

# City of Durham Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall.**

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

**Also present:** Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Councillor Mark Wilkes (DCC), Mr John Ashby, Mr John Lowe and Mr John Pacey (members of the public).

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor A Doig was elected as Chair of the Parish Council. Nominated by Cllr R Ormerod and seconded by Cllr G Holland. Councillor A Doig thanked Members for their support and read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of this Office.

## **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor L Brown was elected as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council. Nominated by Cllr D Freeman and seconded by Cllr V Ashfield.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors G Nair and S Walker.

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

Cllr E Scott declared an interest in item 6 on the Agenda as planning forms part of her portfolio on the County Council and she took no part in the discussions on this item.

## **5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

## **6. UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR MARK WILKES, DCC CABINET MEMBER ON THE SNIPERLEY PARK DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Mark Wilkes, DCC Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, to the meeting to discuss the Sniperley Park development with the Council.

Councillor Wilkes thanked the Parish Council for allowing him to speak today. Councillor Wilkes thanked the Parish Council for its recent correspondence and report regarding the Sniperley Park development.

Councillor Grenville Holland highlighted that the report to neighbouring Parish Councils and Councillor Wilkes had set out seven energy solutions for the development, namely:

1. An Energy Assessment for the entire site designed to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions with all properties satisfying the 2030 operational energy and embodied carbon targets set by the RIBA 2030 Challenge which identify the optimal set of energy solutions to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
2. All homes and buildings to be built to EPC A rating standard as a minimum.
3. No connection of the site to the national gas network.
4. Photovoltaic panels / and battery storage in all homes and buildings.
5. Ground and/or air source heat exchange systems for all homes and buildings.
6. District heating system using any potential geothermal energy.
7. All houses to have electricity supply points for electric cars.

Councillor Wilkes reminded Members that the County Council has recently consulted on a Masterplan for the development at Sniperley Park; a requirement arising from the County Durham Plan. Councillor Wilkes advised that County Durham Plan Policy 5 requires that the site is fully and comprehensively masterplanned ahead of any development.

Councillor Wilkes advised that he was expecting this masterplan to come to DCC Cabinet later in the year.

Councillor Wilkes reminded Members that the development of this site required the deletion of a large amount of greenbelt and therefore there is a requirement to develop as sustainable a development as possible.

Councillor Wilkes recognised the information set out in the report from the Parish Council; specifically that energy independence is even more important given outside national and international factors such as the war in Ukraine and the rise in energy costs.

Councillor Wilkes highlighted that the County Council will be pushing for as sustainable a development as possible with the legal policy framework set by Government.

Councillor Wilkes advised that, under the new regulations, CO2 emissions from new build homes must be 30% lower than current standards.

Councillor Wilkes advised that these regulations help to raise standards and are an important step towards a cleaner and greener built environment; helping to move towards the Future Homes and Buildings Standard, set to be introduced in 2025, which will mean all future homes are net zero ready and will not need retrofitting.

Councillor Wilkes advised that he recognised the desire to move quicker on these standards for new development in the County, however reminded Councillors that developers do have the right of appeal and the County Council may only consider applications within a set legal framework.

Councillor Wilkes thanked the Parish Council again for its efforts on this issue and for all its work on climate change. Councillor Wilkes also assured Members that the County Council regularly engages with Professor Jon Gluyas of the Durham Energy Institute and he regarded Professor Gluyas as an inspiration.

The Chair thanked Councillor Wilkes for his time and coming to speak with the Parish Council on this matter.

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr John Ashby advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in the items on the Agenda.

Mr John Lowe advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in the items on the Agenda.

Mr John Pacey advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in the items on the Agenda and specifically item 6 on the Agenda.

## **8. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **• Planning Committee**

Cllr L Brown presented the minutes from planning committee meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

### **• Environment Committee**

Cllr C Lattin presented the minutes from the environment committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

### **• Licensing Committee**

Cllr N Brown presented the minutes from the licensing committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022. There being no queries from Members, Cllr N Brown moved on to committee reports.

### **- Request for a cumulative impact policy for Durham City**

The Clerk reminded Members that, in September 2019, the County Council consulted on a proposal to introduce a cumulative impact policy for Durham City. During this consultation, Durham Constabulary, Durham University, local Ward Members, the City of Durham Parish Council and the former Member of Parliament all supported the introduction of this policy to the City.

The Clerk advised that the County Council had outsourced this assessment to a specialist third party and the outcome of that assessment was that there was (as at October 2019) insufficient evidence to support the publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) in respect of Durham City Centre (or for any other area of County Durham). That being the case, the Clerk advised that the County Council committed to keeping this under review and to further assessments of the need for a 'special policy' as part of the Statement of Licensing Policy for County Durham.

The Clerk advised that Durham City has a rapidly growing night time economy with a further major development (Milburngate) set to come on board in the coming weeks. This adds a further 48,000sq ft of 'retail and leisure' space to the City. The Clerk advised that it is apparent from recent licensing applications (Brewdog and the Botanist) that 'retail and leisure' will effectively equate to yet more late night licensed premises and the Licensing Committee has also noted the recent losses of retail space at both Riverwalk and North Road to licensed premises.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council's Licensing Committee and Durham Police have jointly written to Durham County Council to express concerns at the implications of these large scale new developments from not only policing and residential amenity perspectives but also the potential for increased pressure on public health services.

