



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of Summons: 14th June 2023

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council: Councillors E Ashby, V Ashfield, L Brown, N Brown, A Doig, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, R Hanson, G Holland, C Lattin, G Nair, R Ormerod, E Scott, S Walker and H Weston.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Meeting of the Council** to be held in the **Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall. Durham. DH1 3NJ** on **Thursday 22nd June 2023 at 7:00pm** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

Members of the public and press are also cordially invited to attend. Members of the public may address Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings for up to three minutes, with the agreement of the Chair of the meeting, provided that the statement is related to an item on the agenda. The speaker should approach the Clerk before the meeting commences to request to speak during the meeting.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Civility and Respect and Human Rights plus Social, Economic and Environmental matters.

Yours faithfully,

A. Shanley

Mr Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council

AGENDA

- 1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH MAY 2023**
- 4. DISCUSSION WITH STEPHEN REED, DCC PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ON SECTION 106 FUNDING PROCESS**
- 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 6. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from meetings held on 12th and 26th May 2023**

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

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

- Report on objections to planning application and calls to Committee: DCC Central and East Planning Committee

- Environment Committee minutes from meetings held on 16th May 2023**

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

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

- Proposal to support the Green Move Out operation in the City this year
- Proposal to support the work of the Wear Rivers Trust

- Finance Committee minutes from meetings held on 12th January 2023**

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

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

- 7. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25th May 2023

8. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2022/23

- (i) to consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor 2022-23 (copy attached)
- (ii) to approve the annual governance statement 2022-23 (copy attached)
- (iii) to approve the draft annual accounts for 2022-23 (copy attached)
- (iv) to approve the register of assets 2022-23 (copy attached)
- (v) to approve the accounting statement and explanation of variances 2022-23 (copies attached)

9. 2023/24 ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDING TO LOCAL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

10. APPOINTMENT OF AN ARMED FORCES CHAMPION FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL

11. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- Report by Cllr A Doig on the most recent meeting of the Parish Council's Community and Residents Association Forum (CRAF).

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the annual meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 25th May 2023 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall. Durham. DH1 3NJ

Present: Councillors A Doig (in the Chair), L Brown, V Ashfield, E Ashby, C Lattin, E Scott, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, N Brown, G Holland, R Ormerod, S Walker and H Weston.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 4 members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor A Doig was elected as Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year; nominated by Councillor E Ashby and seconded by Councillor V Ashfield.

There were no other nominations for the role of Chair.

Councillor A Doig duly read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor S Walker was elected as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year; nominated by Councillor L Brown and seconded by Councillor E Scott.

There were no other nominations for the role of Vice-Chair.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors R Hanson and G Nair.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor E Scott declared an interest in item 9 on the Agenda and took no part in the vote on this item.

5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH APRIL 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr John Ashby advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items.

Mr Jonathan Lovell advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items, but specifically Item 9 on the Agenda.

Mrs Linda Lovell advised that she was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items, but specifically Item 9 on the Agenda.

Ms Janet George advised that she was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 9 on the Agenda.

7. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor G Holland presented the minutes from the Planning and Licensing Committee meetings held on 14th and 28th April 2023. There being no queries from Members, Councillor G Holland moved on to Committee reports.

Proposed research project for planning and licensing arrangements in the City centre.

Councillor G Holland advised that, at its most recent meeting, the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee had agreed to invite external bids to carry out a one-time piece of research into the current and permitted operating hours of all licenced premises within the City of Durham Parish Council boundary area.

Councillor G Holland highlighted that the Committee requires the production of an evidence document which illustrates any discrepancies between approved operating hours in planning permissions, approved opening hours in licensing permissions, opening hours advertised on premises' websites and opening hours in practice for approximately. 163 licensed premises in Durham City.

The Clerk advised that this research may also prove useful to the Parish Council in the run-up to the review of the County Council's Statement of Licensing Policy in 2024. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council has an extensive list of all the licenced premises within the city and their respective addresses, through its Ordnance Survey licence.

The Clerk advised that this research will involve the effective use of several online resources, e.g., research on internet into published opening hours of premises, research on Durham County Council planning portal into opening hours in planning permissions as well as potential visits to the Council's Licensing Department at Annand House (DH7 8RS) to go over any licensing documentation for premises.

The work may also include some visits to licensed premises whose opening hours are not available online.

The Clerk advised that an advert requesting bids was placed on the Parish Council's website last week. All bids were requested to include a fixed fee for producing this document as well as time expected to be spent on its production.

All bids were requested to be submitted by no later than 5pm on Wednesday 24th May 2023 via email.

All bids were requested to be supplemented by evidence that the individual has a research background, has experience of data management, is able to navigate their way around the Council's online planning portal and is proficient in the use of Microsoft office tools e.g. Word, Excel, etc.

Councillor G Holland advised that he hoped that this document may be produced by no later than mid-July 2023.

The Clerk confirmed that only one joint bid had been received for this piece of research as follows:

Time expected to be spent: 25 minutes/ application

Fixed fee: £1,500

Expected completion date: 30th June 2023

Professional background of researchers:

Researcher A has a track record in delivering accurate and well-presented research on time. For instance, she undertook careful research in 2019 into Durham City student HMO planning applications and appeals 2017-2019 and synthesized this data into two charts and produced a report for the City of Durham Parish Council. She is intimately familiar with Durham City and the Durham County Council planning portal.

Researcher B is a postgraduate student who brings a first-class degree, a systematic approach to data collection, a sharp eye for detail, and useful knowledge of licenced premises across the city to the research.

Members **agreed** to the production of the evidence document for licenced premises. (Votes were as follows: 12 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions).

Members also **agreed** to approve this research work being allocated to the two researchers as per the bid received. (Votes were as follows: 12 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions).

• **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 11th April 2023. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to create a community garden space at the top of Lawson Terrace / Laburnum Avenue.

Councillor S Walker took the opportunity to thank Members of the Environment Committee for their ongoing support for this project.

Councillor S Walker advised Members that the £6,000 allocated towards new EV-charging points in the City of Durham parish area is now not being progressed by

the Environment Committee and that the Committee has instead agreed that this funding should be allocated towards this project as part of its commitment to 'green up' the Viaduct Area.

