

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 18th January 2022.

PRESENT: Chairman: Councillor Dennis Hall.

Councillors: Sue Brown, Margaret Caygill, Elsie Forrester, Jackie Gregory, Maureen May, Patrick Driscoll, Craig Martin, Chris Veitch, John Waugh.

County Councillor: Craig Martin (also in attendance as a Parish Councillor).

Clerk: David Murrell.

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

Item 1. 22/01 Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence

Item 2. 22/02 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Craig Martin declared interests as a Governor of Park View School and as a County Councillor.

Item 3. 22/03 To Consider a Candidate for Co-option

The candidate, Chris Veitch, had submitted an application for co-option, copies of which had been previously circulated. Mr. Veitch was invited to address the meeting and following this he took questions from Councillors. The candidate then left the room whilst Councillors discussed his application. Re his residency qualification, Councillors were satisfied that it is only his place of work, and his work rota, that takes him away from the Parish otherwise he would be fully resident in the Parish.

(Resolved on a unanimous show of hands - to co-opt Chris Veitch to the Parish Council).

Cllr Veitch returned to the meeting and was congratulated by Councillors. He thanked Councillors for their consideration and looked forward to working with the Council. The Chairman reminded Councillors that there remained a further vacant seat on the Council. It was hoped that the recent leaflet distribution by Councillors to all homes in the Parish, seeking applicants for co-option, would bring further interest from residents.

Councillors agreed to take Item 11 next.

Item 11. 22/04 Setting the Precept

Copies of financial forecasts prepared by the Clerk for the financial year 2022/2023 had been previously circulated. These formed the basis of extensive discussions by Councillors. Re the Community Fund, Councillors agreed that for 2022/2023 the budget for the Fund was to be £12,000 with a maximum of £6,000 per application to the Fund.

Taking into account the agreed budgets and the current economic climate where some retail prices were expected to rise substantially, Councillors agreed to set a Band D equivalent charge for 2022/2023 of £31.53, an amount unchanged since 2018/2019.

(Resolved - to set a Precept of £31.53 per Band D equivalent property for the financial year 2022/2023).

Item 4. 22/05 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 -

Access to Cycle Track Repaired by Low Flatts Field

I've funded the repair of this access point onto the Sustrans cycle track out of my Neighbourhood Budget. The steps by Low Flatts field have been in a poor condition for many years.

Thanks to Sustrans who managed this project, bidding for the funding and organising the work.

They are an organisation that is mainly funded by charitable donations and bidding for grants.

I will continue to look for projects that will improve the enjoyment of this well used route.

Additional drainage for Caxton Way Field

The field linking Picktree Lodge and Caxton Way has had additional drainage installed to prevent the footpath's from flooding. I've facilitated this happening after residents raised concerns about the issue.

The footpath coming from between 5 and 10 Caxton Way has had pipes installed next to the footpath. This should drain water away rather than flooding the path.

Previously I have successfully worked with Durham County Council to solve flooding issues on another section of these footpaths. This area continues to have poor drainage due to historical building decisions. I will continue to work with the Council to find ways to mitigate the problems.

Pushing for action on masterplans

Durham County Council has recently been reviewing all of their masterplans for the towns across the County. The plans provide proposals on how to make key improvements to the areas. They are going out to consultation with the public.

Been raising the need to turn these plans into action. Plans are useless without the will to implement them. There is a lot of frustration that these masterplans have existed for quite a long time.

The plans will form a basis to bid for pots of money that get released by the government. Ready made bids that demonstrate how they can improve areas. Making it easier to bid and allowing us to be more successful.

The public are encouraged to make their own contributions through the various consultation events happening.

Restoring Railways Connecting Consett to Newcastle through Chester-le-Street

Before reading this please remember that this is a very expensive proposal, only an idea, and there are many difficult obstacles to overcome to make this happen.

There is an idea to reopen the former railway line connecting Chester-le-Street and Consett. Which would then run to Newcastle along the second track on the East Coast Mainline.

Durham County Council are bidding for funding off the government to do a full feasibility study. To get a proper idea of how much it would cost and see what work would need to be done.

The request originally came from calls to reopen the Derwentside railway line. Initial observations concluded that a route going to Newcastle through Chester-le-Street would have more economic benefits. It would pass through more communities and North Lodge would get a railway station.