The Clerk advised that, in doing so, the Licensing Committee and Durham Police have jointly requested that the County Council urgently undertakes a further review leading to the introduction of a CIP to Durham City at the earliest opportunity.

The Clerk advised that the Head of Licensing at Durham County Council has highlighted previous investigations and assessments which have failed to yield the evidence necessary to justify the development and inclusion of a special policy for Durham City centre.

The Clerk reminded Members that a Cumulative Impact Policy may be published by a licensing authority to help it to limit the number or types of licence applications granted in areas where there is evidence to show that the number or density of licensed premises in the area is having a cumulative impact and leading to problems which are undermining the licensing objectives.

It is a legal requirement that a cumulative impact assessment must set out the evidence for the authority's opinion as set out in the assessment. Durham County Council has asked the Parish Council and Durham Police to provide further evidence to show why we believe there is a need for such a Policy being introduced in the City.

The Clerk advised that the purpose of this report is to provide Full Council with an update on this priority and to seek Full Council endorsement for the Committee's

continued work alongside Durham Police to provide evidence in favour of the cumulative impact policy being introduced to the City.

Members noted the report as set out by the Clerk and unanimously **agreed** to endorse the continued work of the Licensing Committee on this priority.

- **Business Committee**

Cllr E Scott presented the minutes from the business committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022. There were no queries from Members.

## **9. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The Chair took the opportunity to say a very big thank you to everyone for their participation and support at yesterday's very successful meeting of the parish. The Chair advised that this is always an important event where members of the public can ask questions about the work of the Parish Council and it was great to present all of the Good Citizens and the Clerk with their awards this year.

The Chair advised that there is tireless work going into the preparation for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The Chair advised that he was delighted to hear that a recent event involving Sue Snowdon at New College went extremely well and that the Parish Council has received some excellent praise from the Lord Lieutenant herself about these events. The Chair advised that it is great to see the hats on show this evening, set for the Tea Dance to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The Chair highlighted that the event this week has sparked a really great working relationship between the Parish Council and the team at New College Durham. The Chair advise that the Clerk had advised him that he has been absolutely blown away by the quality of students' work and in particular the media students who were able to video and photograph the parish meeting yesterday as well as the event with Sue Snowdon. The Chair advised that he hoped that the Parish Council can build on this relationship in the months and years ahead.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council has received a number of concerns regarding an event at Hawthorn Terrace over the last few weeks. The Chair advised that he was personally concerned about the arrangements for this event, its impact on local residents and on the health and safety of all participants – with 2,000 people already registering an interest to attend this on Facebook. The Chair advised that he has, as Chair of the Parish Council, to Durham Police, Durham University and DCC to ask that this be looked into urgently.

The Chair advised that he was aware that Councillors were all very sad indeed to hear that two excellent officers at DCC – Andrew Jackson and Dave Wafer – will soon be retiring from the local authority. The Chair advised that working in local Government is a privilege but isn't always easy. In Andrew's case, the Chair advised that he has devoted 39 years of his life to Durham and it is right that the Parish Council looks to thank both of these officers and wish them well in their

retirement. The Chair advised that the Parish Council will be writing formally to both Andrew and Dave to do just that.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Councillors who participated in the Carbon Audit training this week. In particular to Cllr Friederichsen for identifying this training provider and for his participation in this training. The Chair advised that he hoped to make this sort of training a more regular occurrence and asked Members – if registering for these events - to please ensure that they do attend.

The Chair advised that he felt that the excellent presentation at last night's parish meeting really set out the enormous amount of work the Parish Council has delivered since 2019 and the Chair thanked Councillors past and present for their hard work to achieve these excellent projects.

Finally, the Chair advised that he has asked the Parish Clerk to take a holiday in June owing to the huge commitment undertaken on our behalf as part of Jubilee planning. If Committee meetings need to be moved around slightly to accommodate this, then so be it. The Chair advised that the Clerk will confirm dates in due course.

## **10. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2021/22**

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has now undergone an internal audit by the Council's selected auditor for financial year 2021-22.

The Clerk advised that the internal audit had highlighted no issues and the Parish Council has been commended for good governance and management.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Parish Clerk for his work during the financial year 2021-22.

- (i) Members **agreed** all actions arising from the report of the internal auditor 2021-22
- (ii) Members **approved** the annual governance statement 2021-22
- (iii) Members **approved** the draft annual accounts for 2021-22
- (iv) Members **approved** the register of assets 2021-22
- (v) Members **approved** the accounting statement and explanation of variances 2021-22.

## **11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Clerk reminded Members that there is a legal requirement for Parish Councils to review on an annual basis its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other important documents.

The Clerk advised that, as per the agreement at the April Full Council meeting, a Working Group, comprising Councillors A Doig, R Ormerod and S Walker, had

met to review these documents and the amendments had been set out in reports to Councillors.

