



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of summons: 21st February 2025

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council: Councillors E Ashby, J 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 **Main Hall of the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Rd, Durham DH1 3QF** on **Thursday 27th February 2025 at 7:00pm** 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 22ND JANUARY 2025**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from meetings held on 24th January and 7th February 2025**

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

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

- Report on recent meeting with DCC Traffic Officers re: road user charge zone

- **Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th January 2025**

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

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

- Proposals to support local groups the Durham City Riverscape Community and the Wear Rivers Trust and improve the River Wear.

- **Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 19th November 2024**

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

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

- **Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 15th January 2025**

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

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

- Response to recent Section 106 application by DCC for a 20mph scheme outside St. Oswald's school.

- 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd January 2025.

- 7. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR V ASHFIELD ON THE TEES VALLEY ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY**

- 8. REPORT ON THE RECENT 'MAKING SUICIDE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS' CONFERENCE**

- 9. REPORT ON COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS' FORUM MEETING**

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 will be 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 3 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 will be asked to leave the room.

10. REPORT FOLLOWING ANNUAL STAFF APPRAISAL WITH THE PARISH CLERK

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025 at 7:00pm in the Main Hall of the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Rd, Durham DH1 3QF.

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

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Dave Clarke (Durham Police) and 12 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillor N Brown. No other apologies were received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2024 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Nick Deeming and Mr Steven Lindsay advised that they were part of the group which helped to create the City of Durham parish community emergency plan, which is included in this meeting's Agenda. Both Nick and Steven highlighted the significant work carried out by volunteers as part of this project and requested that Members formally adopt this plan.

Following on from his last report to Full Council, Mr Rupert Benjamin advised that he was still experiencing issues at Homer Terrace where workmen were working on properties and dumping wood and rubble along the lane which he understands from Councillor Liz Brown is not an adopted highway.

Mr Benjamin also advised that the builders were also parking in areas where residents needed access to their vehicles. Whilst Mr Benjamin had already advised the builders of what was permitted, he advised that he found their attitude unhelpful at times.

Mr Benjamin advised that he would follow-up with this in writing to the Clerk and Councillor Brown and also advised that he had been liaising with Jacqui Toase at DCC on this issue too. Mr Benjamin expressed his frustration at the way DCC officers had dealt with his issues to date.

Ms Ophelia Vesely and two other student representatives from EcoDU attended the meeting and expressed their full wholehearted support for the motion in favour of the Parish Council endorsing the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. Ophelia advised that global action was needed now on the climate emergency and that fossil fuels were by far the main contributor to this crisis. Ophelia and her colleagues highlighted that, even at this level of local government, the Parish Council has the capacity to make a real and lasting difference and expressed the hope that Members would endorse the motion.

5. ADOPTION OF THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

Councillor C Lattin highlighted that it had been her pleasure to work with residents on the production of the Emergency Plan before Members at this meeting today. Councillor C Lattin took the opportunity to thank residents, Councillors and the Clerk for their tireless work on this project.

Councillor C Lattin advised that the emergency plan has been developed over nearly 2 years by a group of around 30 residents. It covers the whole city and involves coordination with the University, Cathedral, and local businesses.

Councillor C Lattin advised that the plan aims to ensure residents are aware of risks and have plans in place to care for themselves and their community while waiting for specialist help in an emergency.

Councillor C Lattin advised that, assuming its approval by the Parish Council today, the emergency plan will be submitted to the County Council's Civil Contingency Unit to test the various scenarios identified within the plan. If successful, the plan will be formally adopted.

Members commended residents involved in this project for their outstanding community achievement in developing this comprehensive emergency plan and agreed that this will put the city in a much stronger position to safeguard residents in a crisis.

Members voted unanimously to adopt the Community Emergency Plan as presented and also thanked Councillor C Lattin for her extraordinary work on this initiative.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor G Holland presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from meetings held on 15th and 29th November 2024. There being no queries from Members, Councillor G Holland moved on to Committee reports.

- **Proposal to produce a report in support of a new Article 4 Direction removing the permitted development right to transform front gardens into paved parking areas.**

Councillor G Holland advised that the Planning and Licensing Committee is concerned at the increased number of planning proposals which involve the loss of front gardens to hardstanding used for off-street parking in the City.

Councillor G Holland highlighted that, whilst there is some policy guidance on this issue, at present vehicle crossovers and hardstanding for dwellinghouses are permitted development and, as a result, the local planning authority cannot exercise any control if the works are completed within the provisions of Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended.

As a result, Councillor G Holland stressed that the Committee acknowledges that there is a potential for a major change to the character and appearance of the street scene and, as such, the Committee wishes to form an evidence base in favour of an Article 4 Direction to be able to exercise control and manage such development in Durham City in order to preserve the verdant character of our streets both within and without the Conservation Area.

The Clerk advised that parking on a former front garden creates a domino effect because installing dropped kerbs removes on-road parking spaces. A garden lost to parking does not create more space for parking. The Clerk highlighted that more space is in fact lost. The amount of street parking space declines because access is needed in front of the property. Also, the road and pavement are already hard surfaces and the front garden adds to the amount covered with concrete or paving.

The Clerk advised that he had approached the Council's planning consultant Jo-Anne Garrick to seek her support in producing such a report to be sent to Durham County Council. Jo-Anne has agreed to carry out this work but has asked for specific examples of this within the City so as to reduce her time and workload and hence associated costs to the Council for this work.

Jo-Anne has quoted £1,300 to £1,600 in order to carry out this work on behalf of the Parish Council.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support the production of a list of properties and streets within the parish area where the removal of the front gardens is felt to have adversely impacted on the character of the area.

Following this and upon completion of this list, Members unanimously **agreed** to engage the services of Jo-Anne Garrick as set out in the report provided to produce this report supporting a new Article 4 Direction.

- **To consider the proposal to seek support from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) to lobby Government on making health impacts one of the main licensing objectives under the Licensing Act.**

Councillor S Walker highlighted that the Parish Council has a highly active Planning and Licensing Committee and a key part of the Committee's aims is to promote

the health and wellbeing of its residents, particularly on issues relating to the licensing aspect of its work.

Councillor S Walker advised that the Committee has consistently lobbied for health to be included as a fifth licensing objective in the Licensing Act 2003.

