

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 21st September 2021.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Dennis Hall.
Councillors: Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester, Jackie Gregory, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll, John Waugh.
County Councillor: Craig Martin.
Clerk: David Murrell.

The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming everyone back after the summer break.

Item 1. 21/81 Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence.

Item 2. 21/82 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

Item 3. 21/83 Report of the County Councillor

The Chairman invited the County Councillor to give his report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

Additional Public Bins for North Lodge

I've had a new public bin put in place between Caxton Way and Picktree Lodge. While the dog mess bin on Low Flatts Road has been replaced with a larger general waste bin.

Throughout Spring and Summer, overflowing public bins have been a major problem. COVID has encouraged everyone to stay local while exercising or walking their dogs. More people has meant more waste for our bins.

I've lobbied the Council continually to empty the bins more regularly or if they won't do this put in extra ones. They've repeatedly stated that they would not wish to put in additional resources that are just not going to get used in a couple of months time.

They've finally reacted to the pressure I've applied and targeted the hot spots. Hopefully this will deal with the problem for the foreseeable future.

Planned Hourly Rail Service for Chester-le-Street

My continued efforts to campaign for better rail services, along with others, have paid off. Currently the revised East Coast Mainline timetable has an hourly service for Chester-le-Street railway station.

Transpennine Express will be providing the additional services. Improvements to the infrastructure and new modern trains have opened up space on the network for this to be available.

I've lobbied the portfolio holder to ensure they fight for this increased service at Chester-le-Street. While ensuring they stand up for better services across all of County Durham, even if the region's Joint Transport Committee opt for something different. A body that generally has a preference to support the region's major cities. The timetable is only provisional and being consulted on. I encourage everyone to contribute to the consultations to ensure we get it. If successful, we all need to make sure we use these more frequent trains.

Review of Durham Light Infantry Collection and Museum

In my position as Chair of Scrutiny, I've led a review into the potential future of the DLI. Looking at what can be done with the collection, the empty building, and what role the new history centre will play.

The meeting received submissions from various stakeholders, such as the trustees of the collection and Faithful Durham. The whole of the Council were invited to ask questions and put forward their opinions on what should be done. Although it is disappointing that that the trustees pulled out of taking direct questions from County Councillors.

One of the big themes that came out of the discussions, the need for the grounds of the DLI museum to be memorialised. Throughout its history the area has been used as a place of reflection and to scatter ashes.

A report will be submitted to cabinet on the discussion, with the final decision being with them. Which is expected to come in September.

In addition, re artwork for the Drum Industrial Estate, the County Cllr had met with the Head of Art at Park View School who had advised that the School was keen to be involved. The County Cllr is to keep the Parish Council advised of progress and Councillors stated that they would like the Council to be represented in discussions and decision making. The County Cllr confirmed that there is £6K of S106 money available for this project.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 21/84 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th July 2021, 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. 21/85 Chairman's Report

The Chairman's report included the matters contained in his written report below -

A Business Items: Forward Plan:

Social Media/ Communications: NLPC Facebook Page now live since 11 August

Populate with:

- Photographs
- Newsletter
- Clerk to add information as listed in Schedule to Report to July Meeting
- Agendas & Minutes
- Other suggestions?
- All to join
- Inform friends
- It will take time

Improving Representation: Co-option: Update:

Dates of notices:

Expressions of Interest by 30 September, Interviews 12 Oct

Formal Co-options 19 Oct

B Planned Activities:

DCC Presentation on Environmental Enforcement: postponed

C Items for Discussion:

PCC Presentation: 22 July:

- Plan/Survey circulated 3 August
- Further consideration?

Stone -walled Flowerbeds North Road: Site Visit: 18 August:

- To note decisions

Meeting with Cabinet Member Martin Wilkes: 20 August:

- Community Hub

- S106 funds; need for transparency

- Planning/Environmental Statements

D Items for Decision:

Remembrance Sunday Arrangements: 14 November:

Protocol Review:

Remembrance Sunday will be coming up soon. I recall there was some controversy last year, so I want to deal with this now and in good time....

In my opinion all of us are affected by memories of family that have fought in wars, but some generations are affected more than others. For that reason, I think it right that I should be accompanied by another Councillor on the marking of this important day. I have asked Cllr Forrester to accompany me on this years Remembrance Sunday for that reason. It is a slight break with tradition but trust that there is no objection to this...

