



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of Summons: 15th November 2023

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council: Councillors E Ashby, V Ashfield, L Brown, N Brown, A Doig, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, R Hanson, G Holland, C Lattin, R Ormerod, E Scott, S Walker and H Weston.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Meeting of the Council** to be held in the **LANTERN ROOM, DURHAM TOWN HALL. DURHAM. DH1 3NJ on Thursday 23rd November 2023 at 3:45pm** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

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. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2023**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from meetings held on 15th and 29th September and 13th and 27th October 2023**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/planning-committee/>

- Proposal to adopt a new protocol for site visits for new planning/ licensing applications in the parish area.
- Proposal to produce an evidence base in support of a planning policy on short-term lets/AirBnBs.
- Proposal to produce a report and evidence base in support of a review of County Durham Plan policy 16 on student accommodation.
- Update on the local heritage list for Durham City

- **Environment Committee minutes from meetings held on 12th September and 10th October 2023**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/environment-committee/>

- To consider a nomination for a blue plaque for Bow Cottage.

- **Business Committee minutes from meetings held on 19th September 2023**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/business-committee/>

- Proposal to support a series of events over the Christmas period in the City.

- 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28th September 2023

- 7. PROPOSAL TO CONTRACT ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL**
- 8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD FOR 2023/24**
- 9. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE VACANCY WITHIN THE DURHAM SOUTH PARISH WARD** – report to be provided at the meeting.

- 10. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET SETTING PROCESS** – includes a proposal to launch a public consultation on the Parish Council's priorities and budget for 2024/25.

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the annual meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 28th September 2023 at 19:00 in the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Road. Durham. DH1 3QF.

Present: Councillors A Doig (in the Chair), E Ashby, V Ashfield, N Brown, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, C Lattin, G Holland, R Ormerod and S Walker.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Mr Stephen Reed (DCC Planning Development Manager) and 14 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors R Hanson and G Nair.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor E Scott declared an interest in items 4 and 8 on the Agenda as Chair of the Section 106 Working Group. Councillor E Scott took no part in the discussion or vote on item 8.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH JULY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. DISCUSSION WITH STEPHEN REED ON DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S SECTION 106 PROCESS

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Stephen Reed for attending the Full Council meeting today. The Chair highlighted that there was significant interest in the use of Section 106 monies arising from developments in the parish area. The Chair advised that Stephen was attending to answer any procedural questions only in relation to Section 106 funding.

Stephen thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to speak with them and the public today and highlighted his previous report to the Parish Council some years ago on this topic. Stephen advised that he would be happy to engage in discussions on this through a *question and answer* format.

Mr Jonathan Lovell advised that the public is aware that Section 106 monies are actually a part of the planning application/ process where there is

predicted extra demand on the available provision e.g. extra school places, etc. Mr Lovell asked if this was always the case or are choices and decisions sometimes made later? Stephen Reed advised that, during the consultation process, the planning department will work in collaboration with various public bodies, sometimes internal consultees within the Council (e.g. the education division) to assess each application on its own merits. If, in cases where the development is significant or will necessitate extra future demands on authorities such as education or health, each report on a planning application will set out a certain level of contribution required from developers in order to make the development acceptable. Stephen also highlighted that, should the developer be unwilling to make such a contribution, the planning process can be refused.

Mr Jonathan Lovell also asked if anything was decided ahead of the Section 106 monies received from developers of the many projects in Elvet and Gillesgate, Durham City, over the past ten years? Stephen confirmed that, as with all planning applications, each scheme will be assessed on its own merits and a suitable contribution will be applied to the approval of a scheme depending on its level of impact. In many cases, there have been contributions to core services such as health, education, affordable housing, etc. but in other cases there have been opportunities to gain funding towards open space enhancement and public art, where the Council has deemed it appropriate to attach such a condition.

Mr Jonathan Lovell advised that he felt that the implementation of this planning gain seems to have regional variations between different local authorities and asked if it is usual for there to be varying processes. Stephen advised that each local authority has its own way of dealing with Section 106 schemes. Stephen advised that he certainly felt that Durham operated one of the most transparent and open processes across all local authorities and this included consulting with Parish and Town Councils as well as the various AAPs across the county.

Ms Janet George expressed her concerns that a lot of money seems to be allocated towards projects from Artichoke as opposed to what the local community would like to see. Janet asked what say residents have in the allocation of funding from Section 106. Stephen highlighted that part of the application form for anyone applying for Section 106 needs to demonstrate that there is local community support for the project too. Stephen also advised that there was also a mechanism by which residents could make their views known on any new applications in their area through either their local County Councillors, Parish/ Town Council and/or AAP.

Janet also advised that she was aware of a consultation in another part of the County where residents were being asked to vote for their preferred project for use of Section 106 monies and asked why the same were not the case in the Elvet and Gillesgate division of the county.

Stephen advised that this was a project being run in conjunction with the local County Councillor(s) for that area.

Janet asked who made the final decision on any new applications. Stephen Reed advised that the County Council had established a Section 106 Working Group – made up of Members and Officers – to decide on these applications.

Ms Angela Tracey asked if the monies from Section 106 have to be spent in the electoral division in which the development takes place. Stephen confirmed that this is indeed the case.

Angela highlighted that the residents of Sidegate have had to endure significant developments in their local area for some time, e.g. Milburngate and yet had not seen any of the benefits purported in Section 106 reports to Committees. Angela advised that she felt the time was right for residents to have more say over where funding was allocated.

Councillor V Ashfield advised that public art and open space enhancement were very vague and were not necessarily attributed to specific projects. Councillor V Ashfield advised that she had carried out a lot of proactive work with Residents Association in the Elvet and Gilesgate division and had come up with a plan on projects which do have community support.

Councillor V Ashfield also expressed concern that there are so much Section 106 monies tied to affordable housing for the Neville's Cross division but that these have remained unspent for some time, with no agreed site for this to be delivered on in spite of the desperate need for more affordable housing in the City.

Councillor V Ashfield also highlighted that she had seen no firm plans for the Elvet Park proposal which is being discussed. Stephen advised that he understood that a different team within DCC is presently looking to progress this proposal as soon as possible.

Councillor E Scott highlighted that Section 106 was not a grants scheme and that there are other sources of funding out there, e.g. Lottery funding, Arts Council funding, etc. which could be applied for for other projects.

There being no further queries, the Chair thanked Stephen Reed for attending today and for answering those queries.

At this point, Stephen thanked the Parish Council and left the meeting.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor G Holland presented the minutes from Planning and Licensing Committee meetings held on 21st July and 1st September 2023. There being no queries from Members, Councillor G Holland moved on to Committee reports.

Report on the first draft proposals for the Conservation Area boundary as part of the production of the Conservation Area Management Plan.

Councillor G Holland reminded Members that the Parish Council is a funding partner, along with Durham County Council, for the production of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

On 1st September 2023, Councillor G Holland advised that the Planning and Licensing Committee had met with the lead officer for this work to receive an update on progress.

The Clerk advised that the County Council has now completed the character assessment and condition survey works for each street in the Conservation Area and has produced a heat map showing where there are identified issues in each street. Each street now has its own heritage rating as either: optimal, fair, poor or very poor and the reason for this is stated in the report.

The Clerk also advised that the County Council has completed its identification and analysis of key views of the World Heritage Site and scored these based on their perceived importance. These relate to public views as opposed to private views from a particular property.

The Clerk advised that the coverage of the Article 4 Direction (relating to building materials and design, etc) is proposed to be expanded in order to protect surviving features and characters.