In its recent response to the County Council's Statement of Licensing Policy consultation, the Parish Council called on the Licensing Authority to continue to press Government on this issue.

Councillor E Ashby, as the original proposer of this work, highlighted some alarming statistics relating to alcohol related harm and anti-social behaviour across the county and advised that she felt that the Parish Council should work together with bodies such as the LGA, NALC and CDALC in order to progress this on a national agenda.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted that she believes that, in order to address the alcohol related harm in the longer term, national policies are required, such as minimum unit price alongside a public health licensing objective.

Councillor S Walker highlighted that a fifth licensing objective of health and wellbeing would allow the public health team to use other health data without being restricted to the four licensing objectives. In the main, such a licensing objective would strengthen the representations from Public Health.

The Clerk advised that the Local Government Association has lobbied Government on health as a licensing objective several times over the last ten years.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support the Committee's efforts to request that CDALC itself joins with the LGA and lobby Government to introduce health as the fifth licensing objective within the Licensing Act 2003.

• **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 12th November 2024. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

• **Finance Committee**

Councillor A Doig presented the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 14th October 2024. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 28th November 2024 as follows:

- The Chair wished everyone a very happy, prosperous, and healthy New Year for 2025. A particular thank you was extended to everyone involved in the organisation and success of the Parish Council's Christmas civic event. It was wonderful to see so many people attend and to have the opportunity

to thank them for their work throughout 2024. The Chair expressed anticipation in working with them all in 2025.

- The Chair also expressed gratitude to those involved in organising the upcoming Lunar New Year event in Durham City. The event is set to take place on 1st February, and there is great enthusiasm for celebrating Asian culture in the parish. The Chair and the Mayor, Councillor Liz Brown, will be taking part in the festivities, including the tradition of catching the lettuce, to ensure 2025—the Year of the Snake—gets off to a great start. A special thank you was given to the Clerk for stepping in at the last minute to help make this event possible, even during the holiday period. The work put into this event was acknowledged as a testament to the tremendous efforts of the late Brian Stobie, who made a significant impact as International Officer at the County Council.
- Congratulations were extended to Paul Howard and the Durham BID team on a successful Christmas light switch-on event and the exciting news that the City's Fire and Ice Festival has been shortlisted in the North East Tourism Awards. Voting is now open, and the Clerk has circulated details on how to participate. There is great anticipation for welcoming this fantastic event back to Durham City on 28th February, with a musical theme for all the family to enjoy.
- A reminder was given that Restaurant Week returns to Durham City from 31st January, with over 51 businesses already signed up. It was also noted that businesses outside the immediate City Centre and BID areas have expressed interest in taking part, highlighting the growing success of this initiative.
- Encouragement was expressed at seeing work finally commence at Silver Street on the new STACK premises earlier this month. Regardless of individual views on this project, best wishes were extended to STACK for their redevelopment, with hopes that the work proceeds swiftly and with minimal disruption. The Chair looks forward to collaborating with the STACK team in driving footfall to the City and working together on events. It was also hoped that they would join the Durham BID board and contribute to collective goals.
- It was noted that a further round of public consultation will soon take place regarding the new proposals for Elvet Park. It was welcomed news that funding for the site's redevelopment has been secured, and residents will have the opportunity to share their views. Thanks were given to Councillors Ormerod and Freeman for their efforts on this project. Collaboration with DCC officers on installing child-friendly equipment and new park benches is anticipated. Additionally, an appeal was made to the County Council to expedite the redevelopment of the old toilet block on the site, as there is considerable interest in transforming it into a café.
- Members were reminded that plans for the new data centre at Aykley Heads have been approved. Thanks were extended to Councillor Holland for representing the Parish effectively at Committee earlier this month. It was noted that, just a day later, the Prime Minister announced a new AI

revolution for the UK. There is hope that this signals good news for the funding of the Aykley Heads data centre.

- A reminder was given that the "Making Suicide Everybody's Business" Conference will be held on 18th February. The Clerk and AAP Manager Craig Morgan have shared details on how to participate. Members were strongly encouraged to attend as part of ongoing efforts to support the mental health and well-being of residents.
- With local elections approaching in May, best wishes were extended to all candidates. It was confirmed that an informal drop-in session, titled "A Day in the Life of a Parish Councillor," will be organised in early to mid-March to provide potential candidates with insights into the role and its level of commitment.
- Finally, sincere appreciation was extended to Clean and Green Team Leader Joe Peat. It was noted that Joe worked tirelessly over the holiday season, responding swiftly to residents' concerns through Members and the Clerk. His prompt action was highly valued by the community. A recent image of the newly trimmed-back Station View received positive feedback on social media. Joe has also been working closely with the Clerk and Councillor Ashfield on issues at the Sands. Gratitude was expressed for his dedication and the support of his team.

8. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY 2025/26

The Chair reminded Members that the aim of the Parish Council's strategy is to give local residents, Councillors and Officers a clear understanding of what the council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver its aims and objectives.

The strategy sets out what the areas of development or change the Council intends to focus on over the next year outlining those areas of service that are identified as priority aims and objectives. Members unanimously **agreed** that the five overarching priorities for the Parish Council are:

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.

Members also unanimously **agreed** that the priorities for each Committee in 2025/26 should be as follows:

Committee priorities

The priorities for each Committee in 2025/26 are set out below:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Council priorities 2025/26	Planning priorities 2025/26	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish as a consultee on planning matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Consulting the Parish on planning matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring schemes deliver the required levels of affordable housing and adapted housing for the disabled and elderly.	Theme 4. A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Protect existing Rights of Way and promoting the creation and adoption of new Public Rights of Way and ensuring that they are accessible to all.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
	Protecting our green infrastructure and assets within our parish boundary and ensuring that they are used to the best possible public benefit.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City

3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Upholding the development plans for the area i.e. Neighbourhood Plan and County Durham Plan.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	To maintain and develop an evidence-base to update the Neighbourhood Plan and comment on planning applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Protecting our World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas and designated and non-designated heritage assets.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Delivering a Conservation Area Management Plan	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Protecting against overdevelopment	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live

4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Supporting accommodation above retail units in the City centre.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Supporting tourist attractions and transport infrastructure for the visitor economy	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Putting green future at the heart of planning considerations	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Resisting schemes which do not deliver net zero by 2030 and supporting those which do.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

