

North Lodge Parish Council

NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL

is non-political and is grateful for the support and advice received during the past two years from our North Lodge Division County Councillor Craig Martin and also from Kevan Jones, MP for North Durham.

Also our congratulations to Councillor Craig Martin on his re-election to the County Council in May 2021

Parish Council Members

Dennis Hall – Chair 26 Longdean Park
Patrick Driscoll - Vice Chair 4 Merlin Drive
Margaret Caygill 27a Lyndhurst Avenue
Elsie Forrester 14 Queensmere

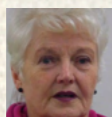
Jackie Gregory 23 Blind Lane
Maureen May Yewtrees, North Lodge
John Waugh Glen Iris, 66 Park Road
North



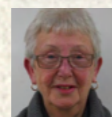
CLLR.
D. Hall



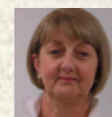
CLLR.
P. Driscoll



CLLR.
M. Caygill



CLLR.
E. Forrester



CLLR.
J. Gregory



CLLR.
M. May



CLLR.
J. Waugh



Parish Clerk
D. Murrell

We always welcome the involvement of residents and local businesses in Parish matters and we will continue to strive for the improvement of North Lodge Parish.

Retiring Chairman

The Parish Council would like to thank our retiring Chairman, Councillor Jackie Gregory, for her commitment to the role for the past two years.

New Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Parish Council welcomes the newly elected Chairman, Councillor Dennis Hall and Vice Chairman, Councillor Patrick Driscoll and looks forward to working with them both during their terms of office.

Retirement of Councillors

The Parish Council wishes to record the service to the community of two Councillors who resigned during the past two years. David Snaith had been a Councillor for six years during which time he had spent a year as Chairman of the Council. Colin Noble-Nesbitt had been a Councillor for no less than thirty-three years during part of which he had also been Chairman. The vast number of hours freely given in service to the Parish by Colin was a magnificent and selfless accomplishment by him.

The Parish Council would like to thank them both for all their hard work and commitment and wishes them both well for the future.

Parish Council Clerk

Members of the Parish Council wish to thank Mr. David Murrell, Clerk to the Parish Council, for his continued support and advice throughout the past two years.

Vacancies

At present there are four seats available on the Parish Council for any residents interested in serving the community and we would welcome any expressions of interest for co-option as a Parish Councillor.

Currently we have no Parish Councillor representation in Picktree Village, Picktree Lodge or Barley Gate.

Please contact the Clerk or any Councillor if you would like more information.

Meetings are held in Park View School, Lombard Drive, North Lodge, at 6.30 pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except August and December).

Parish Council notice boards are located in Picktree Lodge, Picktree Village, Lombard Drive, Merlin Drive, North Road (next to the Lambton Worm Hotel) and Vigo Lane (next to the western entrance to Wanstead Crescent).

Residents wishing to raise concerns should contact: David Murrell, Clerk to North Lodge Parish Council, Tel: 0191 3892516, e-mail: clerk@northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk or any Parish Councillor.

Parish Council Website

This remains by far the most realistic and cost effective way for residents to keep informed of North Lodge Parish Council matters.

You can find it by browsing the internet for "North Lodge Parish Council" or <http://northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk/> to view information under a set of headings in the title page.

Select "Council" to move to all Agendas & Minutes, for example

Draft minutes are usually available within about a week of each Parish Council meeting and can keep you up to date with the full range of Parish Council thinking and actions.



Please retain for reference throughout the year

North Lodge Parish Council NEWSLETTER 2021



Chairman's Message

What a year for local government with the pandemic not just changing our lives but also the way we all work.

Virtual meetings dominated our usual schedule of meetings as restrictions were imposed to bring to an end our usual "in person" meetings.

At the time of writing, the law does not now allow the continuation of those virtual meetings, albeit this is currently highly topical and controversial and has been the subject of legal challenge in the High Court.

We have seen many changes in our Parish, just like the rest of the country.

People have spent more time 'literally' in their homes, either due to enforced home working and/or restrictions requiring people to remain at home for long periods.

This has had many significant and long lasting consequences: a greater sense of awareness of 'locality' amongst residents and an appreciation of 'place' in our lives, and a far greater reliance upon social media to obtain local news, essential messages and information, as a sense of isolation from town centre environments has become the norm.

These themes have informed my own messages to the Council when I took over as Chairman at the May 2021 meeting.

Moving forward, I identified three key themes or challenges for the Parish Council: representation, engagement and communication.

First we need to ensure that we take steps as a Council to ensure that we effectively represent all parts of the Parish, particularly residents new to the area and especially those at the Avant Homes development on Vigo Lane.

Second, we need to develop new ways of engaging with residents through new community initiatives and projects.

Third, we need to enhance our methods of engagement with residents by adopting to the new ways of communication via social media as so many public sector organisations have done.

We will adapt to these changes, but some things will not change... our unwavering commitment to our Parish community is at the heart of everything we do!



Horticulture

Due to the retirement of the Parish Council Gardener and the impact of Covid 19 in appointing his replacement, the Parish Council decided to ask Durham County Council to undertake the Gardener's workload for the next 12 months.

The outcome currently appears to be working satisfactorily and the situation will be reviewed in April 2022.



What we are about

The members of the Parish Council extend a warm welcome to all new residents who have recently moved into the Parish.

We are a small Parish and are very proud of our heritage.

The area is named North Lodge because of its proximity to the original North Lodge entrance to the Lambton Estate which was located on North Road.

We welcome residents' suggestions for improvements to the Parish and encourage you to contact the Clerk with your ideas.

A full and comprehensive Annual Report written by the Parish Council Clerk, David Murrell, can be read on the Council website.

