

City of Durham Parish Council

The City of Durham Parish Council. c/o The Enginemen Secretary's Office
The Miners Hall. Flass Street. Durham. DH1 4BE

Telephone: 07510 074875

Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

Date of summons: 16th July 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 22nd July 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 24TH JUNE 2026**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 22nd June 2026**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:
<https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/planning-and-licensing-committee/>

- **Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 9th June 2026**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:
<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/environment-committee/>

- Proposed joint project with street sign cleaning contractors and local resident volunteers on improving streetlights across the parish area

- 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 24th June 2026

- 7. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR R CORNWELL ON THE NEW NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION**
- 8. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR M WILKES ON AYKLEY WOODS NATURE RESERVE**
- 9. STRENGTHENING THE OPERATION OF THE DURHAM CITY SAFETY HUB**
- 10. RESIDENT CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL**
- 11. SMALL GRANTS IMPACT REPORT FROM GRANTS AWARDED TO ORGANISATIONS IN 2025-26**
- 12. REPORT ON COMMUNITY CENTRE SUPPORT SCHEME PROJECT 2026-27**
- 13. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- Report by Councillor E Scott on the most recent meeting of Durham University's Community Engagement Task Force's Economic Sub-Group.
- Report by Councillor S Walker on the most recent meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (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 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.

14. UPDATE ON THE OVE ARUP TELECOMS MAST AT AYKLEY HEADS

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 24TH June 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**), L Brown, T Cleaver, D Freeman, G Holland, R Handy, E Hopgood, P Layton, F Robinson, E Scott, M Wikes and L Wilson.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 6 members of the public.

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

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and those present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors V Ashfield, R Cornwell and C Lattin.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor E Hopgood declared an interest in item 9 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

Councillor S Walker declared an interest in the grant applications for the Marra Project, IWG, NXCA API Action and took no part in the discussion or vote on these applications. Councillor S Walker also declared an interest in the grant application from Merryoaks Community Hall as a Trustee of the Hall and left the room during the consideration and vote on this application. Councillor E Scott chaired the part of the Agenda relating to grant applications under item 7.

Councillor F Robinson declared an interest in the grant application from Waddington Street URC and took no part in the discussion or vote on this application.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH MAY 2026

The minutes of the annual Council meeting held on 27th May 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited members of the public to address the Council on matters appearing on the agenda.

Two local residents – Mr Ian Simmons-Thomas and Mr Matthew Phillips - addressed Members in relation to Item 6 concerning traffic management on Lowes Barn Bank. Mr Simmons thanked the Parish Council for placing the matter on the agenda and explained that concerns regarding the road extended beyond those

living immediately alongside it. It was emphasised that pedestrians, cyclists and motorists could all feel unsafe when using Lowes Barn Bank as a result of the combination of inappropriate vehicle types, high traffic volumes and excessive speeds.

Particular concern was expressed regarding the use of the road by large HGVs and coaches, which were considered inappropriate for the narrow, steep and winding nature of the route. The resident referred to vehicles travelling at speed towards bends and crossing the centre line, creating potentially dangerous situations for approaching traffic. Members heard that approximately 200 people lived in the immediate area and that Lowes Barn Bank also represented an important route into and out of the city for pedestrians and cyclists. It was noted that some cyclists used the footway because they did not feel sufficiently safe cycling on the carriageway.

Mr Matthew Phillips acknowledged that changes to the traffic arrangements could cause disruption elsewhere but argued that retaining the status quo was not a neutral option given the existing safety concern. Reference was made to the temporary one-way arrangements which had operated during the recent footway works and to the potential for future traffic growth associated with housing development to the west of Durham.

Mr Ian Simmons-Thomas urged the Parish Council to support further action by Durham County Council. It was acknowledged that the precise solution was ultimately a matter for the highway's authority, but the resident considered that the Parish Council could exercise significant influence by formally supporting the need for the existing arrangements to be reviewed. Members heard that the current traffic conditions restricted transport choices for those who might otherwise wish to walk or cycle and that this should be balanced against the inconvenience which alternative traffic arrangements might cause motorists.

Mr Matthew Phillips also made reference to the concept of traffic evaporation, whereby changes to road arrangements could encourage some journeys to transfer to alternative routes or modes of transport. Mr Phillips further suggested that Durham County Council should gather data during forthcoming temporary traffic arrangements in the Church Street area to provide evidence of the impact of such changes and inform future decision-making.

The Chair thanked both residents for their contributions and advised that the matters raised would be considered in detail under Item 6.

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

The Chair introduced the item and welcomed Professor Bennett Zon, who delivered a presentation on the campaign to save the ceramic mosaic at the former County Hall from demolition.

Professor Zon explained that the mosaic formed part of the former County Hall complex and was considered to be an important example of twentieth-century public art. Members heard that the campaign involved local, regional and national

organisations and individuals, including heritage and conservation bodies, and that support had continued to grow as awareness of the threatened demolition increased.

The presentation provided Members with an overview of the mosaic's design and historical significance. Professor Zon explained that the artwork told the story of Durham City and County Durham through a series of images representing important people, places, legends, industries and events. These included St Aidan, the monks carrying the coffin of St Cuthbert, Durham Cathedral, the county's mining heritage and a range of local folklore and landmarks. It was emphasised that the mosaic was unique in presenting the history and identity of both Durham City and County Durham within a single artwork.

Members heard that the mosaic was also considered significant beyond the local area because of its distinctive artistic style. Professor Zon explained that its pixelated imagery anticipated later forms of digital art and visual culture and argued that this gave the work wider national and potentially international importance within the history of twentieth-century art.

The presentation addressed the practical challenges associated with preserving the mosaic. Members were advised that concerns had been raised regarding the strength of the cement backing, cracking between tiles, the potential need to divide the artwork into sections, health and safety considerations and the logistical difficulties involved in removal, transportation, reconstruction and reinstallation.

Professor Zon explained, however, that specialist conservation advice obtained by the campaign suggested that these difficulties were not insurmountable. Modern techniques existed which could enable the mural to be removed together with its backing structure rather than attempting to detach individual tiles. Members were shown examples of other large-scale twentieth-century ceramic artworks which had successfully been removed from threatened locations and reinstalled elsewhere.

The campaign's immediate priority was to secure a stay of execution before demolition of the former County Hall progressed to the point where the artwork could no longer be saved. Professor Zon emphasised that specialist conservators should be commissioned to undertake a proper assessment of the mosaic and determine the most appropriate method of removal and preservation.

Councillor G Holland questioned whether a suitable future location had been identified. Professor Zon explained that the campaign was proceeding in two stages, with the immediate priority being to prevent destruction of the mosaic. Once this had been achieved, detailed consideration could be given to its future location. Considerable interest had already been expressed by potential host organisations, although Professor Zon explained his preference was that the artwork should ultimately be displayed in a prominent and accessible civic location where it could be regularly viewed by residents and visitors.

