

# City of Durham Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 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, G Holland, S Walker, G Nair, E Ashby, E Scott and H Weston.

**Also present:** Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Mr John Ashby, Mr Roger Cornwell, Mr Barry Gower, Mr John Lowe and Cllr Mark Wilkes (members of the public).

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs N Brown and R Hanson.

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

Cllrs L Brown, E Scott, D Freeman and R Ormerod declared an interest in all matters on the Agenda relating to Durham County Council.

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

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

As a point of information, Cllr E Ashby reminded Members that she had requested that the draft minutes of the latest Committee meetings be made available to Members. The Chair agreed this and advised that this would be commencing from the New Year.

## **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr John Ashby advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all items and most specifically item 12 of the Agenda.

Mr Roger Cornwell advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on items 9 and 12 of the Agenda.

Mr Barry Gower advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on items 9 and 14 of the Agenda.

Mr John Lowe advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all items and most specifically item 9 of the Agenda.

Cllr Mark Wilkes advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all items of the Agenda.

## **5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **Planning Committee**

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 15 and 29 October 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr L Brown moved on to Committee updates.

#### **Update following the joint meeting with Durham County Council on the use of the former coach park at the Sands as common land.**

The Clerk advised that he, the Chair and representatives of the Freeman had met with members of the senior leadership of Durham County Council in order to discuss the future use of the former coach park, following its de-registration.

The Clerk advised that representatives of DCC had confirmed that they would be proceeding with the de-registration of the land and that options for the new County HQ building were being explored, with a decision on this to be announced in late Spring of 2022.

The Clerk advised that DCC officers had been instructed to look at options to retain the existing belt of trees along the river side and DCC is currently reviewing the positioning of the water tank for the H building's sprinkler system, albeit this will still be sited within the former coach park itself.

The Clerk advised that DCC could give no assurances at this stage on the future use of the land, in view of ongoing discussions on the future use of the Council's HQ building. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council's position that the land be brought back into use as a coach park had been put to representatives of DCC at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that there would be a further meeting with DCC representatives later this year and the point of contact for all matters pertaining to the land going forward will be Susan Robinson, Head of Corporate Property and Land.

### **Environment Committee**

Cllr C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 12 October 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr C Lattin moved on to Committee updates.

#### **Section 106 project – sedum roofed bus shelters at Lower Claypath**

Cllr C Lattin advised that the Parish Council's Environment Committee has been working for some time now on a proposal to provide green-roofed bus shelters within the parish as part of its aims to clean and green the parish area.

Cllr C Lattin advised that, in order to maximise the benefit of this initiative, the two bus shelters at lower Claypath have been identified as target areas for this work. Both are within a very busy thoroughfare of the City, both shelters are very

well-used by residents, visitors and workers in the City and options to green the public realm are limited in this area of the City centre.

Cllr C Lattin highlighted that more and more communities and cities are following the trend to make their city greener by planting on the roofs of bus stops. Cllr C Lattin advised that green sedum roofs on bus shelters bring several advantages for the environment.

Cllr C Lattin advised that the Clerk has been working with the Strategic Public Transport team on this initiative for some months and that costs have been obtained from the County Council's supplier of shelters.

Cllr C Lattin advised that, in terms of ongoing maintenance, the Parish Council would need to discuss an ongoing maintenance program with the County Council; this may require funding from the Parish Council on an ongoing basis.

Members **agreed** to support the Section 106 application as set out in the report for the introduction of two sedum roof bus shelters at Lower Claypath.

Members **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Clerk to submit the funding bid for two sedum roof bus shelters, subject to agreements on installation arrangements and ongoing maintenance.

#### • **Licensing Committee**

Cllr S Walker presented the minutes from the Licensing Committee meetings held on 19 October and 2 November 2021. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

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

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28th October 2021 as follows:

The Chair advised that the Remembrance Sunday service and parade went extremely well. The Parish Council has received some very positive feedback from the Lord Lieutenant Sue Snowdon about the event. The Chair thanked the Cathedral, DCC, Arthur Lockyear, Dave Cuthbertson and our Clerk Adam for the enormous amount of work and planning which goes into this act of Remembrance.

