

# **CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 19:00 in the main hall of St Leonard's Catholic School, North End, Durham DH1 4NG.**

**Present:**

**Cllr E Scott** in the Chair

Councillors E Ashby, J Ashby, V Ashfield, J Atkinson, E Brown, S Cahill, R Cornwell, R Ormerod, C Reeves, M Ross, G Holland, D Freeman and A Doig

## **1. Presentation from Dave Wafer, Strategic traffic manager at Durham County Council on the new bus station proposals.**

The Chair welcomed Dave Wafer, Strategic traffic manager at Durham County Council to the meeting to discuss the bus station proposals for North Road. Mr Wafer began his remarks by giving a brief overview of the initial scheme. Mr Wafer advised that the County Council had originally intended to remove the roundabout on North Road and allow space for further development to take place and to put the new bus station further north up North Road. Mr Wafer advised that the initial plans for the new bus station were not very popular.

Mr Wafer explained that at this stage the County Council were seeking initial comments on what residents would like to see from the new bus station. However, Mr Wafer explained that the current idea is to re-build the bus station at its current location. Mr Wafer advised that the County were exploring the idea of replicating the height of the existing bus station, pushing this further back for pedestrian access and to get rid of the overhang. Mr Wafer advised that the County Council had considered installing retail units to the ground floor of the bus station and felt that just one unit, such as an off-license, would suffice in this location.

Mr Wafer also advised that the new bus station would include public toilets and would have additional security for the safety and comfort of patrons. Mr Wafer advised that he welcomed everyone's views on the architecture of the new building, however the top priority for the Council would all be about the service which is delivered. Mr Wafer felt that this sort of scheme is judged too heavily on appearance as opposed the service delivered. Mr Wafer also explained that the County Council would work together with disability partnerships to ensure access for all is top priority also.

Mr Wafer also advised that the building may also include a green wall to the exterior.

The Chair thanked Mr Wafer for his presentation and asked about the timescales of the project. Mr Wafer advised that the County Council were welcoming comments over the next few weeks with a view to submitting a planning application for the works, for the works to begin in May and for this to be completed within a 12-month period.

Cllr V Ashfield asked whether the County Council had already selected an architect to work on the scheme and if the architect had submitted suggestions. Mr Wafer advised that no architect had been selected to date and that the new architect would be given a brief to work from.



Cllr V Ashfield asked whether the County Council had considered opening this up to a competition for architects to submit their designs of a new bus station. Mr Wafer advised that this would take too long and also increase the costs of the project so this idea had been discounted.

Cllr J Elmer asked whether the Council and local residents would be able to see the design plans of the building in draft. Mr Wafer advised that they would be able to.

Cllr E Ashby asked whether there were opportunities for residents to suggest amendments to the draft plans. Cllr E Ashby advised that the bus station was used by residents in villages outside the area and this was as much their bus station as it is for those of the City and everyone ought to be given the chance to comment on the plans. Mr Wafer advised that the plans would be subject to the usual planning application procedures where residents of Durham would be able to give their views on this.

Cllr R Ormerod asked about the issue of the toilets. He advised that he had been to other public toilets in different areas of the North East and found that those toilets where you are charged to enter are very often in the best condition. Cllr R Ormerod felt that this ought to be the same for the new bus station. Mr Wafer advised that this is one line of thought the County Council were taking.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she felt the idea of a green wall to the exterior of the building was a great idea and would be a welcome addition to North Road.

Cllr V Ashfield also advised that she felt that more female toilets were needed than male toilets given that very often women were having to queue to gain access to the toilet. Cllr V Ashfield also advised that she felt that the bus station needed a family waiting area so that families and young children weren't experiencing any anti-social behaviour which may occur in the bus station.

Cllr D Freeman advised that he felt that the building ought to be carbon neutral and that solar panels ought to be included in the roof for energy efficiency. Cllr D Freeman advised that the roof should also be visually acceptable.

Poppy (member of the public) advised that she had seen some public toilets with UV lighting to avoid potential drug use taking place in public toilets.

Ann (member of the public) advised that she hoped that the re-building of the new bus station would not make life difficult for pedestrians in Durham who were already having to cope with a lot of other development in the City centre.

Ann also advised that she had been to some public toilets, such as in Sunderland, where there is no charge for usage and they were in a very good state.

Ann also advised that she hoped the design of the new building would be in harmony with the rest of North Road where there were some very nice old buildings such as the water house opposite the proposed location of the new bus station.

Cllr G Holland advised that he felt that the current station had no sense of management and that Durham County Council needed to have a bus centre manager to ensure the security and comfort of users of the new station.

The Chair thanked Mr Wafer for his time and coming to speak with the Parish Council. Mr Wafer left the meeting.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and approved by Council for Cllr M Ross

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr A Doig declared an interest in Items 14 and 17. Cllrs E Scott and L Brown declared an interest in item 14.

### **4. Public participation**

The Chair advised that she was aware of one member of the public coming along later to the meeting to raise an issue with the Parish Council and therefore this item was deferred until later on in the Agenda.

