

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 28th October 2021 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall.

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

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Ms Elizabeth Williams and Mr Jonathan Lovell (members of the public).

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

None received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor E Scott declared an interest the item relating to the common land and item 10 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussions on this item.

Councillor L Brown declared an interest the item relating to the common land and item 10 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussions on this item.

Councillor D Freeman declared an interest the item relating to the common land and item 10 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussions on this item.

Councillor R Ormerod declared an interest the item relating to the common land and item 10 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussions on this item.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2021 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the following amendments:

Under item 5 of the minutes, the sentences "Cllr R Ormerod proposed that Cllr S Walker join the Committee and this was seconded by Cllr D Freeman" and "Cllr V Ashfield proposed that Cllr G Nair join the Committee and this was seconded by Cllr R Friederichsen" be amended to "Cllr R Ormerod proposed that Cllr S Walker fill the vacancy on the Committee and this was seconded by Cllr D Freeman" and "Cllr V Ashfield proposed that Cllr G Nair fill the vacancy on the Committee and this was seconded by Cllr R Friederichsen"

Under item 6 of the minutes, the sentence "The Chair asked Members, as a point of courtesy, if they could make the relevant Chairs of Committees aware that they wish to attend Committee meetings they do not sit on and also advise which items they'd like to discuss" be amended to "The Chair asked Members, in order to assist the efficient conduct of business if they could make the Clerk

aware that they propose to attend a meeting of a Committee they do not sit on and also advise, where relevant, any item(s) they may wish to contribute to”.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms Elizabeth Williams advised that she was attending the meeting with a general interest in items on the Agenda.

Mr Jonathan Lovell also advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in items on the Agenda.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning Committee

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17 and 28 September 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr L Brown moved on to Committee reports.

Update following the verdict of the Inspector into the de-registration of the former coach park at the Sands as common land.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Inspector’s verdict was published on 11th October 2021 and the County Council has been granted permission to de-register the former coach park as common land.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Chair of the Parish Council has issued a public statement expressing disappointment at the outcome of the inquiry and requesting a meeting with Durham County Council in order to discuss the future use of the land.

The Clerk advised that a meeting is scheduled to take place next week with the leadership team at Durham County Council including the Parish Council and representatives of the Freemen in order to discuss the future use of the land.

Members expressed a desire to see the coach park return to the City and for the area to be turned into a more useable community facility with planting and benches installed in the area. Members particularly expressed a desire to see that the land is protected against future development.

The Chair advised that a follow up report would be provided at November Full Council following the meeting with DCC.

• Environment Committee

Cllr C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 14 September 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr C Lattin asked Cllr R Friederichsen to present his report on the COP26 event.

Before Cllr R Friederichsen did so, the Chair reminded Members of his correspondence to Cllr Friederichsen earlier in the week where he had set out a number of concerns about the proposed COP26 event. In particular, the Chair

highlighted issues he had identified with the risk assessment and the proposed activities for the event. In doing so, the Chair remarked that the Parish Council's insurance provider has indicated that they would be unable to insure the Parish Council for this event.

Cllr R Friederichsen reminded Members that he had responded to the Chair's concerns in a letter to all Members and he hoped that this would address the concerns set out by the Chair and could therefore be supported by Full Council. Cllr R Friederichsen also advised Members that the proposal to Full Council on this event is now to provide £1,500 funding to Climate Action Durham.

Cllr V Ashfield highlighted that she, Cllr R Friederichsen and Climate Action Durham have worked tirelessly to organise the COP26 event in Durham and this included the involvement of local interested parties and schools.

Members expressed concern about providing funding to Climate Action Durham as an informal organisation with no bank account, constitution or officers. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would not be able to provide funding to an individual's bank account.

Members also expressed concern about the event currently not being insured. Cllr V Ashfield advised that she and the group were looking to take out a day's insurance for the event and she would be able to organise this.

Members expressed concerns about the event having a political aspect to it and the Parish Council not being to fund any part of this. Cllr E Ashby highlighted that the main organiser for Climate Action Durham is entirely apolitical and usually arranges the hustings – involving all political parties - during general elections.

No amendments were proposed and seconded for the proposal to provide funding to Climate Action Durham for the COP26 event, however the proposal was withdrawn from consideration, with all Members agreeing this.

- **Licensing Committee**

Cllr S Walker presented the minutes of the Licensing Committee meetings held on 20 September and 4 October 2021. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

- **Business Committee**

Cllr E Scott presented the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 22 June 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr E Scott moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to host a Christmas event to support local businesses

The Clerk advised Members that the Parish Council has committed a budget to hosting Christmas events in the City this year in an effort to support local traders and increase footfall to the City.

In order to support the delivery of these events, the Clerk advised that he and representatives of the Business Committee have been in ongoing discussions with business representatives, including the Durham Markets Company, Durham BID and Prince Bishops Place on events.

