

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/87827937557>

Meeting ID: 878 2793 7557

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 22 April 2021 at 6:00pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. TWO-MINUTES SILENCE IN MEMORY OF HRH PRINCE PHILIP, THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH**
- 2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING**
- 3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2021**
- 6. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning Committee minutes from meetings held on 19 March and 1 April 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 application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land

- **Licensing Committee minutes from meeting held on 29 January and 26 February 2021**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/licensing-committee/>

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25th March 2021.

8. GOVERNMENT DECISION ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS AFTER 7TH MAY 2021

9. PROPOSAL TO HOST A CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL IN DURHAM CITY

10. RESPONSE FROM MHCLG ON THE DURHAM CITY CHARTER TRUST

11. REPORT ON GRANTS AWARDED IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21

12. REPORT ON BLUE PLAQUE AWARDS SCHEME

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 25th March 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, G Holland, R Ormerod and M Ross.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Sarah Coop and Helen Marriage (both from Artichoke).

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

No apologies were received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr L Brown declared an interest in item 9 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussions on this item.

3. DISCUSSION WITH ARTICHOKE ON DURHAM LUMIERE 2021 AND PROPOSALS FOR SECTION 106 PROJECTS

The Chair welcomed Sarah Coop and Helen Marriage to the meeting.

Sarah began by advising Members that it is the intention for Lumiere to take place as normal this year in November. The 7th such festival to take place in Durham.

Sarah advised that the total cost for delivering Lumiere in Durham is £2.2million; a lot of this is funded by the County Council and by the Arts Council, as well as (usually) approximately 70 other outside sponsoring organisations. Sponsorships range between £500 and £100,000. Sarah recognised that gaining sponsorship this year is difficult as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Helen advised that the programme for Lumiere has grown this year and Artichoke is working with the local community on this year's festival. Helen advised that Artichoke finds Durham to be a fascinating place and there is a great collaboration for planning the festival.

Sarah advised that Artichoke would also like to apply for some of the Section 106 funding which is available for public art money in the Elvet and Gilesgate electoral division for two permanent art installations.

Helen advised that Artichoke were looking at two potential sites for the installations – one being between Milburngate and Riverwalk and the other being between the new County Council HQ building and the passport office.

Helen advised that one of the installations is called "Lampounette" and is a tall feature resembling a table desk light. This is intended for the Freeman's Quay area. Helen recognised that this area is particularly sensitive. The other installation comes from the international artist Julian Opie called "Shaida Walking". This installation is intended between Milburngate and Riverwalk.

Cllr John Ashby highlighted that the area between Milburngate and Riverwalk does not have pedestrian access.

Cllr Liz Brown asked why a lot of the permanent installations from Artichoke were located in the Freeman's Quay/ Walkergate areas. Helen advised that Artichoke would like to spread the installations across the City, however planning control doesn't allow for this because of the protections for the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

Cllr Roger Cornwell asked if he recalled correctly that a similar installation to that of the lampounette was installed some years ago in the waiting room of Durham Railway Station. Helen commended Cllr Cornwell on his great memory. This was an installation from 2011 and this has gone on to be exhibited in other locations. Helen assured the Council that the lampounette installation is robust enough to survive outdoors.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2021 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Planning Committee

Cllr Roger Cornwell presented the Planning Committee minutes from the meetings held on 19 February and 5 March 2021. There being no questions from Members, Cllr Cornwell moved on to Committee reports.

- Parish planning statistics 2020

Cllr Roger Cornwell presented the planning statistics from 2020 as follows:

281 planning applications were validated in 2020. Four were withdrawn before they could be considered and four could not be considered in the early days of Lockdown 1. Consequently...

273 were considered by the Committee.

184 (67.4%) were noted as being either generally acceptable or not raising issues beyond the immediate application site.

15 (5.5%) were supported

4 (1.5%) were commented on but not objected to

70 (25.6%) were objected to. Of these ...

14 (5.1%) were called to Committee. However, not all of these came to Committee as nine were refused under delegated powers, i.e. the officers agreed with the Parish representation.

56 (20.5%) were objected to but not called to Committee. 30 were approved (one of these on appeal), 9 were refused, 11 were withdrawn and 6 are pending consideration.

Committee appearances in 2020

(These included applications carried over from earlier years.)

Parish Councillors made representations to the Central/East Planning Committee on eight occasions to challenge officer recommendations to approve and were successful five times.

