

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

PRESENT: Chairman: 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 which commenced at 6.30pm and had been preceded by an informative presentation from the Durham County Council Community Economic Development Manager on the County Council's plans for the regeneration of Chester-le-Street.

### **Item 1. 23/13 Apologies for Absence**

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

### **Item 2. 23/14 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **Item 3. 23/15 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 -

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#### **Levelling Up Bids**

Durham County Council submitted 5 bids for levelling up projects to government. All of County Durham's parliamentary constituencies had made a bid, with Bishop Auckland being successful in the first round.

Disappointingly, in this second round, none of the 5 bids were successful. A lot of effort and resource has been put into making these bids as strong as possible. The North East regionally has been successful in receiving funding for new electric buses.

It has now come to light that government changed the original criteria so that local authorities that had been successful in the first round, would not receive any further funding in the second round.

This unknown change in the rules by government meant all the effort in applying was pointless.

Government have announced that there will be a third round of bidding that will be open to everyone. Durham County Council will review what the best possible strategy is going forward to be as successful as possible.

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In addition, a) There was a discussion on whether local issues should also be included in the report, b) Concerns were expressed at the difficulties being experienced in receiving prompt replies and action from some County Hall departments. The County Cllr advised that many departments were at present being reviewed but he was always willing to take matters forward.

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

**Item 4. 23/16 Adoption of Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 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. 23/17 Chairman's Report**

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

Regarding outstanding matters -

- a) Re Minute 23/03 section a). Re the "Santa Bus" not stopping in North Lodge, the County Cllr advised that he was still waiting for a reply to his enquiry but would chase this up.
- b) Re Minute 23/03 section b). Re the Remembrance Group memorial project, the County Cllr advised that designs were awaited from the artist.
- c) Re Minute 23/03 section d). Re tree planting on the Baffle Bank, the County Cllr gave an update including that the planting would be done professionally, a footpath would be maintained by the County Council and that the County Council was seeking as much involvement from the community as possible.
- d) Re Minute 23/05. Re requests for donations, Councillors agreed that any time-sensitive requests could be considered outside of the Council's normal time frame for approval or refusal.
- e) Re Minute 23/06 section a). Re pollution data for the Northlands roundabout area, Cllr Gregory had circulated the most recent data and the County Cllr confirmed that the County Council would continue to collect data at this site.
- f) Re Minute 23/06 section b). Cllr Gregory, in her capacity as a Parish resident, advised that contact from Sustrans had been promised and this was awaited.
- g) Re Minute 23/06 section c). Re new posters for the bus shelter display boards, Cllr Caygill gave an update on progress with this partnership with the School.
- h) Re Minute 23/07 section b). Re raw food dumped in woodland, Cllr Caygill gave an update on her meeting with the Neighbourhood Wardens and advised that there had been no further incidents brought to her attention.
- i) Re Minute 23/07 section h). Cllr Caygill advised that there was still hedge debris at Low Flatts play area. The Clerk will chase this up.

**Item 6. 23/18 Portfolio Holders' Reports**

**a) Communications and Media Development**

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

Cllr Gregory considered that the Council should be pro-active in making its Facebook and Twitter pages available to local community groups to promote their activities. The County Cllr kindly agreed to contact Cllr Veitch with this suggestion.

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

**b) Crime and Community Safety**

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No crimes reports for North Lodge 18<sup>th</sup> January-21<sup>st</sup> February.

**Community Safety**

**Durham Constabulary**

35 new recruits for the constabulary.

Operation Snap aims to reduce the number of road deaths by allowing the public to submit dash cam footage of unacceptable driving.

Mobile Phones. Police national campaign starts 20<sup>th</sup> February. Officers will be carrying out extra patrols to camp down on any drivers illegally using a mobile phone whilst at the steering wheel of a

vehicle.

Durham Constabulary has achieved efficiency savings of £2million thanks to innovative software that allows officers to obtain CCTV footage and witness statements remotely.

Recruitment drive underway for officers to the Degree Holder Entry Programme and/or direct entry for the Detective Graduate Degree Holder Programme. Please refer to Durham Constabulary for further information.

Any emergency incident, use telephone number 999

Any other incident/enquiry, use telephone number 101

**County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service**

6 new recruits for the fire service.

Smoke alarms. Need an alarm call on 0345 2234 221 for help.

The service has been officially rated as "Good" for Effectiveness, Efficiency and People, by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services.

Recruitment for apprentice firefighters and on call firefighters to be announced soon For more information refer to [www.ddfire.gov.uk](http://www.ddfire.gov.uk).