When this item was discussed, the Chair welcomed Kathryn Banks to the meeting who advised that she was horrified by the decision that the County Planning Committee had taken on the proposed new County headquarters. Ms Banks advised that she had written to UNESCO on this, given the impact the proposed new scheme would have on the World Heritage Site in Durham. Ms Banks also advised that she would be submitting a letter of complaint to the County Council and thereafter (if unsuccessful) to the Local Government Ombudsman about the process by which the decision on the new HQ was made.

Mr Peter Carey also asked for the Parish Council's support in relation to the new licensing application of Barrio Comida. Mr Carey advised that he had serious concerns about the impact the proposals would have on nearby residents. Cllr L Brown as Chair of Licensing advised that she would provide an update on this during the Committee updates.

### **5. Approval of the draft Minutes of the Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

### **6. Committee updates**

**Updates were provided from the Environment, Finance, Licensing and Planning Committees as follows:**

#### **Planning Committee**

Councillor R Cornwell provided an update on behalf of the Parish Council Planning Committee. Cllr R Cornwell provided a report on the DCC County headquarters move and advised that the Parish Council were currently awaiting a reply from the Secretary of State as to whether or not the application would be called in. Cllr R Cornwell advised that no decision could be taken as to the next steps until the Parish Council hears back from the Secretary of State on this.

Cllr E Scott thanked Cllr R Cornwell for such a comprehensive report and advised that she would look to call an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council to decide on next steps following notification either way from the Secretary of State.

A member of the public asked when the Parish Council were likely to hear back on this matter. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had expected a response by the 26<sup>th</sup> March however had received notification from the Secretary of State's adviser that the decision on this would be delayed.

#### **Environment Committee**



Cllr V Ashfield provided an update on behalf of the Environment Committee to the Full Council.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Committee were steadily working on their Clean and Green priorities with the team at Durham County Council and would very shortly be submitting proposals to the Full Parish Council on spending commitments.

Cllr V Ashfield also advised that the Committee were working on progressing the idea of contracting the services of an environmental enforcement officer to carry out enforcement on littering etc. in Durham City.

Cllr V Ashfield also advised the Committee had met with Andrew Jackson of Durham County Council and were recommending that the Parish Council partner with the Durham in Bloom scheme this year and purchase a bishop's mitre floral display for Durham City centre.

Councillors voted on the recommendation and unanimously **agreed** to the purchasing of the bishop's mitre.

### **Licensing Committee**

Councillor L Brown provided an update on behalf of the Licensing Committee to the Full Parish Council.

Cllr L Brown advised that the Committee had objected to the Former Walkabout application and also advised Mr Carey that the Committee had also submitted an objection to the Barrio Comida application and that she would be happy to provide Mr Carey with a copy of the Licensing Committee's objection.

Cllr L Brown also advised that the Licensing Committee had objected to the recent application from Outstanding Art Ltd.

Cllr E Ashby advised that the hearing in Spennymoor on the Former Walkabout application needed public backing.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she had spoken with students in the nearby vicinity of the Former Walkabout and that they were complaining about noise levels in the area.

### **7. Update from Chair.**

The Chair provided a verbal update to Full Council on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

The Chair advised that she had instructed the Clerk to organise a photographer to come and take photographs of Councillors to be included on the Parish Council website and to create a "who we are" notice for the noticeboards in the Parish.

Cllr J Ashby asked if Councillor contact details could be added to the website so local residents could get in touch. The Clerk advised that, at present, members of the public get in touch directly to the Clerk via the website and this is then passed to the relevant Councillor. The Clerk advised that the new .gov.uk e-mail addresses would soon be ready and would be put on the website for members of the public to be able to contact Councillors directly.

The Chair also requested that the Clerk organise a Councillors training session on Parish Council protocols through CDALC for all Parish Councillors. This was unanimously agreed by the full Council.

The Chair reminded Councillors that the grant funding window would be opening from 1<sup>st</sup> April as agreed at a previous meeting and that applications for funding were encouraged from organisations.

The Chair also confirmed that Durham County Council had confirmed receipt of the Parish Council representation on the Pre-submission draft of the County Durham Local Plan.

The Chair also advised that she had invited Arthur Lockyear to the June Full Council meeting to speak with the Council about the Remembrance Day parade and also invited other suggestions for guest speakers.

Cllr E Ashby asked if the local MP had been invited to a Full Parish Council meeting. The Chair advised that she has a meeting in her diary with the local MP and would invite her to a meeting then.

Cllr J Ashby asked about the office situation. The Chair advised that this was still being pursued with the County Council and that she hoped to have an update for Full Council very soon.

Cllr E Ashby asked whether the Parish Council logo agreed at the last Full Council meeting had any conditions attached to it. The Chair advised that the Clerk was looking into this further.

#### **8. HMO occupancy within the Parish**

Cllr A Doig provided a verbal report to Full Council on the issue of HMOs within the City of Durham Parish. Cllr Doig felt that the Parish Council should look into gathering its own data on HMOs in the Parish by potentially employing someone for a period of between 6-12 months to carry out a professional review of the situation. The intention being to influence some of the key decision-making being taken by the County Council.

