

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Thursday 22nd October 2020 at 18:00 via Zoom.

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

Apologies were received from Cllr G Holland

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr L Brown declared an interest in the item relating to the North End Allotments site.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 TH JUNE 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

● Planning Committee

Cllr R Cornwell presented the minutes from meetings held on 7 February, 21 February, 6 March, 17 April, 1 May, 15 May, 29 May, 12 June, 26 June, 10 July, 24 July, 7 August, 21 August, 4 September and 18 September to the Council. There being no questions from Members, Cllr R Cornwell moved on to Committee reports.

Update on the progress of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr R Cornwell reminded the Council that the Neighbourhood Plan had now undergone an independent examination by the Parish Council's selected Examiner Mr Tony Burton. A number of recommended modifications to the Plan had been put forward by the Examiner and Cllr R Cornwell advised that both the Parish Council and the County Council have accepted all modifications. In order to make the necessary changes to the Plan, Cllr R Cornwell advised that the County Council has agreed that representatives of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party may act as its agent and carry this out on their behalf. A clean version of the plan along with a version which includes tracked changes are to be submitted to the County Council for formal approval. Cllr R Cornwell advised that work is ongoing with this.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the changes made will need to be approved by the County Council prior to clean versions of the Plan being printed and presented to the Full Parish Council.

That being the case, Cllr R Cornwell advised that, with the Decision Notice now published by the County Council, the Plan can now carry significant weight in the determination of pending and new planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. To meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, a referendum will be held in the area formally designated as the Durham City Neighbourhood Area and this is expected to take place no earlier than May due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that, in the interests of ensuring that copies of the Referendum version of the Plan are available for inspection and for all Members of the Parish Council and Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, the Clerk has sought quotations from a local printing company to have 50 copies of the Plan produced. The total cost for this is £570 (ex VAT).

It was **agreed** that, once the County Council has confirmed that they are content with the modifications made to the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore a final version is prepared, the Parish Council should have 50 copies of the Neighbourhood Plan printed by the selected company for £570 (ex VAT).

Update on the progress of the County Durham Plan

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the Full County Council met yesterday (21st October) and had now decided to formally adopt the County Durham Plan.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that the Plan has been through a number of stages of consultation from the start of preparation in 2009 and the Parish Council has taken an active role in responding to consultations on the prepared Plan.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that, following consideration of the full responses to consultations, the Inspector published his final report on the local plan examination on 21 September 2020. The Inspector concluded that the County Durham Plan was sound subject to Main Modifications being made to the Plan prior to adoption. Some important Modifications for the City of Durham Parish included the deletion of proposals for northern and western relief roads around the City of Durham from policy 23 and changes to policy 3 relating to the strategic employment site at Aykley Heads in terms of the range of uses.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the Plan now replaces all saved policies from the City of Durham Local Plan. The Parish Council's Planning Committee is aware of this and is considering new planning applications accordingly. With the Plan already carrying significant weight, Cllr R Cornwell advised that the Parish Council's Planning Committee has considered all pending planning applications over the last few weeks to assess whether additional comments are needed on applications which policies in the Plan may influence. Supplementary representations to all pending applications which require reference to specific policies within the Plan have been submitted to the County Council.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the adoption of the plan is a most welcome outcome of a demanding and sometimes contentious process in which many groups and individuals, as well as County Council staff and Members, have invested much time and thought. Cllr R Cornwell advised that the City of Durham Parish Council

has been able to engage in the latter stages and has played a constructive role, including representations alongside other organisations that have resulted in many of the Main Modifications required by the Inspector to make the Plan Sound. Cllr R Cornwell advised that this is one of the most significant benefits to date of having a Parish Council for Durham City.

The Council thanked Cllr R Cornwell for his reports and also expressed thanks to the Councillors and the many organisations and members of the public that have played a major part in helping to achieve a Sound County Durham Plan.

