

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 February 2024.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Patrick Driscoll.

Councillors: Sue Brown, Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester,
Jackie Gregory, Maureen May, Dennis Hall,
Craig Martin, Chris Veitch.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular four people who were observing the meeting.

Item 1. 24/14 Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence.

Item 2. 24/15 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Craig Martin declared interests as a County Councillor and as a Trustee of Park View Academy. Councillor Chris Veitch declared an interest as a member of the North Lodge Remembrance Group.

Item 3. 24/16 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 -

Ecology S106 Win from Drum Development

Recent application for a new industrial unit in Drum Industrial Estate has been approved. It comes with £120,000 Ecology S106 funding that will be initially allocated to the Chester-le-Street area. This is welcoming news since a previous application had the funding allocated to Sedgfield. Since this original planning application was approved I have been campaigning to ensure where development causes harm the funding should go to that area to counteract it. This is a success, it is now down to council officers and other stakeholders to work up schemes that will use the money. I originally attempted to amend a previous planning application that was going to send S106 funding to Sedgfield. But this was blocked by Councillors from other political groupings, including those that represent Chester-le-Street.

Severely Damaged Property, Pelaw Grange Court

A house in Pelaw Grange Court has been 'ram raided' leaving the property damaged to the point it is inhabitable. I've been liaising with residents and the various agencies involved to reassure the community. The police are treating this as a very serious incident and CID are investigating. They want to provide reassurance that there is minimal risk to the wider community. With the incident clearly being directed at specific household, there is nothing to suggest that any criminal activity would be directed towards others. The police are encouraging anybody with information on the incident to report it calling 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, remember in an emergency always use 999.

Durham County Council's building control are involved to ensure the property is secured. Due to the extensive damage, it cannot be completely sealed up. Anybody entering the building do it at their own risk and it is expected the owners to access it to start work on repairing it. Hopefully they will act quickly so that it is repaired quickly and isn't left as a blight to the estate for an extended period of time.

In addition, a) the County Cllr advised that the County Council had confirmed its commitment to a new Leisure Centre on the site of the former Civic Centre but, because of increasing costs, no start date could be given, b) Re the ecology s106 monies, the County Cllr advised that these monies could go elsewhere if no appropriate projects could be found in the Chester-le-Street area. However, he was already publicising through various channels the availability of this funding. Cllr Gregory asked if the Drum Industrial Estate could be classed as an Ecology Park. However, the County Cllr advised that this would be difficult with an already developed area although planners were inserting ecology conditions into each new planning application there whenever there was an opportunity, c) In reply to Cllr May, the County Cllr advised that new beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge would be planted up around March time.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 24/17 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th January 2024, 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. 24/18 Chairman's Report

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

At this, the second month of the new year, it is worth accentuating the positives that have already been established. In agreeing at the January Parish Council meeting to keep the precept at £31.53 for a band D equivalent property, it is now 6 years, and before covid, since any rise was administered. Whatever rises occur in council tax for residents this year, the Parish Council has consistently given no additional smaller burdens on residents finances.

In addition, at this month's meeting the council are to meet artist and sculptor Graeme Hopper to try and move forward a new remembrance artwork for North Lodge, which would be a permanent asset for the community.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 24/04 section a). The County Cllr advised that the County Council was reviewing its decision to cease free parking in the town.
- b) Re Minute 24/04 section c). Cllr Gregory advised that the air pollution monitor that was in Blind Lane appeared to have been moved. The County Cllr kindly agreed to enquire about its current location.
- c) Re Minute 24/06 section b). Re the speed of traffic in Picktree Village, the Clerk is to ask the Police to consider a 24hour check at the south end of the Village. The matter of traffic issues in the Village is to be included in the Agenda for the next meeting of the Council.
- d) Re Minute 24/08 section d) sub-section a). Cllr Caygill provided an up-date on the project with the School for new artwork, and hoped to have further information soon.
- e) Re Minute 24/08 section d) sub-section b). Cllr Gregory advised that the County Council had declined to make repairs to the road surface at Low Flatts Road.
- f) Re Minute 24/08 section b). Cllr Gregory advised that applications for fire fighters were now being accepted.

g) Re Minute 24/08 section h). The County Cllr kindly agreed to press the County Council to cut back hedges at Low Flatts and to cut back the apple tree at North Road.

Item 6. 24/19 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

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

Social Media

Nothing to report as no Social Media activity for the Parish Council this month.

