

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Thursday 23rd May 2019 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room of Durham Town Hall, Market Place, Durham. DH1 3NJ.

Present:

Cllr E Scott in the Chair

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

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 6 members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Clerk welcomed all those present and asked Councillors if there were any nominations for the position of Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. Cllr R Ormerod proposed Cllr E Scott advising that he felt that Cllr E Scott had done a brilliant job over the last year as Chair, this nomination was seconded by Cllr G Holland and unanimously agreed by all Councillors. Cllr E Scott thanked Members and then read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair asked if there were any nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. Cllr L Brown nominated Cllr A Doig for the position of Vice-Chair, this was seconded by Cllr M Ross and unanimously agreed by all Councillors.

3. PRESENTATION BY DAVID MILLER AND ANGELA TRACEY ON "LOOKING FORWARD" DOCUMENT.

The Chair welcomed David Miller and Angela Tracey who had attended the meeting to present the Looking Forwards document. David began by setting out the purpose and scope of the document. David advised that the document was set up to be a companion document to the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan and was developed by the City of Durham Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. David advised that the document was built on the aspirations and views as expressed by local people for the City during the five years of preparation of the Plan. David advised that the document looks forward to greater involvement of the community in making Durham a more creative and sustainable City. Angela advised that the initiatives arising from that process have been included in the Looking Forward document, and cover matters that do not primarily relate to the statutory policies of the Plan or its implementation. David advised that many of the suggestions put forward by the public during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan have no direct bearing on statutory planning and are therefore outside the scope of the policies of the Plan; hence the need for the Looking Forward document.

David advised that the document covered initiatives under 6 these – a city with a sustainable future, a beautiful and historic city, a city with a diverse and resilient economy, a city with attractive and affordable places to live, a city with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure and finally a city with an enriched community life.

Angela highlighted the issue of a community hub; at present there are few places for the public to have meeting in Durham and she felt this was an important issue to take forward.

Cllr E Scott highlighted that there were cross-cutting themes between the Looking Forwards document and those of the Parish Council's own strategy.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she would be keen to invite David and Angela to a future Environment Committee meeting to further discuss the priorities within the document.

Cllr E Scott thanked David and Angela for their work on the working party and for their time in coming to speak with the Parish Council about the Looking Forwards document. David and Angela thanked the Parish Council for their time and left the meeting.

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

Apologies were received from Cllr C Reeves.

5. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS.

None received.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Mr John Lowe made the point that the Looking Forwards document is a public document and not just one for the Parish Council. Mr Lowe advised that he would be grateful of any further publicity the Parish Council may be able to provide for the document which showed a real community aspiration.

7. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH APRIL.

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th April 2019 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Proposer: Cllr J Ashby

Seconder: Cllr L Brown

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Planning Committee

Cllr R Cornwell provided an update on behalf of the Planning Committee, advising that recent HMO applications had attracted a lot of coverage in the local media. Cllr R Cornwell advised that it is the intention of the Parish Council to carry out an investigation into the levels of HMOs within the Parish.

Cllr R Cornwell also advised that the consultation on the neighbourhood Plan was in full flow and the next consultation drop-in event would be taking place at St. John's Church for anyone wishing to come along. Cllr R Cornwell advised that the comments on the Neighbourhood Plan were welcome.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the Parish Council's chosen ecologist had carried out his investigation of the proposed new HQ site and had alerted the Parish Council of evidence of the presence of otters by the riverbank at the proposed new HQ site and there was some concern about the wellbeing of the otters as a result of any works to be done on the HQ site.

The Clerk provided a further update on the legal challenge against Durham County Council's proposed new HQ that the County Council had questioned the Parish Council's

Aarhus Convention claim and, as an added protection, the solicitor would be requesting a payment protection order to limit liability for costs of the other side in the event of an unsuccessful challenge.

The Clerk also reported that he had submitted a statement of financial resources to the solicitors to highlight where and how the Parish Council's budget is allocated for the current financial year.

On the matter of responding to Durham County Council's consultation on the de-registration of Common Land at The Sands, Members agreed to delegate responsibility for this to the Parish Council Planning Committee. Cllr R Cornwell also advised that he felt that the Parish Council ought to become members of the Open Spaces Society (OSS) who would be consulted on in relation to the Common Land matter. It was unanimously agreed by members that the Parish Council should apply for membership of the OSS at a cost of £45.

