

City of Durham Parish
The City of Durham Parish
The Enginemen Secretary's
The Miners Hall. Flass Street.



Council
Council. c/o
Office
Durham. DH1 4BE

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Date of summons: 18th June 2026

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council: Councillors V Ashfield, L Brown, T Cleaver, R Cornwell, D Freeman, R Handy, G Holland, E Hopgood, C Lattin, P Layton, F Robinson, E Scott, S Walker, M Wilkes and L Wilson.

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 **Wednesday 24th June 2026 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 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH MAY 2026**

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5. PRESENTATION ON SAVING THE ICONIC COUNTY HALL MOSAIC FROM DEMOLITION

6. LOWES BARN BANK – RESIDENT CONCERNS REGARDING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

7. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 15th and 29th May 2026

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

<https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/planning-and-licensing-committee/>

- New County Durham Plan: scoping report consultation

• Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 12th May 2026

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

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

• Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 13th May 2026

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

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

- Report on grant applications from local community and voluntary organisations for Financial Year 2026-27

8. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 27th May 2026

9. REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE MAYOR'S CHARITY APPEAL

10. PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE REPLACEMENT OF THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE PLAQUE AT MILLENNIUM PLACE

11. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- Report by Councillor S Walker on the most recent meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Council (CDALC).

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 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 were asked to leave the room.

12. PROTECTING OUR DURHAM CITY GREENBELT

Minutes of the annual meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 27th May 2026 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**), V Ashfield, L Brown, T Cleaver, R Cornwell, D Freeman, G Holland, R Handy, E Hopgood, C Lattin, P Layton, F Robinson, E Scott and M Wilkes.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley.

Councillor S Walker opened the meeting.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor S Walker was elected (10 votes in favour and 3 abstentions) as Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. Proposed by Councillor G Holland and seconded by Councillor P Layton.

Councillor S Walker read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of this Office.

There were no other nominations for the role of Chair.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor D Freeman was elected (11 votes in favour and 3 abstentions) as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing year. Proposed by Councillor E Scott and seconded by Councillor C Lattin.

There were no other nominations for the role of Chair.

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

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillor L Wilson.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

5. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND APRIL 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2026 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

7. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor L Brown presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 2nd April and 1st May 2026. There were no queries from Members.

• Environment Committee

Councillor C Lattin presented the Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th April 2026. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to create a new Heritage Blue Plaque walking trail leaflet

Councillor C. Lattin presented a report seeking approval for the design, production and printing of a new Heritage Blue Plaques Trail Map as part of the Parish Council's ongoing commitment to promoting Durham's heritage. Members were reminded that the Parish Council's blue plaques initiative had become one of its most successful heritage projects since its introduction, recognising individuals, places and events of significance to the history and development of Durham City.

Councillor C. Lattin advised that the installation of the Dr Mo Mowlam blue plaque later in the year would bring the total number of Parish Council plaques to thirteen and represented an appropriate milestone at which to create a permanent legacy publication for the scheme. The proposed trail map would provide residents and visitors with a self-guided walking route linking all thirteen plaques whilst also providing historical information about the people, buildings and locations commemorated. Members heard that the project would support local tourism, encourage walking and help strengthen awareness and appreciation of Durham's rich heritage.

Particular reference was made to the important role the blue plaques programme had played in recognising and promoting the contribution of women to the city's history, including pioneers in education, academia and public life. Members noted that this aspect of the initiative had been especially well received by residents and would form an important theme within the proposed publication.

The report further outlined that the map would be designed and produced by the same company responsible for the highly successful Seven Hills of Durham and Durham Heritage maps. Councillor C. Lattin explained that utilising the existing design framework would ensure consistency in style and quality whilst significantly reducing production costs. A total of 5,000 copies would be printed and distributed through a range of locations across the city, including community venues, visitor attractions and public buildings.

Members noted that the total cost of design, artwork, printing and delivery would be £1,956 and that provision for the project had already been included within the Council's approved heritage budget for 2026/27.

Following consideration of the report, Members unanimously **agreed** to approve the expenditure of £1,956 for the production and printing of 5,000 Heritage Blue Plaques Trail Maps. Members further **agreed** to delegate responsibility for the detailed design, production and distribution of the publication to the Environment Committee.

• Business Committee

Councillor E Scott presented the Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 17th March 2026. There were no queries from Members.

- **Finance Committee**

Councillor S Walker presented the Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 16th March 2026. There were no queries from Members.

8. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd April 2026 as follows:

The Chair began by expressing thanks to everyone involved in organising the Parish Council's Annual Meeting of the Parish. Particular appreciation was extended to Durham University for hosting the event and providing an excellent venue which had enabled the Parish Council to showcase its work over the previous year. The Chair noted that the event had provided an important opportunity to celebrate the Council's achievements and recognise a number of worthy award recipients. Thanks were also extended to Dan Beardmore and Kieran O'Leary for attending and delivering presentations during the evening.

The Chair reported that Dan Beardmore would shortly be leaving his role in Durham City to take up a new Sergeant position in Consett. Members heard that Dan had made a significant contribution to the city during his time in post and the Chair placed on record the Council's thanks and best wishes for his future career. The Chair also welcomed the forthcoming appointment of Lee Blaney as the new City Sergeant from 19 June and wished him every success in the role.

The Chair extended the Parish Council's best wishes to everyone involved in the organisation of Durham Pride 2026 ahead of the main event scheduled to take place on 30 May. Members heard that Durham Pride continued to play an important role in promoting diversity, inclusion and equality throughout the city and county. The Chair congratulated Mel, Tess, Emma and the wider organising team for their efforts in planning and fundraising for the event and wished them a successful and enjoyable celebration.