The Clerk highlighted that greening up the Viaduct Area of the City is a key strategic aim of the Parish Council and Committee Members felt that this project conforms strongly with that aim.

Councillor S Walker advised that she and the Clerk had carried out a site visit of the area with contractors and the following quote has been received from DCC's groundworks team to clear and level the land:

Total cost for labour and materials: £4,957.22

The Clerk advised that initial estimates from private contractors have been significantly higher than that quoted by DCC.

The Clerk advised that the works are expected to take approximately. 3 full working days to complete and could only commence at the beginning of September 2023 in order to avoid the bird nesting season.

Councillor D Freeman asked that the Environment Committee considers a range of fruit trees as part of the new planting for the community garden space.

Councillor E Ashby asked that any signage associated with the project should conform with the signage for the Hallow Green project.

Members **agreed** to support this project as set out in the report provided. (Votes were as follows: 12 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions).

Update on the Service Level Agreement with Durham Police

The Clerk highlighted that the SLA with Durham Police had now been agreed by both parties and the new police officers had now commenced (as of 4th April 2023).

The Clerk also advised that he had been part of the interview panel for the new Safer Streets Coordinator role alongside colleagues at the Durham Agency Against Crime (DAAC).

The Clerk advised that the panel had successfully recruited a new Coordinator for this SLA. The Clerk advised that the new Coordinator – Ashleigh White – is due to commence her role on 15th June 2023 and that he expected the Parish Council to receive a regular (monthly) report about the impact of this SLA.

The Clerk advised that he would be meeting with Ashleigh shortly after her formal start date to discuss expectations going forward and ensure that Ashleigh has settled into the role and has everything, she needs to carry out the functions of this role.

The Clerk reminded Members that this role is being funded by the OPCC and that Ashleigh's employers were DAAC but that she would be expected to work closely with the Parish Council and the Durham City Inspector.

Members thanked the Clerk for his work on this matter.

• **Business Committee**

Councillor R Ormerod presented the minutes from the Business Committee meeting held on 21st March 2023. There were no queries from Members.

Councillor R Ormerod took the opportunity to thank Members of this Committee for their work and remarked that he felt that this Committee is the most important of all the Parish Council's Committee.

8. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 27th April 2023 as follows:

The Chair began by thanking everyone involved in the work for the Coronation at the beginning of this month. This involved us establishing a 'Golden Orb Working Group' of all the major City stakeholders; chaired by our Parish Clerk, organising events and acquiring external funding from bodies such as the National Lottery, Durham BID, DCC culture team and many more in order to deliver 7-days' worth of back-to-back events at very little cost to the taxpayer. The Chair remarked that these events were huge undertakings and simply would not be possible without the work of Councillor Esther Ashby, local partners and our Parish Clerk Adam.

The Chair also took the opportunity to thank those Members who attended and supported the annual meeting of the parish yesterday. The Chair remarked that this was a great opportunity to let our residents know about the work the Parish Council does every day on their behalf, to present the Good Citizen Awards and to hear an update from our Inspector Dave Clarke. The Chair advised that all of the issues raised by residents are being looked into and followed up.

The Chair advised that he was pleased to see that Durham County Council is set to adopt new rules around dog control. The Parish Council responded to the PSPO consultation earlier this year and supported this proposal. The Chair remarked that he was disappointed to see that the Council is not following our request and the advice of professional dog walkers' associations, the RSPCA and many others over the maximum number of dogs one handler can walk at any one time. The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council requested this be reduced to 4 dogs but the Council is sticking resolutely to 6.

The Chair advised that there will be a special meeting of our CRAF Forum later in June so that the Terms of Reference of this Forum may be agreed. Sadly, these could not be agreed at the last meeting of the Forum as the minutes demonstrate that there was some unhappiness over Councillors attendance at this Forum. The Chair advised that strong objections to this came solely from the Whinney Hill Community Group who have now resigned from the Forum.

The Chair also advised that he was aware, from a recent meeting of the Durham Traffic peninsula group, that the Council is looking to increase the congestion charge for vehicle entering the peninsula to £5. The current charge is a desperately low £2 and this has remained so for quite some time. In the interests of pedestrianizing our streets and discouraging vehicular movements in the area, the Chair advised that he very much welcomes this proposal and hopes that DCC agree to this. The Chair advised that he will be looking at this in more detail in the coming months.

The Chair welcomed that some landlords have paid towards the Parish Council's voluntary contribution request, with a deadline for all responses to this request of 16th June. The Chair advised that he understood that there is to be a meeting with the County Council and the organisers of Green Move Out to see where this funding can be best spent towards what is a huge undertaking. The Chair particularly thanked Councillors Ashfield and Lattin for their continued work on this.

The Chair also took the opportunity to thank local MP Mary Foy and Durham University for arranging a meeting of local landlords and agents earlier this month. The Chair advised that there was a great turnout and welcomed work moving in the right direction; nobody wants to see a repeat of the scenes we saw last year of students being pressured into signing up with any property and queueing overnight in the street for accommodation.

The Chair also thanked John Ashby for his continued work in trying to progress a landlord licensing/ accreditation scheme. The Chair advised that there is an excellent paper on tomorrow's Planning and Licensing Committee meeting where this issue is being progressed. Despite many obstacles thrown our way on this, the Chair advised that John has persisted on this issue which is high on the list of priorities for residents.

The Chair also welcomed the excellent Merryoaks Community Hall finally opening for business. The Chair remarked that the Hall is absolutely sensational and a huge credit to the work of many. The Chair advised that he understood that Councillor Walker and her husband are throwing themselves into running the Hall which is brilliant.

The Chair also proposed that the Parish Council progresses the idea of putting a lead Member of the project forward for a national honour.

The Chair also highlighted that the Clerk has now completed his CiLCA award as previously reported and proposed that the Council looks to get this extensive piece of work professionally bound and reproduced in hard copy by Ryman in Durham. It was agreed that 5 copies of this should be ordered from Ryman.

The Chair also highlighted that the Clerk has circulated information regarding the new information board for the beacon and a proposal from the Council that Jubilee Walk be re-named Beacon Hill. The Chair advised that the Clerk has asked for all Members' feedback on this by Wednesday next week please.

The Chair also advised that he would like to see a review of whether the current Parish Council office location is the most suitable for the Parish Council's needs and those of its employee(s).

