

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall.

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

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Mr Richard Combstock (Rocking Horse Rehearsal Rooms) and Ms Joanne Strachan (member of the public).

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs V Ashfield, G Holland, G Nair and E Scott.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr H Weston declared an interest in application DM/21/01670/FPA, referenced in the planning committee minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2022.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

In agreeing the minutes, it was also **agreed** that the number of votes cast – for, against and abstention - on each item should also be minuted going forward.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr John Ashby advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 11.

Ms Joanne Strachan advised that she was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 11. In doing so, Joanne also took the opportunity to express her concerns over late night noise disturbance and ASB associated with students living near to her home.

Joanne advised that she regularly reports incidents to 101 and never receives any feedback. Joanne advised that she felt that there is currently poor liaison between the police and local residents on this issue.

Joanne advised that she would like to see the number of reports and the follow-up actions taken to incidents to be published by the University, the Police and the County Council.

Joanne advised that she felt that two PCSOs were insufficient to tackle the issues in the City. Joanne also advised that she would like to see 24-hour Wardens for the City.

Mr Richard Combstock made the following statement to the Parish Council:

"Hello, my name is Richard Combstock.

I am the owner of Rocking Horse Rehearsal Rooms and recording studio, located on Frankland Lane in Durham City. We've served the local music scene for 11 years, providing rehearsal space, recording services, PA and equipment hire, repairs and drum lessons. Growing to become an important asset in the city's creative community.

Unfortunately we are under threat of demolition, as our landlord has decided to redevelop the site. This will be a huge blow to us personally due to the considerable time, money and effort we have invested in the building, it is who we are.

On a wider scale I believe our closure will be very damaging to the city's cultural infrastructure. We are the only facility of our kind in the City and our customer base covers the whole of County Durham.

It is my understanding that the council are unable to discuss the planning application directly while it's ongoing, I will also be attending the meeting regarding planning tomorrow.

I've requested to speak at this evening's meeting in order to ask the Parish Council to consider that Rocking Horse be classified as an asset of community value, as we are an important cultural hub for the city.

It has been drawn to my attention that the City's neighbourhood plan includes policies regarding the protection of such facilities.

Here's a list of some of the things we have contributed:

We receive 30-40 rehearsal bookings a week on average in our 5 acoustically treated, soundproofed rehearsal rooms.

Our recording studio has recorded over 300 local artists, including the University's 22 piece big band on several occasions.

We've mentored four young aspiring sound engineers who've progressed successfully into the professional domain.

For 8 years we've worked with Rhythm Dynamics, providing drum lessons for over 50 students of all ages from as young as 6.

We've provided PA, equipment and sound engineering services for events across the city, specialising in low cost hire for up and coming bands hosting small scale gigs.

We create videos of local musicians, from live sessions up to full music videos. As well as producing our own youtube channel including our gluefactory live series.

We provide a venue for local original bands to host small scale gigs, including recording 2 "live at rocking horse" vinyl albums.

The Durham live music community has suffered a marked decline in its infrastructure in recent years, with the loss of important venues such as Empty Shop and the Fishtank. Many emerging local musicians are finding it almost impossible to perform their material in front of an audience in their own city.

The loss of Rocking horse would result in those musicians also being unable to rehearse and hone their craft, a combination of these factors will result in a catastrophic drop in creative output from the city's music scene.

There is currently a wealth of talented and enthusiastic bands emerging from the Durham area, including Dennis, Martha, Faithful Johanas, the Girl from Winter Jargon, to name a few. You may have heard of some of them, all of them regularly use our facility.

The development was only recently made public, so we've had a limited time to react to the situation. We decided that it would be best to build support from the local music community by creating a petition of objection to our closure. So far, we have received over 2500 signatures and had many messages of support.

Here are some examples:

Jonny Robson wrote:

"I'm a musician living in Bowburn. Our band has practiced and recorded at rocking horse rehearsal rooms for a few years now on a weekly basis. We would be totally devastated if this was no longer possible. It's is a great little business, run professionally. It is affordable and local to our band. We need premises like these available where young kids in Durham and the surrounding area can express their creativity. It is a travesty for the local community if we were to lose this."

Julian Laffin from Durham City wrote:

"The closure of Rocking Horse rehearsal rooms would have a drastic effect on Durham City's bands and music scene. I have been in many bands over 10 years of playing live and all of them have used Rocking Horse to rehearse. Without them, we would have had nowhere to practice and no chance of getting to a gigging standard of playing.