The Chair advised that it was disappointing that once again the timing of the Lumiere Festival clashed with the Remembrance event and advised that he very much hoped that the County Council will be reviewing the timing of this event, such that the service and the parade aren't taking place during construction for the Festival.

The Chair advised that it is wonderful to see that events planning is well underway for the Christmas period with a month's worth of events planned, which the Parish Council is taking an active role in together with partners. The Christmas festival, street entertainment, arts and craft tutorials, a charity

Christmas gift wrap and even a bicycle-powered Christmas tree form part of the offer this year. The Chair advised that the Parish Council's focus is clearly on bringing families and day visitors into the City centre and advised that it is wonderful to hear the news that already 35 coaches of tourists are booked in for the Christmas festival at the beginning of December.

On the subject of Christmas, the Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council's Christmas civic event is set to take place on 9th December in the Town Hall starting from 6:30pm. The Chair advised that he was very much looking forward to taking the opportunity to thank everyone who has worked with us over the last year at this event.

The Chair advised that he and the Clerk have also been out delivering letters advertising the Parish Council Best Christmas Frontages Awards to businesses today. The Chair advised that it is very exciting and great to see so many businesses very positive about trading in the City at present.

The Chair advised that he had met with Cllr V Ashfield earlier today to discuss the issue of Section 106 funding. The Chair advised that it is clear that there is a substantial amount of funding available in the parish area and he is hoping a report can come to the Parish Council's January Full Council meeting on this matter.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council has received an invitation to a public meeting being hosted by the Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen on 6th December at 6pm at the Police Headquarters at Aykley Heads. The Chair advised that this meeting is to discuss the very serious issue of anti-social behaviour. The Chair advised that the Clerk has asked that the Parish Council's ASB consultation letter and responses form the basis of the discussion at this meeting. The format of these meetings is often very difficult and would be much more productive with this paper forming the basis of the discussion.

The Chair advised that there is to be no Full Council meeting in December and the Clerk will be on holiday from the w/c 13th December.

The Chair reminded Members that all Committees have been asked to consider their budgets for the forthcoming financial year and the Parish Council's Finance Committee will be meeting in early January to consider a draft budget for agreement at the January Full Council meeting.

The Chair advised that recruitment for an assistant is well underway and 7 applications are being considered by the Council's personnel committee the week after next.

## **7. DCC CONSULTATION ON LOCAL HERITAGE LIST**

The Clerk advised that, further to October's Full Parish Council meeting, where it was agreed that Members should consider nominations and submit these to the Parish Clerk, he and a number of Councillors have now met with DCC officers to discuss this consultation further.

The Clerk advised that it is clear from the presentation received from officers that the importance of this consultation has been underestimated. With the Government pushing for further relaxations to permitted development rights, the concern is that any assets which are not included as either designated or non-designated heritage assets may be subject to changes by developers under these rights, without the need to submit a planning application. As such, DCC is very keen to get as many assets listed as possible.

The Clerk reminded Members that the County Council's Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) identified a number of existing NDHAs and these can be found on page 141 of our Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk advised that DCC has assured the Parish Council that both these and existing listed buildings are already listed and therefore do not need to be included in submissions.

In addition, the Clerk reminded Members that DCC has shared with the Parish Council a list of over 470 assets which they are already proposing to be put forward for inclusion in the list.

The Clerk advised that the deadline for nominations has already been extended to the 17<sup>th</sup> December but Members were asked to submit their nominations to the Parish Clerk by 18<sup>th</sup> November, in order to allow for this to be considered at Full Council in November. Members were asked to do so on the understanding that they would complete their own application form for each asset and submit these to the Parish Clerk.

