

# **CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 18:00 via Zoom.**

**Present:** Councillors E Scott (Chair), E Ashby, J Ashby, V Ashfield, L Brown, S Cahill, R Cornwell, A Doig, D Freeman and M Ross.

**Also present:** Parish Clerk Adam Shanley

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Elmer, G Holland and R Ormerod.

## **2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

## **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None received.

## **4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

## **5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **• Planning Committee**

Cllr R Cornwell presented the minutes of meetings of the planning committee held 22 January and 5 February 2021. There being no questions from Members, Cllr R Cornwell moved on to Committee reports.

Cllr R Cornwell provided an update on the progress of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr R Cornwell advised that a referendum date had now been set for the Neighbourhood Plan of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, i.e. at the same time as the local and police, crime and victims' commissioner elections.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the maps in the plan were now sorted and completed and that the few text amendments would be sent to the County Council by next Friday.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that the Parish Council had already agreed to have 50 copies of the final Plan printed.

Cllr R Cornwell provided an update on the application to de-register the former coach park at the Sands as common land.

Cllr R Cornwell reminded Members that a date had now been set for the public inquiry (27<sup>th</sup> April 2021) and that objectors needed to submit their case and evidence to the Inspectorate and to the County Council by 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Cllr R Cornwell advised that, in order to prepare for this deadline, a meeting is planned with objectors and the Parish Council's Barrister to go through this.

The Chair thanked Cllr R Cornwell for his updates.

- **Environment Committee**

Cllr V Ashfield presented the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 12 January 2021. There were no questions from Members on these minutes.

- **Business Committee**

Cllr E Scott presented the minutes of the business committee meeting held on 1 December 2020. There being no questions from Members, Cllr E Scott moved on to committee reports.

Cllr E Scott presented a proposal to establish a "Totally Locally Durham" website in order to support Independent Businesses in Durham. Cllr E Scott reminded Members that, last month, the Parish Council's Business Committee hosted a roundtable discussion with over 30 independent businesses in the City. Cllr E Scott advised that the aim of this meeting was to ascertain what Durham City needs as it comes out of the latest lockdown introduced by the Government to tackle the spread of Coronavirus.

Cllr E Scott advised that the meeting format was very positively received and the Parish Council's Business Committee has met following this meeting to discuss what actions may arise from the meeting.

Cllr E Scott advised that, along with the need for more events in the City, businesses had also highlighted the need for a Durham City website dedicated to supporting local independents in the City. Cllr E Scott advised that, in some cases, some of the traders may not have their own website and it is also felt that this will help direct any visitors to the City to independents that they may not already be aware of.

Cllr E Scott advised that the Manager of the Durham Markets Company attended the last meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee and proposed the revamping of the existing but currently out of date Totally Locally Durham website.

The Clerk advised that three quotations had been received from suppliers in order to carry out this work.

Members considered this proposal and it was **agreed** that the Parish Council should fund the rebuilding of the Totally Locally Durham website for independent businesses in Durham City.

Members also **agreed** Company A from the report to carry out this work, subject to the Parish Council receiving a presentation from this company on the work to the proposed new website.

Cllr E Scott reminded Members that 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 will mark International Women's Day and Cllr E Scott presented a proposal for a project for International Women's Day 2021.

Cllr E Scott advised that the Parish Council's Business Committee recently considered and approved a report at its last meeting for the Parish Council to create a video to promote all of the female business owners in Durham City.

Cllr E Scott advised that this video will hopefully include a short statement by her as Chair of the Parish Council, welcoming International Women's Day and highlighting why this is significant. Cllr E Scott also advised that it is also hoped that female business owners in the City will provide the Parish Council with a short video to say what business they own and what International Women's Day means to them – each video will be combined to the overall video.

Cllr E Scott advised that it is hoped that this will not only help to promote this important day but also help to promote the businesses themselves in the process.

The Clerk advised he would produce this video share this via social media. The Clerk advised that there will be no costs associated with the creation of the video, only his time to produce this.

Members **agreed** to support International Women's Day and also **agreed** to the creation of the promotional video as set out in the report provided.

Cllr E Scott also presented a proposal for an Easter 2021 event. Cllr E Scott advised that the most recent meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee involved a discussion with the Durham Markets Company Manager who had proposed that the Parish Council and DMC jointly host an event for Easter.

Cllr E Scott advised that the need for more events in the City to support businesses was recently highlighted as a main issue at the Parish Council's roundtable discussion with over 30 local independent businesses.

Cllr E Scott advised that the Durham Markets Company Manager has put together a proposal for the Parish Council to consider. The Clerk advised that, given the roadmap set out by the Government with the easing of lockdown measures, this event would be moved to a later date as and when the City reopens, as opposed to an Easter event in April.

The Clerk also advised that the Merryoaks WI had requested a project to create some knitted daffodils for Easter.

The Clerk advised that, in conjunction with this idea, the proposal of people sponsoring a daffodil in support of the Marie Curie charity has been put forward. The daffodil not only being an iconic image of Easter but also the official flower of the charity itself.

The Clerk advised that the cost of producing these would be approximately £170. Members **approved** the expenditure of £500 towards the trail event and also **approved** the expenditure of £170 towards the display of knitted daffodils.

- **Licensing Committee**

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes of the licensing committee meeting held on 4 December 2020. There were no questions from Members.

