

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

PRESENT: Chairman: Cllr. David Snaith.  
Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester, Jackie Martin,  
Maureen May, Carole Walton, Dennis Hall,  
Colin Noble-Nesbitt, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Peter May.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm with the Chairman welcoming everyone.

### **Item 1. 16/24 Apologies for Absence**

There were no Apologies for Absence.

### **Item 2. 16/25 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Margaret Caygill declared an interest as a Governor of Park View School. Cllr. Jackie Martin declared an interest as Chairman of North Lodge Residents Association.

### **Item 3. 16/26 Report of the County Councillor**

The Chairman invited County Councillor Peter May to give his report which included matters contained in his written report attached (Appendix 1). In addition, the County Councillor agreed to consider again the problem of overhanging vegetation on the footpath between North Road and Lyndhurst Avenue. Cllr. Colin Noble-Nesbitt reminded everyone that the FixMyStreet website was useful for reporting problems of this type to the County Council.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

### **Item 4. 16/27 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016, 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 5. 16/28 Chairman's Report**

a) Re Minute 16/18 section a). Re noise from the Coveris factory, many residents, including the County Councillor, four Parish Councillors and the Clerk, had attended a public meeting organized and chaired by Kevan Jones MP to discuss with officers of the County Council the present situation re noise attenuation measures. These measures were due to be in place and working by 21<sup>st</sup> March. The MP will then call a further meeting to review the effectiveness of the measures.

b) Re Minute 16/18 section b) The County Council had not yet installed the refurbished seat for Low Flatts play area. The Clerk will again chase this up. County Councillor P. May kindly offered to fund the purchase of a new seat if required.

c) Re Minute 16/18 section c). Re the potential development of the Drum pond area, Cllr. Elsie Forrester advised that the grant application submitted to the County Council's New Year, New Neighbourhood scheme had not been successful.

- d) Re Minute 16/19 section c1). Re a new dog waste bin for Picktree lodge, an estimate of the installation date was awaited.
- e) Re Minute 16/19 section c2). Re the proposed provision of adult exercise equipment, Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt advised that he and Cllr. Margaret Caygill would have discussions with County Council officers following which it was hoped to firm up a proposal. The County Councillor expressed an interest in providing funding towards this project.
- f) Re Minute 16/19 section f). Re molehills at Merlin Drive play area, Cllr. Margaret Caygill advised that there had been no response yet from the County Council. Cllr. Jackie Martin advised that she had attended a recent "Managing Events" training session which had included managing risks such as molehills. Insurers were focusing strongly on Councils having paperwork available to demonstrate that risks were being identified.

#### **Item 6. 16/29 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

The Chairman invited Cllr. Jackie Martin to give her report.

##### **a) Crime and Community Safety**

Cllr. Jackie Martin's report included the matters contained in her written report attached (Appendix 2).

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Martin for her report and invited Cllr. John Waugh to give his report.

##### **b) Finance**

Cllr. John Waugh advised Councillors of the present bank balance and asked Councillors to particularly note the funds still available for unallocated expenditure.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Waugh for his report and invited Cllr. Colin Noble-Nesbitt to give his report.

##### **c) Highways and Website**

Cllr. Colin Noble-Nesbitt's report included the following matters.

1) There had been much recent digging by utility companies of footpaths and roads in parts of the Parish. The two diagonal footpaths at the entrance to Lombard Drive had been re-laid with tarmac and looked very tidy. The County Councillor advised that two new replacement seats would be installed on the north side of the entrance.

2) Many drivers were ignoring the waiting restrictions in Lombard Drive. The Clerk will ask the parking wardens and the Police to patrol the area and take appropriate action.

3) Cllr. Margaret Caygill advised that no response had yet been received to the earlier request to the County Council to re-site the waste bin at the south end of Lyndhurst Avenue. The Clerk will chase this up.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Noble-Nesbitt for his report and invited Cllrs. Maureen May and Carole Walton to give their report.

##### **d) Horticulture**

Cllr. Maureen May gave the report which included the matters contained in the written report attached (Appendix 3).

Re Northumbria in Bloom, Councillors agreed with Cllr. Jackie Martin that a working group should be set up comprising of representatives from Parish residents, the Parish Council, the Residents Association and Park View School. It was also agreed to advertise this in the Newsletter following which an inaugural meeting of the Group would be arranged.