The Clerk also advised that another aspect of this work includes a review of the current Conservation Area Sub-Character Areas and their respective boundaries as well as the boundary of the Conservation Area in its entirety.

In late August, the County Council presented its draft proposals on the respective boundaries and these include a number of highlights:

- The Conservation Area will now be extended to take in Durham City South (Hill Colleges) as well as an area East of Old Durham Gardens.
- The Sub-Character Areas are also being increased to form 7 areas (as opposed to the existing 5) with more concise and distinguishable conservation areas based on character and significance, aligning with the historic narrative of the old boroughs, established by 1250 that were independent single street settlements under the ownership of the Bishop.

In welcoming much of the initial draft of these proposals, Members unanimously **agreed** the following response to the draft proposals for the new Conservation Area boundary:

The City of Durham Parish Council writes to formally congratulate and thank you for a terrific set of proposals in respect of the Durham City Conservation Area boundary. We are aware of the enormous amount of work which you and your predecessor Rebecca Taylor have put into this review.

The Parish Council is proud to be a funding partner for the Conservation Area Management Plan and we thank you for your positive and extensive engagement with us throughout the production of this document.

The Parish Council wishes to make the following observations:

- As a general point, the Parish Council wholeheartedly supports the sub-division of the different character areas as proposed within this document. This allows for smaller, more concise and distinguishable conservation areas based on character and significance as well as aligning with the historic narrative of the old boroughs.*
- Moreover, we fully support the inclusion of a number of the University's Hill colleges as part of proposals for the newly formed Durham City South Character Area. This Character Area includes a high number of non-designated heritage assets, including Grey College, St Aidan's College, St Mary's College, Trevelyan College and Van Mildert College. The document sets out clearly the reasons for this inclusion, with particular reference to building form and design as well as their relationship, views and visual connection to the World Heritage Site.*
- Whilst the Parish Council has a relatively neutral view on the removal of the housing estates at the Sands, concerns have been raised with us regarding the protected status of a number of the trees in this area. A number of these trees form part of the wider landscape setting of the area next to the Sands, contributing a strong element to the local skyline. They are an integral part of the area's setting and have substantial amenity value as well as creating a green leafy feel to the area. Has the Council's Trees Officer been consulted on this aspect of the proposals and what advice are they able to provide regarding the ongoing protection for these trees?*
- In addition, we note from your correspondence with the Gilesgate Residents Association (GRA) that the boundary has now been slightly amended so that West View is now re-included. As you have identified, this is an historic terrace of 1915, has its own character and the lane it fronts is shown on the 1st edition OS map c.1860. The Parish Council fully supports this amendment.*

- *Similarly, we welcome the re-inclusion of Chapel Mews and St. Luke's Mews in this part of the Conservation Area. Whilst the housing is of no special historic significance, the burgage plot pattern is legible and an important part of the historic plan form of Gilesgate and the brick garden walls are an important historical boundary feature.*
- *The Parish Council very much hopes that McNally Place and Green Lane may also be included within the Conservation Area boundary for Gilesgate. Although, we would not support the inclusion of the Esso garage. Historic England make it clear in recent correspondence that conservation areas should be designated where there is "sufficient special architectural or historic interest not to devalue the concept of conservation (NPPF paragraph 186)". The inclusion of the Esso garage and this part of Sunderland Road would certainly seem to meet this criterion.*
- *In addition, the Parish Council objects to the removal of part of St. John's Road as part of these proposals. Firstly, it is unusual to split the boundary in a street. Recent planning applications in this area have also been refused due to their inappropriate harm in this part of the Conservation Area and we would not wish to remove any protections at all to this part of the Conservation Area. Records show that the houses were built sometime in the 19th Century and these form a typical Edwardian terrace that is identified in the Council's adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area adding to its architectural richness and character.*
- *Finally, the Parish Council feels it must object to the removal of Farnley Hey Road from the Crossgate Character Area. This area was developed in the Edwardian period and is a straight wide impressive road running north to south at right angles to The Avenue. Large detached Edwardian /Arts and Crafts Villas (Hillcrest, Farnley Hey and The Tower) appeared within the street scene with extensive grounds and outstanding views. The Parish Council believes that this warrants re-inclusion in this part of the Conservation Area and would be concerned at any loss of protection for this street. Moreover, we are concerned at the loss of protection for trees in the Farnley Hey area in our parish too.*

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We look forward to working with you as this project progresses.

End of response

Proposal to adopt a new protocol for site visits for new planning/ licensing applications in the parish area

Councillor G Holland advised that the Committee had recently discussed the issue of site visits and this had been highlighted with one case in particular. During the discussion on an application within the Neville's Cross division, Councillor E Ashby had queried whether the Committee ought to have a policy on site visits for new planning/ licensing applications in the parish area.

As such, the Clerk advised that he had drafted such a policy for Members' consideration and presented a proposed protocol for approval.

Members unanimously **agreed** that this protocol needed further consideration and agreed to refer this protocol back to the Planning and Licensing Committee for further discussion and adoption at a future Full Council meeting.

• **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 11th July 2023. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to adopt the new Allotment Policy and Tenancy Agreements in respect of the Council's North End Allotment site

The Clerk reminded Members that the City of Durham Parish Council agreed to take over the ownership of the North End Allotment site at Larches Road in early 2019 from Durham County Council. Other allotment sites in the parish – such as St. Margaret's Allotment site – are privately owned.

In late August, the Clerk advised that the Parish Council's solicitor informed the Council that Land Registry has now formally completed the transfer of the site to the City of Durham Parish Council and the Council is now the owners of this site.

Although this has taken a significant amount of time to finalise, the Clerk highlighted that there had been a significant amount of work and engagement carried out prior to this transfer with the North End Allotment Association to ensure that we have a policy and tenancy agreement all parties are content with. The Clerk advised that these need to be formally agreed by the Parish Council and all new tenancy agreements are to be signed.

In February 2019, the Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council agreed to mirror DCC's policy on allotments which was adopted by Cabinet earlier this year. However, this policy includes allowing livestock and beekeeping on their sites as well as other issues - something the Allotment Association is unhappy with for this particular site given its location within a Local Nature Reserve.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council's Environment Committee met with representatives of the Association at its meeting in September to consider the draft proposed changes. Although there was some question over a proposed ban of chemical pesticides and herbicides on the site, the Clerk advised that this has now been dealt with as set out in this policy and tenancy agreement.

The Clerk advised that the site is extremely well-maintained and remains a hugely positive feature in the community of North End.

The Parish Council recently funded a sedum-roofed shelter and water butts for the Association and these have brought significant benefits to the site.

Members unanimously **agreed** to note that the formal transfer of the land has now been completed and the City of Durham Parish Council is the official owners of the site.

Members also unanimously **approved** the content of the new Allotment policy and tenancy agreements and instructed the Clerk to arrange for all new tenancy agreements to be signed forthwith.

Proposal to produce a mural on the wall at East Atherton Street as part of a project to celebrate women's history in Durham City

Councillor C Lattin highlighted that the Durham Women's Banner Group is organising a special 40th Anniversary of the Miners' Strike 'Women Against Pit Closures' event in March 2024.

The event will commence with a special service in Durham Cathedral and will then be followed by a procession with banners down to the Town Hall.

Councillor C Lattin highlighted that the promotion of women's history in Durham City is a priority for the Parish Council and the Council has worked positively with the Women's Banner Group on several other initiatives such as: the restoration of the Ruth First mural, the blue plaques for the first 3 female graduates of Durham University as well as the plaque for the renowned photographer Daisy Edis.