During the discussion, Members strongly supported the principle of preserving the mosaic and emphasised the urgency of preventing its destruction before the available conservation options had been properly explored. It was suggested that

the campaign should seek national and potentially international media attention, given the significance of the artwork and the wider implications of its loss. Professor Zon confirmed that contact had already been made with a range of national and local media organisations and that the campaign was developing its presence across social media platforms. Members also heard that political support had been secured and that efforts were continuing to bring together institutional stakeholders.

Members questioned the likely cost of removing and preserving the mosaic. Professor Zon explained that specialist advice suggested a broad potential range from the low tens of thousands of pounds to around £100,000, depending upon the condition of the artwork and the method ultimately adopted. He considered that, if sufficient time could be secured, there would be opportunities to seek private donations, benefaction and grant funding, including potentially National Lottery support.

Members considered that the mosaic represented an important part of Durham's civic and cultural heritage and that every reasonable opportunity should be taken to investigate its preservation before demolition proceeded. The Council unanimously **agreed** to write to Durham County Council expressing its support for the campaign to save the County Hall mosaic. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would prepare a draft letter, circulate this to Members and, once finalised, send it to Durham County Council.

6. LOWES BARN BANK – RESIDENT CONCERNS REGARDING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Chair introduced the item and reminded Members that the matter had arisen following a request from a resident at an earlier Parish Council meeting to consider whether the temporary one-way traffic arrangements introduced during the Lowes Barn Bank footway improvements could be retained in some form.

The Chair explained that she had subsequently spoken with a number of local residents and that the report before Council sought to bring together the different views and concerns expressed. The Chair declared that she was a resident of the area, regularly drove and walked along Lowes Barn Bank and therefore had direct experience of the issues under discussion.

The Chair began by welcoming the recently completed improvements to the footways and placed on record appreciation for the work undertaken. Members heard that the previous condition of the footways had created serious accessibility difficulties and that the improvements had enabled people with limited mobility to use the route much more safely. The Chair referred to seeing mobility scooter users and pedestrians using walking aids accessing the improved footways in circumstances which would previously have been extremely difficult.

Members were advised that, despite the benefits of the footway improvements, concerns remained regarding traffic conditions. The Chair explained that Durham County Council highways officers had previously indicated that local residents would not support a one-way system. However, the discussions she had held

suggested that there was support amongst at least some residents for further consideration of such an arrangement.

The Chair acknowledged that the issue required the Parish Council to balance competing interests. A one-way arrangement could improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce vehicle conflicts, but it could also displace traffic onto surrounding roads and inconvenience residents elsewhere in the Neville's Cross area. The Chair further advised that Durham County Council officers had declined an invitation to attend the meeting on the basis that the issue had previously been considered.

The discussion also considered parking on Lowes Barn Bank. Members heard that many properties on one side of the road had no off-street parking and residents therefore had little alternative but to park on the carriageway or footway. Properties on the opposite side generally had driveways, although visitors sometimes parked on the footways. This could result in pedestrians being unable to use either side of the road safely. At the same time, if all vehicles currently parked partly on the footway were moved entirely onto the carriageway, the road could effectively be reduced to a single traffic lane.

The Chair also raised the issue of HGV traffic. Members heard that there appeared to be widespread concern regarding large vehicles using Lowes Barn Bank, particularly because the width and alignment of the road meant that two HGVs could not always pass safely. Photographic evidence within the meeting papers demonstrated large vehicles crossing the centre line, and concern was expressed that HGVs and coaches were using a route which was unsuitable for vehicles of that size.

Councillor G Holland considered whether a weight restriction could provide a potential solution. It was noted that Durham County Council had previously indicated that the road did not satisfy the necessary criteria for a formal HGV restriction. The possibility of advisory signage stating that the road was unsuitable for HGVs was therefore discussed as a potential alternative but the Clerk warned that advisory signage may not be possible.

Councillor T Cleaver advised that he fully supported the residents present at the meeting and stated that Lowes Barn Bank was clearly inappropriate for HGVs and a weight restriction and other schemes should be explored to address this.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the proposed one-way arrangements. Councillor L Brown considered how traffic would be redirected and the potential impact upon Neville's Cross Bank, the A167, Mary Oaks, Hastings Avenue and other surrounding roads. Concern was expressed that the temporary arrangements introduced during the footway works had resulted in significant congestion, including queues extending considerable distances at peak periods.

Councillor L Brown acknowledged the genuine concerns of Lowes Barn Bank residents but emphasised that the Parish Council had a responsibility to consider the interests of residents across the wider area. It was recognised that measures which benefited one group of residents could create unintended consequences elsewhere.

Further discussion took place regarding the absence of reliable traffic data. Members considered that temporary arrangements associated with roadworks and other infrastructure projects provided opportunities to assess the effect of changes to traffic flows. It was suggested that Durham County Council should make greater use of such opportunities to gather evidence before determining whether permanent changes were appropriate.

Members also considered the importance of Lowes Barn Bank as an active travel corridor linking existing cycling and walking routes. Concern was expressed that cyclists currently felt compelled to use the footway because of conditions on the carriageway, thereby creating potential conflicts with pedestrians. Members recognised that improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians should form part of any future consideration of traffic management measures.

Members **agreed** (by 6 votes in favour, 2 against and 4 abstentions) to 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.

Members **agreed** (by 5 votes in favour, 3 against and 4 abstentions) to request an update from Durham County Council regarding the possibility of introducing a weight restriction for heavy goods vehicles using Lowes Barn Bank.

Members **agreed** (by 7 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions) to request support from Durham County Council Highways in preventing on pavement parking.

7. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor L Brown presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 15th and 29th May 2026. There being no queries from Members, Councillor L Brown moved on to Committee reports.

New County Durham Plan: scoping report consultation

Councillor L Brown presented the report on the commencement of Durham County Council's preparation of a new County Durham Plan and the publication of the associated Scoping Report consultation. Members were advised that the consultation represented the first formal stage in preparing the new Plan and sought views on the key issues, priorities and strategic choices that would shape future development across County Durham.

Councillor L Brown highlighted the significance of the review, noting the changes to national planning policy since the adoption of the existing Plan in 2020, the substantial increase in assessed housing need and the introduction of a revised national plan-making system.

Councillor L Brown explained that the Scoping Report covered a wide range of important planning matters, including housing and economic growth, climate

change, infrastructure, transport, town centres, biodiversity, the historic environment, healthy communities and the future protection of Green Belt land. Members also noted that the consultation sought views on alternative strategies for accommodating future growth and that more than 800 sites had been submitted to Durham County Council through its Call for Sites exercise. It was therefore considered particularly important that the Parish Council engaged at an early stage to help represent the interests of Durham City and influence the strategic direction of the emerging Plan.

Particular attention was drawn to the relationship between the new County Durham Plan and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor L Brown advised that the Neighbourhood Plan formed part of the statutory development plan and would need to remain in general conformity with the strategic policies of the new Local Plan. Members noted that the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group would shortly begin developing a roadmap and programme for reviewing the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, enabling this work to proceed alongside and remain aligned with the emerging County Durham Plan.

