



Please retain for reference throughout the year

North Lodge Parish Council NEWSLETTER 2023

Editor: Councillor Maureen May



**CHAIRMAN
PATRICK DRISCOLL**

The new Chairman's Message

Hello, this is my first year as Chairman of North Lodge Parish Council. As Vice Chairman for the last two years, I feel I am able to provide the continuity necessary to aid, assist, and respond, to the issues facing North Lodge, in co-operation with you, the residents. Sincere thanks must go to ex- Chairman Dennis Hall, whose diligence and hard work resulted in successful programmes such as the community arts initiative with Park View School, and instigation of a higher social media profile for the Parish Council.

County Councillor (and now Parish Council Vice Chairman) Craig Martin, will be working with colleagues to progress new schemes and plans during the year. There are two vacancies existing on the Parish Council, so get in touch if you feel you can offer something to the team, and make your own contribution.

North Lodge Parish matters to all of us, so please keep a dialogue going with your local representatives.

Highways and Community Assets

In terms of community property, the parish has regular monthly inspections of their principal assets, the 9 bus shelters in the parish, plus 8 internal glass display cabinets. (The glass shelter in Picktree Village has no cabinet). In those cabinets are the newly displayed winning and commended King Charles coronation art work posters, provided from the Parish and Park View School Community arts project competition. With Highways, all residents are asked to be vigilant for any fly tipping or damage around roads or pathways. Anything noticed should be reported to Durham County Council and/or the clerk or portfolio holder at North Lodge Parish Council. Fly tipping was removed earlier in the year from the grass verges of the A693, leading on to the motorway, at Blind Lane, so your help and support is appreciated

Play Areas

The two play areas within the Parish are Merlin Drive owned by Durham County Council and Low Flatts owned by North Lodge Parish Council.

These two areas are important for the welfare of our residents and are monitored by the Parish Council and inspected by Durham County Council.



**COUNCILLOR
M. CAYGILL**

Merlin Drive

The refurbishment here was carried out last year and it is hoped to add another seat within the fenced area nearer to the gate. This has been requested by residents and will be funded with the help of our County Councillor.

Park View pupils planted daffodil bulbs within the fenced area and we hope to supplement these later this year.

Low Flatts

The refurbishment in this area has just been completed to meet current legislation. Residents helped choose the design. We hope to add another seat within the fenced area and this also will be funded with the help of our County Councillor. The goal posts have been painted for the continued enjoyment of this field.

These play areas now meet a very high standard and are well used and appreciated by the majority of our residents. We are delighted to have secured monies for these improvements from the developer contributions accrued from the Vigo Lane housing developments.



We ask for users of these areas to help us maintain the standards of health and safety by:

NOT ALLOWING DOGS WITHIN THE FENCED AREAS.

PICKING UP ALL DOG FAECES AND PLACING IN BINS PROVIDED.

NOT USING METAL DETECTORS ON ANY PLAY AREA.

Residents should raise any concerns with the Parish Council Clerk and in the case of antisocial behaviour report directly to the Police.



Retiring Chairman Dennis Hall



RETIRING - CHAIRMAN
DENNIS HALL

My final year as Chairman was characterised by remarkable historical events associated with the Royal Family: the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II, and the accession of King Charles III, both of which gave rise to events in the Parish. I made the formal public Proclamation of the new King in the Parish on 11 September 2022; I presented Commemorative Badges to students of Park View School; first, in relation to the Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and then more recently in commemoration of the accession of King Charles III earlier this year.

Once again I was delighted to represent the Council at the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony, accompanied by veteran Councillor Elsie Forrester, and also to attend the North Lodge Remembrance Group Ceremony on Armistice Day. The Parish is proud to be associated with the work of the Group in the Parish.

Sadly, I represented the Council at the funeral of County Councillor, Beaty Bainbridge, a popular and industrious councillor who will be missed by many.

We have been very pleased, also, to work closely, once again, with Park View School, our most significant community partner in the

Parish; we supported their development of sensory facilities at the School and the introduction of new mental health counselling support. And, for the second year, the North Lodge Parish Council and Park View School Community Arts Awards Scheme led to more students receiving awards for artwork to be displayed throughout the Parish. I was pleased to be part of the judging panel and also to make the presentations once again this year.

Pam Hall, Head teacher, said she was thrilled by the tremendous support that the School had received from the Council during the year, and looked forward to further collaboration in future.

On Policy and Governance, this year the Council received reports concerning remote meetings, the LGA Civility and Respect Pledge, the new LGA Code for Members, the latest planning reforms, the County Durham Devolution deal and we developed a new Environmental and Diversity Policy.

Crime & Community Safety

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

There have been a few issues in the parish regarding car parking. Please report any issues to police using telephone number 101 and the parish clerk.

It is good to see the police are continuing with speed monitoring in the parish. When available, the results are displayed on the council's social media accounts.

Durham Constabulary has been involved in many initiatives and operations. These include road safety issues including illegally using a mobile phone whilst behind a steering wheel, knife and bladed article collections and firearms. The constabulary promoted information on mental health issues, details on how to seek help if a victim of stalking and how to avoid becoming a victim of a scam.

Operation Snap, this allows the public to submit dash cam footage of unacceptable driving. Operation Trident, county wide operation to arrest persons for various neighbourhood crimes.