Parish Councillors made representations to the County Planning Committee on two occasions to challenge officer recommendations to approve but were unsuccessful both times.

The Chair thanked Cllr Cornwell and the Planning Committee for their excellent work on these matters.

- Update on the progress of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chair advised that the referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan had now been agreed and printed.

The Chair reminded Members that the referendum is due to take place on 6th May 2021 and that the Parish Council would be remaining unbiased and factual in all publicity relating to the Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

Cllr Esther Ashby asked how the outcome of the referendum would be decided. Cllr Roger Cornwell advised that this would be decided by simple majority.

- Update on the application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land.

Cllr Roger Cornwell advised that the virtual test event for the public inquiry had gone ahead as planned though there were a number of issues with technology at this meeting.

Cllr Roger Cornwell advised that the Inspector has now been confirmed as Edward Cussins, who is extremely knowledgeable on common law issues. Cllr Roger Cornwell also advised that the County Council has employed a barrister to act on its behalf for the inquiry and that the inquiry would also take place over 5 days now, not the 3 days as expected.

Cllr Roger Cornwell also advised that it is now likely that the inspectorate would be live streaming the inquiry online so that the public can view this.

- Proposals to tackle car parking issues in Durham City

Cllr John Ashby highlighted the issues that St Nicholas Community Forum has for many years had to address in relation to the problems associated with the emergence of several 'take-away' uses in Lower Claypath.

Cllr John Ashby advised that the problems in the past have been a combination of lack of planning permissions, late-night licenses (open to 02.30 hrs) and taxi-drivers waiting for custom from the drinking establishments in Walkergate. Cllr John Ashby advised that, thanks to a joint operation between the County Council and the Police, those problems were tackled and solved.

Cllr John Ashby advised that, in the past year, a new problem has arisen about the takeaway drivers on Lower Claypath. Those concerns were communicated to the County Council officer who, with others, had been so helpful and pro-active in tackling the previous problems. The County Council officer had advised that nationally, local authorities and the British Parking Association are calling on government to reverse the decision to remove CCTV evidence as evidence of parking breaches and recommended that the Parish Council lends its support to this and writes to the Transport Secretary on this.

Cllr John Ashby advised that, on the matter of missing yellow lines, it has now been established that the 'no waiting at any time' yellow markings on the kerbs outside Student Castle will be re-instated.

Cllr John Ashby advised that it is clear that the issues highlighted at Lower Claypath also exist in other parts of the City and it is therefore recommended that the Parish Council takes all appropriate action to try and resolve these issues.

Members **agreed** to the following proposals on this matter:

- To write to the Government supporting the re-instatement of the use of CCTV for parking enforcement;
- To task the enhanced neighbourhood warden service for the City Centre with advising drivers in identified 'hotspots' around the Parish that they are committing an offence and asking them to turn off their engines whilst stationary;
- To request additional parking warden resources from the County Council;
- To contact schools to draw attention to the health issues arising from car engines running while the drivers wait to pick up their children; and
- To inform the Member of Parliament of these decisions.

• Environment Committee

Cllr Victoria Ashfield presented the Environment Committee minutes from meetings held on 16 February 2021. There being no questions from Members, Cllr Ashfield moved on to Committee reports.

- Climate change commitment and plan

Cllr Victoria Ashfield reminded Members that the Parish Council has made a commitment to combatting the global climate emergency by encouraging a healthy natural environment, improving air quality, promoting zero carbon developments, managing land for nature and reducing waste, so promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents and reduced impact on the global climate.

Cllr Victoria Ashfield presented her proposals for a climate change commitment and plan. Cllr Victoria Ashfield advised that some of these commitments can be met a Full Council level, as it is recognised the Council does not have the powers to achieve many of these aspirations but will have to work with partners to encourage their action. Some of the commitments will be better achieved through the Council's Committees.

Cllr Victoria Ashfield reminded Members that, in March 2019 the Council committed itself to a Climate Emergency Resolution, committing to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. The Parish Council furthermore committed to creating a carbon audit and a roadmap for achieving this by December 2020 and to include environmental implications (including carbon emissions) in all officer reports from that date.

Cllr Victoria Ashfield advised that, due to the Covid-19 situation, the Parish Council has missed this date but this is now being brought forward as a proposal for the March meeting to enable the Council to achieve this commitment.