Following consideration of the report, Members unanimously **agreed** to note the commencement of the County Durham Plan review and publication of the Scoping Report consultation; to invite the Planning and Licensing Committee to engage positively in the consultation process; and to note that the review of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan would proceed alongside the County Durham Plan review through the work of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group.

- **Environment Committee**

Councillor F Robinson presented the Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 12th May 2026. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

- **Finance Committee**

Councillor S Walker presented the Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 13th May 2026. There being no queries from Members, Councillor S Walker handed over the Chair to Councillor E Scott to take the grants report.

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

Councillor E Scott presented the report on grant applications received from local community and voluntary organisations for the 2026/27 financial year. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had allocated a total budget of £21,297 towards its community grants programme, including £6,297 reallocated from the Community Centre Support Fund.

Councillor E Scott explained that applications had been assessed in accordance with the Parish Council's grants policy, which sought to support projects that met the Council's aims and objectives, demonstrated clear community benefit and responded to identified local needs.

Members were reminded that the grants programme was intended to encourage participation in voluntary and community activities, strengthen the effectiveness of local organisations, support residents experiencing social and economic difficulties, improve the local environment and ensure equality of access to services and opportunities across the Parish.

Councillor E Scott advised that the grant funding window had opened on 1st April 2026 and had been widely publicised through the Parish Council's website, social media channels and direct correspondence with local organisations.

Applications received by the deadline had subsequently been subject to detailed consideration by the Finance Committee, which had assessed the merits of each application, the benefits proposed for residents and the local community, the level of financial need demonstrated and the extent to which the projects represented appropriate use of public funds. Members noted that the Finance Committee had undertaken a thorough assessment of the applications before making its recommendations to Full Council.

Councillor E Scott presented the individual applications received, together with the amounts requested, the nature and purpose of the proposed projects and the recommendations made by the Finance Committee.

Members recognised the important contribution made by local voluntary and community organisations to the wellbeing of residents and welcomed the range of projects seeking support through the Parish Council's grants programme. It was noted that successful grant awards would be subject to the Council's established monitoring and evaluation requirements and that organisations should not presume that financial support would automatically continue from one year to the next.

Following consideration of the report and the recommendations of the Finance Committee, Members **agreed** to approve the recommended grant awards to local community and voluntary organisations for the 2026/27 financial year, with payments to be made in accordance with the arrangements set out in the report, as below.

In view of the remaining £2,000 from this fund, it was further **agreed** that this funding should remain open during the course of this financial year in case of any additional/ urgent applications/ projects requiring funding.

Organisation	Project	Amount requested	Amount agreed by Full Council
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	£1,152	£1,152

	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.		
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 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.	£2,000	Agreement in principle of £2,000 depending on further information.
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	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 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 Mika Folding 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, subject to the IWG becoming its own constituted group.
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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 of £2,000 towards children's activities, on the condition that a box seeking donations towards these activities be in situ at the Hall to allow for further funding. As well as an additional £500 agreed in principle for the sign, conditional on further information about the size, appearance, etc of this sign.
NXCA API action	To produce a banner to commemorate the Battle of Neville's Cross; part of which we are hoping to engage local schools	£200	£0 but with an invitation to re-apply with a more detailed application this year.

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 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

8. CHAIR'S UPDATE

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

The Chair began by placing on record her thanks to everyone involved in the planning and delivery of the recent Mo Mowlam blue plaque unveiling event. Members heard that the Parish Council had been delighted to work alongside Durham University and Mo Mowlam's family to ensure that one of the University's most significant alumnae was appropriately recognised and commemorated. The Chair reflected that the unveiling had been a particularly special occasion and thanked all those who had contributed towards its successful organisation and delivery.

The Chair also expressed her appreciation to the organisers of the recent Eco-Fest, which had appeared to attract record attendance and had provided residents with an important opportunity to access information and advice on environmental sustainability and the practical steps that could be taken to live more sustainably and safeguard the environment.

The Chair further reported on her attendance at the Durham Regatta alongside Councillors E Scott, T Cleaver, M Wilkes and R Cornwell. Members heard that the event had once again demonstrated the considerable amount of work undertaken by organisers and volunteers to deliver an annual event which made an important contribution to the profile of Durham City. Particular thanks were extended to the Regatta Chair, Michael Laing, Debbie Mortimer and the wider organising team for their continued dedication and hard work.

Turning to Durham Pride, the Chair reported that the 2026 event had widely been regarded as the biggest and most successful Durham Pride to date, attracting significant numbers of people to the city. The Chair expressed her thanks to Mel and the wider organising team for the considerable amount of work undertaken throughout the year to deliver the event and highlighted the important support provided by organisations which recognised the significance of promoting equality and diversity throughout County Durham.

The Chair placed on record her thanks to the Parish Council's Environment Committee for its work in delivering almost 100 new summer floral hanging baskets across Durham City. Members heard that the displays had significantly enhanced the appearance of the city's principal streets and had received extremely positive feedback from residents and visitors. The Chair thanked everyone involved in coordinating and delivering the project and welcomed the positive contribution the displays were making to the appearance of the city centre.

The Chair also updated Members on progress with the two projects supported through the Parish Council's Community Centre Support Scheme. She thanked Alington House for progressing at pace its application to Durham County Council relating to the installation of new windows and also expressed her appreciation to Maeve Minns for her work in developing and progressing a number of funding applications on behalf of the City Theatre. The Chair welcomed the progress being

made with both projects and looked forward to seeing the proposed improvements advance further.

Members were further updated on work undertaken by the Clerk and Councillor R Cornwell to research a new audio system for future Full Council meetings. The Chair thanked them for their work and noted that, whilst the cost of the preferred system exceeded the Clerk's general expenditure limit of £1,000, the Clerk held delegated responsibility for the purchase of stationery and Members had expressed their support for the purchase of the new equipment. The Chair advised that it was hoped the new audio system would be available for use at the next Full Council meeting and would improve the arrangements for future meetings.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Amanda Hopgood as the new Mayor of Durham City and paid tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Gary Hutchinson. She reflected upon the outstanding contribution made by Councillor Hutchinson during his term of office and thanked both him and his wife Pamela for the manner in which they had represented Durham City and County Durham. The Chair wished Councillor Amanda Hopgood and Neil every success and enjoyment during the forthcoming civic year.

The Chair also congratulated all those recognised in His Majesty The King's Birthday Honours List. Particular congratulations were extended to Sir Carlos Frenk for his contribution to cosmology and to Rhiannon Hiles, who had been awarded a CBE for her contribution to museums and the heritage of the North East. The Chair welcomed the recognition afforded to both recipients and their significant achievements.

Finally, the Chair reminded Members that the Clerk would be taking annual leave between 2nd and 11th July 2026 and wished him an enjoyable and well-deserved break.

9. REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE MAYOR'S CHARITY APPEAL

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has received correspondence from the Mayor's PA at Durham County Council on behalf of the newly elected Mayor of Durham City Councillor Amanda Hopgood, asking if the Parish Council would consider supporting the mayor's charity appeal this year.

Following her election as Mayor in June 2026, Councillor Amanda Hopgood announced that she would be supporting St. Cuthbert's Hospice in the City of Durham parish area and Point North; two charities close to her heart.

The Clerk advised that 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 provided to the charity.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has previously supported the past Mayors' appeals with a donation of £500.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support the Mayor's charities with a total donation to the appeal of £500; split equally between the two charities.

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

The Clerk presented the report seeking the Parish Council's support for the replacement of the Queen's Golden Jubilee commemorative plaque located on the elevation of Clayport Library facing Lower Claypath. Members were advised that the plaque commemorated the official opening of Millennium Place by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8th May 2002 as part of the nationwide celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of her accession to the throne.

The Clerk explained that the plaque represented an important record of a significant royal visit and civic occasion in Durham City's recent history and commemorated both the Queen's visit and the role of Millennium Place in the regeneration of the city centre.

The Clerk reported that, following more than twenty years of exposure to weathering, the condition of the plaque had deteriorated significantly. The engraved lettering had become increasingly difficult to read, the surface had suffered substantial degradation and its overall appearance no longer appropriately reflected the importance of the event it commemorated.

Members were advised that inspections undertaken by contractors acting on behalf of Durham County Council and the Parish Council had concluded that the plaque had deteriorated beyond practical repair. Professional advice had therefore recommended a full like-for-like replacement rather than attempting restoration works which would be unlikely to provide a satisfactory or durable outcome.

Members heard that the proposed replacement plaque would replicate the original design, dimensions, wording, appearance and fixing arrangements but would be manufactured from slightly thicker stainless steel to improve its longevity and future maintenance. The total cost of manufacturing and installing the replacement plaque was £576 excluding VAT, and Councillor E Hopgood had generously offered to fund the works in full. The Clerk therefore emphasised that the Parish Council was being asked to provide its formal and moral support for the project rather than make any financial contribution towards its delivery.

The Clerk further advised that the necessary discussions had taken place with Durham County Council as the owner of the asset. The Council's Corporate Property and Land Team had confirmed its support for the like-for-like replacement, whilst the Planning Service had advised that planning permission would not be required because there would be no material alteration to the plaque's size, location, appearance, illumination or method of fixing. Members also noted that Councillor C Lattin and the Clerk had recently discussed the proposal with the relevant Durham County Council Cabinet Member, who had similarly expressed support for the project.

Members were advised that the replacement plaque would remain an asset of Durham County Council and would continue to be maintained by the authority. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to preserving the original plaque in an appropriate location, such as The Story, for safekeeping and as part of the official historical record.

The Clerk concluded that replacing the plaque would preserve an important feature associated with Durham City's civic heritage, improve the appearance of a prominent location within the Conservation Area and ensure that the significance of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee visit and the official opening of Millennium Place continued to be recognised and understood by future generations.

Following consideration of the report, Members unanimously **agreed** to support the principle of the proposed replacement of the Queen's Golden Jubilee commemorative plaque with a new plaque matching the original design and specification and thanked Councillor E Hopgood for generously agreeing to fund this.

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)

Councillor S Walker presented the following report from the CDALC meeting held on 21st May 2026 as follows:

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*

End of report

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 GREEN BELT

Members considered recent planning applications within the parish area and the recent publication of the *Call for Sites* as part of the review of the County Durham Plan. Members reaffirmed their strong commitment to safeguarding the green belt in and around the parish area and **agreed** to state publicly the Parish Council's ongoing and future intentions to protect the Durham City green belt.

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
(22nd July 2026)**

ITEM 5: PROPOSED JOINT PROJECT WITH STREET SIGN CLEANING CONTRACTORS AND LOCAL RESIDENT VOLUNTEERS ON IMPROVING STREETLIGHTS ACROSS THE PARISH AREA

This report seeks the Parish Council's approval to establish a joint environmental improvement project between the Parish Council, Linden Cleaning Services and local resident volunteers to improve the appearance of streetlights and associated street furniture throughout the parish area.

During the Environment Committee meeting, members considered the excellent voluntary work currently being undertaken by Linden Cleaning Services in cleaning road signs across Durham. Members noted the overwhelmingly positive public response to the company's work and recognised both its strong community ethos and commitment to improving the local environment. It was agreed that this presented an opportunity for the Parish Council to work collaboratively with the company on a wider environmental improvement initiative.

Before



After



The Committee discussed the poor condition of many street lighting columns throughout the parish, many of which have accumulated obsolete planning notices, redundant cable ties, adhesive residue, stickers and other debris over a number of years (see image 1). Members acknowledged that, whilst responsibility for maintaining these assets ultimately rests with Durham County Council, there was widespread agreement that the Parish Council could take a proactive role in improving the appearance of the local environment through partnership working and community involvement.

It was proposed that local resident volunteers undertake the initial preparation work by removing redundant planning notices, cable ties and other debris from street lighting columns where it is safe to do so. Once this preparatory work has been completed, Linden Cleaning Services would be commissioned to undertake professional cleaning of the lampposts, removing adhesive residue, staining and accumulated dirt to restore their appearance. This collaborative approach would

ensure that the specialist cleaning work is carried out efficiently while encouraging community participation and civic pride.

Image 1 – poor condition of lampposts around Durham



Members recognised that careful planning would be required to identify priority streets and coordinate volunteer activity. It was suggested that the project initially focus on areas with the greatest concentration of neglected street furniture before expanding into other parts of the parish if successful. Community groups and local residents would be encouraged to participate through a public appeal and promotion via the Parish Council's communication channels.

The Committee agreed that the professional cleaning element of the project should be delivered on a day-rate basis by the selected contractor, up to a maximum of 2 days. It was proposed that the Parish Council fund one or more dedicated cleaning days to enable the company to systematically clean street lighting columns identified through the volunteer programme. Members considered that this would provide an effective and highly visible environmental improvement while supporting a local business that has already demonstrated a strong commitment to community service.

Members should also note that the company is clearly committed to continuing with its road sign cleaning on a voluntary basis outside of this proposed scheme.

In doing this work, Linden uses 35cm dupont single trim brush heads for the work to the road signs and they usually go through 3 of these brush heads every six months at £46.00 per brush head. In support of their work over the next year and in recognition of their exceptional voluntary service to our community, the Environment Committee is minded to support the purchase of 6 x brush heads at a total cost of £276.

To enable the project to proceed, it was proposed that funding for the professional cleaning work be met from existing approved budgets. Members agreed that part of the funding could be drawn from the £2,000 Emergency Box Fund, together with the £500 allocated through the Partner Award Scheme. It was considered that these existing budget provisions could be utilised to support a project that delivers significant environmental benefits without requiring additional financial provision.