● **Environment Committee**

Cllr V Ashfield presented the minutes from meetings held on 12 February, 3 March, 3 June, 1 July, 29 July and 26 August to the Council. There being no questions from Members, Cllr V Ashfield moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal from Allotments Association for Parish Council's allotment site on Larches Road

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that, in February 2019, the Parish Council agreed to take over ownership and management of the Allotments site on Larches Road.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Parish Council has recently agreed funding for a legal representative to complete the legal transfer documentation and to have the land formally registered with the Parish Council at a total cost of £600 (ex VAT).

Since February 2019, Cllr V Ashfield advised that she and the Clerk have undertaken two separate visits to the site and the site is considered very well maintained. The site is currently managed by an Allotment Association and, in doing so, is self-financing and the upkeep of the site is funded through each tenant's annual fee. Cllr V Ashfield also advised that the Association hosts an annual fundraiser to support the maintenance of the site.

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that, in setting its budget for the current financial year, the Parish Council had agreed a fund of £2,000 towards a project to support this site. Early discussions with the Association originally indicated that there would be a bid for a compost toilet for the site, however this is now not being pursued.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Association has now put together a funding request, as set out in the papers of the meeting, to the Parish Council for the use of this agreed funding and the Environment Committee recently considered and agreed this to go forward as recommended for approval to Full Council.

Members **agreed** to the funding request of £2,000 as set out in the report provided.

Proposal to launch a challenge with local schools to eradicate single-use plastics

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that the Parish Council has agreed to the establishment of a Youth Environment Working Group involving all of the local schools in the Parish area. The primary goal of which is to ensure that young people are represented on important environmental issues going on in Durham and to also give young people a voice in the work of the Parish Council.

As part of establishing this group, the Parish Council also agreed a budget of £5,000 for the Environment Committee for a priority involving young people, with the intention that this be used to support the work of this Youth Environment Working Group.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this Working Group has not been able to meet and feedback from local schools suggests that a meeting of this Working Group is unlikely to take place before the end of the current financial year.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that, in addition to the health and economic impact of the virus, a real concern arising from the Covid-19 pandemic – with the increased use of face masks and the significant increase in plastic containers for hand sanitisers – is that this has dramatically increased the use of single-use plastics. The Parish Council has already received complaints from members of the public regarding face masks being discarded in public places and this adding to an increased litter problem in the City.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that, at its last meeting, the Environment Committee agreed to propose to Full Council that a challenge be launched involving all of the local schools in the parish and for local school pupils to come up with proposals to tackle single-use plastics in the local area. Proposals could be put forward by local schools to the Parish Council with the total £5,000 being distributed equally between all schools.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that this use of Parish Council funds remains true to the original intention of involving young people in environmental issues whilst also educating young people about the need to recycle and the impact of waste on our environment. Cllr V Ashfield also reminded Members that tackling waste and involving young people in the work of the Parish Council are a major part of the Parish Council's agreed Strategy for 2020-21. The Parish Council has also signed up to the County Council's Pledge to eradicate single use plastics and such an undertaking would be consistent with this pledge.

Members **approved** the allocation of £5,000 for the challenge as set out in the report to Council.

Members **agreed** to delegating authority to the Parish Council's Environment Committee to manage this project and decide how funding is allocated.

Alternative proposals for Durham in Bloom fund

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that £10,000 towards Durham in Bloom was agreed by Full Council in January 2020 as part of the budget setting process.

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this event has not been able to take place and therefore the Environment Committee has been considering alternative options for the use of this funding.

The Committee has agreed that this should still go towards projects which help to green the parish and improve the local environment. Cllr V Ashfield reminded Member that £1,000 towards a bulb planting project was agreed earlier this year as part of this funding and, since then, over 6,500 bulbs have been planted across the Parish area by local schools, community groups, resident volunteers, churches and St Cuthbert's Hospice. Cllr V Ashfield advised that these bulbs will hopefully bloom in Spring 2021 and this project was very well received by the local community.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that approximately £9,000 of this funding has yet to be allocated. Originally, the Environment Committee investigated the possibility of green roofing a number of the local bus shelters across the Parish area but this has not been possible.