It was highlighted that there may be an entirely new set of Councillors on the Parish Council after May who may wish to review this. It was therefore **agreed** that this plan should go forward to all future meetings of the Parish Council's Committees so that they may agree in principle to these commitments.

- Proposals for Durham in Bloom 2021

Members agreed to the following proposals for Durham in Bloom 2021:

Durham in Bloom priorities	Estimated costs
Bishops Mitre display in Durham Market Place	£2,500
Floral displays (potentially of the Parish Council logo) on the banks running alongside the steps going up to the railway station	£1,000
Creation of a wildflower meadow at Aykley Heads	£1,000
Hanging baskets on Claypath x 12 @ £40 each	£480

Purchase of bulbs for community planting	£1,000
Wash bridge over A167 and introduce 2xfloral towers at both ends of the bridge.	£1,500
Floral display (potentially of the Parish Council logo) at Gilesgate roundabout	£1,000
Floral planting at Hallgarth Street roundabout	£500
Floral planting at Potters Bank roundabout	£500
Community planting projects with bedding plants to go to Resident Groups / graveyards/ common areas	£1,500
Flower towers on North Road x 2 (outside CEX and outside Sainsbury on corner of Highway)	£1,500
Total:	£13,180

In agreeing these proposals, Members also **agreed** to allocate additional funding to these priorities (over and above the originally agreed £10,000), taken from the fund to improve unadopted footpaths/ area, etc. Members also **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Parish Council's Environment Committee to deliver these priorities.

• **Licensing Committee**

Cllr Liz Brown presented the minutes from the Licensing Committee meeting held on 4 December 2020. There being no queries from Members, Cllr Brown moved on to Committee reports.

- **Proposal to introduce an A boards prohibition zone in Durham City centre.**

Cllr Liz Brown reminded Members that a disability audit was carried out of Durham City in 2019 and 2020 by an inclusive design consultant. This work was commissioned by Durham County Council's Equality and Diversity Officer, Transformation and Partnerships.

Cllr Liz Brown advised that the aim of this audit is to establish the current level of accessibility in Durham City centre and to identify the barriers and other potential issues which disabled people might experience when visiting the city.

Cllr Liz Brown advised that the audit also includes four levels of prioritised recommendations so that a plan of remedial works can be formulated and implemented in tandem with budgets. Recommendations put forward by the inclusive design consultant are categorised, for example where an issue constitutes a potential health and safety hazard, it is allocated Priority 1. Recommendations are provided for best practice solutions and minimum standards, where appropriate.

Cllr Liz Brown highlighted that the use of A boards by local businesses on the public highway was raised throughout the audits as a recurring issue and the design consultant has proposed that DCC consults with local visual impairment groups to obtain their views on these features. Cllr Brown also advised that the

audit also advises that local authority policy should outline the issues and caution business owners to be judicious in the placement of A-frames, where this is not currently within policy.

Cllr Liz Brown advise that tackling the use of A frame boards in the City centre was allocated priority 3-4 by the audits.

Cllr Liz Brown advised that the Durham Access for All Group has recently met to discuss this and, in their own response to these audits. The Group has highlighted that the placement of 'A' Boards on the public highway creates many issues, in particular the potential to present an obstruction and safety hazard to users. This is a substantial problem for those with mobility impairment, such as the blind and partially sighted, wheelchair users and people with prams/pushchairs.

Cllr Liz Brown advised that the Parish Council's Licensing Committee and Environment Committee have recently considered these audits and the Licensing Committee is proposing that an 'A boards prohibition zone' be introduced to both Saddler Street and Silver Street. A similar prohibition has been introduced in other areas such as the City of York.

It is felt that there is a necessity to ensure that the primary purpose of the public highway is achieved and upheld in Durham City (i.e. to pass and repass without let or hindrance).

Members **agreed** to the introduction of an A boards prohibition zone to those two areas highlighted and also **agreed** to write to the County Council to request that this be considered in light of the recent disability audit of the City.

• **Personnel Committee**

Cllr Elizabeth Scott presented the minutes from the Personnel Committee meeting held on 11 June 2019. There being no queries from Members, Cllr Scott moved on to Committee reports.

