

City of Durham Parish Council

Office 3 D4.01d
Clayport Library
8 Millennium Place
Durham
DH1 1WA

Telephone 07704 525630
Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk
<http://cityofdurham.parish.durham.gov.uk/>

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88065896156>
Meeting ID: 880 6589 6156

Dear Councillor,

In accordance with both the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of local authority and Police and Crime Panel meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, I hereby give you notice that a meeting of the **Full Council** will be held in **via Zoom** on **Thursday 25 February 2021 at 6:00pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2021**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning Committee minutes from meetings held on 22 January and 5 February 2021**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here: <http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/planning-committee/>
- Update on the progress of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.
- Update on the application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land

- **Environment Committee minutes from meetings held on 12 January 2021**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here: <http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/environment-committee>

- **Business Committee minutes from meeting held on 1 December 2020**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:
<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/business-committee/>

- Proposal to establish a "Totally Locally Durham" website in order to support Independent Businesses in Durham
- Project for International Women's Day 2021
- Proposal for Easter 2021 event

• **Licensing Committee minutes from meeting held on 4 December 2020**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:
<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/licensing-committee/>

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28th January 2021.

7. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY - REVIEW OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8. UPDATE ON MAY ELECTIONS 2021

9. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Durham Access for All Group
- County Durham Association of Local Councils

And pursuant to the provisions of the above-named Acts, **I Hereby Summon You** to attend the said meeting.

Adam Shanley
Clerk City of Durham Parish Council

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Thursday 28th January 2021 at 18:00 via Zoom.

Present: Councillors E Scott (Chair), E Ashby, J Ashby, V Ashfield, L Brown, S Cahill, R Cornwell, A Doig, J Elmer, D Freeman, R Ormerod, C Reeves and M Ross.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley.

1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING

Apologies were received from Cllr G Holland.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2020 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Planning Committee

Cllr R Cornwell presented the minutes from meetings of the Planning Committee held on 27 November, 11 December and 8 January. There being no queries from Members, Cllr R Cornwell moved on to Committee reports.

Cllr R Cornwell provided an update on the progress of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr R Cornwell advised that he and Sue Childs had had a very constructive meeting with Durham County Council on the outstanding issue of the maps provided as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and a number of good suggestions had been made at this meeting; including extending the designated green space areas of Flass Vale and Observatory Hill. Cllr R Cornwell advised that we are still awaiting the outcome of the proofreading being carried out by DCC on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr R Cornwell also reminded Members that Durham County Council is currently consulting on a number of spatial planning policy documents. In particular, Cllr R Cornwell advised that the County Council is consulting on

a proposed extension of the Article 4 Direction area relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for the Mount Oswald area in the parish. The Article 4 Direction would mean that any change from a family home to an HMO would require planning permission. This would enable the Council to assess the suitability of the proposals in line with the County Durham Plan. Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that the Parish Council had already contracted the services of a planning consultant to build an evidence base in support of this proposal, in anticipation of this consultation. Cllr R Cornwell presented this report to Members. In doing so, Cllr R Cornwell also reminded Members that Durham County Council is holding two online consultation events for the Article 4 Direction in February.

Members **agreed** to support the proposed extension to the Article 4 Direction.

Members also **approved** the report by the Parish Council's planning consultant on this consultation, subject to any minor amends which may arise as a result of the County Council's drop-in consultation events.

Environment Committee

Cllr V Ashfield presented the minutes from the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 24 November. There being no queries from Members, Cllr V Ashfield moved on to Committee reports.

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that that Sunday October 17th 2021 will mark the 675th anniversary of the Battle of Neville's Cross.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the local County Councillors for Neville's Cross have been developing a proposal to improve the information boards and the waymarking of this walk and, in order to progress this proposal further, a meeting took place between DCC officers and Cllrs L Brown and R Cornwell and the Parish Clerk on 14th January. At this meeting, it was proposed that DCC officers look to carry out a condition survey of the existing information boards, the Cross and the waymarking of the walk with a view to having these repaired/upgraded in time for the 675th Anniversary of the Battle. DCC officers have progressed well with this scheme and are intending on submitting a Section 106 application to help fund this proposal. A follow up meeting with Durham County Council is planned for 2nd February to go over the final details of the application.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that, at its January meeting, the Parish Council's Environment Committee considered this project and agreed to support such an application for Section 106 funding.

The Clerk advised that it was originally expected that the Parish Council would lead on this project, however DCC Officers have been working on this and hope that the Parish Council will act in a consultative capacity and support the project in any way possible.

The Clerk also advised that a further proposal has been put forward that the Parish Council looks to organise a commemorative walk of the Battle Walk. The key idea would be to involve the local schools, student residents and permanent residents and have someone knowledgeable on the subject of the Battle provide a talk during the walk. The Clerk also advised that a further proposal has been put

forward that a church service be organised after the walk. The suggestion has also been made that the Parish Council also tries to get the BBC interested in covering a short documentary about the Battle.

