

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 15th July 2025.

PRESENT Chairman: Councillor Craig Martin.

Councillors: Suzanne Brown, Margaret Caygill, Maureen May, Glenn Batey, Patrick Driscoll, Dennis Hall, Darren Hawkes, Graham Watson.

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm with the Chairman welcoming everyone, in particular Graham Watson who had applied for co-option to the Council.

Cllr Caygill advised of the recent death of former Councillor Carole Walton. The Clerk is to send a sympathy card.

Item 1. 25/82 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Jackie Gregory and Chris Veitch.

Item 2. 25/83 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Craig Martin declared interests as a County Councillor and as a Trustee of Park View Academy.

Item 3. 25/84 Application for Co-option - Graham Watson

Mr Watson had applied to be co-opted to the Council. His application form had been previously circulated by the Clerk to all Councillors. Mr Watson left the meeting whilst Councillors discussed his application which was approved unanimously. Cllr Watson then returned to the meeting and was welcomed to the Council.

(Resolved - to co-opt Graham Watson to the Council).

Item 4. 25/85 Report of the County Councillor

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

Park View Ofsted 'Good'

Park View School's recent Ofsted inspection has come back with 'good' in all areas while its 6th form provision is 'outstanding'. This is an improvement from two years ago when the school was rated 'requires improvement'.

This only happened down to the hard work of all the staff, students, and parents. As one of the trustees of the school, I've supported leaders in delivering improvements in the school and challenged them on their work. The last Ofsted inspection has led to a concerted effort to improve standards for all pupils.

Park View School has always been successful at delivering students with high grades. But the work done in improving the grades of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is what led to the improved rating.

Consultation County Durham Plan

The government has increased the housing allocation for County Durham, meaning that the Council now must redo the County Plan. They've opened a consultation calling on stakeholders to put forward initial areas they believe would be good locations to develop. I recommend Parish Councillors take a look at it and participate.

<https://letstalkcountydurham.co.uk/en-GB/folders/countydurhamplan>

New Surgery Arrangements

1st Monday of every month, 6.00pm-7.00pm, at the Wheatsheaf.

Everyone is welcome, feel to pop in and say hello. If inconvenient, very happy to meet any resident at a mutually agreeable time and location.

In addition, a) The County Cllr recommended that Councillors should take part in the County Durham Plan consultation, b) Councillors discussed the apparent recent high increase in the number of traffic incidents at Northlands roundabout. The Clerk is to express concerns to the County Council as outlined by Cllr Hall. Residents are to be asked on social media for their comments. This matter is to be included in the Agenda for the September 2025 meeting of the Council, c) Cllr Watson commented on poor sightlines for drivers at the junction of Lombard Drive and Leander Avenue. The County Cllr agreed to discuss this with Cllr Watson, d) Cllr Hawkes commented on a dispute re wild bird feeding in Lombard Drive. Cllr Hawkes is to liaise with Cllr Veitch for an item on social media. The County Cllr advised that he was already supporting the residents who had raised the matter with him. Councillors thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 5. 25/86 Adoption of Minutes of Council Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th June 2025, 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 6. 25/87 Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave an update re the Barley Mow signage press campaign. Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 25/70 section a). Cllr Caygill advised that the smaller posters from the Art Society for the noticeboards were expected within the next two weeks.
- b) Re Minute 25/71 section e). Re funding for the proposed celebration trees for Vigo Lane, the County Cllr advised that he would welcome a conversation with Cllr May.

Item 7. 25/88 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Veitch had advised the Clerk that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch.

b) Crime and Community Safety

In her absence from the meeting, Cllr Gregory had provided a written report below -

Crime

Please use Police.uk website for any recorded crimes in North Lodge.

Community Safety

Police

Fatal Four

A road safety campaign highlighting the 'Fatal Four' driving offences will be visible across the UK thanks to a Durham haulage firm.

Using Mobile phones- distraction.

Not wearing seat belts.

Speeding.

Using Alcohol and Drugs- then driving a motor vehicle.

Please refer to Durham Constabulary's Facebook account for full story.

Drones

Durham Constabulary has expanded its fleet of Drones further and can now operate drones 24/7. With 40 qualified pilots now able to operate the drones, several hubs have been created across County Durham and Darlington, meaning that a drone is only minutes away from an incident if needed.

Durham Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen has recently provided funding for 16 new pilots and four drones.

It is hoped further funding will be secured to allow for further training and equipment in the coming months.

Illegal Waste Carriers

Neighbourhood Wardens teamed up with officers from Durham Constabulary and the The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) as part of an operation to crack down on illegal waste carriers.

Wardens checked that correct licences were in place to transport waste, officers from Durham Police and DVSA carried out full inspections on the vehicles to ensure they were fully road legal. These checks are vital in the fight against fly-tipping and environmental crime. If you carry waste as part of your business, make sure you're registered.