All emergencies use telephone number 999.

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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**

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I have studied the financial information supplied to me by the clerk and can confirm that everything appears to be correct.

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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**

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The monthly bus shelters inspection took place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. All appeared in good working order, with seat cleaning where required, and trimming at the back of Northlands shelter to prevent contact between the rear wall and trailing leaves from the adjoining bush. In addition, councillor Gregory has reported fly tipping on the north side grass verge of the A693 at Blind Lane. This includes a vehicle tyre, pieces of plastic sheeting, and a full rubbish bag. The "Green and Clean team" has been informed, and removal is awaited.

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Re clearance of fly tipping at Blind Lane, the County Cllr kindly agreed to chase this up. Councillors thanked Cllr Driscoll for his report and the Vice-Chairman invited Cllr May to give her report which included the matters contained in her written report below -

**e) Horticulture**

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**1. Wheatsheaf Area Project**

On hold. Although a price has been agreed with the Parish Council and Stephen Makepeace, Parish Gardener for this project to be carried out, there is a delay as the land in question is unadopted. Investigations are presently ongoing on how to proceed.

**2. Raised Flower Beds**

We are still waiting for the costings for the planting and maintenance of these Flower Beds 2023/2024 from Graham Cozens. Following receipt of this information, some flower beds may be removed.

**3. Tree Planting (Baffle bank)**

Councillor Brown will contact County Councillor Martin for updates.

**4. Picktree Lodge Entrance Update**

Ongoing

**5. Barrels**

At the end of the of the winter bedding, 8 Barrels will be disposed of, due to rot etc. 2 will remain at entrance of North Lodge, Lambton Park.

**6. Parish Gardener** Jubilee tree border to be enlarged. Stephen Makepeace to be contacted

**7. Shrub beds (North Road**

Ian Harland (Durham County Council) assures us these will be complete by end of week.

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In addition, a) re the Wheatsheaf Area project, the Clerk will chase up the adoption of the land, b) since production of the report, the costings for the flower beds had now been received. These will be discussed at the next sub-group meeting and will then be an Agenda item at the Council meeting in March, c) re tree planting at the Baffle Bank, Cllr Brown advised that this is to be further discussed at the next sub-group meeting, d) re the Picktree Lodge entrance area, the County Cllr advised that the County Council would carry out the reinstatement work but at the cost to the Parish Council. Councillors expressed great disappointment that the County Council had changed its position from offering to carry out the work at the County's cost. This matter is to be discussed at the next sub-group meeting.

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

**f) Meetings of Partnership Organisations**

Cllr Forrester provided a report of the recent CDALC meeting and advised that the next AAP meeting would be held shortly.

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

**g) Planning**

Cllr Waugh advised that he continued to provided weekly updates and commentaries, where necessary, to Councillors on planning applications.

Cllr Gregory raised a concern re the County Council's apparent lack of consistency to neighbour consultations, and Cllr May raised a concern re consultations following amended planning applications. Cllr Waugh advised Councillors of the County Council's obligations in these matters. 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**

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**MERLIN DRIVE**

All equipment appears to be in good order.

Enquiries are being made re a new seat as requested by residents.

**LOW FLATTS**

All equipment appears to be in good order.

Moles are creating large mounds on the play field which hopefully will be flattened when the grass is cut.

The design has been chosen for the refurbishment which will include the retention of the existing multi frame.

It is hoped that work will commence in March.

We will consider another seat within the fenced area when we are able to judge the space available. Again, this has been requested by residents.

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Re a new seat for Merlin Drive play area, the County Cllr kindly advised that he would be happy to consider a funding request. The Clerk is therefore to make an application to the Area Action

Partnership.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Caygill for her report.

**i) Policy and Governance**

In his absence, Cllr Hall had provided a written report -

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**LGA Daily Report:Physical threats to councillor**

A councillor in Durham has said physical threats while out campaigning caused her to fear for her life, as the LGA warns that abuse is preventing elected officials from doing their jobs. Members of Durham County Council agreed to endorse the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign on Wednesday, following a study by the Local Democracy Reporting Service that found seven in 10 Durham councillors were suffering abuse.

**BBC News: County councillor feared for her life after physical threats**

DLUHC: Press release: Levelling Up Secretary in North East England to sign historic £1.4 billion devolution deal: (27 January):

A landmark devolution deal has been signed in North East England today by Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove and eight local leaders in the region.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/levelling-up-secretary-in-north-east-england-to-sign-historic-14-billion-devolution-deal>

NALC: Putting the local In the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - News: (19 January):

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/2343-putting-the-local-in-the-local-government-and-social-care-ombudsman>

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The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Hall for his report and invited Cllr Martin to give his report.

