

Please retain for reference throughout the year



# North Lodge Parish Council

## NEWSLETTER 2022

Editor: Councillor Maureen May

## Horticulture

Unfortunately we are still without a Parish Council gardener, although we are still actively seeking to fill the position as soon as possible.

Anyone interested in taking up this position or would like further information, please feel free to contact David Murrell, Parish Clerk.

In the meantime we have temporarily contracted with Durham County Council (Clean and Green) for them to carry out our Horticulture requirements until we are able to appoint a Gardener. We are extremely grateful to all the Clean and Green team, for their work and commitment they have given to our Parish.

This year to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration we have planted the 14 barrels around the parish with Red White and Blue flowers. Councillor Veitch arranged for the flower beds to contain cutout figures and flags.



## Chairman's Message

Hello, this is the second year when I have had the opportunity to address you in this Newsletter as Chairman of the Parish Council. We have been particularly ambitious in what we do to serve our Parish!

In May 2021, the Council decided that there were three key issues that we must address: first, improve our representation, increase the number of councillors and fill existing vacancies; second, engage more, and better, with the local community and third, establish wide ranging and better communications with all our residents and of all ages.

I am delighted to say that, following a publicity and leaflet campaign, we now have three new Parish Councillors... Craig Martin, Suzanne Brown, and Chris Veitch...

On community engagement, there have been two major initiatives launched by the Council this year...

First, in January, we introduced our first Community Fund to encourage a wide range of activities in the Parish; the Fund is available to both groups and organisations who come forward to seek support to develop their own community and parish projects. The Fund totals £12,000 this year, and qualifying projects can be awarded up to £6,000...

Second, we have developed a Community Arts Initiative with Park View School, as part of our Platinum Jubilee Programme... Local art from local pupils will be seen across the Parish during the coming months and the artwork will be judged and prizes awarded...

On communications, we now have a Facebook page, and Councillor Chris Veitch is planning to do more to develop our social media profile.

I'm keen that we develop more community projects with residents, so if you have ideas, please talk to us...

County (and now Parish Councillor) Craig Martin will be working with colleagues to bring forward new Parish schemes and initiatives during the year.

And finally, it was an especial privilege for me to represent the Council at the Annual Chester-le-Street Remembrance Sunday Ceremony with my colleague, veteran Parish Councillor and Past Chair, Elsie Forrester, and to attend the touching ceremony organised by the North Lodge Remembrance Group in North Road, an initiative that the Council fully supports...

As a Parish Council, we aspire to do more for our Parish, and to do more, working with you.

One vacancy still exists on the Council, so do get in touch if you want to be part of the Parish Council Team and represent your Parish!

Best wishes,

Dennis

# Crime & Community Safety



North Lodge parish area continues to experience very low crime rates compared to other areas of Chester-le-Street and County Durham.

The cases of Anti-Social behaviour in the parish have been resolved. However, the incidents of graffiti on the C2C bridges in the parish are causing concern. The Council is working alongside residents and our County Councillor to support Sustrans.

Durham Constabulary is one of the best in the country for burglary detection rates. It is in the top 3 of the 43 forces in England and Wales. Well done, keep up the good work

The force has been involved with many initiatives. These have included Road Safety, Knife and Bladed articles and Firearms. Further details on these can be found on the police website/Facebook account.

It is good to see that the Police and volunteers continue to attend areas of the parish regarding speed monitoring. Results are regularly placed on the Council's website and Facebook account.

Scams continue to increase. If you are suspicious of any cold calling at your property or a telephone call, do NOT divulge any personal details and do NOT part with any cash. Remember also, if contacted by land line telephone, leave a period of time before using that telephone to contact any authority. These criminals can keep telephone lines open and you will be chatting to these people who, will be posing as your bank, police or other authorities.

Be on your guard when purchasing tickets on line. Make sure that the website is genuine.

There were important changes to the Highway Code/Law regarding Road Safety issues. Please refer to the Highway Code for details.

On the County Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's website are details of the Police and Crime plan for 2021-2024.

Co Durham and Darlington Fire Service has been awarded the UK and Rescue Service of the year. Well done, keep up the good work.

Please refer to the Co Durham and Darlington Fire Service website for information on how to carry out an on-line Home Safety Fire check.

Key crime prevention messages for our residents:

- a) **Please remember to lock vehicle doors when stationary and unattended. Remember to remove valuable items on show from vehicles.**
- b) **In the summer months, remember to close windows, lock garden sheds and secure garden furniture.**
- c) **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 reminds residents to 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 your local police station or Police Community Support Officer Christine Taylor using telephone number 101

**For any emergency, use telephone number 999**



## Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Portfolio Holder Councillor Elsie Forrester continues to provide regular and important information from the Area Action Partnership and from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC). She attends numerous meetings on behalf of the Council and her feedback ensures that the Parish Councillors are kept up to date on matters affecting local government as well as the people of Chester le Street and the County. She is a member of both the AAP and the local CDALC group, so is well placed to bring forward views and proposals. She sits on numerous Sub Groups at the AAP.

At the recent CDALC Council Forum held 19th May 2022, at Shildon Town Council Centre, Councillor Forrester was nominated and voted into the position of Chairperson once again for the following year 2022/2023.

## Former Parish Gardener Remembered

In November 2021, we were greatly saddened to learn of the death of our former Gardener and Environment Caretaker, Frank Leighton. Frank was very well-known and much liked within the Parish and had given the Council over eight years of excellent service. We liaised with Frank's family and arranged a commemoration event with themselves and Parish Councillors in May 2022 where we fixed a plaque to a bench seat within the Parish to remember Frank, and recognise his role in the community. He will be sadly missed.