The Environment Committee is agreed that the proposed partnership represents an innovative and practical approach to enhancing the appearance of the parish. By combining the efforts of local volunteers with the expertise of a professional cleaning contractor, the Parish Council has the opportunity to deliver tangible improvements to the public realm, strengthen community engagement and demonstrate its continued commitment to maintaining a clean parish area.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to approve the establishment of this joint project with Linden Cleaning Services and local resident volunteers and authorise the commissioning of the company on a day-rate basis to undertake professional cleaning of street lighting columns. 2) If 1) is approved, for Members to approve the use of funding from the Emergency Box Fund and the Partner Award Scheme to support delivery of the project, as set out in the above report. 3) For Members to support the purchase of 6 x brush heads to facilitate the voluntary work of cleaning up the road signs by this company. 4) If 1) and 2) are approved, for Members to agree to delegate responsibility for delivering this scheme to the Parish Council's Environment Committee.
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ITEM 7: MOTION BY COUNCILLOR R CORNWELL ON THE NEW NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor R Cornwell wishes to propose the following motion on the new national scheme of delegation:

The motion

This Parish Council considers that the new National Scheme of Delegation for planning applications is a threat to local democracy and seriously compromises the ability of this Council to represent our residents when responding to planning applications. Consequently we

- 1. commend the Town and Country Planning Association for expressing so well the reasons why this draconian measure is a retrograde step;*
- 2. resolve to write to our local MP and the new Prime Minister to convey our concerns and to ask them to reverse this measure before it comes into force on 31 October 2026;*
- 3. resolve to raise this matter with other Parish Councils via the County Association and individual contacts to make them aware of this threat; and*
- 4. resolve to work with other bodies to oppose this measure and seek its reversal.*

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the above motion.
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ITEM 8: MOTION BY COUNCILLOR M WILKES ON AYKLEY WOODS NATURE RESERVE

Councillor M Wilkes wishes to propose the following motion on Aykley Woods Nature Reserve:

The motion

This Parish Council requests that Durham County Council's Cabinet immediately removes Aykley Woods Nature Reserve from the County Durham Plan scoping consultation.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to the above motion.
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ITEM 9: STRENGTHENING THE OPERATION OF THE DURHAM CITY SAFETY HUB

As Members are aware, the Parish Council had been a significant funding partner for the City Safety Hub at St. Nicolas Church, providing £10,000 each financial year since financial year 2022/23 (excluding this current financial year).

Background to the hub

In Summer 2021, the Home Office invited applications for the latest round of Safer Streets (SS3) funding. The initiative was aimed at implementing improvements for the safety of public spaces. Shortly after release, another funding opportunity linked to Safer Streets was launched.

This opportunity was specifically aimed at the Safety of Women and Girls at Night (SWaN). The same organisation could not bid for both funds, so working in partnership, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office applied for SS3 and DCC applied for the SWaN funds.

Although the projects complimented each other, the SWaN bid could not contain any matters applied for under SS3. The spend on both bids had a challenging target date and was to be delivered by the end of March 22 and the funding could not be carried forward beyond that date. In November 2021, it was announced that the SWaN bid had been successful although SS3 had not.

The SWaN bid had four key elements

1. The appointment of a co-ordinator to oversee and deliver the project
2. Delivering vulnerability training to key staff working in the night time economy and situational awareness training to University Students
3. Deliver a Comms campaign highlighting the issue of safety of women and reporting of sexual harassment
4. Deliver a night hub on a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights which could provide a safe space for women should they feel at risk or vulnerable. The Hub would also be manned by staff of DCC who would also assist others in the night time economy when required

The original plan was to secure a retail unit and refit it to suit the operational needs of the hub. Due to the complexities of securing a unit and the costs of refit, this option very quickly became impractical so an alternative solution was sourced.

Positive liaison with St Nicholas Church resulted in an agreement to use that venue for the night hub. The venue is already used by Durham Street Lights and it was agreed that a room in the church could be suitably adapted to meet the needs of the hub.

The Safety Hub in operation

Since opening on the 5th February 2022, the hub has proven to be a positive and at times life-saving facility for Durham City on the busiest three nights of the week (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday). Working between the hours of 9pm and 3am, the Hub has provided necessary support, assistance and guardianship not only to

females in a vulnerable or at-risk state, but also males in a similar situation. These incidents can range from the most serious life-threatening issues to the everyday care and wellbeing facility.

Members have been provided with incident log data from the last six months of the hub's operations and the following observations should be highlighted:

- Wellbeing and welfare issues are consistently the highest each month and also indicate an ongoing need for welfare checks and mental health-related support in the city centre. Incidents of intoxication are also high.
- Female-related incidents have outnumbered male-related incidents every month of the hub's operation.
- There are no recorded incidents of spiking having taking place and sexual offences are also extremely low.

Running costs

The major running costs for the hub involve its staffing and security along with general resources and the room hire costs. Th running costs have been reduced through successful negotiation with St. Nic's Church who have significantly reduced the room hire costs and DCC has entered into a more cost-effective security contract with the security provider.

However, whilst the Hub has been running each Wednesday, Friday and Saturday since February 2022, the ongoing need to finance the hub in a restricted funding environment means that the hub will be closing on a Wednesday moving forwards.

The annual running cost for the Safety Hub for Friday and Saturday nights only are approximately £69,000 and this has previously been funded by Durham's Police and Crime Commissioner (£25,000), DCC's Public Health team (£24,000), the City of Durham Parish Council (£10,000) and Durham BID (£10,000).

In addition, Durham University is also funding two additional police officers during term-time on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and these officers routinely support the operation of the Hub.

Durham County Council, the lead partner behind the Safety Hub, will soon be approaching all partners once more to seek additional funding for this Hub and Members will need to consider this as part of its budget setting process later this calendar year.

Improving the Hub's services

When the Hub first began its operations in 2022, it was aided free-of-charge by the organisation City Safe – a charitable organisation which provided medics at no cost to the Hub or any partner associated with the Hub. Unfortunately City Safe is no longer in existence and the Night Time Economy trade – through the Durham PubWatch scheme – has consistently highlighted the need for medics to be in situ as part of the Hub's operations. This is a view shared by the Hub's coordinating officer and a matter which needs to be remedied if we are to realise the full benefits of this Hub.

Looking at a private sector option for this medical cover is one option and initial discussions with organisations such as Nerams who provide the medical coverage for events hosted by the Parish Council and other partners suggest that the cost for two medics over a calendar year would be circa. £70,000+ and is therefore deemed undeliverable if partners which to maintain the same financial contribution to this Hub as in the past.

An alternative proposal is for partner organisations, including the Parish Council and Durham BID, to jointly approach County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust to explore whether trainee nurses, paramedics or medical students could be supported to provide supervised clinical assistance as part of the Hub's operations. Such an arrangement would strengthen the Hub's services whilst providing valuable practical experience for NHS trainees and reducing costs for funding partners.