The Chair also advised that he would like to re-visit the idea that a review be undertaken of the role of the Charter Trust.

9. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR A DOIG ON SECTION 106 FUNDING WITHIN THE PARISH AREA

Councillor A Doig advised that he was aware of some unhappiness relating to the delay in allocation of Section 106 funding within the parish area and highlighted that this has been raised at a number of previous meetings of the parish by local residents.

Councillor A Doig presented the following motion to the Council:

"This Council invites Durham County Council to urgently establish a special Working Group of interested stakeholders, including the City of Durham Parish Council, in order to explore projects for funding through the City's substantial Section 106 funds which have remained unspent for several years."

Councillor A Doig advised that the current list of Section 106 monies published by the Council currently has £318,789.42 marked as unallocated from various developments within the Elvet and Gilesgate division. Some of this dates back to June 2014 (e.g. development at Kepier Hospital).

Councillor A Doig advised that the Clerk has raised this several times with the Council since the Levelling Up bids failed but has not had a clear answer on what is happening with this.

Councillor A Doig highlighted that the latest list was circulated on 14th May 2023 and strangely didn't include the Section 106 funds attached to the development of William Robson House for instance e.g. the £22,134 agreed for open space enhancement has been indexed for the provision or upgrading of play/ recreational facilities.

Councillor A Doig also advised that the Parish Council had recently experienced the issue of funds for Biodiversity Net Gain allocation and Open Space enhancement (over £522k) attached to the development of the PBSA at Mount Oswald provisionally allocated to outside the parish area.

Councillor A Doig also highlighted that the Neville's Cross division also has circa. £150,000 available for sports fields which has yet to be allocated.

Councillor A Doig reminded Members that the Parish Council endorsed a list of proposals in September 2021 which we were aware had community support and these have not been able to be progressed due to applications being on hold for the Elvet and Gilesgate division – something which appears to be a special case for Durham.

Ms Janet George highlighted concerns from local residents groups that the Section 106 monies may be returned to the developer if unspent and asked the Councillors

to move speedily on projects which had community support as opposed to projects such as Lampounette at the Sands.

Councillor V Ashfield highlighted the extensive work she had undertaken with local residents' groups to allocate this funding towards community projects and felt that there were no direct answers coming from the County Council on this allocation. Councillor D Freeman advised that he was aware of the local concerns but highlighted that there is to be a further round of Levelling Up funding applications and it is envisaged that the Section 106 monies may be put towards these projects.

Councillor D Freeman highlighted that this funding could lead to a much greater source of funding towards projects such as Elvet Park.

Councillor L Brown highlighted her disappointment at how Section 106 funds from Elvet and Gilesgate were being allocated.

Councillor V Ashfield advised that no plans had ever been presented for Elvet Park and local residents in the Elvet area had already expressed their concerns about any element of this proposal including a skate park.

Councillor E Scott advised that DCC has one of the most open and transparent processes of any local authority in the allocation of Section 106 funds. Councillor E Scott advised that she felt that the Parish Council could benefit from another meeting with Stephen Reed (DCC) to explain how the process works.

Councillor E Ashby advised that she was aware of previous consultations on the Elvet Park proposals. Councillor E Ashby indicated that she wished to propose an amendment to the motion.

Councillor R Ormerod advised that there is no risk of any Section 106 funding being returned to developers and asked Councillor A Doig if he might consider withdrawing his motion. Councillor R Ormerod highlighted that the motion had not yet been seconded and it was therefore still the ability of the proposer to withdraw the motion.

Councillor A Doig advised that he would withdraw the motion on the basis that the Parish Council invites Stephen Reed to its next meeting in June, in order to discuss how funding is allocated.

The motion was therefore withdrawn and not put to a vote.

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

The Clerk reminded Members that there is a legal requirement for Parish Councils to review on an annual basis its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other important documents.

The Clerk advised that, as per the agreement at the April Full Council meeting, a Working Group, comprising Councillors A Doig, E Ashby and S Walker, had met to

review these documents and the amendments had been set out in reports to Councillors.

The Clerk also highlighted that the report also included a request to adopt both a Staff Appraisal Policy and a Community Engagement Policy.

The content and wording of each document was **agreed** as set out in the following link: <https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/important-documents-and-policies/> (Votes were as follows: 12 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions).

Members also **agreed** to adopt the Staff Appraisal Policy and the Community Engagement Policy. (Votes were as follows: 12 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 0 abstentions).

11. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE LEAD

The Chair reminded Members that, in February 2022, the Parish Council had agreed to appoint Councillor R Friederichsen as its first Climate Lead. This was again agreed at the Full Council meeting in May 2022 and a set of Terms of Reference for this position were also established.

The Chair reminded Members that this role and these Terms of Reference must be reviewed on an annual basis at the Council's annual meeting.

Members unanimously **agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Climate Lead role and also unanimously **agreed** to appoint Councillor R Friederichsen as its Climate Lead for the ensuing year of the Parish Council; as proposed by Councillor C Lattin and seconded by Councillor V Ashfield.

12. TO DECIDE ON APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Members **agreed** (Votes were as follows: 11 votes in favour, 1 vote against, 0 abstentions) to maintain a Parish Council representative on all of the local organisations listed in the report. In doing so, Members also agreed that the Parish Council representative for each of these organisations should be as follows:

Local organisation/ body	City of Durham Parish Council representative
Community Engagement Task Force	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Economic	Esther Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group – Citizenship	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Lived Environment	Carole Lattin
PBSA Liaison Group	Esther Ashby

Durham Access Group	Nicola Brown and Susan Walker
CDALC Larger Councils Forum	Esther Ashby, Adam Shanley and Richard Ormerod
City Safety Group	Adam Shanley
Durham BID board	Adam Shanley
Durham AAP Board	Susan Walker

13. TO DECIDE ON PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members unanimously **agreed** the membership of each Committee for this year of the Parish Council as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee (7 Members) Grenville Holland (Chair) Susan Walker (Vice-Chair) Richard Ormerod Carole Lattin Alan Doig Esther Ashby Nicola Brown	Environment Committee (6 Members) Carole Lattin (Chair) Victoria Ashfield (Vice-Chair) David Freeman Liz Brown Susan Walker Rupert Friederichsen
Personnel Committee (5 Members) Alan Doig (Chair) Elizabeth Scott (Vice-Chair) Govind Nair Victoria Ashfield Grenville Holland	Business Committee (6 Members) Richard Ormerod (Chair) David Freeman (Vice-Chair) Nicola Brown Grenville Holland Esther Ashby Victoria Ashfield
Finance Committee (6 Members) Alan Doig (Chair) David Freeman (Vice-Chair) Robert Hanson Victoria Ashfield Helen Weston Liz Brown	

14. REVIEW OF COUNTY DURHAM ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

The Clerk advised that the Local Government Boundary Commission is reviewing the electoral areas in County Durham to make sure councillors represent an equal number of people and the boundaries help with effective council work.