The following nominations have been received:

Painting above 13-15 Silver Street (nominated by Cllrs Carole Lattin and Esther Ashby)

WWII spigot mortar gun emplacement alongside the river banks at Maiden Castle, just before Shincliffe Bridge (nominated by Cllr Carole Lattin)

The Vennels (nominated by Cllr Carole Lattin)

Ancient horse trough at 3 Quarryheads Lane (nominated by Cllr Helen Weston)

Cross Street sign on no 57 Hawthorn Terrace (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Observatory Hill (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Neville House NX College (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

JB Principals House South Road (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

University Physics Centre (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Old Pot and Glass (Sainsburys) (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

DLI Museum (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

DLI Cottages Field House Lane (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Back Lane to the rear of Flass Street/Mowbray Street (Granite Cobbs) (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Lych Gate St Bedes Cemetery (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Sextons Cottage Potters Bank (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Salvation Army Houses New Street (nominated by Cllr Liz Brown)

Holliday Park in Langley Moor (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Railway Cottages 1-5 Quarryhouse Lane (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Fern Hill Newcastle Road (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Peskies Park Laburnum Ave (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Tias brass window frames 84 Claypath (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Leazes Place Street lamps (nominated by Cllr Esther Ashby)

Members **agreed** that the above proposed list be nominated for consideration as non-designated heritage assets and **agreed** to task each respective Councillor to draft an application for their own nominations on behalf of the Parish Council.

## **8. ALLOCATION OF REMAINING GRANT FUNDING FROM 2021/22**

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council has committed to providing assistance and support to local community organisations which are set up to promote community life for our residents. The Council's financial support is provided by way of grants, which are decided against criteria set by the Parish Council.

The Chair also reminded Members that the Parish Council agreed a total grant fund of £20,000 and in June this year the Parish Council allocated a total of £17,544 grants to local community and voluntary organisations. In agreeing this funding, Members also agreed to reopen the grant funding window for a second phase later in the year with a decision on further grants being taken at the Parish Council's November Full Council meeting.

The Chair advised that the funding window has been advertised for the remaining £2,456 worth of grant funding and the following application has been received:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount requested (£)</b>
Durham Pride	To fund weekly volunteer sessions to support the charity and the Durham LGBT+ community. We have struggled to retain and recruit volunteers due to the Covid measures. This has had a huge impact on the most vulnerable of people who we support such as victims of domestic and sexual violence and hate crime who have been isolated and living in fear.	2400

Members **agreed** to support this grant application for £2,400 in principle, subject to further clarity and a breakdown of what exactly the grant will go towards funding.

## **9. SECTION 106 CONSULTATION - MGH CARD LLP APPLICATION**

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council is currently being consulted on a new Section 106 grant funding application made by MGH CARD LLP for use of £45,000 worth of funding

The Clerk advised that the purpose of this grant application is for the discharge of planning permissions DM/21/00154/VOC - condition 8 and DM/18/00894/FPA - condition 11.

The proposals include the design and construction of a pedestrian link beneath Milburngate Bridge and elevated above Framwelgate Waterside to connect the Milburngate and Riverwalk sites.

The Clerk advised that the pedestrian link will have shallow reinforced concrete pad foundations supporting a structural steel frame with composite metal deck walkway complete with resin bound gravel trafficable waterproof surface finish and tactile warning studs at the bottom of the steps, balusters with railings infill along with lighting, security gate, handrail at the steps, CCTV camera and signage.

The proposals also include extending the pedestrian link over/ through the Milburngate gas house and car park entrance / exit access ramp through provision of additional structural steelwork to support the composite metal deck walkway complete with resin bound gravel trafficable waterproof surface finish, balusters with railings infill along with lighting, security gate, signage, blockwork compartment walls over / through the gas house and all necessary mechanical & electrical services alteration works.

The total cost of the scheme is £352,885 (excluding VAT). The remaining capital costs of the scheme will be funded by MGH CARD LLP and the ongoing maintenance costs would be covered by the County Council.

The County Council has indicated that monies are available for this proposed scheme within the Electoral Division and as such the proposal is considered to have merit in principle. However, a final decision on the request will only be made when the application has been considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Council's Section 106 Working Group.