On a personal level, the confidence I gained as a musician through having a regular and reliable place to practice that is local and easy to access is invaluable and I know many local musicians feel the same way.

Many of them have recorded music at the rehearsal rooms which has led to significant steps in their careers.

Rocking Horse has changed my life and the lives of so many bands and musicians in Durham. Not only that, but through these bands being able to get to a gigging

standard and be supported by Rocking Horse, they can encourage local pub trade as friends and family in the area flock to see them.

Our local pubs value us and count on us to provide high quality entertainment, which we simply cannot do without a local place to rehearse. Rocking Horse is a modest cultural icon of Durham City, without which much of the music in our town centre would disappear. I urge you to consider this before getting rid of the rehearsal studios I value so much."

I haven't got time to read out any more unfortunately, but there are many, you can read them on the petition when I send it.

I will be doing everything I possibly can to halt this development, but I'm fully aware that our demolition will prove difficult to stop, it is after all their land.

If it goes ahead, it will be very difficult and costly for us to move our premises, we would require a considerable amount of time to remove and rebuild our soundproof walls. It will also be very difficult for us to find suitable premises, particularly given the cost of commercial rental properties in the area and our very specific needs.

We would request that we are given the time necessary for us to find a suitable alternative premises locally, as well as have any new building up and running before the development proceeds. Otherwise we would have to cease trading for an extended period of time, leaving the city with no equivalent facility.

Thankyou."

The Chair thanked Mr Combstock for his statement.

The Chair also advised Members that the Parish Council's Standing Orders do not allow for an item raised by a member of the public to be decided and for a decision to be made on the matter.

The Chair therefore advised the Council that the Planning Committee would be considering the planning application at its meeting tomorrow. Thereafter, a decision on whether to hold a special meeting of the Full Parish Council to consider the question as to whether the Parish Council would support an application to make the Rocking Horse an Asset of Community Value would need to be made. The Chair also advised that any report to Full Council on this matter would need to consider the position of the developer as well as the Rocking Horse.

Mr Combstock thanked the Parish Council and confirmed that he would be attending the Planning Committee meeting tomorrow.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Planning Committee**

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes from meetings of the Planning Committee held on 12th and 26th November and 10th December 2021.

Cllr H Weston advised that she had received a letter of thanks from a local resident thanking the Parish Council's Planning Committee and the Clerk for their thoroughness in dealing with a recent application in the parish.

- **Environment Committee**

Cllr C Lattin presented the minutes from meetings of the Environment Committee held on 9th November and 7th December 2021 and updated Members on the recent work of the Committee. There being no queries from Members, Cllr C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposed Terms of Reference for the Parish Council's Climate Lead

Members **agreed** that Cllr R Friederichsen should assume the role of the Parish Council's Climate Lead. In agreeing this, Members also **approved** the following Terms of Reference for this role:

1. The Nomination

The Parish Council shall nominate one councillor of the Environment Committee at its annual meeting in May to undertake various roles consequential on the Parish Council's declaration of a climate emergency in March 2019. The councillor will be termed 'City of Durham Climate Lead' and will act to strengthen the Council's climate-related work in the short and long term. Strong climate action is strategic; it integrates the various parts of the Council, and covers mitigation as well as adaptation.

2. The Nomination process

Any councillor may nominate themselves for the role. Any nomination should be submitted in writing to the Clerk 7 clear working days before the meeting. Any nomination should be seconded by another councillor whose name should be recorded on the written submission. The nomination will be subject to a majority vote of the full Council. In the event of two or more nominations, there will an election whereby the successful nomination will have a majority of votes cast; in the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.

3. The Length of Nomination

The period of nomination shall be for one calendar year; it may be renewed annually.

4. The Roles

The Climate Lead's roles are as follows:

- to support the Chair and Vice-Chair on climate-related discussions and decisions relating to the Full Council;

- to advise on and support coordination of climate action across the Committees of the Council through the Committees' Chairs and Vice-Chairs;
- to provide guidance on, and - where tasked to do so – coordinating, the actions of the Parish Council as a whole and its committees;
- to provide guidance on those areas of Parish Council where there is a climate aspect, including:
 - procurement and commissioning;
 - place shaping (planning, development, transport);
 - showcasing;
 - partnerships;
 - involving, engaging, communicating (see Local Government Association (2021; point 3.2) A councillor's workbook on the local pathway to net zero).
- to support the development of external relationships when tasked to do so by the Parish Council and its Committees;
- to attend meetings of external partners to provide guidance on, and - where tasked to do so – coordinating, the actions of the Parish Council as a whole and its committees;
- to support learning and development regarding climate policy;
- to access technical expertise to inform the Parish Council's climate action.

