

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 19th March 2024.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular five residents in attendance.

Item 1. 24/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Chris Veitch.

Item 2. 24/25 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillors agreed to take Item 8b next.

Item 8b. 24/26 Virgin Media Cabinets at Longdean Park

Cllr Hall gave an up-date on replies received from Durham County Council and Virgin Media.

At this point, the Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow those residents wishing to speak to do so.

The Chairman then re-opened the meeting and Councillors discussed a way forward. It was agreed that further correspondence be sent to the CEO of Virgin Media. This matter is to be included in the Agenda for the next meeting of the Council.

At this point, four of the residents left the meeting.

Item 3. 24/27 Report of the County Councillor

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

- a) The County Cllr had funded a new piece of play equipment at Northlands play area.
- b) The new flower beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge were now installed although additional planting was needed.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 24/28 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th February 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. 24/29 Chairman's Report

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

The latest parish Council volunteer litter pick was on Thursday the 7th of March. On this occasion the majority of volunteers targeted the woods alongside the A693, where a large amount of litter and debris had accumulated both within the trees, and alongside the line of the A693 itself. By concentrating on problem areas like this, a more significant dent can be made on returning areas of the parish to a more natural habitat.

Alongside this, regular removal of litter from higher footfall footpaths and green borders, such as North Road and Vigo Lane, achieves a more attractive aspect for pedestrians. The continuing use of these litter picking events should help the parish to be nearer the cleaner natural environment that all residents aspire to.

Cllr May offered thanks to all those who had taken part in the litter pick.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 24/16. In reply to Cllr Brown, the County Cllr advised that the damaged property at Pelaw Grange Court had now been made fully secure.

b) Re Minute 24/18 section b). Re the air pollution monitor that was previously in Blind Lane, the County Cllr advised that there had been three monitors in the area but now there was just one, outside 1 Blind Lane. However, Cllr Gregory pointed out that this was a corner property and the site of the monitor was actually in North Road. The County Cllr will make further enquiries to clarify this matter.

c) Re Minute 24/18 section d). Re the School artwork project, Cllr Caygill advised that the competition had been launched and entries would be ready to be judged in April. Councillors agreed that Cllrs Caygill and Driscoll are to be the judges along with any other Councillor who might want to join in. Also agreed was that prizes are to remain the same as for last year's competition.

d) Re Minute 24/19 section b) sub-section b). Re bogus callers in the Parish, Cllr Gregory advised that the Police had taken action but had not been able to proceed to a prosecution.

e) Re Minute 24/21 section c). The Clerk advised that an additional quote had been received for new tree lights. This matter is to be included on the Agenda for the next Council meeting.

Item 6. 24/30 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Veitch had provided the written report below -

Social Media

We have posted regarding Dog fouling, the Community Policing survey and the DCC Big Spring Clean across County Durham also DCC's latest consultations:

- ◇ Local Nature Recovery Strategy for County Durham
- ◇ Solar Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- ◇ Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document

and of course our latest litter pick. We have received a few likes and shares, plus comments

thanking the volunteers for litter pick which is very positive to see.

I am sorry to say one resident continues to comment on posts in a negative manner and appears to have an issue with perceived in action of the parish Council and County Councillor. I have liaised with our County Councillor regarding contact with this individual. A reply has been posted offering an invite to the Parish Council meetings and the County Councillor's Surgery. Email addresses also provided. Future posts will not allow any form of comments (which we originally did). This is disappointing and means we will be unable to receive any feedback or have any engagement. As always if any councillor has anything they wish to have posted on our social media please let me know.

Litter pick

Another successful litter pick was carried out on 7th March 2024. We had 9 volunteers again including regulars Chairman Patrick Driscoll and Councillors Veitch and Gregory. The group successfully collected 16 bags of rubbish including a sink pedestal, paisley shirt, Polish newspaper and £21.10 which was put in the charity tin at the Lambton Worm. Another few areas which have a build of rubbish have been identified for the next litter pick which I aim to arrange for May.

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 website

Community Safety

Police

Picktree Lane, Picktree Village

The parish council has made a request for a 24/7 speed monitoring data collection at the south entrance area of the village on Picktree Lane.