The Clerk advised that this commemorative walk would need to be subject to the relevant Covid-19 restrictions at the time and would need to be appropriately risk assessed.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that this walk represents an important part of our Parish's heritage and the promotion of our local heritage is a key part of the Parish Council's agreed Strategy and Looking Forwards document. A project to promote this Anniversary would be considered consistent with the aims of both of these important documents.

Members **agreed** to support the project to improve the Battle of Neville's Cross heritage. Members also **agreed** to organise a commemorative walk of the Battle of Neville's Cross Walk and to delegate responsibility to the Clerk to do this.

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that the proposal of the Parish Council launching its own blue plaque scheme was considered at a recent Full Parish Council meeting and the Environment Committee agreed to take this forward as a heritage project.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that this scheme is based loosely on the English Heritage scheme for blue plaques in London and has been delivered in other local areas outside London by various Parish and Town Councils. Cllr V Ashfield advised that launching such a scheme would be an encouragement for residents to celebrate their heritage and an opportunity to engender Civic Pride. If the scheme is successful, Cllr V Ashfield also suggested that this could form part of a heritage trail in the City which could attract more visitors.

Cllr V Ashfield presented a proposed set of criteria to help commemorate important people, buildings and events from the Parish.

For Members **agreed** to launch the blue plaque scheme and **approved** the proposed criteria and procedure for launching this scheme.

Members also **approved** this scheme being advertised via the Parish Council newsletter and other means as appropriate.

In agreeing the procedure for considering new applications, it was **agreed** that the Full Parish Council should make the overall decision on the merits of each new application.

Finance Committee

Cllr A Doig presented the minutes from the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 26 November 2020. There were no queries from Members however the Council took the opportunity to thank the Clerk for his work and for achieving a successful outcome from the recent audits of the Council.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 10th December 2020.

The Chair advised that she had received some very positive feedback from a member of the public on the work of the Parish Council.

The Chair asked Members how they wished to proceed in assessing the Parish Council's Strategy. Members felt that a review of the Strategy next month would be the best way to go about this.

The Chair advised that a date had now been set for the public inquiry into the County Council's application to de-register the former coach park as common land. This date is now the 27th April 2021.

The Chair thanked all those involved in successfully securing the Section 106 funding towards the renewal of the Ruth First mural on Providence Row.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had hosted a very positive roundtable meeting with over 30 local independent businesses in January and the Business Committee would be progressing a plan following this meeting.

The Chair advised that the inaugural meeting of the Parish Council's Community Residents' Association Forum would be happening in February and all local associations had agreed to attend.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had received a number of complaints about the return of students to Durham City. Following which, the Parish Council had a joint meeting with Durham Police to try and address this. The Chair advised that the Clerk had circulated notes from this meeting.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had recently learned of the death of the former (interim) Clerk's mother. The Chair advised that she had asked the Clerk to write a letter of condolence to the former (interim) Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council.

7. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

Members approved the following budget for the financial year 2021/22:

Planning Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Professional support in responding to planning applications	4,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Production of two Supplementary Planning Documents (Trees and a Design Guide)	4,000.00

TOTAL PROVISION IN 2021-22 AGAINST PRIORITIES	8,000.00
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Business Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	10,000.00
PRIORITY 2: E-commerce website for Durham City Businesses	4,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2021-22 AGAINST PRIORITIES	14,000.00

Licensing Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Licensing training conference	1,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Award for best run licensed premises	500.00
PRIORITY 3: Enhanced police drug search of licensed premises	600.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2021-22 AGAINST PRIORITIES	2,100.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Being a voice for the City	
Young People's Environment Working Group	£5,000
Climate lobbying	£1,500
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Evening Wardens	£3,000
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Improve unmaintained Footpaths, unadopted and green areas	£10,000
Encourage Walking, Cycling & Sustainable Travel (active streets)	£1,000

Durham in Bloom and planting	£10,000
PRIORITY 4: Heritage	
Adding content to the Heritage App	£3,000
Creation of a map for the Seven Hills Trail	£1,000
Creation of new blue plaques in the parish	£2,000
PRIORITY 5: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	£10,000
Easter and Christmas Frontages Awards	£5,000
PRIORITY 6: Climate Emergency	
Encourage a green infrastructure	£2,000
Encourage electric vehicles	£1,000
Reduction in Plastic Use	£1,000
Explore and encourage sustainable food	£1,000
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2021-22 AGAINST PRIORITIES	56,500.00

