

City of Durham Parish Council

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Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83131873220>
Meeting ID: 831 3187 3220

Dear Councillor,

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, I hereby give you notice that the **ANNUAL MEETING** of the **FULL COUNCIL** will be held **via Zoom** on **Monday 17 May 2021 at 7:00pm** to transact the following business:

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

To elect the Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. The Parish Council Chair will read and sign the Declaration of Acceptance of this Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

To elect the Vice Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. No Declaration of Acceptance of this office is required.

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

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND APRIL 2021

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

7. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- Parish Council Standing Orders
- Parish Council Financial Regulations
- Terms of Reference for the following Parish Council Committees: Business, Environment, Finance, Licensing, Personnel and Planning.
- The following Parish Council policies: Communications policy, Environmental and sustainability policy, Equality and diversity policy,

Grant Awards policy, Health and safety policy, policy on dealing with vexatious behaviour, Safeguarding policy and Social media policy.

- 8. ADOPTION OF PARISH COUNCIL GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**
- 9. TO DECIDE ON APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**
(Last approved list of appointees attached)
- 10. TO DECIDE ON PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**
(Last approved list of Committee Membership attached)
- 11. UPDATE ON THE DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**
- 12. UPDATE ON THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE APPLICATION TO DE-REGISTER THE SANDS AS COMMON LAND**
- 13. ADVICE ON THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS**
- 14. CYCLE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Suggested Cycle of Meetings (all commencing at 7pm)

2021

24 June
22 July
23 September
28 October
25 November
13 December

2022

27 January
24 February
24 March
28 April

And pursuant to the provisions of the above-named Act, **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 22nd April 2021 at 18:00 via Zoom.

Present: Councillors A Doig (Chair), V Ashfield, L Brown, S Cahill, R Cornwell, D Freeman, G Holland and M Ross.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Mr Colin Wilkes (Durham Markets Company).

1. TWO-MINUTES SILENCE IN MEMORY OF HRH PRINCE PHILIP, THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The meeting began by observing a two-minutes silence in memory of HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, who sadly passed away on Friday 9th April 2021.

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs E Ashby, J Ashby, E Scott, R Ormerod and J Elmer.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr D Freeman declared an interest in item 11 on the Agenda as a member of SNCF.

Cllrs A Doig and L Brown declared an interest in item 11 on the Agenda due to their involvement with the Lowes Barn Community Centre.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair welcomed Mr Colin Wilkes to the meeting. Colin advised that he was attending to hear discussions on item 9 of the Agenda.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th March were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to amending the sentence: "*Cllr Roger Cornwell advised that the Inspector has now been confirmed as Edward Cussins, who is extremely knowledgeable on common **law** issues*" to "*Cllr Roger Cornwell advised that the Inspector has now been confirmed as Edward Cussins, who is extremely knowledgeable on common **land** issues*".

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Planning Committee**

Cllr R Cornwell presented the minutes from meetings of the Planning Committee held on 19 March and 1 April 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr R Cornwell moved on to Committee reports.

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

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the public inquiry into the application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land is due to commence on 27th April 2021.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the objecting parties would be holding a pre-inquiry meeting to go over any last minute preparations.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that the Parish Council, the City of Durham Trust and the Durham City Freemen had jointly engaged the services of a Barrister. Whilst the County Council had also engaged the services of a Barrister in order to support their case.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that the inquiry would be livestreamed via YouTube so that members of the public and the press could view the proceedings.

The Chair thanked Cllr R Cornwell for his report.

• Licensing Committee

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes from meetings of the Licensing Committee held on 29 January and 26 February 2021, there were no queries from Members on these minutes.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

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

The Chair advised that the Annual meeting of the Parish Council would take place on 17th May 2021 after the election.

The Chair reminded Members that the public inquiry into the common land de-registration application is due to commence on 27th April 2021.

The Chair advised Members that the Parish Council had received a number of applications for the Assistant Parish Clerk role and the Personnel Committee will be carrying out a number of interviews on Monday 26th April, with a view to making an offer to an appropriate candidate that week.

The Chair advised that, as discussed at the last Full Council meeting, the Parish Council is organising a Committee to work up a plan for the Queen's Jubilee weekend in June 2022. This Committee will be meeting soon but in light of the sad passing of Prince Philip, the Committee has not felt it appropriate to meet as

yet. The Chair advised that a number of partners were keen to get involved in the organisation of this historic event.