Council priorities 2025/26	Licensing priorities 2025/26	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish on licensing matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring that all new licensing applications and existing premises promote the four licensing objectives. Lobbying central Government on ensuring that health impacts become the fifth licensing objectives.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Empowering our residents to make informed	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

	representations on licensing matters.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Supporting a cumulative impact policy for the parish Supporting a late night-levy on licensed premises in the parish.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Making licensing as open as possible by supporting DCC's new online licensing portal	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Making the City more accessible to all by representing the needs of all users in relation to pavement and outdoor seating applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Ensuring that the objectives of licensing and planning are aligned.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Promoting the early evening economy to families and tourists	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City

		Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	To encourage all new taxi licenses granted by DCC to be for low emissions/ electrical vehicles only.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

Environment Committee

Council priorities 2025/26	Environment priorities 2025/26	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with and responding to residents of all ages and backgrounds in environment-related work Mobilise Volunteer groups Work with young people and respond to their concerns	Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life.
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promote cleaner air, a cleaner river, green spaces, and streets for living across the city. Reduction in light pollution. Reduction in night time noise. Sustainable travel Supporting the creation of a Community Emergency Plan	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Work with all relevant committees to ensure the climate and ecological emergencies are considered in all planning matters. Sustainable housing	Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Improve and protect the appearance of the city and its heritage.	Theme 2: A Beautiful and Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy

5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Be proactive and collaborate with all partners (including Parish Council committees, Durham County Council, residents, developers, landlords, and other businesses) to coordinate our impact on the climate and ecological emergencies and increase community resilience. Encourage sustainable Travel Increased awareness and action on climate change. Tackle the ecological emergency	Theme 1: A City with A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
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Business Committee

Council priorities 2025/26	Business priorities 2025/26	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with local businesses, including improving the visitor economy	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promoting responsible and environmentally sound businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Supporting new businesses and attempting to fill empty units across the City and promoting the overnight stay economy/ businesses 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, particularly the overnight stay sector	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 footfall 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 and emerging green technologies and services	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life

9. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

The Clerk reminded Members that there is a need for the Parish Council to have agreed its budget and to submit its precept request for the forthcoming financial year by the end of January 2025.

In order to support this work, all of the Parish Council's Committees met last year and have submitted their respective budget proposals for their work from April 2025.

The Clerk highlighted that the Finance Committee had met on 15th January to discuss this and the proposed budget was before Members to consider alongside three proposals for the precept as part of item 10.

Members carefully considered each item of expenditure as proposed by Committees and the majority of Members (by 6 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 1 abstention) agreed that they wished to achieve a budget which facilitated the precept to only be increased by 2.6% in line with UK inflation.

Those Members who voted against this proposal voted in favour of the Finance Committee's recommended budget and precept (as detailed in the report at item 10).

With the proposal to only increase the precept in line with the 2.6% inflation rate agreed by majority, Members unanimously agreed the budget as 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	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving the licensed economy	
Enhanced drug searching scheme with Durham Police	£600.00
Deployable noise monitoring equipment	£0.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025-26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£7,600.00

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	£40,000.00
Safety of Women at Night Hub	£10,000.00
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	
Planting budget	£2,000.00 (£8,000.00 added from 2024/25)
PRIORITY 4: Engaging the youth in the work of the Parish Council	
Project working with young people (clean air and climate change)	£2,500.00
PRIORITY 5: Improving the appearance of our City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA	£12,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Promoting the heritage of our parish area	
Introduction of new blue plaques	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 7: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust (Education and INNs)	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 8: Emergency planning	
Supporting our community in preparing for emergency events	£2,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025-26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£80,500.00

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
Sponsoring community events with local businesses – a specific focus on improving the early evening economy	£5,000.00
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	£42,100.00

Full Council

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council	
(Office rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website and other expenditure)	£19,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training of staff and Councillors	
Training budget	£3,000.00
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)	£85,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Paying for elections	
Parish contribution towards the cost of all-out elections	£20,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025-26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£142,000.00

General reserves	£45,000.00
Contingencies	£15,000.00
Election reserve	£5,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2024-25 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£65,000.00

Committee	Cost (£)
Planning and Licensing Committee	£7,600.00
Environment Committee	£80,500.00
Business Committee	£42,100.00
Full Council	£142,000.00
Contingencies and election reserves (to be added)	£20,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025/26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£292,200.00

In agreeing this budget, the following was also unanimously **agreed** to be amended from the Finance Committee's recommended budget:

- The budget set aside for the review of the County Durham Plan should be reduced from £5,000 to £2,000.
- The planting budget should be reduced from £15,000 to £2,000 (in terms of additional funding).
- The £8,000 earmarked for the much-delayed Market Place improvement project should instead be used to top up the general planting budget.
- The £2,000 to provide support to climate groups in Durham City was removed entirely.

10. PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT REQUEST FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

It was **noted** that the 2025/26 Tax Base is 4,622.9. The 2024/25 City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base was calculated at 4,450.1

Members noted that the Tax Base has therefore increased by 172.8 which equates to an increase of £10,644.48 although Members also noted that the LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2025/26 is £0. The increased tax base and the removal of the LCTRS Grant produces a net position of -£2,208.48 for 2025/26.

Members **agreed** by majority (6 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 1 abstention) to Option 2 for the precept, as set out in the report provided, to increase the precept in line with inflation at 2.6%, which equates to a Band D charge of £63.20 and generate a total income of £292,167.28.

11. REQUEST FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL TO ENDORSE THE FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Councillor V Ashfield presented a report to Members highlighting that the world is in a climate emergency and fossil fuels are responsible for the bulk of CO2 emissions worldwide.

Councillor V Ashfield highlighted that support for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is gaining momentum worldwide. Many local and subnational decision-makers are supporting the call. One hundred cities and subnational governments – including the US state of California, London, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Barcelona, Vancouver, Sydney, Los Angeles and Toronto – have endorsed the treaty. An ever-growing bloc of national governments has joined them – including Colombia, which is economically dependent on fossil fuels. The support of local councils around the world is key for building the pressure to get more national governments on board and ready to start the treaty process.