As an alternative to the latter proposal, Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Environment Committee has been working with both the County Council's Clean and Green team and the Wear Rivers Trust group on alternative proposals for this funding and the following proposals were put forward to Members:

Wear Rivers Trust project - Funding of education and signage to the general public on the Wear River Trust's WINNs project and detail of invasive species and the removal of invasive species in River Wear (together with possible tree planting on riverbanks in future, subject to Environment Agency approval) – cost £1,500.

Design out ASB on North Road roundabout - Planting and improvement of area by North Road roundabout to replace benches and "design out" ASB. This proposal comes from the Neighbourhood Warden team – cost £500.

Clean and Green Greening and Planting Up proposals –

Area adjoining North Road church – the removal of the concrete sewer pipes / tubes and providing planters filled with trees and sustainable planting, similar to those on display in Millennium Place, close to the Gala Theatre.

Southfield Way roundabout – the creation of new display in the central area, again using sustainable plants (expected to be made up from perennial herbaceous plants 21 and grasses, from the likes of Heucheras, Hardy Geraniums, Achillea, Stipa, Carex, etc. Flowering bulbs (Alliums, etc) could be another consideration).

A167 tree planting – preference expressed for planting near Mount Oswald's development as a means of replacing trees lost in recent months which act as an important barrier between housing and the A167.

Cost - £7,000.

Members **approved** the proposals and costs for the WINNS project and the Design out ASB on North Road roundabout. Members **agreed** to the project

Clean and Green Greening and Planting Up proposals in principle but wished to have more precise costs for each proposal as set out in this proposal. It was **agreed** that authority should be delegated to the Chair of the Environment Committee and the Chair of the Finance Committee to approve the final costs for this part of the project.

● **Licensing Committee**

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes from meeting held on 14 February, 13 March, 5 June, 3 July, 14 August and 28 August to the Council. There being no questions from Members, the Chair thanked Cllr L Brown for her report. Cllr L Brown advised that the Licensing Committee is currently developing its response to the County Council's consultation on its draft Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles Policy.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25 June 2020 as follows.

The Chair thanked the Clerk and all Members for their continued work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic on behalf of the Parish Council. The Chair advised that these were difficult and unprecedented times and the public has seen that the Parish Council is here to continue as normally as possible and to provide support.

The Chair advised that the Clerk continues to work from home and is going into the office on a fortnightly basis to check post, etc. The Chair advised that, during the pandemic, the County Council has not charged the Parish Council rent for the office.

The Chair thanked Cllr A Doig for his work as part of the University's Covid-19 community group meeting and reminded Members that Cllr A Doig had decided to step down from this group.

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council had agreed to establish a Covid-19 emergency response group and thanked Cllrs E Ashby, L Brown, R Cornwell and A Doig for agreeing to be part of this group.

The Chair took the opportunity to publicly congratulate Colin Wilkes on the award of his MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Colin has been awarded the MBE for his services to Business in North East England and the Full Council offered their congratulations. The Chair advised that the Clerk had already written to Colin to offer formal congratulations on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Chair reminded Members that there would be a public inquiry into the issue of the Common Land at the Sands deregistration application from the County Council. The Chair advised Members that the Parish Council continued to work with the Freeman and the Parish Council's chosen Barrister to ensure that there was a strong representation at the inquiry on this matter.

The Chair thanked Cllr R Cornwell for correcting the record publicly about the number of businesses which had closed in Durham City since the Covid-19 pandemic began. It appeared that the incorrect figure had been published by the Local Data Company. Recent stories in the press stated that 43 shops have closed down in Durham City. Whilst it is true that a number of shops have closed, the actual figure is 21.

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council had agreed to co-host a Virtual Christmas Market this year as an alternative to the Christmas Market in Durham City. This is due to be launched on 27th November.

7. MOTION BY CLLRS R ORMEROD AND L BROWN ON BUSKING IN DURHAM CITY

The following motion was agreed by Full Council on the issue of busking, following an amendment by Cllrs E Ashby and V Ashfield:

"This council calls on Durham County Council to develop a policy on busking in Durham City centre which prevents damage to business whilst allowing street music to be performed and enjoyed.