5. Reporting

The Climate Lead reports to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment Committee and to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Full Council, as appropriate.

6. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The nomination should act at all times within the Parish Council's Standing Orders, with particular reference to SO18 (Financial Controls and Procurement), SO22 (Relations with Press/Media), SO24 (Communicating with District and County or Unitary Councillors), SO25 (Restrictions On Councillor Activities), FR 10 (Orders for work, goods and services), FR11 (Contracts), FR15 (Insurance) and FR17 (Risk management). The nomination should also act in accordance with City of Durham Parish Council policies on Communications, Environment and Sustainability, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Social Media.

It was also **agreed** that these Terms of Reference be reviewed on an ongoing basis at the annual Parish Council meeting in May.

• Licensing Committee

Cllr S Walker presented the minutes from meetings of the Licensing Committee held on 15th November and 13th December 2021. There being no queries from Members, Cllr S Walker moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to launch a best-run licensed premises award in Durham City

Cllr S Walker reminded Members that £800 was agreed in January 2021 towards a proposal by the Parish Council's Licensing Committee to launch a best-run licensed premises award.

Cllr S Walker advised that the Licensing Committee works proactively with both DCC and premises in the City to ensure that all premises operate in a way which is consistent with the four licensing objectives.

As part of this work, Cllr S Walker advised that the Parish Council's Licensing Committee has been working to establish an award for the best-run licensed premises in the City, based on a set of criteria.

In conjunction with this, Cllr S Walker also advised that the Licensing Committee has also agreed to establish an award for the best-run Durham University college bar, with the criteria proposed following consultation with the University's Deputy Head of Catering.

Cllr S Walker advised that it is hoped that this award may be launched to premises at the end of January 2022 with each application being judged and the award presented during the current financial year.

Cllr S Walker advised that the full funding agreed by the Parish Council is requested for this scheme and it is hoped that outside judges from partner organisations such as DurhamBID, Visit County Durham, etc. may be involved with this, with input from Durham Police.

Members **agreed** to launch the best-run licensed premises award in Durham City as set out Cllr S Walker's report, delegating responsibility for this to the Parish Council's Licensing Committee.

• **Finance Committee**

Cllr A Doig presented the minutes from the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 10th June 2021. There were no queries from Members.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 25th November 2021.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's Christmas events throughout December went extremely well and were much appreciated by local residents and visitors of the City during December. It was great to see the Parish Council's charity gift wrapping service do so well. The Chair particularly thanked Cllr E Ashby and the Durham Markets Company for their work in helping to deliver these.

The Chair welcomed that the planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee is going so well. A meeting of all stakeholders was held earlier today to go over plans and the Chair advised that he is sure that the Parish Council will be a lead organiser for the events over the Bank Holiday weekend in June 2022.

The Chair thanked everyone who fed into our Parish Council's response to the Durham City Framework and the Sniperley Park Masterplan consultations – two exceptionally important consultations and particularly thanked the Parish Clerk for pulling this all together.

The Chair expressed his disappointment that the underpass connecting the Riverwalk and Milburngate developments – a scheme which the Parish Council highlighted several concerns about – has been granted planning permission. The Chair advised that he understands that the Council is going to be looking into the issue of disabled access for this and is going to report back to the Parish Council on this.

The Chair reminded Members that the Chinese new year celebrations are set to take place in early February and the Clerk has circulated details of this. The Chair advised that this is always a great event and an opportunity to celebrate culture in the City.

The Chair advised that a further meeting of the Parish Council's Community Residents Association Forum is set to take place in the coming weeks to consider the joint response to the Parish Council's ASB consultation paper.

The Chair thanked all those involved in helping to green up the Viaduct area of the City during the Christmas holidays and in the last few days. The Parish Council has received some very positive feedback about this.

The Chair welcomed that the development of the new bus station is progressing well. The Chair advised that it appears the initial concerns from some businesses in the area have been addressed. The Chair thanked the Business Committee for progressing any and all concerns about this. The Chair advised that he very much welcomes the new bus station and hopes that it will be a big first step in helping to regenerate North Road.