Councillor V Ashfield highlighted that the three pillars of action proposed by the Fossil Fuel Treaty are:

- Non-Proliferation - preventing new coal, oil, or gas developments
- Equitable Phase Out of existing fossil fuel production plans
- Just Transition so that no community, country or worker is left behind

Councillor V Ashfield acknowledged what the Parish Council can achieve on its own is small so stressed the need to call upon the County Council to support this treaty. Councillor V Ashfield advised that DCC is doing good work towards achieving carbon neutral in the County, mainly through their Climate Emergency Plan 3, and the targets are ambitious.

Councillor V Ashfield advised that a motion from DCC to endorse the Fossil Fuel Treaty would put additional pressure on the UK Government to endorse this important treaty. The motion provided within the Agenda papers was **proposed** by Councillor V Ashfield and **seconded** by Councillor C Lattin. Members unanimously **agreed** the motion as follows:

This Council notes that:

- 1. The scientific consensus is clear that fossil fuels are primarily responsible for accelerating global climate change, and that the climate crisis now represents one of the preeminent threats to global lives and livelihoods.*
- 2. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report states that it is unequivocal that climate change has already disrupted human and natural systems and that societal choices and actions implemented in the next decade determine the extent to which medium-*

and long-term pathways will deliver higher or lower climate resilient development.

- 3. The International Energy Agency stated in its May 2021 report "Net Zero by 2050" that in order to reach that goal there should be no new oil or gas fields, or new coal mines, as of that moment.*
- 4. The Paris Climate Agreement is silent on coal, oil and gas, an omission with respect to the supply and production of fossil fuels (the largest source of GHGs) that needs to be collectively addressed by other means; and that global governments and the fossil fuel industry are currently planning to produce more than double the amount of coal, oil and gas by 2030 than can be burned if the world is to limit warming to 1.5°C and avert catastrophic climate disruption, and such plans risk undoing the work of our Council to reduce GHG emissions.*
- 5. A new global initiative is underway calling for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty that would plan the end of new fossil fuel exploration and expansion, phase out existing production in line with the global commitment to limit warming to 1.5°C and accelerate equitable transition plans globally.*
- 6. Our entire global community will be impacted by the climate crisis. Vulnerable communities, and those who have contributed the least to climate change, however, will often be impacted most acutely.*

This Council believes that:

- 7. New fossil fuel infrastructure and expanded reliance on fossil fuels exposes communities to untenable risks to public health and safety at the local and global levels; and that the economic opportunities presented by a clean energy transition far outweigh the opportunities presented by an economy supported by expanding fossil fuel use and extraction.*

This Council resolves to:

- 8. Formally endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and make that endorsement public.*
- 9. Call on Durham County Council to endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and to call on the UK government to do likewise.*
- 10. Reaffirm our commitment to rapidly decarbonising our economy at a local and national level.*
- 11. Write to the Local Government Association and raise the need for a planned phase out of fossil fuels, and to call on it to promote the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty among its members.*

12. REPORT ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S INTERNAL CONTROLS

Members unanimously **agreed** to the appointment of Mr Gordon Fletcher as the Parish Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2024/25.

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

1. RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

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

2. SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

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

The Parish Council has adopted a risk register and this is under continuing review by the Clerk and the Chair/ Chairs of Committees and any issues arising from risk assessments carried out will be reported to Full Council.

The assessment of the risk attached to any and all of the Council's actions and responsibilities forms an essential part of all Council decisions. Risk mitigation (the reduction in the level of risk where it is deemed to be too high) is integral to many of the Council's policies but it also forms an important part of the detailed Standing Orders which govern the way in which the Council carries out its business.

A copy of this risk register has been circulated to Members and this includes a table identifying risk mitigation/ contingencies. This is kept under annual review and Members unanimously **approved** the risk register and the associated mitigation actions identified through this review.

The Council

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

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

The Full Council meets at least 10 times per year. The Parish Council does not usually meet in August or in December.

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

Clerk to the Council

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations and advises the Council on managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to. The Clerk also manages projects agreed by full Council and works with all suppliers and contractors agreed by full Council to carry out functions on behalf of the Council.

Payments

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

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

Risk Assessments/Risk Management

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

Internal Audit

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

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

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

Gordon Fletcher has indicated that he is willing to carry out an audit of the Parish Council again next year. The cost of this service is £175.

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

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

External Audit

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

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

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

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

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The external audit report for 2023-24 was carried out by Mazars and was completed in September 2024. No issues were raised by the external auditors.

6. INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

The Auditors did not raise any issues as part of the 2023-24 Audit.

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.

13. FUTURE REVIEW OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION WITHIN THE COUNCIL

It was **agreed** to defer this item until after May 2025. No decisions were taken on this matter.

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
(27th February 2025)**

ITEM 5: REPORT ON RECENT MEETING WITH DCC TRAFFIC OFFICERS RE: ROAD USER CHARGE ZONE

Note from meeting with DCC Highways re: (Durham City) (Road User Charging Scheme) Order 2014 (Amendment No.1) Order 2024 – reference 5175164

Date of meeting: 28th January 2025

In attendance: Dave Lewin and Kieron Moralee (DCC Strategic Traffic), Councillors Susan Walker, John Ashby and David Freeman and Parish Clerk Adam Shanley

Apologies: Councillor Esther Ashby

1. The Parish Council representatives began by welcoming the intention to introduce stricter traffic regulations in this part of our city. For many months, our medieval peninsula, particularly the Market Place and Elvet Bridge areas of our City, have been subjected to significant abuse by a number of road users.
2. All parties agree that the scale and frequency of this issue increases markedly post-8pm when civil enforcement officers are no longer on duty; effectively creating a 'free-for-all' environment.
3. The Parish Council representatives took the opportunity to thank DCC and NSL (parking enforcement) colleagues for their ongoing and positive engagement with us on this important Order. Civil enforcement officers, together with officers at Durham Constabulary, have shown great willingness to engage with us particularly on joint enforcement operations during the Summer and Autumn 2024.
4. In that context, all parties agreed for the need to attend the DCC Highways Committee where this will be agreed/ discussed (now likely scheduled for 21st March), in lockstep with one another.
5. The Parish Council representatives wholeheartedly support the increase in the access charge from £2 to £5 though we stressed the need for a £5/ access charge rather than a £5/ day charge.
6. Officers felt that a more proportionate approach is needed for the time being and advised that they would still be recommending the £5/ day charge to DCC's Highways Committee. Parish Council representatives accepted this approach on the basis that a review of the effectiveness of this new Order and the related actions would take place approximately 6-months from the date of the Order being sealed.
7. It is important to note that the TRO which includes the £5 charge per day can move forward almost immediately after the Committee approves this in March, otherwise this will need to go back out for re-consultation which will cause a delay of up to 9 months. However, if it goes through as is and the monitoring shows this TRO is not sufficient to address the issue, a £5 per visit amendment could be made within 18 months and the existing TRO with its other benefits will still be in place.
8. Parish Council representatives asked if a loading bay at Saddler Street could be introduced, following representations from one local business. Dave Lewin

highlighted that this would not be acceptable from a health and safety perspective as the loading bay would sit between two sets of traffic lights and would be on an already narrow, predominantly pedestrian street.