Cllr. M. May had advised the County Council that the planting on the small roundabout within Picktree Lodge estate required attention.

Cllr. M. May presented a proposal for the appointment, for a trial period of 12 months, of an environmental caretaker to pick litter and clean seats. The County Councillor offered to provide some of the funding towards this. Councillors discussed the proposal and agreed that it should be progressed by Councillors Maureen May, Carole Walton and Elsie Forrester with a possible start date of 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**(Resolved on a unanimous show of hands** - to approve, in principle, the appointment of an environmental caretaker for a trial period of 12 months).

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. May and Walton for their report.

**e) Planning**

Cllr. David Snaith advised that there were no matters to report.

The Chairman invited Cllr. Margaret Caygill to give her report.

**f) Play Areas**

Cllr. Margaret Caygill's report included the following matters.

At Low Flatts, all equipment was in order. The waste bins were full and the County Council had been asked to attend to this. There was much litter around the perimeter and in hedges. A proposal by the Residents Association to plant daffodil bulbs was very welcome.

At Merlin Drive play area, the proposal by the Residents Association to plant daffodil bulbs was again very welcome.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Caygill for her report and invited Cllr. Elsie Forrester to give her report.

**g) Publicity**

Cllr. Forrester's report included the matters contained in her written report attached (Appendix 4).

The Clerk is to include an item "Neighbourhood Plans" on the Agenda for the April meeting of the Council.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Forrester for her report.

**Item 7. 16/30 Correspondence**

1) From Durham Police and Crime Commissioner  
Press release re Community Safety Fund.

2) From the County Durham Association of Local Councils

a) Press release from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary re Durham Constabulary.

b) Letter from Chief Constable Mike Barton.

The Clerk is to write to the Police with congratulations on the "outstanding" rating awarded by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

c) Email re North East Combined Authority poll results.

d) Email re North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto consultation.

3) From Durham County Council

a) Email re "Lets Join In" fund.

b) Email re Chairman's Medal nominations.

c) Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2016/2017.

**(Resolved** - that the Clerk is to sign the Contract on behalf of the Parish Council).

d) Completed survey of bus shelters.

e) Notification of AAP Improved Environment Meeting to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

**Item 8. 16/31 Welcome Signs**

Cllr. John Waugh had sourced a supplier and price for the Council's preferred design. For a trial installation, Councillors agreed to purchase one sign for Northlands roundabout/North Road bus shelter. Cllr. Waugh is to provide the Clerk with a mock-up of the sign which will then be submitted to the County Council for approval.

Councillors thanked Cllr. Waugh for his work on the project to date.

**Item 9. 16/32 Annual Risk Assessment**

Councillors discussed the annual Risk Assessment, draft copies of which had been prepared by the Clerk and previously circulated, and agreed to approve the Assessment in the form provided. (**Resolved** - to approve the Risk Assessment in the form provided).

**Item 10. 16/33 Payment of Accounts**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 480.95	Salaries March 2016	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses March 2016	
Durham County Pension Fund	£ 140.11	Pensions March 2016	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 198.60	P.A.Y.E.	
Pot-It-On	£ 304.48	Horticulture March 2016	
D. Snaith	£ 150.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Npower Northern Ltd	£ 18.90	Festive Lighting	£ 0.90
Cty Durham Assn of Local Councils	£ 27.00	Fee for Training Event	
Durham County Council	£1132.91	Christmas Tree Lights	£188.82
Durham County Council	£3703.21	Flower Beds	£617.20

(**Resolved** - the payments be approved as submitted).

**Item 11. 16/34 Other Matters for Information**

Councillors agreed with the suggestion of Cllr. Jackie Martin that an item should be included on the Agenda for the April meeting of the Council re an event to mark the switching on of the Christmas tree lights.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.46pm.

