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 20th October 2026.

PRESENT	Chairman:	Councillor Craig Martin.
	Councillors:	Suzanne Brown, Margaret Caygill, Maureen May, David Dinsley, Patrick Driscoll, Dennis Hall, Darren Hawkes, Chris Veitch.
	County Councillor:	Craig Martin.
	Clerk:	David Murrell.
		1 Resident

The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming everyone, particularly the resident in attendance.

Item 1. 26/94 Apologies for Absence
There were no apologies for absence.

Item 2. 26/95 Declarations of Interest
Councillor Craig Martin declared interests as a County Councillor and as a Trustee of Park View Academy. Councillor Darren Hawkes declared an interest as a member of the North Lodge Remembrance Group. Councillor Chris Veitch declared an interest as the Chairman of the North Lodge Remembrance Group..

Item 3. 26/96 Report of the County Councillor
The County Councillor's report included the matters contained in his written report below -

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They agreed that the road has deteriorated, despite the patching work that has been carried out, and that it would benefit from being fully resurfaced. Unfortunately, the Council does not believe that Low Flatts Road is currently a high enough priority to be included in the next round of resurfacing work. This is due to the limited resources available to resurface roads across County Durham.

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In addition, a) Cllr Caygill asked if the turn from North Road to Low Flatts Road could be made more prominent. The County Cllr kindly agreed to take this request forward. b) Re the planning reforms, Cllr Hall enquired as to who at the County Council would be making the decisions. The County Cllr will obtain this information.

Item 4. 26/97 County Durham Plan – Picktree Village Green Belt

The County Cllr reported that there had been a very good turnout of residents, councillors and the MP for the photos for the press release which would be ready for publication within the next few days. The next step would be to form a small working group of residents and councillors to monitor progress.

(**Resolved** – to form a working group of residents and councillors to monitor progress of the Picktree Village Green Belt in the County Durham Plan).

Item 5. 26/98 Adoption of Minutes of Council Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th September 2026, 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. 26/99 Chairman's Report

The Chairman advised that there were no matters to report.

Councillors thanked the Chairman.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 26/86. Re the empty property at Kingsmere, Cllr Hawkes advised that several residents had been active in further drawing the attention of the County Council to the property.

b) Re Minute 26/88 section 2). Re possible lighting for the Remembrance Artwork, Cllr Veitch considered that the existing street lighting was sufficient.

c) Re Minute 26/88 section b). Re new displays for the bus shelters' cabinets, Cllr Caygill advised that postcards had now been received from George Nairn and these were now with Cllr Hawkes who was kindly arranging for posters to be printed from the postcards.

d) Re Minute 26/89 section e). Cllr Brown reported on a recent site meeting with David Wales, the County Council Clean and Green Team Leader (North) at which, amongst other things, Mr Wales offered to have the North Road tree stump ground out free of charge.

e) Re Minute 26/91 section c). Re a defibrillator for Picktree Village, the Clerk advised that a finance proposal was to come forward for consideration by the Council.

Item 7. 26/100 Parish Council Budget Setting for 2027/2028

The Chairman, with input from the Finance Portfolio Holder and the Clerk, had produced a draft budget for consideration and also an amended budget to the draft which had had input from the Horticulture Portfolio Holder. Cllr Martin provided detail to the figures in the draft budget and advised that the aim was to produce a breakeven budget. Councillors discussed the draft and recognised the need to be mindful of the cost of living for residents. Cllr Veitch then moved the approval of the draft budget and Cllr Martin seconded. Cllr May then detailed the amendment to the draft and moved its approval with Cllr Brown seconding.

At this point, the resident left the meeting.

(**Resolved** on a show of hands with eight against the motion and one abstention – to refuse the proposed amendment to the draft budget).
(**Resolved** on a show of hands with eight for the motion and one abstention – to approve the draft budget and set a Precept of fifty-one thousand, seven hundred and fifty-two pounds 20p for the financial year 2027/2028).