I turn now to the question of donations to the Royal British Legion: last year we made a donation of £100. This year I am recommending £250, in recognition of two matters: first, the public increasingly recognises the much wider humanitarian work our forces carry out in challenging places like Afghanistan; it has regularly been observed in all the media; but second, and frankly, we can well afford to do this. Our inability in recent years to spend precepted funds entrusted to us for the public good concerns me very much since I have been Chair.....

So, finally I have asked Cllr Forrester to obtain a suitable wreath for the service and that we reimburse that cost; is that agreed also...

Pre Budget-Setting Planning:

We usually set Budgets in January. I want us to think earlier about spending opportunities for each of the Portfolio Areas (save for Governance and Finance)

Can I request Portfolio Holders to bring forward in their reports to the October Meeting suggestions for spending in their areas of responsibility?

By planning ahead, and carrying out any necessary enquiries or research, I am hoping we can make better and more informed decisions.....specific projects and spending that we can allocate funding towards...

Item: 6 f Policy and Governance Portfolio

New Code of Conduct is on the Agenda

Advice: Declarations of Interests at Meetings: Guidance: Request Clerk to re issue

Re the Police and Crime Commissioner, Councillors hoped that the Commissioner would visit the Parish Council in the Spring. Cllr Gregory advised that Councillors would need to submit questions in advance.

Re the Poppy Appeal, Cllrs agreed to make a donation of £250 plus any cost for the wreath.

Re Budget Reports, this is to be included in the October Agenda.

Regarding outstanding matters -

Re Minute 21/73. The County Cllr kindly agreed to investigate the possibility of installing a defibrillator at Picktree Village.

Item 6. 21/86 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Crime and Community Safety

The Chairman invited Cllr Gregory to give her report -

Cllr Gregory advised that there were no matters to report at present.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory and invited Cllr Waugh to give his Finance report which

included the matters contained in his written report below -

b) Finance

I have studied the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm everything appears in order.

There are still a few transactions to record but we have a healthy balance of over £70,000.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his report and invited Cllr May to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

c) Horticulture

Summary

Councillor Driscoll and I met with Ian Harland (Team Leader, Durham County Council) and discussed schedule of work required.

Items of priority discussed:

1. Jubilee Tree in Lombard Drive

Requirement of circle of bedding around outside of metal work

2. Two Shrub Beds at North Road

We have discussed these beds with Ian Harland.

Scenarios:

a) During the digging and removal of trees/shrubs etc. with machinery, there may be considerable damage to the surrounding walls etc., which may prove to be costly to repair. Therefore Durham County Council will give a price to Parish Council for this cost, if this issue were to occur.

b) If Parish Councillors were to accept the risk, and the wall was not so severely damaged etc., then the price will be reduced,

If the Parish Council agreed to the above, then the beds would be left soiled up and discussion to which plants would be planted (plus cost) would be discussed between Parish Council and County Council.

3. Northlands Shrub Bed

Bed requires tidying etc. We requested winter bedding plants are planted. Requires weeding and more bark to be installed.

4. Picktree Village

A resident has been given permission by Durham County Council to remove some old bedding from flower beds. She will then replant them in a public area of the village for next year. The Parish Council wish to thank the resident for all her help and hard work.

5. Picktree Lodge Entrance

The County Council have decided to re-instate this area themselves. The area will be cut, levelled etc., and flower beds re-installed. However this will not happen until the winter season as the grass cutting machine will be in use by grass cutters for regular use for the Parish.

Re the North Road shrub beds, Cllrs agreed to the proposals in item 2 of the report.

The Chairman thanked Cllr May for her report and invited Cllr Waugh to give his Planning report which included the following matters -

d) Planning

Cllr Waugh advised that he continued to inform Councillors on a weekly basis of any new planning applications in the Parish and also to highlight any concerns.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his report and invited Cllr Caygill to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

e) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

All equipment appears to be in good order.

The junior swing has been repaired and replaced.

The fault on the multi use piece of equipment reported after the last meeting has not yet been repaired and I have reported it again.

LOW FLATTS

The equipment appears to be in good order.

As reported at the last meeting, the weeds around the park and the fenced area need to be cut back.

Re weeds at Low Flatts, the Clerk is to arrange for these to be cut back.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

f) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall advised that there were no matters to report.

