



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of Summons: 12th July 2023

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council's Business Committee: Councillors E Ashby, V Ashfield, N Brown, D Freeman, G Holland and R Ormerod.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Business Committee meeting** to be held **via Zoom at 11:00am on Tuesday 18th July 2023** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

The link to join this meeting is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85625495715>

Meeting ID: 856 2549 5715

Members of the public and press are also cordially invited to attend. Members of the public may address Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings for up to three minutes, with the agreement of the Chair of the meeting, provided that the statement is related to an item on the agenda. The speaker should approach the Clerk before the meeting commences to request to speak during the meeting.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Civility and Respect and Human Rights plus Social, Economic and Environmental matters.

Yours faithfully,

A. Shanley

Mr Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and apologies**
- 2. To receive any declarations of interest from members**
- 3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 16th May 2023**
- 4. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.** Please email the Parish Clerk parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk to register to speak
- 5. Proposal to support the work of the ShopWatch organisation**
- 6. Proposal to launch a campaign promoting independent businesses in the City centre**
- 7. Update on the work of Durham BID**
- 8. Update on the proposal to improve the Fowler's Yard area of the City**
- 9. Proposal to support the Children's Book Festival event over the Summer holidays**
- 10. LNER consultation on the proposed closure of the Ticket Office at the Durham Station**
- 11. To consider recent correspondence from local businesses regarding a PSPO on nuisance begging in the City**
- 12. National Association of Local Council's Power to Change report**
- 13. Report by retail consultant Graham Soult on work in Durham City**
- 14. Date of next meetings**

19th September 2023 at 1pm

21st November 2023 at 1pm

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Business Committee held on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 11:00 via Zoom

Present: Councillors R Ormerod (in the Chair), V Ashfield, E Ashby, D Freeman and G Holland.

Also present: A Shanley (Clerk), Mr Paul Howard and Ms Emma Wright (Durham BID), Mr Colin Wilkes and Ms Alice Wilkes (Durham Markets Company), Mr Geoffrey Thistlewaite and Mr Trevor Longstaff (Durham Pointers), Mr Graham Soult (Parish Council retail consultant), Councillor Carole Lattin (Parish Council), Belinda Snow and Sarah Billingham (DCC).

1. Welcome and apologies

None received.

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members

None received.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 21st March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2023 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the sentence *"The Chair advised that he is discussing this with the Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee and would be looking to progress the Voluntary Contribution request, as discussed at previous meetings of the Council"* being amended to *"The Chair advised that he is meeting with the Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee and would be discussing the Voluntary Contribution request, as agreed at previous meetings of the Council"*.

In agreeing the minutes, Councillor E Ashby advised that she wished to disassociate herself from the comments made by Councillor G Holland in paragraph 3 of item 7 within the minutes.

4. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.

None received.

5. Report by retail consultant Graham Soult on work in Durham City

Graham provided an update on his work since the last meeting of the Parish Council's Business Committee in March 2023.

Graham advised that he had been working with Oxfam to promote their store since the re-fit of the store had taken place.

Graham also advised that he had helped to promote the expansion of Woven Workshop into the Prince Bishops Place shopping centre.

Graham advised that he had covered Moon Jewellery as this month's Independent Cover Star. Graham highlighted that he had been supporting Moon with the expansion of its online marketing and retailing operations.

Graham also advised that he had recently helped to plan the most recent meeting of the Business Durham organisation in Coarse in Durham City. Graham highlighted that the new Coarse restaurant is doing extremely well and this is great to see as a new Independent in the City.

Graham also advised that he had linked a potential new retailer for the City with the landlord in the former Vodafone site and he hoped that this would soon be filled with an independent business.

Graham advised that he had received feedback from potential new retailers that they would like to see improvements to the Fowler's Yard area in the City.

Graham advised that he continues to engage with new chain retailers as he was aware that people would like to see more retail options in the City as opposed to new Food and Drink businesses.

Graham also advised that he had supported Durham Pointers with its new website.

Graham advised that @IndieDurhamCity now has 4,800 followers and he continued to push a positive message about Durham City on social media.

Graham highlighted that there were very few vacant units in the City and that vacancies are generally only available in Prince Bishops.