Running alongside this project, the Environment Committee has been making efforts to improve the wall at East Atherton Street. The wall is of very poor quality and has a detrimental impact upon the street scene in this part of the City. Previous efforts to plant hanging plants above the wall in the rear private garden above have not been progressed due to health and safety issues.

At its latest meeting, the Parish Council's Environment Committee agreed to support the painting of a mural on this wall.

The Clerk has investigated whether a planning application would be required to paint the wall and has had it confirmed that, so long as it is clearly not an advert, this would be Permitted Development under Schedule 2, Part 2, Class C which relates to the painting of a building and therefore does not require planning permission.

From a conservation point of view, as part of the Conservation Area Management Plan survey work in this area, the Conservation Officer has identified this section of poorly render brick wall as being a visually stark/harsh boundary and out of keeping as a connection between the 2 Victorian former mine workers terraces.

Conservation has also expressed the view that they would prefer for the mural to have a mining-related theme to its design so that it directly relates to the heritage

of this part of the city. Conservation has also confirmed that any works to this wall may give the street an upgraded heritage value in the Management Plan.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has previously funded the work of Lewis Hobson, a local artist from Durham Spray Paints, at St. Oswald's play park. Lewis is keen to do more projects to promote women's history in the City and the Women's Banner Group are keen to progress this project further.

Lewis has indicated that the total cost for design, rendering and paint works will be approximately £1,000 in total. If approved by Members, it was proposed that the Environment Committee and representatives of the Durham Women's Banner Group be delegated responsibility to agree the design.

Prior to commencing this work, Councillor V Ashfield also advised that the Environment Committee hopes to carry out a consultation with the residents of East Atherton Street.

Councillor V Ashfield advised that the Committee had previously investigated adding some planting/ greenery from the top of the wall but there were practical difficulties with this.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he had previously proposed that the wall should be painted with some sort of mural on but that he disagreed with Conservation that the theme should necessarily be focused on the mining history of Durham.

Councillor V Ashfield expressed concerns at the condition of the wall and advised that she felt that the Council should firstly check on the structural soundness of the wall. The Clerk advised that he would look into this.

Members **agreed** (9 votes in favour and 2 abstention votes) in principle to fund the work of Durham Spray Paints for a mural on the wall at East Atherton Street, subject to the outcome of a public consultation with residents on this street.

Members also **agreed** (10 votes in favour and 1 abstention vote) to delegate responsibility to the Environment Committee for the delivery of this project but with a further amendment by Councillor E Ashby that the final design sign-off of the mural be taken at a future Full Council meeting.

• **Business Committee**

Councillor R Ormerod presented the minutes from the Business Committee meeting held on 18th July 2023. There being no queries from Members, Councillor R Ormerod moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to support the Uniformed Services Fun Day and Youth Market events during the Autumn half-term holidays.

The Clerk reminded Members that, in agreeing its budget for financial year 2023/24, Members approved an allocation of £25,000 towards the hosting of events in the City.

Hosting events in the City is identified as one of the key aspects of the Parish Council's work – through the Business Committee – to increase footfall into the City centre.

To date, the Clerk reported that the Parish Council has delivered a series of Coronation events, supported Durham Pride, the National Youth Market competition, the Children's Book Festival 2023 and planning for the Remembrance Day parade is well under way.

The Clerk advised that the Autumn half-term holidays will run between Friday 27th October to Monday 6th November 2023. This has generally been a relatively quiet period for events in the City. In light of this, the Clerk advised that he has been working with partners the Durham Markets Company to host the following series of events over the week:

Youth Market - October 30th

An outdoor market to promote and celebrate local young entrepreneurs aged 16-30 and provide a supportive space to test ideas as well as the opportunity to sell in front of a buying public with minimal overheads (the gazebos will be provided free of charge). Working in conjunction with the Northern Lass Lounge who will be promoting their Lounge Generation programme to provide support for girls aged 16-17 who would like to run their own business. DMC will also be advertising this opportunity to Durham University and local colleges.

Free family entertainment such as face painting, arts and crafts and a family treasure trail will be provided during both events to encourage families to visit the city centre for a fun and affordable day out.

Uniformed Services Fun Day - November 1st

An opportunity for blue light services to engage with members of the public in a fun, free family setting.

The Clerk advised that DMC has asked for a total of £1,300 towards support for entertainment, advertising and other miscellaneous expenses for these events.

The Clerk also highlighted that, in agreeing its events budget for 2023/24, the Parish Council's Business Committee specifically allocated £2,500 towards the Autumn half-term holidays for events so there is more than sufficient funding available for this.

Members unanimously **agreed** to provide £1,300 towards these events, as set out in the report provided.

Report on planning for the Remembrance Sunday 2023 event

The Clerk presented an extensive report on plans for the Remembrance Sunday event this year, highlighting the huge amount of work going into planning this event.

The Clerk highlighted that he is working with partners to once again ensure that the Parish Council hosted a successful Remembrance weekend this year.

Members thanked the Clerk for his excellent work on this event and unanimously **agreed** to note the report provided and the preparations being made for this event and to delegate all organisational and budgetary responsibility for this event to the Clerk.

Proposal to produce and distribute a leaflet to support local independent businesses

Councillor R Ormerod reminded Members that one of the Parish Council's key aims is to support local independent businesses in Durham City.

As part of this priority, Councillor R Ormerod proposed the production of a leaflet, to be distributed around the City of Durham parish area (as well as the unparished part of Gilesgate) to try and encourage more usage of the great variety of local independents Durham City has to offer.

The focus of this leaflet is around supporting retail businesses as opposed to other uses such as food and drink/ hospitality businesses and to try and alter consumer habits away from online shopping/ retail and more towards using existing premises within the City.

Councillor R Ormerod highlighted that the messaging of this campaign comes directly from the Totally Locally campaign which has also provided stats specific to Durham. The intention of the messaging is to be as direct as possible in a positive way but the general message of 'use them or lose them' is clear from the leaflet. Councillor R Ormerod thanked the Clerk and Committee Members for their work in helping to re-design this page of the leaflet.

Page 2 of the leaflet seeks to inform the public of a number of funding and training opportunities which are presently available through the County Council's economic development and regeneration teams, in a bid to improve existing services and premises as well as attract more uses for the City. Councillor R Ormerod highlighted that its content has been provided by Durham County Council and Members of the Business Committee were also able to approve this at their most recent meeting.

The Clerk highlighted that the printing costs referenced in the report provided of £485 are out of date and the printing costs are now £245 for 10,000 leaflets. The delivery costs remain the same at £38/1,000 leaflets. The Clerk highlighted that the cost for the delivery has been reduced by £60/1000 leaflets as he has timed its production and distribution at the same time as the delivery of the "What to do if you have a local issue in Durham..." leaflet.

The total cost for this project being £625, Members unanimously **agreed** the production and distribution of this leaflet.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 27th July 2023.

The Chair expressed his sincere thanks to all those Councillors involved in the recent meeting of the Central and East Area County Planning Committee which saw 3 highly controversial schemes rejected against a recommendation for the Committee to approve these. The Chair remarked that the Council's success was further cemented this week when Councillor Holland successfully argued another case in the Neville's Cross part of the parish. The Chair advised that the Parish Council has received a lot of appreciative messages from residents for our efforts in this regard. In all cases, the Chair advised that, had the Parish Council not called in these applications, all of the proposals would have been approved. The Chair remarked that residents have come to regard the Parish Council highly in protecting our City from inappropriate development.