Councillors thanked the Chairman and he invited Cllr Forrester to give her report which included the following matters -

g) Publicity

Cllr Forrester reported on several matters of community interest from the AAP meeting held on 13th September 2021.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her report and invited Cllr Gregory to give her Website report which included the following matters -

h) Website

Cllr Gregory advised that the website was being kept up-to-date.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report.

i) Highways

Cllr Gregory reminded Councillors that all Councillors should be monitoring highways as the Highways Portfolio was currently without a portfolio holder. Cllr Gregory advised that she had reported to the County Cllr difficulty in picking out the junction of North Road/Low Flatts Roads. The County Cllr confirmed that he was pursuing this with the County Council.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory.

Item 7. 21/87 Correspondence

1) From Mazars LLP

Notification of completion of Audit.

2) From a Resident

Email re trees for the Baffle Bank.

3) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

Notification of the AGM to be held on Saturday 9th October 2021.

Agreed that Cllrs Forrester and May are to represent the Council at the meeting.

4) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following were within North Lodge Parish:-

a) Application for felling of one Willow tree (TPO-CLS-1), at 1 North Lodge.

b) Application for single storey rear extension, changing colour of windows and doors throughout and render to rear elevation, at 1A North Lodge.

c) Application for listed building consent for part replacement of roof, at Lambton Castle.

- d) Application for first floor side extension and single storey side and rear extension, at 12 Wear Lodge.
- e) Application for first floor extension above existing garage, single storey rear extension, remove conservatory roof and replace with a new lean to roof, at 58 Lombard Drive.
- f) Application for increase in roof height of 2.8m to create an additional floor within the roof space, 1.5 storey extension to the north, south and western elevations, new boundary fencing/sliding gates, and new vehicular access off private road, at Pad Panache, Picktree Village.
- g) Approval for single storey extension to rear pitched tiled roofs, each pitch has a Velux window (600x600, 4 in total). Bi-fold doors to be fitted to extension. Existing garage roof to be raised. Existing sun lounge to be demolished and new workshop at rear of garage. Garage roof/workshop roof and new extension to have flat roof. Ensuite to be created for bedroom 1, at Izing Lore, Picktree Village.
- h) Approval for single storey side extension to link up with existing garage, conversion of the garage into habitable rooms and extension to driveway, at 27 Blind Lane.
- i) Approval for erection of 1 no. detached dwellinghouse on Plot 2 (reserved matters application pursuant to DM/19/01917/OUT), at site of former Pelaw Grange Cottage.
- j) Approval for erection of 1 no. detached dwellinghouse on Plot 5 (reserved matters application pursuant to DM/19/01917/OUT), at site of former Pelaw Grange Cottage.
- k) Approval for erection of a light modular portacabin classroom for use as additional training space, at Unit 22, Second Avenue, Drum Industrial Estate.
- l) Approval for erection of 1 no. detached dwellinghouse on Plot 4 (reserved matters application pursuant to DM/19/01917/OUT), at site of former Pelaw Grange Cottage.
- m) Approval for reserved matters application for one dwelling (Plot 3) in relation to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale relating to DM/19/01917/OUT, at site of former Pelaw Grange Cottage.
- n) Approval for construction of a building for use when readying cherry pickers for rental for a temporary period of 5 years, at Unit 32, Third Avenue, Drum Industrial Estate.
- o) Approval to fell 2 yew trees and 2 holly trees, at 21B North Lodge.
- p) Approval for erection of 83 dwellings, at site of former Arizona Chemical, Vigo Lane.
- q) Approval for felling of one Willow tree (TPO-CLS-1), at 1 North Lodge.
- r) Refusal for retrospective application for the construction of a shed for use as a rest area, at land to the north of Low Flatts Road and west of 92 Kingsmere.

Item 8. 21/88 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Request for Donation - North Lodge Remembrance Group

Councillors discussed this request and agreed to make a donation of £350 to the Group.

(Resolved on a unanimous show of hands - to make a donation of three hundred and fifty pounds to the North Lodge Remembrance Group)

b) Request for Donation - Park View School

Councillors discussed this request and agreed to make a donation of £3500 to the School. This donation is in addition to the Council's annual budget for donations.