The Clerk advised that, as part of this review, the total number of councillors will be reduced from 126 to 98 and will consist of 48 divisions, including nine single councillor divisions, 28 two councillor divisions and 11 three councillor divisions.

The Boundary Commission is conducting this review of Durham County Council as some Councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. The Commission describes this as 'electoral inequality'. The aim of this review is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per Councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

The Clerk advised that this electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The divisions in County Durham are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the county.

The Clerk also highlighted that the Parish Council had agreed to simply note (without further commenting) on the parliamentary boundary proposals when they were consulted on last year.

It was unanimously **agreed** to note the proposals without making any further comments to the Boundary Commission.

15. CYCLE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

The following cycle of meetings was **agreed** by Members for forthcoming Full Council meetings:

2023

22nd June
27th July
28th September
26th October
23rd November

2024

25th January
22nd February
28th March
25th April

ITEM 6: OBJECTIONS TO PLANNING APPLICATION AND CALLS TO COMMITTEE: DCC CENTRAL AND EAST PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. It has been brought to the attention of the City of Durham Parish Council that there may have been some concern at DCC about (i) the apparent number of objections to planning applications and requests that the applications are brought before the Central and East Planning Committee by the City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee, and (ii) the Parish Council's objections to planning applications where the application – invariably involving HMOs – appears to fall within the formal requirements laid out in the County Plan (and especially in relation to Policy 16[3]).
2. The City of Durham Parish Council wishes to make a number of points that may explain its actions and why it considers that its approach is valid, intentional and likely to continue.
3. First, the City of Durham Parish Council receives a disproportionate number of planning applications for the size of the Parish area* and a disproportionate number of those relate to conversion of residential properties to student accommodation. As it is well-known, one of the most controversial issues facing the City of Durham has been that of the growth of student numbers in the private rented sector and persistence of a number of developers who, whether or not there is any evidence of 'need', push for conversion of more and more residential properties across the Parish area.
4. In particular a growing source of complaint and distress has been the impact on stable, long-established and mixed residential areas with a cohesive mix from families with young children and some students to the elderly and retired. These tend to be the type of "healthy community" which the NPPF and County Plan claim to want to promote. The concerns of permanent residents in such areas are entitled to be expressed through their democratically-elected institutions. The number referred to the Central and East Planning Committee is not a disproportionate percent of those considered but, after careful debate by the City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee, those where the Committee is giving voice to those valid concerns as a matter of public discourse which it wishes to have presented to the Central and East Planning Committee.

* 28% (158) of all the planning applications in the whole of the Central and East Planning area in 2022. Of these applications the Parish Council simply noted 80%. Just 17 were called to Committee; however 4 of these were withdrawn and 3 refused under officer delegated powers, so only 10 were destined to the County Council's Planning Committees, of which just 8 have reached a Committee at the time of writing (5 May 2023).

5. These valid concerns are of public interest to the electors of the parish area and are fourfold.

5.1 First, HMO conversion and expansion continues in the Parish area – and shows no evidence of diminishing. The expansion now involves residential areas which have not thought that their road or street would be affected. Thus, a number of referred cases are those where the City of Durham Parish Council wishes to reflect the strength of permanent residents' (and voters') concerns and consider they should be brought to the attention of the Central and East Planning Committee. As democratically elected representatives of their wards, the membership of the Parish Council considers that such concerns should be aired and in terms of ongoing and emerging issues of which the Committee and planning officers may be unaware.

5.2 Second, the Policies in the County Plan are now a number of years old into their operation and valuable experience is being gained as to how these Policies **work** in practice. Indeed, the County Council has been consulting on a Supplementary Planning Document specifically concerned with how to interpret and apply Policy 16. Like many such policies their precise functionality cannot be predicted with absolute certainty, particularly in terms of the dynamics of student accommodation within the Parish area and the consequences of the over-expansion of student numbers in recent years due to the 'A' Level fiasco.

The City of Durham Parish Council is aware that some of the concerns on the part of DCC relate to those referred applications that come within the remit of the Policies that were fashioned in 2019, but the City of Durham Parish Council feels that the acknowledged letter of the Policies should not deter the City of Durham Parish Council's representations and objections which are based on the spirit or intention of the Policies and concerns about the way that developers are finding ways around them. DCC must give consideration to how to update the County Plan to reflect changing circumstances and concerns. This requirement is laid down in paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): "***Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area.***" In accordance with this requirement, the review of the County Durham Plan should be completed no later than October 2025. Given the length of time taken for preparing the County Durham Plan, the review should be launched immediately.

5.3 Third, the interpretation of certain Policies by DCC continues to frustrate both the City of Durham Parish Council and constituents. This particularly applies to the calculation of existing HMOs where DCC uses Council tax

exemptions lists. It is clearly demonstrable that a number of student landlords now pay the Council tax to avoid making a planning application or registration. This is particularly important when the data appears to be open to interpretation over the number of properties (where groundwork by a number of residents in relation to specific applications has suggested that the use of Council Tax records to estimate the level of HMOs in an area may significantly under-estimate their number). There is the further issue of the treatment of PBSAs that fall part within and part outwith the 100 metre radius. The Parish Council considers that every bedroom intended for a student and falling within the 100 metre radius of the subject property should be included in the percentage calculation. Any decision informed by such data should be transparent in terms of the sources used and the verification process. The basis of the calculations should be provided to all parties and the right to challenge the data should be made available.