**j) Project Development, Business and External Relations**

Cllr Martin advised that he had no matters to report at present.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Martin.

**Item 7. 23/19 Correspondence**

1) From a Resident

email re tree planting at Picktree Lodge.

2) From County Durham Association of Local Councils

email re Durham County Council consultation on North East Devolution Deal.

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

a) Application for installation of pitched roof over existing detached garage to provide first floor storage area, at 27 North Lodge.

b) Application to demolish existing conservatory and construct two storey side extension, at 14 North Lodge.

c) Application for detached single storey garage, at 6 North Lodge.

**Item 8. 23/20 Proposals, Reports and Requests for Consideration**

**a) Liaison with Lambton Estates / Picktree Village Defibrillator**

Cllr Brown gave an update on contact with Lambton Estates, in particular with the Estate Manager Hugo Willoughby and they had discussed the possible installation sites for a defibrillator in Picktree Village although the Estate Manager had advised that the Estate wall could not be used. Further discussion on this will be held between the County Councillor, Cllr Brown and Cllr Veitch.

**b) A Commemoration for the Forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III**

Councillors agreed that Coronation badges, similar to the recent Jubilee badges, should be purchased incorporating the official Coronation artwork, and these should again be presented to pupils at Park View Lower School. The County Cllr advised that he had £300 available as a grant towards Coronation activities and the Clerk will make an application for this. The Clerk is also to make enquiries re a proposed Coronation bench for public seating.

**c) Remembrance Artwork**

Cllr Martin had provided a written report -

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North Lodge Parish Council are liaising Graham Hopper, who has agreed to design and produce the artwork. Until we have a design and costings we are unable to progress this project. This information is needed to apply for the funding and get the relevant permissions. Cllr Veitch is taking the lead in moving the project forward at this stage.  
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The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Martin for his report.

**Item 9. 23/21 Payment of Accounts**

<b>TO</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Salaries	£ 570.74	Salaries February 2023	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses February 2023	
Zoom inc	£ 14.39	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2023	£ 2.40
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - Feb 2023	£ 6.64
Kompan Scotland Ltd	£9065.76	First Instalment - Low Flatts Re-furb	£1510.96
Information Commissioner	£ 40.00	Data Protection Act Annual Fee	
Makepeace Landscapes	£1022.40	Horticulture	£ 170.40
<b>Total of Above Payments</b>	<b>£10853.15</b>		

**Payments Made by Debit Card**

<b>TO</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Morrison's Ltd	£ 4.50	Stationery	£ .75
<b>Total Card Payments</b>	<b>£ 4.50</b>		

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

**Item 10. 23/22 Other Matters for Information**

There were no other matters raised.

The Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 8.32pm.

**North Lodge Parish Council**

**Accounts for the month as submitted to the Meeting of North Lodge Parish Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
Salaries	£	Salaries March 2023	
Expenses	£ 100.00	Expenses March 2023	
Zoom inc	£ 15.59	Monthly Subscription - March 2023	£ 2.60
ANS Group Ltd	£ 39.86	Monthly Subscription - March 2023	£ 6.64
Makepeace Landscapes	£	Horticulture	£
D. Hall	£ 180.00	Chair's Quarterly Allowance	
HM Revenue & Customs	£	P.A.Y.E. and N.I.C.	
<b>Total of Above Payments</b>	<b>£</b>		

<b>Payments Made by Debit Card</b>			
TO	AMOUNT	REASON	VAT
	£		£
<b>Total Card Payments</b>	<b>£ Nil</b>		

**Balance to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Balance b/f	£53518.66	Balances at Bank:-	
Deduct Payments - Feb 2023	<u>£10853.15</u>	Treasurers Account	£ 1063.23
	£42665.51	Instant Account	<u>£49222.49</u>
Deduct Card Payments for month	<u>£ Nil</u>	Total	£50285.72
	£42665.51		
Add Bank Interest Received	<u>£ 25.41</u>	Deduct cheques not yet presented	£ 40.00
	£42690.92		
Add s106 Grant Received	<u>£ 7554.80</u>		
Balance c/f	<u>£50245.72</u>		£50245.72

One cheque not yet presented -  
£40.00 cheque number 1542 dated 21/02/2023 for annual fee payable to Information Commissioner.