The proposal would have similar journey times between Consett and Newcastle compared to the Derwentside proposal. While being less costly, being able to use the infrastructure of the East Coast Mainline for a proportion of the route.

The main flaw in this idea would be the loss of the cycle track linking Chester-le-Street and Consett, which the railway would run on. Although space could be found along it to put in a new cycle track.

Incinerator Plans Rejected for Newton Aycliffe

Proposal has been put forward to build an incinerator in a major Newton Aycliffe industrial estate. Which would deal with medical waste. This was rejected by one of the council's planning committees in December.

I created and led the planning argument for the incinerator to be refused. On the basis that it would harm the organisations and the jobs they create on the industrial estate. This was to be built right next to Hitachi, who put forward their own complaints. One of the county's major employers who noted it could harm their operations.

This comes alongside plans, which were rejected, to build an incinerator right next to Consett town centre. Incineration is a necessary evil to deal with our waste as opposed to landfill. But we need to be vigilant in these planning matters to ensure poor decisions do not harm our surrounding areas.

In addition, a) Re Caxton Way, the Chairman considered that re-wilding was, in general, a beneficial aim. Councillors agreed to support any project to plant wildflowers there. b) Re the new Sustrans steps at Low Flatts, Cllr Gregory reminded Councillors that there was a need to continue to press Sustrans for refurbishment of the North Road bridge. This is to be an Agenda item for the next Parish Council meeting. c) Re the incinerator, Councillors agreed that there would be great concerns should there be a proposal to build the plant at the Drum Industrial Estate. d) Re restoring railways, Councillors asked the County Councillor to consider advising the Clerk directly of any new major initiatives.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 5. 22/06 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16th November 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 6. 22/07 Chairman's Report

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

A Business Items: Forward Plan:

Community Engagement:

The Community Fund was approved at our November Meeting. Just a reminder we will have the opportunity under Item 11 to consider how much Councillors will want to commit to that Fund and the size of the limit upon applications.

Council Representation: Co options:

I circulated leaflets on part of the new Barley Mow Estate earlier this month (Wanstead Court). I think that we must keep up the work that we ve done to encourage representation on the Council for all of the reasons I gave in my original Report.

Members may wish to update on their own progress.

B Planned Activities:

NALC: Climate Change Report:

On the Agenda for discussion

LGA: Working in Partnership Report:

On the Agenda for discussion

Portfolio Review:

We have new members. I think it is appropriate that we review the current portfolios held by members. Are they 'fit for purpose'? Do we need to change or add to them? Do we need different councillors responsible for them? What might our new Councillors like to do?

I am recommending that first, I take informal soundings from Councillors as to what their views are with a view to a formal discussion at our April Meeting. Can I ask that members contact me with their opinions and views on what changes they would like to see.? Can I ask our new members let me know what particular areas of interest they might wish to take up as a portfolio responsibility.?

Developing Cooperation with Local Businesses:

What businesses are in our Parish? Should we establish closer links with them? Are their matters where they may have a common interest with the Parish. I raise these questions because there may be benefits in establishing a local business forum of some kind to encourage closer collaboration. Members views would be welcomed upon whether this should be pursued.

Items for Discussion/Agreement:

As per Agenda

D Other Matters:

None

Item: 7 f Policy and Governance Portfolio

Remote Meetings: The Government announced over the Christmas period that it is still not in favour of Councils arranging meetings remotely. This would require a change in the law. All the local government bodies, all commentators and the majority of councillors want the law to change to allow them to do this.

Two local authority bodies, LLG, ADSO have begun a petition to support the necessary change in the law; here's the details: <https://www.change.org/p/uk-government-and-parliament-for-councils-in-england-to-have-the-choice-to-meet-remotely>

Item: 7 h Website Portfolio

As regards the website, and Facebook, once we have resolved the levels of financing for the Community Fund, details should be added to encourage take up.

The Chairman emphasised 1) the need to encourage residents on the new estates to engage with the Council, 2) a Portfolio review is to be included in the Agenda for the April Council meeting, 3) Councillors are asked to present ideas to the Chairman for engaging with businesses in the Parish. Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 21/107 section b). The Clerk advised that a debit card was still awaited from Lloyds Bank.

b) Re Minute 21/107 section e). Cllr Caygill advised that filling the gap in the hedge at Low Flatts was in hand.

Item 7. 22/08 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Crime and Community Safety

The Chairman invited Cllr Gregory to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below --

Crime

No information given by Police

Community Safety

Anti-Social Behaviour in the parish, all the necessary agencies have worked in partnership to resolve this issue.