5.4 Fourth, the piecemeal individual applications fail to take account of an overall view of the Parish area, in terms of County Durham Plan and NPPF intentions to place a primacy on creation of mixed and balanced communities, including affordable family homes. Allowing developers priority over conversion to HMO status of further available accommodation in the private sector denies families in Durham the opportunities to be part of mixed and balanced communities. Aligned to this concern is the potential degradation of the Conservation Area. Piecemeal applications must be seen within the context of their potential to incrementally and adversely affect the overall character, appearance and special significance of the Conservation Area through Permitted Development Rights, development pressures, and proliferation of student private rented accommodation. This is to the overall detriment of the Conservation Area.

6. Overall, the City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee feels justified to continue its approach to planning applications. It is up to DCC to decide if it wishes to ensure a coherent and balanced approach to the City of Durham as a place to live for permanent residents and a place that is one of the country's foremost Conservation Areas. The City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee also wishes to represent and reflect the views of residents who feel that their amenity is increasingly eroded and degraded – and their views ignored – when faced by a continuing exploitation by property developers. The City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee would invite DCC to immediately start to review and revise existing Policies to reflect changing circumstances and take a much more robust approach to the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area and the Parish area as a whole.

ITEM 6: PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE GREEN MOVE OUT OPERATION IN THE CITY THIS YEAR

Members are reminded that the Parish Council recently agreed to launch a voluntary contribution appeal to local landlords and letting agents in Durham City towards keeping the City clean and green.

Following the decision at Full Council in March 2023, an appeal letter was sent out in April to all landlords and letting agents who own property in the City. The appeal included a request that all contributions be received by no later than 16th June 2023.

The Parish Council requested a contribution of £52.00 per property from all owners/ agents – approximately the equivalent of the Band D tax charge within the City of Durham Parish area in financial year 2023/24.

At the time of this Agenda's publication, the Parish Council had received a total of £1,508 from local landlord and agents. This figure was received from 8 individual payments – including one from Loc8me on behalf of several landlords – and a further 3 pledges of financial support have been made.

A reminder email to all agents was sent out in early June and the Parish Council's request generated a significant media, social media and public reaction.

In order to deliver on the aims of this funding, representatives of the Parish Council's Environment Committee recently met with representatives of Durham University and Durham County Council, in order to decide on the most beneficial use of this additional funding.

During this meeting, it was highlighted that the background to this request centred around the experiences of Green Move Out day in 2022, which saw furniture and other items discarded in certain streets and a desire to combat this issue reoccurring. Albeit, it was recognised that 2022 was successful in ensuring that thousands of items were recycled/ donated to a local charity and that the team had been able to deliver this scheme in spite of the many challenges of Covid-19, increased student numbers, etc.

Green Move Out has been running in the city since 2005 and has grown significantly from its humble beginnings as a one-charity collection scheme within one college. Students living in University or private accommodation are encouraged to 'Leave Durham Tidy', by donating unwanted clothes, shoes, bedding, electrical items, pots and pans, crockery, books and non-perishable food. The scheme centres around distinctive purple bags, which are delivered to colleges, purpose-built student accommodation (PBSAs) and rented student properties in June, before students move out throughout June and July. Items collected are then reused, diverted or sold. Some are redistributed to incoming students in a re-sale event in the autumn, while some are used to help provide services delivered by charity partners or sold in local charity shops.

Typically, the scheme collects around 15-20 tonnes of material, and to date the total weight of material collected and diverted from general waste is approximately 200 tonnes.

An early proposal that the funding could go towards the hiring of skips in certain streets in hotspot areas was rejected by all those involved in the operation as this would go against the principle of Green Move Out and the desire to recycle goods. Other concerns centred around misuse of these skips as well as contamination issues.

Both Durham University representatives and the DCC Waste Management team advised that they felt there is a gap in the Green Move Out operation insofar as the two Sundays during move out are not currently covered from a waste collection point of view and therefore waste left on a Saturday will remain in place until Monday at the earliest.

Durham County Council has confirmed that they would be able to cover both Sundays at a cost of £2,000 in total for both days and Durham University very much welcomed this proposal at the meeting. This would ensure that any waste could be recycled and any furniture discarded may be re-used or donated to a local charity (e.g. British Heart Foundation).

The Parish Council's Environment Committee recently met in early June and agreed that all funding received from the voluntary contribution request should be allocated towards this operation.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the allocation of all funding received from the voluntary contribution appeal to local landlords and letting agents towards the Green Move Out operation, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 9: ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDING TO LOCAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN THE PARISH FOR 2023/24

Members are reminded that at the January meeting of the Full Parish Council 2023, Councillors formally agreed to allocate £15,000 of the budget for 2023/24 towards grants for local and voluntary organisations.

- The project to be funded meets the aims and objectives of the Parish Council.
- Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
- Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit the people living in the Parish or will benefit the environment of our Parish.
- Any assistance given will be subject to on-going monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the outcome of the grant.
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis.

In accordance with the Parish Council's current grant awards policy, the City of Durham Parish Council provides grant funding to support the following aims:

- To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
- To help the parishes' voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.
- To ensure the provision of services, needed by the residents, via the voluntary sector.
- To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all parishioners of City of Durham to the services it provides and funds.
- To improve or enhance the local environment.
- To achieve value for money.

The grant funding window opened on 1st April 2023 and this has been advertised on social media, the Parish Council's website, through the local press and through direct e-mails.

Organisations were asked to apply by 2nd June 2023 in order that the Finance Committee may consider this at its meeting in June and make a recommendation to Full Council in June. Once approved, all grant payments will be made at the end of June 2022. Members have been provided with the full details of all applications. For ease of reference, the applicant, the amount requested from each applicant and a summary of each project is provided overleaf.