Full Council

Item of Expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council (rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website, other expenditure)	15,000
PRIORITY 2: Training budget	3,000
PRIORITY 3: Events (Remembrance events and Christmas)	6,000.00
PRIORITY 4: grants for local community and voluntary organisations	20,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Staffing costs – including salary, National Insurance contributions and workplace pension	49,440.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2021-22 AGAINST PRIORITIES	93,440.00

Committee	Proposed expenditure (2021/2022) against priorities (£)
Planning Committee	8,000.00
Licensing Committee	2,100.00

Environment Committee	56,500.00
Business Committee	14,000.00
Full Council	93,440.00
TOTAL POTENTIAL PROVISION IN 2021-2022 AGAINST PRIORITIES	174,040.00

It was also agreed to ring fence the following expenditure for the next financial year from the current financial year's budget:

General Reserves	£45,000
Contingencies	£15,000
Licensing budget	£1,500
Durham in Bloom expenditure (agreed activities from 2020 now commencing in Spring 2021)	£7,500
Admin support role – including salary, National Insurance contributions and workplace pension	£15,000
Legal costs for public inquiry into the Common Land at the Sands	£7,000
TOTAL	£91,000

8. PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

Councillors **agreed** to keep the Band D charge the same as the current financial year as for 2021-22. Therefore the Band D charge for 2021/22 would generate a total precept of £153,849.93 (based on a tax base of 4,412.1).

The Clerk also reported that the LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2021/22 is £622.00. Previously the total amount paid to the Parish Council was £0.

The Clerk also reported that the County Council had offered to fund the remaining balance of £16.12 to the Parish Council in light of the reduction in the City of Durham parish's tax base.

Members **agreed** to the offer by Durham County Council that a one-off payment of £16.12 be paid to the Parish Council in recognition of the reduction in the Council tax base for the Parish.

9. RESPONSE TO THE POLICE, CRIME AND VICTIMS COMMISSIONER'S PRECEPT REQUEST CONSULTATION

The Clerk advised that the Office of Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner is currently consulting on the recommendation that the Policing Precept (part of the Council Tax) be increased by the maximum of £15 per year in Band D properties (this will increase and decrease according to a resident's banding). This equates to nearly a 7% increase.

The Clerk advised that the purpose of this increase is to help ensure that there will be more officers on the street and in the communities of Durham and Darlington.

Members **agreed** their response to this consultation as follows:

Introduction

The Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner is currently consulting on the recommendation that the Policing Precept (part of the Council Tax) be increased by the maximum of £15 per year in Band D properties (this will increase and decrease according to a resident's banding) for the financial year 2021-22. This equates to an increase of approximately 7%.

Explanation

The Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner proposes that the purpose of this increase includes help to:

- ensure that there will be more officers on the street and in the communities of Durham and Darlington;
- more funding to ensure it has adequate resources to meet its demand from calls for service; responding to 999 and 101 calls in a timely way;
- invest in maintaining officer numbers, victim support services to provide vital support to residents recovering from a range of crime types;
- ensure the force are able to maintain PCSO numbers and a visible neighbourhood policing in communities and also bring forward the force's planned recruitment;
- invest in carrying out in more telephone investigations where possible which save time for both the force and its citizens.

Response

The City of Durham Parish Council is aware of the budgetary reductions to all police forces across the UK, including those to Durham Constabulary. In principle, the City of Durham Parish Council would be minded to approve the proposed increase but it has a number of reservations that would require further information than that provided to date.

The grounds for the increase and the 1-10 rankings for investment are dissimilar, with the former very much reflecting local operational priorities and the latter more shaped by both county-wide and national policing agendas. We understand the demands placed on Police resources when faced with such a wide range of issues in urban and rural communities across the County. However, as representatives of people living in the City, we have become increasingly concerned at the growth in concerns expressed by residents, particularly in relation to:

- The inability of the 101 service to respond positively to requests that would normally then engage either with the Police or the University's Covid-19 Marshall resource;
- The decline in PCSO support for the City centre since the appointment of the new Chief Constable;
- The absence of an effective and visible police presence to address Covid-19 related issues and more general ASB behaviour, notably in the evenings and at weekends.

While a number of the above could be addressed by a more positive and linked-up approach, the City of Durham Parish Council would still be concerned that any approval to raise the precept would then not see the benefits invested in the grounds proposed by the Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner for the benefit of the residents of Durham City.

Decision

In such circumstances, and until the Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner is able to clarify exactly how it intends to allocate the increase and exactly how such allocation will benefit the residents of Durham City, the City of Durham Parish Council is unable to make a decision on the consultation proposal. It invites the Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner to provide such information as soon as possible.

10. PROPOSAL FOR JANUARY 2021 EDITION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER AND INCREASING THE AUDIENCE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S FACEBOOK PAGE.

The Clerk reminded Members that the proposal of the Parish Council launching its own newsletter was approved some months ago by Full Council. The Clerk advised that a draft copy of the first edition of the newsletter has been circulated to all Members.