## **6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The Chair advised that she and the Clerk had had a productive meeting with Arthur Lockyear and Dave Cuthbertson, organisers of the Remembrance Sunday parade, who are contacting all of the usual participants to this event to ascertain what might be possible for this year's commemorations.

The Chair also advised that this meeting had also considered plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event in June 2022. The Chair advised that the Parish Council had written to the Lord Lieutenancy to ask what plans are currently in place and to offer the Parish Council's support for this event.

The Chair advised that the inaugural meeting of the Parish Council's Community Residents' Association Forum had taken place and a follow up meeting is planned for next week of this Forum. The Vice-Chair advised that the inaugural meeting had agreed a Terms of Reference and the next meeting is to look at issues of joint concern across the parish area.

The Chair reminded Members of the email sent by the Clerk on protocols during and outside of meetings, particularly after the Handforth Parish Council meeting went viral on online platforms.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's Personnel Committee would soon be meeting to discuss advertising the role of an assistant to the Clerk and a report would be coming to Full Council on this following this meeting.

The Chair advised that there had been some very positive feedback received from other areas on the Parish Council's newsletter and all of the work being carried out by the Parish Council. The Chair advised that it was hoped that the next newsletter would be in a hard copy format going through all of the doors in the parish.

## **7. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY - REVIEW OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The Clerk reminded Members that the February Full Council meeting had agreed that the existing priorities of the Council should be reviewed by Members. The Clerk advised that he had circulated the existing strategy to all Member and thanked all those who had provided feedback and proposed additions to the

strategy. The Clerk presented the new strategy with all amendments made. Members unanimously **approved** the new strategy.

## **8. UPDATE ON MAY ELECTIONS 2021**

The Clerk reminded Members that the 6<sup>th</sup> May elections have now been confirmed by the Government.

In preparation for these elections, the Clerk provided a briefing to all Members on the important dates and protocols leading up to and after the elections.

Then Clerk advised that the most important dates are:

- Publication of notice of election - Not later than 25 day before the day of election – probably 25 March
- Delivery of nomination papers, consent to nominations and home address forms – not later than 4pm on the 19 day before the day of election (8 April). The Clerk reminded Members that it is the responsibility of each individual candidate to submit these to electoral services and not the Clerk's responsibility.
- Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature – not later the 4pm on the 19th day before the day of election (8 April)
- Publication of statement of persons nominated – not later than 4pm on 18 day before the day of election (9 April)
- Publication of notice of poll – not later than the sixth day before the day of election (27 April)
- Polling between the hours of 7am and 10pm on the day of election (6 May)

The Clerk also advised that he would be quarantining all email accounts of those Members who are either retiring or unelected from 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

## **9. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

### **- Durham Access for All Group**

Cllr L Brown advised that a meeting of the Access Group had recently taken place and that this meeting had considered the recent disability audit of Durham City. Cllr L Brown advised that these audits were substantial and that both the Licensing Committee and the Environment Committee would be considering this at their next meetings with a proposal coming to Full Council in March.

### **- County Durham Association of Local Councils**

The Clerk and Cllr E Ashby presented the following report to Council from the recent CDALC meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021:

### **Report of meeting February 18th 2021**

Cllr Dave Fleming (Bishop Auckland) in the Chair.

Executive Officers: Audrey Christie and Steve Ragg.

Audrey and Steve outlined Operation Forth Bridge which may come into play following the Duke of Edinburgh's current stay in hospital. The Civil Contingencies Unit will issue guidance re commemorative books, floral displays etc. DCC may organise its own local events. Parish Councils may complement these. Kath Hierons, Spennymoor Clerk will circulate a note on procedures following a Royal death to Audrey and Steve.

Steve reported concerns about the unrealistic requirement on new clerks, particularly those without previous experience, to achieve CiLCA qualification within 1 year. It is a mammoth task taking 200-300 hours of coursework. In response to my query about possible lobbying for change it was agreed that CDALC would issue relevant guidance.

CDALC would issue guidance for the March meeting relating to election arrangements and matters such as General Powers of Competence for the next 4 years following May 10th.

Reporting on the CDALC Executive meeting Steve referred to the likelihood of a £4-£5k deficit at the year end.

The current representative had been unable to attend recent meetings and it was agreed to appoint Cllr Dave Fleming instead.

CDALC currently pays £400 for an advice service which includes back up insurance. This is largely funded by the training course fees earned by CDALC. Such a service is valuable as it is practical and provides ways forward with otherwise time consuming enquiries.

Audrey will send a reminder about the service as it can be speedier than that provided by NALC for larger councils. Cllr Blakemore recommended as an eye opener the training course he attended re the difference between VAT for councils and business.

The Local Councils Working Group is meeting later this month so nothing to report.

A poll was taken at the meeting of Parish and Town Council representatives on whether they wish for remote meetings to continue after the 6<sup>th</sup> May; at present the Coronavirus Bill 2020 only allows for this power until May 2021. 100% of those attending voted in favour of this though the concern was expressed about being able to engage with those members of the public who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the technology.

The issue of the annual meeting of the electors was also discussed in this context (usually needs to be held between March and June) however the Government last year negated the need for this to be held. The practicalities of checking the electoral register for such a format were also highlighted as problematic.

The meeting discussed the matter of the Handforth Parish Council video which had gone viral on platforms such as YouTube. CDALC is to investigate why a previously proposed new Code of Conduct for Councillors had not been adopted by 80% of Monitoring Officers across the Country (including in County Durham).

End of report

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council  
(25<sup>th</sup> March 2021)**