The Chair advised that the competition to recruit the Town Crier for Durham City would be organised via the Parish Council's Personnel Committee.

The Chair advised Members of the plan for after the election. The Chair advised that all successful candidates at the election will be contacted and the Clerk is arranging for Acceptance of Office forms, Register of Interests forms, photographs to be taken (with the most likely venue being St. Nic's Youth Centre) and new email accounts for all new Councillors will be set up on 10th May.

The Chair also advised that the Clerk is arranging for some training to take place to help new Members and the Clerk is also arranging a pack, including copies of the Good Councillors Guide, for all elected Councillors.

In her absence, the Clerk played a recording from Cllr E Scott (Chair of the Parish Council) thanking everyone for their wonderful work since the start of the Parish Council.

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

The Clerk reminded Members 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.

The Clerk advised that 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.

At present, the Clerk advised that 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.

The Clerk also advised 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.

The Clerk advised that 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.

Members **agreed** to note the report provided by the Clerk and to await the outcome of the High Court ruling on virtual meetings.

Members also **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Clerk to arrange for a safe return to physical meetings after 7th May 2021.

Members also **agreed** to respond to the Government's call for evidence, lobbying for the powers to meet virtually to be extended in perpetuity.

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

The Clerk reminded Members that, 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 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-19 recovery plan for the City centre. The 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.

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.

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. There would also be a 'book themed' treasure hunt around the city centre.

If the event is a success, Mr Colin Wilkes advised that the Markets Company envisaged 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.

Mr Colin Wilkes advised that the Markets Company 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.

Mr Colin Wilkes advised that the Markets Company 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.

Members **agreed** to co-host this Children's Book Festival on 22nd and 23rd July 2021 with the Durham Markets Company.

Members also **agreed** to allocate £1,786 towards this event; providing the funding for the proposed marquee, flooring, carpet, tables & chairs.

10. RESPONSE FROM MHCLG ON THE DURHAM CITY CHARTER TRUST

The Chair reminded Members that, at a previous Parish Council meeting, 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.

The Chair reminded Members that 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 Chair advised that 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 Chair advised that, 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 Chair advised that 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".

The Chair advised that, following on from this correspondence, the Parish Council had written to the Chief Executive of Durham County Council seeking clarification on the situation. It was **agreed** to await a response to this correspondence.

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

The Clerk presented a report from all those who had successfully received a grant during the previous financial year. Members noted that this funding, in many cases, had been a lifeline to these organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A number of organisations had yet to provide a report. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should write out to these organisations formally and request such a report. Each organisation has until June 2021 in order to spend the funds as originally

intended. In a number of cases it was **agreed** that this should be extended until December 2021, due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

12. REPORT ON BLUE PLAQUE AWARDS SCHEME

Members agreed to fund 10 new blue plaques as part of this scheme, provisionally agreeing who would receive a plaque (all subject to the relevant land owner's permission) and the Clerk was tasked with seeking permissions for the erection of these plaques.

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
(17th May 2021)**

ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF PARISH COUNCIL GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

It is proposed that the Parish Council adopts the following grievance and disciplinary procedures, which has been considered and agreed by the Parish Council's Personnel Committee.

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The City of Durham Parish Council Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures are modified from the ACAS Code of Practice as set out in the various Employment Acts.

This procedure applies to all employees of the City of Durham Parish Council. This document describes the procedure which aims to facilitate a speedy, fair and consistent solution to an individual employee's employment grievance or disciplinary status.

Where appropriate, the opportunity for mediation will be put forward at any stage of a grievance or disciplinary procedure.

1. Grievance Procedures

1. Introduction

It is the Parish Council's policy to ensure that all employees with a grievance relating to their employment can use a procedure which can help to resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.

2. Informal discussions

If you have a grievance about your employment, you should communicate this either verbally or in writing to the Parish Council's Personnel Committee. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.

3. Grievance procedure

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you may raise the matter formally with the Parish Council. You will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance and be notified in writing of the decision. You have the right to be accompanied by a friend or relative, a solicitor or trade union representative at all grievance meetings. You will be given the right to appeal against the decision.

4. Appeals

Any appeal will be considered by Members of the City of Durham Parish Council who were not involved in the original hearing and who will decide the case as impartially as possible.