Precept Consultation Survey closes 24th January 2022.

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Joy Allen, has launched a survey asking local residents how much they are prepared to contribute towards policing in the force area through their local council tax.

Your views are welcome via the survey at
durhampcc.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/x3xzq9

Market Activity Week 8th August to 12th August 2022.

Neighbourhood Police Team.

This will be the 15th year of Chester-le-Street Activity week. There will be a host of rides, games and sessions on Burns Green, Cone Terrace. Applications for funding will be made to local councils and other organisations. Shoppers at Tesco, Chester-le-Street can now vote using a token from the Tesco Bags of Help initiative. Votes will totted up and a grant will be given to the activity week team.

Chester-le-Street Police welcomes Sgt. Andy Davison to their Neighbourhood team.

The Police road shows around the Chester-le-Street area have been a great success. More will be arranged and details will be advertised.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gregory for her report 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 that everything is in order.

We have well in excess of £50,000 in our bank account.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his report and invited Cllrs May and Driscoll to give the Horticulture report which included the matters contained in Cllr May's written report below -

c) Horticulture

Summary

Councillor May, Councillor Driscoll, and David Murrell (Parish Clerk) attended a meeting with Graham Cozens Area Supervisor (North) Grounds Maintenance Durham County Council to discuss schedule of work required from 1st April 2022

Update

Durham County Council will honour all agreements with North Lodge Parish Council for horticulture work carried out until 31 March 2022

1. Flower Beds x 21

Nineteen of these flower beds will continue to be planted up with summer and winter bedding twice yearly in June and September.

Unfortunately, over time the Parish Council has been undercharged yearly for these beds due to an error by Durham County Council. Therefore from 1st April 2022 the Parish Council should expect to see an increase in the cost of these beds in order to keep in line with all the other Parishes in the County. Also added to the new cost, there may well be a price increase of 2-2-5%. We are awaiting new prices.

The remaining two flower beds (Diamond Jubilee at Picktree Lodge) will not be re-instated. Costings would need to be agreed with Parish Council and Durham County Council.

3. Two Shrub Beds at North Road

Parish Council has received price for the above. If walls had to be demolished etc., then the cost would be £5841.00 + Vat. + plants. Agreement required.

4. Picktree Lodge Entrance

See item 1. Above. The power cabinet has been removed. The rough grass has been cut.

5. Sustrans Bridge

We could ask for funding -Discussion required

6. Litter Picking

Can we advertise for Volunteers?

Frank Leighton

Sadly our retired Parish Gardener Frank Leighton, "Pot it On" died on 19 November 2021.

Frank worked within the Parish and in the North Lodge general area for many years and is fondly remembered by many residents.

Frank's daughter has contacted the Parish Council requesting that his family could possibly fund the planting of a tree or some other commemorative memorial in his memory.

In addition, 1) Re the Diamond Jubilee beds at Picktree Lodge, Councillors were concerned to learn that the County Council would not re-instate them. The County Cllr kindly agreed to approach the County Council to seek a proposal to re-instate. Cllr Gregory reminded Councillors that the planting of barrels should be included in any discussions with the County Council. 2) Re the North Road shrub beds, Councillors approved the estimate from the County Council. 3) Re land near the Sustrans bridge, the County Cllr kindly agreed to provide funds for a wildflower project there. 4) Re litter picking, more information is to be sought for presentation at a later meeting of the Council. 5) Re a memorial for Mr. Leighton, further discussion is to be sought with his family.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs May and Driscoll for the report and invited Cllr Forrester to give her report which included the following matters -

d) Publicity

Cllr Forrester reported on several matters of community interest including the AAP Water Safety Group, funding awarded by the AAP Community Recovery Task & Finish Group, and CDALC meetings, in particular re reduced numbers of Police officers in the County.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her 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 apart from the fault on the Multi Gym which has been reported several times and has been again.

A resident consultation on the revamp of this area has been carried out. I understand a decision on the final design has been made.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.

The reinstatement of the gap in the fence is in hand.

I have asked to meet James Young to discuss the use of 106 monies to revamp this area.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

f) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall's report was contained in his Chairman's Report (Minute 22/07, above).

Councillors thanked Cllr Hall for his report.

g) Website

Cllr Hall's report was contained in his Chairman's Report (Minute 22/07, above).