The Clerk reminded Members that it was originally envisaged that this newsletter would be in a hard copy format and would be delivered through every door of the Parish. Due to the latest Covid-19 restrictions however, this is not possible and the proposal now is that the January/February edition of this newsletter be in an electronic format only.

The Clerk advised that an electronic format would mean that the newsletter is distributed to all local residents' groups and partner organisations via e-mail, is posted on the Parish Council's website and Facebook page.

Members **agreed** that the January/February edition of the Parish Council newsletter should be in an electronic format only.

Members also **agreed** to promote the Parish Council's Facebook page as set out in the report and, in so doing, **agreed** to allocate a total budget of £250 towards this.

11. MOTION BY CLLR R ORMEROD ON PUBLIC TOILETS IN DURHAM CITY

Councillors agreed the following amended motion on the issue of public toilets in Durham City centre:

"The City of Durham Parish Council invites DCC to seek solutions in conjunction with the Parish Council for the provision of public toilets in Durham City centre. The current situation is unhelpful to the local economy and residents with certain health issues. This Council undertakes to write to the Chief Executive of DCC to explore with them both the current situation and the options for longer term permanent provision".

12. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Durham University engagement task force report

Cllr J Ashby provided the following report to Members following a recent meeting of the Durham University engagement task force:

Cllr Alan Doig and I were appointed to the Durham University Community Engagement Task Force as the Parish Council reps and Cllr David Freeman as the County Council rep.

Since my last report on the Task Force meeting held on 14 September 2020 there has been just one more meeting so far, held on 3 December 2020. The principal topic was managing COVID-19; it was felt that the University Community COVID Group was proving useful, and that the current priority was safe arrangements for departures at the end of term. Returns will be in the week beginning 11 January 2021 but face-to-face teaching will be staggered. The Community Response Team contract will be extended. Problems with 101 are being reported; the Police rep said that recruitment is underway.

The DSU rep noted that it has been a very stressful term for students and staff. Students had signed accommodation contracts a year ago and landlords were being asked to reduce rents for unoccupied rooms. Testing for COVID is a pre-requisite for participating in extra-curricular activities. Students are appreciating that they live in a 'green' city. DSU is commissioning a review to tackle the "toxic culture" of the University.

The various Sub-Group chairs gave updates:

- Citizenship (Parish rep Cllr V Ashfield): Hannah noted some breaches including a few high-level incidents.

- Lived Environment (Parish rep Cllr J Ashby): had not met for a long time. All Estate work is on or ahead of programme.
- Economy (Parish rep Cllr E Ashby): is to look at commercialisation of University spin-outs; breaking economic impacts into city centre, wider city, County, and the region and beyond; promoting local procurement (currently 35%); and reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding with the County Council.
- Culture (Parish rep Cllr C Reeves): a local website is being created to help people engage with business and culture.
- Durham For All (was the late Cllr J Atkinson): no chair's report.

The as-yet-unknown big picture continues to be how the University adjusts in the medium and long term to the financial and teaching consequences of the 'new normal'.

End of report

Cllr Alan Doig proposed that, recognising that the work of the Community Engagement Task Force is somewhat different from the rationale for its establishment, the Parish Council reduces its membership of the main committee to one councillor and one councillor for each of the sub-committees. This was agreed by Members.

- **Durham University engagement task force (economic sub group) report**

Cllr E Ashby provided the following report to Council following a recent meeting of Durham University's engagement task force economic sub group:

Partner updates

City Business perspectives

BID. The city centre continues to show greater resilience than many other high streets nationally despite media reports to the contrary. Talks are ongoing re empty premises e.g. the Cooplands site. It was anticipated that the hospitality sector would show regrowth in May. There has been praise for DCC's work in supporting local businesses from outside this area.

DMC. The market has now been closed for 7 of the last 12 months. This is particularly hard for the operators who, unlike stallholders, receive no support at

all. The Jan/Feb lockdown was not too bad for traders. Overall the last 10 months had been very hard for Independent businesses.

Community perspectives

EA. Replying to my query about the ongoing effects of Covid induced absence of students on the part time work available to other young people and the general effects of ZHE Sarah Slavin said that DCC and partners have two pieces of work ongoing involving economic analysis of employment. She will ask that this question is included in that work.

Residents are keen that if the University and private sector partners have to review their long term provision of accommodation for students' partners begin looking now at the potential for repurposing whole or parts of buildings to meet other housing needs.

The residential use of empty space above shops in the city centre has been discussed for many years so the Parish Council welcomes plans for the first such development with retail provision on the ground floor and student and other accommodation above. Another such development is ready to let and 2 others could be in the pipelinesoon. This adds welcome vitality to the street scene.