The Chair thanked colleagues involved in the Clerk's recent formal appraisal. The Chair highlighted that this was one area of improvement recommended by the Inspectors when awarding the Council a national quality award. The Chair remarked that this was a positive exercise on all accounts and that he hoped this will feed into a follow-up bid for Quality Gold award next year.

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome the new Durham Chief Constable Rachel Bacon to her post. The Chair advised that Rachel was confirmed in this new role at a recent meeting of the Durham Police and Crime panel on Monday. The Chair advised that Rachel joins Durham from her previous role as Deputy Chief Constable of South Wales Police and the UK police lead for mental health. The Chair wished Rachel every success in this new role and expressed his desire at working closely with her to keep the public safe in our City.

The Chair also took the opportunity to welcome our new student residents to our City this year. No matter what their background or programme of study, the Chair advised that students attending the University can be sure of a warm welcome from their Parish Council. The Chair expressed the hope that students will enjoy all that Durham City has to offer them and that they will take every opportunity to be part of City life in Durham. The Chair wished all students every success in their academic careers this year and into the future. The Chair advised that he was pleased to see Councillor Lattin do a welcome video for new students and all will soon be receiving our *"What to do if you have a local issue in Durham..."* leaflet.

The Chair expressed his thoughts to the parents, pupils, teachers and many others caught up in the RAAC-saga at St. Leonard's School in the parish. The Chair advised that he was pleased that MP Mary Foy and others have been working with the school and the Department for Education to ensure that this issue is resolved as speedily as possible. The Chair advised that nothing is more important than the safety of our young people and this disruption to their education is something none of us wish to see.

The Chair advised that he was pleased that the Parish Council's ongoing efforts to resist the closure of the Durham Ticket Office at Durham Railway station continue to attract press attention. The Chair advised that the plans have rightly been met with a groundswell of opposition, with the consultation amassing an unprecedented 680,000 responses. The outcome of the consultation was originally timetabled for assessment by 6th October, however both Transport Focus and London Travelwatch are understood to have requested an extension due to the

sheer volume of feedback. The Chair advised that, in a government concession, they now have until the end of October to complete their evaluation.

The Chair expressed a huge congratulations to all those involved in this year's successful Durham In Bloom competition. Yet again, Durham City won Gold for best small City. The Chair advised that he felt it was truly wonderful to see the work that Andrew Jackson started continue in this way. The Chair remarked that the City – particularly the displays at North Road and Leazes Road roundabouts – looked particularly lovely this year. The Chair advised that he was delighted to continue as a partner in this initiative.

The Chair also offered his congratulations to the organisers of Durham Fringe. Ticket sales this year were up 82% from last year with over 5,000 sold and most of the events sold out. The Chair advised that he hoped to work more closely with the organisers to ensure that we all capture this opportunity to grow and build on this successful, family-fun event.

The Chair put on record his personal thanks to Colin Wilkes, the Managing Director of Durham Markets Company, for all he has done over a 30-year career in our City. The Chair remarked that Colin is deservedly regarded as a powerhouse in Durham and we are all delighted that he ends his career on such a high; a mere 2 years since Her Majesty the Queen awarded Colin an MBE for services to small businesses in Durham.

Finally, the Chair reminded Members that the Council is coming up to that stage in the year when Members discuss our strategy and budget for next year. The Chair advised that he would like to arrange a further Councillors' Away Day ahead of November.

8. SECTION 106 FUNDS - DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR A CONSULTATION CODE OF PRACTICE

Following a number of concerns from Members on the practicalities of this proposed protocol, this item was withdrawn from the Chair and not progressed further.

9. COMPLETION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDIT 2022/23

The Clerk reminded Members that each year the Parish Council undergoes two sets of audits - one internal audit and one external audit. These audits are a legal requirement which assess the Parish Council's policies, standing orders, financial regulations, VAT returns, cashbook, bank statements, minutes, website and more to ensure good governance and compliance.

Earlier this year, the Internal Auditor carried out a review of the Parish Council's workings and provided a positive report, as provided to Members. Mazars LLP have now completed their external audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and have certified the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The Clerk advised that no issues have been identified in the external audit review. As such, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what the Parish Council must do at the conclusion of this audit.

Members thanked the Clerk for his work on this audit and unanimously **agreed** to note the conclusion of the external audit for 2022/23 and to instruct the Clerk to take all appropriate action, as set out in the report provided.

10. PROPOSAL TO FUND THE NIGHT TIME SAFETY HUB IN DURHAM CITY

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council is a funding partner for the City Safety Hub at St. Nicolas Church. In setting its budget for 2023/24, the Clerk advised that the Council had agreed to provide an additional £10,000 worth of funding for the hub for this financial year. This is in addition to the funding provided in 2022/23 of £10,000.

The Clerk advised that other funding partners include: Durham County Council, Durham Police, Safer Streets (national) funding through the OPCC, Durham BID and Durham University.

Since opening on the 5th February 2022, the Clerk advised that the hub has proven to be a positive and at times life-saving facility for Durham City on the busiest three nights of the week. Working between the hours of 8pm and 3am they have provided necessary support, assistance, and guardianship not only to females in a vulnerable or at-risk state, but also males in a similar situation. The hub has dealt with over 3,500 incidents since launching and these can range from the most serious life-threatening issues to the everyday care and wellbeing facility.

The Clerk reminded Members that the latest (confidential) report from August 2023 of the hub's operations and incident log has been circulated to Members.

The Clerk also advised that the running costs for the hub are approximately £130,000 per annum. This includes staffing, training, room hire, equipment and campaign materials. The hub is fully funded till the end of 2023.

To date, the University has committed a further £10,000 thereafter and Durham BID has given a verbal commitment to continue to support the hub.

More worryingly, the criteria for Safer Streets funding has changed and cannot fund ongoing operations such as the hub. There is therefore a need to consider the long-term sustainability of the hub.

Whilst expressing support for the work of the hub, a number of Members expressed concerns that the Parish Council and other public bodies should not continue to fund this indefinitely and expressed the hope that hub could be funded into the long-term by the trade itself.

A number of Members advised that they felt that the Parish Council contribution towards the hub should be gradually reduced.

Councillor E Ashby advised that she lived very close to the City centre and was exceptionally grateful for the work of the hub staff and supported the continued funding for the hub.

In the meantime, the Clerk advised that DCC staff who run the hub are looking for funding from all other partners.

Members unanimously **agreed** to provide the £10,000 funding agreed in this year's budget for 2023/24 for the hub, as set out in the report provided.

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.

11. NOMINATION FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PARISH AWARD

Members unanimously **agreed** to award Colin Wilkes the Freedom of the Parish.

At this point, the Clerk left the meeting ahead of item 12 on the Agenda.

12. OUTCOME OF THE CLERK'S FORMAL APPRAISAL BY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Chair provided a report to the Council following the recent appraisal of the Parish Clerk. Members **agreed**:

- The Clerk focus on those strategic areas identified in the appraisal;
- The Clerk undertake the proposed postgraduate qualification in planning, subject to;
- The Parish Council would be happy to consider requests from the Clerk where he may consider daytime attendance or study may be required to complete the course;
- The Clerk remains in post for at least 2 years following completion of the qualification, otherwise the costs of the course be repaid to the Parish Council;
- The Parish Council vires sufficient funds into the training budget in anticipation of any calls on the training budget by councillors.
- The title of the Parish Clerk be revised to Parish Clerk and Executive Officer;
- The Clerk's salary be raised to £50,782 (SCP44), subject to the pending pay rise and to be paid with effect from April 2023 (the latter aspect of this being **agreed** by 10 votes in favour and 2 votes against);
- The Parish Council invite the Clerk to present for consideration proposed costs of buying a commercial parking contract in a convenient car park;
- The website and the door to the Parish Council offices specify that any visit shall be by appointment only and/or specify days/times of availability to discourage ad hoc and persistent callers;
- The Committees of the Parish Council be invited to consider whether or not they would find it useful to explore the possibilities of additional support and what form that might take (for example, the employment of an

undergraduate or postgraduate from Durham University on a living wage of £10.90 an hour) to provide assistance in committee business;

- Further inquiries be made about possible support for committee administration, including agenda preparation and minute-taking;
- Expressions of interest be sought for: a local IT firm to devise and maintain the Parish Council website; development of an external communications strategy; and event delivery.