- **Annual performance review with Parish Clerk**

Cllr Elizabeth Scott advised that she and the Personnel Committee had carried out the annual performance review for the Parish Clerk. Cllr Elizabeth Scott highlighted that the Parish Council is extremely happy with the Clerk's performance in his role and thanked him for the hard work and dedication he shows.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott highlighted that the Clerk has indicated that he wishes to undertake further training for various aspects of his role, as well as some more in-depth planning training, in view of the importance of planning issues in the Parish Council's work.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott advised that workloads are an issue and it is therefore important that the Parish Council looks to recruit an assistant for the Parish Clerk in order to support him in his role and tasks to be undertaken.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott also highlighted that the Personnel Committee felt that the Clerk's role had changed substantially since commencing in 2019 and therefore she would be seeking external HR support in carrying out a review of this role and to recommend an amendment to the Clerk's salary pay scale.

It was **agreed** that this review should be undertaken and any amendments to the Clerk's pay scale should be backdated and paid to the Parish Clerk dating back to the end of his probation period.

- **Proposal to recruit an Assistant Parish Clerk to support the work and functions of the Parish Council**

Cllr Elizabeth Scott highlighted that further resource is needed in order to support the work and functions of the Parish Council and therefore the Personnel Committee is recommending that the Parish Council seeks to recruit an Assistant Parish Clerk for the Council.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott advised that the job role, salary, etc. in front of Councillors for consideration had been produced by the Personnel Committee and the Clerk in conjunction with HR officers at DCC.

Members **agreed** to the recruitment of an assistant Parish Clerk for the Council. Members also **approved** the job description as set out in the report provided. Members also **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Parish Council's personnel committee to make an appropriate appointment of this role, following successful interview.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25th February 2021.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Parish Clerk for his exceptional work in gathering the full bundle of evidence to go forward for the public inquiry into the common land de-registration application.

The Chair reminded Members that June 2022 marked the 70th Anniversary of the Queen's reign and therefore plans were now beginning on celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee. The Chair advised that the Clerk had made contact with a number of key external stakeholders and it was now agreed that a working group should be formed in order to start the ball rolling with planning for this event.

The Chair advised that work on the Parish Council's new Totally Locally website – a website aimed at promoting to the offer of Independent Businesses in Durham City – to visitors etc. was well underway and the Parish Council looked forward to seeing the results of this.

The Chair advised that a further roundtable meeting is planned with local businesses following the initial meeting and a subsequent meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee, where follow up actions were agreed. The Chair

advised that the first roundtable meeting with businesses had been a great success with over 30 independent businesses attending and sharing their views.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had had some initial discussions with stakeholders about the possibility of Durham City hosting a Children's Book Festival, post lockdown. The Chair advised that she expected a report on this to come forward to the next Full Council meeting.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The Clerk reminded Members of the need to carry out the annual review of these important documents. It was **agreed** that a Working Group should be established, made up of Chairs of all Parish Council Committees, in order to carry out this review.

9. PROPOSAL TO REINSTATE THE TOWN CRIER IN DURHAM CITY

The Chair advised that the Parish Council has been asked to consider supporting the reinstatement of the Town Crier to Durham City.

The Chair advised that, traditionally, a Parish or Town Council 'employs' the town crier for a particular area. Durham City has also previously had a town crier.

The Clerk advised that an Honorary Freeman and the Warden of the Butchers Company as well as other Freeman Members have recently recommended a Durham-based individual and previous town crier for this role. The individual has also indicated a desire to take on this role. The individual is a Justice of the Peace and a member of the Operatic Society and already has the necessary traditional costume for a town crier.

The Chair advised that reinstating the town crier could add some attention and interest to selected events in the City, as well as reinstating an important role for an historic city such as Durham.

Members **agreed** to reinstate the role of the Town Crier for Durham City and also **agreed** to launching a competition in order to recruit an appropriate person to carry out this role.

Due to the confidential nature of the following items, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972 Act and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. At this point in time the press and the public were asked to leave the room.

10. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Clerk provided an update to the Parish Council from the ASB sub-group meeting held on 1st March 2021.

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
(22nd April 2021)**

ITEM 7: GOVERNMENT DECISION ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS AFTER 7TH MAY 2021

Members will be aware that the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 have permitted Local Councils to meet in a virtual setting since 4th April 2020 (under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020) - a month following the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and during the first national lockdown.

These powers have been essential in allowing the Parish Council to continue with its programme of work and to do so safely. This format has also allowed for cost savings to be made from the booking of rooms and has also freed up officer time from travelling to and from various meetings.