9. Parish Council representatives asked if vehicles registered on the so-called "white list" (vehicles exempt from any charges) could be required to re-apply each year in the same way that residents have to re-apply for a permit. Kieron highlighted that organisations such as the University and the Cathedral – who do need regular access to their premises – do have access to their own white list however this has been greatly reduced and is limited in number of vehicles per organisation and this is calculated based on the total number of off-street parking places each organisation has. This was very welcome news and one of the key takeaways from the meeting.
10. Parish Council representatives asked if daytime retail premises within the charging zone might be able to add at least one vehicle to the white list. It was understood that this same option is available to market traders for loading/unloading purposes only. Kieron advised that he was not aware that such an arrangement is in place for market traders and would need to check this.
11. Dave and Kieron advised that the £5 charge would still apply to market traders – on the presumption that their vehicles are not on the white list – and would apply when accessing the Market Place to collect their stalls. (Most traders arrive before 10am to set up and therefore this will be outside of the charging period).
12. Any vehicle accessing Elvet Bridge outside 2am-10am would receive an automatic ticket of £60 (reduced to £30 if paid within a set number of days) as this would now fall under a moving traffic offence. APRN cameras would pick this up however these cameras cannot be used to enforce parking (law changed by Lord Eric Pickles in 2012).
13. Concerns were raised regarding the existing exemption for Uber Eats as most are registered as Uber drivers too and these fall under the definition of private hire vehicles; all of whom are exempt from the charge. Adam Shanley asked for that to be withdrawn but DCC officers advised that restricting access to a vehicle can adversely impact on issues such as health and safety/ ASB in city centres and stressed that this was a balancing act.
14. David Freeman brought the concerns of two residents who regularly attend St. Nicholas Church on a Sunday and who need access to the door. David asked if residents with mobility issues needing to access the church service could also be exempt from the £5 charge. Kieron advised that he would check this with the legal team but he was sure that any blue badge holders may be exempt from the £5 charge but that they would need to apply for the exemption from DCC.

Action points

- Kieron to confirm the date of the DCC Highways Committee where this Order will be discussed/ agreed.
- Parish Council representatives to provide a report of this meeting to the Planning and Licensing Committee who have delegated authority from Full

Council on highways matters and seek their agreement on the Parish Council's stance going into the DCC Highways Committee meeting.

- Kieron to confirm if blue badge holders might also be able to apply for an exemption to the £5 road user charge.
- Kieron to clarify whether Market Traders are also included on the white list.

ITEM 5: PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT LOCAL GROUPS THE DURHAM CITY RIVERSCAPE COMMUNITY AND THE WEAR RIVERS TRUST AND IMPROVE THE RIVER WEAR

As Members are aware, the City of Durham Parish Council has agreed a fund of £5,000 for this current financial year (2024/25) towards a project aimed at improving the River Wear. This has been a significant priority for the Council's Environment Committee since as early as 2022 and this has usually taken the form of both funding and collaboration with the Wear Rivers Trust as part of its Durham Peninsula Invasive Non-native Species (DP INNS) project. This project is also supported by other key stakeholders in the City, notably the University and the Cathedral as the major landowners along the river wear.

The Durham Peninsula Invasive Non-native Species (DP INNS) project is a long-term project aimed at connecting the dots across the project area to achieve a joined-up approach to managing, and raising awareness of, invasive non-native species (INNS), particularly Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and Giant Hogweed. The project has been active since 2021 and has already seen various successes, including intensive survey efforts which have produced in-depth maps of the project area; widespread management of the source of Giant Hogweed within the Old Durham Beck system; and the creation of an active and engaged organisational register with members meeting regularly for steering / operations group meetings.

Treatment of both Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed involves the use of pesticides, it is therefore imperative to have a willing team of WRT staff and volunteers that are trained in the safe use and application of pesticides next to water. In previous funding years, the Parish Council has funded this through the Wear Rivers Trust.

The key value of the Durham Peninsula INNS projects is found within the connections made between the various players and stakeholders within our community. WRT are positioned as the Chair of the DP INNS Steering and Operations groups, and it is vital that effective communication continues. Such communications lead to direct management of INNS, either through WRT led volunteer events, WRT staff and volunteer management activities, or events / activities led by partner organisations.

It is looking very promising that WRT will be able to tackle INNS in DCC woodland this year, an issue which has limited our progress over the past few years. WRT have requested permission to remove invasive species and litter pick in Pelaw Woods, Aykley Woods and Flass Vale between March and October 2025.

WRT has also secured Northumbria Water Branch Out Funding. The funding will pay for scythe training for 4 volunteers from the Friends of Groups in Durham Peninsula and two WRT staff. The skills from the training can be used to manage the INNS management in DP more sympathetically. It will also allow from the removal of large sections of Himalayan Balsam late in the season, when hand picking is no longer an option. WRT will engage in volunteer and staff led events to remove INNS in DP.

The Northumbria Branch Out Funding is supporting the delivery of three Engagement Days at the Botanic Gardens and Blaid's Wood; Palace Green Library and river peninsula; Redhills and Flass Vale. These will be delivered in May, June and July and will support the work WRT is completing in DP. In addition to the Engagement Days WRT would like to deliver engagement events that coordinate with national and local campaigns. The Great British Spring Clean occurs in March 2025, a litter pick will allow the opportunity to spread the word of INNS and impact of litter on the environment. The Big River Watch is a bi-annual event introduced by the Rivers Trust. There is an app to record a river visit. The app is valuable at recording the conditions of the river and supports the INNS campaign. A mindfulness event in April is planned in conjunction with the Big River Watch. There is also the opportunity for WRT to attend the Greenspaces Event at Durham University and Durham Pride event at the Sands.

