

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 19th April 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. Councillor Martin was not present at the start of the meeting.

Item 1. 22/35 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Martin had given Apologies for his expected late arrival at the meeting.

Item 2. 22/36 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

In the absence of the County Councillor, Councillors agreed to take Item 3 after his arrival.

Item 4. 22/37 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th March 2022, 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. 22/38 Chairman's Report

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

A Business Items: Forward Plan:

Community Engagement:

April: The Community Fund scheme begins in April: David has drafted publicity text and a revised application form in readiness for the initiative going live

B Planned Activities:

The Review of Portfolios : This is on the Agenda, but I would like to thank Members who have already worked with me by contributing to the Report I've written. I look forward to a good debate when we get to it..

Park View Platinum Community Art Scheme: Delighted to hear that the entries are now in. Thanks to Cllrs Caygill Waugh & Driscoll for their continued efforts on this project

Memorial Plaque: Again I was please with the results of the Commissioning work on this

C Other Matters:

In accordance with agreed arrangements, I conducted the Clerk's Annual Appraisal. This is considered at Item 9: CONFIDENTIAL.

Item: 7 f Policy and Governance Portfolio

It is expected that there will be a government announcement in the Queen’s Speech that the current section 106 arrangements will be changed: a new Infrastructure Levy is to be put in place to govern the way developer contributions re to be made.

Remote Meetings:

Over 10,000 signatures have been obtained.

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 g Website Portfolio

No report

Councillors thanked the Chairman for his report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

a) Re Minute 22/26 section b). Re the regeneration of the wood alongside the A693, Cllr Veitch had noticed that self-seeding of trees had already begun.

b) Re Minute 22/29. Cllr Gregory confirmed that a Police report re the road closure of Blind Lane had been circulated to Councillors.

At this point, Councillor Martin arrived at the meeting.

c) Re Minute 22/34 section b). Cllr Gregory confirmed that she would soon make the inspection of the Sustrans cycleway.

Item 3. 22/39 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 -

Funding Issues for Struggling Bus Services

Durham County Council are providing an additional £1.9 million directly to bus companies to protect services. With bus use still down following COVID and the Government withdrawing their additional support given during the pandemic.

Without any additional funding bus services are expected to reduce by 10%. The reduction would not be shared equally across services and the county, there would be greater reductions in rural and evening services.

Funding for the Metro is in an even worse position, the service is having to be propped up using reserves this year. Nexus are also taking funding from bus services in the Tyne and Wear area to support the Metro. With pretty much all of Chester-le-Street's services crossing into the nexus area, there could very well be some knock on reductions that our town experiences.

Bus use has not returned back to pre pandemic levels due to many people continuing to work from home, along with a continued fear of the virus, especially in older generations. Without the income from fares and reduced government funding, we need more people to use our bus services to keep them going.

Fibre Broadband to the Property Coming to North Lodge

Virgin Media have confirmed they will be providing broadband to our community, with speeds around 1,000 Mbps. It is expected to go live by the end of 2022.

I've met with Virgin to raise the need to minimise disruption during the work and prevent footpaths being trashed. A number of these complaints were received while they previously worked on other areas of Chester-le-Street.

This time Virgin will be feeding their cables through existing ducts as opposed to digging their own trenches. They will only need to dig up footpaths where blockages occur, which should be few and far between.

In addition, a) Re Virgin Media fibre broadband, Cllr Martin advised that the company had no plans at present for Picktree Village but he remained in contact with them about this. b) Re the recent fire at Barley Mow, the County Councillor advised that he had received no responses to his emails to various statutory organisations re future channels of communication.
The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 6. 22/40 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 and Community Safety report

Crime

Council not informed of any crime in North Lodge although, please see first item listed below.

Community Safety

Abandoned vehicle in coppice area of A693. Await confirmation that the vehicle is no longer subject to any police investigation, arrangements will then be made to remove said vehicle. For further details of this incident, refer to Durham Constabulary Facebook account entry dated 7th April.

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On the 12th April, The National Police Chiefs Council introduced
'2 Wheels Campaign'

This campaign aims to raise awareness amongst motorists and riders in how to improve driver/rider behaviour in order to enhance road safety.

Refer to National Highways for top tips <http://bit.ly/3rkEJVj>

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FRAUD : Take care when purchasing any tickets via Internet. There is a rise in fraudulent activity, with over £3,000,000 lost to bogus agents.

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Nine more Police Officers have been trained to work across Cleveland and Durham as Family Liaison Officers.

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There are 5 Police Road shows organised for the coming months. Details are :

Waldridge Parish Centre	22 nd April, 6-8pm
Chester-le-Street Parish Centre	18 th May, 11-1pm
Great Lumley Community Centre	26 th May 6-8pm
Bullion Hall	14 th June 2-4pm
The Scout Hut, Bournmoor	27 th July 11-1pm

Please check with local police and the Chester-le-Street police Facebook to check details do not change.

Fire Safety

Details of an on-line home fire safety check can be found on the County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service website and Facebook account.

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 looked at the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm that everything appears to be in order.
We have around £48,000 on deposit.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Finance report and invited him to give his Planning report.

c) 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 Cllrs May and Driscoll to give the Horticulture report which included the matters contained in Cllr May's written report below -

d) Horticulture

Summary

Frank Leighton

As per email from Clerk David Murrell, Frank's family will be arriving at the memorial seat at Lombard Drive North Lodge on Friday 06 May 2022 at 2pm.