At its most recent meeting, the Finance Committee note that there was an underspend of circa. £7,000 from the previous financial year and has agreed to reallocate £5,400 of this funding towards additional funding for grants this financial year.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to consider the merits of each of the grant applications and to agree to the allocation of funding as set out in the below table.
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Applicant	Project	Amount requested (£)	Amount agreed at Finance Committee (£)
Alington House	We run 3 sessions of fitness sessions for the over 50's which has proved to be beneficial both mentally and physically. This also offers the chance to combat loneliness and isolation. To continue this very important project we need funding to pay our qualified fitness tutor.	2,500	2,500
Climate Action Durham	We want to continue to meet monthly in the City of Durham to raise awareness of the urgent situation of the climate damage which has been and is being done by humanity on our environment and to explore the way by which we can individually and collectively contribute to limiting this damage.	1,500	500
Discovering Durham CIC	<p>Discovering Durham's "Show Us Your Shelf" campaign is an innovative initiative aimed at encouraging people to support local businesses and embrace locally sourced products. The campaign invites participants to dedicate a shelf in their kitchen specifically for locally sourced items and then share a picture of their shelf, known as a "shelfie," on social media platforms. The primary goal of the campaign is to inspire individuals to incorporate more locally produced goods into their daily lives and to raise awareness about the importance of supporting local businesses. By dedicating a shelf to these products, participants showcase their commitment to the local economy and sustainable consumption.</p> <p>The act of sharing a shelfie not only serves as a personal expression of support but also has a broader impact. It acts as a catalyst for encouraging others to follow suit and create their own dedicated shelves. Through this collective sharing of how participants utilize the locally sourced products, the campaign aims to foster a sense of community and inspire a ripple effect of support for local businesses.</p> <p>By leveraging the power of social media and the visual appeal of shelfies, Discovering Durham hopes to create a widespread movement that highlights the benefits of buying locally sourced products. Ultimately, the "Show Us Your Shelf" campaign aims to strengthen the local economy, promote sustainable practices, and foster a sense of pride and connection within the community.</p>	1,500	1,500

DMC 4 Durham CIC	<p>Covid-19 followed by the cost-of-living crisis has had a long and lasting impact on small local independent businesses and families in Durham City. Businesses are seeing a vast reduction in footfall and people 'spending local' as families are increasingly watching their finances. We could like to create some free-standing community art installations on Market Hall stall roofs in collaboration with local artists/sculptors and primary schools in the area which will hopefully encourage families to visit and see how much Durham City centre has to offer. In addition to this, we would like to apply for funding for a hand truck/ sack barrow in order to support the operations of the market and to make this easier for staff on market days.</p>	850	850
Durham Fringe	<p>All of our volunteers are local people who give up their time to support this community arts festival. In recognition of the hard work that is given freely and to give a sense of belonging to the group, Fringe gives each volunteer a T-shirt for when they are on duty but it is theirs to keep. At each of our venues we provide snacks and a non-alcoholic drink which is offered free of charge to volunteers. In addition, all volunteers are given free access to as many Fringe performances as they wish to see. Therefore, we are applying to the Parish Council for a contribution towards the costs of T-shirts and to cover the costs of refreshments and travel expenses when requested. Our aim is to enable local people to participate in a voluntary group and support residents who volunteer their free time</p>	1,000	1,000
Lowes Barn Community Project CIO	<p>Within the new Merryoaks Community Hall, we have the facilities for meetings, conferences and public lectures which require the use of modern audio-visual equipment. This is something we currently do not have and is a gap in the offering that we provide for the local community. We plan to buy two or three screens that will enable a presentation to be made and shared throughout the Hall making the experience more inclusive for all participants irrespective of their ability or location within the Hall. A grant from the Parish Council will enable us to offer a more complete package to groups meeting in the Hall to the benefit of the inhabitants of Durham City</p>	5,000	5,000

Merryoaks WI	<p>To purchase a receiver and possible second hand held microphone to compliment the equipment we already have to allow more flexibility and inclusion.</p> <p>To purchase a full Zoom license to allow us to continue when needed to have speakers from other parts of the country and to enable us to have hybrid meetings when required.</p>	300	300
St. Cuthberts Church	Installation of a Baby Memorial, Installation of new signage, Renewal of footpaths, Professional Fees (architect and archaeologist).	2,000	2,000
St. Cuthberts Hospice	<p>Many of our visitors still prefer to meet and visit guests outdoors to prevent the risk of infection. Our gardens continue to provide much needed sensory stimulation and therapeutic benefit to our patients and their families. It is important that we continue to maintain and rejuvenate the mature gardens we are most fortunate to offer.</p> <p>We are so grateful for the support of the City of Durham Parish Council and would use any subsequent funds to continue to improve accessibility around the Hospice grounds and enhance experience for all who visit our gardens through improvements and essential repairs. Your donation will be used to pay for new and replacement tools, equipment, plants and furniture.</p> <p>As a result of these funds and improvements, we will be able to remain a welcoming, peaceful and accessible environment for our patients, families and visitors, through innovation and repair. Over a 12-month period we expect that over 1,000 patients and their families will be able to enjoy the therapeutic value of nature within our grounds.</p>	4,250	1,750
St Margaret Centre	The replenishment of consumable materials used in the craft room, woodworking, shop supplies and horticultural sections of the Centre.	5,000	3,000
St Nicholas Church	To help fulfil our aims of serving the community and acting as an eco-church we need to reclaim the church's graveyard which has been neglected (and desecrated) over the last 10 years. We want to turn it into a heritage rest and recuperation area potentially with mini-allotments for older residents to use and designated picnic and meeting areas and areas for rest and contemplation.	2,000	2,000
	Total	£25,900	£20,400

ITEM 10: APPOINTMENT OF AN ARMED FORCES CHAMPION FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL

As Members are aware, the Parish Council has taken a lead at a local level on events such as Battle of Britain, D-Day commemorations, Remembrance Day and many more.

In order to promote the role of the Parish Council in its support for our Armed Forces personnel, it is proposed that the Council seeks to establish a new Armed Forces Champion role from within its membership.

The primary aim of the Armed Forces champion would be to maintain the Parish Council's commitment to support the Armed Forces and their families and veterans, and raise the profile of the support provided by the Council and the community as a whole.

To help define this role, the following Terms of Reference are proposed to Council for discussion:

Armed Forces Champion Terms of Reference

1. The Nomination

The Parish Council shall nominate one Member at its annual meeting in May to undertake various roles consequential on the Parish Council's activities to honour our Armed Forces and continued links with the DLI. The councillor will be termed 'City of Durham Parish Council Armed Forces Champion' and will act to strengthen the Council's work on events such as D-Day, the Battle of Britain, Armistice Day, Remembrance Day, etc.

