

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 17th September 2024.

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

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 6.30pm by welcoming everyone back after the summer recess.

Item 1. 24/86 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Maureen May and Chris Veitch.

Item 2. 24/87 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. 24/88 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 been updating the new Clean and Green manager re requirements for North Lodge. Councillors noted that the bin near The Wheatsheaf pub had now been moved, that the pedestrian controlled lights in Vigo Lane were now in place, that work had begun in Vigo Lane to reinstall the footpath and that the replacement goal posts at Low Flatts had eventually been installed.
 - b) The Government's budget was awaited to see how this would affect the operations of the County Council.
 - c) The County Cllr will follow up a request from Cllr Gregory re a resident's problem with vermin.
- The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 24/89 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th July 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. 24/90 Chairman's Report

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

Welcome back to everyone after the Summer recess. Nothing major to report but there were two significant positives to reflect on. The annual newsletter had very positive feedback from residents, particularly regarding the inclusion of the extra section highlighting all the Park View pupils " D-Day" art work, from the community arts project. This has certainly given added value for the

publication, and sets an even higher bar to follow in the future.

The other good news is that there was no further damage to the glass cabinets in the bus shelters over the summer, contrasting sharply with last year when one cabinet was removed, and others damaged. Hopefully, this can give an extended life to this valuable asset.

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 24/78 section d). Re fires at the woods alongside the A693, Cllr Gregory reminded Councillors that should there be further incidents then the Fire Service should be contacted.
- b) Re Minute 24/80 section a). Re the siting of the air pollution monitor at Blind Lane/North Road, Cllr Gregory advised that further information had been received from the County Council and an appropriate reply would be sent.
- c) Re Minute 24/85 section b). Cllr Gregory advised that the "For Sale" board at the entrance to Lambton Park was still in place. The Clerk will chase this up with the County Council.

Item 6. 24/91 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

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

Only a couple of posts on Facebook and X (Twitter). They highlight the rescheduled local Steam Fair at Lambton Park and recruitment for the local Air Cadets in Chester le Street.

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

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

Police

Crime

Please refer to website Police.uk

Graffiti writing on Low Flatts Road bridge, North Lodge, was reported to PCSO Christine Taylor.

Community Safety

Mobile phones and Seat belts

Nearly 1,000 County Durham drivers were caught using their mobile phone or not wearing a seatbelt in just one week by a temporary camera.

The camera was deployed in the first week of July as part of a trial which aims to target people committing these specific driving offences.

These cameras will be deployed at various locations in Co Durham.

622 drivers were caught using a mobile

329 drivers were caught without a seatbelt

Those caught using a mobile phone will have to pay a £200 fine and will receive 6 points on their licence.

Off Road Bikes

If you have information on antisocial off-road bikes in your area, contact us at

opendurance@durham.police.uk

Information can also be passed on anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or via their website, www.crimestoppers-ork.uk

Recruitment

Police welcomed 29 new student officers to Durham Constabulary.

Another 21 officers have successfully completed their two-year Degree Holder Entry Programme.

Police Constable recruitment opens from Monday, 30th September 2024.

Activity week 05/08/24 - 09/08/24

Burns Green Chester-le-Street

A record number of visitors for this year. After 17 years of organising this event it's just seems to get bigger and better.

From everyone at Chester le Street police, hope you enjoy your visit.

This community event was along with other groups and organisations, sponsored by North Lodge Parish Council.

Retirement

Christine Taylor, the PCSO for North Lodge, has announced her retirement at the end of September.

The parish council sends thanks for her work in the parish and good wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Details of the new PCSO will be circulated, once known.

Any emergency incidents, please use telephone number 999

Any other incident, please use telephone number 101

Please refer to Durham Constabulary social media accounts for more information.

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

Smoke Alarms

If you or someone you know, needs smoke alarms installing or replacing, contact our Community Safety Team on 0345 223 4221.

Open Day

CDDFRS is holding an open day at Bishop Auckland Fire Station on the 28th September.

Any emergency incident, please use telephone number 999.

Please refer to CDDFRS social media accounts for more information.

Durham County Council (DCC)

****SCAM WARNING****

DCC do not use QR codes for any payment methods in any of DCC pay and display car parks or spaces. Fake QR codes have been found on number of parking meters across the North East. Members of the public have also notified DCC about scam texts they have received to say that a parking fine is outstanding to their local council and to click the link on the text to pay £20.00. This information and request appears as a 'gov' phone number and website address, <http://gov.uk>. **This is also a SCAM.**

If you notice a QR code in any of DCC car parks or parking places, please inform Parking Services via email at parkingservices@durham.gov.uk or phone on 03000 263 985.

You can pay for a parking space at DCC parks and pay and display parking by: phone, cash or contactless payments (where provided).

Read more about the latest scams and fraud to be aware of in County Durham, using website: www.durham.gov.uk/currentscams

Fires and BBQs

DCC do not allow fires or BBQs on any of DCC sites apart from Hardwick Park and Wharton Park where they are only permitted in designated areas.