Members were pleased to hear the Chair report on a number of positive economic indicators for Durham City. The Chair advised that annual footfall figures were now reported to be 7.5% higher than pre-pandemic levels, whilst Durham BID had indicated that demand for business premises remained exceptionally strong and hotel occupancy rates at the Radisson Blu continued to increase. The Chair welcomed these encouraging signs of economic growth and thanked the Business Committee for its ongoing work in supporting events, partnerships and initiatives which contributed towards the city's success.

The Chair also congratulated Durham Markets Company on the successful celebration of its 175th Anniversary over the recent Bank Holiday weekend. Members heard that the three-day programme of entertainment, music and heritage activities had attracted strong public support and had been enhanced by favourable weather conditions. The Chair further welcomed the involvement of the Mayor, Gary Hutchinson, in supporting the celebrations.

Turning to planning matters, the Chair expressed disappointment regarding the recent approval of an application to extend a House in Multiple Occupation by the Central and East Area Planning Committee. Members heard that the Parish Council had raised concerns during the application process regarding fire safety issues and the size of one of the proposed bedrooms, which was below the recognised minimum standard. The Chair noted that, despite the Council's wider commitment to strengthening controls around HMOs, the application had nevertheless been approved. Members were advised that the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee had subsequently written to the Cabinet Member, Councillor Quinn, seeking further consideration of the HMO licensing issues highlighted by the case.

Finally, the Chair thanked Councillor C. Lattin and members of the Environment Committee for their continued efforts to improve conditions at Durham Railway Station. Members heard that Councillor C. Lattin and the Clerk had recently met with the Head of Public Affairs at LNER to discuss ongoing concerns regarding littering around the station and opportunities to enhance the overall appearance and maintenance of the site. The Chair welcomed commitments made during the meeting, including improved maintenance arrangements and the possibility of securing North East Combined Authority funding to support jet washing and other improvements at the station.

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

The Clerk presented the report of the Working Group on the annual governance review. The Clerk advised that this review had incorporated statutory updates and introduced a number of significant changes, including the amendments to the grants policy that the same project would not be funded for more than 3 consecutive years and the deletion of the social media policy and adding DCC's social media guidance to the Council's Communications Policy.

Members unanimously agreed to all of the changes to the Council's policies and procedures. Members also unanimously **agreed** to the adoption of a sickness absence policy.

Full copies of each policy can be found via the Parish Council's website: <https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/important-documents-and-policies/>

10. TO DECIDE ON APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Members considered the current list of Parish Council representatives on all of the local organisations listed in the report to Council.

Members also considered that the Parish Council has agreed to have a representative on outside local organisations only where the aims of these groups are aligned with the strategic objectives of the Parish Council in the exercise of its functions.

Members also noted that there is a need for all Parish Council representatives to

provide a report to Full Council on the work of these organisations/ bodies following each meeting they attend.

In view of this, Members **agreed** to retain an official Parish Council representative on each of the following groups and the respective representative on each group was also unanimously **agreed** as follows:

Local organisation/ body	City of Durham Parish Council representative
Community Engagement Task Force	Victoria Ashfield
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Economic	Elizabeth Scott
Community Engagement Task Force sub group - Lived Environment	Carole Lattin
CDALC Larger Councils Forum	Susan Walker, Fred Robinson and Mark Wilkes
City Safety Group	Adam Shanley
Durham BID board	Adam Shanley
Durham University Housing Group	Roger Cornwell

11. TO DECIDE ON PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chair highlighted that there is a need for the Parish Council to agree the membership of each of its Committees. The report presented to Members highlighted the specific functions of each of the Committees and Members were asked to consider which of these Committees they wished to sit on.

The Clerk advised that a quorum for all of the Committees is presently no fewer than three Members. The Clerk also highlighted that, in all cases, the maximum number of Members per committee is set out within the Terms of Reference for each Committee

The Clerk also highlighted that, in some cases, a committee has delegated authority to act on behalf of Full Council (for example the Planning and Licensing Committee responds on behalf of Full Council to planning applications, the Business Committee organises events on behalf of Full Council, etc.) however all decisions on expenditure (where delegated authority does not exist) and/or of a strategic nature, are taken by Full Council.

The Chair also set out that no Committees sit in August or December.

The Chair also reminded Members that, following a review of the Council's Governance documents in 2025, it was further agreed that Full Council should elect the Chair and Vice-Chair of each Committee at the annual meeting of Full Council.

The Committee Membership and dates/ times of each meeting were **agreed** as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee (6 Members) Grenville Holland Liz Brown Carole Lattin Roger Cornwell Philip Layton Rory Handy Planning and Licensing Committee (10:00am – 12:00pm) Meeting every two weeks on Mondays (except August and December) at 11:00am starting from 8th June 2026.	Environment Committee (6 Members) Carole Lattin Victoria Ashfield Tony Cleaver Grenville Holland Fred Robinson Mark Wilkes Environment Committee (10:30am – 12:30pm) Meeting every second Tuesday of the month (except August and December) starting from Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 10:30am
Personnel Committee (6 Members) Susan Walker David Freeman Roger Cornwell Victoria Ashfield Tony Cleaver Mark Wilkes Personnel Committee (11:00am – 13:00pm) Meeting on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 11:00am	Business Committee (6 Members) Philip Layton David Freeman Elizabeth Scott Ellie Hopgood Rory Handy Les Wilson Business Committee (11:00am – 13:00pm) • Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 11:00am • Tuesday 21st July 2026 at 11:00am • Tuesday 15th September 2026 at 11:00am • Tuesday 17th November 2026 at 11:00am • Tuesday 19th January 2027 at 11:00am • Tuesday 16th March 2027 at 11:00am
Finance Committee (6 Members) Susan Walker Liz Brown Ellie Hopgood Elizabeth Scott Victoria Ashfield Les Wilson Finance Committee (11:00am – 13:00pm) • Wednesday 17th June 2026 at 11:00am	

• Wednesday 9th September 2026 at 11:00am • Wednesday 13th January 2027 at 11:00am • Wednesday 10th March 2027 at 11:00am	
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In relation to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each Committee. These were **agreed** as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor R Cornwell was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor V Ashfield and this was seconded by Councillor F Robinson.