Graham advised that he was aware that there plans to re-develop the Prince Bishops Place site and he looked forward to seeing more details about the plans.

Colin highlighted that he was concerned at the growth in hospitality businesses versus the reduction in retail businesses. Graham advised that he was making every effort to ensure that new retail businesses are coming into the City centre. Graham advised that he felt that Durham City needs more smaller units for new Independents.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that one unit in Riverwalk is currently advertising itself as "short term lets will be considered." Graham advised that his impression is that Riverwalk is very welcoming to small independents and highlighted the example of *Collected* as a new retailer in Riverwalk. Graham advised that his impression is that business rates are a major factor in deterring new business from coming into the City in spite of the reduction in rateable value for most businesses in the City.

Councillor G Holland highlighted that the planning policies for the City favoured retail and this is the direction of travel he would like to see the City go in. Councillor G Holland advised that he very much supported accommodation to the upper floors of premises.

6. Update on the work of Durham BID

Paul Howard advised that there were very few vacancies in the City at present and this is positive news. Paul also advised that a lot of work has been happening in the background at Prince Bishops in order to retain as many of the retailers there in the City.

Paul also advised that Durham BID had been doing some engagement with the Banks in the City, particularly in view of the recent changes to legislation that Banks can now share spaces and the potential impact this may have on Banks retaining their physical presence in the City.

Paul advised that the Indoor Market is key in providing a great retail offer in the City. Paul also advised

Paul thanked the Parish Council and the Clerk for their work in putting on the Spark LED Drummers event.

Paul advised that footfall is increasing in the City and this included daytime shopping, etc.

Paul advised that the independents campaign is set to commence in July and will also run over Christmas too.

Paul also advised that the BID Board has now agreed not to host a Christmas light switch on this year in the City. Paul advised that this cost a significant amount of money and this isn't translating into more money spent in the City, based on feedback from businesses. Paul advised that the BID will be putting more funding into Christmas events in the City instead of this.

Paul advised that the BID is also hoping to host Fire and Ice Festival again in 2024 but he hopes to see the format changed slightly in that the night time show element is withdrawn but that the funding went on more sculpture installations during the day.

Paul advised that Durham BID is working closely with the ShopWatch organisation and it is clear that local businesses do have a concern around ASB in the City. Paul advised that he was aware that the AAP would soon be looking at an application for a coordinator to help tackle some of these issues.

Paul advised that Durham BID has been asked a lot about outdoor seating for pubs and bars and he had discussed this with Durham County Council but this is not going to be possible.

The Clerk suggested that an attraction such as a ferris wheel over the Christmas period might be a great draw for more people. Paul advised that Durham BID is looking into this.

7. Discussion with Durham Pointers on their view of the Tourism economy of the City

The Chair welcomed Geoffrey Thistlewaite and Mr Trevor Longstaff from Durham Pointers to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

Geoffrey thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Business Committee. Geoffrey advised that the general feedback from visitors of the City is a highly positive one in his view. Geoffrey advised that Durham Pointers do have a concern about the potential implications for the re-location of the coach drop-off point moving to the other side of the River Wear and now being located on the Radisson Blu side of the river.

Trevor advised that he had recently been contacted by the Council's tourism team to advise that they had recently installed signage to Freeman's Place to direct passengers to the Cathedral Bus. That being the case, Trevor advised that Durham Pointer do have ongoing concerns about this drop-off location as, whilst it may function better from a highways management perspective, this effectively made the walk to the centre of Town, the Indoor Market, etc. much longer.

Trevor also advised that the signs leading coaches to the city centre were also being updated with the new information about this new coach drop-off location. Trevor advised that Durham Pointers fully expected some teething issues with this arrangement and that drivers will continue to drop visitors off on the original side of the river.

Trevor also highlighted that Durham Pointers had recently lost 10 volunteers and were struggling to recruit new volunteers for the "Meet and Greet" service.

Trevor also highlighted that visitor numbers were slowly increasing but advised that, in 2019 (pre-Covid) Pointers welcomed a total of 236 coaches to the City whereas there were only 96 in 2022. Trevor advised that there is a noticeable increase since 2022 however and he hoped that visitor numbers may continue to increase.