2. The Nomination process

Any councillor may nominate themselves for the role. Any nomination should be submitted in writing to the Clerk 7 clear working days before the meeting. Any nomination should be seconded by another councillor whose name should be recorded on the written submission. The nomination will be subject to a majority vote of the Full Council. In the event of two or more nominations, there will an election whereby the successful nomination will have a majority of votes cast; in the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.

3. The Length of Nomination

The period of nomination shall be for one calendar year; it may be renewed annually.

4. The Roles

The Armed Forces Champion's roles are as follows:

- Principal objective - raise the profile and needs of the Armed Forces community, within the Council and the parish area.

- Foster and maintain good working relationships with the Armed Forces community.
- Represent the Parish Council at key events centred around honouring the Armed Forces community both past and present, e.g., Durham City Remembrance Day.
- To act as the cultural link between the Parish Council and the DLI, County Council, Armed Forces and other stakeholders on the redevelopment of the DLI museum.
- Understand the aims of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) and the needs of the Armed Forces Community in relation to Council policies and service delivery. Ensure awareness is cascaded to staff who have daily contact with the public through engagement.
- Actively communicate the AFC and the work in promoting it within the Council and the community, ensuring that Armed Forces Champion names and contact details are publicised and known both internally and externally through various communication channels.
- Act as the first point of contact for local Armed Forces Units and other key stakeholders, such as Service charities and other service providers.
- Ensure all areas of Council services recognise the needs of the Armed Forces community
- Understand Armed Forces activities and events within the parish area

5. Reporting

The Armed Forces Champion reports to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Full Council, as appropriate.

6. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The nomination should act at all times within the Parish Council's Standing Orders, with particular reference to SO18 (Financial Controls and Procurement), SO22 (Relations with Press/Media), SO24 (Communicating with District and County or Unitary Councillors), SO25 (Restrictions On Councillor Activities), FR 10 (Orders for work, goods and services), FR11 (Contracts), FR15 (Insurance) and FR17 (Risk management). The nomination should also act in accordance with City of Durham Parish Council policies on Communications, Environment and Sustainability, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Social Media.

**DECISIONS
REQUIRED**

1) For Members to agree the Terms of Reference for the Armed Forces Champion.

2) If 1) is agreed, for the Council to appoint an Armed Forces Champion from within its Membership for this year of the Parish Council.

ITEM 11: Report by Cllr A Doig on the most recent meeting of the Parish Council's Community and Residents Association Forum (CRAF).

Minutes of the Community Residents' Association Forum annual meeting held on Wednesday 26th April 2023

Present: Adam Shanley and Alan Doig (City of Durham Parish Council) Richard Hornby and Carole Lattin (Gilesgate Residents Association), Alan Hayton and Des Ward (Whinney Hill Community Group), Simon Priestley (Crossgate Community Partnership), David Rosser (Sheraton Park Residents Association), Mike Costello (Distressed Residents in the Viaduct Area), Kirk Leister (St. Nicholas Community Forum), Mr John Ashby, Mr John Lowe (Side Residents Association) and Walia Kani (Durham University Residents Forum).

Also present: Inspector Dave Clarke (Durham Police) and PC Michael Ashurst (Durham Police).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Roz Layton (Elvet Residents Association).

2. Election of Officers

Alan Doig was elected as Convener of the Forum, proposed by David Rosser and seconded by Simon Priestley.

Roz Layton was elected as Deputy Convener of the Forum, proposed by Alan Doig and seconded by Simon Priestley.

Adam Shanley was elected as Secretary of the Forum, proposed by Simon Priestley and seconded by Richard Hornby.

3. Approval of the draft minutes of the Forum meeting held on 25th January 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

In approving the minutes, Alan Hayton proposed that the Forum develops a mechanism by which the minutes can be approved before being presented at a Full Council meeting. The Secretary advised that he would seek to have these circulated for comments/ amendments prior to the next Full Council meeting where they would be presented.

Alan Hayton also advised that he felt that the views of the Forum did not appear to be given any due consideration when looking at the Full Council minutes and he felt that the views of the Forum on particular issues should be highlighted at meetings and minuted accordingly.

4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference for this Forum

The Convener reminded Members that there is a need for the Forum to review its Terms of Reference each year and this usually took place in April at the annual meeting of the Forum.

The Convener reminded Members that the existing Terms of Reference for the Forum had been pre-circulated in advance of the meeting. The Convener also advised that the changes made and circulated were amendments he had made to the Terms of Reference. The Convener reminded Members that this is the Forum whereby any comments of changes to the Terms of Reference may be made and agreed.

Alan Hayton and Des Ward advised that the amendments to the Terms of Reference had been circulated without any reference at all to who had made the changes. Alan Hayton also objected to Forum Members not having been asked in advance for their own amendments to the Terms of Reference.

Des Ward advised that he felt that Councillors should not be involved in this Forum and any Parish Councillors attending these meetings should be asked to leave. Des Ward advised that he felt that this went against the principle of the Forum and objected to Councillors attending the meetings. Des advised that he felt that Parish Councillors have their own political agendas which could get in the way of issues being progressed.

Des Ward and Alan Hayton asked for an audit of the Parish Clerk's emails in the run-up to the establishment of the Forum so that the original reasons for establishing the Forum could be considered.

Mike Costello advised that he felt that more was achieved for the community on DURF without Councillor attendance at those meetings.

Alan Doig advised that he would be content to leave the Forum and allow for this to become a meeting of all of the parish's Residents Associations only without anyone from the Parish Council involved. Des Ward objected to this statement by the Convener.

The Secretary highlighted that this Forum is an opportunity for Members to discuss the Terms of Reference for the Forum and to agree these in this Forum and proposed that a vote take place following the discussion to agree the newly drafted Terms of Reference. Alan Hayton and Des Ward advised that they were opposed to a vote on this in this meeting as Associations had not had the opportunity to discuss the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference.

Fiona Adamson advised that she felt having Councillors attending this meeting was important so that they could listen to the views of residents on particular issues. Fiona also advised that she would struggle to justify calling a meeting of her own Residents Association simply to look at the Terms of Reference of the Forum; a matter which some residents may consider to be quite trivial.

Simon Priestley and Dave Rosser also advised that they supported Councillors attending the Forum meetings.