Item 8. 26/101 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

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

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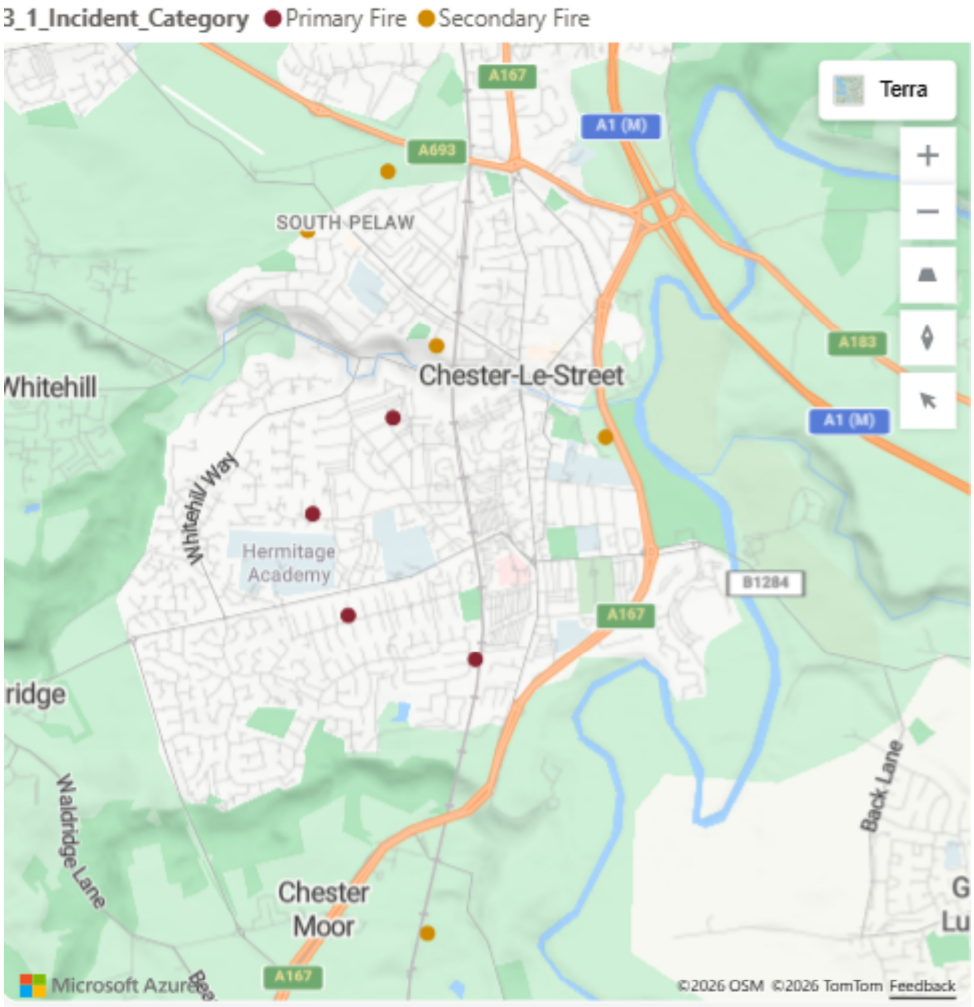
Chester-le-Street (Areas covered - Central, North, East, West, South)
9 x Fire Related Incidents. 4 x Dwelling (Largely consisting of small fires related to cooking) & 5 Secondary fires (Grass / Woodland)



Recruitment for On Call crews across the County continues and the Wholetime Recruitment Campaign is now live. This can be viewed on their website and social media.
CDDFRS also recently ran a training exercise at the Riverside Park in Chester le Street.

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The Chairman thanked Cllr Veitch for his report.

c) Finance

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

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I have inspected the financial information for our Bank accounts, and as always I can confirm that everything appears correct. Cllr Martin, myself and the Clerk have been liaising and finalising proposals for the forthcoming coming budget for our next financial period. Councillors will be updated in the forthcoming meeting.

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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 -

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The monthly bus shelters inspection was done on Wednesday the 7th of October 2026. The shelters appeared to be in good condition, with one exception.
That exception was the shelter at Kingsmere, where the glass cabinet pane had been given a full length crack from a heavy blow, which will require a new glass pane to be fitted, if possible.

All shelters needed a clear out of Autumn leaves, and the shelter at the "Lambton Worm" public house had to have full clean down of the adjacent seat, due to a combination of wind, rain, and sheltering birds in the canopy of tree branches above it.