2. Disciplinary Procedures

1. Purpose of the Procedure

The Parish Council's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct and performance. This procedure sets out the action which will be taken when the Council's rules or acceptable standards are breached.

2. The Principles

- This procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.
- At every stage you will be advised of the nature of the complaint, be given the opportunity to state your case and be accompanied by a friend or relative, a solicitor or trade union representative.
- You will not be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will normally be dismissal without notice and without pay in lieu of notice.
- You have a right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against you.
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if your alleged misconduct warrants such action.
- If you request, you have the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing by a friend or relative, a solicitor or trade union representative.

3. Informal discussions

Before taking formal disciplinary action, the Parish Council will make every effort to resolve the matter by informal discussions with you. Only where this fails to bring about the desired improvement will the formal disciplinary procedure be implemented.

4. First warning

If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, you will be given a written warning or performance note. Such warnings will be recorded. You will also be informed that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. (Where a matter is sufficiently serious – for example because it is having, or is likely to have, a serious harmful effect on the Council or other Council employees, it may be considered necessary to move directly to a final written warning.)

5. Final written warning

If the offence is serious, or there is no improvement in standards, or if a further offence of a similar kind occurs, a final written warning will be given which will include the reason for the warning and a note that if no improvement or change results within 12 months, you may be subject to dismissal. Unless dismissal involves gross misconduct, employees will receive a period of notice, or payment in lieu.

6. Discipline and dismissal procedure

If facing dismissal or action short of dismissal such as loss of pay or demotion – the following minimum statutory procedure will be followed:

- You will receive a written note setting out the allegation and the basis for it.
- A meeting will be held to consider and discuss the allegation.
- You will be given a right of appeal, including an appeal meeting.
- You will be reminded of your right to be accompanied at any meetings.

In serious cases, immediate suspension may take place whilst the full facts of the incident(s) are ascertained.

In all cases of disciplinary procedures, the Parish Council will have the support of an external Human Resources professional.

7. Gross misconduct

If after investigation, it is confirmed that you have committed an offence of the following nature (the list is not exhaustive) the normal consequence will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice – theft, damage to property, fraud, incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, physical violence, bullying and gross insubordination. Whilst alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, you may be suspended, during which time you will be paid your normal rate of pay. Any decision to dismiss you will be taken by the Parish Council only after full investigation.

8. Appeals

If you wish to appeal against any disciplinary decision, you must appeal, in writing, within five working days of the decision being communicated to you by the Parish Council. Independent Members who were not involved in the original disciplinary action will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

Date adopted: May 2021

Date to be reviewed: May 2022

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the adoption of the grievance and disciplinary procedures, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 9: TO DECIDE ON APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

As Members are aware, the Parish Council has agreed to have a representative on outside local organisations, where the aims of these are aligned with the strategic objectives of the Parish Council in the exercise of its functions.

The below is the grid showing who the (now) former Parish Council representatives on outside local organisations are.

Members are reminded that, as per the terms of reference of the CDALC Larger Councils Forum, the City of Durham Parish Council may have up to a maximum of three representatives, which may include either three Parish Councillors or two Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

Members are reminded that, as per the terms of reference of the ASB sub-group task force, this group is an officer only group and therefore the representative of the Parish Council on this group must be the Clerk.

Members are also reminded that there is a need for all Parish Council representatives to provide a report to Full Council on the work of these organisations/ bodies.

There is a need for the Parish Council to review its membership of these organisations.

The Parish Council has also received a request from the AAP that a Member of the Parish Council joins the its Board.

Local organisation/ body	City of Durham Parish Council representative
Community Engagement Task Force	John Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Economic	Esther Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group – Culture	Carole Reeves (Esther Ashby agreed as a substitute representative).
Community Engagement Task Force sub group – Citizenship	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Lived Environment	John Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Durham for All	Richard Ormerod
Durham University Covid-19 community engagement group	Esther Ashby, Liz Brown and Roger Cornwell
PBSA Liaison Group	Esther Ashby
Durham Access Group	Liz Brown
CDALC Larger Councils Forum	Esther Ashby, Adam Shanley and Richard Ormerod
ASB sub-group task force	Adam Shanley

**DECISIONS
REQUIRED**

- 1) For Members to agree which of these local organisations they wish for the Parish Council to remain represented on.
- 2) With 1) being agreed, for Members to agree who the Parish Council representatives should be on these organisations.