Lighting fires in woodland areas can spread, destroy habitats and kill wildlife.

Voter registration details (Annual review).

Residents who have recently moved, or whose details are not included on the form, can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Vacancies

Vacancies for a wide range of jobs with DCC. Details of all current vacancies and how to apply use the website Durham County Council Jobs and Careers site: <https://ow.ly/ygBw50Rf78z>

For more information please use DCC's social media accounts.

The Clerk is to write to Christine Taylor with thanks for all her work in the Parish.
The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

c) Finance

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

I have inspected the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm that everything appears correct. The Parish Council has received confirmation that the End of Year 2023/2024 Annual Governance and Accountability Return audit has been completed satisfactorily with no comments made by the auditors.

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 undertaken on Wednesday the 4th of September 2024. All the shelters seemed to be in good condition, with a large leaf removal needed at the shelter in front of the 'Lambton Worm' public house, plus a full clean of the nearby seat.
In addition, the shelter at Ambleside Court needed to have ivy clipped back, where it was overhanging from the roof. Otherwise, it was just the usual seat cleaning and litter removal in and out of the shelters.

Councillors thanked Cllr Driscoll for his report.

e) Horticulture

In her absence from the meeting, Cllr May had provided a written report which is below -

1. Raised flower beds - Present summer bedding

- a) Slugs in beds at Longdean Park. Gardiner has replaced plants
- b) Soil level of beds to be raised and beds to be packed with plants.
- c) Spring bulbs to be planted in September/October throughout parish. Suggestion of polyanthus, primulas pansies, tulips mini daffodils and grape hyacinths. To be very colourful plus replace cordyline where necessary. All beds are in differing condition areas so need individual attention
- d) Bus stop at Barley Mow to be left as it is
- e) DCC x2 beds Picktree Lodge. We take over maintenance in 2025. DCC to maintain until then and they need to be in good condition at handover

2. Millennium Tree. Shape not right. Is too square. Needs pruning of lower branches to resemble tree not bush. Gardener to action.

3. Millennium bed damage. Ongoing. Stuck in lengthy DCC process. Clerk to check progress.

4. Large shrub beds x 2. North Road. They are looking good. More spring bulbs to be added by gardener

Discussion

- a. Containers to replace barrels next to Xmas tree?
 - b. Stephen to investigate and price.
 - c. More bulbs North Road. Add daffodils Longdean to end of house to complete look.
 - d. Longdean Park bed looking tired? Needs replacing - Gardener
 - e. Residents have been very complimentary about the colourful look of the Parish.
 - f. X3 Celebration trees. Gardener to price Cherry Serrula Tree. Very attractive flowers and distinctive shiny bark.
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In addition, a) Councillors raised no objections to the quote for the additional soil for the beds. b) Councillors discussed the number of plants for the beds. c) Cllr Brown is to liaise with the County Cllr and the County Council Clean and Green team re approval for the planting of the celebration trees. d) The Gardener is to present alternatives to the barrels at the North Road Christmas Tree area.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report.

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

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

Cllr Martin advised that there had been very few meetings during the summer recess.

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

g) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

Equipment appears to be in good order.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.

Finally, the goal posts have been fitted.

We await action on the puddling on the small climbing frame.

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 -

h) Policy and Governance

Remote Meetings:

UKA: Minister hints at return of hybrid council meetings. (20 August).

A Government minister has indicated that it could reinstate the right of local authorities to run hybrid council meetings, combining physical and virtual attendance.

Jim McMahon, minister of state at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), stated the position at the beginning of this month in response to a parliamentary question from Liberal Democrat MP Daisy Cooper on the right of councils and other public bodies to stage the meetings.

“We are keen to break down barriers that prevent people from seeking to serve their communities,” McMahon said. “Allowing hybrid meetings could be a helpful step in doing that and we are keen to work with the sector to have an evidence-based discussion about its merits.”

This has provided encouragement for advocates of hybrid meetings, who have been pressing for a change in the rule that currently requires physical attendance at statutory meetings.

<https://www.ukauthority.com/articles/minister-hints-at-return-of-hybrid-council-meetings/>

Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities: Playing your part in building the homes we need:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-the-deputy-prime-minister-to-local-authorities-playing-your-part-in-building-the-homes-we-need>

Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system:

Consultation Closes: 24 September

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

Deputy Prime Minister kickstarts new devolution revolution to boost local power

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-prime-minister-kickstarts-new-devolution-revolution-to-boost-local-power>

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 approval had been received for the S106 application for funding of the memorial artwork. The next stage would be the planning application. Councillors were reminded that a site meeting with the artist had been arranged.