The Parish Council was sad to hear of the recent death of Prof. Sir Arnold Wolfendale. He was a shining example of the breadth of cultural and social value that the University brings to the local community.

Business Durham/DCC

Sarah Slavin reported on work around supporting local business including the £670k Business Recovery grant applications already received. Business rate payments for closures is now ongoing after some delay in Government guidance to local authorities.

The County Council report on Social Value went to Cabinet last week.

The most recent Covid infection 7 day rate was 398 compared with the national average of 591 in England. A vaccination centre at County Hall opens next week with front line staff the priority. Outbreak control continues good.

Peter Allen announced a Business School event on Social Value is being planned and it would be good to get DCC on board with that.

The University

Tim Hammond reported that the modifications at Net Park Enterprise Zone to provide incubator units and new communal space had been slowed by Lockdown and were expected to launch in April.

The Commercialisation of Research Seed Fund had launched with £1.2m already committed with another 6 firms competing for the June funding round.

A second project by the 4 Universities and the LEP (Prevention North) engaging new major investment houses will tackle key challenges in health, aging, city centres and

post Covid recovery. There is still £75m to find [of the original huge fig. which I missed.]

The University is part of new talks between the N East and Westminster about sustainable regional growth.

Energy and digital developments are ongoing at Akeley Heads.

Marek Toparski updated on the new programme for retaining graduate talent. Work has been on the back burner due to Covid. Prize money for the Blueprint competition in March has been raised. For the first time the 6 finalists will have mentoring support.

Sarah MaCallister – the major item for students is ongoing accommodation related stress.

3 Durham Digitale

Peter Allen and Ged Matthews

This new initiative began as a place making exercise based on a Pokemon style app featuring local places, people and stories. Current partners include DCC, BID, VCD

The scope has widened considerably with hopes to trial pilot themes in April. GM is happy to talk to the Parish Council with more details.

4 Priority Action Areas/ feedback on Plan on a Page.

Generally agreed to be useful as a focus for discussion. Agreed it would be a regular agenda item.

End of report.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and contribution and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(25th February 2021)**

**ITEM 5: UPDATE ON THE APPLICATION TO DE-REGISTER THE FORMER
COACH PARK AT THE SANDS AS COMMON LAND**

Members are reminded that a date has now been set for the public inquiry into the County Council's application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land. The inquiry is now set to take place on 27th April 2021.

The County Council has now served a fully paginated and indexed inquiry bundle containing numerous documents in both an electronic and hard copy format upon all objectors and the Planning Inspectorate.

An electronic copy of the bundle can be found on the County Council's website here: <https://websites.durham.gov.uk/durhamgoss/TheSands-ApplicantsBundle.pdf>

There is now a requirement for all objectors to submit the following documentation by **19th March** to the Planning Inspectorate and to the County Council:

- 1) a statement of case (in numbered paragraphs) including, if any, copies of all the documentary evidence relied upon.
- 2) full copies or relevant extracts of any legal authorities on which the Objector intends to rely at the Public Inquiry; and
- 3) signed and dated proofs of evidence of every witness the Objector intends to call at the Public Inquiry, arranged in alphabetical order, containing (in numbered paragraphs) the substance of their evidence.

The Planning Inspector has now indicated that the public inquiry will take place in the following order:

- a. Inspector's introductory remarks;
- b. any opening statement by the Applicant;
- c. the evidence of the Applicant's witnesses (including cross-examination and re-examination);
- d. any evidence and submissions by members of the public in support of the application at the Inspector's discretion;
- e. any opening statement by the Objectors;
- f. the evidence of the Objectors' witnesses (including cross-examination and re-examination);
- g. evidence and submissions by others who made representations of objection to the Planning Inspectorate following the advertising of the application, and by members of the public in opposition to the application, at the Inspector's discretion;
- h. the Objectors' closing statements;
- i. the Applicant's closing statement;
- j. arrangement of any site visit.

The Inspector will hold a test event/Pre-Inquiry meeting, **opening at 3pm Tuesday 23 March 2021** to allow people to see how the process can work for them and to test their equipment. The Inspector may also use this opportunity to clarify further matters relating to the running of the Inquiry itself.

In preparation for submitting our statement of case and other evidence, the Parish Council, Durham City Freemen, the City of Durham Trust and all other objectors

will be meeting on the week commencing 8th March with the Barrister representing those parties at the inquiry and all those wishing to submit evidence on a particular topic have been asked to do this by 3rd March in advance of the meeting.

ITEM 5: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A "TOTALLY LOCALLY DURHAM" WEBSITE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES IN DURHAM

Last month the Parish Council's Business Committee hosted a roundtable discussion with over 30 independent businesses in the City. The aim of this was to ascertain what Durham City needs as it comes out of the latest lockdown introduced by the Government to tackle the spread of Coronavirus.