Government decision on 25th March 2021

At present, the powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020, for Local Councils to meet virtually last up until May 2021. In spite of lobbying from NALC, local Members of Parliament and other bodies for the continuation of these powers, on 25th March 2021, the Minister advised that the powers would cease on 7th May 2021. In his letter, the Minister advised:

Extending the regulations to meetings beyond May 7 would require primary legislation. The Government has considered the case for legislation very carefully, including the significant impact it would have on the Government's legislative programme which is already under severe pressure in these unprecedented times. We are also mindful of the excellent progress that has been made on our vaccination programme and the announcement of the Government's roadmap for lifting Covid-19 restrictions. Given this context, the Government has concluded that it is not possible to bring forward emergency legislation on this issue at this time.

As outlined in the Government's Spring 2021 Covid-19 Response, our aim is for everyone aged 50 and over and people with underlying health conditions to have been offered a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by 15 April, and a second dose by mid-July. While local authorities have been able to hold meetings in person at any time during the pandemic with appropriate measures in place, the successful rollout of the vaccine and the reduction in cases of Covid-19 should result in a significant reduction in risk for local authority members meeting in person from May 7, as reflected in the Government's plan to ease Covid-19 restrictions over the coming months.

The letter goes on to state:

Finally, while you do have a legal obligation to ensure that the members of the public can access most of your meetings, I would encourage you to continue to provide remote access to minimise the need for the public to attend meetings physically until at least 21 June, at which point it is anticipated that all restrictions on indoor gatherings will have been lifted in line with the Roadmap. However, it is

for individual local authorities to satisfy themselves that they have met the requirements for public access.

This decision is presently the subject of a High Court challenge. Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Hertfordshire County Council have asked the High Court to make a declaration on whether they can continue to hold meetings remotely past 6 May.

It has since been confirmed that the hearing will take place on 21 April.

Preparations for a return to physical meetings

In the meantime, the Clerk has been putting in place arrangements for the return to physical meetings after 7th May 2021.

The Clerk has sought advice from the Council's insurance provider on the return to physical meetings, in the event that a claim is made following a meeting of the Parish Council. The Council's insurers have advised as follows:

This is covered under your Public Liability insurance; this will also extend to cover legal liabilities resulting from injury or disease suffered by a member of the public where it is deemed to be your fault. This also includes contracting Coronavirus.

For a claim against you to succeed, you would have to be found responsible for the individual contracting Coronavirus. The claimant would need to show that you had failed in your duty to take reasonable steps to keep them safe and that this was the cause of them contracting the disease.

As you re-open/re-start services and activities you will need to conduct fresh risk assessments for them, ensuring that the latest government guidelines are factored into them. You will need to document these assessments and then take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of your staff, volunteers and service users. You should be able to demonstrate that you have adhered to the advice and recommendations provided by the government during each phase of the pandemic's evolution. So this means you will need to re-do your risk assessments each time the government guidelines that affect you are changed.

In the event of a claim arising we will ask for copies of the risk assessments, as we will use these to defend a claim on your behalf.

The Clerk has also been investigating possible venues to allow for a safe return to physical meetings after 7th May. This includes for all Committee meetings (of which there is usually at least one per week) and Full Council meetings. At present, Clayport library is operating a limited service, with the upstairs of the library closed off. In any case, the room previously used by the Council for regular Committee meetings is deemed inadequate, owing to its size.

Furthermore, the Town Hall is currently under extensive renovations and is not at present open to the general public.

A number of the community halls in the City do not benefit from disabled access and schools are unable to accommodate regular daytime meetings owing to

safeguarding issues of allowing members of the public access to their facilities during teaching hours.

The Clerk is currently investigating three options: County Hall at Aykley Heads, the Miners Hall and Elvet Methodist Church in Durham City.

In order to make safe these meetings, the Clerk will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out for each meeting, that hand sanitisers are in place, the seating arrangements permit a seating space of at least 2metres between attendees and that there is a track and trace option in place for any eventual location for these meetings.

Government call for evidence on virtual meetings

Councillors are also reminded that the Government has now launched a call for evidence in order to understand the experience of local Councils across the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings. Further details of this call for evidence can be found on the Government website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>

It has been suggested that the Parish Council may wish to respond positively to this consultation, encouraging the Government to extend these powers to allow for virtual meetings to become legal in perpetuity.