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

Signed,

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(23rd November 2023)**

ITEM 5: PROTOCOL FOR SITE VISITS FOR NEW PLANNING AND LICENSING APPLICATIONS IN THE PARISH AREA

The City of Durham Parish Council has created a Planning and Licensing Committee, which will consider and make representations on new planning and licensing applications for sites in the City of Durham parish area, or which will have a significant impact on the parish. The Committee has delegated authority to respond to new applications on behalf of the Parish Council as a corporate body.

Although the City of Durham Parish Council is not the decision-maker on new planning and licensing applications, it has an important duty to discharge in representing its residents in assessing new applications. In the case of new planning applications, the Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning matters which occur in our area.

The final decision on all new planning and licensing applications rests with Durham County Council as both the Local Planning Authority and Licensing Authority.

Introduction

1. Site visits by the Planning and Licensing Committee can be helpful in reaching a decision on issues where site circumstances are fundamental to the decision.
2. Members will have access to any application which is to be considered by the Planning and Licensing Committee and can discuss this with the Clerk prior to the meeting.
3. Where site visits are considered appropriate, Committee site visits should:
 - focus precisely on the observation of site factors which are relevant to the consideration of the application;
 - not be an opportunity for lobbying, public address, submission of new information etc;
 - not be used purely as an opportunity to defer consideration (if there is a good reason to defer consideration of an application, this should be done openly at the Committee meeting);
 - always involve the Clerk or another appropriate officer of the Parish Council;
 - be carefully conducted so that Members cannot be accused of bias to any of the parties involved
 - not go ahead if it is known in advance that a Member or Clerk/ Officer will be attending unaccompanied.
4. A site visit should only be arranged where a proposal is contentious or particularly complex and where the potential impact of the proposed development is a crucial factor which the Committee may find it difficult to visualise or assess from the plans and photographs made available on the Council's planning portal¹ and other supporting material. The purpose of a Committee site visit should only be to gain further information on a specific issue(s) or to assist Members in gaining a better understanding of the proposal.

¹ [Simple Search \(durham.gov.uk\)](https://www.durham.gov.uk/simple-search)

5. Where a proposal is clearly contrary to national or Development Plan policy it should be refused for reasons of principle unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A site visit will not normally be appropriate in the absence of any overriding clear and convincing material considerations, except if necessary to decide whether particular local circumstances warrant the inclusion of additional reasons for refusal.

6. No minutes will be taken of the site visit and no recommendation will be made back to the Committee, as the purpose of the site visit is simply to assist in the decision-making process. Members of the Committee should endeavour to attend site visits to ensure they are fully apprised of all the relevant information prior to considering the application concerned but if all Members cannot attend this will not be a reason to defer a decision on how to respond to the application.

Pre-Committee Site Visits

7. For major/particularly contentious applications, a site visit may be recommended by the Clerk or any Member in advance of a decision on how to respond to the application. In such cases, the Clerk or Member should make a recommendation to the Chair of the Committee (in the cycle before the meeting at which it is intended to consider the application or earlier) that a site visit be undertaken prior to considering the application.

8. If the consultation timeframe allows for a decision to be deferred to the next meeting, any Member may propose that a site visit be undertaken at the relevant Committee meeting. Where there has been no pre-Committee site visit, the Committee may decide that a Member site visit is required in respect of a specific planning/ licensing application or enforcement matter.

9. In all circumstances, the Clerk or Members must state their reasons for recommending a site visit. The reasons for the decision (either way) will be clearly recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

10. A site visit cannot be requested by the applicant/agent or member of the public.

Organisation of Committee Site Visits

11. The organisation of the site visit will fall to the Clerk or relevant officer of the Parish Council. The Clerk/ Officer will send relevant communications inviting the following bodies to the site visits:

- all Members of the Committee
- the Ward Members
- The applicant/agent

12. Other third parties will not be invited to attend a site visit. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Chair of the Committee does allow for third parties to attend the site visit. If this does occur then the third parties will be expected to make their own transport arrangements for the visit.

13. No opportunity for speaking will be afforded to any party other than Members of the Committee who attend the site visit unless specifically requested by the

Committee Chair in order to answer questions of fact. This will be pointed out by the Chair at the beginning of the site visit.

14. The Clerk or relevant officer of the Parish Council must always attend a site visit.

Format of Committee Site Visits

15. For major applications, the Clerk or relevant officer of the Parish Council should prepare a briefing note for Members providing a description of the proposal, a brief summary of any consultee and public responses and identifying the key issues raised by the proposal. This should be circulated in advance of the site visit wherever possible.

16. On assembling at the site at the time specified, the Committee Chair will open the meeting and advise those present of the purpose of the site visit in line with this protocol and of the procedure to be followed, so that all are aware that it is a fact-finding exercise only and that no decision will be taken until the relevant Committee meeting.

17. Members should stay close together and should not engage in discussion individually or in small groups with others who may be present. Any request for Members to express a view or offer of hospitality should be politely declined.

18. The Clerk or relevant officer of the Parish Council will describe the development and point out/explain the issue(s) which Members have come to view, making use of relevant plans when appropriate.

19. Members should address any questions of clarification through the Chair.

Committee meeting following the site visit

20. All members of the Committee, including any who were not able to attend the site visit, are entitled to participate in the discussion and vote when it is reported back to Committee.

Appeal site visits

21. If a planning decision is appealed, the Planning Inspector (appointed by the Secretary of State) will undertake a site visit. For smaller sites, or ones where the site is viewable from public vantage points, the Inspector may make an unaccompanied visit. Where that is not possible, the Inspector will make an accompanied visit with representatives from each side present, as well as any third parties who may have requested to be present.

22. The site visit will follow a similar procedure to the Committee site visit, with the Inspector able to ask for clarification from either party. Sometimes, if the appeal is being determined by way of a Public Inquiry, or a Hearing, the Inspector may leave the Inquiry or Hearing 'open' for the duration of the site visit, and will allow representations to be heard from both parties on site.

23. In all cases, the Inspector will decide the time and date of the site visit, and will set out on what basis the visit will proceed.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to approve the proposed protocol for site visits for new planning/ licensing applications in the parish area, as set out above.
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ITEM 5: Proposal to produce an evidence base in support of a planning policy on short-term lets/AirBnBs

The number of short-term lettings in England has increased significantly in recent years, due to the development and growth of the 'sharing economy' and 'peer-to-peer' accommodation services such as Airbnb.

These online platforms essentially provide marketplaces which connect people who want to rent out their properties or spare rooms with people seeking short-term accommodation.

Outside London, there is no specific limit on the number of days a property can be let out on a short-term basis. It is up to the local planning authority (LPA) to make a judgement as to whether a letting amounts to a material change of use, for which planning permission must be sought.

Different rules apply to London homeowners. Those who wish to use residential premises for short-term accommodation for more than 90 nights in a calendar year must seek planning permission from their LPA.