County Lines

In a crack down on illicit drug operations, Durham Constabulary have arrested ten individuals, protected two children and successfully shut down multiple drug lines. The force also seized an estimated £2million worth of cannabis as part of an operation during County Lines week.

Mobile Phones

Durham Constabulary is heading into week two of the campaign to make drivers aware of the dangers of using a mobile phone at the wheel of any vehicle. The police are encouraging people to make a change that could save a life.

Sexual Grooming of Children,

Please visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk for confidential advice on the above subject. It is available for children and parents or guardians worried about their children

Police Staff Vacancies

If you are interested in a career as a member of the police staff, There are several vacancies available across the force, including

Policing Skills Trainer

HR Advisor

Crime Scene investigators

Information Analysts.

Please apply immediately.

<https://www.durham.police.uk/Recruitment/Jobs/Vacancies.aspx>

For further information on any of the above subjects, visit the social media accounts of Durham Constabulary.

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)

National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

Be Water Aware campaign week commencing April 22-28.

Don't take risks near open water.

CDDFRS have joined with Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council to help keep people safe this spring.

The warmer weather means that many people are likely to be out and about with family and friends at waterside locations within Co Durham and Darlington.

People should be aware of the dangers when near the water.

Smoke Alarms

If you or someone you know needs smoke alarms installing or replacing, please call CDDFRS safety team on 03452 234 221 to arrange a home visit.

Recruitment

CDDFRS are currently recruiting Full Time Firefighters. This is first time in five years.

For full details around eligibility and the recruitment process visit: <https://bit.ly/3UI1ZvP>

To register your interest and start your application journey visit: <https://bit.ly/48VKuwY>

Recruitment closes on April 12.

Ten new apprentice firefighters are set to begin their new careers at fire stations around Co Durham and Darlington - after proudly completing their initial training.

Community Risk Management Plan

Have you got a few spare minutes to have your say on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This outlines how CDDFRS use the resources it has to keep our communities safe

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

To read the full CRMP visit: <https://bit.ly/48pWnJL>

For further information relating to the above subjects, please visit the social media accounts of Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

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

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

c) Finance

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Veitch had provided the written report below -

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

The bus shelters inspection for this month, was undertaken on Monday 11th of March 2024. All the shelters appeared in good order, and the only extra tasks involved some minor litter and broken glass clearance.

However, most likely overnight, between the 13th/14th of March, the bus shelters at Kingsmere, northbound on North Road, and near the Barley Mow Inn roundabout, south bound on North Road, had the art posters removed and cabinet doors damaged. The only positive feature was that the locks were still intact, and with difficulty, were re-lockable, and therefore the missing art posters could be replaced. At the shelter near the roundabout, some opportunist used the open cabinet to install 2 leaflets for the " Spring Fayre at Barley Mow Village Hall", at the end of the month!

These incidents endorse the decision taken to not repair or replace badly damaged cabinets, at last month's Parish Council meeting. This is now more of a case of survival for the remaining cabinets on North Road, with both of those in question already tampered with, and the stability and

usability compromised.

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 13 March 2024 14.00

Discussion Points

- a) We have had a nice compliment from a resident about the colourful display on Picktree Lane.
- b) The cold weather has had an effect on slow growth of shrubs on the North Road raised beds. We do need sunshine and warmth.

14.55 Stephen Makepeace joined the meeting

Future planning discussed

- 1 **Raised beds in North Road** To place one Acer in each of the raised beds in North Road. The trees will be in 5 litre pots.
- 2 **Small bus stop on A167** To edge where grass is growing over pavement and re-seed small bus stop on A167.
- 3 **Lambton Park Entrance.** Due to the really bad weather the grass has suffered heavily at Lambton Park Entrance. Re-seed and fertilise this with a more suitable grass seed.
- 4 **Lambton Park Entrance** To extend beds to end of walls at Lambton Park entrance and fit soil.
- 5 **Millennium Bed.** Requires refurbishment around the tree e.g. paving and curb stones removing and replaced. - Breaking up and re unsightly and dangerous. Area around tree needs refreshing. Temporary safety measures of Heras fencing to be erected and removed when work finished.

Suggestion of any future areas for planning.