In addition, 1) Councillors discussed a format for the Frank Leighton memorial meeting. Cllrs Gregory and Waugh gave apologies as they would not be able to attend. 2) Re planting of daffodils, Councillors made suggestions for suitable sites, to include sites appropriate for participation by children. 3) Cllr Waugh had kindly agreed to provide a design for flower beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge. 4) The future of the Council's flower barrels is to be an Agenda item at the next Council meeting. 5) Cllr Gregory had observed that the plinth at the entrance to Picktree Lodge needed weeding.

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

e) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

Equipment appears to be in good order.

The branches are still in the area.

No news of the refurbishment which is expected to be in the next two months.

LOW FLATTS

Equipment appears to be in good order.

The new whips planting area needs to be discussed.

No news on ideas for replacement equipment yet.

In addition, 1) A stronger mesh is needed to protect the new whips at Low Flatts. The Clerk will arrange this. 2) Cllr Driscoll had talked to a County Council officer carrying out an audit of equipment at Merlin Drive. The officer had advised that long delays were being experienced in the delivery of playground equipment. 3) Cllr Driscoll advised that a change in County Council procedures for bin emptying was producing unsatisfactory results. The County Councillor advised that such issues should be reported to him for investigation.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

f) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall's report was contained in his Chairman's Report (Minute 22/38, above).

Councillors thanked Cllr Hall for his report.

g) Website

Cllr Hall's report was contained in his Chairman's Report (Minute 22/38, 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 Forrester to give her report which included the following matters -

i) Publicity

Cllr Forrester reported on several matters from the AAP including that she is now a member of the AAP Holiday Activities and Food Programme Committee.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forrester for her report.

Item 7. 22/41 Correspondence

1) From npower Business Solutions
Letter re contract prices.

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

a) Application for tree works, at 5 North Lodge.

b) Application for erection of single storey carport, formation of enlarged rear dormer and erection of open structure in rear garden, at 1 North Lodge.

Item 8. 22/42 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Councillors agreed a proposal to provide commemorative badges to each student at Park View Lower School. Cllr Caygill provided an update on progress in the Community Arts Awards Programme. Cllr Veitch outlined a proposal for artwork to be installed in the flower beds.

Councillors approved this proposal with thanks to Cllr Veitch for all his work to date. Councillors agreed a budget allocation of £1K for the planting of the flower barrels. Cllrs May and Veitch are to lead on this project. The County Councillor advised that he had a sum of money from the County Council specifically for the Jubilee celebrations. The Clerk is to make an application for funding.

b) Review of Portfolios

The Chairman had produced a Report which had been previously circulated. This formed the basis for a discussion by Councillors who agreed to all the proposals in the Report. In addition, a Horticulture sub-group is to be formed, with the members being Cllrs Brown, Caygill and Gregory and lead by the Horticulture Portfolio Holders, to make reports and recommendations to the full Council.

c) A Defibrillator for Picktree Village

Cllr Martin and the Clerk gave an update on progress with this project. Permission for the preferred site was awaited from the County Council. This item is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

d) Painting of the Sustrans Bridge, North Road

Cllr Gregory, as a resident of the Parish, advised that a reply from Sustrans was still awaited and considered that it might be necessary to involve the MP to make progress. This item is to be included in the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

e) The Annual Newsletter

Cllr May requested that Councillors send to her by the end of May their items for consideration for inclusion in the Newsletter.

For consideration of the next item, in accordance with Standing Order 66, the following resolution was passed -

(Resolved - That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw).

Item 9. 22/43 The Clerk's Annual Appraisal

The Chairman and Clerk had carried out the Annual Appraisal and the Chairman had produced a Report which had been previously circulated. Councillors agreed to the Chairman's recommendation to note the Report.

Item 10. 22/44 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 526.34	Salaries April 2022	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses April 2022	
Amazon	£ 32.04	Magnets for Noticeboards	£ 5.34
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - April 2022	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - April 2022	£ 6.64
Northern Signs Engravers Ltd	£ 68.40	Memorial Plaque	£ 11.40
Cty DhM Assn of Local Councils.	£ 390.90	Annual Subscription	
Total Payments	£1161.93		

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 11. 22/45 Other Matters for Information

Cllr Veitch provided an update for the Remembrance Artwork project.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.36pm.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th May 2022.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries May 2022	
Expenses	£ 90.00	Expenses May 2022	
C. Veitch (via ebay)	£ 14.99	Union Jack Flags	
C. Veitch (via Tor Coatings Ltd)	£ 79.73	Paint for Crowns	£ 13.29
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - May 2022	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - May 2022	£ 6.64
Zurich Municipal	£ 719.11	Annual Insurance Premium	
Total of Above Payments	£		

Payments Made by Debit Card

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Richardsons Photographers	£ 90.00	Group Photograph	£ 15.00
XL Displays Ltd	£ 94.20	Noticeboard	£ 15.70
Made by Cooper Ltd	£ 459.90	Platinum Jubilee Badges	£ 76.65
Total Card Payments	£ 644.10		

Balance to 30th April 2022

Balance b/f	£48427.55	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - April 2022	<u>£ 1161.93</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 3579.15
	£47265.62	Instant Account	<u>£80644.69</u>
Deduct Card Payments	<u>£ 644.10</u>	Total	£84223.84
	£46621.52		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ .51</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 1140.90
	£46622.03		
Add Precept Received	<u>£34720.84</u>		
	£81342.87		
Add VAT Refund Received	<u>£ 1740.07</u>		
Balance c/f	£83082.94		£83082.94

Two cheques not yet presented -

- 1) £750.00 cheque number 1486 dated 15/02/22 for donation payable to North Lodge Remembrance Group. This cheque has not yet been issued.
- 2) £390.90 cheque number 1494 dated 19/04/22 for Annual Subscription payable to County Durham Association of Local Councils.