Chairman thanked Cllr May and members of the Horticulture sub-group for all their excellent work.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report and invited Cllr Forrester to give her report which included the matters below -

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Cllr Forrester provided a report of the AAP meeting held on 16th January 2023. Topics had included an outdoor sporting facilities consultation and various AAP budget and portfolio reports.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her report.

In the absence from the meeting of Cllr Waugh, he had provided this written Planning report -

g) Planning

I continue to report to councillors on a weekly basis on planning applications made within the parish. There have been very few applications submitted recently and no contentious applications to report.

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

h) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

All equipment appears to be in good order.

LOW FLATTS

The perimeter hedge has been cut (flayed) by DCC and Clean and Green have been contacted to remove the surplus branches etc. left lying at the entrance.

On 13th Jan a site meeting took place for invited residents to inspect and vote on one of two schemes submitted for the refurbishment of this area. This was led by James Young and his assistant Tom from DCC. Councillors Martin, Driscoll, Waugh, Veitch and Caygill and the Clerk also attended. Votes were made and further discussions took place and it is hoped the work will be done by the Spring.

Meanwhile all equipment appears to be in good order.

In addition, re the refurbishment of Low Flatts play area, the County Cllr kindly advised that he would be happy to consider funding requests.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

i) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall's report was contained in his Chairman's Report (Minute 23/06, above).

Councillors thanked Cllr Hall.

The Chairman invited Cllr Martin to give his report.

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Cllr Martin advised that he had no matters to report at present.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

Item 8. 23/08 Correspondence

1) From a Resident

email re idea for the commemoration of the Coronation of King Charles III.

2) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

a) email re Royal Garden Parties.

b) email re vacancy on the County Council's Standards Committee.

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

a) Application for replacement sun room extension to rear, at 3 Leander Avenue.

b) Application for proposed porch and garage extension, at 63 Leander Avenue.

Item 9. 23/09 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Chester-le-Street Masterplan and Deprivation

The County Councillor advised that he had arranged for an officer of the County Council to give a presentation to the Parish Council.

b) Liaison with Lambton Estates / Picktree Village Defibrillator

The Clerk advised that one of the difficulties of providing a defibrillator for Picktree Village had been a lack of good contact with Lambton Estates. Councillors agreed that provision of a defibrillator continued to be a desirable project. Cllr Brown kindly agreed to make contact with Lambton Estates.

c) A Commemoration for the Forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III

The Clerk gave an update on discussions being held at national and County level, and on an offer by Cllr Veitch to create displays around the Parish. More information is expected to be available at the next Council meeting.

d) Boundary Commission Proposals for County Durham

The Chairman had produced a report which had been previously circulated. The Commission had recommended that the number of County Councillors be reduced from 126 to 98 by changing Ward boundaries. Councillors discussed this and agreed that the position of the Parish Council was that no change should be made to North Lodge Ward, including the area in the Ward that is unparished. The Chairman and the Clerk together are to make a submission to the Commission.

Item 10. 23/10 Requests for Donations

The Clerk advised that there were no outstanding requests.

Item 11. 23/11 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 570.54	Salaries December 2022	
Salaries	£ 570.54	Salaries January 2023	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses December 2022	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses January 2023	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 654.16	P.A.Y.E. & N.I.C.	
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Dec 2022	£ 2.40
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Jan 2023	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - Dec 2022	£ 6.64
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - Jan 2023	£ 6.64
D. Hall	£ 180.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Society of Local Council Clerks	£ 146.00	Annual Subscription	
Assn of Local Council Clerks	£ 50.00	Annual Subscription	
Makepeace Landscapes	£1022.40	Horticulture - December 2022	£170.40
Makepeace Landscapes	£1022.40	Horticulture - January 2023	£170.40
S E Harrison & Sons	£ 156.00	Christmas Tree for Picktree Village	£ 26.00
Down to Earth Landscapes	£ 144.00	Erect Tree and Lights, Picktree Vill	£ 24.00
Total of Above Payments	£4824.54		

Payments Made by Debit Card

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Amazon	£ 8.25	Printer Ink	£ 1.38
Morrison's Ltd	£ 10.75	Batteries for Tree Lights	£ 1.79

Total Card Payments £ 19.00

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 12. 23/12 Other Matters for Information

There were no other matters raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.33pm thanking everyone for their deliberations, particularly on the Precept setting.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 21st February 2023.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries February 2023	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses February 2023	
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2023	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2023	£ 6.64
Kompan Scotland Ltd	£9065.76	First Instalment - Low Flatts	£1510.96
Total of Above Payments	£		
Payments Made by Debit Card			
TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Morrison's Ltd	£ 4.50	Stationery	£ .75
Total Card Payments	£ 4.50		
<u>Balance to 31st January 2023</u>			
Balance b/f	£58311.31	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Dec 22/Jan 23	<u>£ 4824.54</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 871.58
	£53486.77	Instant Account	<u>£52697.08</u>
Deduct Card Payments for month	<u>£ 4.50</u>	Total	<u>£53568.66</u>
	£53482.27		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 36.39</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 50.00
	£53518.66		
Balance c/f	£53518.66		£53518.66

One cheque not yet presented -
£50.00 cheque number 1539 dated 17/01/2023 for annual subscription payable to Association of Local Council Clerks.