In formulating the policy Durham County Council is urged to take advice from the parish council at all stages.

Prior to undertaking to write to the Chief Executive of Durham County Council informing him of this resolution, it is agreed that this matter be considered by the Parish Council's Business Committee"

8. MOTION BY CLLRS R ORMEROD AND M ROSS ON DURHAM WOMEN'S FOOTBALL CLUB

The following motion was agreed by Full Council on the success of the Durham Women's Football Club:

"This council:

Notes the impressive start to the season made by Durham Women FC in the FA Women's Championship.

Notes with pleasure that home matches are now being played in our parish, at Maiden Castle.

Undertakes to support the club wholeheartedly"

9. PROPOSAL TO PROMOTE THE PARISH'S HERITAGE AND ITS PEOPLE

Cllr J Ashby reminded Members that promoting Durham City heritage is agreed as a key part of the Full Council's Strategy for 2020-21. Promoting Durham City's heritage and cultural assets is also a key component of the Parish Council's formally adopted "Looking Forwards" document. As part of this work, the Parish Council has undertaken to create a Durham City Heritage Trail App – a system which provides the location and history of points of historical and cultural interest in Durham City. This app is currently live on the app store and is

undergoing further works before being promoted to the public, with the first tranche of the app illustrating the works of Dr Fenwick Lawson.

Cllr J Ashby advised that, as a further tranche of this work, it is proposed that the Parish Council launches a scheme which aims to recognise important people who have lived in Durham City over the centuries. It appears that a number of plaques and dedications to people who have lived in the parish are in existence but that there is no one single point of information for their location and history – the Parish Council would be an appropriate body to collate and publish this information.

Cllr J Ashby advised that, one particular plaque in the parish, which was commissioned by the former City Council, is that which is dedicated to Ruth First on Providence Row. Cllr J Ashby advised that Ruth First was a South African anti-apartheid activist and scholar who lectured in development studies at Durham University between 1973 and 1978. Ruth was assassinated in Mozambique, where she was working in exile, by a parcel bomb built by South African police.

Cllr J Ashby advised that a member of the public has contacted the Parish Council expressing concern about the state of this plaque. The plaque is very heavily worn and is in need of replacing. The original designers and creators of the plaque have indicated that they would be able to recreate and reinstall this at a cost of £2,000. Cllr J Ashby advised that the County Council, as the inherent owner of the plaque, has indicated that they would support the Parish Council having the plaque recreated on a like-for-like basis, without the need for a planning application.

Furthermore, should the recreation of the plaque be approved by Full Council, Cllr J Ashby advised that the possibility of one of Ruth First's daughters being available to participate in an unveiling event when the artwork is reinstalled will be investigated.

On the matter of existing plaques, Cllr D Freeman advised that he felt that the Parish Council should also launch a competition for members of the public to nominate new plaques in the parish.

Cllr V Ashfield highlighted that, should this project be approved by Full Council, the Parish Council's Environment Committee should take this forward as a project.

Members agreed to the proposal of launching a scheme to collate and publish information on all plaques dedicated to people who have lived in the parish and also to investigate further launching a competition for new plaques dedicated to people.

Members **agreed** in principle to the proposal of funding the replacement plaque dedicated to Ruth First at a cost of £2,000 but first **agreed** that a Section 106 application should be made from the funds available in this Division for this project.

10. REPORT ON PLANS FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENT AND REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Clerk advised that representatives of the Parish Council, the Armed Forces, the Police, Durham Cathedral and the DLI met on 11th August to discuss the arrangements for this year's Remembrance Sunday event in Durham City in light of the Covid-19 situation. At the meeting, all parties unanimously agreed that the service and the parade simply cannot take place in the same way as usual.

The Clerk advised that the parade is cancelled completely and the Cathedral agreed that a much reduced service should be arranged, involving one representative from all of the organisations who usually lay wreaths on the Day (i.e. DCC, Police, DLI, Fire Brigade, Lord Lieutenant, Armed Forces, Member of Parliament, etc - 30 max.) attending the service only (no public attendance) and the service could be live streamed via Facebook to ensure that members of the public are able to participate in some way.