As always if any councillor has anything they wish to have posted on our social media please let me know.

Litter pick

Plans in place for a Litter Pick on Thursday 7th March. This will be advertised on our social media.

In addition, Cllr Veitch advised that he had posted recently about bogus callers.

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

b) Crime and Community Safety

Crime

Please refer to Police.uk

Durham County Council (DCC)

DCC working in partnership with Durham Constabulary executed a search warrant on a shop in the north of the county.

150 vape products were seized as they did not meet the legal requirements.

Illicit and dangerous tobacco and vapes can cause serious harm to people's health with the cash proceeds often invested into organised crime.

Durham Constabulary

Picktree Village

The Parish Council has received the traffic monitoring data regarding Picktree Village. The mobile speed monitoring vehicle will be attending the area, on a rota basis.

Domestic Abuse

If you are suffering from domestic abuse, call police on 101 or 999 if in immediate danger.

Don't want to speak to police, then call the National Domestic Abuse hotline available 24 hours on 0808 2000 247.

Local helpline Harbour is also available 24 hours.

Call 03000 20 25 25.

You are not alone

Clare's Law

Worried that your partner or ex partner has a history of domestic abuse.

If the police have information that could protect you, they will tell you.

Apply for a Clare's Law disclosure at www.durham.police.uk

Fraud.

National UK government and police campaign against Fraud

Stop - do you know who you are talking to ?

Think - does this sound too good to be true ?

No-one is immune from fraud.

Whether it is online or at your home, criminals will target people in whatever way they can to steal your money and personal data.

New Police Officers

24 new officers have been recruited and will now undertake training for 18 weeks.

22 officers have successfully completed their Two Year Degree Holder programme in partnership with Northumbria University.

Police Cadet-schemes

20 new police cadets were shown around the police control centre as part of their training.

For information on becoming a police cadet, visit the Durham Agency Against Crime website at www.daac.uk/projects/cadets-schemes.

For further information on any of the mentioned subjects, please visit Durham Constabulary's social media accounts.

For non emergency calls to police use telephone number 101

For emergency calls to police use telephone number 999

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue service (CDDFRS)

The fire service has published their draft Community Risk Management Plan(CRMP) that outlines how the service use the resources to keep the communities safe.

The document is now opened for a period of consultation, closing at midnight on May 10.

To take part in the survey visit <https://bit.ly/42FziBO>

CDDFRS has launched a brand new WhatsApp Channel to keep the communities as informed as possible.

Included on the channel will be up to date information on the latest incidents, news, events and job opportunities.

To sign up <https://bit.ly/49xtU5P>

Operation Trailblazer

CDDFRS recently took one of the tactical response vehicles to Riverside Park,Chester-le-Street.

The purpose was to engage with locals around the dangers of fire setting and educate people on how they can help us tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the communities.

The engagement activity was carried out as part of a Home Office funded ASB action plan, Operation Trailblazer.

Durham is currently one of the 'trailblazer' areas to receive funding to pilot urgent action to tackle ASB.

CDDFRS is working closely with Durham Constabulary, local authorities and housing associations to help stamp out disorder in the communities.

Home Safety Visits/Fire Alarms

In 2023, CDDFRS conducted 18,221 free Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) as part of the commitment to keeping communities safe. To book a visit call 0345 223 4221

For further information on CDDFRS issues mentioned, visit their social media accounts.

For all emergency calls to the Fire Service, use telephone number 999

In addition, a) Cllr Brown advised that she had still not received a reply from the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner to a letter which she had written as a resident re traffic in Picktree Village. However, as Cllr Brown did not divulge the wording of her letter, this remains a private matter not in the Council or public domain, b) Cllr Gregory advised that she would contact the Police re recent reports of bogus callers in the Parish.

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

c) Finance

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

The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch for his report. Cllr Driscoll then gave his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

d) Highways and Community Assets

Prior to this month's bus shelters inspection, during the night of 1st/2nd of February, the bus shelter glass cabinet at the shelter on North Road, next to the "Lambton Worm" public house, had the door ripped open, lock pulled out, and art poster removed. This left the cabinet unusable, and was therefore removed. This now leaves 2 shelters without cabinets, with the other one missing at the shelter across the road from this newly damaged one.

That one was completely removed over the August Bank Holiday of 2023, and reported at the Parish Council Meeting of 19th of September 2023. It was also agreed at that time for non - replacement, and the issue to be brought up again at a future meeting, which now makes this meeting appropriate as an agenda item for discussion and decision.