- 1. Celebration trees North Lodge / Vigo Lane Queens Canopy
- 2. Discussion re Parish feature - suggestion needed please.
- 3. General tidying up
- 4. Christmas Tree 2024 November to January 2025. Stephen Makepeace to liaise with Clerk David Murrell re arrangements - solar powered lights needed for Tree

In addition, a) Cllr May advised that the small bus stop referred to in her report was the one at Barley Mow, b) Councillors agreed that should the acers be removed from the raised beds without authorisation, then they will not be replaced, c) re celebration trees, the sub-group is to present to the Council a full proposal for consideration.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report and invited Cllr Forrester to give her report.

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Cllr Forrester advised that there were no matters to report.

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.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.

An order has been placed for a new goal post.

The perimeter hedge has not yet been cut and should probably be left till later in the year now.

In addition, the Clerk will remind the County Council that new signage, and the removal of the old sign, is still awaited for Merlin Drive play area.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report and invited Cllr Hall to give his report

i) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall advised that there were no matters to report.

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

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Cllr Martin advised that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

Item 7. 24/31 Correspondence

1) From St Cuthbert's Hospice

Thank you for donation.

2) From Great North Air Ambulance Service

Thank you for donation.

3) From npower Business Solutions

Letter re electricity prices.

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

a) Application for tree works, at 10 North Lodge.

b) Application for first floor side extension, single storey rear extension and pitched roof canopy to front (Amended Application), at 18 Lyndhurst Avenue.

Item 8. 24/32 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Cost of the Proposed Remembrance Artwork

Councillors discussed, and gave advice on, the way forward for this project. Cllr Martin is to produce a full report, including the preferred site at Lombard Drive and a maximum budget of £60,000, for the Council to discuss and endorse. In the meantime, Councillors expressed continuing full support for this project and visits to the proposed site and to the artist's workshop are to be arranged.

b) Virgin Media Cabinets at Longdean Park

This item had been considered earlier in the meeting. See Minute reference 24/26.

c) Speed of Traffic in Picktree Village

Cllr Brown advised that she, as a resident, had now sent an email to the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, a reply to her earlier letter not having been received. An acknowledgement to the email had been received but not yet a full reply. Cllr Gregory advised that a request for a new 24/7 speed monitor at the south end of the Village had been made to the Police who had forwarded it to the County Council for consideration. The outcome of this was awaited.

Item 9. 24/33 The Annual Risk Assessment

Councillors discussed the Annual Risk Assessment, draft copies of which had been previously distributed by the Clerk, and agreed to approve the Assessment in the form provided.
(**Resolved** - to approve the Annual Risk Assessment in the form provided).

Item 10. 24/34 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 615.94	Salaries March 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses March 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 1882.39	Horticulture March 2024	£313.73
P. Driscoll	£ 190.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 540.80	P.A.Y.E.	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 59.34	Employer's N.I.C.	
Total of Above Payments	£ 3393.47		

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

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

Item 11. 24/35 Other Matters for Information

- a) Cllr Caygill thanked Cllr Martin for providing maps of the Parish.
- b) Re the apple tree at the raised beds on North Road, as the County Council has not yet carried out the pruning, the Clerk is to ask the County Council for permission for the Parish Council's Gardener to carry out the work.
- c) A resident had advised Cllr Caygill that the sub-station at the south end of Lyndhurst Avenue was being used as a urinal. Cllr Gregory kindly agreed to advise the PCSO and also advised that residents should ring 101 to report further incidents including any evidence such as vehicle registration marks.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th April 2024.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries April 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses April 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture April 2024	£
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils	£ 10.00	Training Session Fee	
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils	£ 459.62	Annual Subscription	
Total of Above Payments	£		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - April 2024	£ 7.71
Total Card and D/D Payments	£ 46.25		

Balance to 31st March 2024

Balance b/f	£36106.37	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - March 2024	<u>£ 3393.47</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 601.08
	£32712.90	Instant Account	<u>£32254.86</u>
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	<u>£ 86.25</u>	Total	£32855.94
	£32626.65		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 39.29</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 190.00</u>
	£32665.94		
Balance c/f	£32665.94		£32665.94

One cheque not yet presented -
£190 cheque number 1608 dated 19/03/24 for Chair's Allowance payable to P. Driscoll.