There is also a compelling case for NHS involvement from both a healthcare and financial perspective. The Safety Hub routinely provides early intervention for individuals experiencing the effects of intoxication, minor injuries, welfare concerns and mental health crises.

By offering immediate assessment, reassurance and appropriate support within a safe environment, the Hub frequently prevents situations from escalating to the point where attendance at Accident and Emergency departments or ambulance conveyance becomes necessary. This early intervention not only delivers better outcomes for vulnerable individuals but also helps reduce demand on already overstretched emergency healthcare services.

The Parish Council and its partners should therefore highlight that the Safety Hub represents a preventative healthcare initiative that contributes directly to reducing unnecessary admissions to Accident and Emergency departments, lowering ambulance call-outs and enabling NHS resources to be focused on patients requiring urgent clinical treatment.

In this respect, the Hub delivers significant cost avoidance for the NHS whilst improving public safety and patient outcomes. It is therefore recommended that the Parish Council works alongside Durham BID and other funding partners to make a formal approach to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, inviting the Trust to become a strategic partner in the Safety Hub by providing trainee healthcare professionals or other appropriate clinical support as part of its wider commitment to community health, prevention and integrated partnership working.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to write jointly with Durham BID (and any other appropriate partners) to the NHS Trust, to ask that they become a strategic partner of this Safety Hub and provide medics to the Hub, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 10: RESIDENT CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to undertake a comprehensive parish-wide public consultation to inform the Council's Strategic Priorities and budget-setting process for the 2027/28 financial year.

The consultation will provide residents with an opportunity to comment on the work of the Parish Council, identify the issues that matter most to them, and influence the Council's future strategic direction ahead of the Councillors' Away Day scheduled for October 2026.

It is recommended that Members approve the launch of a parish-wide consultation, to be undertaken between 30th July 2026 and 30th September 2026, using a combination of physical and electronic surveys, with the findings reported to Members in advance of the October 2026 Councillors' Away Day to directly inform the Council's Strategic Plan and Medium-Term Financial Planning process.

Since its establishment, the City of Durham Parish Council has placed resident engagement at the heart of its decision-making processes. Regular consultation with the community has enabled the Council to ensure that its priorities, services and financial resources reflect the needs and aspirations of local people. Previous resident consultations have sought views on service priorities, Council performance and future investment proposals, providing valuable evidence to support policy development and budget decisions.

As the Council prepares to review its Strategic Plan and establish priorities for the coming municipal year, it is appropriate that Members once again seek the views of residents across the parish. The Councillors' Away Day provides an important opportunity for Members to consider long-term objectives, review existing priorities and identify areas for future investment. A robust programme of public consultation undertaken in advance of this process will ensure that these discussions are informed by contemporary evidence and community feedback.

It is proposed that the Council undertakes a comprehensive consultation over a period of approximately two months, commencing at the end of July 2026 and concluding at the end of September 2026.

The consultation will be designed to gather residents' views on the Parish Council's current work, identify the issues that residents believe are most important within the parish, understand community aspirations for the future and seek opinions on the services and projects that should receive priority over the coming years. The consultation will also provide an opportunity for residents to comment on the Council's overall performance and identify opportunities for improvement.

Recognising that no single consultation method reaches every demographic, the proposed approach adopts a mixed-method methodology in accordance with recognised best practice in local government consultation. Electronic surveys will

be made available through the Council's website and promoted extensively via social media platforms, electronic newsletters and partner organisations. At the same time, paper questionnaires will be made available at a range of accessible community venues across the parish, including Clayport Library and community centres, ensuring that residents who are digitally excluded are able to participate equally in the consultation process.

Physical survey collection points will also be provided to maximise response rates and encourage participation from all sections of the community.

Meaningful public consultation is recognised as a fundamental principle of good governance and effective community leadership. The proposed approach reflects recognised consultation best practice by ensuring that the process is open, transparent, proportionate and accessible to all residents.

Utilising both digital and traditional methods of engagement will maximise participation, reduce barriers to involvement and help achieve a representative sample of views from across the parish. Providing sufficient time for responses, promoting the consultation through multiple communication channels and ensuring that responses can be submitted in a variety of formats will further strengthen the robustness and credibility of the exercise.

The consultation has been deliberately scheduled to conclude prior to the Councillors' Away Day to allow sufficient time for Members to analyse responses, identify recurring themes and prepare a detailed report for Members. This evidence-based approach will support informed decision-making and demonstrate that the Council's strategic priorities have been shaped by the views of the community it serves.

Following the closure of the consultation at the end of September 2026, a summary report will be presented to Members setting out key findings, emerging themes and recommendations. The results will form one of the principal evidence bases for discussion at the October 2026 Councillors' Away Day and will subsequently inform the Council's Strategic Plan, service priorities and budget-setting process for 2027/28.

In addition, a summary of the consultation findings will be published to demonstrate transparency and to provide residents with feedback on how their views have influenced the Council's future direction.

The costs associated with printing, publicity and survey distribution are expected to be modest and can be met from existing communications and administration budgets. The use of electronic survey platforms will minimise overall expenditure while ensuring the consultation remains accessible to the widest possible audience.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the Parish Council to undertake an annual strategic priorities consultation, doing so represents good governance and supports the Council's general power to engage with its community. The

consultation will be undertaken in accordance with relevant data protection legislation, and all personal information will be processed in line with the Council's Privacy Notice.

The consultation will be designed to ensure that all residents have a reasonable opportunity to participate regardless of age, disability or digital access. The provision of both electronic and paper surveys, together with accessible collection points located throughout the parish, will assist in reducing barriers to participation and promote inclusive engagement.

Failure to undertake meaningful resident engagement could result in strategic priorities being developed without sufficient community evidence or support.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to launch a parish-wide public consultation on the strategic priorities of the Parish Council, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 11: SMALL GRANTS IMPACT REPORT FROM GRANTS AWARDED TO ORGANISATIONS IN 2025-26

The City of Durham Parish Council's small grants scheme supports voluntary, community and charitable organisations whose work delivers clear benefits for residents of the City of Durham Parish.

Through the scheme the Council invests public funds in projects that improve health and wellbeing, reduce isolation, strengthen community resilience, protect the environment, celebrate culture and heritage, encourage volunteering and enhance community facilities. The grants awarded during 2025/26 demonstrate how relatively modest financial contributions can generate significant additional value through volunteer time, partnership working and long-term community benefit.

The requirement for organisations to submit an impact report twelve months after receiving funding is an important element of the Council's partnership approach. Monitoring enables the Council to demonstrate accountability for the use of public funds, understand the outcomes achieved, measure value for money and celebrate the work undertaken by local organisations. The reports also provide valuable evidence to inform future grant decisions and strengthen relationships between the Council and its community partners.

The following report draws together the evidence provided by grant recipients and presents it in a consistent format. The narrative remains faithful to each organisation's own submission whilst highlighting the wider community impact of the Parish Council's investment.