The Chair also advised that it is great to see some recent planning committee successes with appeals being dismissed and applications being refused as the Parish Council had asked. The Chair advised that the Planning Committee takes on a substantial workload on the Parish Council's behalf – considering nearly 400 applications every year – the Parish Council goes into great detail in responses and brings an awful lot of expertise, which the Chair advised he felt is appreciated.

The Chair thanked all those who fed into the recent questionnaires about Pharmacy and Library services. Really important services for our community and the Parish Council looks forward to seeing the outcome of these questionnaires.

The Chair reminded Members that the Article 4 Direction for Mount Oswald, Belmont and Carrville has now come into force. The Chair advised that this is very good news indeed and follows an excellent report the Parish Council's consultant Jo-Anne Garrick, submitted in support of this for Mount Oswald.

The Chair reminded all Neville's Cross Councillors that the Planning Committee is meeting with Banks tomorrow to discuss a number of updates on the Mount Oswald development.

7. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY 2022/23

Members agreed the following strategy for 2022/23:

Environment Committee

Council priorities 2022/23	Environment Committee priorities 2022/23	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with and responding to residents of all ages and backgrounds in environment-related work Mobilise Volunteer groups Work with young people and respond to their concerns	Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life.
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promote cleaner air, a cleaner river, green spaces, and streets for living across the city. Reduction in light pollution. Reduction in night time noise. Sustainable travel	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Work with all relevant committees to ensure the climate and ecological emergencies are considered in all planning matters. Sustainable housing	Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Improve and protect the appearance of the city and its heritage.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Be proactive and collaborate with all partners (including Parish Council committees, Durham County Council, residents, developers, landlords, and other businesses) to coordinate our impact on the climate	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

	<p>and ecological emergencies and increase community resilience. Encourage sustainable Travel</p> <p>Increased awareness and action on climate change.</p> <p>Tackle the ecological emergency</p>	
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Planning Committee

Council priorities 2022/23	Planning Committee priorities 2022/23	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish as a consultee on planning matters	<p>Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future</p> <p>Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City</p> <p>Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live</p>
	Consulting the Parish on planning matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring schemes deliver the required levels of affordable housing and adapted housing for the disabled and elderly.	Theme 4. A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Promoting the creation and adoption of new Public Rights of Way and ensuring that they are accessible to all.	<p>Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City</p> <p>Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure</p>

	Protecting our green infrastructure and assets within our parish boundary and ensuring that they are used to the best possible public benefit.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Upholding the development plans for the area i.e. Neighbourhood Plan and County Durham Plan.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	To maintain and develop an evidence-base to update the Neighbourhood Plan and comment on planning applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Protecting our World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas and designated and non-designated heritage assets.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City

	Delivering a Conservation Area Management Plan	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Protecting against overdevelopment	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Delivering an enhanced planning enforcement service for the parish	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Supporting accommodation above retail units in the City centre.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Supporting tourist attractions and transport infrastructure for the visitor economy	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Putting green future at the heart of planning considerations	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

		Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Resisting schemes which do not deliver net zero by 2030 and supporting those which do.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

Business Committee

Council priorities	Business Committee Priorities	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with local businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promoting responsible businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Supporting new businesses in empty units across the city	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Marketing Durham as a place to visit	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 5: A City with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure
	Contracting professional support for local businesses in the city	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Promoting businesses in the city centre and encouraging a variety of businesses to ensure wide range of choice for visitors	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate	Reducing food miles by encouraging the use of local suppliers	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy

and ecological emergencies.		Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life
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Licensing Committee

Council priorities	Licensing Committee Priorities	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish on licensing matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring that all new licensing applications and existing premises promote the four licensing objectives.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Empowering our residents to make informed representations on licensing matters.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Supporting a cumulative impact policy for the Parish	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Making licensing as open as possible through hosting an online licensing map	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City

	Making the City more accessible to all by representing the needs of all users in relation to pavement and outdoor seating applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Ensuring that the objectives of licensing and planning are aligned.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Promoting the early evening economy to families and tourists	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	N/A	N/A

In agreeing this strategy, Members also unanimously **agreed** that the Parish Council’s Licensing Committee should re-consider its position on what it can do on taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.

8. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

Members unanimously **agreed** the following budget for 2022/23:

Income and carry over funds	Cost (£)
Projected remaining funds from 2021-22	£88,382.32
Proposed precept for the financial year 2022-23	£156,737.17

TOTAL	£245,119.49
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Planning Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
Professional support in responding to planning applications	4,000.00
Supporting the production of a Conservation Area Management Plan	10,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	14,000.00

Licensing Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
Enhanced drug searching SLA with Durham Police	1,800.00
Hosting a licensing training event	1,000.00
Licensing award	1,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	3,800.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Being a voice for the City	
OASES/ schools project	3,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the Shhh campaign	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Planting up and greening the parish	10,000.00
Event for clean air and active travel	1,500.00
PRIORITY 4: Heritage	
Information Boards on heritage and nature	3,000.00
Creation of new blue plaques in the parish	1,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	10,000.00

Christmas Frontages Awards (possible collaborative project with Business Committee)	2,000.00
Improving the river	6,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Climate Emergency	
Continuation of Terracycle scheme	3,000.00
Celebrating plastic free businesses	1,000.00
Community composting project	1,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	42,500.00

Business Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	10,800.00
PRIORITY 2: Maintaining and promoting the e-commerce website "Totally Locally Durham" for Durham City Businesses	1,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, Queen's Jubilee 2022, miscellaneous).	22,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	33,800.00

Full Council

Item of Expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council (rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website, other expenditure)	15,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training budget	3,000.00
PRIORITY 3: grants for local community and voluntary organisations	15,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Staffing costs – including salary, National Insurance contributions and workplace pension	56,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	89,000.00

Committee	Proposed expenditure (2022/2023) against priorities (£)
Planning Committee	14,000.00
Licensing Committee	3,800.00
Environment Committee	42,500.00
Business Committee	33,800.00
Full Council	89,000.00
TOTAL POTENTIAL PROVISION IN 2022-2023 AGAINST PRIORITIES	183,100.00

Members noted that that the Parish Council is expected to finish the current Financial Year (2021-22) with (approximately) £88,000 remaining in the bank account (taking into account).

Of the remaining £88,000, it was unanimously **agreed** that the following be ring fenced for 2022/23:

General Reserves	£45,000.00
Contingencies	£15,000.00
TOTAL	£60,000.00

9. PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT REQUEST FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

The Clerk advised that the 2022/23 City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base has been calculated at 4,494.9. For 2021/22 the Tax Base was 4,421.1. The Parish Council's Tax Base has therefore increased by 82.8.

The Clerk advised that, if the Parish Council retains its current council tax band D charge of £34.87, it can generate a precept of £156,737.17. This would represent an increase from 2021/22 which generated a total precept of £153,849.93.

The Clerk also reported that the LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2022/23 is £0.

Members unanimously **agreed** to freeze the Band D precept charge at £34.87, thus generating a precept of £156,737.17.

10. ANNUAL REPORT ON PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL CONTROLS

Members **agreed** the following report on the Parish Council's internal controls:

1. RESPONSIBILITY

Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2011 requires Councils to carry out a review of their internal controls annually before the end of the financial year.

The City of Durham Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.

In discharging this responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

The Parish Council has now adopted a risk register and this is under continuing review by the Clerk and any issues arising from risk assessments carried out will be reported to full Council.

The Council

The Council has elected a Chair who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and together with the Clerk for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January full Council meeting each year. The January meeting of the Council also approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The full Council meets at least 11 times per year. The Parish Council does not usually meet in August.

A budget report is prepared and submitted to all of the Parish Council's Finance Committee meetings showing income and expenditure together with a budget update for all Committee spends. Any budget revision reports are also reported for information and these set out any changes to the budget as per Council decisions or any known budget over or underspends.

Clerk to the Council

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for

the day to day compliance with laws and regulations and advises the Council on managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to. The Clerk also manages projects agreed by full Council and works with all suppliers and contractors agreed by full Council to carry out functions on behalf of the Council.

2021 has again been a difficult year for all due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation. It became apparent in March 2020, just before the first national lockdown that things would be operating very differently, and it was then that NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) recommended reviewing and agreeing local councils' delegation to the Clerk. Councillors agreed this delegation to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents.

This meant that day to day operations of the Parish Council could continue normally as much as possible. The Parish Council has continued holding meetings of Committees via Zoom and returned to physical meetings of the Full Council in 2021, whilst observing the latest Covid-19 guidance from Government throughout.

Payments

All payments made are reported to all Finance Committee meetings. The Parish Council now makes all payments via electronic banking. Two Members of the Council from the current list of five authorised signatories (excluding the Clerk who acts as administrator) must authorise every payment against invoices before authorising the payment using their own login details provided by the bank.