Alongside planning rules, in some cases tenancy, lease and mortgage agreements may prohibit or restrict short-term lettings.

Proponents highlight the benefits of the accommodation sharing economy for consumers, providers and the economy in general. However, concerns have been raised about the negative impacts associated with the growth in short-term lettings and their concentration in certain neighbourhoods.

Key concerns include:

- commercial operators using residential properties as letting businesses in breach of planning rules and the challenges local authorities face in taking planning enforcement action.
- the impact on local housing markets, in particular on supply and rental prices.
- negative effects on neighbours and local communities, for example from noise disturbance and anti-social behaviour.
- taxation compliance and compliance with health and safety regulations.
- the implications for traditional short-term accommodation businesses such as hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

In light of these concerns, there have been calls from a range of organisations, commentators and politicians for greater regulation of short-term lettings.

In response, the Government launched a consultation on planning measures to give local authorities greater control over the number of short-term lettings in their area, where this is an issue.

Proposals include:

- creating a new use class for short-term holiday lets to distinguish them from "dwellinghouses"

- introducing “permitted development rights” for dwellinghouse to short-term holiday let conversions (and vice versa) so planning permission would usually not be required for these changes; and
- giving local planning authorities the option to revoke these permitted development rights in their area using an “article 4 direction”.

This consultation closed on 7th June 2023 and we are awaiting the outcome of this.

In recent parliamentary debates, several MPs have warned of the ‘hollowing out’ of communities, with the viability of local shops, schools and other local services impacted by the lack of a permanent population and properties being left vacant over winter. The analysis of responses to the DCMS call for evidence noted that *‘many respondents felt that short-term lets had negatively impacted the social dynamics and economic trajectory of local communities, in part by limiting the available housing stock and pricing residents out of the communities.’*

Moreover, in October 2023, the Planning Inspector for an appeal in North Yorkshire (Appeal ref: APP/E2734/C/22/3305930) found that the short-term let use of a property was “materially different from residential” and the appeal was dismissed.

The AirBnB site (a main platform for advertising such accommodation) has over 1,000 properties listed in the Durham area alone on its site: [Holiday Homes & Apartment Rentals - Airbnb](#)

The issue of short-term letting has been raised on a number of occasions during the Parish Council’s Planning and Licensing Committee. Whilst we await the outcome of this consultation and proposals from the Government, it is proposed that the Parish Council takes a proactive approach to this issue.

As such, the Clerk has discussed this issue with the Parish Council’s Planning Consultant Jo-Anne and she has agreed to produce a report which will:

- produce an evidence paper which highlighted the need for such a policy (outlining the current issue); and
- demonstrate how different councils across the country (maybe even Scotland) approach this issue and this could include relevant appeal decisions.

In anticipation of the Government consultation, the report could be presented to DCC to illustrate how they could enforce against the use of properties as short term lets i.e. because there has been a material change of use without planning permission. Should the Government decide to introduce some sort of controls, then it could be used to justify the need for an article 4 direction.

Jo-Anne has previously produced an evidence base in favour of the Article 4 Direction for Mount Oswald in our parish, which was successful. In order to carry out this work on short-term lettings, Jo-Anne would charge a total of £900 to produce this evidence base and there is sufficient budget available for this work.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the production of an evidence report into a policy on short-term lettings, as set out in the above report at a total cost of £900.
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ITEM 5: Proposal to produce a report and evidence base in support of a review of County Durham Plan policy 16 on student accommodation.

The County Durham Plan was formally adopted in October 2020 and aims to accommodate, rather than constrain, the growth of the University, but to manage development such that it is carried out in a sustainable manner in terms of design, layout and location. This is consistent with national policy and guidance which state that plans should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, and make provision for sufficient student accommodation.

However, the significant growth in student numbers in the last twenty years has resulted in an extremely high number of former family homes being converted to houses in multiple occupation in many parts of the City.

Durham County Council has previously sought to manage such development through the removal of permitted development rights in much of the city (through the introduction of Article 4 Directions) and the use of an interim policy, published in 2016 which aimed to prevent further houses in multiple occupation in areas where concentrations are high.

Nevertheless, this high proportion of students, along with the limited size of the city and its particular physical and historic character, mean that there are significant planning issues that need to be addressed. In response, the adopted CDP Policy 16 sets out the Council's approach for considering all forms of university-related development, including student accommodation proposals.

Paragraph 5.155 of the supporting text of CDP Policy 16 rightly states that the Council's approach is to maintain and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities in Durham City and acknowledges that residents have expressed concerns that concentrations of student accommodation in HMOs amongst the general housing stock has a negative impact upon residential amenity and changes the overall character of an area.

Whilst there is certainly recognition that CDP Policy 16 accords with both Paragraphs 91 and 127 of the NPPF, there is also widespread acknowledgement now that Policy 16 is insufficient to protect certain parts of our parish from further studentification.

Although there has been much debate on how the % is calculated, the Parish Council is generally of the view that using the radius as opposed to the street to calculate this is by far the most effective.

CDP Policy 16 uses the 100m criterion when considering proposals for the creation of new HMOs. It is noteworthy that a Planning Inspector, at a recent appeal in our parish (appeal ref: APP/X1355/W/20/3245601), fully supported the Council's use of the 100m criterion, considering: "*the 100-*

metre radius is a more suitable geographical denominator by which to measure the level of C4 properties than use of 'the street' since the latter would turn on the highly variable dimension of the length of the road and the number of dwellings along it, rendering it of limited use." The Inspector further considered the use of the 100m radius to be: *"a sensible way to implement a policy that recognises that a householder's day to day social interaction with others is often dependent upon distance and not just street address"*.

The Parish Council and local residents have had a number of success stories recently overturning the recommendation for approval on several planning applications for Change of Use from C3 to C4 (33 St. Bede's Close, 41 Fieldhouse Lane, 1 Larches Road and 5 Lyndhurst Drive).

It is evident that the planning department is concerned that the Central and East Area County Planning Committee has overturned a number of their recommendations and there is a desire to review Policy 16.

As such, the Planning and Licensing Committee has recently agreed that their hope is to add to the existing Policy and not to remove anything from the Policy. The case of 5 Lyndhurst Drive in particular highlighted the impact of a single application on cul-de-sac areas within the parish and the Committee has agreed to look at the possibility of a so-called "cluster" policy which would consider the impact of several HMOs within close proximity to one another on neighbouring C3 dwellings.

Jo-Anne Garrick has advised that she would be able to prepare an evidence report to feed into the review of policy 16 of the CDP at a fee of £900. This report would look at approaches used across the country – for example Birmingham uses a radius approach, but also consider the impact of family dwellings being located between two HMOs - the policy is supported by a supplementary planning document (SPD). There is sufficient funding within the budget to fund this work and this is seen as a top priority for residents.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the production of an evidence report supporting a review of County Durham Plan policy 16 on student accommodation, as set out in the above report at a total cost of £900.
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ITEM 5: UPDATE ON THE LOCAL HERITAGE LIST FOR DURHAM CITY

The Local Heritage Listings Project is a national initiative launched in 2020 by Government across 22 pilot areas. The council was successful in receiving grant funding to participate as a pilot project. Resources in the Design and Conservation function of Planning and Housing were secured to conduct the research, ICT development, engagement, and data processing to produce lists of non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) for eight pilot areas across the county, also known as a local list.

The criteria used to identify candidates for the local list was developed and agreed with project sponsors; DLUHC and Historic England, and reflects the national guidance in Historic England Advisory Note 7- Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage published January 2021.