**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries April 2016	
Expenses	£ 80.00	Expenses April 2016	
Durham County Pension Fund	£	Pensions April 2016	
Pot-It-On	£	Horticulture April 2016	
<b><u>Balance to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016</u></b>			
Balance b/f	£28215.57	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - March 16	<u>£ 6236.16</u>		
	£21979.41		
		Current	£ 239.64
		30 Day	<u>£21922.35</u>
		Total	£22161.99
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 15.47</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	<u>£ 167.11</u>
Balance c/f	£21994.88		£21994.88

# **North Lodge Parish Council March Report 2016**

## **County Councillor Peter May**

**Light at Northlands bus stop** now working after the services were connected - working all of the time. Reported to Council

### **Tall trees at 5 Caxton Way**

Because of the close proximity of the Caxton Way Sewerage pumping station I have asked that Northumbria Water take a look to see if the trees are a danger to the pumps etc. **awaiting a reply.**

### **BOC SITE**

The Council have admitted that initial discussions with Bellway have not yet produced a planning application.

### **Winter Maintenance Service Information**

I have been providing twice daily information to the Parish Clerk for distribution

### **My reply to the Planners re the proposed application for Drum Lane Travellers site.**

Regarding **Planning Application DM/16/00001/VOC**: 15 Drum Lane Traveller Site, Drum Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 2AF - Removal of condition 1 (temporary consent) of planning permission 2/13/00135/FPA to allow the permanent use of the land as a residential caravan site for travellers.

**Still under consideration**

### **Durham County Council – North East Combined Authority Devolution Poll – results.**

Consultation closed 8<sup>th</sup> February.

Number of eligible participants – 337,110

Responses received 81,964

Turnout 21.7%

Analysis of Poll:

59.5% of electors thought that devolving some power to the North East would be a step in the right direction.

Elected Mayor powers – 47.8% thought mayor should have limited power and influence

40.3% mayor should have quite a lot of power and influence

If the agreement goes ahead should we try to get additional powers for the North East – majority said not sure let's wait and see 42.9%

If agreement goes ahead will it bring more prosperity and jobs to County Durham – 40.5% **yes**

9.1% **no** 36.2% **make little or no difference** 14.2% **I don't know**

**A Council debate will be held during March to propose a recommendation**

### **Council tax setting 16/17**

At a County Council meeting 24 February 2016 the Council agreed to raise the Council Tax by 1.99% plus an additional 2% for Adult Social Care Services funding (total increase 3.99%)

I voted for the increase for the following reasons:

**In previous years the Government has provided all local authorities with the option to accept a council Tax Freeze grant rather than increase council tax.**

For 2016/17 and future years however the Government has withdrawn this opportunity. Rather than limit council tax increases the Government has now provided the flexibility for any local authority which provides Adult Social Care services to increase council tax by 2% in addition to the normal 2% allowed before the requirement for a referendum i.e. local authorities which provide Adult Social Care services could increase council tax by up to 4%. All government projections for council tax increases over the next four years are based upon ALL such local authorities utilising this new additional 2% flexibility.

The largest budget pressure for local authorities in relation to Adult social Care services at this point is the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW) notwithstanding the significant pressures due to extra demand for services with people living longer. The NLW is expected to increase by around 40% over the next four years. This will place significant financial pressure upon businesses that have low paid workforces and will result in them needing to increase their prices significantly. The council spends well over £100m every year on purchasing Adult Social Care services from the private sector e.g. residential care and home care. Providers of these services have already approached the council identifying that they will require significant price uplifts over the next four years. A 2% increase in council tax rises circa £3.5m which will nowhere near cover the additional costs the council will experience as a result of the implementation of the NLW.

I was assured that extensive work had been carried out to produce an indicative Medium Term Financial Plan and that a broad range of assumptions had been robustly challenged as part of this plan (by professional accountants not politicians)

It is essential that we have the capabilities to find additional savings of £67.4 million pounds over the next 2/3 years.

I do not believe that the time is yet right to use all of our reserves and that they should be held for 3 main purposes

1. A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of General Reserves

2. A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this also forms part of General Reserves
3. A means of building up funds known as Earmarked Reserves. To meet known or predicted funding requirements

General Reserves are £30m

## **School transport changes to be discussed**

Councillors in County Durham will be asked to agree changes to free school transport entitlement when they meet next week (March 16).

A report to Durham County Council's Cabinet recommends the removal of automatic entitlement to free home to school transport for some students where this is currently provided at the council's discretion.

The move would be expected to save approximately £740,000 by 2019 and would be part of a series of measures aimed at managing reductions in public sector funding.