Remember: Always ask to see a waste carriers license and ask for a receipt before handing over your rubbish!

Please refer to Durham Constabulary's social media accounts for further information.

For non- emergency telephone calls to Police, use telephone number 101

All emergency telephone calls to police, use telephone number 999

Co Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)

Water Safety

It may be tempting in the summer months to enter open water, especially when it is warm and sunny, but remember the water in sea, lakes, rivers and reservoirs are still extremely cold - even on the hottest of days.

There are also dangers hiding underneath the water, which you can't see from the surface.

CDDFRS want everyone to enjoy visiting their favourite spots of open water this summer but we urge you to do so safely without taking any risks

Wildfires

Dry weather removes the moisture from vegetation, making it highly flammable, and causing fire to spread faster.

Meaning it creates the perfect conditions for wildfires, which can have devastating consequences to wildlife and community areas

When firefighters are attending preventable fires, it can impact the ability to respond to other emergencies.

So if you're celebrating with friends and family out and about in our parks, forests and wooded areas, CDDFRS is asking you to put down the sausages and pick up a baguette instead - to pack a picnic, not a BBQ.

Please refer to CDDFRS social media accounts for more information.

For all emergency telephone calls to CDDFRS please use telephone number 999

Durham County Council (DCC)

Independent Co-opted Panel Member

The Durham Police and Crime Panel is looking to appoint an independent co-opted member from County Durham or Darlington who is committed and enthusiastic.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for setting the priorities and resources for Durham Constabulary, as well as supporting broader community safety activities across the region. They're required to consult with the panel on their plans for budget and policing, as well as the level of tax collected through the Council tax and the appointment of a Chief Constable.

Independent co-opted members, through their knowledge and experience, are expected to enhance the panel's ability to play its role effectively.

If you think you could join the panel from October 2025 for a four-year term, or would like to know more about the role, please contact durhampoliceandcrimepanel@durham.gov.uk

Road Works and Congestion

Have your say on roadworks and congestion in County Durham.

DCC is proposing a Lane Rental Scheme to help reduce traffic disruption on our busiest roads – and want your views on the following:

- 1) Charges for roadworks during peak hours (on traffic sensitive roads)
- 2) Less congestion, smoother journeys Better air quality and road conditions
- 3) The revenue raised from it would be reinvested into upgrading and protecting our roads.

Read the draft proposals and share your thoughts: letstalkcountydurham.co.uk

Please refer to DCC's social media accounts for more information.

To contact DCC by telephone number use telephone number 03000 26 0000

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

c) Finance

In his absence from the meeting, Cllr Veitch had advised the Clerk that all financial information supplied to him confirmed that everything appeared to be correct.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch for his report.

d) Highways and Community Assets

Cllr Driscoll's report included the matters contained in his written report below -

The monthly bus shelters inspection was undertaken on Monday the 7th of July. All the shelters appeared to be in good condition, with just some minor tidying and seat cleaning needed.

The glass shelter in Picktree Village has now had the replacement glass panel installed.

All the glass cabinets have now had a strapline placed under each art poster - " Artwork courtesy of Chester - Le - Street Art Society", as provided by the clerk.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Driscoll for his report.

e) Horticulture

Cllr May's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

SUMMARY

The summer flower beds are now flourishing and looking very good. There is one bed of concern in Lombard drive which appears to have been damaged - ? by rabbits or vandalism. The jubilee tree has also been damaged by rabbits. Councillor May has discussed this issue with Stephen Makepeace. Stephen and his team have replaced the jubilee bedding three times. If the Council so wishes, Stephen will replace the plants and charge the Parish Council the cost of the bedding plants but will plant them free of charge. Stephen Makepeace and his team have consistently watered and fed all the beds. Stephen has reported back that he has had several nice comments from the public regarding their work, which he is very proud of.

In addition, the Horticulture sub-committee will consider the proposal to replant the damaged bed. An item re the damage by rabbits is to be posted on social media.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report.

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Cllr Batey advised that he would be attending on-line the forthcoming meeting of CDALC. Cllr May advised that she would be attending in person.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Batey and Cllr May.

g) Picktree Village

Cllr Brown's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

Picktree village is looking lovely in this summer sunshine. The natural environment enhances the buildings. My only news is that I have now spoken to the newly appointed Lambton Estate Manager and he has invited me to visit the Estate Office for a chat. Harvey Lee is his name and I look forward to establishing a useful relationship. I asked about trespassers at Picktree farmhouse and he stated that renovation work and securing the boundary will begin soon. Fingers crossed for that. No more ugly graffiti has appeared recently. I have noticed the same signature around Rickleton and around Vigo Lane.