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Interesting to read in the local newspaper of the proposed housing development of a field behind Bournmoor Primary School of 399 houses. 30% will be affordable housing. Builder is Persimmon. Enjoy the lovely colours of Autumn. The trees around the village are stunning.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Brown for her report..

h) Planning

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

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W/E 16th October

North Lodge/

North Lodge/ East North	DM/ 26/02518/ FPA	Construction Industry	136 Wanstead Crescent Chester-le-street DH3 2BP	Retention of Boundary Fence

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W/E 9th October

No applications within the parish.

W/E 2nd October

No applications within the parish, however there is one in North Lodge ward.

North Lodge/

No Parish/ East North	DM/ 26/02482 /FPA	Mrs Gillian Bell	6 Broadway Chester-le-street Chester-le-Street DH3 3RT	Erection of front and rear extensions, existing garage and porch to bedroom/bathroom

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W/E 25th September

No applications within the parish.

W/E 18th September

North Lodge/

North Lodge/ East North	DM/ 26/024 12/TPO	Twin Trees	Brooklands 23A North Lodge Chester-le-Street DH3 4BA	T1- sycamore - fell close to ground level as possible and T2 - birch - fell close to ground level

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North Lodge/

No Parish/ East North	DM/ 26/024 62/TPO	Julie Driver	89 Highfield Rise Chester-le-Street DH3 3UY	T1 Sycamore - Reduce and reshape by 2m

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There is also a licensing application for Drum Industrial Estate, should anyone have any objections.

Details below, with a link to the DCC website.

From: Lynn Hodgson - Licensing Officer <Lynn.Hodgson2@durham.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 October 2026 16:15
Subject: BiD Food, Angel Park, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street, DH2 1AQ
Dear Sir/Madam,
The following application has been received/accepted by Durham County Council.
Application Type - Application for a New Premises Licence
Applicant: - BFS Group Limited
Premises – BiD Food, Angel Park, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street, DH2 1AQ
Date of Application – 1st October 2026 Last date for representations – 29th October 2026
If you require further details in relation to this application, this information will be available to view on the Council's website within the next 5 working days via the following link:
http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2136/Licensing-Act-2003-applications
Kind Regards
Lynn Hodgson
Licensing Officer
Community Protection Service
Neighbourhoods and Environment
E-mail: licensing@durham.gov.uk
E-mail:lynn.hodgson2@durham.gov.uk
For general licensing enquiries please email licensing@durham.gov.uk

In addition, although not having any direct impact on us, I have also included the correspondence below regarding the offshore wind project, which in my opinion will have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the County Durham coastline.
Subject: Morven Offshore Wind Farm – Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid Connection Project – Autumn 2026 Consultation launching 6 October 2026
Dear Sir / Madam,
We are emailing to let you know that we will be launching the Autumn 2026 consultation for the Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid Connection Project on 6 October 2026.
The project
Morven Offshore Wind Limited ("MvOWL") (company number 13792251) is developing the MHPGC Project to connect either the Morven North Offshore Wind Array Project or the Morven South Offshore Wind Array Project to the National Grid at Hawthorn Pit.
The MHPGC Project comprises offshore export cables in Scottish and English waters and onshore infrastructure in England, near Seaham.
The consultation
The consultation will run from 6 October to 15 November 2026. All consultation materials will be published on our website www.morvenoffshorewind.com.
Feedback received through our previous consultations in 2024 and 2025, alongside further technical and environmental assessment, has helped us refine the proposals being presented in 2026. In 2025, we presented two landfall location options, two cable corridors and three land substation site options. MvOWL is now seeking any further feedback on the proposals, prior to an application being made for development consent.
We are inviting your feedback on:
The proposed infrastructure routeing and locations:

- one refined offshore export cable corridor;
- one proposed landfall location;
- one indicative onshore export cable corridor
- one AC connection cable corridor from the new land substation to the existing National Grid Hawthorn Pit Substation; and

- two further refined options for land substation sites to support down selection to one site;

2 the proposed approach to construction, operation and maintenance, including temporary infrastructure and associated activities; and

3 the potential impacts of the MHPGC Project and the measures proposed to avoid, reduce or mitigate these effects as outlined in the PEIR and Non-Technical Summary.

Meaningful engagement with local communities is core to the MHPGC Project ethos and consultation approach. Whilst there is no longer a statutory requirement to undertake pre-application consultation or publish a Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR"), MvOWL has elected to undertake a further round of pre-application consultation and publish a PEIR as part of this consultation.

We would welcome your support in promoting the consultation once it has launched on 6 October and we can provide printed copies of the leaflet, poster and consultation brochure, should you need them.