# Play Areas

## Merlin Drive

*This area is owned by Durham County Council.*

As reported in last year's Newsletter it is to undergo a complete refurbishment. Due to the pandemic it has been delayed and is now scheduled for June/July this year. The local residents and Parish Council were consulted in the choice of design and equipment for the site.

This area continues to be very popular and it is hoped even more widely used, when refurbished, to include our new parishioners from Vigo Lane area.

## Low Flatts

*This area is owned by North Lodge Parish Council.*

This Play Area is owned by North Lodge Parish Council and during the year minor improvements have been carried out, replacement seat, goal posts repainted and a gap in the hedge filled.

If funding can be sought it is hoped to refurbish some, if not all, of this area and we hope it will invite even more residents to use it.

We once again ask dog walkers to be aware of the risk to health of dog faeces and ask and ask for them to be placed in the bins provided.

These Play Areas are monitored by the Parish Council and Durham County Council and any issues addressed. Residents should raise any concerns with the Parish Council Clerk, and in the case of antisocial behaviour, report directly to the Police.

We consider these areas to be extremely important for the welfare of residents and will continue to work hard on their maintenance and upgrading.

# Seats/Benches Around the Parish

Recent seat changes throughout the Parish are: the removal of the seat by the hedge in Low Flatts and replacement of the green metal seat overlooking the Play Area with a new composite black seat, (arm rests at both ends) to complement the remaining composite seat. In addition the two green metal seats on the left -hand entrance to Lombard Drive have also been replaced with new composite black seats, again to complement the 2 existing black seats on the right-hand entrance.

## Finance

As a Parish, we receive an income of around £34,000 annually which is raised through the Council Tax precept. We have responsibilities for looking after your money and spending it wisely, endeavouring to achieve the very best value.

All Parish Councillors complete a register of Interests form and all Councillors (apart from the Chair who receives a small allowance to cover some of the costs of the additional work involved in that office), have declined to receive any financial allowances they may be legally entitled to receive in order to carry out their duties.

## Planning

Each week, North Lodge Parish Council is informed by Durham County Council of all planning applications made within the Parish. Those applications which are thought to be significant, are formally considered by the Parish Council. The Parish Council will, where necessary, make representations on behalf of the community but it will not object to or support a planning application simply because it is asked to do so.



# 3 New Councillors

This year we welcome to the Parish Council three new Councillors:

## Suzanne Brown

"I am delighted to have re-joined North Lodge Parish Council after some years and have been made very welcome by all members of the Council. I have lived in Picktree Village for 30 years with my family and appreciate the countryside environment close to the Lambton Estate. I, and I know a number of other residents, are increasingly alarmed about the speed and rise in the number of commercial vehicles through the lane who totally ignore the speed signage. Going to post a letter or collecting litter, presumably thrown from car windows, is a dangerous business- the pathways are narrow and vehicles do not reduce their speed when passing pedestrians. In highlighting this issue at Council to raise awareness at Durham County Council I hope for a solution to be found. Monitoring traffic speeds needs to be done when no cars are parked outside properties. This is the only way speeding traffic slows on the lane. I look forward to working with other North Lodge Parish Councillors to maintain the lovely area that we call home.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss any concerns within Picktree Village, or indeed in any other areas of the Parish."

## Craig Martin

As Parish Councillor, Craig's portfolio will be Project Development, Business and External Relations. Craig is also our County Councillor.

## Chris Veitch

"Following my election on to North Lodge Parish Council, this year my first project has been to make cut out figures and crowns and place them alongside flags in the flower beds throughout the Parish. My Portfolio for the Parish Council will be: Communications and Media Development. The Parish Council can already be found on Facebook and our new Twitter account is now complete and up and running."



# North Lodge Parish Council

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

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

## Parish Council Members

|                               |                              |                |                             |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Dennis Hall - Chair           | 26 Longdean Park             | Jackie Gregory | 23 Blind Lane               |
| Patrick Driscoll - Vice Chair | 4 Merlin Drive               | Craig Martin   | 61 Leander Avenue           |
| Suzanne Brown                 | South View, Picktree Village | Maureen May    | Yewtrees, North Lodge       |
| Margaret Caygill              | 27a Lyndhurst Avenue         | Chris Veitch   | 15 Lyndhurst Avenue         |
| Elsie Forrester               | 14 Queensmere                | John Waugh     | Glen Iris 66 Park Rd. North |



CLLR  
D. Hall



CLLR  
P. Driscoll



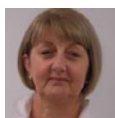
CLLR  
S. Brown



CLLR  
M. Caygill



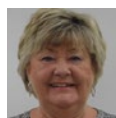
CLLR  
E. Forrester



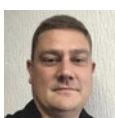
CLLR  
J. Gregory



CLLR  
C. Martin



CLLR  
M. May



CLLR  
C. Veitch



CLLR  
J. Waugh



Council Clerk  
D. Murrell

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### North Lodge Parish Council Annual Report

This report, written by the North Lodge Parish Council Clerk David Murrell, is very informative and makes for extremely interesting reading. The full report can be found on the Parish Council website: [www.northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### 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.

### Parish Council Notice Boards

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).

### Vacancies

There is at present one seat available on the Council and we would welcome any expressions of interest from Residents for co-option as a Parish Councillor. Please contact the Clerk or any Councillor if you would like more information. 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.

### Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council 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).

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

*Parish Council Website - Live since September 2011*

For regular continued updates or more information, find our website online by searching for 'North Lodge Parish Council' or [northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk).