

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 July 2022.

PRESENT: In the Chair: Vice-Chairman Councillor Patrick Driscoll.

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

County Councillor: Craig Martin.

Clerk: David Murrell.

The Vice-Chairman, in the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular two people on work experience with the County Councillor.

Item 1. 22/73 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Dennis Hall (Chairman) and Councillor Chris Veitch.

Item 2. 22/74 Declarations of Interest

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

Item 3. 22/75 Report of the County Councillor

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

Sands Building Sold

Durham County Council have agreed a deal to sell its proposed new HQ to Durham University, to be used as their new Business School. The final hurdle for this deal to be completed passed with planning permission being granted for the building's use changed to an education facility.

The Council will now undergo a full assessment of how much office space it actually needs in the post COVID world of flexible working. It is expected that the Council will repurpose a building on Stanley front street for additional office space. Promoting the regeneration of our town's as opposed to focusing development on Durham City.

A much smaller HQ will be built on the Aykley Heads site to house the key political functions of Durham County Council. The building will double up as a conference centre to bring in additional income. This decision has been welcomed by businesses on the site who can utilise the facility rather needing to have their large meeting spaces.

The sale of the building on the Sands has generated a significant surplus, even after proposed investment in the Council's buildings. This extra funding will be invested back into the communities of County Durham.

Opening Up of Budget Scrutiny Process

Using my position as Chair of Scrutiny I'm opening the process of how Councillors can contribute and scrutinise Durham County Council's budget. All scrutiny committees will now have the formal ability to directly feed into the budget process, before cabinet produces its budget decisions.

Previously the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were the only committee to review the budget, as a whole and only after cabinet had given it their approval. Now each of the thematic scrutiny committees will have the ability to work up their own budget proposals that feed into scrutiny's response to the budget.

It is up to the individual committee to decide how they approach this. Whether they decide to take on their budget area as a whole or produce a piece of focused work on a particular area of the council's spending.

Under my leadership, all councillors now have a process to formally submit their policy ideas into the council's budget. I will be continuing to find ways for Councillors to have even more of an input in policy decisions before cabinet make their final decision.

In addition, a) Cllr Caygill asked that consideration be given to reducing the speed limit on North Road from 40mph to 30mph. The County Cllr advised that he was in support of that request but at present the national guidelines for speed limits identified a limit of 40mph as correct for that stretch of North Road. b) Cllr Caygill was concerned at the length of time being taken by the County Council to carry out and complete tasks and projects agreed with the Parish Council. The County Cllr advised that a shortage of trained staff was a significant problem at present.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the County Councillor for his report.

Item 4. 22/76 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 21st June 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 Vice-Chairman.

Item 5. 22/77 Chairman's Report

The Chairman had advised the Clerk that there were no matters to report.

Regarding outstanding matters -

Re Minute 22/68 section d). Re graffiti, Cllr Caygill advised that Park View School would wish to be informed of any instances so that they could attempt to identify if any students were involved.

Item 6. 22/78 Portfolio Holders' Reports

a) Communications and Media Development

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder, no report was made.

b) Crime and Community Safety

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

Crime

Theft from motor vehicles across the Chester-le-Street area including North Lodge.

Prevention advice: Please make sure unattended vehicles are locked and any valuables are removed from sight.

Community Safety

An 'Open Water' Safety Task Group has been set up in response to on going concerns about water safety at the Riverside Park, Chester-le-Street.

Two Chester-le-Street police officers have been nominated for a bravery award. PCs Connor McTaggart and Scott Bowes successfully administered CPR to a women.

From the 28th June, there has been an increase to the sentencing for causing death by dangerous

driving.

Activity Week 8th - 12th August, 10am-3pm at Burns Green, Cone Terrace (near to the swimming pool).

The activities at the site include funfair rides, bouncy castles and a five a side football game.

This is an annual event arranged by local PCSOs Richards and Taylor.