Annual meeting of electors

There is also a need for the Parish Council to decide on plans for its annual meeting of electors this year.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) For Members to note the above report and to await the outcome of the High Court ruling on virtual meetings.2) Notwithstanding 1), for Members to agree to delegate responsibility to the Clerk to arrange for a safe return to physical meetings after 7th May 2021.3) For Members to agree to respond to the Government's call for evidence, lobbying for the powers to meet virtually to be extended in perpetuity.
-------------------------------	---

ITEM 8: PROPOSAL FOR A CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL ON 22ND AND 23RD JULY 2021

As reported at the March Full Council meeting and at the latest meeting of the business roundtable, the Parish Council has met with representative of the Durham Markets Company and a local author, in order to investigate the possibility of the jointly hosting a Children's Book Festival in Durham City later this year.

The Markets Manager has put forward the following proposal for Members to consider:

DMC 4 Durham CiC was formed to, principally, to promote and put on events for the benefit of Durham City and has regularly worked with the City of Durham Parish Council to deliver such events.

One such event we have both been considering is a two-day children's/family event with an educational but fun objective.

Children, and their parents/guardians, have suffered as much as any group of people during lockdown and with foreign travel appearing unlikely in the summer then more families will be at home during the summer holidays.

The proposal is to put on a two-day event just after the end of the school summer term, mid-week, in the City Centre, based in the Market Place and then possibly extending out to Clayport Library and Prince Bishop's Shopping Centre to attract children and families into the City as part of a covid recovery plan for the City centre.

Emphasis of the event will be on children's authors and illustrators, mainly local, giving a number of talks and presentations in a marquee in the Market Place.

Current thoughts are either a) theatre style seating (which would maximise the numbers) but might be awkward for families with younger children etc or b) café style seating around individual tables – although this would reduce the capacity it would mean the layout could be used for both authors and illustrators (who will be delivering a more hands on experience) and give people more room to move around.

Although we had initially thought some bespoke audio-visual facilities would be required in the marquee, we have reviewed this in light of the cost and have scaled this back to just head set microphones and speakers.

Prince Bishops have indicated their support for the event and will facilitate activities in one of their empty units.

Clayport Library does not yet know what, if anything, they will be able to provide/deliver but still hopes to be involved.

The relevant contact at Waterstones is still on furlough but it is hoped the children's section there may also wish to be involved.

Depending on funding, the range of what we can deliver can be tailored accordingly. The aim is for everything to be free to children at point of delivery. As such the delivery options are deliberately fluid.

The 'full event' would see additional entertainment like a petting farm; face painter; Bugs n stuff; music etc. The scaled back event would exclude these and just concentrate on the authors and illustrators.

We have priced up a 9m x 9m marquee – it could seat about 90 in theatre style. Numbers will be regulated by a ticketing system through something like Eventbrite or similar.

If we were to go with the café style layout in the marquee, we will not need to change tables and chairs around for the illustrators and will be able to rely just on a microphone rather than any need for a bespoke AV system. It is anticipated each author session would be one session of around 75-90 mins interspersed with an illustrator session of about 60 mins each.

Durham City AAP has given 'in principle' support but due to purdah the full proposal hasn't yet been able to be submitted and won't be considered by the AAP Board till the end of May. The minimum grant available from the AAP is £5,000. If approved by the AAP Board, then it will go to the scrutiny committee at DCC for final approval and issue of offer – this is where the timetable will be at its tightest as we can not spend anything in advance of any offer. However, we should be able to provisionally book people and entertainment to ensure their commitment.

With the invaluable assistance of local author Jenny Pearson, we have identified most of the participants we would like to invite, including Alfie Joey, presenter of the morning show on BBC Radio Newcastle who, by luck, has a children's book coming out soon.

Each day's events will be centred around 2 authors each giving a separate 90-minute slot, to include reading, Q and A, book buying and signing etc. Ideally, there would be one later slot on the Thursday late afternoon/early evening to allow working parents to join their children. So, a total of 5 authors.

2 illustrators will then fill the gaps in the marquee. So, a total of 4 illustrators.

In the 'full' event there would be entertainment in the Market Place of a petting farm; face painter; music and Bugs n stuff in the main entrance to the Market Hall to make it a great family event.

We can also do a 'book themed' treasure hunt around the city centre.

If the event is the success we hope it will be, then we would envisage various venues around the City wanting to get involved in future years and in effect paying for their own children's themed events leaving the main marquee in the Market Place to fund.

