

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 16th April 2024.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Item 1. 24/36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Elsie Forrester, Dennis Hall and Chris Veitch.

Item 2. 24/37 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.

Item 3. 24/38 Report of the County Councillor

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

- a) The County Cllr advised that funds had been made available from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to trial a specialist market in Chester-le-Street.
- b) The County Cllr continued to chase up information re the siting of the air pollution monitor at Blind Lane/North Road.
- c) Re the unfinished roadside verge on Vigo Lane, the County Cllr advised that it was the responsibility of Avant Homes to complete the works but delays were being caused by having to involve utility companies in the works.
- d) Re the new Picktree Lodge flower beds, the County Cllr confirmed the established agreement that they would be maintained by the County Council until January next year when they would become the responsibility of the Parish Council.
- e) Re the future of the former bus garage in Picktree Lane, the County Cllr advised that he had no further information to report.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 24/39 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th March 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. 24/40 Chairman's Report

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

A discussion took place between the Chairman and the Clerk on Monday the 25th of March at 11.30 a.m. This was regarding the Annual Appraisal for the Clerk, and was a structured event, based upon the format recommended by ACAS, for the conduct of an appraisal process.

The discussion covered the following:

Current performance of the Clerk's role.

The general and specific responsibilities of the post, as currently set out in the job description.

A discussion of areas where training and support may be required.

Career planning.

A number of general areas of discussion.

The results of the discussion were duly recorded in this format, to be included in the Clerk's H.R. file, and signed by the attendees.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 24/29 section c). Re the School artwork project, the Chairman advised that he and Cllr Caygill would be judging the entries on 26th April. Other Councillors were welcome to take part in the judging.

b) Re Minute 24/30 section b). Cllr Brown advised that speed monitoring equipment had been in place in Picktree Village.

c) Re Minute 24/30 section d). Re the bus shelters, Councillors agreed that these should be re-painted, where appropriate, after the works specified in the survey report had been carried out.

d) Re Minute 24/32 section c). Cllr Brown advised that National Highways had confirmed that Picktree Lane is part of an agreed diversion route for closures of the A1(M) southbound between Junction 64 and Junction 62.

e) Re Minute 24/35 section b). Re the apple tree at the raised beds on North Road, Cllr Caygill and the Clerk advised that the County Council would prune back a few crossed branches but this was not considered by them to be priority work. Councillors agreed to wait and see the outcome of this work before discussing any further action.

f) Re Minute 24/35 section c). Re the activity at the sub-station at the south end of Lyndhurst Avenue, Cllr Caygill advised that she had passed on the information to the resident concerned.

Item 6. 24/41 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

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

Social Media

No Social media activity. As informed via email by the clerk, It appears that we are one of six Councils to choose Madhouse Media as our new web provider. At present we still do not have a timescale for our new website to be online.

Litter pick

Next Litter Pick is 9th May 11:00am. Meeting at Lambton Worm. This will be advertised on our social media.

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

Community Safety

Durham Constabulary.

Mr Jon McAdam has been appointed Deputy Chief Constable.

Buckle Up

Throughout April, Durham Roads and Armed Policing team will be patrolling the county, focusing on motorists and passengers who are not wearing a seatbelt. This is part of a national campaign.

A reminder to motorists

Drivers are responsible for ensuring that suitable safety restraints are worn by all passengers under 14 years old.

Passengers over 14 years old are responsible for wearing a seat belt and can face prosecution, if not wearing one.

Children must use an appropriate child car restraint for their weight until they are 135 cm tall or their 12th birthday.

Failure to wear a seat belt carries a fine of £100. If prosecuted, the maximum fine can be up to £500.

Recruitment

37 new police officers and 12 special constables have been officially sworn in and issued with warrant cards.

For more information on any of the mentioned subject and other issues, please visit Durham Constabulary's social media accounts.

For non-emergency incidents please use telephone number 101

For all emergency incidents, please use telephone number 999

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

Be Water Aware Week (22-28 April)

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) aims to highlight the risks and offer advice on what to do if you fall into water or how to help someone who is struggling in water

Please refer to the web-site for simple rules and further information.

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/your.../news/news-item/...>

Arson: the dangers and consequences.

CDDFRS has been visiting local schools and the community to deliver educational sessions about Arson, the dangers and consequences.

Preventative action to consider:

Parents and Guardians-Talk to your children about the dangers to themselves and others.

Explain the damage fires cause to the environment.

Residents-Keep your rubbish bins secure and try not to put the bins out for collection longer than necessary.

Businesses- Secure your waste and pack any cardboard flat.

Encouragement is given to report any instances of anti-social behaviour to Durham Constabulary.

If anyone has any information regarding deliberate fires in your area, please call 'Firestoppers' anonymously on 0800 169 5558

In 2023, CDDFRS was ranked 26 in the Department of Education Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers. It was also given recognition with an award from Investors in People.

In 2024, again success to CDDFRS as it has recently been awarded the platinum level of the ' We Invest In Apprentices' accreditations scheme.

For more information on any of the mentioned subjects and other issues, please visit CDDFRS social media accounts. For all emergency incidents please use telephone number 999

In addition, a) unofficial videos purporting to show a car theft at Barley Gate had been circulating on social media, b) a dog had died after being hit by an off-road bike in the Stanley area of the Sustrans C2C Cycle Route. The safety of users of the C2C is to be an Agenda item at the next meeting of the Council.