Councillor L Brown was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor G Holland and this was seconded by Councillor C Lattin.

Following a vote of Members, Councillor L Brown was **elected** as Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee.

Councillor R Cornwell was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor V Ashfield and this was seconded by Councillor F Robinson.

Councillor G Holland was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor D Freeman and this was seconded by Councillor L Brown.

Following a vote of Members, Councillor G Holland was **elected** as Vice-Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee.

Environment Committee

Councillor C Lattin was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor D Freeman and this was seconded by Councillor V Ashfield. There were no further nominations and Councillor C Lattin was **elected** as Chair of the Environment Committee.

Councillor V Ashfield was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor E Scott and this was seconded by Councillor F Robinson. There were no further nominations and Councillor V Ashfield was **elected** as Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee.

Personnel Committee

Councillor S Walker was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor D Freeman and this was seconded by Councillor C Lattin. There were no further nominations and Councillor S Walker was **elected** as Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Councillor D Freeman was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor E Scott and this was seconded by Councillor M Wilkes. There were no further nominations and Councillor D Freeman was **elected** as Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Business Committee

Councillor E Scott was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor L Brown and this was seconded by Councillor E Hopgood. There were no further nominations and Councillor E Scott was **elected** as Chair of the Business Committee.

Councillor E Hopgood was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor E Scott and this was seconded by Councillor M Wilkes. There were no further nominations and Councillor E Hopgood was **elected** as Vice-Chair of the Business Committee.

Finance Committee

Councillor S Walker was nominated for the role of Chair of the Committee by Councillor L Brown and this was seconded by Councillor G Holland. There were no further nominations and Councillor S Walker was **elected** as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Councillor L Brown was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of the Committee by Councillor S Walker and this was seconded by Councillor E Scott. There were no further nominations and Councillor L Brown was **elected** as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2025/26

- I. Members unanimously **agreed** the actions arising from the report of the internal auditor 2025-26
- II. Members unanimously **approved** the annual governance statement 2025-26
- III. Members unanimously **approved** the draft annual accounts for 2025-26
- IV. Members unanimously **approved** the register of assets 2025-26
- V. Members unanimously **approved** the accounting statement and explanation of variances 2025-26

In closing this item, the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Clerk for all his work throughout the year in maintaining the Council's accounts and his work in the governance of the Council.

13. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE LEAD

The Clerk reminded Members that, in February 2022, the Parish Council had agreed to establish the role of a Climate Lead for the City of Durham Parish Council. To support with the understanding of the responsibilities of this role, a set of Terms of Reference for this position were also established.

The Clerk reminded Members that this role and these Terms of Reference must be reviewed on an annual basis at the Council's annual meeting.

Members unanimously **agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Climate Lead role and also unanimously **agreed** to appoint Councillor V Ashfield as its Climate Lead for the ensuing year of the Parish Council; as proposed by Councillor R Handy and seconded by Councillor F Robinson.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ARMED FORCES CHAMPION

The Clerk reminded Members that, in June 2023, the Parish Council had agreed to establish the role of an Armed Forces Champion for the City of Durham Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that this role was primarily a ceremonial role where the postholder may represent the Parish Council at such events as the Remembrance Day parade and all other events with a main focus on the past and present contributions of the armed services. This role involves working with the Clerk and partners on the organisation of these important events.

The Clerk reminded Members that this role and the Terms of Reference associated with this role must be reviewed on an annual basis. Members unanimously **agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Armed Forces Champion role and also unanimously **agreed** to appoint Councillor E Scott as its Armed Forces Champion for the ensuing year of the Parish Council; as proposed by Councillor D Freeman and seconded by Councillor L Brown.

15. CYCLE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members unanimously **agreed** the following cycle of Full Council meetings for the year ahead:

Suggested Cycle of Meetings

2026

Wednesday 24th June 2026 at 7pm
Wednesday 22nd July 2026 at 7pm
Wednesday 22nd September 2026 at 7pm
Wednesday 28th October 2026 at 7pm
Wednesday 24th November 2026 at 7pm

2027

Wednesday 27th January 2027 at 7pm
Wednesday 24th February 2027 at 7pm
Wednesday 24th March 2027 at 7pm
Wednesday 28th April 2027 at 7pm

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
(24th June 2026)**

ITEM 6: LOWES BARN BANK: RESIDENT CONCERNS REGARDING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Background

At a recent meeting of the Parish Council, a resident asked whether consideration could be given to retaining a one-way traffic system on Lowes Barn Bank following the completion of the recent footway improvements.

Since that meeting, expressions of support for exploring this option have been received from a number of residents living on Lowes Barn Bank.

This follows on from a campaign to reduce the level of traffic especially HGV traffic over the past few years.

Current situation

Residents have welcomed the improvements to the footpaths on Lowes Barn Bank and have expressed gratitude for the investment made. However, several residents have also raised concerns that the newly repaired footways are already being used extensively for informal vehicle parking, reducing the benefits of the scheme.

Lowes Barn Bank is also an important active travel corridor, linking the cycle routes on the A167 with the Stonebridge route and the popular railway path network. At present, many cyclists choose to ride on the footway rather than the carriageway, reflecting concerns about traffic conditions on the road.

Alternative views

Many residents do not have sufficient in curtilage parking and some choose to park on the on the footway. Although this can cause an obstruction to pedestrians it does allow for the movement of two-way traffic and minimises the damage to cars from passing vehicles. This may suggest that the views expressed by those who have raised concerns are not necessarily representative of all residents, and the Parish Council may therefore wish to proceed with caution before taking forward the issues raised. Consideration should also be given to the implications of any action to prevent pavement parking, including the potential for enforcement against residents and visitors.