Across the county, there has been an increase in the theft of motor vehicles. Predominately, key less vehicles which are then either sold on, stripped for parts or used to commit crime. Residents are advised to take measures to improve the security of their vehicles.

Co. Durham and Darlington Fire Service has been officially rated as "Good" for Effectiveness, Efficiency and People, by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. The service has also been awarded the UK Fire and Rescue Service of the year for the second year running, at the IESE Public Sector Transformation Awards, along with a

Public Service Award at the The Northern Echo County Durham Together Awards.

The service is working hard with other community partners to promote personal safety at waterside locations. Please take care when beside rivers, lakes and streams.

Residents are reminded to check smoke alarms, to make sure the alarms are working correctly. If residents need help to fit an alarm contact the Community Safety team for advice, using telephone number 03452234221.

Key crime prevention messages for our residents.

- a) **Please remember to lock vehicle doors when stationary and unattended. 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 to the appropriate authorities. Merely commenting on social media only, may not resolve the problem.

For further information, check out the police and fire service social media accounts and to contact our local PCSO Christine Taylor, use telephone number 101

For any emergency, use telephone number 999



COUNCILLOR
J. GREGORY

Project Development, Business, and External Relations



**VICE CHAIRMAN
C. MARTIN**

I continue my work as the parish council's portfolio holder for Project Development, Business, and External Relations. Working with all parish councillors supporting them to deliver their larger and longer term goals. This role continues to be challenging due to the current economic climate, rising costs stretching budgets and ability to find labour plus materials to complete work. Despite this the parish should be proud of what has been achieved over the last year and work has already begun on our future plans.

I've also arranged for parish councillors to question and challenge staff from Durham County Council including visits from Neighbourhood Wardens and a member of the regeneration team allowing us all to raise issues across North Lodge and push for further improvements in our area.

Meetings of Partnership Organisations



**COUNCILLOR
E. FORRESTER**

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 in May 2023, Councillor Forrester was nominated and voted into the position of Chairperson once again for the following year 2023/2024.

Social Media Portfolio Holder



**COUNCILLOR
C. VEITCH**

- This year Councillor Veitch continued his work as social media portfolio holder ensuring that the work of the Parish Council is promoted online and key information broadcast to the community via Facebook and Twitter.
- For the Kings Coronation Councillor Veitch made cutouts of Crowns and Kings Ciphers and placed them around the parish. He will also once again be organising this years Remembrance Displays throughout the community.

Finance

Parish finances are reviewed on a monthly basis. The Parish's year end accounts are independently audited and this year, once again, are confirmed to be sound and to be of an appropriate standard for the Parish.

We encourage residents to suggest ideas for use of the Precept and of contributions provided by the developers of the new housing areas.

Planning

All planning applications submitted within the Parish are inspected on a weekly basis. Applications of concern are discussed by the full Parish Council with comments reported to the Planning Department as appropriate.



Picktree Village



**COUNCILLOR
S. BROWN**

Hello everyone, I have lived in Picktree village for over 30 years, very happily and am pleased to be a Parish Councillor for the second time I have become increasingly concerned about two issues that do detract from our lovely village. More and more cars are speeding through the village and ignoring the Speed beacons. I know many residents are very concerned about this. Also the number of very large commercial vehicles that are now using our road as I presume a short cut to the Motorway. After several attempts to persuade the County Council to acknowledge this situation I have been advised to contact Joy Allen, the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner to register my concerns. Councillor Craig Martin has been very helpful with advice about this. Let's see what happens. As I'm sure residents in the Parish are aware we also have a problem with litter. It is really a nuisance and health hazard especially just up the lane from the Motorway. Some drivers are so kind they even put all their rubbish into one bag before they throw it out of the window !!!! Hey ho!! It is quite a dice with death to clear it from the lane as cars are travelling too fast. The Parish Council are going to organise a number of litter picks so please help if you can. We all want a nice safe, clean happy place to live in and North Lodge is a great place to live so hopefully we can make some progress soon with action to keep it like that A new litter bin is promised beside the Bus Shelter opposite Lintfort. Thank you Craig. Have a lovely summer and enjoy the colours all around



**COUNCILLOR
M. MAY**

Horticulture

In September 2022 the Parish Council appointed Makepeace Landscapes as our new Parish Council Gardener.

Makepeace Landscapes are now responsible for all horticultural work within the Parish Councils remit. We look forward to a good working relationship with Stephen Makepeace and his team and thank them for their hard work over the last twelve months.

Durham County Council still has responsibility for all grass cutting of public spaces within the parish.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Durham County Council for all their work in the past and hope to maintain a good relationship especially in any future projects.

Our current projects are:

The removal of 9 barrels which had deteriorated and will be replaced sometime in the near future.

The 2 large shrub beds on North Road have been cleared of old growth and the walls repaired. A major replanting scheme will commence later this year.



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

Patrick Driscoll - Chair patrick.driscoll@northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Craig Martin - Vice Chair craig.martin@northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Suzanne Brown suzanne.brown@northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk
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NEWS IN BRIEF

North Lodge Parish Council Annual Report



COUNCIL CLERK
D. MURRELL

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

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 are at present two seats 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 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.