

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 20th June 2023.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Patrick Driscoll.

Councillors: Sue Brown, Margaret Caygill, Maureen May, Craig Martin, Chris Veitch.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting which commenced at 6.30pm.

Item 1. 23/59 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Elsie Forrester, Jackie Gregory, Dennis Hall and John Waugh.

Item 2. 23/60 Declarations of Interest

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

Item 3. 23/61 Report of the County Councillor

The Chairman invited the County Councillor to give his report which included the following matters.

- a) Re Northlands roundabout, the County Council Clean and Green team had agreed to produce designs which would be brought to the Parish Council for discussion.
 - b) Re a new waste bin for Picktree Village, delivery of a stock of bins was awaited.
 - c) A new hotel was planned for the Riverside cricket ground.
 - d) Re the Drum art project, there had been delays at Park View school with the production of designs.
 - e) Re the entrance to Picktree Lodge, Cllr Martin had discussed this with an officer from the County Council Clean and Green team. Cllr Martin proposed that he would fund the planting and maintenance in the first year of herbaceous shrubs with the Parish Council funding the maintenance thereafter. This proposal is to be discussed at the next meeting of the Horticulture sub-group.
 - f) Cllr Brown enquired about progress in planting a tree for the Queen's Green Canopy. Cllr Martin will chase this up.
 - g) Cllr Martin advised that he had reported as fly-tipping a large advertising board that had been sited near Northlands roundabout, and this had been removed by the County Council.
- The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 23/62 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th May 2023, 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. 23/63 Chairman's Report

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

With the Low Flatts children's play area now re- vamped and re- furbished for this month it is worth reviewing what the impact should be for both Parish play areas in the future. Merlin Drive children's play area was completed at the end of last summer, so this will be the first summer of full play facilities for the Parish.

Talking to families at both sites recently it is clear that the new improvements are warmly welcomed, and that families are still travelling from a wide catchment area to attend both sites, and the out of Parish Riverside Park. A wide area covers not only Chester-Le-Street itself, but Barley Mow, Vigo, Birtley, Northlands, and Pelton. Low Flatts has a Kompan company installation sign denoting that it is designed for ages 2-5, with parental guidance, whilst Merlin Drive covers that category, and up to young teenagers. The Riverside Park, as befitting a large site, covers all ages, with a skate board park and water splash comfortably situated.

The important context for Merlin Drive and Low Flatts is that residents had a say in the possible designs offered by the County Council. They have therefore helped to tailor them in to a well-suited niche, which should now reap the benefits in terms of footfall. Merlin Drive has certainly been very popular over the recent half term holiday, and the word is spreading about the attractiveness of that and Low Flatts, not just via social media, but nurseries, and toddler groups, and word of mouth. Barleygate and Vanburghgate, as new estates in the Parish, will start to reach full occupancy in the next year or so, hopefully adding to the play areas popularity.

A conclusion at this stage would be that we now have two fit for purpose play areas, which residents appreciate, and in a year's time it will be interesting to note whether their potential footfall is being fulfilled.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 23/55 section i). Re the demolition of the bus garage, the County Cllr was awaiting a report regarding protecting the newly opened up view.

b) Re Minute 23/55 section l). Cllr Caygill advised that the fly-tipping on the railway embankment at Drum Road was still there. The County Cllr will chase this up.

Item 6. 23/64 Portfolio Holders' Reports

The Chairman invited Cllr Veitch to give his report which included the following matter -

a) Communications and Media Development

Cllr Veitch had discussed with a group of residents that the Council did not permit replies on its Facebook and Twitter pages. Councillors agreed that these pages should remain as information boards only.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch for his report.

In her absence from the meeting, Cllr Gregory had submitted a written report below -

b) Crime and Community Safety

Crime

No reports of crime for North Lodge supplied to the parish council.

Community Safety

POLICE

There have been a few complaints received from North Lodge residents regarding the standard of driving/parking outside Park View Lower School, Lombard Drive, North Lodge, at the end of the school day.

I accompanied PSCO Richards and his colleague on a walkabout in the vicinity of the school. Although there were many stationary vehicles, there was no need for police to intervene.

However, it was agreed that the current road markings in the area need to be revamped. It was also decided, that police will make an application to Durham County Council for new 'zigzag' lines to be placed at the pedestrian crossing in North Road (north travelling south) and new double yellow lines at the entrance to Longdean Park.

Reminder non emergency calls to police, use telephone number 101

All emergency calls to police, use telephone number 999

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

The service community team has recently been working with Durham Constabulary's Road and Armed Policing team to make the regional arterial routes including the A1 and A19 safer for all to use.

Hot weather : The service has released the following information:

Be wildfire aware

No camp fires //Only use bbqs in designated areas//Take your litter home, especially glass bottles//Ensure cigarettes are put out and not thrown on the ground. If you see a wildfire, stay a safe distance from the fire and call 999.

Open water areas

With summer now here, the service has joined forces with community partners to urge anyone to think twice about entering open water. There are dangers, often hidden and could be serious.

Emergency calls to the Fire Service, use telephone number 999

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Waugh had submitted a written report below -

c) Finance

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

David has provided some valuable financial information. A draft Financial Statement which to me appears correct and which I support. There is also an Annual Governance Statement and Internal Audit Report which confirms we have robust internal procedures and controls over our financial affairs. These reports show no areas of weakness or concern. Again, I welcome and support these reports.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Finance report. Cllr Driscoll then gave his 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 Sunday the 4th of June 2023. All appeared in good condition, whilst a majority of the seats did need cleaning. Clipping of encroaching greenery and branches was also required for Ambleside Court shelter and the glass bus shelter in Picktree village. The glass cabinets were cleaned to wipe away the dust accumulated in the dry weather.

On the 20th of May it was noticed that the glass cabinet window at Northlands bus shelter was hanging wide open. Initially this was deemed to be vandalism, but after removing and checking the dis-lodged mechanism, it was found to be repairable, and it has now been re-instated, with the art poster returned at this inspection.

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

e) Horticulture

SUMMARY

All summer bedding planted. Awaiting funding from County Councillor Martin's Budget, in order to proceed with North Road two raised shrub beds.

In addition, the County Cllr advised that grass cutting was now back on schedule.
The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report.

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

In her absence from the meeting, Cllr Forrester had advised the Clerk that there were no matters to report.

g) Planning

In Cllr Waugh's absence from the meeting, no report was made.

The Chairman 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.

It is hoped to have an additional seat in this area soon.

A reminder of health and safety issues regarding play areas has been included in the Newsletter.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order and the new equipment is now in place and very much appreciated.

It was necessary to bring in our local firm to cut back the weeds growing around the perimeter fence and it is now looking very neat and tidy.

It is hoped to have the new seat added soon.

A meeting on site with the Neighbourhood Warden resulted in a notice being put up informing users that inspections would be taking place to enforce the need for owners to pick up after their dog.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

i) Policy and Governance

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Hall had advised the Clerk that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman invited Cllr Martin to give his report which included the following matters -

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Re remembrance artwork for Lombard Drive, the County Council Assets team was happy with the basics of the project. Cllr Martin hoped to present to the Parish Council in September a report for consideration. Cllr Veitch advised that a further meeting with the artist was to be arranged.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin for his report.

Item 7. 23/65 Correspondence

1) From npower Business Solutions

Letter re Qualifying Financially Disadvantaged Customer discount.

2) From CDALC

a) email re Durham County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation.

b) email re AGM nominations.

- 3) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following was within North Lodge Parish:-
- a) Retrospective application for a log cabin summerhouse in rear garden, at 45 Wanstead Crescent.
 - b) Application for various tree works, at Park View School.
 - c) Application for installation of 1no roller shutter door, 4no first floor windows and internal alterations, at Marubeni Komatsu, Drum Road.
 - d) Application for single storey rear extension with roof lantern, single storey front extension. Replacement of window to door on rear and front elevation with juliet balconies. 6x tinted glass windows on front elevation with grey slate facing brick slips, at 44 Longdean Park.
 - e) Application for tree works, at 21 Blind Lane.

Item 8. 23/66 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

The Annual Newsletter

Cllr May outlined progress to date. Some submissions from Councillors were still to come and these were requested as soon as possible. This matter is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Item 9. 23/67 Approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022 / 2023

Councillors discussed the Annual Governance Statement for 2022 / 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, and agreed to approve the statement.

(Resolved - to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022 / 2023).

Item 10. 23/68 Approval of the Accounting Statements for 2022 / 2023

Councillors discussed the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, and agreed to approve the statements.

(Resolved - to approve the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023).

Item 11. 23/69 Review of the Chairman's Allowance

At this point, the Chairman left the meeting, with the Vice-Chair taking the Chair.

Councillors discussed the Allowance and agreed that the amount of payment should be increased by £40 per annum with immediate effect.

(Resolved - to increase the Chairman's Allowance by forty pounds per annum with immediate effect).

At this point, the Chairman returned to the meeting and thanked Councillors for their deliberations.

Item 12. 23/70 Review of the Clerk's Salary and Expenses

At this point, the Clerk left the meeting.

Councillors discussed a) the Clerk's salary and agreed that it should remain linked to the national agreement and b) the Clerk's expenses and agreed that the amount of payment should be increased by £5 per month with immediate effect.

(Resolved - that the Clerk's salary is to remain linked to the national agreement and that the amount of the Clerk's expenses is to be increased by five pounds per month with immediate effect).

At this point, the Clerk returned to the meeting and thanked Councillors for their deliberations.

Item 13. 23/71 Payment of Accounts

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Salaries | £ 570.54 | Salaries June 2023 | |
| Expenses | £ 100.00 | Expenses June 2023 | |
| Ian Herberson | £ 50.00 | Internal Audit Fee | |
| Kompan Scotland Ltd | £44003.75 | Refurb of Play Area | £7333.96 |
| Makepeace Landscapes | £ 1882.39 | Horticulture | £ 313.73 |
| P. Driscoll | £ 190.00 | Chair's Quarterly Allowance | |
| HM Revenue & Customs | £ 503.00 | P.A.Y.E. | |
| HM Revenue & Customs | £ 33.27 | Employer's N.I.C. | |
| DSJ Property Services | £ 70.00 | Strimming Weeds at Low Flatts | |
| Total of Above Payments | £47402.95 | | |

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|---------------|---------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Zoom inc | £ 15.59 | Monthly Subscription - June 2023 | £ 2.60 |
| ANS Group Ltd | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - June 2023 | £ 7.71 |
| Morrisons | £ 9.50 | Stationery | £ 1.58 |

Total Card and D/D Payments £ 71.34

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 14. 23/72 Other Matters for Information

- a) Cllr Veitch advised that he now had all the litter-picking equipment and he would welcome suggestions for areas of the Parish to be cleaned.
- b) Cllr Martin advised that he was no longer Chair of the County Council Scrutiny Committee.
- c) Cllr Brown reminded Councillors that a site for a Coronation Bench was still to be selected. This matter is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.14pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th July 2023.

| | TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|---|----|----------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Salaries | | £ | Salaries July 2023 | |
| Expenses | | £ 105.00 | Expenses July 2023 | |
| Total of Above Payments | | £ | | |
| Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit | | | | |
| | TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
| Zoom inc | | £ 15.59 | Monthly Subscription - July 2023 | £ 2.60 |
| ANS Group Ltd | | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - July 2023 | £ 7.71 |
| Total Card and D/D Payments | | £ 61.84 | | |

Balance to 30th June 2023

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance b/f | £76535.96 | Balances at Bank:- | |
| Deduct Payments - June 2023 | <u>£47402.95</u> | Treasurers Account | £ 638.66 |
| | £29133.01 | Instant Account | <u>£64418.32</u> |
| Deduct Card and D/D Payments | <u>£ 71.34</u> | Total | £65056.98 |
| | £29061.67 | | |
| Add Bank Interest Received | <u>£ 51.84</u> | Deduct cheques not yet presented | <u>£ Nil</u> |
| | £29113.51 | | |
| Add Grant Received | <u>£35943.47</u> | | |
| Balance c/f | £65056.98 | | £65056.98 |