There is a facility for making urgent payments out of meeting if necessary. Such payments are also reported to the Parish Council's Finance Committee meeting and all decisions to spend funds as urgent action are ratified at the next Full Council meetings and minuted as such.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions. The Clerk makes an annual risk management report to the Council. A review of financial management risks is included as part of the review report.

Internal Audit

Last year, the Council appointed an independent Internal Auditor, Mr Gordon Fletcher, who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management
- Reviews

- Insurance cover

A review of internal audit must be carried out before the end of each financial year.

Gordon Fletcher has indicated that he is willing to carry out an audit of the Parish Council again next year. The cost of this service is £150.

Gordon was previously the Audit Manager at Easington District Council before retiring when the Unitary Council was formed and set up his own business by providing an internal audit service for Town and Parish Councils. This has grown to a current portfolio of 7 local Town Councils and 24 local Parish Councils.

Gordon is C.M.I.I.A. (Chartered Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors) qualified and has his own professional indemnity insurance.

External Audit

The Council's External Auditors are Mazars, appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA). They submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council, together with a copy of their report listing any issues to be raised. At the end of the Audit the Council must display the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for 14 days and must make the Annual Governance and Audit Return (AGAR) and Final Accounts available on request. These are also displayed on the Parish Council's website.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has a responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- The Full Council
- The Clerk to the Council who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks
- The independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's systems of internal control
- Mazars, the Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the AGAR, which is completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor.

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The external audit report for 2020-21 was carried out by Mazars and was completed in September 2021. No issues were raised by the external auditors.

6. INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

The Auditors did not raise any issues as part of the 2020-21 Audit.

The Internal Auditor did recommend that the Council open a new bank account, not associated with its existing bank, in order to further protect its finances. At

present, only £85,000 would be protected as part of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The Council has now opened an account with NatWest Bank and funds will be deposited into this account.

An alternative electronic provision for approving invoices has been arranged for this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic but going forwards it is hoped that these can be approved by wet signature in addition to the online approval.

Members also unanimously **agreed** to the appointment of Mr Gordon Fletcher as the internal auditor for the Parish Council for 2021/22.

11. INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF JOINT RESPONSE FROM DURHAM UNIVERSITY, DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL AND DURHAM POLICE TO THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ASB AND NOISE CONSULTATION

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's Community Residents Association Forum would be meeting to discuss the joint response to the late night noise and ASB consultation paper and he would like this Forum to report back to Full Council on their view of this response. The Chair advised that he hoped that this would help inform the Parish Council's response to this report. The Chair also advised that the Parish Council would be inviting the Police and Crime Commissioner and her new ASB Champion to the February Full Council meeting and he had asked the Clerk to ensure that ASB could be a substantive item of discussion at the February Full Council.

12. REPORT BY CLLR V ASHFIELD ON SECTION 106 PROJECT PROPOSALS IN THE ELVET AND GILESGATE DIVISION

In Cllr V Ashfield's absence, Cllr C Lattin presented a report on potential uses of Section 106 funds from the Elvet and Gilesgate division.

Cllr C Lattin advised that funds totalling £280,106.31 are available from 11 separate developments which have taken place in Elvet and Gilesgate. A later development is also likely to contribute further funds. Cllr C Lattin advised that the details of funds available are available in **Appendix A** of the report. Cllr C Lattin advised that they are designated to be spent on either Public Art or Open Space / Recreation / Sport.

In October, Cllr V Ashfield approached all of the Residents' Associations in Elvet and Gilesgate and heard back from all but one. The Parish Council was also approached by some representatives of the community and other suggestions arose from the Parish Council's Environment Committee.

Cllr C Lattin advised that Appendix B of the report summarises the suggestions and indicates whether they are likely to fit into the category of Art or Open Spaces and provides an update of the status they have achieved so far.

Members **agreed** by 10 votes in favour and 1 abstention that these projects would, in principle, have the Parish Council support, subject to a satisfactory application from the relevant group/ organisation coming forward.

13. REPORT BY CLLR R FRIEDERICHSEN ON CLOUD-BASED WORKING AND COLLABORATION

Cllr R Friederichsen presented a proposal on cloud-based working and collaboration to the Council.