One-Way traffic proposal

Space Durham has shared a proposal that was developed several years ago which would introduce a one-way system on the lower section of Lowes Barn Bank, up to Hastings Avenue, whilst retaining two-way traffic on the upper section.

The proposal seeks to balance the needs of residents and businesses by:

- Maintaining two-way access for residents of The Steadings and users of the Duke of Wellington public house.
- Reducing traffic conflicts on the narrowest sections of the road, where there is significant on street parking.

- Potentially easing pressure on traffic movements at the Neville's Cross traffic signals compared to a fully one-way Neville's Cross Bank.
- Creating additional road space that could potentially be used for parking provision and/or cycling infrastructure.

Alternative views

Not all residents support the introduction of a one-way system. Some residents from the wider Neville's Cross area have highlighted the disruption experienced during the footway construction works, when the road operated as a one-way route for an extended period. For example, residents had to tolerate an increase in vehicles using Neville's Cross bank, journey times on A167 was double the norm, and queues at peak times extending beyond Musgrave Gardens.

Given the Parish Council exists to represent the interests of all residents, any proposal that benefits one group while potentially disadvantaging others should be considered carefully. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Parish Council's second overarching priority, "Enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish". Members may therefore wish to exercise caution before progressing the concerns that have been raised.

Members should also note that current traffic patterns are being influenced by the ongoing A690 improvement works at Meadowfield, and it may therefore be difficult to assess longer-term traffic impacts at the present time.

Heavy Goods vehicle traffic

A separate concern frequently raised by residents relates to the suitability of Lowes Barn Bank for heavy goods vehicles. The road is widely perceived by residents as being unsuitable for HGV traffic due to its steep gradient, bends and residential nature.

One suggestion has been to investigate a weight restriction, particularly once the new traffic signals at Meadowfield are operational and alternative routes become available through the industrial estate.

Previous discussions with Durham County Council Highways officers have indicated that they do not currently consider a weight restriction to be necessary. Members may wish to explore whether an advisory weight limit could be considered as an alternative.

Alternative Views

DCC is likely to argue that the proposal does not meet the Highway Authority's policy criteria for the implementation of weight restrictions, which are as follows:

- To prevent the risk of structural damage, for example to protect a weak bridge.
- For environmental reasons, where a more suitable route exists nearby that would not incur addition excessive mileage to hauliers. (As an example, a

new bypass may be constructed and it is advantageous to re-direct HGVs to the new route.)

Any restriction would also require the support of Durham Constabulary, which is responsible for enforcement and operates within the same legislative framework. In relation to Lowes Barn Bank, campaigners have previously been advised that Durham Constabulary would not support the proposal, on the basis that it would not represent an appropriate use of such a restriction.

Members will need to consider, in the context of Priority 2 of the Parish Council's strategy, the potential wider implications of any restriction for surrounding residents, the highway network, and the alternative routes that HGVs may be required to use. DCC will argue that this could have adverse consequences for emergency services, public transport operations, and overall network congestion.

A weight restriction on Lowes Barn Bank would result in increased HGV movements elsewhere in the parish, as vehicles would be required to pass through Neville's Cross signals. HGVs travelling south on the A167 would need to turn right at the signals, which may affect traffic flow on Nevilles Cross Bank and could lead to queuing extending towards Langley Moor and Broompark.

HGVs travelling north on the A167 would need to turn left at Nevilles Cross signals, which could also lengthen queues on the northbound approach, potentially as far back as the Duke of Wellington and beyond. Members may therefore wish to consider whether residents on Neville's Cross Bank, and wider area, would raise concerns about the parish supporting any proposal that could increase HGV traffic in their area.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1. Request Durham County Council Highways to review traffic management arrangements on Lowes Barn Bank, including the feasibility of a partial one-way system once the roadworks at Meadowfield have been completed. 2. Request an update from Durham County Council regarding the possibility of introducing either a mandatory or advisory weight restriction for heavy goods vehicles using Lowes Barn Bank. 3. Request support from Durham County Council Highways in preventing on pavement parking 4. Send to planning/environment? Working group to discuss ways we can do something meaningful
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Appendices Space Durham document and picture of HGV on LBB



ITEM 7: NEW COUNTY DURHAM PLAN: SCOPING REPORT CONSULTATION

Members will be aware that Durham County Council has commenced the preparation of a new County Durham Plan and has published a Scoping Report for consultation.

A full copy of this can be found here:

<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s224925/Appendix%20a%20Scoping%20Report%20Consultation.pdf>

The consultation represents the first formal stage in the preparation of the new Plan and runs from 22 June 2026 until 17 August 2026. The purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders on the key issues, priorities and strategic choices that should inform the development of the new Plan. The County Durham Plan, once adopted, will provide the statutory framework for determining planning applications and guiding future development across the county.

The current County Durham Plan was adopted in October 2020. Since that time there have been significant changes to national planning policy, new plan-making regulations have been introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and there has been a substantial increase in the county's assessed housing need.

Durham County Council undertook a formal review of the existing Plan in 2025 and concluded that, whilst many policies remain broadly aligned with national policy, the scale of change now required means that a new Local Plan must be prepared. The new Plan will therefore be developed under the revised planning system that came into force in March 2026 and will need to respond both to national planning reforms and to the emerging regional planning framework being prepared by the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority.

The Scoping Report is a substantial document containing 249 paragraphs and 103 consultation questions covering the full range of planning policy matters that will need to be addressed in the new County Durham Plan. These include housing growth, economic development, climate change, infrastructure provision, transport, town centres, minerals and waste, biodiversity, the historic environment, healthy communities and the future protection of Green Belt land.