The bus shelters inspection was done on Monday 5th of February, and all other shelters appeared in good condition.

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

Sub Group met 9 February 2024 10am

Discussion needed re Summer planting and decision on Autumn bulb planting later in year

11.00. Stephen Makepeace joined the meeting

1. Stephen suggested he met with us at all our sub group meetings to discuss work schedule and future plans and any current issues. All 3 Councillors welcomed this suggestion.

Stephen confirmed that Spring bulbs have been planted as requested - daffodils, tulips etc.

Weather not been kind and sunshine will encourage growth

2. Summer planting discussed around specific plants and colour impact to give impact. Begonias geraniums and selection from huge range available from supplier in Lancashire. We assured Stephen that money is available to produce a colourful display.

3. Discussion around possible siting of hanging baskets, trough and wall containers. Need to ensure they cannot be stolen. Stephen to make enquiries.

4. We all agreed weather patterns are changing and we must consider climate change for future planting

Winter fertiliser has been applied twice.

5. Stephen agreed to take on responsibility of siting and caring for the Xmas tree in Picktree Village

Stephen Makepeace left the meeting

6. Councillors discussed overhanging Apple tree branches on North Road. Still waiting for DCC to complete job

7. Councillors would like an A3 map of the Parish for reference and sites of beds etc. as well as the list we already have. Clerk to be approached

In addition, a) Councillors agreed that a quote should be obtained from Makepeace Landscapes re the Christmas Tree in Picktree Village, b) Cllr May will compile a planting specification to guide Makepeace Landscapes.

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 advised on several Police matters around the town and County.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester.

g) Planning

In the absence of a Portfolio Holder, no report was made. The Clerk confirmed that he circulated all notices of planning applications in the Parish whenever they were received from the County Council.

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.

There does, however, seem to be a lot of litter around.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.

There has been a lot of mole activity in the area.

No news yet of the replacement goal post.

As the perimeter fence has not yet been cut, I feel it is getting a bit late now as the buds are appearing and birds will be nesting soon.

In addition, as the insurance company has not yet decided on the claim for the damaged goal posts, the Clerk will submit a Neighbourhood Budget application for the replacement costs. Should the insurance company eventually agree the claim, the Budget application will be cancelled.

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

i) Policy and Governance

NALC opposes the street vote development concept. (7 February)

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has opposed the government's new street vote development order plans.

In response to the recent Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) consultation on street vote development orders, NALC emphasised that street vote development orders would undermine the plan-led approach to plan-making in communities.

NALC also called for local (parish and town) councils to be specified statutory consultees at the examination stage of street vote development proposals and for the examination process to reflect that for neighbourhood and local plans.

Many parts of England have small parishes covering less than 50 residential properties. NALC proposes that these parishes must have the option to be the preferred vehicle to deliver street vote development orders.

Further costs will be an issue for small community or resident groups in their preparation for street vote development orders (e.g. commissioning environmental impact assessments), and the government must consider funding support similar to neighbourhood planning.

This consultation sought views on the detailed operation of street vote development orders, which will inform the content of regulations using new powers in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/2797-nalc-opposes-the-street-vote-development-concept>

LGA: Pavement parking powers needed now, councils urge. (10 February)

Powers to ban pavement parking need to be extended to all areas across England to save lives and make our streets safer, more than three years after a government consultation to introduce them ended, according to a new report published by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Older and disabled people, including those who use wheelchairs, as well as parents with pushchairs and younger children are all forced to navigate around vehicles which are mounted on

the kerb or across the footway, potentially risking their lives by stepping into the road and oncoming traffic. This also presents a hazard to blind and partially sighted people. Parking on the pavement can also crack and damage the surface, creating trip and injury hazards as well as leading to costly repairs and maintenance.

Pavement parking is currently only banned in London, where councils have powers to exempt certain roads. The Government held a consultation on extending this ban to all councils in the rest of England, which ended over three years ago but an announcement has yet to be made. In Scotland, a nationwide parking ban has just started to be enforced by some councils and a consultation is also set to take place in Wales on introducing restrictions on pavement parking.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/pavement-parking-powers-needed-now-councils-urge>

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall and invited Cllr Martin to give his report.

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Cllr Martin advised that he had nothing further to update.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

Item 7. 24/20 Correspondence

1) From Durham Constabulary

Traffic speed survey, Picktree Village.