This meeting format was very positively received and the Parish Council's Business Committee has met following this meeting to discuss what actions may arise from the meeting.

Along with the need for more events in the City, businesses also highlighted the need for a Durham City website dedicated to supporting local independents in the City. In some cases, some of the traders may not have their own website and it is also felt that this will help direct any visitors to the City to independents that they may not already be aware of.

The Manager of the Durham Markets Company attended the last meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee and proposed the revamping of the (existing but currently out of date) Totally Locally Durham website. In order to give Councillors an understanding of the aims of such a website, the following information has been provided:

WHAT IS THE CONCEPT BEHIND TOTALLY LOCALLY?

It's not a magic wand but it's a kickstart for getting things going. It's a shopping initiative for local independent businesses.

Totally Locally is specifically for INDEPENDENT shops, it's a branding project with a marketing strategy. It ISN'T for use with national chain stores and even franchises.

Durham has a large number of quality and talented local independent businesses able to adapt to changing business and economic conditions more quickly than larger High Street names.

Totally Locally isn't about individuals. It's about our City. It isn't about 'How do I promote my business?' – It's about 'How do we work TOGETHER to get people to understand what our town has to offer?'

Will people drive into the City, pay parking, risk the rain, risk you not being open just to see your shop? Not really, unless you are REALLY good.

BUT if people think 'I've heard there's loads of great independent shops in Durham, I'm not sure what they all are but let's go and find out' – now that's more likely.

People want to discover new things. Independent shops and businesses are in a great position for this.

Start working together. Look at what you could achieve (together), not what's stopping you (individually).

Your competition is not the shop across the road – its Amazon, its Tesco, its Starbucks.

But if small shops, businesses, makers and growers work together, they can become a force to be reckoned with. And when your town thrives, we all thrive.

WHAT TOTALLY LOCALLY DURHAM WEBSITE/PROJECT CAN DELIVER FOR LOCAL INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

A. WEBSITE

1. One stop website to identify names, location and product lines of participating local independent businesses.
2. Photos of each business – an initial focus on produce, followed up by a photographic focus on the people and place, the city and events.
3. Single click through to business' website/Facebook/social media details etc as well as information about the business.
4. Search function for business themes (i.e. café/ hairdresser) and products
5. City Centre to be divided into several areas – e.g. North Road and Riverwalk; Claypath and Walkergate; Market Place and Prince Bishops; Silver Street; Saddler Street; Elvets – New, Old and Bridge with a specific business page for each area, and then a page for each business
6. Location maps with filters
7. Events page highlighting events that can give people even more reason to be in the city

B. SOCIAL MEDIA

Totally Locally Durham already has established (though fairly dormant) social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These are ready to be reinvigorated promoting businesses, events and campaigns – and working together with IndieDurhamCity.

The domain "Totally Locally Durham" is currently owned by the Durham Markets Company.

All social media produced will need to adhere to the Parish Council's agreed Social Media Policy.

Councillors are reminded that, during the budget setting process last month, it was agreed that a budget of £4,000 under the Business Committee's priorities be allocated towards the creation of a new website for Durham Independents.

In order to deliver this project, the following quotations have been provided by local contractors:

Company A

Quote for website rebuilding with photography and video: £2,350
Ongoing hosting, content management and support: £60/month

Company B

Quote for website rebuilding with photography and video: £5,300
Ongoing hosting and support: £50/month

Company C

Quote for website rebuilding with photography and video: £3,950
Ongoing hosting and support: £65/month

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) For Members to agree to fund the rebuilding of the Totally Locally Durham website for independent businesses in Durham City.2) If 1) is approved, for Members to select an appropriate contractor to carry out this work.
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ITEM 5: PROJECT FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021

Councillors are reminded that 8th March 2021 will mark International Women's Day.

The Parish Council's Business Committee recently considered and approved a report at its last meeting for the Parish Council to create a video to promote all of the female business owners in Durham City.

This video will include a short statement by the Chair of the Parish Council welcoming International Women's Day and highlighting why this is significant. It is also hoped that female business owners in the City will provide us with a short video to say what business they own and what International Women's Day means to them – each video will be combined to the overall video.

It is hoped that this will not only help to promote this important day but also help to promote the businesses themselves in the process.

This video will be produced and shared via social media by the Parish Clerk and there will be no costs associated with the creation of the video, only the Clerk's time to produce this.

The University's Equality and Diversity team has recently produced a similar piece of work focusing on female academics. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/equality.diversity/events/iwd/>

The University is also hosting an online panel event on 8th March 2021 which Members may be interested in attending.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) For Members to agree to supporting International Women's Day.2) For Members to agree to the creation of the promotional video as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 5: PROPOSALS FOR EASTER EVENTS 2021

PROPOSAL 1: EASTER EGG HUNT

The most recent meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee involved a discussion with the Durham Markets Company Manager who proposed that the Parish Council and DMC jointly host an event for Easter. The need for more events in the City to support businesses was recently highlighted as a main issue at the Parish Council's roundtable discussion with over 30 local independent businesses.