The consultation also seeks views on a number of alternative spatial strategies for accommodating future growth across County Durham, including concentrating growth in the main towns, dispersing development more widely across settlements, focusing growth along strategic transport corridors, creating a new settlement or major urban extension, pursuing regeneration-led development, or adopting a combination of these approaches.

A significant feature of the emerging planning framework is the move away from reliance on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The Government has confirmed that the statutory powers to prepare topic-based SPDs will be removed

and local planning authorities are expected to review existing SPDs, incorporating important guidance directly into Local Plans or retaining it as non-statutory guidance. This change is likely to have important implications for the content and detail of planning policies in the replacement County Durham Plan.

The Scoping Report also confirms that Durham County Council received more than 800 site submissions through its recent Call for Sites exercise. These sites are now being assessed to determine their suitability for future development and will help inform decisions about where growth may be directed during the preparation of the new Plan. The consultation therefore provides an important opportunity for local communities to influence the strategic direction of growth before detailed site allocations and policies are drafted.

The preparation of a new County Durham Plan is of particular significance for Durham City because the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan and must remain in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The Scoping Report explicitly recognises the important role of neighbourhood plans in shaping development and confirms that they must align with wider strategic needs and priorities. As a consequence, the review of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will need to proceed in lock step with the review of the County Durham Plan to ensure that the neighbourhood planning framework remains up to date and consistent with emerging strategic planning policies.

Members will recall that the Parish Council has now established a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group and has approved a set of Terms of Reference to guide its work. The Working Group is scheduled to meet in mid-July to begin setting out a roadmap and programme for the review of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. The timing of this work is particularly important as it will enable the Parish Council to monitor the emerging County Durham Plan, identify issues of direct relevance to Durham City and ensure that the neighbourhood plan review remains aligned with the strategic planning framework as it develops over the coming years.

Given the significance of the County Durham Plan in shaping future development, infrastructure provision, environmental protection and community wellbeing across the county and within Durham City, it is recommended that the Parish Council engages positively and constructively in the current consultation process. Early engagement will provide an opportunity to influence the emerging vision, priorities and strategic choices before more detailed policies and site allocations are prepared. It will also ensure that the Parish Council is well placed to represent the interests of Durham City residents and to inform the parallel review of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to note the commencement of the County Durham Plan review and the publication of the Scoping Report consultation 2) For Members to invite the Planning and Licensing to engage positively in the consultation process
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	3) For Members to note that the review of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will proceed alongside the County Durham Plan review through the work of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group.
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ITEM 7: REPORT ON GRANT APPLICATIONS 2026-27

Members are reminded that Councillors have formally agreed to allocate £21,297 (£6,297 re-allocated from the community centre support fund) of the budget for 2026/27 towards grants for local and voluntary organisations, on the basis that:

- The project to be funded meets the aims and objectives of the Parish Council.
- Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
- Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit the people living in the Parish or will benefit the environment of our Parish.
- Any assistance given will be subject to on-going monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the outcome of the grant.
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year-to-year basis.

In accordance with the Parish Council's current grant awards policy, the City of Durham Parish Council provides grant funding to support the following aims:

- To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
- To help the parish's voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.
- To ensure the provision of services, needed by the residents, via the voluntary sector.
- To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all parishioners of City of Durham to the services it provides and funds.
- To improve or enhance the local environment.
- To achieve value for money.

The grant funding window opened on 1st April 2026 and this has been advertised on social media, the Parish Council's website and through direct e-mails.

Organisations were asked to apply by early June 2026 in order that the Finance Committee may consider this at its meeting in June and make a recommendation to Full Council in June. Once approved, all grant payments will be made at the end of June 2026. Members have been provided with the full details of all applications.

For ease of reference, the applicant, the amount requested from each applicant and a summary of each project is provided below as well as the recommendation for a grant following the Finance Committee's thorough assessment.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to consider the merits of each of the grant applications and agree an appropriate grant allocation for each.
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Organisation	Project	Amount requested	Amount agreed at Finance Committee
Dead Dog Gallery - Durham Sixth Form Centre	We are seeking funding of £1,900 to support our Community Class Programme, delivered at The Dead Dog Gallery and our Visual Arts Centre in autumn 2026. As we enter the next phase of arts development, we are expanding our gallery programme to deliver more residencies, exhibitions and community classes that foster a more creative, connected and inclusive city. This programme will: • Deliver 10 community classes between September and December 2026 • Engage approximately 200 participants. • Provide paid opportunities for 2 local artists. • Offer student volunteering opportunities, supporting pathways into creative careers. The programme prioritises DH1 residents, particularly those experiencing loneliness, isolation, or limited access to creative opportunities. It fosters intergenerational learning, strengthens community connection, and contributes to Durham's identity as a culturally vibrant and inclusive city. The project aligns with Durham's recognition as part of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, embedding creativity, lifelong learning and participation in community life.	£1,900	£1,900