Councillors thanked Cllr Hall for his report.

h) Highways

In the absence of a Portfolio Holder, no report was presented.

The Chairman invited Cllr Waugh to give his Finance report which included the following matters -

i) 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. There had been nothing contentious since the previous Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his report.

Item 8. 22/09 Correspondence

- 1) Various planning applications, approvals and refusals from Durham County Council, of which the following were within North Lodge Parish:-
 - a) Application for detached garage and garden room, at 1A Park View.
 - b) Application for alteration to existing store and utility to side of dwelling, rebuilding front and rear walls with pitched roof in lieu of flat roof to form study and utility area, at 2 Lyndhurst Ave.
 - c) Application for single storey extension to the existing kitchen, french doors and juliette balcony to first floor south elevation, at 72 Leander Avenue.
 - d) Application for T1 chestnut - fell due to disease and losing major limbs and becoming unstable, at 25 North Lodge.
 - e) Approval 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.
 - f) Approval for raising, enlarging and recovering of main roof including the replacement of existing dormer with inverted dormer to form roof terrace, a one and a half storey front

- extension, alterations to the rear elevation, a rear dormer extension, formation of first floor rear terrace and associated alterations, at 1 North Lodge.
- g) Approval for listed buildings consent for part replacement roof, at Lambton Castle.
 - h) Approval for first floor side extension and single storey side and rear extension, at 12 Wear Lodge.
 - i) Approval 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.

Item 9. 22/10 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) NALC Climate Change Report

Councillors agreed to defer this item to the February 2022 meeting of the Council.

b) LGA Working in Partnership Report

Councillors agreed to defer this item to the February 2022 meeting of the Council.

c) Arrangements for the proposed visit of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Councillors discussed if there should be a change to the original proposal. It was agreed that the format to be offered to the Commissioner should be for a 30 minute meeting with Councillors before the start of a Council meeting.

Item 10. 22/11 Requests for Donations

The Clerk advised that there was one outstanding request, from the Great North Air Ambulance Service for £500. Councillors agreed that a donation of £500 should be made.

Item 12. 22/12 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 517.84	Salaries December 2021	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses December 2021	
D. Murrell (via Wilko Ltd)	£ 11.50	Batteries for Tree Lights	£ 1.92
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Dec 2021	£ 2.40
D. Murrell (via ALCC)	£ 50.00	Annual Subscription	
UKFast	£ 36.24	Monthly Subscription - Dec 2021	£ 6.04
Society of Local Council Clerks	£ 144.00	Annual Subscription	
Durham County Council	£ 473.83	Attending to Tree Lights	£ 78.97
S. E. Harrison & Sons	£ 144.00	Supply of Christmas Tree	£ 24.00
D. Hall	£ 165.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
HM Revenue & Customs	£ 468.60	P.A.Y.E.	
Salaries	£ 517.14	Salaries January 2022	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses January 2022	
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Jan 2022	£ 2.40
UKFast	£ 36.24	Monthly Subscription - Jan 2022	£ 6.04
CDALC	£ 10.00	Training Fee	
Down to Earth Landscapes	£ 120.00	Erect Christmas Tree and Lights	£ 20.00
Great North Air Ambulance	£ 500.00	Donation	
Total Payments	£3403.17		

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 13. 22/13 Other Matters for Information

- a) Cllr Caygill gave an up-date on the Council's Civic Arts Awards project.
 - b) Cllr Brown asked for consideration to be given to more attractive road signs in Picktree Village. Councillors recalled that the County Council had refused a similar request near the Vigo Lane/North Road junction.
- The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th February 2022.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries February 2022	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses February 2022	
D. Murrell (via B & Q Ltd)	£ 9.00	Hawthorn Plants	£ 1.50
D. Murrell (via Zoom inc)	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2022	£ 2.40
DSJ	£ 40.00	Planting Hawthorns	
UKFast	£ 36.24	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2022	£ 6.04
Total Payments	£		

Balance to 31st January 2022

Balance b/f	£57738.29	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - January 2022	<u>£ 3403.17</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 833.58
	£54335.12	Instant Account	<u>£53622.50</u>
		Total	£54456.08
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ .96</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 120.00
Balance c/f	£54336.08		£54336.08

One cheque not yet presented -
£120.00 cheque number 1481 dated 18/01/22 for attending to Christmas tree and lights at Picktree Village payable to Down to Earth Landscapes.