The Durham Markets Company Manager has put together the following proposal for the Parish Council to consider.

Easter Egg Hunt

Rationale:

Depending on the direction of travel on the PM's 'road map' on 22nd February, and assuming non-essential businesses will be open for Easter, then this family Easter trail round Durham City Centre aims to encourage families to revisit Durham City Centre and reinforce the message of supporting your local independents in a fun and positive way.

To run: 5th – 10th April [Easter break]

Proposal:

To complete a trail sheet, either downloadable from Parish Council or DMC websites or hard copies collectable from participating city centre locations on the trail;

Trail will be circular and will lead participants around the City Centre taking in local independents businesses from North Road, Riverwalk, Market Hall, Fowlers Yard, Claypath, Prince Bishops, Saddler Street, Elvet.

- Each sheet will contain instructions, clues and a map with approximate locations labelled.
- As the trail is circular there is no set starting point to join the trail. This will give participating families the opportunity to visit/look at local independent shops and attractions across the City Centre whilst enjoying 'a good old family walk'.
- The project will run for a week during the Easter break with schools and nurseries being notified of the project a week/fortnight beforehand to increase awareness to youngsters.
- As an incentive for completion there will be a small prize (e.g. a cream egg) for each correct completed sheet handed in to, say, the sweet shop in Market Hall.
- Random draw - ideally two vouchers for named independent businesses for £40 each.
- Trail will be entirely self-guided.
- Photo opportunity for DPC/DMC to present prizes.

Anticipated Costings:

<u>ITEM OF EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>COSTS</u>
To create the trail, print leaflets, promote trail and distribute necessary information to participating businesses, etc	<u>£350.00</u>
Prizes 175 eggs @ 40p + 2 prizes of £40 each	<u>£150.00</u>
Total cost	<u>£500.00</u>

Event to be supported and delivered by Durham Parish Council and DMC 4 Durham CiC.

<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Activity</u>
4 weeks	Identify/send out round robin email to find out which independent businesses are happy to support, promote and participate. Creation of map and trail leaflet
3 weeks	Leaflet finalised and printed
2 weeks	Trail advertised on Social Media, through Residents Associations etc Press release Notify nurseries etc in City Centre open through Easter break
1 week	Packs delivered to participating businesses. Leaflets uploaded on DPC and DMC websites and hard copies delivered to collection points

Please note: this proposal is entirely dependent on the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the beginning of April.

PROPOSAL 2: KNITTED DAFODDIL DISPLAYS

The Merryoaks WI has contacted the Parish Council to see if there is anything which they can do to support an Easter event this year. Members will recall that Merryoaks WI carried out a lot of work between April and November last year on the production of the Parish Council's knitted poppy display at the Town Hall.

The president of the WI has indicated that she felt that this was a most positive project for members of the WI to stay active on a community project during lockdown.

The Clerk has discussed this further with the president of the WI and the proposal of producing a knitted daffodil display – as discussed at the most recent meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee has been agreed.

The idea is for something similar to the below to be located around the Neville's Cross and Merryoaks area:



In conjunction with this idea, the proposal of people sponsoring a daffodil in support of the Marie Curie charity has been put forward. The daffodil not only being an iconic image of Easter but also the official flower of the charity itself.

The cost for producing these would be approximately £170.

Members are reminded that a budget of £1,000 has been agreed for the forthcoming financial year towards an event for Easter.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<p>3) For Members to agree to the above proposals, the first of which being subject to the Covid-19 regulations at the beginning of April.</p> <p>4) If 1) is agreed, for Members to approve the expenditure of £670 as set out in the above report.</p>
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ITEM 8: UPDATE ON MAY ELECTION 2021

As Members will be aware, the 6th May elections have now been confirmed by the Government.

In preparation for these elections, the Clerk has put together the following briefing note.

The most important dates are

- Publication of notice of election - Not later than 25 day before the day of election – probably 25 March
- Delivery of nomination papers, consent to nominations and home address forms – not later than 4pm on the 19 day before the day of election (8 April) – **PLEASE NOTE:** it is the responsibility of each individual candidate to submit these to electoral services and not the Clerk's responsibility.
- Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature – not later the 4pm on the 19th day before the day of election (8 April)
- Publication of statement of persons nominated – not later than 4pm on 18 day before the day of election (9 April)
- Publication of notice of poll – not later than the sixth day before the day of election (27 April)
- Polling between the hours of 7am and 10pm on the day of election (6 May)

Information on purdah

Purdah, or the pre-election period, is the time between an election being announced and the date the election is held, it must start before 29th March 2021 – but probably 25 March for this round of elections. The returning officer will confirm in due course.