ITEM 10: TO DECIDE ON PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There is a need for the Parish Council to agree its Committee membership for this year of the Parish Council.

At present, the Parish Council has six Committees as well as the Full Council meetings. Each of these Committees carries out a specific function of the Parish Council, as set out in the Committee Terms of Reference. In some cases, a Committee has delegated authority to act on behalf of Full Council (for example the Planning Committee responds on behalf of Full Council to planning applications) but decisions on expenditure where appropriate and of a strategic nature are taken at Full Council.

The below grid provides an overview of the former membership of each of the Committees and also details the frequency of meetings for each Committee.

In all cases, quorum (the minimum number of Members in attendance necessary to conduct the business of the Committee) for the Parish Council's Committees is three or one third of the total Committee membership (whichever is the greater) but not less than three.

Typically, the Parish Council has always ensured that each Committee has a politically proportionate balance and it is suggested that this be continued as a formal arrangement.

<p>Planning Committee (7 Members) - Meets once every two weeks on a Friday at 2pm. Roger Cornwell (Chair) John Ashby (Vice-Chair) Victoria Ashfield Liz Brown Jonathan Elmer Carol Reeves Grenville Holland</p>	<p>Environment Committee (7 Members) – Meets once every four weeks, dates and times agreed at Committee level. Victoria Ashfield (Chair) Jonathan Elmer (Vice-Chair) Esther Ashby David Freeman Saul Cahill Mandy Ross Liz Brown</p>
<p>Personnel Committee (5 Members) – Meets as and when required, typically once per year. Elizabeth Scott (Chair) David Freeman (Vice-Chair) Roger Cornwell Carol Reeves Grenville Holland</p>	<p>Business Committee (5 Members) – Meets once every two months, dates and times agreed at Committee level. Elizabeth Scott (Chair) Richard Ormerod (Vice-Chair) Grenville Holland Esther Ashby Victoria Ashfield</p>
<p>Licensing Committee (6 Members) – Meets once every two weeks on a Friday at 2pm (the alternative Friday to the Planning Committee). Liz Brown (Chair) Esther Ashby (Vice-Chair) Roger Cornwell Alan Doig Carol Reeves David Freeman</p>	<p>Finance Committee (6 Members) – meets once per quarter, dates and times agreed at Committee level. Alan Doig (Chair) John Ashby (Vice-Chair) Victoria Ashfield Richard Ormerod Esther Ashby Elizabeth Scott</p>

**DECISIONS
REQUIRED**

- 1) For Members to formally agree the structure of each Committee for this year of the Parish Council.
- 2) For Members to agree the membership of each Committee for this year of the Parish Council.

ITEM 13: ADVICE ON THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS

Members will recall that the matter of the annual meeting of electors has been discussed at previous meetings of the Parish Council.

Given the current Covid-19 risk level, the Covid-19 regulations being at odds with other Local Government legislation and the lack of availability of any suitable venue in Durham to host an annual meeting of electors, it is clear that the holding of such a meeting at this time is entirely impractical.

The following advice has been issued from NALC on this matter:

It is becoming clear that many English local councils have decided not to convene their annual parish meeting at the current time, but to defer it until later in the year.

Whilst legislation states that an Annual Parish meeting should be held each year on or before 1 June, a local council is not obliged to hold one. The Chairman of the local council has a power to convene but not a duty.

Traditionally, it has been the local council who has made the arrangements for the annual parish meeting. it would be wise to place a notice on your noticeboards and website saying that you will convene the annual parish meeting later in the year if that is the step you are taking.

If a local government elector for the local council area complains about the failure to hold the meeting, then you may consider it appropriate to draw their attention to the power for any six of those electors to convene a Parish meeting. If that occurs then the local council would not be under a legal obligation to make the practical arrangements to enable the meeting to take place.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances in a particular local council's area, it is probable that the risks of deferring the annual parish meeting are low.

It is therefore proposed that the Parish Council seeks to delay the holding of its annual meeting of electors until a later date this year, as and when it is deemed possible to do so and an appropriate venue is available.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the proposal that the Parish Council delays the annual meeting of electors until a later date this year.
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