Non emergency calls use telephone number 101

Any emergencies calls use telephone number 999

The Vice-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 -

c) Finance

I have studied the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm that everything appears to be in order. We currently hold about £70,000.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Waugh for his Finance report and then gave his Highways and Community Assets report which included the matters contained in his written report below -

d) Highways and Community Assets

The latest bus shelter inspections were completed on 04/07/22, and all appeared to be in good order. Work was also required to re-shape the bushes at the rear of Northlands bus shelter, trim the bush at Ambleside Court shelter, and cut back excess growth inside and outside the glass shelter in Picktree Village.

Only minor seat cleaning was needed throughout, and some leaf removal in the Lambton Worm shelter. All glass display cabinets in shelters were cleaned, and the artwork posters rotated to refresh viewpoints.

Councillors thanked the Vice-Chairman for his report and he then invited Cllr May to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

e) Horticulture

Horticulture Sub Group

The group unanimously agreed to recommend to the full Parish Council to appoint Makepeace Landscaping as the Parish Gardener.

Agreement to be reached at the meeting of the full Parish Council on 19th July 2022.

Picktree Lodge

Grass appears to have been cut but not satisfactorily. (The embankment cutting machine has been out of action for some time)

Flower beds - who should be responsible for the restoration of these beds? Discussion and agreement required.

Picktree Village

The three small flower beds have still not been planted. Ian Harland has been informed

Low Flatts Road /Lyndhurst Avenue

Offending tree on corner has been inspected by Robbie Aberdeen and will be crowned later in the year.

Flower Barrels (14 in total)

Full Council needs to decide the future of these barrels as their condition is deteriorating

Shrub beds in North Road

Still not started apparently the winter storms have held this project up.

In addition, 1) Councillors thanked Cllr Gregory for planting up the Picktree Lodge plinth. 2) Councillors discussed the sub-group recommendation that Makepeace Landscapes should be appointed as Gardener.

(Resolved on a unanimous show of hands - to appoint Makepeace Landscapes as the Parish Council Gardener)

The Clerk and the sub-group are to make the detailed arrangements with the company.

3) Re grass cutting at Picktree Lodge, the County Cllr considered that it was likely that more residents would be in favour of the Baffle Bank grass being cut than those who would like to see it left uncut for bio-diversity reasons. The County Council was currently reviewing its policy on grass cutting. 4) Cllr Brown enquired about the flailing of hedges. The County Cllr advised that this method provided for the best re-growth of the hedge. 5) Re the reinstatement of the flower beds at the entrance to Picktree Lodge, Councillors agreed that this was a matter for the sub-group to discuss with the involvement of the County Cllr. 6) Three flower beds at Picktree Village had not been planted up by the County Council. This had been reported to the County Council and the County Cllr will follow this up. 7) Re the flower barrels, Councillors agreed that the sub-group should produce a recommendation for consideration by the full Council. 8) The County Cllr kindly agreed to chase up the long-outstanding work due to be carried out by the County Council to the raised shrub beds on North Road, 9) The County Cllr kindly offered to provide some funding for the potential project to improve the overgrown area near to the Wheatsheaf pub.

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

f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations

Cllr Forrester reported on matters discussed at the recent AAP meeting, including the Police Activity Week and the launch of the Area Action Partnership Fun & Food Project.

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

g) Planning

Cllr Waugh gave his observations on planning applications DM/22/01430/FPA and DM/22/01783/FPA. Councillors discussed these applications and agreed on comments to be submitted to the County Council Planning Department.

The Vice-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 -

h) Play Areas

MERLIN DRIVE

All equipment appears to be in good order.

LOW FLATTS

All equipment appears to be in good order.

It is disappointing that we still have no news of the refurbishment.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

i) Policy and Governance

Cllr Hall had advised the Clerk that there were no matters to report.

The Vice-Chairman invited Cllr Martin to give his report.

j) Project Development, Business and External Relations

Cllr Martin advised that at this stage there were no matters to report.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

Item 7. 22/79 Correspondence

1) From a Resident

Letter re trees at corner of Lyndhurst Avenue and Low Flatts Road.

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

- a) Application for two storey side extension, single storey extension and loft conversion with two dormer windows, at 11 Blind Lane.
- b) Application for proposed two storey rear extension and revised front porch, at 62 North Road.
- c) Application for removal of existing porch area and free standing double garage and erect a new single storey extension (new entrance, dining and living room) finished in white render. Existing driveway altered to provide adequate parking which will include new entrance/exit onto Ash Meadows, at 1 Ash Meadows.
- d) Application for 1) To remove the existing brick pillars and electric driveway gates. Install new brick pillars and new electric driveway gates. 2) Extend boundary fence between Woodcroft and Pad Panache (part retrospective application), at Woodcroft, Picktree Lane.
- e) Approval 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. 22/80 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration

a) Appointment of a Gardener

This matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting (see Minute 22/78 section e2).

b) The Annual Newsletter

Cllr May advised that the Newsletters were now available for distribution by Councillors. Cllr May was thanked for all her hard work leading to an excellent outcome.

c) Planning Application DM/22/01430/FPA 11 Blind Lane

This matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting (see Minute 22/78 section g).

d) Planning Application DM/22/01783/FPA 62 North Road

This matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting (see Minute 22/78 section g).

Item 9. 22/81 Payment of Accounts

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 522.34	Salaries July 2022	
Expenses	£ 10.00	Increase in Expenses June 2022	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses July 2022	
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - July 2022	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - July 2022	£ 6.64
Npower Commercial Gas	£ 393.75	Standing Charge - Tree Lights	£ 18.75
Durham County Council	£3028.50	Flower Beds	£504.75
JAK HQ Ltd	£ 326.00	Newsletters	£ 16.00
Total of Above Payments	£4434.84		

Payments Made by Debit Card

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Post Office Ltd	£ 15.20	Postage Stamps	
Sainsbury's Ltd	£ 4.75	Cups and Bottled Water	
Total Card Payments	£ 19.95		

(Resolved - the payments be approved as submitted).

Item 10. 22/82 Other Matters for Information

- a) Cllr Caygill advised that a new seat had been requested for in the area of the Sustrans cycle route. Councillors agreed that the Parish Council would be pleased to offer non-financial assistance but any funding request must be made in writing and discussed as an Agenda item.
- b) Cllr Caygill advised that the Lambton Worm pub would like to put some artwork on the rear wall of the Council's bus shelter outside the pub. Councillors agreed that this request must be put in writing and discussed as an Agenda item.
- c) Cllr Caygill advised that Park View School might welcome some horticultural assistance from the Council. Cllr Caygill will discuss this with the School and report back to the Council.
- d) Cllr Forrester advised that a request had been received for a seat at the Lombard Drive bus shelter. This was discussed but Councillors agreed that this was not feasible.

The Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 8.08pm and wished everyone a very enjoyable summer recess.

North Lodge Parish Council

Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th September 2022.

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£ 524.34	Salaries August 2022	
Salaries	£	Salaries September 2022	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses August 2022	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses September 2022	
HM Revenue & Customs	£	P.A.Y.E.	
D. Hall	£ 180.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - August 2022	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - August 2022	£ 6.64
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Sept 2022	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - Sept 2022	£ 6.64
Durham County Council	£ 769.99	Website Hosting	£ 128.33
Mazars	£ 240.00	Audit Fee	£ 40.00
Total of Above Payments	£		

Payments Made by Debit Card

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Tesco Stores Ltd	£ 15.20	Postage Stamps	
B & M Retail Ltd	£ 3.45	Cups and Bottled Water	
Total Card Payments	£ 18.65		

Balance to 31st July 2022

Balance b/f	£72052.41	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - July 2022	<u>£ 4434.84</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 452.94
	£67617.57	Instant Account	<u>£67146.63</u>
Deduct Card Payments for month	<u>£ 18.65</u>	Total	<u>£67599.57</u>
	£67598.92		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ .65</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ Nil
	£67599.57		
Balance c/f	£67599.57		£67599.57