The identification of an asset as being a non-designated heritage asset via the planning process or its inclusion on a local list, means that any proposals requiring planning permission which have an impact on its significance or setting would fall under Policies 44 and 46 of the County Durham Plan (as well as section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant policies within Neighbourhood Plans). The planning process provides a balanced judgement which will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The County Durham Plan advises that, 'Heritage assets; designated and non-designated, are irreplaceable so any harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification.'

Preparation of the local lists for the pilot areas is now complete, and a report was presented and agreed at DCC's Cabinet meeting on 15th November 2023 which allows for the publication and promotion of these lists. DCC will now submit the publication date of this list to DLUHC.

The project involved extensive engagement with residents and local interest groups in each pilot area and the City of Durham Parish Council nominated a number of these assets for this list. The outcome of this project will help both promote local heritage and ensure consideration in planning decisions through the development management function.

In total, 340 locally listed assets have now been identified across the pilot areas in County Durham, 65 of which are located in Durham City (although not all of these are located within the parish area). These are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

There were a total of 8 different pilot areas across the county and these include: Bishop Auckland, Durham City, Sacriston, Seaham, Sedgefield, Shotley Bridge, Staindrop and Stockton & Darlington Railway route (including Shildon).

Appendix B of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan lists a number of non-designated Heritage Assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area and this list will now need to be updated accordingly.

Appendix 1 – local heritage list for Durham City

- The Old Neville's Cross Hotel,
- Sainsbury's, Newcastle Road, Crossgate Moor,
- Ye Old Elm Tree Public House, Crossgate,
- 20 Allergate,
- Harrisons Organ Factory, 1 Hawthorn Terrace,
- Street Sign, 57 Hawthorn Terrace,
- St Margaret's Allotments, Margery Lane,
- Park Garden and Landscape Holliday Park, Langley Moor Park / Landscape
- 1 to 7 Railway Cottages, Quarry House Lane, Durham
- Racecourse Riverside, Durham City.
- Park, Garden and Landscape Dunn Cow, Riverside, Durham City.
- Former Swimming Baths, Elvet Waterside,
- Unite Students, Rushford Court, North Road,
- DLI Museum , Aykley Heads, Durham and landscape
- DLI Cottages, Back Western Hill,
- Lychgate, Bede Lodge, Redhills Lane,
- Flass Lane
- New Street,
- Stone pillar, Station Approach,
- Telephone box North Platform, Durham Railway Station,
- Station Bank, North Road,
- 25 Tenter Terrace, North Road,
- Painting attached to 13-15 Silver Street,
- Public Art Vennel between 6 & 7 Silver Street,
- Post box, Palace Green,
- Telephone box, Palace Green,
- DLI Memorial Stone, Palace Green,
- Durham Heritage Centre, North Bailey,
- Garden between 14 & 15 South Bailey,
- Historic garden adjacent to 13 South Bailey,
- St Chads College Chapel, North Bailey,
- Bridge footings near Counts Corner,
- Sculpture, South Street Bank, north of Prebends Bridge,
- Upper Footpath Wall near Prebends Bridge Cottage, Quarryheads Lane,
- Prebends Bridge Cottage, Quarryheads Lane,
- Stone arch, riverbanks, upper path near Quarryheads Lane,
- Floorscape, Riverbanks, upper path near Quarryheads Lane,
- St Oswald's Park, Church Street,
- St Aidan's College, Windmill Hill,
- Van Mildert College, Mill Hill Lane
- St Mary's College, Elvet Hill Road,
- Physics Building, Lower Mountjoy, South Road
- Trevelyan College, Elvet Hill Road,
- Grey College, South Road,
- Durham Crematorium, South Road,
- Dept. of Geography, University Science Park, Stockton Road,

- Dawson Building, University Science Park, Stockton Road,
- Bill Bryson Library, University Science Park, Stockton Road,
- "Cry for justice" sculpture, University Science Park, Stockton Road,
- British Isles floor sculpture, University Science Park, Stockton Road,
- Josephine Butler & Stephenson Colleges,
- Browns Boathouse, Elvet Riverside,
- DLI Statue, Market Place,
- "The Journey" sculpture, Millennium Square,
- Two Telephone Boxes, Land adjacent 97 Claypath,
- 80 Claypath,
- 57 Gilesgate
- School View Lane, Durham
- Rifle Range Targets, Kepier, Kepier Brick Kiln, Kepier,
- Belmont Community Centre and Park, Sunderland Road, Belmont, Durham Park, garden, and landscape with built elements.
- Dragon Park, Sherburn Road, Durham Park, garden, and landscape with
- East Durham College, Houghall Campus
- Spigot Mortar Site,
- Shincliffe Bridge, Shincliffe, Durham
- Mural attached to Ruth First House, Providence Row

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to note the publication of the local heritage list and to instruct the Clerk to take all necessary steps to update the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly.
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ITEM 5: TO CONSIDER A NOMINATION FOR A BLUE PLAQUE FOR BOW COTTAGE

As Members are aware, the City of Durham Parish Council has funded the production of new blue plaques around the parish area, as part of our aim of promoting the rich and diverse heritage of the City.

These blue plaques seek to celebrate a person, event or building of significance and have been popular with visitors and local residents. In addition to the Parish Council's own scheme, the County Council has also run a similar scheme to celebrate heritage and the two projects have complimented one another.

Recent meetings of the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee and Environment Committee have discussed the possibility of having a blue plaque produced for Bow Cottage in our parish, with Members expressing their strong support.



Although the building is unlisted, Bow Cottage is potentially a non-designated heritage, it is identifiable on the 1st edition OS Map c.1856-60, the older elevations a mixture of C19 brickwork and some render. The site is highly sensitive in heritage terms because of its location, Bow Lane is medieval in origin being the site of an important part of the castle defences "Kings Gate" at the bottom of the lane. It is important historic pedestrian link to Mary-le-Bow church and the Cathedral precinct from the Elvet area via Kingsgate Bridge.

More recently however, Bow Cottage was the former home of sculptor Dr Fenwick Lawson and was in fact the location where the Journey sculpture was made. As such, it is proposed that the blue plaque captures this history with the following wording:

Bow Cottage
World-renowned sculptor Dr Fenwick Lawson ARCA lived here
1977 - 2015. The much-loved Journey sculpture in Durham was
crafted here

If approved, a blue plaque at the site would be acquired by the same company which provided the other blue plaques and the costs would be £500.

Although the Parish Council has previously conducted a public nomination process for awarding such plaques, a number of Members are keen to support this proposal and to mark this important location in this way.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the production of a blue plaque for Bow Cottage, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 5: REPORT ON CHRISTMAS EVENTS PLANNING 2023

Members are reminded that the Parish Council has agreed a total budget of £25,000 towards events for this financial year. As part of this, Christmas has been identified as a key season for events in the City and the Parish Council has previously supported Christmas events as a way of promoting footfall to the City during the festive season.

This year, the Parish Council has earmarked a total of £7,000 towards Christmas events over December 2023.

Planning for Christmas events started earlier this month and representatives of the Parish Council have met with key stakeholder representatives of the business community in Durham to arrange events in the lead up to Christmas. These meetings have included Durham Markets Company, Durham University and Durham BID (with the board having individual business representatives).

