



City of Durham Parish Council

The City of Durham Parish Council. Office 3, Clayport Library. 8 Millennium Place. Durham. DH1 1WA.

Telephone: 07510 074875 Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

Date of Summons: 13th November 2024

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council's Business Committee: Councillors R Ormerod, E Ashby, A Doig, G Holland, D Freeman and S Walker.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Business Committee meeting** to be held **via Zoom at 13:00pm on Tuesday 19th November 2024** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83647385424>

Meeting ID: 836 4738 5424

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 held on 27th September 2024**
- 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. Durham Business Viewpoints** – discussion with James Wilson of Durham Markets Company on the business environment of the city.
- 6. Report by Graham Soult on the filling of vacant premises in the City**
- 7. Report on the work of Durham BID**
- 8. Proposal to promote Durham Indoor Market as a retail space to visitors and residents**
- 9. Proposal to establish a voluntary 'Friends of Durham Town Hall' group**
- 10. To review the business committee's strategic aims for 2025/26**
- 11. To consider the business committee's budget for 2025/26**
- 12. Events report** – to include a report on Remembrance Day and Christmas.
- 13. Dates of future meeting(s) of this Committee:**

Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 1pm

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the Business Committee meeting held via Zoom at 11:00am on Friday 27th September 2024

Present: Cllr R Ormerod, Cllr E Ashby, Cllr D Freeman, Cllr G Holland and Cllr S Walker.

Also present: Mr A Shanley (Parish Clerk), Paul Howard (Durham BID Manager) and Graham Soult (Parish Council retail consultant).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor A Doig.

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members.

The Chair declared an interest in Item 9 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussion on this item.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceeding.

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

None received.

5. Durham Business Viewpoints

The Clerk advised that, due to unforeseen circumstances, James Wilson from Durham Markets Company is unable to attend this meeting. It was **agreed** that James should be invited back to the next meeting.

6. Report by Graham Soult on the filling of vacant premises in the City

The Chair welcomed Graham Soult to the meeting.

Graham began his presentation by highlighting the recent change to the provision of services delivered by Canny Insights. Graham highlighted that this would be a one-day per month arrangement with more focus on the filling of empty retail units in the City as opposed to online or social media marketing of the City.

Graham highlighted a number of achievements since this new operation had been agreed, specifically around progressing ongoing leads for new businesses to take over empty retail premises.

Graham highlighted that he had worked closely with the owners of Course and had managed to secure them two new premises on North Road – now opened as Crush and Isla – and Graham advised that this high-quality offering is helping to change perceptions of North Road.

Graham also highlighted the recent opening of the People's Bookshop in Prince Bishops and advised that he has been supporting the owners with funding and other general queries.

Graham also highlighted two ongoing leads in Durham that he is currently working on; one with an existing independent business looking to expand into a bigger unit and another opportunity involving a North East Museum potentially going into a unit at Prince Bishops.

Graham also advised that he has met with a business that is looking for some bookable events space in the City and is looking to support them in this way.

Graham also advised that he has met with a Sunderland-based online retailer which is looking for circa 2,000sqft for retail/ event space and he has recently introduced this business to Prince Bishops.

Graham also advised that he had recently introduced Prince Bishops to the Head of Property and Estates at Marks and Spencer's and is hoping that this meeting will be beneficial in attracting a new food retailer into the City.

Graham advised that there were a number of new businesses keen on trading in Durham City who had the following space requirements –

Quality furniture retailer very keen on Durham which requires 5,000sqft. Graham advised that he has offered a tour of the City to the UK property director when suitable options emerge.

A beauty brand wants 750sqft with a prominent frontage and is looking at either Silver Street and Prince Bishops as potential locations.

A national brand wants over c.1,200sqft – this brand has previously rejected Prince Bishops but is very keen on Silver Street due to its high footfall.

Graham highlighted the importance of maintaining ongoing conversations with these businesses.

Graham highlighted that his perception of current trading in the City is that retailers are keen to see the redevelopment of Prince Bishops take place as soon as possible. In addition, Graham highlighted that the frontage of STACK is having a detrimental impact on the image of this street. The Clerk reported that the STACK frontage should be sorted imminently thanks to a scheme jointly worked on together with the Parish Council/ Durham BID.

The Chair thanked Graham for his excellent report and for his work on behalf of the Committee.

7. Report on the International Welcome to Durham City campaign

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that she, the Clerk and Paul at Durham BID had recently launched the Parish Council's International Welcome to Durham City campaign. This includes the provision of posters in key entry points in the City as well as the Park and Ride sites which service the City.

Councillor E Ashby thanked the Clerk and Paul for their support in distributing these posters around various businesses but expressed disappointment that a number of businesses had not as yet installed these to their shop frontages.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that there were a number of posters still available as part of this campaign and asked if the Committee could arrange for these posters to be installed in some of the colleges and PBSA sites around the City. The Clerk **agreed** to work with Councillor E Ashby and the University's Community Liaison Officer to arrange this, following unanimous agreement from the Committee.

8. Update on the retail unit at Mount Oswald

The Clerk and Councillor E Ashby highlighted the long-running issues in seeing the retail unit at Mount Oswald finally occupied. The Clerk advised that a requirement for a new retail unit on this site formed part of the Masterplan and planning consent for the Mount Oswald development.

The Clerk advised that he had struggled to receive any responses from the new Community Liaison Officer at Banks on a definitive date on when this unit will be occupied, however the Clerk advised that he has now had sight of a leaflet confirming that this unit will be occupied by a mini ASDA.

Councillor E Ashby offered to liaise with the new Community Liaison Officer at Banks to attempt to get a firm commitment on a date on when the new unit will be occupied and actively retailing.