Cllr R Friederichsen advised that this proposal is based on three observed issues:

- access all official documents which the Parish Council has produced so far;
- organisation of the documentation of what the Parish Council overall has achieved so far for future councils and councillors;
- promotion of remote working - for example in a Committee, by making suggestions in the file the Committee is working on rather than sending comments back and forth over email.

Cllr R Friederichsen presented three proposed actions as part of this proposal; a) to adopt a file hosting service which enables cloud-based collaboration and easy access to all the information; b) for Councillors and staff to receive training in virtual teamwork; and c) reviewing the added-value of the two actions in a year's time.

It was **agreed** by 9 votes in favour and 2 against that Cllr R Friederichsen should carry out a survey of the Chairs of each of the Parish Council's Committees and the Clerk to establish a) current levels of virtual teamwork skills, knowledge and attitudes among councillors and staff; and b) their willingness to adopt the proposed new technology to improve the quality of virtual teamwork.

14. MOTION BY CLLR E ASHBY ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD CAMPAIGN

Members unanimously **agreed** the following motion proposed by Cllr E Ashby and seconded by Cllr L Brown:

"Reflecting its concerns about reports of increasing demands on food banks, the growing availability of fast foods and the impact of diet related issues among both children and adults on health and other public services, the City of Durham Parish Council fully supports the campaign to have the Right to Food enshrined in English Law".

Members also unanimously **agreed** that some appropriate actions to highlight the Parish Council's support for this campaign may include: publishing this along with the definition of the Right to Food on the Parish Council's website, writing to the local MP and County Council (both of whom support the campaign) and writing to CDALC to ascertain what other local Councils have done on this campaign.

15. VERBAL UPDATE ON PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT

Members noted that recent attempts to recruit an assistant for the Parish Clerk had been unsuccessful and none of the candidates interviewed were considered appropriate for this role.

In view of the urgency to bring in additional resource to the Parish Council in order to support the Clerk, it was unanimously **agreed** that the minute-taking and events planning aspects of the role should be outsourced on a contract basis and that the Personnel Committee should be delegated responsibility to approve this.

16. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Report by Cllr C Lattin from the 22nd November meeting of the Durham University Community Engagement Task Force Lived Environment sub-group.

Cllr C Lattin presented the following report from the 22nd November meeting of the Durham University Community Engagement Task Force Lived Environment sub-group:

David Loudon – absent. Rebecca Eves led the meeting

Also present: Matthew Wright, Bill Moir, Walia Kani, John Ashby, John Lowe, Rebecca Eves, Yvonne Flynn, Matthew Deakin, Chris Hindmarsh, Bernie Taylor (Minutes) Carole Lattin (CODP)

- 1. The Mount Oswald development, the Teaching and Learning Centre and the Mathematical Science and Computing sites are completed.*
- 2. In the Terms of Reference, Walia Kani is nominated as the Community lead.*
- 3. Bill Moir, a new member, is representing Durham Area Action Partnership.*
- 4. Jonah Graham, the Student representative was unable to be present but submitted a written report. This said that the Tenants' Union had re-started after Covid. The Students' Union is hosting an online meeting before students come up to Durham about the need for caution before signing agreements with landlords., in the 'Take Time to Sign' Campaign. Because of increased demand for student accommodation, students are facing higher rental prices.*
- 5. PBSA/Accommodation Update (M. Deakin)
Matthew confirmed that an additional 1,200 students, above the already higher target, have joined the university this year. To accommodate these, the university have leased PBSA space e.g., 96 students at Ernest Place and others at Dunholme, Rushford Court, Houghall Court and The Village (100) The rooms are licensed by the university and attached to colleges. All first year students have been accommodated though this has entailed many post grads being unable to remain in college. (Usually 1,400 postgrads and this*

year only 700 have been accommodated.) The university is about to publish its prices for next year. Next year, the numbers who deferred from this year, thanks to the cash incentive offered, will be added to the target so there will be a decrease in new offers. The University calculates that they have 7,500 bed spaces available. Clarification was asked, because this figure does not enable the university to reach its target of 50% of undergraduates living in colleges. It was confirmed that if the proposed building of new colleges goes ahead as their masterplan states, then they would be able to reach 50% occupancy of its students, and there is at this time no intention of lowering the target figure.