The Marra Project	The grant would support Transoup, a regular social event for trans and non binary young adults, held at Merryoaks Community Hall. The project provides a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space where participants can meet others, foster a community atmosphere, and eat a free nutritious meal. Sessions include a shared vegan meal, refreshments, and informal social activities in a sober environment. All participants are part of at least one socially marginalised demographic, intersecting with mental health vulnerabilities, disability, and more. As such, there is an unexpectedly high incidence of medical dietary needs above and beyond statutory food allergen requirements, meaning specialist food needs to be provided. Many participants are immunocompromised and as such testing for COVID-19, along with air purifiers a necessary part of the event. The group provides an important source of peer support and community connection for individuals who may otherwise feel isolated or excluded from mainstream social spaces. Funding is requested primarily towards room hire costs and food to enable the sessions to continue on a sustainable basis.	£1,152	£1,152
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Durham City Harriers	The club in its current form is consistently performing well in regional athletic competitions, particularly cross country and road running, with multiple accolades in the harrier league (xc), north eastern xc competitions and local road races. The club was awarded club of the year in 2023 for its improvements. There has been increased club investment in increasing our capacity for more juniors as of spring 2025, several new coaches have been recruited for development and foundational work with 8-12 year olds in particular. Additionally a new sprint section has been added to complement the clubs access to the athletics track at maiden castle, the hope is the club will develop and progress multiple young people in many of the athletics fields that are so popular in this nation. Junior membership of the club has grown to 85 in the last calendar year. We are now looking to improve our clubs access and availability of training equipment to accommodate the additional membership and continue to provide for the training and athletic needs of the local community for many years to come. The additional resources will also hopefully assist us to expand our membership offer (we have nearly 30 children on the junior waiting list).	£1,500	£1,500
Durham & District Prostate Cancer Group	Durham and District Prostate Cancer Group (CIO application currently under review with the Charity Commission) is seeking funding to support community based prostate cancer awareness and early detection activities within Durham and surrounding areas. Funding will help the group provide community awareness events, pop-up information stands, educational materials and facilitated PSA testing opportunities delivered in partnership with appropriate healthcare	£2,000	Agreement in principle of £2,000 depending on further information.

	professionals and organisations. The project aims to encourage earlier awareness and help-seeking amongst men who may otherwise not access support or testing. The group has already identified strong local demand for this work through existing support meetings and previous awareness activities. Funding will contribute towards: • PSA testing event costs • venue and equipment costs • awareness materials and publicity • community outreach activities • volunteer support and event expenses The initiative will particularly benefit men who may be reluctant to seek support, are socially isolated, or may not otherwise engage with preventative health initiatives. What difference will the project make? The project will help increase awareness of prostate cancer, promote earlier detection, reduce isolation and encourage men to seek advice and support earlier. The group currently supports approximately 120 members and has already delivered awareness activities within the local community. Previous testing initiatives identified individuals who required further medical follow up, demonstrating the importance and potential impact of early awareness and testing opportunities. The project will also help improve community wellbeing by providing accessible support, information and signposting for men affected by prostate cancer and their families. Who will benefit? Men affected by prostate cancer and their families or carers living in Durham and surrounding areas. The project will particularly benefit older men and those who may not otherwise engage with support or preventative health initiatives. About		
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	the Organisation Durham and District Prostate Cancer Group CIO is a volunteer led community organisation providing peer support, awareness activities and information for men affected by prostate cancer and their families. The group holds regular meetings and awareness activities and works in partnership with community organisations and healthcare contacts to improve awareness and support early detection initiatives.		
Durham aged mineworkers housing association	Resident Involvement, looking to create more resident Involvement for our residents to reduce loneliness, isolation and promote healthy wellbeing, bring communities together with coffee mornings, craft sessions, gentle exercise gardening clubs etc	£5,000	£0
Durham Hospital Radio	2 YELLOWTEC mikaFolding Monitor arms are required to allow Ergonomic positioning of PC monitors in Studio 3 particularly for presenters who have acute poor eyesight allowing for the screen to be positioned for optimal clarity and reduced eye strain whilst maintaining a healthy working environment.	£500	£0
Friends of Durham Woodland Cemetery	Whilst we are currently financially stable, we are not yet in a position to have the lodge reroofed after it was damaged in the storms of previous years. The lodge which is owned by the Trust was regularly hired by families for funeral ceremonies and memorials which provided an income to cover the outgoings of the Trust. The Lodge also provides a meeting place for volunteers and Trustees. We are slowly working towards raising the estimated £8000 (quotes have been obtained) but are constantly aware of the ongoing deterioration of the roof and the constant loss of tiles which have almost gone.	Any contribution	£2,000

IWG application (made under NXCA)	Durham International Women's Group has previously received support from Ustinov College, Durham University, which enabled us to deliver activities that brought together women from diverse backgrounds and supported community integration. The success of this work has demonstrated the ongoing need for our activities but sadly the College support is no longer available to us. So our purpose for applying for a grant is to secure funding that would enable us to hire a venue for regular meetings, finance any insurance or safeguarding costs that might arise and give us a budget to cover some of the costs of craft and activity materials, cooking and cultural activity supplies, children's resources, refreshments, evening event costs and guest facilitators. If we had any left-over we would like to reinstate the hugely beneficial family trips we used to take to such places as Holy Island or the Lake District.	£2,500	Agreement in principle of £2,500 depending on further information
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Merryoaks Community Hall	1. To get a sign installed at the hall 2. Free children's activities - We previously ran free children's holiday activities from May to December 2025, which were extremely popular. Every session was fully booked, and due to high demand, we increased capacity from 20 to 30 children per session. Although the hall is located in an area considered relatively affluent, discussions with parents, carers, and volunteers have shown that many families are unable to afford extracurricular activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and mental health-focused programmes. Funding from other sources, such as Fun and Food, has not always been accessible to these families due to eligibility criteria. By offering activities at the community hall, we can ensure all children have access, regardless of financial circumstance. The sessions provide a safe and welcoming environment where children can build friendships, develop confidence, and improve social and interpersonal skills. The programme also addresses physical health. Childhood obesity is a growing concern, and our activities encourage physical activity, promote healthy habits, and reduce screen time. Children will also gain informal education on wellbeing and nutrition. By reducing social isolation and supporting mental and physical health, the programme helps children thrive holistically. A grant of £2,000 will enable us to deliver sessions during school holidays, supporting over 300 child attendees. This funding will provide high quality, engaging and enriching activities, ensuring children in our community have access to experiences that improve their wellbeing, confidence and physical health.	£2,500	Agreement in principle of £2,500 depending on further information (specifically regarding the sign).
NXCA API action	To produce a banner to commemorate the Battle of Neville's	£200	£0

