

## **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 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Item 1. 24/61 Apologies for Absence**

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

### **Item 2. 24/62 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 WhatsApp Group.

### **Item 3. 24/63 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 additional traffic signage at the Northlands roundabout area to direct more vehicles to access Drum Industrial Estate via the A693.
- b) With the forthcoming general election, a new funding settlement for local authorities was awaited with interest.
- c) In reply to Cllr May re the unfinished roadside verge on Vigo Lane, the County Cllr understood that the utility company had now completed its work and the remaining work was now the responsibility of the housing developer. The County Cllr continues to pursue completion of these works.
- d) In reply to Cllr May re the planting of the beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge, the County Cllr offered a site meeting with the Parish Council Horticulture team to discuss the way forward.
- e) In reply to Cllr Gregory re the siting of the air pollution monitor at Blind Lane/North Road and data from it, the County Cllr will provide contact details at the County Council for the Clerk to put forward the concerns of the Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

### **Item 4. 24/64 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 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. 24/65 Chairman's Report**

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

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This month has seen the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-day landings on 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944. Congratulations must go to Councillor Veitch, and the other members of the North lodge Remembrance Group for providing such a vivid and thought provoking memorial, on the usual remembrance spot, on the grass at North Road, next to the " Lambton Worm" public house. A ceremony was also given on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, with appropriate readings, renditions by a bugler, and the lighting of two adapted beacons at the nationally accredited time of 9.15 p.m. This highlights how North Lodge Parish is able to respond to national and international events, and interpret them in it's own unique way.

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Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 24/58 section b). Re public safety on the Sustrans Cycleway, Cllr Gregory advised Councillors of the replies received from Sustrans.

**Item 6. 24/66 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

**a) Communications and Media Development**

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

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A number of posts on Facebook and X (Twitter) these includes posts regarding 50th Anniversary of Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue, CLS Splash-pad, Dangers of Open Water, Beamish Museum winning an award, upgrades on the Birtley to Beamish C2C route by Sustrans and the 80th D Day Remembrance Display and informal service.

A litter pick will be organised for July and will be advertised in due course.

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

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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**

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**Crime**

Please refer to Police.uk website.

**Community Safety**

**POLICE**

**Educating to prevent**

Durham Constabulary officers have recently carried out a series of awareness days at schools across the county around reducing collisions.

Students have received inputs from Durham Roads and Armed Policing, Casualty Reduction Unit, Durham County Council, North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service.

The days are designed to educate young people who are approaching driving age, learning to drive or newly driving about the consequences of irresponsible, careless or dangerous driving. Part of the day also included a live demonstration of a person being extracted from a vehicle.

**Road Safety**

PCSOs from the Chester-le-Street team have been busy visiting schools this week to talk about road safety.

They covered important topics such as the Green Cross Code, the importance of wearing seatbelts and ensuring drivers aren't distracted or using mobile phones at the wheel.

PCSO recruitment

The closing date for applications has been extended. You now have until Wednesday, June 26 to send in your application. [www.durham.police.uk/.../jobs/dnu-app-template2/](http://www.durham.police.uk/.../jobs/dnu-app-template2/)

Other vacancies available at Durham Constabulary.

- Senior developer
- Business support officer
- Traffic management advisor
- Fixed term HR advisor
- Policing skills trainer
- Forensic collision investigator
- Detention officer

Apply to [www.durham.police.uk/.../careers/join-us/vacancies/](http://www.durham.police.uk/.../careers/join-us/vacancies/)

Please refer to Durham Constabulary's social media accounts for further information of issues around the county

All non-emergency telephone calls, use telephone number 101

All emergency telephone calls, use telephone number 999

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

Safety beside Rivers, Lakes and other open water areas.

Everyone to remember to be cautious around open water.

As the weather warms up, it may be tempting to take a dip in our local rivers and lakes. However there are risks associated with open water swimming, including cold water shock.

For more information about our campaign, and how to keep yourself safe near water head to: [www.rlss.org.uk/](http://www.rlss.org.uk/)

Please refer to CDDFRS social media accounts for further information of issues around the county.

All emergency telephone calls, use telephone number 999

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The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

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

**c) Finance**

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

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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**

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The monthly bus shelters inspection was completed on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. All the shelters appeared to be in good condition, whilst the majority of adjacent seats needed a further clean. Overhanging ivy had to be trimmed back on the Ambleside Court shelter, and prior to the inspection there was a litter pick required, to remove bags, bottles, and cans, piled up in the shelter on the opposite side of the road from the "Lambton Worm" public house, which had been dumped as a single event.

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Councillors thanked Cllr Driscoll for his report and the Chairman invited Cllr May to give her report which included the following matters -

**e) Horticulture**

1) The flower beds had been planted up but the amount of rain was not helping the plants to establish.

2) The Horticulture sub-group had not needed to hold a meeting in the last few weeks.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report.

**f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations**

In the absence of Cllr Forrester, no report was made. Cllr May advised that she attended several AAP and CDALC meetings and could, therefore, report on them in the continued absence of Cllr Forrester.