Councillor V Ashfield highlighted the concerns of Market Traders in relation to the moving of the coach park drop-off point to the other side of the river. Councillor V Ashfield highlighted the importance of the coach business to the wider economy of the City.

Councillor V Ashfield advised that she had been lobbying the County Council to consider reinstating the original coach park at the Sands.

Ms Alice Wilkes supported Councillor V Ashfield in her statement about the impact of this move on Market Traders and that she was aware of the concerns of small businesses on this.

Mr Colin Wilkes advised that he was concerned at the lack of signage from the new coach drop-off point. Colin advised that he wanted to see a more joined-up approach to signage in the City.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that she was concerned about the impact of moving the coach drop-off point on visitors with mobility issues. Councillor E Ashby also asked Durham Pointers for their views on how these proposals were impacting on the visitor experience for visiting Crook Hall. Geoffrey advised that his understanding was that Crook Hall is certainly still the destination of choice for visitors in the afternoon after visitors have seen the Cathedral.

Councillor G Holland advised that he regretted deeply the withdrawal of the tourism centre in Durham City and commended Trevor and his colleagues for filling an enormous gap in the City.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he felt that the Council should be telling coach drivers not to drop off by the passport office if the new coach drop-off point is definitely going to be by the Radisson. Councillor D Freeman advised that having effectively two coach drop-off points would cause issues for organisation such as Durham Pointers who are stretched for resources at present.

Geoffrey thanked the Parish Council for the support they had shown to Durham Pointers over the years.

8. Proposal for the Parish Council to undertake a project to improve Fowler's Yard in Durham City

Councillor E Ashby highlighted the ongoing issues in relation to Fowler's Yard and Back Silver Street, in relation to the bins, fly tipping, signage, etc and drew the Committee's attention to the report she had produced to support this item.

Councillor E Ashby asked that the Council considers establishing a special Working Group to look into these issues and making this a much more attractive space for visitors as well as more of a circular walking route around the City.

Sarah advised that she would be happy to look into the issue of signage for Fowler's Yard. Sarah advised that the current signage strategy for the City is on hold as the costs associated with delivering the strategy are proving to be prohibitive at the moment.

Belinda advised that there had been a lot of work happening in the background with the landowner at Fowler's Yard and she was aware that the owner is currently seeking planning permission from the Council which may have an impact on the visibility of bins in that area.

Councillor V Ashfield seconded Councillor E Ashby's proposal that a Working Group be established to look into the issues at Fowler's Yard. Councillor C Lattin asked that a Member of the Parish Council's Environment Committee could be part of this Working Group. Councillor E Ashby advised that she felt that this should be an initiative led by the Business Committee only.

The Chair advised that he supported a Member of the Parish Council's Environment Committee being part of this Working Group and proposed this to Committee. This was seconded by Councillor G Holland. 2 votes were cast in favour of this and 2 votes were cast against this. The Chair made a casting vote in favour of this proposal.

It was also **agreed** that Durham Markets Company and the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Wardens teams at DCC be part of this Working Group.

9. Update on events in Durham City (to include Durham Pride and Coronation).

The Clerk highlighted that the Durham Pride event is set to take place on the weekend of 27th and 28th May 2023 and that he had been engaging with Mel on the planning for this. The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council is a sponsor organisation of this event and he hoped to see as many Councillors at this event as possible.

The Clerk also took the opportunity to thank all partner organisations for their support in putting together a series of Coronation events in the City, which he felt had been a terrific success. Colin Wilkes took the opportunity to thank the Clerk for his extraordinary role in pulling together so many different organisations in the City for this event.

10. Update on the request to Durham City landlords to make a voluntary contribution to the Parish Council precept

The Clerk advised that approximately £1,500 had been received from a number of student landlords/ agents to the Parish Council's appeal and that he and colleagues from the Parish Council's Environment Committee would soon be meeting with representatives from DCC and Durham University to decide on the best use of this funding and a report would be coming to Full Council in June on this matter.