The main calendar for Christmas-themed events in the City, in addition to activities from other stakeholders and individual businesses, is as follows:

- The Christmas Festival will be taking place on 1st, 2nd and 3rd December as usual. Durham Markets Company is again looking for financial assistance towards the costs of putting this event on again this year owing to increased costs. The County Council has already supported this and DMC is looking for an additional £3,000 sponsorship for the event.
- The Lantern Parade will be taking place on 2nd December starting in the Market Place and leading up to the Cathedral for a service. This event is well-supported and usually attracts approximately 1,000 attendees.
- The Parish Council will be judging Christmas business frontages again this year; most likely on either 7th or 8th December, with prizes awarded at the Parish Council's Civic Christmas party in the Town Hall.
- Durham BID will be running its support for Independents campaign between 17th and 22nd December 2023 and Paul and Emma (Durham BID) will be sending through further details of this.
- Elvet and Bailey and Moon Jewellery (BID Board) are teaming up to put on a fantastic Children's Christmas arts and crafts festival every weekend in December leading up to Christmas. These will be free events aimed at younger children with sessions on jewellery-making, book binding, Christmas decoration making and much more. The Parish Council has been asked if it would contribute £1,500 towards this festival this year with match funding coming from the two businesses.
- Durham BID is organising a series of street entertainment throughout the festive period – including the return of the Grinch in December. Durham BID is putting £4,000 towards this this year and it is hoped that the Parish

Council will provide £2,000 funding towards this, which we have usually done previously.

- Prince Bishops will again be doing a Santa's Grotto this year throughout December and will also be supplementing this with a virtual Santa sleigh ride.
- The Parish Clerk is also arranging the design and printing of A5 leaflets for schools in Durham City to distribute to their pupils. This leaflet will not only advertise Christmas events but other events throughout Winter in Durham City, in order to boost footfall; events to be advertised include the Chinese New Year Festival and the Fire and Ice Festival.
- The Parish Council will also be hosting its annual Christmas Civic event in the Town Hall this year on 12th December 2023; this is a very good event which gives the Parish Council the opportunity to thank all those volunteers and organisations who have worked with us over the last year.

Budget request for Christmas 2023:

- Support for the Christmas Festival - £3,000
- Funding towards the Children's arts and crafts festival - £1,500
- Support towards street entertainment in December (the Grinch) - £2,000
- Advertising of Winter events in Durham City - £500

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to agree to working in partnership with key stakeholders on the hosting of Christmas events. 2) For Members to agree to provide funding for the Christmas events, as set out in the above report. 3) For Members to delegate organisational responsibility for these events to the Parish Clerk and the Parish Council's Business Committee.
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ITEM 8: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD FOR 2023/24

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has been advised by the Local Government Association that agreement has now been reached on the pay award for local government services ('Green Book') employees, covering the period from 1st April 2023.

The new pay rates for local councils have been agreed with SLCC and ALCC. Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

For all spinal points to 43, the agreed award is a flat rate payment of £1,925. For scale points above that the award is 3.88%.

In September 2023, the Parish Council agreed a new spinal point salary level of 44 for the Parish Clerk and therefore the award is calculated at 3.88%.

Historically the calculation of hourly pay for local councils has been reached by dividing the annual salary by 52 weeks and then by 37 hours. This is different from the recommendation of the Joint Council which calculates hourly rates by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week). This marginal difference causes some confusion, and it is intended that next year NALC shall move to the approach recommended by the National Joint Council.

NALC continues to be disappointed that the annual settlement has been delayed for reasons outside the Association's control.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to accept the 3.88% increase to the Clerk's salary. 2) If 1) is agreed, for Members to make the necessary arrangements for arrears to be paid in the November 2023 payroll window.
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ITEM 10: TO CONSIDER THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

This report is intended to update Members on the current budget setting process for the Parish Council to date. A number of the Council's Committees have already met and discussed their individual priorities and budget request for 2024/25 and this will need to go to the Parish Council's Finance Committee in early January 2024.

Information on Council Tax base

Council Tax base is calculated by taking the number of houses in the City of Durham Parish Council area, allocating a weight to them based on their council tax banding and adding up the total of the weighted households. For example, higher council tax band properties carry a higher weighting and lower council tax base properties carry a lower council tax weighting. The Council Tax Base can therefore fluctuate from year to year based on the number of properties in each area. For example, council tax base will increase if any new houses have been built and the occupants have started to pay council tax but may decrease if for example any houses have been demolished in an area or have changed their use from Use Class C3 to Use Class C4 or sui generis (non-tax paying Use Classes).

The 2023/24 Tax Base is 4,641.5. The 2024/25 City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base has been calculated at 4450.1. Our Tax Base has therefore decreased by 191.4 which equates to a reduction of £9,985.34.

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant

The LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2023/24 is £8,437.00.

The reduced tax base and the LCTRS Grant produces a net position of -£1,548.34 for 2024/25.

Precept request

The precept request must be submitted to Durham County Council by the end of January 2023.

The Parish Council's precept Band D charge is currently £52.17. Although the City of Durham Parish Council area has a high population, its tax income is lower than areas of similar size due to the significant number of properties exempt from Council tax because of their use as student accommodation.

The Band D charge in the City of Durham parish area remains one of the lowest in County Durham.

The current draft budget is set out below:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Representing the parish on planning and licensing matters	
Professional support in responding to planning applications and licensing hearings	£5,000.00
Review of County Durham Plan policies	£3,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving the licensed economy	
Enhanced drug searching scheme with Durham Police	£600.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£8,600.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Additional policing and safety for the parish area	
Enhanced SLA with Durham Police for late night policing	£30,000.00
Safety of Women at Night Hub	£8,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the <i>Shhh...11pm to 7am</i> campaign	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Durham in Bloom	£10,000.00
A project to promote clean air across the City	£2,500.00
PRIORITY 4: Engaging the youth in the work of the Parish Council	
Project working with young people (OASES / Elvet and Bailey)	£2,500.00
PRIORITY 5: Improving the appearance of our City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA	£10,000.00
Christmas frontages awards	£1,500.00
PRIORITY 6: Recycling	
Terracycle scheme	£3,000.00
Green business award	£1,000.00
PRIORITY 7: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 8: Improving access to public toilets	
Production of a map and extra signage on available public toilets	£1,500.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£77,000.00

Business Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Supporting Independent businesses	
Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	£10,800.00
PRIORITY 2: Increasing footfall through events	
Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, D-Day Anniversary, miscellaneous).	£30,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Filling empty units with new retailers	
Welcome to Durham Fund (match funded through UKSPF)	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Promoting accessibility and the tourism offer of the City	
Part-funding a Cathedral bus service on a Sunday	£10,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£55,800.00

Full Council

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council	
(Office rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website, other expenditure)	£17,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training of staff and Councillors	
Training budget	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Upgrading the Parish Council website	
Website upgrade	£8,000.00
PRIORITY 3: supporting local community and voluntary organisations	
Grants budget	£15,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Staffing costs	
Clerk salary (including salary, pension, NI on costs)	£75,000.00
Part-time administrator for the Parish Council	£15,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£135,000.00

General reserves	£45,000.00
Contingencies	£15,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£60,000.00

Committee	Cost (£)
Planning and Licensing Committee	£8,600.00
Environment Committee	£77,000.00
Business Committee	£55,800.00
Full Council	£135,000.00
Reserves	£60,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024/25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£336,400.00

- ☐ End of year position for 2023/24 = £45,000.00 (reserves).
- ☐ Funds required (Working budget + contingencies) = £291,400.00
- ☐ Precept (if frozen) + LCTRS grant = £241,938.12
- ☐ Difference - £49,461.88

Parish-wide public consultation on precept

As with the previous financial year, it is proposed that the Parish Council launches a public consultation between November and January to gain public views on priorities and the budget. A copy of the draft consultation form is included with this agenda.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to note the above report and the ongoing budget setting process. 2) For Members to agree to launch a public consultation as set out in the above report on Council priorities and budget.
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