Cllr A Doig advised that he had intended to pursue this with a PHD student he was aware of but to date had not moved this forward due to the student's availability.

Cllr J Ashby advised that the method of using the council tax register to identify HMOs was defective.

Cllr G Holland advised that he felt there is a problem of landlords paying Council tax but not declaring the property as a HMO.

Cllr L Brown felt that every student HMO ought to be registered with the local authority.

Cllr J Elmer advised that he felt that the Parish Council ought to put pressure on the County Council to amend their methodology of recording the HMO data, as the current system was defective.

#### **9. Notice board in Market Place**

Cllr A Doig provided a verbal report to the Full Council on the issue of a notice board in Market Place or in the Town Hall ground floor.

Cllr A Doig advised that the intention was to provide residents and visitors of the City with more information about what was happening in the Parish.

It was **agreed** that both the Clerk and Cllr A Doig ought to investigate this further and report back to Full Council.

#### **10. Motion to Durham County Council on proposed new bus station.**



Councillors considered the proposed response put together by Cllr V Ashfield and Cllr E Ashby in relation to Durham County Council's invitation for comments on the new bus station.

Cllr G Holland advised that he felt that the motion was long and ought to read "the City of Durham Parish Council welcomes Durham County Council's consultation for seeking ideas for the new bus station. It asks the Clerk to write to the County Council submitting proposals based on, but not limited to, the views expressed below concerning the future structure and security of this new station and its impact on North Road". The Clerk explained that this was not an amended motion but rather a confirmation of the decision required as set out in the report. The Clerk advised that this was a proposed response to DCC on the bus station and the decision required was to agree to this. The Council unanimously agreed the response subject to the addition that the new building have some environmental design accreditation attached to it.

#### **11. Motion to congratulate Durham Women FC**

Cllr R Ormerod advised that he felt that the Council ought to congratulate the Durham Women FC team on reaching the quarter finals of the Women's FA cup.

It was unanimously **agreed** to congratulate the team on their success and for promoting football in Durham.

It was **agreed** to defer the decision to hold a civic reception for the team.

#### **12. City of Durham Parish Council Strategy 2019/20**

The Chair advised that she had requested the Clerk to formulate the strategy document following the October 2018 Council strategy session, where all Councillors were invited to give their views on a strategy for the Parish Council.

Cllr S Cahill advised that he felt that the document ought to be accompanied by KPIs. The Chair advised that she felt that it may be too early to do this.

Cllr A Doig proposed that the strategy document be accepted as a draft for the purposes of the grant awards, where applicants are asked to align their application with the Council's key objectives and also for the purposes of the Annual Parish meeting in May, where members of the public could give their views on this.

Cllr G Holland advised that he would like to thank the Clerk for an excellent piece of work.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she felt that this document ought to have been dealt with through a working party, however she was happy to accept Cllr A Doig's proposal of this being adopted as a draft.

It was **agreed** to adopt the City of Durham Parish Council Strategy 2019/20 as a draft. One Councillor abstained from the vote.

#### **13. DCC Consultation on polling districts, places and stations.**

Councillors considered their response to the consultation on polling districts, places and stations. Cllr R Cornwell highlighted that the area covering Mount Oswald, the Farewell Hall and the Roundhaven developments would give something in the region of 700 voters and therefore provision ought to be considered for these areas.

Cllr R Cornwell also felt that the polling station at St Mary's College ought to be reinstated (previously a polling station).

Cllr R Cornwell also highlighted that there were no polling stations in the City of Durham Parish area North of St Leonards School.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk and Cllr R Cornwell should work together in formulating the Parish Council's response to the consultation and circulate this to Members for their comments.

#### **14. Section 106 consultation – Sheraton Park**

The Council considered the application by the Sheraton Park residents association for works to the playing fields.

It was **agreed** to support the application for section 106 funding for the purposes as set out in the application. Two Councillors abstained from the vote.

#### **15. Climate emergency resolution**

Cllr J Elmer presented a proposed resolution to the Parish Council on the emergency of climate change and felt that the Parish Council ought to undertake every possible action to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030.

Cllr J Elmer expressed disappointment that the County Council had chosen to push the date for them to become Carbon-neutral until 2050.

It was unanimously **agreed** to adopt the climate emergency resolution.

#### **16. Date of next meeting**

The Chair advised that the date of the next meeting would be on 25 April, to be held in the Lantern Room of Durham Town Hall.

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

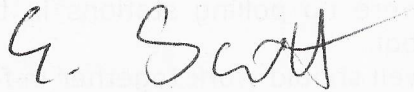
#### **17. City of Durham Parish Council Good Citizen Award.**

Members considered all nominations as submitted to the Clerk for consideration for the Good Citizen 2019 Award.

Members then held a secret ballot and voted for their preferred recipients of the Awards. The Clerk announced that the winners of the Award for 2019 were Jennifer Thompson, Colin Wilkes, Dennis Jones and Douglas Pocock.

There being on further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Signed,



Chair of City of Durham Parish Council.  
25 April 2019