9. Discussion on anti-shoplifting strategies in North Road in Durham City

Councillor E Ashby highlighted a new alarm system at North Road's Sainsbury's and expressed concerns about the wellbeing of staff as a result of noise, etc. Councillor E Ashby advised that this system seems to have been removed but asked that the Shopwatch meetings consider what measures each of the different retailers are taking in order to address issues of shoplifting.

Paul highlighted that the Shopwatch meetings are very well-attended and the radios initiated by the Police and Parish Council have been really so welcome to support the City becoming more resilient to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Paul also welcomed the new PSPO in Durham City which has just been approved by DCC's Cabinet. Paul advised that he hoped that this would be another tool in the box for the Police and Neighbourhood Wardens to be able to tackle these sorts of problems.

The Committee **agreed** to consider the expansion of the Shopwatch initiative with appropriate funding allocated towards additional radios.

10. Update on the new STACK unit on Silver Street

It was highlighted that works are due to commence on Silver Street for the new STACK unit in Easter 2025. Members expressed frustration at the poor condition of the frontage of 4-6 Silver Street and advised that STACK should be encouraged

to address this problem; not least because the unit is subject to significant fly posting and occupies a large area of the total street scene of Silver Street.

Paul presented a proposal for the new frontage which he had worked for some weeks on with a designer and a local business, this involved vertical-laid timber cladding along with a "Coming Soon" messaging and iconic images of Durham designed into the timber, e.g. the Rose Window of the Cathedral. Members expressed their disappointment at this style of frontage and asked that this be reconsidered.

Paul advised that he is still liaising with the Council's Design and Conservation and Regeneration teams on this and he hoped to have an assurance that this could be installed in a relatively quick timeframe.

11. Update on the redevelopment of Prince Bishops in Durham City

Councillor E Ashby asked both the Business Committee and Planning and Licensing Committee to do all they can to remain updated on progress with this development, given its significant influence on the success of the City centre as a retailing environment. The Committee agreed to do all it can to remain updated on how this progresses, with the Clerk reporting that he had been verbally advised that the Citrus Group is hoping to commence work to the Centre in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

12. Report on coach management and the riverbanks

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that she had recently observed tourists waiting to be picked up by their coach in poor weather and asked if consideration could be given to the Parish Council potentially funding a shelter in this area to allow tourists to at least remain dry during poor weather.

The Clerk advised that he would be happy to look into this alongside the Council's highways team as there is still approximately £4,000 remaining in the City Theatre project budget.

13. Events report

The Clerk provided a very positive report on this year's Durham Children's Book Festival and provided footfall stats from this event. Members warmly welcomed the work carried out for this excellent event and took the opportunity to thank the Clerk and Durham Markets Company for their work on this event.

The Clerk reported that planning was well in-hand for the Remembrance Day event and that he is liaising with all partners to ensure a successful event in the City.

The Clerk reported that Prince Bishops is hoping to host Durham Duck Race in the new financial year. As a result, the Clerk reported that the £3,000 earmarked for this event was no longer needed for this current financial year. As such, Members **agreed** to allocate this funding to the Christmas light switch on in November for the City. In addition, it was also **agreed** to allocate £7,000 towards the Christmas Festival this year.

The Committee thanked the Clerk for his substantial work with this event.

14. Dates of future meeting(s) of this Committee:

Tuesday 19th November 2024 at 1pm

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

Signed,

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council's Business Committee
(19th November 2024)**

ITEM 10: TO REVIEW THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2025/26

Councillors are reminded that the Parish Council has agreed to formulate its strategy for 2025/26 ahead of the budget setting process in January 2025.

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

For this current year, Members have agreed that the five overarching priorities for the Parish Council are as follows:

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

Looking Forwards

The 'Looking Forwards' document has also been included as part of this work. 'Looking Forwards' is a companion document to the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan and has been developed by the City of Durham Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. It is built on the aspirations and views as expressed by local people for their City during the five years of preparation of the Plan. It looks forward to greater involvement of the community in making Durham a more creative and sustainable City.

In addition to the five overarching aims of the Council, the Business Committee also agreed the following priorities for this year:

Business Committee

Council priorities 2024/25	Business priorities 2024/25	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	Promoting responsible businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy

inequalities in our parish		
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 and ecological emergencies.	Reducing food miles by encouraging the use of local suppliers	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life

**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to consider the above report and agree the Business Committee priorities for 2025/26.

ITEM 11: TO CONSIDER THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE'S BUDGET FOR 2025/26

As Members are aware, the Parish Council is required to agree its budget and precept request for the forthcoming financial year in January 2025.

In order to assist the Council in agreeing both the budget and precept for 2025/26, each Committee of the Council is being asked to propose a budget against their individual identified priorities for next year.

Two years prior, Members agreed that the hosting of events should be delegated to the Parish Council's Business Committee, in view of the Committee's commitment to increase footfall into the City centre. Events have been identified as a key activity the Parish Council can undertake in order to promote Durham as a daytime attraction to family visitors in particular.

The Parish Council's Finance Committee will be meeting in early January to consider each Committee's budget request.

In view of these ongoing commitments of the Business Committee, the following budget is proposed:

Business Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Supporting Independent businesses	
Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	£3,600.00
PRIORITY 2: Increasing footfall through events	
Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, D-Day Anniversary, miscellaneous).	£30,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Tackling shoplifting and anti-social behaviour	
Funding new radios and other initiatives as part of Shopwatch	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Improving shop frontages in the City	
Christmas Frontage Awards (previously under Environment Committee)	£1,500.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025-26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£37,100.00

DECISION REQUIRED

For Members to consider the above report and agree a proposed budget for the Parish Council's Business Committee.