(Resolved on a show of hands with 6 in favour and 1 against - to make a donation of three thousand five hundred pounds to Park View School)

c) Improving communication - Using social media

The Chairman outlined progress to date with the Facebook page. Councillors agreed that Cllr Hall is to be Portfolio Holder for Social Media, to include the website and Facebook.

d) Review of Public Seating

Cllr Driscoll had carried out an audit of public seating in the Parish and made proposals for the improvement of the stock. Councillors agreed with the proposals and thanked Cllr Driscoll for his work to date.

e) Proposals for Bus Shelters

Cllr Gregory outlined the reasons why it would not be possible to provide a stone built shelter in Picktree Village to replace the existing metal frame shelter. Councillors agreed, therefore, to request from the County Council a shelter of the same design as the shelter towards the south end of the Village, to include a litter bin. In Vigo Lane, the County Council had advised that there would not be enough space for a stone bus shelter.

f) An Updated Code of Conduct

A draft Code of Conduct, copies of which had been previously circulated, was discussed and adopted with immediate effect.

(Resolved - to adopt a revised Code of Conduct with immediate effect)

For consideration of the next item, the public and the press were excluded from the meeting.

g) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - Clerk's Remuneration/Increased Duties

The Clerk left the meeting during consideration of this Item.

The Chairman had prepared a report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Councillors discussed the report and agreed to adopt the proposals in full including an increase in the Clerk's hours to 58 hours per calendar month and the purchase of a replacement laptop computer. The Clerk thanked Councillors for their support.

(Resolved - to agree in full to the proposals contained in the Chairman's Report)

Item 9. 21/89 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 463.84	Salaries August 2021	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses August 2021	
Salaries	£ 464.04	Salaries September 2021	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses September 2021	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 415.40	P.A.Y.E.	
D. Hall	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
D. Murrell (via Morrisons)	£ 15.30	Postage Stamps	
D. Murrell (via Costco)	£ 13.19	Copier Paper	£ 2.20
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - August 2021	£ 2.40
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Sept 2021	£ 2.40
UKFast	£ 28.99	Monthly Subscription - August 2021	£ 4.83
UKFast	£ 28.99	Monthly Subscription - Sept 2021	£ 4.83
DSJ Property Services	£ 180.00	Painting of Bus Shelter Walls	
Durham County Council	£2954.64	Flower Beds	£492.44
Durham County Council	£ 747.56	Website Hosting and Support	£124.59
Greenbarnes Ltd	£ 788.10	Purchase of Noticeboard	£131.34
Mazars LLP	£ 240.00	Audit Fee	£ 40.00
DSJ Property Services	£ 150.00	Erecting Noticeboard	
JAK HQ Ltd	£ 240.00	Printing Newsletters	£ 40.00
Npower Northern Ltd	£ 157.93	Power for Tree Lights	£ 7.60
Park View School	£3500.00	Donation	
North Lodge Remembrance Group	£ 350.00	Donation	
D. Murrell (via Newsquest)	£ 525.60	Newspaper Adverts	£ 87.60
Total Payments	£11,637.36		

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 10. 21/90 Other Matters for Information

The Clerk is to include an Agenda item for the next meeting re the appointment of a Gardener/Environment Caretaker for the Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th October 2021.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries October 2021	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses October 2021	
Salaries	£	Backdated Additional Hours (Sept)	
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Oct 2021	£ 2.40
UKFast	£ 28.99	Monthly Subscription - Oct 2021	£ 4.83
D. Murrell (via Currys PC World)	£ 22.97	Computer Mouse + Memory Stick	£ 3.83
D. Murrell (via John Lewis)	£ 799.99	Laptop Computer	£133.33
DSJ Property Services	£ 150.00	Strimming Weeds at Low Flatts	
Poppy Appeal	£ 250.00	Donation	
Total Payments	£		

Balance to 30th September 2021

Balance b/f	£72148.17	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Aug/Sept 2021	<u>£11637.36</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 5631.45
	£60510.81	Instant Account	<u>£58620.54</u>
		Total	£64251.99
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 1.18</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 3740.00
Balance c/f	£60511.99		£60511.99

Two cheques not yet presented -

- £240.00 cheque number 1457 dated 21/09/21 for the audit fee payable to Mazars LLP.
- £3,500.00 cheque number 1465 dated 30/09/21 for the donation payable to Park View Academy.