If agreed, the changes will mean the removal of the automatic entitlement to free transport for pupils in years 10 and 11 who move house during these exam years, post-16 students who do not have access to viable public transport and post-16 students who can't travel independently due to a medical condition or disability.

The recommendation follows a consultation on the proposals, between September and November 2015, in which 146 responses were received.

Analysis of the results shows that while the majority of those who responded were not in favour of the proposals, many of them said they would not be personally affected.

Cllr Ossie Johnson, Cabinet member for children and young people's services at Durham County Council, said: "This is one of a number of difficult decisions we and other councils have to make in the light of the very challenging financial circumstances we face.

"We know that these changes will affect young people and under the proposals being put forward we will continue to consider support for those facing exceptional circumstances.

In particular we recognise that in rural areas post-16 students can often have long distances to travel and we will work with families to ensure they apply for any bursary or funding they may be entitled to."

The changes would only apply to new applicants from September 2016 and in cases where there are exceptional circumstances the council will continue to look at whether assistance can be provided.

Those currently in receipt of free home to school transport until the existing arrangements – approximately 334 young people – will continue to do so until they reach the end of their course.

The report to Cabinet sets out the results of the consultation which took place last year as well as details of how the county council will seek to ensure young people, families and schools are supported where possible.

Cabinet will meet to consider recommendation next Wednesday (March 16) at County Hall.

## **Durham Humanitarian Support Partnership**

Following the agreement of Cabinet in December, work has focused on the operational aspects of how we deliver our commitment to support refugees in line with the Council's share of the national population (**circa 200 Syrian refugees over the next four years**).

Please be assured that we are taking measures to implement the recommendations made by Durham Humanitarian Support Partnership. We have been working closely with the North East Migration Partnership, which is co-ordinating regional offers and arrangements on behalf of all North East councils, the majority of which are expected to welcome refugees in phase two (anticipated early summer 2016).

**Arrangements are now being made to receive our first five families towards the beginning of summer 2016.**

Final arrangements have not yet been confirmed by the Home Office, so these details are subject to minor change. The Council will be provided with details of the families and their recent history, including any health difficulties they may have, in the next couple of weeks. Council services and partners, including housing, health, education, police and social care, are working together to ensure we are prepared for the arrival of these vulnerable people.

Humanitarian support is being co-ordinated within County Durham by the Assistant Chief Executive's Office, and the Council's Housing Service will be providing the core resettlement support to refugees, offering arrivals housing advice and support, orientation assistance and supporting the individuals to live and successfully integrate in the local community.

We are also working with the voluntary and community sector and faith representatives to look at additional support and assistance we can provide in partnership.

The main towns across the County have been assessed against key criteria to identify the most suitable areas for accommodating arrivals in small clusters of four/five family groups on a phased basis over the next four years. We have since been working with housing providers to allocate properties in these areas.

**In the best interests of the refugees, and to try to maintain their anonymity and respect their privacy, we are not planning to generally disclose precise details of arrival dates and locations.**

It is planned to hold a meeting of the Partnership in April, when we should be in a position to provide much more detailed information about progress made.

#### **Coveris Meeting**

Attended a meeting held on 4th March 2016 at 5pm at Park View School to discuss the noise from Coveris. This meeting was arranged by MP Kevan Jones and was well attended by residents living close to the factory. Representatives from DCC assured residents that noise attenuation equipment was being installed by the 21 March after which a thorough noise evaluation will be undertaken.

#### **Hett Hills**

Hett Hills Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) will open throughout the week from Friday 25 March until Friday 1 April.



## **North Lodge Parish Council**

### **Crime and Community Safety Report, Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016.**

**Burglary Update:** December 2015: North Road and Ash Meadows investigations still ongoing.  
January 2016: Picktree Manor, investigations still ongoing.

Confusion over location of Picktree Manor by PSCO. PSCO was advised of the North Lodge Parish area including the different postcodes.

**For information only:** March 2016-Burglary in Blind Lane. Property located on the South side of the road (not in Parish area). Suspects used a ladder from a neighbour's garden to remove security alarm then entered property through rear patio window. A quantity of jewellery taken.

**Speed Watch:** Request made to Police for speed monitoring in Picktree Village. Update at next meeting.

Vehicle over turned at Vigo Lane roundabout, Barley Mow. Incident dealt with by Northumbria Police, no further information.