The Clerk set out a timetable of events already taking place in the City over Christmas and proposals for how the Parish Council may add to these. The events primarily included street entertainment and followed advice from business representatives on what typically works well for families.

The Clerk also reported that he and Cllr E Ashby are currently trying to establish a charity gift wrapping service over December.

Members **agreed** to working in partnership with key stakeholders on the hosting of Christmas events.

Members also **agreed** to provide funding for the Christmas events, as set out in the Clerk's report as follows:

- **£1,200** – arts and crafts, street entertainment (LED juggler and storytelling) delivered by DMC – 12th and 19th December
- **£2,000** – paw patrol on 12th December, in partnership with PBP.
- **£2,500** – Grinch/ Christmas-themed street entertainment character, liaising with Durham BID – 19th December
- **£200** – Facebook advertising

Members also **agreed** to delegate organisational responsibility for these events to the Parish Clerk and the Parish Council's Business Committee.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 27th September 2021.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council is very disappointed with the outcome of the public inquiry into the common land issue. The Chair advised that he and the Clerk, along with representatives of the Freeman, will be meeting the leadership at DCC in the coming days to talk through potential future uses and safeguards for this plot of land.

The Chair advised that he was delighted to see the Parish Council's anti-cigarette waste campaign being launched this week and hoped to see this having a meaningful impact on the city, not just in terms of keeping the City clean and green but also the positive impacts for people's health too through quitting smoking. The Chair thanked all those Councillors who supported the Clerk in the rollout of this project to City businesses yesterday.

The Chair advised that, like many others, he was shocked at the recent reports in the national news about the spiking taking place in licensed premises in Durham City. The Chair advised that Members will have seen that University students this week have boycotted nightclub establishments. The Chair advised that the Clerk

has circulated a briefing from Durham Police about this and the Licensing Committee is meeting next week to discuss its response to this issue.

The Chair advised that the recent Section 106 application from Artichoke for the "lampounette" art piece has been rejected by DCC. The Chair reminded Members that, having seen the full details of this application, the Parish Council withdrew its original support and objected to this.

On the subject of Lumiere, the Chair advised that the festival is set to commence on 18th November in the City, with tickets already on sale for the event. The event will take place until 21st November. The Chair advised that he hoped that the event will take place safely, with as little disruption to usual daily life as possible and families enjoy their time during the festival.

The Chair advised that, like many others, he was shocked at the tragic killing of the MP Sir David Amess earlier this month. Whilst the security arrangements for MPs are currently being reviewed, the Chair advised that local Councillors are just as accessible to the public if not more so than MPs, albeit Parish Councillors are less at risk than MPs. The Chair advised that he has asked the Clerk to circulate a briefing to all Members on ensuring that Councillors keep safe as they go about their duties as local representatives in the community.

The Chair advised that the Battle of Neville's Cross Anniversary events earlier this month – including a commemorative walk and a church service – went absolutely brilliantly. The Chair advised that those who attended the church service were overwhelmed at the incredible artwork by local school pupils and the commemorative walk led by David Butler was fantastic. The Chair particularly thanked the Parish Clerk for arranging this and to everyone who helped and supported this event – including local schools, Rev. Barnaby at St. John's church, David Butler and Councillors. The Chair advised that it was a real source of pride for the Parish Council that the work on the restoration of the Neville's Cross was completed to a phenomenal standard in time for this important anniversary in our parish.

The Chair advised that he was delighted to hear the news that Durham has been longlisted in its application for City of Culture 2025. The Chair advised that the Parish Council looks forward to DCC engaging with us on this and hopes that, no matter the outcome of this bid, 2025 can be a huge year of culture for Durham.

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council's Christmas civic event is set to take place in the Town Hall on Thursday 9th December. This is a great event, which gives the Parish Council the opportunity to thank all those groups, volunteers, partners and Councillors for their work and support of the City throughout the year.

The Chair reminded Members that Parish Council representatives on outside bodies must bring a written report from their respective organisations to each Full Parish Council meeting to update Members of the Parish Council on the work of each organisation.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council will be progressing with its strategy earlier than usual this year, in order to agree this ahead of the budget setting

process in January 2022 for the forthcoming financial year. The Chair advised that the Clerk will ensure that this item is on the Agenda of all of our Committees' meetings in November.

7. DCC CONSULTATION ON LOCAL HERITAGE LIST

The Clerk advised that Durham County Council is currently consulting on the production of a local heritage list.

The Clerk advised that the Local List is a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government. The aim is to connect with communities across the county and take nominations for non-designated heritage assets or NDHA's. The Clerk advised that these can be buildings, green spaces (such as parks), street furniture (such as benches, street signs, sculptures), archaeological sites, or maritime heritage. Importantly what makes them a non-designated heritage asset is that they have heritage value but are not already covered by existing protection such as a listed building or scheduled monument.