	Cross; part of which we are hoping to engage local schools		
St. Margaret's Centre	We are seeking funding to purchase materials and equipment needed to run the Centre's wide variety of Health and Wellbeing Activities in the joinery workshop, craft room, and gardens. This will benefit the 250 people currently referred to the service, as well as the estimated 200+ people who will be referred over the next 12 months. These activities provide people with skills training that will support them to better maintain their homes, mindfulness techniques that can offer a distraction from chronic pain and mental distress, and the opportunity to do something that makes them feel good around other people who understand at least some of what they are experiencing. They are designed to help people build confidence in themselves, while benefiting from a sense of structure that is often absent in their lives. The materials needed to run these activities include: • Joinery workshop - wood, screws, glue, stains and varnish, and the purchase and maintenance of equipment • Craft room - art supplies like paint, pastels, and glue, textile crafts supplies such as fabric, scissors, and embroidery hoops • Gardens - compost, seeds, new tools as needed	£4,000	£2,000
Waddington Street URC	Two elements to improve facilities for all user groups. 1. Upgrading of carpets on entrance, stairs and passageways into community used hall and meeting room. 2. Necessary upgrading of audio system to be a more flexible, user friendly and inclusive experience. (also less crackly and prone to outside interference!)	Any contribution	£3,500
			Total £19,052

ITEM 9: REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE MAYOR'S CHARITY APPEAL

The Parish Council has received correspondence from the Mayor's PA at Durham County Council on behalf of newly elected Mayor of Durham City Councillor Amanda Hopgood, asking if we would consider supporting this year's Mayor's Charity Appeal.

Following her election as Mayor in June 2026, Councillor Hopgood announced that she would be supporting two charities St Cuthbert's Hospice and Point North as her charities this year. Both organisations are very close to Amanda's heart.

Background to St. Cuthbert's Hospice

Over three decades ago, a group of Durham residents came together for a common cause. They saw the absence of care and support available for those coming to the end of their lives and decided to take action. Thanks to their many years of fundraising and dedication, St Cuthbert's Hospice first opened its doors in 1988 to provide services, free of charge, for people with advanced illness, people approaching the end of their lives and those who are bereaved.

They have been providing care to people in our community ever since. St Cuthbert's Hospice's care teams can support people at any stage, from diagnosis, to living well with their illness to their last days. Whether it's helping with pain relief, supporting a loved one or just being there to listen, they understand that sometimes it's the little things that can make the biggest difference. Hospice care is quite unlike many other types of care.

The team treat everyone as an individual, spending time learning what is important to them and focusing on delivering care suited to their wishes. They have a 10 bedded In-Patient Unit, which delivers care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This may be for end-of-life care or to help patients with symptom management.

The also offer Day Services called the 'Living Well Centre', which gives people with life-limiting conditions, and their carers, the opportunity to spend an enjoyable, activity-based or relaxing day at the Hospice. Laughter and chatter can often be heard from our guests who attend the Living Well Centre. The Hospice couldn't do what they do without the support of the local community which they serve.

Background to Point North

Point North is a charitable grant-making organisation based in County Durham that works to create "a better today and a brighter tomorrow" for people across County Durham, the Tees Valley, and the wider North East of England. Formerly known as the County Durham Community Foundation, the organisation rebranded as Point North to better reflect the broader geographic reach and impact of its work. Since its founding in 1995, it has connected donors, businesses, and supporters with local communities by raising funds and distributing grants to organisations that address social challenges and improve quality of life.

At its core, Point North acts as a bridge between philanthropy and community need. The charity collects donations from individuals, families, businesses, and

charitable funds, then awards grants to voluntary organisations, charities, and community groups. These grants support a wide range of initiatives, including projects that help young people achieve their potential, provide support for older adults, strengthen local arts and culture, and tackle the root causes and effects of poverty. Point North describes its role simply as getting money “to where it can make the most difference to the most amount of people,” ensuring resources reach communities that need them most.

The organisation’s overarching mission is to fight poverty and enrich lives, with a vision that everyone should have the opportunity to live a full, healthy, and fulfilling life. Point North believes that people need more than just basic necessities; they should also have access to education, fair employment, safe housing, and opportunities to thrive within resilient and prosperous communities. Working alongside local partners, donors, trustees, and community organisations, Point North aims to create lasting social impact throughout the North East by investing in projects that strengthen communities and improve outcomes for current and future generations.

Again, no specific amount has been requested in the letter from the Mayor’s PA and any offers of a donation will be gratefully received and acknowledged and any donations will be divided equally between both charities.

Since 2020, the Parish Council has supported previous Mayors’ appeals with a total donation (even where there is more than one charity being supported) of £500 towards local charities.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1. For Members to agree to support this year’s Mayor’s charity appeal. 2. If 1) is approved, for Members to agree an appropriate contribution towards this appeal.
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ITEM 10: PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE REPLACEMENT OF THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE PLAQUE AT MILLENNIUM PLACE

Members are asked to consider supporting the replacement of the Queen's Golden Jubilee commemorative plaque located on the elevation of the Clayport Library facing on to Lower Claypath (see Appendix 1 below). The plaque commemorates the official opening of Millennium Place by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 May 2002 as part of her Golden Jubilee celebrations and remains an important marker of a significant royal visit and civic occasion in the recent history of Durham City.

During the nationwide programme of visits undertaken to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, Her Majesty visited Durham City. The Golden Jubilee celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne in 1952 and was marked by a series of royal visits throughout the United Kingdom. During her visit to Durham, Her Majesty officially opened Millennium Place, recognising both the significance of the new civic space and its contribution to the ongoing regeneration of the city centre. The opening formed part of the wider Golden Jubilee celebrations taking place across County Durham and the United Kingdom.

To commemorate this occasion, this stainless-steel plaque was installed on the side elevation of the Clayport Library building. The plaque therefore serves not only as a marker of the opening of Millennium Place but also as a permanent record of a nationally significant royal event and the Queen's historic visit to Durham City during her Jubilee tour.