The Parish Council's Environment Committee recently considered a proposal by the Wear River Trust for funding towards volunteer events as well as engagement with schools. Whilst the engagement with schools was welcomed and this has been funded each year since 2022, the Committee felt that the priority for the work ought to be geared towards volunteer recruitment and activities.

The Committee agreed to delegate responsibility to the Chair of the Environment Committee to engage with WRT more closely on this and the Chair has asked that the Committee funds the printing and distribution (within the DH1 postcode area) of an information and volunteer recruitment leaflet (a copy of which is provided alongside this Agenda) at a total cost of £1,800 (ex. VAT).

Additionally, the Committee has also supported the work of the recently established Durham City Riverscape Community (DCRC) Group.

The group, made up of 213 members, is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the beauty of the River Wear through Durham City. Their skills help keep the riverscape looking its very best while functioning for the enjoyment of all, residents, visitors and wildlife alike. As well as the much-publicised monthly litter picking events hosted by this group, the group shares thoughts, ideas, vision and creative solutions to the issues facing the City's primary and outstanding natural asset.

The Environment Committee recently met and agreed to the following funding proposal by the DCRC:

Item	Justification	Cost	Potential supplier
Insurance for the activity	Without it we cannot continue as an organised group	£112	Already agreed by Adam and Graham
Long reach poles & hooks (3 off)	To be used to retrieve litter currently inaccessible due to terrain	Pole £74 ea. Hook £20 ea. Total £282	Docazoo (on Amazon) PC ay have preferred suppliers

Printed logo on Hi Viz Vests we currently have or retrospective printing with Riverscape Logo	To give the group a sense of identity and bring attention to the activity and its importance to the community. In an effort to engendering as more responsible attitude to littering along the river and in the city.	£3.5 each for 50 in total. Total £175	Hi Viz (Potentially can be sourced locally)
Tear drop flag to publicise activity 2 off	As above the plan would be to site at each end of the stretch, we are picking	Base £25 Flag £125 X 2 Total £300	Vista Print Potentially can be sourced locally
Supply of disposable rubber gloves	Provide protection from infection from contaminated litter	£11 per pack of 50. One year's supply say £132	Screw fix
Sustainable dispensers for antibacterial gel.	Currently Antibacterial (Alcohol) gel is available in the club boat house purchased by members in disposable dispensers a more environmentally sound and cost-effective alternative is durable dispensers filled from a bulk container	£15.71 ea Handy Dryers Refillable Sanitiser Pump Bottle x 3 =£47.13 Gel in packs of 5l £22 ish each x 3 for 1 year = £66	BLT Direct PC probably has preferred supplier but widely available
		Total: £1,067	

All activities set out above by both groups would be covered by their own individual insurances and both groups are aware that it is their sole responsibility to carry out all risk assessments and other procedures in the delivery of these activities.

The groups are also aware that full acknowledgement of any and all funding from the City of Durham Parish Council must be included in all literature and online materials promoted by the groups.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to approve the total funding requests as set out in the above report as follows: a) Wear Rivers Trust – funding of the production and distribution of an information and volunteer recruitment leaflet @£1,800.00
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	b) Durham City Riverscape Community – funding of the activities as set out above to a total of £1,067.00.
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ITEM 5: SECTION 106 APPLICATION FOR A PART-TIME ADVISORY SCHOOL 20MPH SCHEME IN THE VICINITY OF ST OSWALD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Members are aware, the City of Durham Parish Council has recently been consulted on a new Section 106 application by DCC's Traffic Assets division, seeking funds from the Elvet and Gilesgate division's Section 106 funding.

The project aims to install a part-time advisory 20mph speed limit around St Oswald's Church of England Primary School. The existing school warning signs will be replaced with powered posts, new signage, and flashing amber units. The signs will feature artwork created by students, supported by an illustrator. Additionally, an education and marketing package will be delivered to the school and local community.

The project is intended to be fully funded by Section 106 funds and, although the stated overall costs for delivery were £28,205.22 on the application form, following liaison with the Council's Traffic Section, we now understand that those costs have been reduced to approximately £20,000.00.

The Parish Council's Finance Committee met on 14th February in order to consider a response to this application. Albeit the Committee does not have delegated authority for this in its Terms of Reference, given the timescales for responding to this application, Members agreed in writing to delegate responsibility to the Finance Committee on behalf of Full Council to consider this application.

The Committee agreed to support this application and all Members were sent a draft copy of the proposed response. A copy of the final response submitted to Stephen Reed is set out below:

Thank you for consulting the Parish Council on this Section 106 application by Durham County Council for the installation of a part-time advisory school 20mph scheme in the vicinity of St Oswald's Church of England Primary School. The City of Durham Parish Council writes to express its wholehearted support for this proposal.

Firstly, the Parish Council wishes to commend both Durham County Council and St Oswald's school for bringing forward this long-awaited initiative to improve pedestrian safety on Church Street. As the main route to and from the University's main campus as well as the location of the school along this road, Church Street is one of the busiest pedestrian streets in the City. The safety of school children and other pedestrians is of paramount importance and we fully support any measures which enhance road safety in our community.

*Whilst the Parish Council has consistently advocated for a permanent 20mph speed limit running the entirety of Church Street, the Parish Council recognises the statutory and budgetary constraints which have influenced this proposal. In 2013, the Department for Transport provided revised guidelines on the **Setting Local Speed Limits (DfT Circular 01/2013)**, encouraging traffic authorities to*

consider introducing more 20mph limits over time, and over a larger number of roads. However, it also advises that 20mph limits are most appropriate where the mean speed (85th percentile) is already at or below 24mph. At present, we understand that the mean speeds on Church Street exceed this limit and therefore a 20mph speed limit covering the entirety of Church Street would only be possible with further (costly) traffic calming measures.

Notwithstanding this, and in considering the existing road layout, comprising side roads, accesses, parking and restrictions, current pedestrian usage and vehicle movements, the Parish Council appreciates that the introduction of physical traffic calming features to slow traffic down would likely to be inappropriate as they are generally aimed at maintaining lower speeds where an excess problem is present.