### **Crime and Community AAP forum task group meeting 7<sup>th</sup> March.**

**One Punch Campaign:** This campaign is as a result of an innocent man who, was assaulted in a pub in County Durham and died a few months later as a result of his injuries, caused by a single punch. The victim had attended the pub and was asked by the suspect for a cigarette. The victim did not smoke and his refusal resulted in the assault. The victim's family have set up this campaign with the Police and have been awarded £300 from Chester-le-Street Area Action Partnership fund to place posters and beer mats in pubs around Chester-le-Street warning of the consequences of any assault and possible punishment.

### **Neighbourhood Watch (NW)**

Maureen Wells and Sue Smith attended the meeting to give an overview of the NW organisation and why the organisation needs to be updated. A re-launch scheme across the Chester-le-Street area was planned and funding had been pledged by a number of local County Councillors. At present the Police are updating the current NW co-ordinators contact details, obtaining permission to pass the details on to the ladies. This will

completed by the end of April.

The ladies to attend an extra forum group meeting to be arranged in April to discuss the progress of this project.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation Event.**

The forum group agreed to support this road show project with allocated funding of £787. Total project costs = £1800.

7 secondary schools across the county including 3 from the Chester-le-Street area will take part in the event being held at Stanley. The event will provide information of appropriate relationships, internet grooming, online safety and how to report issues or concerns.

Forum meeting ended at 8.00pm

Next meeting agreed for April, date to be arranged.

**HORTICULTURE REPORT  
NORTH LODGE PARISH COUNCIL  
15 March 2016**

**New Flower Beds**

- There are presently seven raised flower beds throughout the Parish which Durham County Council plant and maintain twice a year – financed by the Parish Council. The horticultural team have requested a further nine beds to be installed by Durham County Council with the same agreement.

**Flower Bed at entrance to Longdean Park**

- 2 hydrangeas, plus bedding to be planted

**Shrub Bed within Longdean Park**

- Maintenance and tidying continues

**Shrub Bed close to northlands Roundabout**

- Frank has some spare plants which may be planted in this bed

**Flower Bed around plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge**

- Red Geraniums will be planted around Plinth

**Diamond Jubilee Flower Beds (2) near entrance to Picktree Lodge**

- Roses are to be removed from these beds and planted in northlands shrub bed (may or not flourish). Improve soil with nutrients etc. and fill diamond beds with bedding.

**Millennium Flower Bed at entrance to Lombard drive**

- No problems. Bedding to be planted.

**Heather Bed at Picktree Village**

- No problems. Frank maintains bed

**Flower/Shrub Bed close to Ash Meadows in Picktree Village**

- Frank in partnership with local resident Mrs Kirkup is maintaining this bed. Old shrubs will be removed and replaced. Plus 2 Acers and 1 Acuba will be planted and bedding will be planted in front of bed.

**Flower/Shrub Beds (Back and two sides) of Northlands Bus Shelter**

- No problems. Frank will repair grass which was damaged by DCC when repairing street lights.

**Grassed area at top of Blind Lane (between house numbers 1 – 3)**

- A request by Residents was received for a flower bed to be put in. following discussion with the gardener, it was felt that the area was too small for a flower bed due to grass cutting issues. However, it was suggested that this area could be filled with daffodils.

**Planting of flowers below wall opposite plinth at entrance to Picktree Lodge**

- This cannot take place until Durham County Council have done major work in this area. DCC to be contacted.

**Checking of Low Flatts Play Area – Hawthorn Hedge**

- We have now acquired the bare rooted saplings of Hawthorn hedging. Frank will plant shortly.

**Edging or stone work around flower beds – Picktree Lodge Plinth and Longdean Park**

- This work is still outstanding.

**Checks on Notice Boards**

- Frank continues to monitor the condition of the notice boards. It has been suggested that these notice boards be freshly painted if we enter Northumbria in Bloom. ? light green.

**Graffiti removal from Bus Shelters**

- On going

**Daffodil planting**

- Frank will make list of where he suggests planting daffodils.

**Tubs at Lambton Park entrance**

- These tubs will be planted with salmon geraniums to contrast with red ones in beds.

**Tubs at North Road near to Barley Mow**

- Three flower tubs to be placed in this area.

**Northumbria in Bloom**

- Ongoing

*Carol Walton/Maureen May*