The Clerk advised that, due to the size of County Durham and the vast amount of potential for the list, DCC is to commence with eight pilot areas only, this is to help ensure that the processes are correct before making it available to the wider county. These initial pilot areas include:

- Bishop Auckland
- Durham City
- Sacriston
- Seaham
- Sedgefield
- Shotley Bridge
- Staindrop and Raby
- Stockton & Darlington Railway including Shildon

The Clerk reminded Members that he had circulated details of this consultation in advance of this meeting. So far, the Clerk advised that he had received one nomination for the former Durham City Baths.

Cllr H Weston asked if Kingsgate Bridge could be considered, however the Clerk advised that this was already listed and the consultation did not include already listed heritage assets.

Cllr E Ashby asked if the list of non-designated heritage assets – as identified during the County Council's 2016 Conservation Area Character Appraisal and listed in the Neighbourhood Plan could be submitted immediately.

It was **agreed** that the existing lists be circulated to all Members electronically with a deadline to feedback to the Clerk and nominations would be submitted once agreed.

8. CONSIDERATION OF PARISH COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS BEGGING IN THE CITY

The Clerk reminded Members that he had been contacted by DCC to ask if the Parish Council would consider supporting a campaign which would include a poster on the issue of addressing begging in the City centre and asking the public not to give money to those begging in the City.

The Clerk advised that he had initially circulated the details of this campaign via email and asked for a view from all Members, however it was clear that there are strong feelings on this highly complex issue.

It was **agreed** that this issue is such a complex one that this cannot be resolved by this poster alone. Members **agreed** not to support this campaign.

9. UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENT 2021

The Clerk provided a report to Councillors on the work being undertaken on preparations for the Remembrance Sunday event. The Clerk advised that preparations were going well and reminded Members that the Cathedral is limiting numbers of attendees at the Sunday service this year due to Covid-19. The Clerk reminded Members that there is a need for all attendees to have a Covid passport and proof of a recent negative test result.

10 Councillors confirmed their attendance at the Remembrance Day event.

10. DURHAM CITY CHARTER TRUST

The Chair set out a report on the issue of the Charter Trust and advised Members that he would be discussing this further with the current Mayor of Durham City. The Chair reminded Members that the current position of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on Charter Trusts is that they are outdated establishment and NALC is calling on the Government to abolish these entirely.

The Chair advised that no decision is required at today's meeting on this subject and he would be contacting DCC to discuss this further.

11. PROPOSAL TO DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON DURHAM TOWN HALL

Members were asked to consider a proposal to Durham County Council that the Town Hall be turned into a community hub for the City.

The Clerk set out the report to Full Council on this proposal. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Parish Council has agreed, through the '*Looking Forwards*' document, to seek to establish a community hub for the parish and it is proposed that the Town Hall be considered as a business case for such a use.

The Clerk advised that *Looking Forwards* set out that an overarching requirement in encouraging creativity is to develop a City Centre Hub which provides welcoming spaces for meetings, courses and events where people can think, plan and act with imagination. A City centre facility which advertises all that the City has to offer would be a focal point for the whole community, including permanent residents, students and visitors. This central facility is more fully described in Initiative 20 'The Development of a City Centre Hub'.

The Clerk advised that, since the formation of the Parish Council, a number of requests have been made to the Parish Council to assume responsibility for the Hall. Any such request would need to be considered and worked through with the County Council.

The Clerk advised that, at present, the Town Hall includes the council chamber which was the meeting place of the municipal borough of Durham and Framwellgate until 1974 and then of Durham District until it was dissolved in 2009; it remains the meeting place of the mayor and aldermen of Durham, who are now appointed by charter trustees.

The Clerk also advised that the Town Hall is listed as one of the cultural assets of the County and it is hoped that turning this into more of a community hub will enhance this status in the City.

The Clerk also advised that, at present, the current office arrangements for the Parish Council are temporary and the Parish Council has a rolling monthly lease with the County Council for the use of the office and part of the corridor outside the Clerk's office. The office has no windows or landline facility and is limited to library opening times. With the prospect of additional staff joining the Parish Council, it is not envisaged that this is a suitable long-term arrangement and it is therefore proposed that the Parish Council requests a more suitable office arrangement within the Town Hall.

In addition to which, Durham City currently has no Tourist Information facility nor (until recently) a Durham World Heritage Centre. All of which may be considered as part of a request to the County Council, subject to discussions with relevant third parties.

It was **agreed** that Cllr E Scott, in her role as DCC Cabinet Member, should pursue the proposal of the Parish Council having an office space within the Town Hall.

12. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND NOISE: CONSULTATION PAPER

The Chair provided a follow-up report to the Parish Council on the issue of the anti-social behaviour and noise issues in the parish. The Chair advised that no decision is required on this item at this particular meeting but that the Parish Council is continuing to engage with partner organisations on these issues. The Chair advised that the Parish Council has received an indication from Joy Allen, Police and Crime Commissioner, that she will be hosting a public ASB meeting in November on these issues.

Members expressed a desire that this public meeting be held in Durham City.

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(25th November 2021)**