Alington House Community Association (£750 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant enabled the redevelopment of the Alington House community garden through the purchase of tools, equipment, compost, containers, flowers, fruit and vegetable plants. Although the project was delayed because of staffing changes and the loss of volunteers, the funding allowed the organisation to restore a neglected outdoor area, establish raised beds and create a welcoming environment that will continue to develop as part of a future community café and gardening project.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

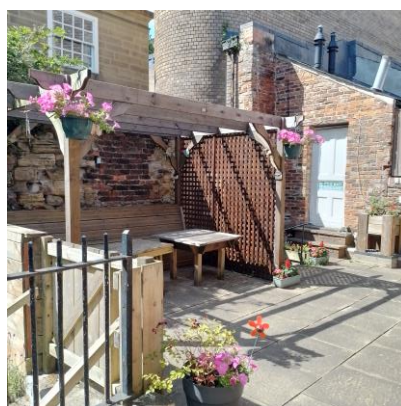
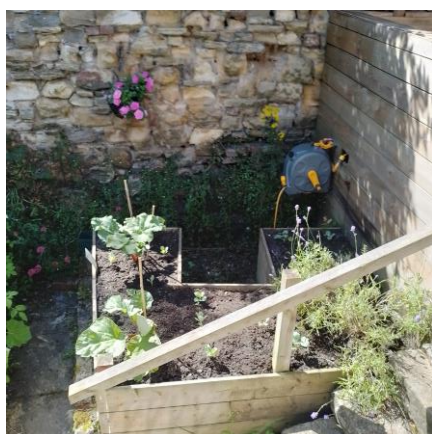
The funding has transformed a neglected area into an attractive community asset. It attracted new volunteers, including young people with additional needs from The King's Trust and an experienced retired volunteer who has overseen maintenance work. Volunteers cleared extensive ivy and debris, improved safety and accessibility and created an outdoor space that other user groups are now keen to help develop further, including proposals for a sensory garden.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

People using Alington House now benefit from an attractive and safe outdoor area which supports relaxation, gardening, learning and social interaction. Volunteers have developed practical skills, increased confidence and taken pride in improving their surroundings. Produce grown in the garden will support future training opportunities within the planned community café and enhance the experience of everyone using the building.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The project directly supports the organisation's aim of strengthening community participation, inclusion and wellbeing. It has created opportunities for volunteering, skills development and environmental improvement while laying the foundations for future food-growing, training and community café activities.

**Durham Hospital Radio (£1,570 awarded)****Details of the project/events funded**

The grant contributed towards the purchase of a replacement mixer desk for Studio 3, ensuring the station could continue to deliver reliable broadcasts to patients and staff.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The investment enabled the organisation to maintain a dependable broadcasting service and modern equipment. As a volunteer-led charity, grant funding is essential to sustaining operations and maintaining the high standards recognised nationally by the Hospital Broadcasting Association.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Patients continue to benefit from companionship, entertainment and comfort during their hospital stay through a varied programme delivered by dedicated volunteers. National broadcasting awards demonstrate the quality of the service supported by the Parish Council.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The funding has enabled the station to continue fulfilling its objective of providing a high-quality bedside broadcasting service that improves patient wellbeing and combats isolation.

**Durham Scratch Choir (£300 awarded)****Details of the project/events funded**

The funding purchased a new multifunction printer/copier to produce music for rehearsals and performances.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The equipment has enabled the formation of a Library Team, improved efficiency, reduced reliance on one volunteer and reduced paper use through reliable double-sided printing.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Choir members benefit from quicker access to music, improved print quality and easier integration of new members and visitors. Volunteers have also developed greater confidence using modern technology.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The investment supports sustainability, widens participation, strengthens teamwork and has enabled greater focus on community performances including Durham Fringe Festival.



Friends of Durham Woodland Cemetery (£500 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant covered essential operating costs including insurance and communications while the charity rebuilt following the appointment of new trustees.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The funding stabilised the organisation financially, restored confidence, stimulated fundraising, improved its online presence and helped rescue the charity from near insolvency.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Visitors benefit from improved information, additional memorial benches, community tidy-up days and greater engagement with bereaved families and volunteers.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The funding supported the charity's aims of conserving the Woodland Cemetery, supporting bereaved families, encouraging volunteering and securing the organisation's long-term sustainability.

Friends of Pelaw Woods (£350 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant funded essential conservation work including mowing, a new pond liner, drainage improvements and ongoing habitat management.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The funding enabled volunteers to concentrate on practical conservation work rather than fundraising, ensuring continuity of environmental improvements.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Residents and visitors continue to enjoy accessible woodland, improved footpaths and enhanced wildlife habitats.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The grant has enabled the Friends group to continue protecting and enhancing Pelaw Wood as an important community and environmental asset.



Seven Stories (£2,700 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant supported the Tiger Who Came to Tea exhibition, free storytelling sessions and educational activities within the Two Tales pop-up in Durham.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The exhibition introduced Judith Kerr's work to new audiences and attracted over 14,000 visitors including schools, teachers, families and home educators.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Visitors enjoyed free creative activities, educational resources and intergenerational storytelling experiences which promoted reading, inclusion and wellbeing.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The project delivered the organisation's objective of increasing access and inclusion by taking a national exhibition directly into the heart of Durham.

St Nicholas Community Forum (£2,964 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant transformed the Community Garden through the construction of a sustainable timber shed, sheltered potting area, rainwater collection, refurbishment of the polytunnel and purchase of tools, seeds and plants. Much of the work used recycled materials and volunteer labour.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The project has become a thriving community initiative where residents have learned gardening, woodworking and practical skills while creating an environmentally sustainable community asset. Careful financial management ensured maximum benefit from the grant and allowed additional improvements beyond those originally planned.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

The garden has become a place for wellbeing, friendship, learning and food growing. Residents of different ages and backgrounds work together, learn new skills and share knowledge while improving biodiversity and environmental awareness.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The project perfectly reflects SNCF's objectives of strengthening community awareness, improving quality of life, promoting sustainability and encouraging active community participation through a long-term volunteer-led initiative.

St Margaret's Centre (£2,000 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The funding supported the purchase of horticultural equipment for therapeutic gardening groups and the expansion of allotment provision.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The grant enabled the Centre to expand its gardening activities following the acquisition of an additional allotment plot and respond to increasing demand for mental health support.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Participants benefit from improved confidence, reduced anxiety, new practical skills and valuable social interaction. Testimonials demonstrate the important role the gardening groups play in supporting recovery from mental ill health.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The funding supports the Centre's strategic objective of improving mental health and wellbeing through accessible, community-based horticultural activities.

St Oswald's Church Institute (£12,000 awarded)

Details of the project/events funded

The grant funded a complete replacement kitchen providing modern cooking, catering and serving facilities which have subsequently been enhanced through additional fundraising.

What impact has this funding had on your organisation?

The refurbishment has transformed the appearance, functionality and attractiveness of the Institute, enabling increased community use and generating additional income.

What impact has this funding had on users of your services/facilities?