Planning

With three new housing developments being built in the Parish together with the usual planning applications made by residents, we are grateful to Councillor John Waugh for overseeing this Portfolio.

All planning applications made within the Parish are monitored on a weekly basis. Applications which might be of concern are discussed by the Parish Council and, where necessary, a formal response is made to the County Council planning department.

Crime & Community Safety

The last two years show that the North Lodge Parish area continues to experience low crime rates compared to other areas of Chester-le-Street and County Durham.

Steve White, the then acting Police Commissioner, attended a Parish Council meeting before national Covid rules were implemented. The meeting was very informative. The Council hopes to arrange a meeting with the newly elected Commissioner Joy Allen. Details of the date and time will be displayed on the Parish Council notice boards and on the Council website. The Parish Council also welcomed PC Ged Cooke to the North Lodge Parish area.

At the end of 2020, there was an increase in vehicle crime. A police initiative resulted in a person being arrested. This helped in lowering the numbers of reported vehicle crimes. However, the Crown Prosecution Service did not proceed with the case.

Other police initiatives have included delivering crime prevention leaflets in specific areas of the Parish and a Seatbelt Buckle-Up campaign. They also implemented security checks on stationary vehicles, again in certain areas of the Parish, alerting residents to insecure vehicles.

It is good to see that speed monitoring cameras have been deployed throughout the parish: results are regularly posted on the Parish Council website.

Publicity

During the pandemic, meetings and events of the County Council have been very much reduced. However the County Council AAP (Area Action Partnership) Board has now held its first public meeting following this unprecedented time.

Parish Councillor Elsie Forrester who attends many external meetings, including the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC), has been re-elected to the AAP Board representing all Parish Councils in the Chester-le-Street area.

Elsie has also been re-elected as Chairman of the CDALC Small and Medium Councils Forum.



Play Areas

During the pandemic it was necessary for the Play Areas to be closed for several months. When reopened several pieces of equipment were removed and numbers limited to ensure social distancing was maintained. It is hoped to resume normal use very soon.

Low Flatts

This area is owned by North Lodge Parish Council.

At the request of residents, a new seat was installed within the fenced area allowing closer supervision of children. Our County Councillor, Craig Martin, kindly funded this from his Neighbourhood Budget. A litter bin was removed from the fenced area and a new one erected at the park entrance. This helped to keep litter further from children. A sign was erected at the north end of the field asking people to place dog waste in the bin provided. We would once again ask dog walkers to adhere to this rule.



Merlin Drive

This area is owned by Durham County Council.

Currently this area is being considered for refurbishment and it is expected that residents will be consulted on this matter.

These two Play Areas are monitored and inspected regularly by our Portfolio Holder, Councillor Margaret Caygill, who also liaises with DCC on any issues that arise. Residents should raise any concerns with the Parish Council Clerk and in the case of antisocial behaviour, report it direct to the Police.

North Lodge Parish Council, together with our County Councillor Craig Martin, will continue to work to enhance this provision within the Parish for the enjoyment of all.

Parish Councillors did request a further Play Area within the new Vigo Lane housing developments but unfortunately this was not included in the final building plans.

Retirement of Gardener/Environment Caretaker



After nine years of service our Gardener/Environment Caretaker, Frank Leighton, decided to retire. The Parish Council wishes to thank Frank for all his hard work and commitment to enhancing the area and wishes him well for the future.

To date, there are two Parish areas attracting anti-social behaviour. Police will monitor these areas to deter this behaviour.

Key crime prevention messages for residents:

- Please remember to lock vehicle doors when stationary and unattended. Remove valuable items on show from vehicles.**
- In the summer months, remember to close windows, lock garden sheds and secure gardening equipment.**
- In the dark winter months, consider using lamp timers to give the impression that the property is occupied when you are away from it.**

The Council asks that residents report any crime or community issues directly to the appropriate authorities. Commenting on social media only, may not resolve the issue.

For police advice, please contact PC Ged Cooke or Police Community Support Officer Christine Taylor, using telephone number 101 or email christine.taylor@durham.police.uk

In any emergency, use telephone number 999

Park View School

Since our 2019 Newsletter there have been many changes, including the appointment of Mr. A. Finley as Headteacher of Park View School and Mrs. P. Hall as Head of Lower School, North Lodge site. We look forward to resuming our joint community projects in September and to their contribution to future issues of the Parish Council Newsletter.

We offer best wishes for the continued success of Park View School.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Please check your hedges

...and show consideration by ensuring that your hedges, shrubs and trees do not extend at all beyond your property's boundary with public footways, throughout the whole year.

Giving clear headroom of about 7 feet 6 inches is also important. This should allow for the safe passage of pedestrians, eliminating the risk of facial injury or damage to clothing, prams and umbrellas from thorns and branches (and possible legal action). Problems of this sort which affect any individual pedestrian can be most effectively and efficiently dealt with by reporting them directly to Durham County Council which has enforcing powers under the Highways Act 1980.



Dog Fouling

Dog fouling spoils the environment, upsets local residents and can cause serious health risks, particularly to children. Pick up your dog's waste using a bag and put the waste in a rubbish bin. Please encourage your family and friends to do the same. Please do NOT bag the waste just to leave it hanging from a tree/shrub branch as sometimes happens.

To report dog fouling, please contact DCC via the website Durham County Council/dog fouling, and follow the instructions.

KEEP NORTH LODGE TIDY - thank you.

Protect Your Pet

- Secure.** Pets are easily stolen when the animals are left unattended from insecure gardens.
- In sight.** When out and about, keep the pet close and practise good recall.
- Search.** To support a quicker recovery make sure the pet has been micro chipped and that the information on it is current. Make sure the pet is wearing a tag and you have an up to date photograph of the pet.