11. Date of next meetings

18th July 2023 at 11am
19th September 2023 at 1pm
21st November 2023 at 1pm

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

Signed,

**Chair of the Parish Council's Business Committee
(18th July 2023)**

ITEM 5: PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE SHOPWATCH SCHEME IN DURHAM CITY

As Members are aware, ShopWatch has been operating in Durham City in one form or another for some time now. The scheme has developed further since November 2022 through the work of the PCSO for Durham City Michael Ashurst and both the Police and daytime economy businesses in Durham are keen to continue this work.

ShopWatch is a partnership network of businesses in Durham City, linked by radio to each other and the police. This scheme operates in most major cities, towns and shopping centres across the country, and collaborating with local councils and the police, ShopWatch has a purpose to deter and ultimately assist with the prevention of antisocial behaviour within public spaces as well as increasing personal safety and confidence amongst many retailers and their customers.

Key aims of the Durham City ShopWatch scheme include:

- To tackle and prevent retail crime and anti-social behaviour through effective communication and the prompt reporting of retail crime, anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.
- To promote a sense of security for customers and staff.
- To improve police/licensee liaison by providing effective communications through two-way radio.

Since ShopWatch began developing in November 2022, Durham has noted a reduction in shoplifting crime within the City. This has had a positive impact on local businesses by decreasing losses of stock as well as creating a safer environment for customers. Having a live form of communication between businesses and the police is clearly central to the success of this scheme.

ShopWatch meets at the end of every month in Durham Town Hall and this is an important network of businesses which is well-attended and where feedback can be provided to the Police by retailers and the Police can also share intelligence to retailers (e.g. recent banning orders for individuals found guilty of an offence, etc.).

The Police are looking to expand the ShopWatch scheme further by providing approximately 14 licensed radio sets (provided by the company Apex who currently operate the scheme) to some of the smaller independent businesses in the City. These businesses have expressed an interest in being part of this scheme and it is hoped that supporting businesses with the hire costs for a radio set for a 12-month period will incentivise them to continue with this scheme into the future. This will also allow businesses to assess the radio link while protecting their business by using the radio.

Provision of additional radio sets will also increase the coverage of the scheme across the City, thereby making this safer for businesses and visitors as well as growing the network of small businesses actively engaged in public safety within the City.

The Durham scheme, through Apex, has a rental fee of £20 per month, however Apex are willing to reduce this cost for the year to £120/ annum if 14 radios are hired, with match funding coming directly from Apex.

In addition, Inspector Dave Clarke has also been successful in securing additional officers to cover the City centre and residents and businesses have noted an increased visible police presence during the day.

The Police are hoping that the Parish Council will provide funding for these 14 radios at a total cost of £1,680.00. Although this funding was not allocated in our January budget setting, funding is available from the Parish Council's contingency funds of £15,000.

One of the key aims of the Parish Council's Business Committee is to promote the daytime visitor economy of the City and supporting this proposal is consistent with that aim.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to support the expansion of the ShopWatch scheme, as set out in the above report, and fund the hiring of 14 radios.
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ITEM 8: UPDATE ON THE PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE THE FOWLER'S YARD AREA OF THE CITY

As Members are aware, improving the public realm and promoting businesses within the Fowler's Yard area of the City has been discussed at previous Committee meetings. At the Business Committee meeting in May, it was agreed that a Working Group of stakeholders should be established in order to assess what actions can be taken to positively promote this hidden gem of our City.

The potential of Fowlers yard to play a key role in the City's business, cultural and visitor economies has long been recognised but never realised.

At the May meeting of the Business Committee, the Committee received and welcomed a report by Councillor E Ashby which set out a number of proposed for working towards Fowler's Yard and Back Silver Street enhancement. These points set the basis on which the Working Group has worked are set out below:

Some ideas for working towards Fowlers Yard and Back Silver Street Enhancement

1. A scheme be designed to way-sign Walkergate as entry to FY and BSS and the circular route up the steps to Silver Street and then either on to the vennel to Saddler Street/ castle etc or North Road.
2. The 2 sets of steps from FY/BSS to Silver Street be cleaned and if possible, the walls to waist/shoulder height brightened.
3. Introduction of a lighting scheme to co-ordinate the circular route.
4. Briefing from and work with bin companies on details of their systems re: legal requirements, business contracts, etc. What signs can we/they put on bins etc? - need for basic information. Practical matters such as days of collection/ time etc. Best ways of arranging bins for collection and daily use. Guidance notes for new businesses.
5. Award for business demonstrating best waste management and waste reduction. This might go across the whole city centre.
6. Improve the green/ riverside boundary as part of a pedestrian route - good photos across the river.
7. Meet with businesses in Fowlers Yard including the Theatre etc and DCC's Cultural officer re: growing the wider cultural offer.