In addition, Cllr Brown advised that there was a lot of intrusive noise in the Village from speeding traffic.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Brown for her report.

h) Play Areas

Cllr Caygill's report included the matters contained in her written report below -

MERLIN DRIVE

The site is looking tidy and all equipment appears to be in good working order.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good working order and after a litter pick the site is looking tidy. Since the last meeting I have reported the removable fence panel being loose and dangerous. I am pleased to say it has now been secured.

In addition, the Clerk will contact the County Council re the poor condition of some of the signage and re the possibility of a direction sign for Low Flatts.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

i) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall provided an oral report on the Government's English Devolution and Empowerment Bill.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hall for his report.

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Cllr Martin advised that planning permission had now been granted for the Remembrance Artwork. However, permission was still awaited from the County Council's CPAL department. Councillors thanked Cllr Martin for his report.

Item 8. 25/89 Correspondence

- 1) From a Resident
email re wild bird feeding.
- 2) From Durham County Council
Approval of Planning Permission re planning application DM/25/01240/FPA.
- 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 19 Blind Lane.
 - b) Application for two storey rear extension, at 58 North Road.

Item 9. 25/90 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) The Annual Newsletter

Cllr May gave an update on progress. A draft had been produced by the printers and circulated to all Councillors. Some additional items were suggested for consideration. Cllr May was thanked for her work to date on this matter.

b) Quote for attending to the North Road Tree Lights

The Clerk advised that the County Council had provided a quote of £607.71 + vat to test the lights, dress and undress the tree and return the lights to store. Councillors discussed the quote and agreed to accept it.

Item 10. 25/91 Payment of Accounts

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Salaries | £ 643.28 | Salaries July 2025 | |
| Expenses | £ 115.00 | Expenses July 2025 | |
| Makepeace Landscapes | £ 1976.51 | Horticulture July 2025 | £ 329.42 |
| Dominic Waugh | £ 934.00 | Planning Consultancy | |
| Total of Above Payments | £ 3668.79 | | |

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| ANS Group Ltd | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - July 2025 | £ 7.71 |
| Cartridge People | £ 23.89 | Printer Ink Cartridge | £ 3.99 |
| Total Card and D/D Payments | £ 70.14 | | |

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 11. 25/92 Other Matters for Information

- a) Cllr Caygill reported on a recent meeting with officers from the Clean and Green team. Cllrs Caygill, Gregory and May had been in attendance and Cllr Gregory had kindly drawn up the minutes of the meeting. Included in the matters discussed was the possible cutting back or removal of the apple tree on North Road. The County Councillor kindly agreed to take this forward with the County Council.
- b) In reply to a question from Cllr Hawkes, the County Councillor outlined the County Council's grass cutting regime.

- c) Re anti-social behaviour by bike riders on the C2C, Cllr Batey advised that the Police expected to be able to tackle this better through the use of drones and new laws to be introduced.
- d) Cllr Hawkes advised of two recent incidents of fires on the C2C. The Clerk is to ask Sustrans to introduce preventative measures.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.02pm.

DRAFT

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th July 2025.

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Salaries | £ 643.28 | Salaries July 2025 | |
| Expenses | £ 115.00 | Expenses July 2025 | |
| Makepeace Landscapes | £ 1976.51 | Horticulture July 2025 | £ 329.42 |
| Total of Above Payments | £ 2734.79 | | |

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

| TO | AMOUNT | REASON | VAT |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| ANS Group Ltd | £ 46.25 | Monthly Subscription - July 2025 | £ 7.71 |
| Cartridge People | £ 23.89 | Printer Ink Cartridge | £ 3.99 |
| Total Card and D/D Payments | £ 70.14 | | |

Balance to 24th June 2025

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance b/f | £69276.29 | Balances at Bank:- | |
| Deduct Payments - June 2025 | <u>£ 3830.37</u> | Community Account | £ 1649.06 |
| | £65445.92 | Commercial Instant Access | <u>£63992.78</u> |
| Deduct Card and D/D Payments | <u>£ 893.02</u> | Total | £65641.84 |
| | £64552.90 | | |
| Add Bank Interest Received | <u>£ 45.61</u> | Deduct cheques not yet presented | <u>£ 1049.58</u> |
| | £64598.51 | | |
| Deduct Bank Charges | <u>£ 6.25</u> | | |
| | £64592.26 | | |
| Balance c/f | £64592.26 | | £64592.26 |

Three cheques not yet presented -

£250.00 cheque number 1668 dated 20/05/25 payable to The Office of Durham PCC for donation.

£203.00 cheque number 1673 dated 17/06/25 payable to Craig Martin for Chair's Allowance.

£596.58 cheque number 1674 dated 17/06/25 payable to Durham County Council for installation of seat.