2) From CDALC

a) email re Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation.

b) email re Royal Garden Parties.

3) From Durham County Council

a) email re Neighbourhood Plan Amendments - Pelton, Ouston and Urpeth.

b) Notification of committee date for planning application DM/23/01932/FPA

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

a) Application for lounge extension, at 45 Wanstead Crescent.

b) Application for single storey rear extension, at 54 Lyndhurst Avenue.

Item 8. 24/21 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Remembrance Artwork

Prior to the meeting, there had been a very helpful and informative presentation by the artist Graeme Hopper. This formed the basis for discussions by Councillors. Cllr Martin advised that the project would require a lot of engagement on legal, financial and planning matters and with the residents of the Parish. He would produce a report for discussion and decision by Councillors following which it should be possible to make funding applications.

b) Virgin Media Cabinets at Longdean Park

The Clerk advised that a reply had been received from Durham County Council (DCC) and that the MP had written to Virgin Media. However, no replies had yet been received from Virgin Media or from Gateshead Council. Cllr Hall considered that there were shortfalls in the reply from DCC and that the reply should be challenged. Councillors discussed this and agreed that a further communication should be sent to DCC. Cllr Hall kindly agreed to draft this out. Councillors thanked Cllr Hall for all his work on this matter to date.

c) New Christmas Lights for the Tree in North Road

Councillors discussed the quote that had been obtained by the Clerk. However, Councillors decided that they would prefer lights with bigger bulbs than those in the quote. The Clerk will therefore seek a further quote.

d) Future of the Bus Shelter Display Cases

The Chairman reminded Councillors of the history of damage to the display cases. Councillors agreed with regret that damaged and unrepairable cases should be disposed of and not replaced. Cllr Hall proposed therefore that the Council should be considering other ways of displaying artwork, for instance on social media and in the newsletter. Councillors agreed with this. Cllr Caygill advised that the art project with the School was on-going but there could be alternative sources for artwork should the current project come to an end.

Item 9. 24/22 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 616.14	Salaries February 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses February 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 2218.39	Horticulture February 2024	£369.73
Great North Air Ambulance Service	£ 125.00	Donation	
St Cuthbert's Hospice	£ 125.00	Donation	
Total of Above Payments	£ 3189.53		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2024	£ 7.71
Lamp Light of Peace	£ 110.00	D-Day Lamp Lights	
Amazon	£ 13.24	Printer Ink Cartridges	£ 2.21
Amazon	£ 7.96	Waste Ink Pads	£ 1.33
Ink Experts	£ 7.00	Waste Ink Reset Key	£ 1.17

Total Card and D/D Payments £ 184.45

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 10. 24/23 Other Matters for Information

a) Cllr Caygill advised that she would like CPR training for all Councillors. Cllr Veitch advised that plans for this were in formulation. Cllr Gregory advised that the recent trial training session that she had attended had been as a resident and not as a Councillor.

b) The Chairman advised that there had been a proposal to introduce a new Portfolio for Picktree Village. This would be included in the Agenda for the Annual Meeting in May.

c) Cllr Gregory advised that a donation request had been received from the Police Activity Week. This will be included in the Agenda for the April meeting of the Council.

d) Re the litter bin under the Sustrans bridge, the County Cllr confirmed that the County Council had agreed to move it but that it was not considered to be a priority. The County Cllr will press for it to be sited on the opposite side of the road. Cllr Brown advised that a new bin for Picktree Village was also still awaited.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th March 2024.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries March 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses March 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture March 2024	£
P. Driscoll	£ 190.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
HM Revenue & Customs	£	P.A.Y.E.	
HM Revenue & Customs	£	Employer's N.I.C.	
Total of Above Payments	£		
Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit			
TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - March 2024	£ 7.71
Information Commissioner's Office	£ 40.00	Data Protection Renewal Fee	
Total Card and D/D Payments	£ 86.25		

Balance to 29th February 2024

Balance b/f	£38308.86	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Feb 2024	<u>£ 3189.53</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 1515.80
	£35119.33	Instant Account	<u>£34715.57</u>
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	<u>£ 184.45</u>	Total	£36231.37
	£34934.88		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 42.49</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 125.00</u>
	£34977.37		
Add Insurance Claim Settlement	<u>£ 1129.00</u>		
Balance c/f	£36106.37		£36106.37

One cheque not yet presented -
£125 cheque number 1606 dated 20/02/24 for donation payable to St. Cuthbert's Hospice.