Since the May meeting of the Business Committee, a number of positive actions have been taken in relation to these proposals and these are summarised below:

Lack of signage

- It has been highlighted that there is a lack of signage within the public realm, particularly from Lower Claypath to the corner of St. Nic's Church to let pedestrians know that Fowler's Yard exists.
- Sarah Billingham (DCC) is arranging for a new fingerpost sign to be installed on the sign at the corner of St. Nic's to say "Fowler's Yard Artisan Crafters".
- In addition, Colin has requested the installation of a further fingerpost sign on the grass verge on the corner of Back Silver Street to include details of

the Indoor Market (which includes information about the lift and the toilet facilities). Sarah is investigating this.

- The bin at Silver Street could be moved elsewhere on Silver Street to make the sign for Fowler's Yard more visible.

Bins

- There is a proliferation of bins within Fowler's Yard itself. New yellow painted hatching has been painted on to the road and this has improved the positioning of the bins so as to allow the collection lorry to make a U-turn once the litter is collected. It has also freed up space within the public realm and made the area look marginally tidier with the positioning of the bins more aligned.
- It is clear that a number of businesses do not have enough space capacity within their allotted bins and their bins are regularly overflowing. The Parish Council's Neighbourhood Warden team is liaising with businesses concerned to seek a solution but preferably for more collections to be paid for.
- The Parish Council has met with the owners of Fowler's Yard and, long-term and subject to planning approval, they are hoping to develop the site such that most of the industrial bins can be housed internally. Members will need to consider that there are heritage impact implications for these proposals insofar as the present site allows for a largely unblemished view of the World Heritage Site from the riverside.
- The Parish Council's Environment Committee is hoping to launch a Green Business Award in August and this includes a criteria for waste management as well as recycling and other criteria. It is hoped that this will inspire positive change for improvements to the public realm re: bins etc.
- Although the Neighbourhood Wardens have labelled a number of bins, a small few remain unlabelled and it is essential that these be identified so that action can be taken against anyone allowing their bins to overflow, etc.

Flytipping

- Colin at Durham Markets Company has reported incidents of fly tipping within his designated waste area and this is a continuing problem which must be addressed by identifying those who do this. Colin has received a quotation for a CCTV camera pointing at the bin area and has asked if the Parish Council might be in a position to offer some match funding towards this. The total cost for this camera is £1,341.06 and Colin will pay £500 towards this. It is felt that this will help to make the entrance to Fowler's Yard from St. Nic's a more attractive entrance.

General public realm appearance

- The Parish Council's Environment Committee has sufficient funding available to fund additional planters and this could help improve the public realm if adopted by local businesses in the area.
- The Durham City Theatre windows facing onto Fowler's Yard are in a terrible condition. The Clerk has met with representatives of the Theatre on-site and this is not only causing an issue from a public realm perspective but also causing a serious issue of damp to the upper floors of the Theatre. The

Clerk will look to support the group with an application to the Durham AAP and with planning etc. if this is acceptable to the Committee.

Photos of the site

Photo 1 – entrance to Fowlers Yard



Photo 2 – DMC bin store



Photo 3 – Durham City Theatre



Photo 4 – yellow hatching



Photo 5 – bin area behind Market Place



Photo 6 – signage from St. Nic's



**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to consider the above report and agree any further action to be taken in respect of the aims of this proposal.

ITEM 9: PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL EVENT OVER THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS

As Members are aware, the Parish Council has agreed a total budget of £25,000 for this financial year towards hosting events in the City. One of the events identified within this budget was the regular Book Festival in the City.