Members are reminded that the Town and Parish Councils are included in the LGA 1986 Act, Section 2 (prohibition of political publicity) but many of the amendments which place much stricter restrictions on Principal authorities do not apply. That being the case, Town and Parish Councils should follow this as best practice in order to avoid any challenge or accusations of interference with the election process.

The Parish Council should not:

- produce publicity on matters which are politically controversial
- make references to individual politicians or groups in press releases
- arrange proactive media or events involving candidates
- issue photographs which include candidates supply council photographs or other materials to councillors or political group staff unless you have verified that they will not be used for campaigning purposes.
- continue hosting third party blogs or e-communications
- help with national political visits (as this would involve using public money to support a particular candidate or party). These should be organised by political parties with no cost or resource implications for the council.

PLEASE NOTE: Purdah does not interfere with the usual activities of the Council and meetings of the Council, etc. will continue as normal.

Furthermore, Parish Council staff do not have any involvement with the election and any issues of complaint during the election must be referred to either the Monitoring Officer or the Electoral Commission.

There are a number of matters relating to purdah in the City of Durham parish which Members need to be aware of:

- The Planning Inspectorate has been asked what impact purdah will have on the common land public inquiry and its outcome. The Inspectorate has responded as follows: **“In holding the public inquiry the Inspector will have regard to the current Government guidance for civil servants and any further guidance published specifically in relation to the local government elections on 6 May.”**
- It may be that the City of Durham parish remains in purdah should the Neighbourhood Plan referendum (which may not take place on the same date as the 6th May elections) takes place immediately following the 6th May elections. **Please note:** the Parish Council must remain neutral on the referendum and cannot be seen to influence how individuals vote one way or another at the referendum.

After the election

The current Council retires on the fourth day after election day and the new council takes up position.

Please note: the gov.uk e-mail accounts of Members who are either unelected or who are retiring will be deleted on 11th May 2021.

All Councillors must complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form before the first meeting of the Council or as soon as possible after election and these forms need to be retained by Clerk in council records.

A register of interest form must be completed by all Councillors within 28 days. This must be shown on the Parish Council’s website and sent to the Monitoring Officer for insertion on Durham County Council’s website.

ITEM 9: COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LARGER COUNCILS - LARGER COUNCILS FORUM

Report of meeting February 18th 2021

Cllr Dave Fleming (Bishop Auckland) in the Chair.

Executive Officers: Audrey Christie and Steve Ragg.

Audrey and Steve outlined Operation Forth Bridge which may come into play following the Duke of Edinburgh's current stay in hospital. The Civil Contingencies Unit will issue guidance re commemorative books, floral displays etc. DCC may organise its own local events. Parish Councils may complement these. Kath Hierons, Spennymoor Clerk will circulate a note on procedures following a Royal death to Audrey and Steve.

Steve reported concerns about the unrealistic requirement on new clerks, particularly those without previous experience, to achieve CiLCA qualification within 1 year. It is a mammoth task taking 200-300 hours of coursework. In response to my query about possible lobbying for change it was agreed that CDALC would issue relevant guidance.

CDALC would issue guidance for the March meeting relating to election arrangements and matters such as General Powers of Competence for the next 4 years following May 10th.

Reporting on the CDALC Executive meeting Steve referred to the likelihood of a £4-£5k deficit at the year end.

The current representative had been unable to attend recent meetings and it was agreed to appoint Cllr Dave Fleming instead.

CDALC currently pays £400 for an advice service which includes back up insurance. This is largely funded by the training course fees earned by CDALC. Such a service is valuable as it is practical and provides ways forward with otherwise time consuming enquiries.

Audrey will send a reminder about the service as it can be speedier than that provided by NALC for larger councils. Cllr Blakemore recommended as an eye opener the training course he attended re the difference between VAT for councils and business.

The Local Councils Working Group is meeting later this month so nothing to report.

A poll was taken at the meeting of Parish and Town Council representatives on whether they wish for remote meetings to continue after the 6th May; at present the Coronavirus Bill 2020 only allows for this power until May 2021. 100% of those attending voted in favour of this though the concern was expressed about being able to engage with those members of the public who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the technology.

The issue of the annual meeting of the electors was also discussed in this context (usually needs to be held between March and June) however the Government last

year negated the need for this to be held. The practicalities of checking the electoral register for such a format were also highlighted as problematic.

The meeting discussed the matter of the Handforth Parish Council video which had gone viral on platforms such as YouTube. CDALC is to investigate why a previously proposed new Code of Conduct for Councillors had not been adopted by 80% of Monitoring Officers across the Country (including in County Durham).

Report by Cllr E Ashby and the Clerk