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 monthly bus shelters inspection was completed on Monday the 8th of April 2024. All the shelters were, to all appearances, in good condition, and the only further tasks required were in seat cleaning, and litter clearance.

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 15 April 2024 14.00

Discussion Points

- a) Considering the poor weather, the flower beds are looking as well as or better than expected.
- b) Millennium Bed. From the three choices of design, the third option was chosen. Cost £3350.00 plus vat.
- c) Tree celebrations x3.
 - 1. Queens Canopy
 - 2. Coronation of Charles 111
 - 3. 80th anniversary of D Day

Suggestion of three Flowering Cherry trees to be purchased, planted in October/November 2024 and maintained by Makepeace Landscapes on a site approved by County Councillor Craig Martin.

In addition, a) re tree celebrations, Councillors agreed that a site meeting including the appropriate County Council officer would be necessary, b) re the Millennium Bed, the County Councillor kindly offered to fund this. The Clerk is to prepare a Neighbourhood Budget grant application.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report.

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

In the absence of Cllr Forrester, no report was made.

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.
Coun Driscoll reported minor vandalism here.
No further news of the new signage.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.
Since the last meeting the perimeter fence has been cut by DCC.
No further news of the replacement goal post.

In addition, the County Council had since advised that the goal posts would be received within the next few days and would then be scheduled for installation.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

i) Policy and Governance

In his absence, Cllr Hall had advised the Clerk 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 gave a report on the visit by himself, Cllrs Gregory and Veitch and the Clerk to the premises of the artist for the proposed Remembrance Artwork. This had been a valuable and informative meeting which had shown how the artist worked and had provided an opportunity to discuss ideas and options which would inform the report being prepared by Cllr Martin for presentation to the Council.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

Item 7. 24/42 Correspondence

- 1) From a Resident of North Lodge Ward
email re Council Tax bill
- 2) From Durham Constabulary
email re speed survey, Picktree Village.
- 3) 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 18 North Lodge.
 - b) Application for tree works, at 38 North Road.

Item 8. 24/43 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Virgin Media Cabinets at Longdean Park

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Hall had advised the Clerk that a) the latest reply from Virgin Media had been disappointing, b) Cllr Hall recommended therefore that no further correspondence should be sent to them, c) residents had now submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman, d) matters should be reviewed following the outcome of the Ombudsman's deliberations.

b) Quote for Attending to the Picktree Village Christmas Tree

Councillors discussed the quote received from Makepeace Landscapes and agreed that it should be accepted. The Clerk is to advise the company accordingly.

c) New Lights for the Christmas Trees

Re the Picktree Village tree, the Clerk had discussed with an estimator of the County Council, the performance of solar-powered lights during the shorter hours of daylight. The advice received was that trials by the County Council had identified very unsatisfactory performance. Councillors agreed therefore to purchase sets of battery-powered lights to replace the ones broken last Christmas

when the tree blew over.

Re the North Road tree, the County Council estimator kindly agreed to source further quotes for LED lights.

d) Request for Donation - Police Activity Week

Councillors discussed this request and agreed to make a donation of £250 to the Activity Week.

e) The Annual Newsletter

Councillors discussed the format for this year's Newsletter and agreed that it should have a theme of the D-Day 80 commemoration. Councillors were asked to send contributions to Cllr May as soon as possible.

Before the next Item, the following resolution was passed -

That in the view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

The Clerk also left the room for the duration of this Item.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Item 9. 24/44 The Clerk's Annual Appraisal

The Chairman and Clerk had carried out the Annual Appraisal and the Chairman had produced a Report which was advised to Councillors who agreed to the Chairman's recommendation to note the Report.

Item 10. 24/45 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 616.14	Salaries April 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses April 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 2302.39	Horticulture April 2024	£383.73
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils	£ 10.00	Training Session Fee	
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils	£ 459.62	Annual Subscription	
Npower Commercial Gas	£ 604.52	Power for Tree Lights	£ 28.79
Durham Constabulary	£ 250.00	Donation	
Total of Above Payments	£ 4347.67		

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

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 11. 24/46 Other Matters for Information

The Chairman reminded Councillors that next month's meeting would be the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.28pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 21st May 2024.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries May 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses May 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture May 2024	£
Zurich Municipal	£ 838.66	Annual Insurance Premium	
First Prize Winner	£ 150.00	Community Arts Awards	
Second Prize Winner	£ 100.00	Community Arts Awards	
Third Prize Winner	£ 50.00	Community Arts Awards	
Total of Above Payments	£		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - May 2024	£ 7.71
Cash Withdrawal	£ 160.00	Prizes for Community Arts Awards	
Total Card and D/D Payments	£ 206.25		

Balance to 30th April 2024

Balance b/f	£32665.94	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - April 2024	<u>£ 4347.67</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 1908.64
	£28318.27	Instant Account	<u>£77806.53</u>
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	<u>£ 46.25</u>	Total	£79715.17
	£28272.02		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 41.76</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 719.62</u>
	£28313.78		
Add Precept Received	<u>£37009.91</u>		
	£65323.69		
Add VAT Refund Received	<u>£13671.86</u>		
Balance c/f	£78995.55		£78995.55

Two cheques not yet presented -

£469.62 cheque number 1612 dated 16/04/24 for Annual Subscription and Training Fee payable to CDALC, and £250.00 cheque number 1615 dated 16/04/24 for Donation payable to Durham Constabulary.