In accordance with standard procedures, the Clerk advised that the Parish Council is invited to make any comments on the application inside 21 days and that details of the scheme have been circulated in advance of the publication of the Agenda.

Cllr E Scott updated Members that she had discussed this with the relevant officer at DCC and he had confirmed that the £45,000 had already been earmarked for this purpose.

The Clerk also updated Members that DCC has confirmed that the scheme itself will go through under a Discharge of Planning Condition application, which do not usually go out for public consultation. As such, the Planning Committee will not be able to comment on this matter, though the Clerk suggested that the officers dealing with this application be invited to the next Planning Committee meeting to discuss this.

Members expressed grave concerns about the fact that the scheme appears to have no disabled access at all and also highlighted the health and safety implications for use of this underpass late at night for any member of the public travelling to and from the late night premises in either the Riverwalk or Milburngate developments.

Members **agreed** to object to this application.

## **10. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY – FULL PARISH COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2022/23**

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council has agreed to formulate its strategy for 2022/23 ahead of the budget setting process in January 2022.

The aim of the Parish Council's strategy is to give local residents, Councillors and Officers a clear understanding of what the council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver its aims and objectives. The strategy sets out what the areas of development or change the Council intends to focus on over the next year outlining those areas of service that are identified as priority aims and objectives.

As part of this, the Chair advised that all Parish Council Committees have been asked to agree their priorities for the forthcoming financial year so that this can feed into the Parish Council's budget agreement.

Members **agreed** the following key overarching priorities for the Parish Council for 2022/23

- 1.** Being an ambitious voice for the city
- 2.** Enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish
- 3.** Upholding the Neighbourhood Plan and representing the parish on planning matters
- 4.** Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish
- 5.** Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.

## **11. PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT A REQUEST FOR THE CONTINUATION OF LIVE STREAMED MEETINGS**

The Chair advised that, in mid-November, Durham County Council announced changes to the live streaming of Council meetings.

The Chair advised that, since the council elections in May 2021, Durham County Council's formal meetings reverted to being held in person following changes in legislation. Although there is no mandatory requirement to do so, the Council has continued to live stream all of their meetings to help promote democratic engagement.

Given the increased frequency of meetings as a result of the meeting calendar returning to its pre-pandemic timetable, a review undertaken by the County Council has identified that demand and support requirements can be better met through a reduction in the number of meetings being live streamed.

With effect from Wednesday 1 December 2021, it is the Council's intention that only meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and County Planning Committee will be streamed. The Council's stated aim is to maintain democratic engagement in those meetings, that are most frequently accessed online.

The Clerk advised that this issue was raised at a recent meeting of the Parish Council's Planning Committee, during which the Parish Council was asked if they would support a joint letter with the City of Durham Trust, calling on the County Council to reconsider these changes, so as to continue the live streaming of all meetings.

The Clerk advised that, prior to making a decision on this matter, Members will need to consider that the Parish Council is currently planning to revert back to full physical meetings from January 2022.

The Clerk advised that an agreement on whether to be a co-signatory to a letter to the County Council on the continuation of live streaming of all meetings is not a matter which sits within the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference and therefore this matter has been referred to Full Council for a decision.

The Clerk also updated Members that videos which are still available on YouTube of these meetings have attracted over 300 views, so there is clearly a democratic argument for the continuation of live streamed meetings.

Members **agreed** that the Parish Council should be a co-signatory to a letter to the County Council with the City of Durham Trust, asking the Council to reconsider its proposed changes to the livestreaming of meetings. In doing so, Members also **agreed** to continue lobbying for virtual meetings to be made lawful once more by Government legislation.

## **12. REPORT FROM THE LANDLORD LICENSING WORKING GROUP**

The Clerk reminded Members that, the County Council consulted on a proposed Selective Licensing Scheme for County Durham in 2020. At that time, the scheme was strongly welcomed by the Parish Council until it emerged that none of the City of Durham Parish would be included, as it did not meet the criteria set by Government for such a scheme.