In addressing the question of co-option, Cllr E Ashby proposed that the term “non-Councillors” be amended to “people”. This was seconded by Cllr V Ashfield. 4 Members voted in favour of this amendment, 6 Members voted against this amendment and 4 Members abstained from voting. It was **agreed** that the wording should remain “non-Councillors”.

The Clerk highlighted that he was aware of some discontent regarding limiting numbers of Committees of the Parish Council and asked what the arguments in favour of limiting numbers were. Cllr R Ormerod advised that this was to help ensure that each Committee was manageable.

The content and wording of each document was **agreed** as set out in the following link: <https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/important-documents-and-policies/>

## **12. TO DECIDE ON APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Members unanimously **agreed** to maintain a Parish Council representative on all of the local organisations listed in the report. In doing so, Members also **agreed** that the Parish Council representative for each of these organisations should be as follows:

<b>Local organisation/ body</b>	<b>City of Durham Parish Council representative</b>
Community Engagement Task Force	Robert Hanson and Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Economic	Esther Ashby
Community Engagement Task Force sub group – Citizenship	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Lived Environment	Carole Lattin
Durham University Covid-19 community engagement group	Esther Ashby and Liz Brown
PBSA Liaison Group	Esther Ashby and Govind Nair
Durham Access Group	Liz Brown
CDALC Larger Councils Forum	Esther Ashby, Adam Shanley and Richard Ormerod
ASB sub-group task force	Adam Shanley
Durham AAP Board	Susan Walker

## **13. TO DECIDE ON PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Members unanimously **agreed** the membership of each Committee for this year of the Parish Council as follows:

<p><b>Planning Committee (6 Members) - Meets once every two weeks on a Friday at 2pm.</b>  Victoria Ashfield  Richard Ormerod  Carole Lattin  Grenville Holland  Susan Walker  Govind Nair</p>	<p><b>Environment Committee (6 Members) – Meets once every four weeks, dates and times agreed at Committee level.</b>  Carole Lattin  Victoria Ashfield  David Freeman  Liz Brown  Rob Hanson  Rupert Friederichsen</p>
<p><b>Personnel Committee (5 Members) – Meets as and when required, typically once per year.</b>  Elizabeth Scott  Alan Doig  Govind Nair  Victoria Ashfield  Grenville Holland</p>	<p><b>Business Committee (6 Members) – Meets once every two months, dates and times agreed at Committee level.</b>  Elizabeth Scott  Richard Ormerod  Nicola brown  Grenville Holland  Esther Ashby  Govind Nair</p>
<p><b>Licensing Committee (6 Members) – Meets once every two weeks on a Monday at 4:30pm (the alternative Friday to the Planning Committee).</b>  Susan Walker  Nicola Brown  Alan Doig  Esther Ashby  Govind Nair  Helen Weston</p>	<p><b>Finance Committee (6 Members) – meets once per quarter, dates and times agreed at Committee level.</b>  David Freeman  Alan Doig  Robert Hanson  Victoria Ashfield  Helen Weston  Liz Brown</p>

#### **14. CLIMATE LEAD OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Cllr R Friederichsen set out his first report on work carried out following the Parish Council’s decision on 27th February 2022 to appoint him to the role of Parish Council Climate Lead until the Full Council meeting in May 2022.

Taken together, the recommendations in this report provide a suggested workplan for the climate lead for the period from June 2022 to April 2023.

Cllr R Friederichsen set out a number of priorities, work carried out and recommendations in his report, including his work in carrying out a carbon audit of the Parish Council, organising the carbon literacy training, improving the River Wear and producing a report on the Sniperley Park development

In addition to priorities identified within the report, Cllr R Friederichsen also recommended he focussed working with the Business Committee to identify potential projects, including ones which may require budget to be allocated in 2022 for the financial year 2023-24.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support this report and the recommendations set out within.

Cllr R Friederichsen was elected as the Climate Lead for the Parish Council for this year. Nominated by Cllr C Lattin and seconded by Cllr V Ashfield.

## **15. PLANNING FOR THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS 2022**

The Clerk advised that planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee is going extremely well and that the Parish Council, together with the Durham Markets Company, is continuing to take a leading role in the organisation of Jubilee events this year.

The Clerk also advised that regular meetings with key partners are taking place and this has resulted in a timetable of very exciting events for the City over the Jubilee weekend and beyond.

The Clerk advised that he was very pleased with the event with Sue Snowdon at New College Durham and thanked Cllrs E Ashby and E Scott for their work and support with this. Cllr E Ashby thanked the Clerk and Alice Wilkes for their tremendous work with this event.

## **16. CYCLE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **Suggested Cycle of Meetings (all commencing at 7pm)**

#### **2022**

23<sup>rd</sup> June  
28<sup>th</sup> July  
22<sup>nd</sup> September  
27<sup>th</sup> October  
24<sup>th</sup> November  
8<sup>th</sup> December

#### **2023**

26<sup>th</sup> January  
23<sup>rd</sup> February  
23<sup>rd</sup> March  
27<sup>th</sup> April

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  
(30<sup>th</sup> June 2022)**