Since that meeting took place, the Clerk advised that the Government has announced further restrictions in response to a growing number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and we are awaiting further guidance from the Cathedral on revised plans for the Day. It may be the case that a representative from just the Armed Forces, the DLI and the Lord Lieutenant attend and lay wreaths on behalf of everyone. The Parish Council awaits further guidance on this and the Clerk shall keep all Members informed of arrangements.

The Clerk advised that the decision to cancel the parade is consistent with national guidelines and action taken across the country for other Remembrance Day events.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council agreed a budget of £6,000 towards events for this financial year and a significant element of this was earmarked towards the Remembrance Day event. Approximately £2,000 of this fund has been spent on the Parish Council's Battle of Britain Anniversary event and a further £1,675 has been agreed towards the cost of hosting a virtual Christmas Market.

The Clerk reminded Members that he had been working with local WI groups and volunteer residents on the production of a knitted poppy display over the Remembrance period. To date, over 6,000 knitted poppies have been produced and Durham County Council has offered to have these cascading from the Town Hall balcony in Durham Market Place. It is hoped that this may become a fundraising project in itself with the launch of a "Sponsor a Poppy" appeal, with all funds going to the Royal British Legion. The Clerk advised Members that approximately 12,000 of the 40,000 poppy sellers nationally are unable to sell the poppies this year due to them being in a vulnerable category for Covid-19. This will undoubtedly have a financial impact on the charity.

Earlier this month, Members considered a proposal to fund the purchase and installation of 10 Unknown Tommy statues across the Parish. These can be purchased from the Royal British Legion directly and goes towards providing

employment to ex-service personnel. The Clerk advised that this proposal did not receive full support from Members and the decision has been taken to cancel this proposal. Feedback has been received from some Members that they would like to see a project for Remembrance which also looked to the future. To that end, the Clerk advised that he had been in dialogue with the Finchale group to discuss possible proposals. The Finchale group is a local charity based in Belmont who do a lot of work with Veterans, Serving Soldiers, Families of Veterans and Serving Soldiers, Alternative Education Learners (excluded or a risk of being excluded from main stream school) 27 and NEETs (17 to 24 year olds who are not in education, training or employment). Finchale offers education, training and wellbeing activities which can be accredited / qualification based courses or non-accredited.

The Clerk advised that Finchale is currently working with two local Veterans who would like to become Mentors and to work alongside Alternative Education and NEETs Learners. To support these two Veterans, Finchale is looking for funding to support them with the City & Guilds Level 2 Construction Multi-Skills course, TAQA (Training, Assessment & Qualification course), Teaching Qualification and a Mentor/Coaching Certificate.

Members **agreed** to note the information regarding the Remembrance Day event and to await further details on the service from the Clerk.

Members **agreed** to the launch of the "Sponsor a Poppy" appeal to run alongside the knitted poppy display.

Members **agreed** to the proposal to fund training for local Veterans as set out in the report provided and agreed to provide the project with £984.50 funding.

11. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The appointment of representatives on local organisations was agreed 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 (Esther Ashby agreed as a substitute representative).
Community Engagement Task Force sub group – Citizenship	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Lived Environment	John Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Durham for All	Richard Ormerod
Durham University Covid-19 community engagement group	Esther Ashby, Liz Brown and Roger Cornwell
PBSA Liaison Group	Esther Ashby

Durham Access group	Liz Brown
CDALC Larger Councils Forum	Esther Ashby, Adam Shanley and Richard Ormerod
ASB sub-group task force	Adam Shanley

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.

12. GOOD CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD 2020

The following people were voted as this year's winners of the Good Citizen of the Year Award 2020:

Ms Janet George

Ms Sue Childs

Ms Kirsty Thomas

Mr Arthur Lockyear MBE

Dr Fenwick Lawson

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

Signed,



**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(10th December 2020)**