The Clerk advised that the Council report at the time noted that there were (at the time of publication) 790 registered HMOs within County Durham with 766 or 97% located in and around Durham city centre.

The Clerk reminded Members that, at present, Durham County Council runs a voluntary landlord accreditation scheme to attempt to secure improvements in property condition and management practice for those landlords who choose to become a member. As it requires voluntary engagement, rogue or poor landlords are unlikely to participate and a relatively low number of landlords have joined the scheme.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council concluded in 2020 that alongside the County-wide Selective Licensing Scheme there needs to be an equivalent compulsory, self-financing scheme for Durham City to address the facts that virtually all of the County's HMOs are in Durham City, that the associated problems are extensively documented, and that the voluntary scheme is demonstrably not adequate.

The Clerk advised that, since submitting this to the Council, the Parish Council's Landlord Licensing Working Group has been seeking to establish such a scheme for Durham City, with the Sheffield SNUG scheme – tailored to Durham City – being the preferred option. The Working Group has also received a very positive presentation from colleagues in Sheffield on their SNUG scheme. The Working Group's meetings with the County Council's Portfolio holder and officers were very positive, and produced an undertaking that the officers would come back in Spring 2021 with a draft Durham version of the Sheffield scheme.

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the Clerk advised that he, Councillor Liz Brown and DURF's representative on the Working Group John Ashby met with the relevant DCC officers in order to discuss progressing this scheme further for Durham City. The meeting was called by DCC to brief representatives of the Working Group about progress with the scheme for Durham City.

The Clerk advised that DCC officers recounted that their team have been discussing with landlords and representatives from the National Residential Landlords Accreditation Scheme.

The Clerk advised that, under the newly proposed scheme, inspections would be carried out and landlords could lose their license. However, only properties with 5 or more occupants come within the licensing framework, so many or most HMOs in Durham City would not be in the scheme anyway. There are presently 820 licensed properties under the provisions of s.232 of the Housing Act 2004 (i.e. those with five or more separate tenants.) and there are 3,307 properties which have Class N Student Exemption from paying Council Tax, i.e. only 25%.

Members agreed that, by counting only registered HMOs, the County Council is seriously underestimating the problem.

There is also a trend over the past year or two for landlords to sub-divide properties into one-or two-bedroomed properties with self-contained facilities, and so fall below the threshold for HMOs. But they are still in the private rented sector.

The Clerk advised that representatives of the Working Group concluded the meeting disappointed that the County Council appears to be retreating from the understandings of 2020. The Working Group is agreed that we need a more thorough examination of what is problematic about having a Sheffield-type scheme in Durham City.

In considering this matter, Members also had regard to the analysis of student accommodation in the parish, provided by Mr Roger Cornwell.

Members **agreed** to request a full review be undertaken by the County Council setting out a range of alternative options for landlord licensing schemes in Durham City.

### **13. DCC CONSULTATION ON DURHAM CITY FRAMEWORK**

The Clerk advised that, at its 17th November 2021 meeting, Durham County Council's Cabinet agreed a set of recommendations in a report set out by the Council's Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth. The purpose of this report was to seek Cabinet's approval to commence public consultation on a number of masterplans across County Durham. One of which includes a Framework for Durham City.

The Clerk advised that although a key driver for this round of masterplans is Levelling Up Funding (LUF) the Council assures that these are being comprehensively prepared and therefore contain other projects and proposals that will either not be suitable for LUF or may ultimately be unsuccessful bids. This will ensure that these projects will be well placed to progress should other sources of funding be identified.

The Clerk advised that the stated purpose of the public consultation is to enable local communities including residents, businesses and other stakeholders to have their say on the content of the masterplans, as well as putting forward their own ideas for consideration. Following consultation, amendments will be made in response to the comments made wherever possible.

The Clerk advised that the document includes a vision and objectives, opportunities and challenges but then features an interactive map which identifies all current and future projects in the Durham City area.