Environment Committee

Cllr V Ashfield set out the current work programme for the Parish Council Environment Committee as follows:

- We have become a partner with Durham in Bloom and have contracted to finance a flower exhibit for 2019.
- We are planning to provide floral panels in Millennium place in 2020.
- We have contracted grass cutting, sustainable planting and the provision of bike racks/ flower tubs in Walkergate, below Milburngate Bridge opposite the back of the Indoor Market;
- We have negotiated a contract with DCC to tidy up land at Highgate and potentially turn the area into sensory garden/park. We will maintain the upkeep of this land in future years.
- We are liaising with the Students Union to progress a Good Neighbour project to support residents with a range of needs including snow clearance in the DCC designated "Priority 2 and 3" areas (which DCC does not cover) for the winter of 2019/20.
- We have established liaison with local secondary schools (primary schools to follow) to investigate the ways in which pupils can influence our proposed programme and support our environmental activities, (e.g. by litter picking, improving flower beds etc).
- We have planned an award for the best kept business frontage, including a competition for the best Christmas display by: independent businesses; chains stores; indoor market stalls, non-retail units.
- Replanting of gardens in front of The Sands flats in conjunction with Durham Sixth Form Centre students.
- We have agreed to contract an Environmental Enforcement Officer with statutory powers to issue fines to individuals and businesses which contravene environmental laws, e.g. litter, abandoned rubbish bins, dog fouling and dangerous parking;
- Subject to full PC agreement, we are advertising for an employee for 15 hours per month to improve the physical environment by litter picking on road sides and riverbanks; washing street signs and highways signs; possibly also street weed control;
- We will bring to full PC costs of carrying out gum removal and provide an anti-gum surface on the lower part of North Road and across Framwellgate Bridge.

Cllr V Ashfield also presented a recommendation to Full Council on behalf of the Environment Committee that the Parish Council undertake a business frontage award competition for Christmas 2019 with the Awards to be presented at a Christmas civic ceremony in early December. The cost for this would be no greater than £3,000 (£500 for each award criteria (4 in total - independent businesses; chains stores; indoor market stalls, non-retail units and £1,000 maximum for a civic ceremony). The recommendation was unanimously agreed by Councillors.

Cllr V Ashfield also presented a recommendation to Full Council on behalf of the Environment Committee that the Parish Council undertake a deep cleaning and treatment of the pavement on North Road (both sides of the pavement from Nevilles Street to the North Road end of Framwellgate Bridge), using the specialist cleaning company as recommended by Durham County Council.

The Clerk advised that the need to receive three quotations as per Standing Orders was not possible as the selected company offered an exclusive service not offered by other providers as far as treatment, etc is concerned.

Cllr G Holland expressed some concern over the Parish Council picking up the work which ought to be done by Durham County Council. Cllr V Ashfield advised that Durham County Council did not have any budget allocated towards this work on North Road and stressed the need for this to be done to improve the area. It was unanimously agreed by Councillors to have the work carried out as set out in the report using the chosen specialist company.

Licensing Committee

Cllr L Brown provided an update to the Full Council on behalf of the Licensing Committee in relation to recent Licensing applications.

Cllr L Brown advised that objections had been submitted by the parish Council Licensing Committee in relation to the Odeon application and the Barrio Comida application. Cllr L Brown advised that the Barrio application had gone to Committee and had been approved with various conditions attached. Cllr L Brown also reported that a hearing was also due in relation to the Odeon licensing application.

9. UPDATE FROM CHAIR.

Cllr E Scott provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25 April.

Cllr E Scott advised that the Clerk's probationary period comes to an end at the end of May and a meeting of the Personnel Committee would be taking place at the beginning of June as well as a 6-month review with the Clerk. Cllr E Scott advised that a report on this would come to the June Full Council meeting.

Cllr E Scott also advised that the Council would not meet for a Full Council meeting in August. Members agreed that this was a sensible idea.

Cllr E Scott reminded Councillors of the need to keep all Register of Interests forms up to date and to let the Clerk know of any changes to circumstances.

Cllr E Scott also reminded Councillors of the need to use the official Parish Council .gov.uk e-mail accounts and to speak with the Clerk in the event of any difficulties.

Cllr E Scott also reported that the Parish Council had been contacted by Nick Malyan of the Redhills Appeal, requesting that the Parish Council submit a letter of support in relation to the renovation of the Durham Miners Hall. Cllr E Scott advised that she was minded to support this and this was unanimously agreed by Members.

Cllr L Brown also asked if the Parish Council may wish to purchase a token at a cost of £100. Members unanimously agreed to do this and the Chair instructed the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements for this.

10. MOTION ON ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CDALC)

Cllr J Ashby proposed a motion to Full Council as follows:

"The City of Durham Parish Council agrees to contribute the sum of £1,500.00 to the County Durham Association of Local Councils in recognition of the exceptional support provided in establishing the new Parish Council in 2018/19."