Richard Hornby advised that he felt that this was an issue for the individual Residents Association to nominate their chosen representative. Richard advised that, if the chosen representative so happened to also be a Parish Councillor, then this was fine but the Councillor was attending the meeting as a resident representing their individual Association.

Carole Lattin highlighted that she had been nominated by Gilesgate Residents Association to represent them on this Forum and she therefore felt entirely justified to attend these meetings.

The Secretary highlighted that Carole is an extremely proactive Councillor along with 14 colleagues for the community and that he felt that having Carole and Alan attend the meetings had not hampered any projects in any way, indeed quite the contrary.

The Secretary also advised that a decision on whether to allow Parish Councillors to attend the Forum was fundamental to the ongoing running of the Forum. The Secretary also objected as an employee of the Council to the idea that he would be the link between residents' associations and the forum.

The Secretary advised that he is simply an administrator of the Parish Council not the spokesperson or decision-maker and that he felt that these meetings were becoming increasingly hostile; something which runs the risk of becoming a HR matter for the Parish Council as an employer if he is to be left alone to defend any decisions.

This statement was supported by Kirk Leister who said that he did not feel that Parish Councillors attending the meeting but with a different hat on caused any issues at all.

The Convener proposed that a decision on the Terms of Reference be deferred until a special meeting in June could take place where these could be properly considered. The Convener asked all attendees to take the Terms of Reference to their respective Associations and come forward with any proposed changes for the next meeting.

5. Update on the Service Level Agreement between Durham Police and the City of Durham Parish Council

The Convener welcomed Dave Clarke and PC Michael Ashurst to the meeting and thanked them for their work in the City.

Dave began by confirming that the two additional officers as part of the Operation Lentil project in the City began in early April and they were already a visible presence around the City and its surrounding residential areas.

Dave advised that he was aware that the additional officers had already dealt with a number of incidents since commencing and having the additional resource for the City meant that issues were being dealt with much quicker than they were prior to the Operation.

Dave took the opportunity to thank the Parish Council and local residents for their ongoing support with this Operation and time will tell what difference this makes for the City in addition to the work already being done by the Parish Council and others on the Safety Hub.

The Secretary highlighted the exceptional amount of work which Dave Clarke has put into this Operation and his ongoing work to make the City a safer and more pleasant place for residents.

All Forum Members thanked Dave Clarke and his team for their work and agreed that this additional visible presence was really having a positive impact on the City.

Forum Members highlighted that the big issue in the City at present is the issue of nuisance begging and expressed their disappointment that DCC had not pursued a PSPO against begging in the City centre. Dave Clarke advised that he and his team are currently looking to build up an evidence base to go back to DCC on this to try once more for a PSPO.

The Forum unanimously **agreed** to draft a letter of support for such a PSPO in the City and to send this in to DCC at the earliest opportunity.

In relation to Operation Lentil, Dave advised that he and the Secretary would soon be conducting interviews for a new Safer Streets Co-ordinator role; funded by the PCC's office as part of the SLA and he hoped to have someone in post full-time in the near future.

The Convener thanked Dave Clarke for such a positive update. Having received a round of applause from Forum Members, Dave Clarke and Michael Ashurst left the meeting.

6. Discussion on proposed report on a) additional HMO licensing and b) the impact of Durham University on the parish area

The Secretary reminded Members that, further to previous discussions and correspondence on the BRE report on Durham University, he and John Ashby were able to meet with BRE representatives on 1st March 2023.

The Secretary reminded Members that he had asked BRE to focus on providing the Forum with a separate cost and scoping document for two areas:

1. A report setting out a justification for the introduction of an additional HMO licensing scheme for Durham City; and
2. A report which focused on the information we have agreed and which is set out in the attached document kindly produced by Alan Hayton for us.

In the case of number 1, the Secretary advised that BRE have now advised that they no longer offer this service since their last report in 2012 for the County Council but offered an alternative service which focused more on housing stock modelling, etc. The Secretary advised that the Forum has concluded in writing that this would not be appropriate for our needs.

Since that meeting therefore, the Secretary advised that he has reached out to over 10 local authorities across the country who have successfully adopted an additional HMO licensing scheme and asked if they have used the services of an external consultant to produce the report justifying their own schemes. A number of whom recommended the same Housing Sector Market Research consultancy and the Secretary advised that he had reached out to this consultancy firm to enquire about the costs for a report but again this company does not offer this service.

The Secretary also highlighted that he has reached out to the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils, the County Durham Association of Local Councils, the Institute for Licensing and private contractors to locate someone to carry out a business case for this; all of which had been to no avail.

In relation to the larger report detailed above at point 2, the Secretary highlighted that BRE advised that such a report would carry a significant workload, hourly-rated consultancy fees, boots on the ground for surveys, etc. and the likely costs for this would be well into the £100ks - far beyond the means of the Parish Council. It is therefore regretful that the Forum will not be able to proceed with this proposal at this time.

John Ashby highlighted that a compulsory, self-financing private landlords' registration scheme is/was DURF's top priority in the Issues and Actions Register. This arose from a well-received presentation of the Sheffield 'SNUG' scheme at DURF's national conference in 2016. John advised that both the Parish Council and DURF have sought the introduction of such a scheme in Durham.

John highlighted that the purpose of the scheme would be: (i) give better protection for student, (ii) require external maintenance of the property, and (iii) require management of nuisance e.g. noise from early morning parties, wheelie bins and parking.

John advised that DCC officers committed in February 2022 to putting together a business case, including the role of the housing officer(s) involved in such inspections, and what funding would be required to recruit such officers. However, there has been no further progress as the County Council officers have subsequently felt unable to commit to working on a draft business case unless and until other agencies, notably the University, have committed to some funding for these additional officer resources.

John advised that he is aware that the local MP and Jeremy Cook (Durham University) are soon to meet with landlords and letting agents in the City and that Jeremy is presently pushing for the national Selective Licensing Scheme to be amended to recognise the special situation in University cities.

John recommended that the Forum should welcome such a proposal as well as the University pressing for a resumption of the County Council's work, currently

suspended, on the business case for a licensing scheme for Durham City like the Sheffield SNUG scheme, with estimates of staffing requirements and costs.

This was unanimously **agreed** by Forum Members.

There being no further business, the Convener thanked Forum Members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

Forum Convener