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

**g) Play Areas**

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**MERLIN DRIVE**

All equipment appears to be in good order.

**LOW FLATTS**

All equipment appears to be in good order.

I have reported the dumping of wood etc. on the path outside the play field.

We still await the goal posts, new signage etc.

A request by a councillor for signage to be erected on the approach to the play areas has been sent to James Young for his consideration

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In addition, a) Cllr Hall gave his reasons for proposing new road signage directing to Low Flatts play area. Councillors discussed this and agreed that the proposal should be taken forward to the County Council. The Clerk advised that a request had been made to the County Council and a reply was awaited. b) Cllr Caygill advised that directions to both play areas would be included in the forthcoming Newsletter. c) The Chairman advised that the bins at Merlin Drive play area were not being emptied often enough. As a solution, the County Council had offered to install a further bin.

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

**h) Policy and Governance**

Cllr Hall advised that due to the forthcoming general election there were no matters being issued that required a report.

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

**i) Project Development, Business and External Relations**

Cllr Martin advised that the S106 application for the memorial artwork had now been submitted and approval was awaited.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin for his report and invited Cllr Brown to give her report which included the following matters -

**j) Picktree Village**

Cllr Brown reported on compliments received from residents for the flower beds and borders in the Village, the speed of traffic, litter problems and liaison with Lambton Estate particularly about parking plans for various forthcoming events there.

Re the speed of traffic, Councillors discussed a way forward and agreed that more information was required before a case could be made to the County Council Highways Department for any traffic calming or restriction measures. Cllr Brown kindly agreed to make further enquiries although Councillors considered that it might be difficult to eventually make a successful case. This matter will be included in a future Agenda when the additional information becomes available.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Brown for her report.

**Item 7. 24/67 Correspondence**

**1) From Kevan Jones MP**

Letter of thanks following his retirement as an MP.

The Clerk is to write thanking Mr. Jones for the many ways he has helped the North Lodge community. Cllr May advised that a message of thanks would be included in the Newsletter.

- 2) From Chris Bradburn  
email requesting a husting.
- 3) From Sustrans  
emails re anti-social behaviour.
- 4) From County Durham Association of Local Councils  
email re AGM to be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- 5) From Durham County Council  
email re pollution site.

**Item 8. 24/68 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration**

**a) Virgin Media Cabinets at Longdean Park**

Cllr Hall advised that there had been no further developments since last month's Annual Parish Meeting and that residents had nothing further for the Council to pursue. However, the County Cllr will enquire with the County Council about appearances of similar cabinets around the County.

**b) The Annual Newsletter**

Cllr May advised that she was close to completing the first draft and would soon visit the printers with it. The Clerk advised that pdf's of the winning Civic Arts posters had now been received from the School and had been forwarded to the printers.

**Item 9. 24/69 Adoption of new Financial Regulations**

The Clerk advised that the National Association of Local Councils had produced a new template for Financial Regulations, mainly to take account of the increasing use by Councils of electronic banking. The Clerk had adapted the template for the circumstances of the Council and draft copies had been previously circulated. Councillors discussed this and agreed to adopt the Regulations in the form provided. The Clerk will put the new Regulations on the website.

**(Resolved - to adopt the new Financial Regulations in the form provided).**

**Item 10. 24/70 Approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024**

Councillors discussed the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, and agreed to approve the statement.

**(Resolved - to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024).**

**Item 11. 24/71 Approval of Accounting Statements for 2023/2024**

Councillors discussed the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, and agreed to approve the statements.

**(Resolved - to approve the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024).**

**Item 12. 24/72 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 £20 per annum with immediate effect.

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

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

**Item 13. 24/73 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 14. 24/74 Payment of Accounts**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 615.94	Salaries June 2024	
Expenses	£ 105.00	Expenses June 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 1882.39	Horticulture June 2024	£ 313.73
Ian Herberson	£ 50.00	Internal Audit Fee	
P. Driscoll	£ 195.00	Chair’s Quarterly Allowance	
<b>Total of Above Payments</b>	<b>£ 2848.33</b>		

**Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - June 2024	£ 7.71
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 541.16	P.A.Y.E.	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 59.34	Employer’s N.I.C.	
LITE	£ 3300.00	LED Tree Lights	£ 550.00
Marmax Products Ltd	£ 455.04	Seat for Low Flatts Play Area	£ 75.84
<b>Total Card and D/D Payments</b>	<b>£ 4401.79</b>		

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

**Item 15. 24/75 Other Matters for Information**

There were no other matters submitted.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm.

**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.**

<b>TO</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Salaries	£	Salaries July 2024	
Expenses	£ 110.00	Expenses July 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture July 2024	£
DSJ Property Services	£	Repairs to Bus Shelters	
<b>Total of Above Payments</b>	<b>£</b>		

**Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit**

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

**Balance to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Balance b/f	£75402.61	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - June 2024	<u>£ 2848.33</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 565.26
	£72554.28	Instant Account	<u>£67672.75</u>
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	<u>£ 4401.79</u>	Total	£68238.01
	£68152.49		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 85.52</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ Nil</u>
Balance c/f	£68238.01		£68238.01