The key proposals in the Framework include:

- Major commercial and employment development sites at Milburngate and Aykley Heads;
- A cultural hub at Millennium Place;
- Improved accessibility and public realm improvements on Durham Riverside;
- Heritage improvements at Durham Miners at Redhills, Crook Hall, Belmont Viaduct, Old Fulling Mill, Cornmill;
- Housing developments at Sniperley Park, Sherburn Road, Gilesgate and Gort Place;
- Public Realm improvements on North Road, Boathouse Yard and Fowlers Yard;
- Retail development at Dragonville, North Road and the Former Eddis site;
- Durham University development including new academic buildings and Purpose Built Student Accommodation;
- Cycling and walking projects including improved links from the railway station to the town centre;
- Improvements to and creation of a number of routes in the Durham City Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Great North Cycleway;
- Transport infrastructure including new park and ride capacity, Sniperley roundabout and a number of Active Travel projects including Abbey Road to Rotary Way, Framwellgate Moor Front Street, A181 Gilesgate Access Road;

- Broader city-wide projects including new public Wi-Fi provision and fibre broadband.

In view of the timeframe in which to respond to this important consultation, putting this back to a Full Parish Council meeting prior to submitting a response is not practical.

The Clerk also reminded Members that there were a number of public drop-in sessions planned to discuss these masterplans with relevant DCC officers.

Members **agreed** that the Parish Council's Business Committee, along with the Chairs of the Environment, Planning and Licensing Committees, be tasked to respond on behalf of Full Council to this consultation.

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

##### **Report by Cllr E Ashby on the Durham University Covid-19 Community Liaison Group**

Cllr E Ashby presented a report from the Durham University Community Covid-19 Liaison Group meeting, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021, as follows:

1. Reported cases among students and staff remain at very low level. 6 student reported cases this year compared with +400 same week last year. Over 90% of students have had their first vaccination.

There is a good rate of compliance with the requirement to wear masks in all public spaces on campus. If rates remain low mask wearing requirement may be moderated.

The Test to Participate scheme continues.

2. In response to comments about mask wearing and crowding in city streets The Community Relations Officer said she would ask the Communications team to send out a reminder to students.

3. Responding to an enquiry about monitoring any risks associated with Covid and reports of 'spiking' in city premises, particularly as some are applying to double their capacity, it was confirmed that the University does not liaise with the (public) evening economy on these or other matters.

4. In reply to a question about student and staff response to The Shh campaign feedback was mixed: some said it was generally positive with just some mocking. One Principal said he would like it on campus too but this wasn't picked up. The SU rep. wasn't familiar with the campaign.

5. The Street Lights map was out of date but this has been taken up with the City Safety Group.

6. The next meeting is on Dec 3rd.

## **Report by Cllr L Brown on the Durham Access for All Group**

Cllr L Brown provided an update from the last meeting of the Durham Access for All Group.

Cllr L Brown highlighted that the group is engaging with electrical vehicle charging point installers in order to ensure that these can be made accessible to disabled users.

Cllr L Brown also highlighted that the group has a particular concern about the proliferation of A Boards across the City and the impact that this is having on accessibility for users of the City.

The Clerk reminded Members that the County Council (in 2019 and 2020) commissioned an independent disability audit of the City and this had highlighted, as a recurring theme throughout the City, the issue of A boards blocking the public highway. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has asked the County Council to introduce an A boards prohibition zone – similar to that introduced in the City of York – to both Saddler Street and Silver Street. The Clerk advised that he had received a response from DCC on this request to say that this is being looked into internally within the County Council. The Clerk also reported that the Chair of the Parish Council's Licensing Committee Cllr S Walker is in the Northern Echo this week calling on action to be taken on this issue.

The Clerk advised that he would share the response from DCC on this matter with the Durham Access for All Group and Mr Barry Gower.

Cllr L Brown also highlighted that the Group has a particular concern about the removal of some disabled badge holder parking bays in the City and advised that she would be looking into this with DCC.

The Chair thanked both Cllrs E Ashby and L Brown for their reports.

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

Signed,



**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council  
(27<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**