In accordance with Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, please find attached the notice publicising the Proposed Application in accordance with section 48 of the Planning Act 2008.

Details of the consultation, including how to find out more about the project, the times and locations of our public exhibition events, and how to provide feedback, can be found on the attached leaflet.

Should you have any questions, you can contact the team on info@morvenoffshorewind.com or 0800 669 6110.

Yours sincerely,

LScadden

Laura Scadden
Transmission DCO Consents Manager
Morven Offshore Wind Limited

Morven
Offshore
Wind Farm

Morven Offshore Wind Limited is a limited company registered in England and Wales, with registered number 13792251. Our registered office is at Chertsey Road, Sunbury On Thames, Middlesex, England, TW16 7BP.

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The Chairman thanked Cllr Hawkes for his report.

i) Play Areas

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

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Item 9. 26/102 Correspondence

1) From the Office of Luke Akehurst MP
email re off road bikes meeting.

2) From County Durham Association of Local Councils
Notification of the AGM to be held on Saturday 24th October 2026.

3) From Morven Offshore Wind Ltd
Notification of consultation re the Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid Connection Project.

Item 10. 26/103 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) An Alternative Venue for Council Meetings

The Chairman advised that he and Cllr Hall had established that there were no fully suitable spaces at the current venue. Councillors discussed alternatives and agreed with the Chairman's proposal that a meeting room at Barley Mow Village Hall should be trialled for the next three meetings. The Clerk is to make the appropriate booking.

b) County Council Consultation on 2027/2028 Budget

The Clerk outlined the consultation process. Councillors discussed this and agreed to submit comments welcoming the proposed additional weed spraying, against the proposed extension of the period between grass cutting and a concern at the poor standard of grass cutting which left a mess of cut grass on pavements and roads.

c) Donation Requests

North Lodge Remembrance Group – A written request had been submitted and circulated to Councillors for a donation of £260 towards a replacement defibrillator battery. Cllr Veitch, as Chairman of the Group, detailed the need for the battery. Councillors discussed this and agreed to the request.

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – The Clerk advised that two wreaths had been bought from the RBL for £46 including vat. Councillors discussed making a donation to the Poppy Appeal and agreed to make a donation of £154. Cllr Veitch outlined plans for a Remembrance Day event and a Christmas Eve event at the Remembrance Artwork. Councillors agreed to provide funding of up to £300 from the Community Improvement Fund towards a buffet for the Remembrance Day event.

Item 11. 26/104 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 686.78	Salaries October 2026	
Expenses	£ 118.00	Expenses October 2026	
Makepeace Landscapes	£ 2144.51	Horticulture October 2026	£ 357.42
George Nairn	£ 100.00	Supply of Old Postcards	
CDALC	£ 20.00	Training Event	
North Lodge Remembrance Group	£ 260.00	Donation	
Total of Above Payments	**£ 3329.29**		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription – Oct 2026	£ 7.71
Poppy Shop	£ 46.00	Poppy Wreaths	£ 7.67
Poppy Shop	£ 154.00	Donation	
Post Office Ltd	£ 21.60	Postage Stamps	
Total Card and D/D Payments	**£ 267.85**		

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 12. 26/105 Other Matters for Information
There were no other matters raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.02pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th November 2026.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries November 2026	
Expenses	£ 118.00	Expenses November 2026	
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture November 2026	£
DSJ Property Services	£ 55.00	Repair to Display Board	
Total of Above Payments	**£**		

Payments Made by Debit Card and Direct Debit

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
ANS Group Ltd	£ 46.25	Monthly Subscription – Nov 2026	£ 7.71
Total Card and D/D Payments	**£**		

Balance to 31st October 2026

Balance b/f	£49001.73	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments – Oct 2026	£ 3329.29	Community Account	£ 713.28
	£45672.44	Commercial Instant Access	£44823.63
Deduct Card and D/D Payments	£ 267.85	Total	£45536.91
	£45404.59		
Add Bank Interest Received	£ 20.07	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 120.00
	£45424.66		
Deduct Bank Charges	£ 7.75		
Balance c/f	£45416.91		£45416.91

Two cheques not yet presented -
£100.00 cheque number 1737 dated 20/10/2026 payable to George Nairn for supply of old postcards. £20.00 cheque number 1738 dated 20/10/2026 payable to CDALC for training event.