The Parish Council and the Durham Markets Company have established a very close working relationship to deliver events for the City. As such, the Parish Council has received the following request for support to once again host the Durham City children's book festival in 2023 from the Markets Company:

Durham Children's Book Festival

Aims:

- To celebrate and promote north east authors, illustrators and small businesses who do such a fantastic job of inspiring children to pursue their dreams and aspirations.
- To encourage footfall into Durham City Centre
- To provide locals and tourists with a positive view of Durham City as a family friendly destination with accessible and affordable family activities.
- To work together with different inter-city organisations to promote Durham City Centre.

Festival programme

- 4 author/illustrator workshops each day interspersed with literary themed circus workshops from Lunatrix from 9/10am-4pm
- Free family entertainment (face painting and street entertainment TBC)
- Debut of the Durham Children's Book Festival Family trail (1 for young children around the immediate city centre with a slightly longer one for families with older children). Children will be encouraged to explore a different view of Durham City and visit independent retailers to find hidden story themed statues.
- Family market of north east businesses

Cross partnership working

- Durham Markets Company
- City of Durham Parish Council
- Durham BID
- Kylie Dixon and Northern Lass Lounge
- Elvet and Bailey
- Durham Constabulary
- Waterstones

Funding

- Literary themed circus workshops (2days) = £1400
- Bugs 'n' stuff (2 days) = £350
- Facepainter (2days) = £300
- Authors workshops (2days) = £1200
- Sound = £1000
- Promotion (leaflets and social media) = £500
- Family walking trail (to promote and encourage families to explore the city centre and the small independents within it) = £700

Total: £5450

Funding from Durham Markets: £1,150

Total grant funding applying for: £4300

Efforts to make the festival more sustainable

- The decision has been made to reconfigure the festival layout in order to make it as cost effective as possible while still providing a fantastic experience for young children and their families. With this in mind, we are using the gazebos to create a marquee this year (easier to assemble and allows us greater flexibility to work within the confines of the Market Place). We also are holding a family market to go alongside the festival, in order to allow local authors and small independent businesses to promote themselves in the city centre for a relatively small cost.

With grateful thanks for your consideration and we look forward to working with the CoDPC again on another successful event for families in the city centre.

The Parish Council has sufficient budget to support this event, as well as other future events in its agreed programme, at a cost of £4,300.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to support the 2023 Durham City Children's Book Festival, as set out in the above report, at a cost of £4,300.
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ITEM 10: LNER CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE TICKET OFFICE AT THE DURHAM STATION

As Members are aware, LNER is currently proposing to close Ticket Offices across the country and this includes the Ticket Office at Durham Railway Station. In order to assess the public view of these proposals, LNER has launched a consultation and is seeking views by no later than 26th July 2023.

Since announcing these proposals, there has been a strong reaction online in Durham with members of the public exceptionally keen to see the Ticket Office retained. Local Members of Parliament have also objected to these proposals.

LNER's plans include the retention of ticket offices at Edinburgh Waverley, Newcastle, York, Doncaster, Peterborough and London King's Cross, which will continue to offer the same range of products and opening times.

Under the proposals LNER plans to repurpose travel centres at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Darlington, Durham, Grantham, Newark Northgate, Retford, and Wakefield Westgate, with colleagues supporting customers on the stations and proposals to create a modern station retailing experience. LNER is responsible for ticket retailing and passenger assist at eleven stations, as well as Edinburgh Waverley and London King's Cross, all of which will continue to be staffed by LNER staff from the first to the last train and passenger assist will remain.

Within the consultation document, LNER states that it is continuing to invest in its stations as record numbers of customers have returned to using rail services post-pandemic. A Family Lounge has been introduced at London King's Cross station and waiting rooms have been refurbished across the route.

LNER has also committed to multi-million-pound investments at Darlington, Doncaster and Peterborough.

Independent passenger watchdog Transport Focus is facilitating the consultation.

Last week, the Clerk wrote to all Members advising that the Business Committee is proposed to respond to this consultation on behalf of Full Council as the deadline for responses is prior to the next available Full Council meeting.

Further information about these proposals can be found on the website: <https://www.lner.co.uk/station-changes>

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- 1) For Members to consider the content of this consultation and agree on a proposed response.
- 2) For Members to decide what further action beyond responding to the consultation the Parish Council can take in order to raise awareness of this consultation.