Over the intervening twenty-three years, the plaque has been exposed to weathering and general deterioration and its condition has now significantly declined. The engraved lettering has become increasingly difficult to read, the surface has suffered substantial degradation and the overall appearance no longer reflects the significance of the event it commemorates. Recent inspections undertaken by contractors acting on behalf of Durham County Council and the City of Durham Parish Council have concluded that the plaque has deteriorated beyond practical repair. The professional advice received is that restoration works would not provide a satisfactory or durable outcome and that the most appropriate course of action is a full like-for-like replacement.

The replacement would be set in slightly thicker stainless steel which is important for its longevity and ongoing maintenance and will match exactly the detailing, lettering and size of the original. The total cost for this work (including installation etc.) is £576.00 (ex VAT) and Councillor Ellie Hopgood has expressed her willingness to fund these works and a replacement plaque.

The proposal is therefore to replace the existing plaque with a new plaque replicating the original design, dimensions, wording, material specification, fixing arrangement and appearance. The intention is to preserve the historic and commemorative significance of the plaque whilst ensuring that the inscription remains legible and appropriately reflects the importance of the event it records. The replacement would maintain the existing heritage value of the feature and ensure that future generations are able to understand and appreciate the significance of the Queen's visit and the official opening of Millennium Place.

Whilst the site lies within the designated Conservation Area, the building itself is not listed. Durham County Council's Corporate Property and Land Team, as owners of this asset, have reviewed the proposal and have confirmed their support for a like-for-like replacement of the existing plaque. Discussions have also taken place with Durham County Council's Planning Service, which has advised that planning permission is not required for the proposed works. The advice provided confirms that, as the proposal involves a direct replacement of the existing plaque with no material change to its size, position, appearance, illumination or fixing method, the works fall outside the scope of development requiring planning consent. As such, no planning application is necessary.

Councillor C Lattin and the Clerk also recently met with the relevant Cabinet Member who expressed his support for this project.

The proposed replacement would deliver a number of public benefits. It would preserve an important commemorative feature associated with a significant event in Durham's recent civic history, enhance the appearance of a prominent location within the Conservation Area, and demonstrate the Parish Council's commitment to maintaining heritage assets and public memorials. The replacement would also ensure that the contribution of Queen Elizabeth II to the national life of the United Kingdom, and her visit to Durham as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, continues to be appropriately recognised within the city centre.

In view of the plaque's deteriorated condition, the professional advice that it is beyond repair, the approval received from Durham County Council's Corporate Property and Land Team, and the confirmation that planning permission is not required for a like-for-like replacement, Members are recommended to support the replacement of the Queen's Golden Jubilee commemorative plaque at Millennium Place with a new plaque matching the existing design and specification. This will ensure the continued preservation and interpretation of an important element of Durham City's civic heritage.

The plaque itself would be retained as a Durham County Council asset and will continue to be maintained by the Council. It is also suggested that the original plaque be housed in somewhere suitable such as the Story for safekeeping and official record keeping.

In view of Councillor Ellie Hopgood's generous offer to fund these works, the support requested from the Parish Council is more moral support for this project as opposed to financial support.

Appendix 1 – image of the Queen’s Jubilee plaque



**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to support the proposed replacement of the Queen’s Jubilee plaque, as set out in the above report.

ITEM 11: Report by Councillor S Walker on the most recent meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Council (CDALC)

CDALC Meeting – 21 May 2026

The CDALC meeting on 21 May focused on a range of national policy and legislative updates relevant to town and parish councils. The most significant item for councils was the update on the Employment Rights Act 2025, with additional briefings on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, planning and renewable energy developments, and rural housing challenges.

Employment Rights Act 2025 – Key implications for Councils

The Employment Rights Act 2025 represents a major overhaul of UK employment law, with phased implementation through 2026–2027. It is expected to have substantial implications for parish and town council employment practice and governance.

Key changes include:

- Day-one employment rights, including statutory sick pay, parental and paternity leave, and new bereavement leave entitlements
- Significant unfair dismissal reforms, including a reduced qualifying period (2 years to 6 months, expected 2027) and removal of the compensation cap
- Flexible working becoming the default, with employers required to justify any refusal on clear business grounds
- Stronger regulation of casual and zero-hours contracts, including rights to guaranteed hours and compensation for cancelled shifts
- Tightened restrictions on “fire and rehire” practices, with most dismissals for refusal of contractual changes becoming automatically unfair
- Enhanced protections around redundancy, including increased penalties for failure to consult
- Stronger workplace harassment duties, including liability for third-party harassment and enhanced whistleblowing protections
- Establishment of a Fair Work Agency to oversee enforcement

Implications for parish and town councils

Councils should expect:

- Increased legal and financial risk in employment matters
- A need for stronger HR systems, documentation, and governance processes
- More robust recruitment, induction, and probation procedures
- Greater reliance on professional HR advice and updated policy frameworks

NALC has issued updated model policies (including sickness absence, bereavement, paternity leave, and whistleblowing) to assist councils in preparing for the changes.

Priority actions

Councils are advised to:

- Review and update HR policies and employment contracts
- Ensure councillors and staff are briefed on the changes
- Strengthen documentation and decision-making processes
- Review casual and zero-hours arrangements
- Prepare for flexible working as standard practice

Other matters

The meeting also received updates on:

- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, which strengthens parish council involvement in neighbourhood governance and introduces a Community Right to Buy for local assets
- Planning and renewable energy, including increased pressure for wind, solar and battery storage development and opportunities to engage through the forthcoming County Durham Plan review (2026–2029)
- Rural housing challenges, highlighting ongoing shortages of affordable housing in villages and encouraging parish councils to engage with local housing need assessments and community-led solutions