Additionally, the Parish Council recognises that there are minimum length requirements for the implementation of a standalone speed limit and Church Street falls short of these requirements. Considering this, a legal permanent speed limit could only be implemented if it included a wider area and this would certainly impact traffic flow and emergency response times in these city centre locations.

In recognising these constraints on the local traffic authority, we would invite Durham County Council to join us in further lobbying central Government to ensure that all roads adjacent to primary schools can be designated as 20mph zones, that the minimum length requirements be reviewed and that appropriate funding is allocated to local authorities to achieve this vital safety improvement.

On the application itself, we understand that the costs originally associated with this scheme may have been reduced to circa. £20,000. Before final approval of this funding application, we would appreciate confirmation of the total amount of funding now being sought and would particularly welcome the use of solar-powered signage as opposed to signs that rely on power from the grid. A solar-powered solution aligns better with our environmental commitments and will contribute to reducing carbon emissions associated with the scheme's implementation.

The Parish Council also acknowledges concerns regarding the potential increase in emissions caused by vehicles slowing down and speeding up within the proposed advisory zone, particularly given that Church Street is already identified as an area of air quality concern. As such, the Parish Council is delighted to be proactively working with DCC's public transport team on its own Section 106 proposal to install new green roof bus shelters in the area. These shelters will play an important role in carbon capture and mitigating air quality issues. We look forward to submitting a funding bid for this initiative in due course and trust that Durham County Council will give this its full support.

We very much look forward to working with the County Council on the delivery of this proposal and would particularly be interested to learn more about how the effectiveness of this scheme is to be monitored once installed.

Thank you once more for consulting us on this proposal.

**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to approve the response to this Section 106 application, as set out in the report above.

ITEM 7: MOTION BY COUNCILLOR V ASHFIELD ON THE TEES VALLEY ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY

Background:

1. Four Tees Valley councils (Redcar and Cleveland, [Hartlepool](#), [Middlesbrough](#) and [Stockton](#)), together with [Darlington](#), Durham County, and Newcastle City Councils signed an agreement in 2019 to invest in a brand new incineration scheme to be built in Teesside (Grangetown in Stockton). The Strategic Outline Business Case was first made in 2018, Outline Planning Permission was given in July 2020 and Full Planning Permission granted by Redcar & Cleveland in July 2023. There is an Environment Agency Environmental Permit in place from August 2024.
2. It is not anticipated that the TVERF will enter commercial operations before 2029.
3. The authorities have signed up to a 29-year operating contract.
4. The Government proposes to impose stricter standards on waste incinerators and to introduce charges on incineration.
5. Two of the Authorities signed up (Newcastle and Stockton) are already debating whether this is still the best way forward – six years after the initial proposal.
6. It is anticipated that Optimised Final Tenders will be received in early 2025, but the penultimate tenderer (Green Recovery) has dropped out, so this is no longer a competitive process.

Arguments against:

Efficiency and Cost

1. The Government proposes to impose stricter standards on waste incinerators and to introduce charges on incinerator emissions via the Emissions Trading Scheme. Councils are likely to be liable for this cost from 2028. The projected cost of the incinerator is already over £300 million. This would be better spent on creating more jobs in recycling and a new repair/reuse based circular economy.
2. England has seen recycling rates stall. Under new plans, the government will only back projects if they meet strict local and environmental conditions. Projects will need to maximise efficiency and support the delivery of economic growth, net zero and the move to a circular economy.
3. Almost half of all waste collected by local authorities in 2022/23 was incinerated with increasing amounts of resources that could be recycled being lost. Scotland and Wales have a moratorium on new incinerators. Wales recycles over 65% of its waste. The North East recycles just 31.2% the lowest of all English regions.
4. New ways of recycling waste products are being developed constantly and will reduce the amount of waste which can go to incineration.
5. Much of the products and materials contained in this waste could already have been prevented, reused or recycled. This is inefficient not only because materials that hold value are being lost, but also incineration and landfill are the most expensive ways to treat waste. Waste streams are

very variable in kind and quantity, power station boilers use very tightly specified fuels. (DEFRA Report December 2024).

6. DEFRA has also stated that: **Care needs to be taken when allowing any new residual waste treatment capacity to ensure that new capacity does not impede the achievement of the statutory residual waste reduction target.** There is currently 18.2 tonnes of English incineration capacity operational or under construction (split 14.3Mt operational and 3.9Mt under construction), and acknowledges that some existing plants might be able to accept more waste in the future.
7. The 29-year contract will lock the LAs into producing high volumes of waste, especially plastic to 'feed' the incinerator – disincentivising recycling and other waste reduction and diversion efforts - during a period when many new schemes for recycling waste (including the announced bottle deposit scheme) will become available.
8. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy criticises the current practices with respect to **incineration as inefficient and expensive.** With the inclusion of incineration in the UK ETS, it is going to become ever more expensive to send waste containing plastics to incineration and plans to encourage reuse, reduce consumption and minimise waste generation by [supporting reuse and repair shops, product renting and sharing](#), will be undermined. DEFRA's new Circular Economy Taskforce will drive waste reduction policy.

Health Grounds:

9. There are concerns about the emissions and their effects on people who live near incinerators. With suitable plant and operating procedures these emissions can be driven down to very low levels, but there are **no emission levels** which will be totally harmless. There will always be accidents and plant failures which will lead to higher than usual emissions. (A plant in Byker, Newcastle was closed on health grounds). This new plant is close to houses as well as to other incinerators. Teesside already has some of the lowest rates of citizen health in the UK.

Transport:

10. The current Teesside incinerators have the capacity to process far more waste than we produce in the North East. One of the existing incinerators already processes waste from Merseyside. The concentration of incineration on the south of this area will increase traffic through the transportation of waste materials. This is wasteful and poor practice.

Consultation

11. Consultation on this matter has been very restricted and as technology and the legal context change, it is all the more important that the population is allowed to comment on possible alternatives.

The Motion

"Given the UK Government's proposal to introduce new charges for sending waste to incineration, the City of Durham Parish Council requests Durham County Council to review the finances and other factors associated with the TVERF and re-evaluate whether this is the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable method of handling residual waste"

**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to consider the information as set out in the above report and approve the motion proposed by Councillor V Ashfield on the TVERF.