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

j) Picktree Village

There are 2 items of note to report this month

Durham Constabulary have carried out a further monitoring on the Lane recently. Speaking with them they appreciate that 1.5 hours does not give an accurate record of the speeding problem we have. They see this monitoring as a warning to drivers that they will monitor again as and when. I am meeting with a resident at Dobbies on Friday 13th September to discuss our joint concerns and any progress that we can make. I will report on this discussion as an update at the September meeting.

Also to mention, I have contacted Lambton Estate manager Hugo about the overhanging shrubbery from the boarded up Picktree farmhouse. It is making safe walking on the narrow pathway quite difficult. Hugo responded next day to say work would be done asap. A very welcome result considering the speed of vehicles on the Lane

I await results from the Traffic monitoring

In addition, a) Cllr Brown gave an update on the resident's communication with the Neighbourhood Sergeant for Washington. b) The County Cllr advised that the County Council would carry out patching work to the road surface through the Village.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Brown for her report.

Item 7. 24/92 Correspondence

1) From Forvis Mazars LLP

Notification of completion of the audit for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Councillors thanked the Clerk for his work in obtaining a clean audit report.

2) From Lloyds Bank plc

Notification of change of title of bank account from Business Banking Instant to Commercial Instant Access.

3) From npower Business Solutions

Advice of changes to electricity prices.

4) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

Notification of 78th AGM to be held on Saturday 12th October 2024.

5) From the Co-op Community Group

email re clearing of footpath.

Cllr Caygill outlined the overgrown condition of the public footpath between Low Flatts and the Drum Industrial Estate and the need to have a fence at the culvert there. A site meeting has been arranged with the Co-op team to discuss any possible input from them. The Clerk is to contact the factory owners to try to ascertain the ownership of the footpath.

- 6) 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 5 Vigo Lane.
 - b) Application for erection of 1no detached dormer bungalow, at land to the south east of 27 Blind Lane.

Item 8. 24/93 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

Condition of Public Seating in the Parish

The Chairman had kindly carried out an audit of public seating in the Parish. Re the seat next to the Lambton Worm pub, Councillors agreed that it was in poor condition and its siting under a tree created a health and safety risk. Therefore, the preferred option was to remove the seat and its plinth. The Clerk is to obtain a quote for this. An item, advising of the intended removal, is to be posted on social media. The seat at the Barley Mow bus stop was also in poor condition and should be replaced. The Clerk is to seek a quote for a black composite seat from the County Council Clean and Green team. Re the cleaning of seats, the Clerk reminded Councillors that the Chairman was carrying out this activity as a resident and volunteer and not under the direction of the Council. The subject of seating is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Item 9. 24/94 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 615.14	Salaries August 2024	
Expenses	£ 110.00	Expenses August 2024	
Salaries	£ 614.94	Salaries September 2024	
Expenses	£ 110.00	Expenses September 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 1882.39	Horticulture August 2024	£313.73
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 1882.39	Horticulture September 2024	£313.73
DSJ Property Services	£ 420.00	Installation of Seat at Low Flatts	
P. Driscoll	£ 195.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Total of Above Payments	£ 5829.86		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - August 2024	£ 7.71
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - Sept 2024	£ 7.71
Jak HQ Ltd	£ 486.00	Design and Printing of Newsletters	£ 16.00
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 544.16	P.A.Y.E.	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 61.41	Employer's N.I.C.	

Total Card and D/D Payments £ 1184.07

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 10. 24/95 Other Matters for Information

- a) The Clerk is to make enquiries for obtaining two poppy wreaths. Councillors agreed to make a donation of £200 to the Poppy Appeal, to include the cost of the wreaths.
- b) Cllr Gregory advised of several events coming up in the next few weeks -

Farmers Market Chester-Le-Street this weekend

Saturday 21 September, 10am - 3pm

Marketplace, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3RA

Durham Book Festival Bridget Jones creator Helen Fielding, Pat Barker, Jodi Picoult and Terry Deary are among the literary luminaries who will appear at our event when it returns from 10 to 13 October.

The County Durham Environmental Awards 2024 Launched on Monday 9th September. Applications are now open for entries. There are lots of categories for individuals, schools, businesses and groups.

Please refer to Durham County Council's social media accounts for more information.

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 15th October 2024.

	TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries		£	Salaries October 2024	
Expenses		£ 110.00	Expenses October 2024	
Makepeace Landscapes		£	Horticulture October 2024	£
Durham County Council		£ 1474.80	Supply & Installation of Goal Posts	£245.80
Total of Above Payments		£		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

	TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd		£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription - Oct 2024	£ 7.71
Poppy Shop		£ 200.00	Wreaths and Donation	£ 7.16
Total Card and D/D Payments		£ 246.25		

Balance to 30th September 2024

Balance b/f	£64858.42	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Aug/Sept 2024	<u>£ 5829.86</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 601.20
	£59028.56	Instant Account	<u>£57359.39</u>
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	<u>£ 1184.07</u>	Total	£57960.59
	£57844.49		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 116.10</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ Nil</u>
Balance c/f	£57960.59		£57960.59