This motion was seconded by Cllr R Cornwell. Cllr R Ormerod advised that he was not in favour of this motion. Cllr E Scott advised that she had carried out some investigation into this via Steve Ragg and advised that, though the Association is currently working on a deficit, it also had approximately £100,000 in reserves. Cllr J Ashby advised that on the basis of this new additional information he would withdraw the motion and Cllr R Cornwell withdrew his seconding of the motion. No objections were raised from Councillors to the withdrawal of the motion. It was therefore resolved that the motion be dropped.

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

The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Working Party agreed in April had taken place and a number of amends had been made to the Standing Orders of the Parish Council as well as the Terms of Reference for the Planning, Environment and Licensing Committees. These amends were presented to the Full Council and it was agreed unanimously to adopt these.

12. CREATION OF A BUSINESS REGENERATION COMMITTEE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr E Scott advised that The Parish Council had been contacted by a local market trader who has expressed concern regarding the number of events taking place over the coming year which are having a detrimental impact on traders' ability to sell their products during peak times and seasons.

Cllr E Scott advised that, as a Parish Council whose Parish Area includes the City centre of Durham and therefore a high level of businesses, the Parish Council ought to be in a position to represent the views of the business community as a whole as well as seeking to promote Durham as a place to do business. Cllr E Scott advised that the need to work with and represent the views of the business community does not sit within the remit of any of the Parish Council's existing Committees and Cllr E Scott therefore proposed that a new Business Committee of the Parish Council be set up to represent the views of local traders, to understand and seek to resolve any issues identified as adversely impacting on their businesses and also look to regenerate empty shopping units or areas within the City. Cllr V Ashfield advised that she felt that this was a very good idea. It was unanimously agreed that the Business Committee be set up. Cllrs E Scott, G Holland, R Ormerod, V Ashfield and E Ashby agreed to become Members of the new Committee.

Cllr E Ashby asked whether it would be appropriate to amend the proposed draft Terms of Reference. It was agreed that the terms of reference as presented in the report be accepted as draft for the time being and the Committee review the Terms of Reference at its first meeting and then report any amends to Full Council for formal approval.

13. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

It was agreed that the Parish Council representatives on local organisations for the ensuing year would be as follows:

Local organisation/ body	City of Durham Parish Council representative
Community Engagement task Force	Alan Doig and John Ashby
Community Engagement task Force sub group - Economic	Esther Ashby
Community Engagement task Force sub group - Culture	Carole Reeves
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	Judith Atkinson
Durham Access group	Liz Brown

Councillors also advised that there was a need to select the official representative for the Assembly Rooms Theatre working party and the CDLAC groups. The Clerk also reported that he had been contacted about having a rep for the Shakespeare Hall. Cllr E Scott asked that the reps for the Theatre, CDALC and a decision on whether to take part in the Shakespeare Hall management team be deferred to the next Full Council meeting.

14. PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was agreed that the Parish Council Committee membership for the ensuing year would be as follows:

Planning Committee (7 members)

Roger Cornwell
John Ashby
Victoria Ashfield
Liz Brown
Jonathan Elmer
Carol Reeves
Grenville Holland

Environment Committee (8 members)

Victoria Ashfield
Esther Ashby
Jonathan Elmer
David Freeman
Saul Cahill
Mandy Ross
Judith Atkinson
Liz Brown

Licensing Committee (6 members)

Liz Brown
Esther Ashby
Roger Cornwell
David Freeman
Carol Reeves
Alan Doig

Finance Committee (6 members)

Alan Doig
John Ashby
Victoria Ashfield
Richard Ormerod
Esther Ashby
Elizabeth Scott

Personnel Committee (5 members)

Elizabeth Scott
Roger Cornwell
Carol Reeves
David Freeman
Grenville Holland

15. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2018/19

The Clerk reported that the internal auditor had now completed his audit and had provided an internal audit report and had signed off the accounts for 2018/19.
Councillors took each recommendation as follows:
Councillors agreed to the action points arising from the report of the internal auditor
Councillors approved the Annual Governance Statement
Councillors approved the draft annual accounts for 2018-19
Councillors approved the Accounting Statement and explanation of variances

16. CYCLE OF MEETINGS

Councillors approved the dates of meetings for the ensuing year as per the list below:

2019

27 June
25 July
26 September
24 October
21 November
12 December

2020

23 January
27 February
26 March
23 April

Cllr R Cornwell made a request that next year the Annual Parish meeting and the Annual general Meeting of the Parish Council be on separate evenings.

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

Signed,



Chair of City of Durham Parish Council.
27 June 2019