6. Landlord Licensing: A national conference was held, where information was shared by other University towns with self-financing regulation of landlords so that landlords comply with higher standards in their properties. It was felt that DCC are back-tracking and are now proposing a voluntary scheme which would only cover 25% of student properties. CODP want a compulsory scheme and have sent a paper to this effect to DCC.
7. University Open Days. A Community Fun Day is planned for next summer and an 'Open Buildings' event to provide tours around a few of the university buildings. This would be on a rolling basis, with different sites each year. The City of Durham Trust welcomes the opportunity that this would provide for a closer look at the architecture of university buildings. Firm plans will be presented at the next meeting.
8. Update of the September meeting of DURF:
 - Confirmation of new residents' membership of DURF – Mount Oswald and the Viaduct area.
 - The university has been requested to deliver a formal community strategy. This should go to the Community Forum.
 - The conference on Anti-social behaviour is deferred.
 - Livers' Out leaflets received and delivered.
 - The development of a web-based course on living out successfully is still hopefully to be progressed.
 - The hours when the new Tesco can sell alcohol have been reduced.
 - Plans for a new PBSA on the Apollo Bingo site were discussed.
 - Awareness of the need for more accommodation during the re-development of Hild Bede.
 - Sssh campaign
 - The excellent paper on managing ASB was discussed. When asked for their priorities most people chose the re-instatement of the police responsibilities.
 - There is now a procedure for identifying properties which cause noise issues and community orders can be issued.
9. Agreed that a key opportunity is the recognition that the Lived Environment includes the open spaces in Durham as well as buildings, and that these are much appreciated by Durham students and valued for the mental and

physical health benefits they offer. An example of co-operation between the university, the City of Durham Parish Council and the City of Durham Trust is the Seven Hills Trail. Some minor issues remain to be settled about the infrastructure of this walk and action was promised.

10. Spiking. The University is eager to support its students. JCR heads have developed a campaign to promote safety, called Durham Unite. The university is working with college licensed bars, city bars and the Student Union to communicate safety advice and how to report incidents.

11. University volunteering. A volunteer Fair was held at St. Oswald Institute. University staff can now get time off work to volunteer in the community and new portals have been developed to publicise opportunities to staff and students.

Report by Cllr V Ashfield from the 6th December meeting of the Durham University Community Engagement Task Force Citizenship sub-group.

Members noted the following report from Cllr V Ashfield from the 6th December meeting of the Durham University Community Engagement Task Force Citizenship sub-group:

1. There was no representation from Police or Councils I asked if the University could schedule the next meeting with confirmation from Police and DCC that the day chosen was one they could attend.
2. A charter mark scheme is to be implemented in pubs and bars (re spiking and the like) and training in all College bars. Some spiking has been thought to have happened in College bars and all College bars now have CCTV. One of the students said there is work being done on the drinking culture.
3. There is an online and Face to face module on values and behaviours for staff and students. Part of that will include being responsible citizens.
4. The ASN procedure has been signed off by all. The press release is taking some time.
5. Two student wardens are in post, there is talk of a Street Champions scheme.
6. The University is reviewing the enhanced warden service and the Parish Council and Residents' Associations are asked for feedback please.
7. There was a discussion around improving or reclaiming back lanes. I asked that the PC should be kept informed as we also have a project for improvement to some back lanes. The Residents' Association rep asked that student wardens to talk to local residents.

Report by Cllr L Brown from the 12th January 2022 meeting of the Durham Access for All Group

Cllr L Brown presented the following report from the 12th January 2022 meeting of the Durham Access for All Group:

Attendees were concerned at the lack of a map showing disabled friendly vehicle charging points. I contacted Alan Shield Portfolio holder for Equality and Inclusion about this and I believe it is now in hand.

Once again, the matter of pavement obstructions was considered. A discussion took place regarding disabled access at both the Cathedral and Ushaw College.

Attendees would like more Changing Places facilities in Durham City. At the moment there are only three, and two are at the Palatinate Centre. (Changing Places are toilet facilities provided for disabled people who need help to use the toilet).

Finally there was a discussion regarding the change to all digital phones. I have contacted Susan Mc Donnell the Portfolio Holder for Digital and Customer Services who assures me that the effects of this have been exaggerated in various newspaper reports. She is at present formulating a proper reply which I will circulate

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.

Report by the Parish Clerk from the 21st January 2022 meeting of the Durham City Safety ASB sub-group

The Clerk presented a report from the 21st January 2022 meeting of the Durham City Safety ASB sub-group. The Clerk advised that the ASB sub-group continues in its work to combat residents' concerns over ASB.

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
(24th February 2022)**