Community organisations, youth groups, university societies, wedding receptions, children's parties and social events all benefit from improved facilities and greater flexibility.

How has this funding helped you to achieve your organisation's strategic objectives?

The investment has helped achieve the Institute's objectives of increasing daytime use, improving financial sustainability and providing an inclusive, welcoming and high-quality community venue.



ITEM 12: REPORT ON COMMUNITY CENTRE SUPPORT SCHEME PROJECT 2026-27

As Members are aware, supporting community centres and facilities across the parish area is a key strategic priority for the Parish Council.

This financial year alone, following an extensive application process, the City of Durham Parish Council is supporting Alington House to become a more sustainable and financially viable community centre.

In addition, through the Parish Council's fundraising budget, the Council has contracted the services of a professional bid writer to apply for large funding schemes to support the internal restoration of the City Theatre at Fowlers Yard; an important cultural venue in the City. In both cases, work is progressing at pace.

In relation to the Alington House project, a suitable contractor has been identified, Alington has agreed the Terms and Conditions for the grant funding proposed by the Parish Council and a planning application for the replacement of 5 x windows to the rear of the centre is now live (planning application reference: DM/26/01581/LB | Listed Building Consent for the replacement of 5 no. timber windows | North Bailey Hall 4 North Bailey Durham DH1 3ET). The double glazing element of these new windows will hopefully allow the centre to significantly reduce their energy costs.

In agreeing the Parish Council's contribution to the Alington House project, the Parish Council has agreed to fund the capital cost of the windows at £30,000 plus up to £3,600 towards the cost of the planning application. The Clerk engaged with the Design and Conservation team pre-application and also produced an extensive Heritage Statement free-of-charge for Alington House. As a result, the total cost of the application process has been £415.00 and therefore over £3,000 currently remains unallocated.

At the same time, Following the successful appointment of a professional bid writer through the Parish Council's fundraising budget, significant progress has also been made in developing the next phase of support for the internal restoration of the City Theatre at Fowlers Yard.

The initial Phase 1 Discovery and Strategic Positioning Report (attached) has now been completed. This work reviewed previous feasibility studies, condition reports, heritage documentation and historic funding applications, together with a site assessment of the building. The report confirms that the City Theatre is an important volunteer-led community and cultural asset, hosting around five productions and over 35 performances each year, together with extensive rehearsals, community events, educational activities, volunteer working parties and performances as part of the Durham Fringe Festival.

The report identifies a clear programme of future capital investment priorities, including structural repairs, accessibility improvements, environmental

enhancements, refurbishment of public areas and the long-term conservation of the historic building. It also establishes a strategic funding pipeline, identifying a number of significant external funding opportunities including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Theatres Trust's Theatre Improvement Scheme, both of which could support substantial future investment in the building.

A key recommendation arising from the Phase 1 work is that the next priority should be the commissioning of a comprehensive professional building condition survey. The survey would identify structural issues, maintenance requirements, accessibility improvements and future capital priorities, providing the robust evidence base required to support major external funding applications.

The report concludes that such a survey is an essential prerequisite for progressing bids to organisations such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and would significantly strengthen the Theatre Trust's ability to secure substantial external investment for the restoration and long-term sustainability of the building.

As set out earlier in this report, the planning application costs associated with the Alington House project have been considerably lower than originally anticipated, leaving in excess of £3,000 of the previously approved budget unallocated. Rather than returning these funds to general reserves, Members may wish to consider reallocating the remaining balance to commission the recommended professional building condition survey for the City Theatre. The Theatre Trust has confirmed that it is willing to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the survey.

On 16th July 2026, the Clerk, Maeve and the City Theatre met with a contractor to undertake an initial assessment of the building and the Parish Council has received a quote of £3,600 (incl. VAT) for a full building assessment (with each element of work costed out by a quantity surveyor).

Commissioning the survey would enable the Theatre Trust to develop credible, evidence-based funding applications capable of attracting significantly larger sums of external grant funding for one of Durham's most important community and cultural venues. In doing so, the Parish Council would continue to deliver against its strategic objective of supporting the long-term sustainability of community facilities across the parish whilst maximising the impact of its own financial contribution.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to note the progress made in relation to both the Alington House and Durham City Theatre projects. 2) For Members to approve the reallocation of the unspent balance of the Alington House planning application budget, in order to commission a professional building condition survey for the City Theatre, subject to an appropriate financial contribution being made by the Theatre Trust.
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ITEM 13: REPORT BY COUNCILLOR E SCOTT ON THE MOST RECENT MEETING OF DURHAM UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE'S ECONOMIC SUB-GROUP.

The Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) Economic Subgroup met on 14 July 2026 to receive updates on a range of economic development initiatives involving Durham University, Durham County Council and partner organisations. The meeting agenda included presentations on the County Durham Pound initiative, Durham's designation as a UNESCO Learning City, partner updates and consideration of revised Terms of Reference.

James Cook (Durham County Council) encouraged all partner organisations and members to participate in the current consultation on the County Durham Local Plan, emphasising the importance of ensuring broad stakeholder engagement in shaping future planning policy.

The Subgroup received a presentation from Catherine Chrichard on the County Durham Pound initiative. Members were advised of the developing website, which now includes a range of case studies demonstrating the benefits of encouraging procurement and spending within the local economy. The initiative continues to support the objective of increasing economic value retained within County Durham through stronger local supply chains.

Anne Allen presented an update on Durham's designation as a UNESCO Learning City. The designation provides opportunities for collaboration across education, business and community sectors and is intended to encourage the exchange of ideas and best practice.

It was noted that there is a two-year period in which to develop the Learning City programme. Membership of the wider UK Learning Cities Network will enable the sharing of good practice with other participating authorities.

Members also noted that 2027 will be the European Year of the Normans, presenting further opportunities to promote Durham's heritage and develop associated cultural and economic initiatives.

The revised Community Engagement Forum Terms of Reference were considered and approved. The refreshed document clarifies the purpose of the Forum and its three thematic subgroups (Economy, Lived Environment and Durham for All), together with updated membership and responsibilities.

I provided an update on the City of Durham Parish Council's contribution to economic development discussions and ongoing engagement with the Economic Subgroup.

John Lowe drew attention to a recent Durham County Council Cabinet report concerning poverty and deprivation and highlighted the relevance of its findings to the work of the Economic Subgroup. Members recognised the importance of

ensuring that future economic initiatives contribute to reducing inequalities across County Durham.

Business Durham reported that activity continues at expected levels. Work is underway with Durham University Business School on research into the future of High Streets, with further information expected as the project develops.

It was also noted that Kerry Walker has been appointed as the new Managing Director of Business Durham.

Durham University reported that graduation ceremonies had generated significant visitor numbers and increased footfall across the city. The University's conference programme is fully booked through to mid-September, with strong levels of activity expected to continue over the summer period. This is anticipated to provide ongoing economic benefits to local businesses, particularly within the hospitality and retail sectors.