We will be applying to the AAP for a grant of just over £5,000, which will leave a shortfall on the 'full event' of around £3000 plus the vat on the marquee invoices to be funded by DMC/DPC.

The DMC is able to provide £1,300 worth of funding towards the event, as well as staffing etc. and the Parish Council is asked to provide a further £1,786 worth of funding to be allocated towards the marquee, flooring, carpet, tables & chairs.

Total costs for the event are as follows:

	OPTION A	OPTION B
	Everything + larger	larger marquee
	marquee + AV	AV limited
Authors - 5 in total	£1500	£1500
Illustrators - 2 a day	£1200	£1200
Marquee, flooring, carpet, tables & chairs*	£1786	£1786
Microphone and speakers	£300	£300
Advertising/Promo	£450	£450
Overnight security/herras fencing	£500	£500
Bugs n Stuff	£300	
Petting Farm	£700	
Face Painters	£200	
Music	£300	
Treasure Trail?	£300	£300
On the day staffing	£550	£550
TOTAL	£8086	£6586

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For Members to agree to co-host this Children’s Book Festival on 22nd and 23rd July 2021. 2) If 1) is approved, for Members to agree to allocate appropriate funding towards this event depending on the proposed options as set out in the above report.
---------------------------	---

ITEM 9: RESPONSE FROM MHCLG ON THE DURHAM CITY CHARTER TRUST

Members will recall, at a previous Parish Council meeting, that the issue of the Durham City Charter Trust was discussed and it was agreed that the Parish Council should write to the relevant Government Minister seeking clarity on the legislation pertaining to the present arrangement in Durham City, following the establishment of the City of Durham Parish Council.

As Members are aware, Durham City Council was abolished in 2009 and Durham retained its city charter status through the appointment of charter trustees. Its purpose was to ensure the continuation of the civic traditions for the City of Durham. In addition, the Trust raises a precept to gather a budget of over £70,000 and members of the public in the City of Durham Parish area have asked why they have been precepted for both a Parish Council and a Charter Trust this year.

The City of Durham Parish Council became a recognised legal entity in its own right on 1st April 2018 and the first elections to the Parish Council took place on Thursday 3rd May 2018. While Section 246, Local Government Act, makes arrangements for the "*preservation of powers, privileges and rights of existing cities or boroughs*" through a charter and the appointments of trustees to exercise stated powers under the Act, it also states that:

(3) Where by virtue of Part I or II of this Act, the area of an existing city or borough on 1st April 1974 becomes a parish in England or becomes a community in Wales having a separate community council, any powers to appoint local officers of dignity exercisable immediately before that date by the corporation of the city or borough shall be exercisable on and after that date by the parish or community council.

(8) If an area or part of an area for which charter trustees have been constituted under subsection (4) above becomes, or becomes comprised in, a parish or a separate community council is established for a community consisting of such an area, that subsection shall cease to apply to the area or part and accordingly the charter trustees shall cease to act therefore.

In the 2019 House of Commons Briefing Paper 04827 [Parish and town councils: recent issues] notes that Charter trustees are now a '*residual category...where a new parish or town council is established for an area with charter trustees, the new body takes on their role and the charter trustees are discontinued*'.

While the mapping of its boundaries against those of the former City Council leaves small pockets on the outskirts of the City, the City itself is now fully parished.

The Parish Council has now received the following advice from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG):

MHCLG are not able provide definitive answers to these questions as the department does not issue legal advice. It is the responsibility of the local authority concerned to ensure it acts within the law. I would direct the City of Durham Parish Council to clarify their legal position following a review of the following legislation:

Charter trustees established following local government restructuring under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents#>

Regulation 15 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008/625 makes provision for the dissolution of charter trustees following the establishment of a parish council or councils for the entire charter trustees' area: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/625/regulation/15/made>

I would also encourage City of Durham Parish Council to clarify with Durham County Council the final recommendations set out in the Community Governance Review regarding Charter Trustees and parished areas.

It is for the principal council to establish new parish councils and that the Government has no role in either the establishment of parishes or the dissolution of charter trustees, and therefore Durham County Council are responsible for any specific information about parishes or charter trustees in that council's area.

This briefing note is intended to update Members on the response received from the MHCLG and to advise Members that the Parish Council has written to the County Council asking for clarification on this situation.