ITEM 8: REPORT ON THE RECENT 'MAKING SUICIDE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS' CONFERENCE

Making Suicide Prevention Everyone's Business Conference Summary Report – 18th February 2025

Introduction

The "Making Suicide Prevention Everyone's Business" conference, hosted by Durham County Council, aimed to raise awareness, foster a shared ambition and refine a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy. The event brought together public health experts, emergency service representatives, academics, and those with lived experience to discuss the current suicide landscape and the actions needed to address it.

Key Themes and Discussions

1. Suicide in County Durham: The Current Picture

- County Durham has the ninth highest suicide rate in England and fourth highest in the North East.
- The overall rate of suicide deaths in the county (2021-2023) is 16.4 per 100,000, averaging 74 deaths per year.
- 75% of those who died by suspected suicide between September 2023 and December 2024 were not engaged with mental health services.

2. Risk Factors and Inequalities

- Suicide rates are significantly higher among men (26.4 per 100,000) compared to women (7.1 per 100,000).
- Key risk factors include financial difficulties, trauma, bereavement, prior self-harm, and lack of social support.
- Suicide rates have increased by 26% in the last five years, outpacing national and regional trends.

3. Local Action Plan and Ongoing Initiatives

- Improving data collection and evidence to support timely interventions.
- Providing targeted support for high-risk groups, including men, veterans, and young people.
- Promoting online safety and responsible media content.
- Enhancing crisis support across sectors.
- Reducing access to means of suicide where appropriate.
- Strengthening bereavement support.

4. Evidence-Based Suicide Prevention Strategies

- Rapid access to suicide-specific services is critical for effective intervention.
- Suicide prevention efforts must extend beyond mental health services to primary care and community settings.
- Structured psychological therapies tailored to individual needs have proven effective in reducing self-harm and suicidality.

5. Community and Emergency Services' Role

- Testimonies from first responders, including fire and rescue services, highlighted the increasing number of crisis incidents.
- The need for improved training in engaging with people in crisis was emphasized.
- First responders are often the first point of contact and require better support structures.

6. Lived Experience Contributions

- Moving personal accounts from individuals affected by suicide underscored the importance of early intervention and community support.
- Organisations such as If U Care Share, James' Place, and Amparo were highlighted for their contributions to suicide prevention and bereavement support.

Workshops and Key Outcomes

Participants discussed future goals and actions to feed into DCC next suicide reduction plan:

Next Steps

- Refining the County Durham suicide prevention action plan based on conference insights.
- Strengthening multi-agency collaboration and community involvement.
- Ensuring ongoing evaluation and improvement of interventions.

Conclusion

The conference reinforced the urgency of suicide prevention efforts and the importance of community-wide engagement. Attendees were encouraged to take an active role in implementing the revised strategy and fostering a culture of support and awareness.

My personal takeaways from the day were the need for additional support specifically for men as well as the need for more mental health first aid training within the community.

ITEM 9: REPORT ON COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS' FORUM MEETING

Larger Local Councils Forum Meeting Report

Date: 20 February 2025

Venue: City of Durham, Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Road, Durham

1. CDALC Executive Committee Report

A verbal report highlighted recent committee meetings, including financial updates and policy changes. The Executive Committee emphasized ongoing efforts to support local councils and improve governance structures.

2. May 2025 Local Elections

An overview of the upcoming local elections scheduled for 1 May 2025 was presented. Key points included nomination deadlines, voter registration dates, and election procedures. Councils were encouraged to attend training sessions on election management. Details Can be found here:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-parish-council-elections-england>

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/elections2025>

<https://cdalc.info/members-area/elections/>

3. Government Consultations & Devolution White Paper

Updates were provided on various government consultations, including:

- **Strengthening Standards and Conduct Framework** – Proposal for a mandatory code of conduct and potential powers for local authorities to suspend councillors for misconduct.
- **Local Audit Reform** – Strategies for improving local audit processes and accountability.
- **Remote Meetings & Proxy Voting** – Review of legislation allowing councils to conduct meetings remotely.
- **Local Authority Funding Reform** – New approaches to funding allocations and resource management.
- **English Devolution White Paper** – Potential impacts on local governance structures and enhanced roles for town and parish councils.

4. Workplace Recycling Regulations (Environment Act 2021)

New regulations coming into effect from 31 March 2025 will require workplaces to separate dry recyclables, food waste, and black bin waste. Local councils must ensure compliance by implementing appropriate waste management practices. (Not especially pertinent for CODPC.)

5. Addressing Alcohol-Related Harm Through Licensing Laws

We presented a proposal to advocate for amendments to the Licensing Act 2003. Key recommendations included adding a public health objective to licensing regulations and lobbying for policy changes to mitigate alcohol-related harm. This was approved after some discussion.

6. Partnership Working with Durham County Council (DCC)

- **Durham County Local Networks** – Updates on replacing Area Action Partnerships with Local Networks, scheduled for implementation post-May 2025 elections. The new boundaries will require new arrangements for Parish representation with one Parish representative from Belmont Parish, City of Durham, Framwellgate Moor Parish, Pitlington Parish, Sherburn Village Parish, and Shincliffe Parish for the proposed Durham Local Network. CDALC would like each Parish Council group to decide amongst themselves which council should provide their representation.
- **Register of Interest Forms** – Proposed updates to the system to enhance transparency and compliance. These will be ready in time for the newly elected councillors to complete.

7. Housing Allocations Policy Review

John Kelly from Durham County Council provided insights into proposed changes to housing allocation policies, focusing on improving fairness and accessibility. He urged councils and councillors to respond to the consultation which can be found here:

<https://letstalkcountydurham.co.uk/en-GB/folders/socialhousingpolicyreview> .

If CODPC is to respond it should be noted that the deadline for submissions is 12 March 2025.

8. Martyn's Law (Counterterrorism Measures)

Graham Wakeman and Andy Bailey discussed the impending Martyn's Law, which will introduce stricter security requirements for public venues. Councils were advised to prepare for compliance with counterterrorism measures, including risk assessments and emergency response planning. They are available for consultation with Parish Councils and community groups for free. (Audrey to forward on contact details.)