



City of Durham Parish Council

The City of Durham Parish Council. c/o The Enginemmen Secretary's Office
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Date of summons: 17th September 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 23rd September 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 COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND JULY 2026 (PAGES 4-14)**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 20th July and 3rd August 2026**

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

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

- Report on Durham County Council's Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement **(PAGES 15 - 16)**

- **Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th July 2026**

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

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

- Report by Councillor V Ashfield on the upcoming reconstruction of Baths Bridge and its implications for Elvet Green **(PAGES 17-18)**
- Proposal to support an archaeological study of the wider landscape of the Neville's Cross Battlefield **(PAGES 19-20)**

- **Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 17th June 2026**

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

<https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/finance-committee/>

- **Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 21st July 2026**

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

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

- 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd July 2026

- 7. ADOPTION OF NEW HR POLICIES FOLLOWING THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (PAGES 21-22)** – includes a Bereavement Policy, Paternity Pay and Paid Leave Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

- 8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD 2026/27 (PAGES 23-27)**

- 9. COMPLETION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26**

**10. REPORT ON PLANNING FOR THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2026
EVENT (PAGES 28-30)**

**11. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL
ORGANISATIONS (PAGES 31-32)**

- Report by Councillor R Cornwell on the Durham Student Housing Review meeting. To include: an update on our recruitment position for the academic year 26/27 and an update on our medium-range forecast for capacity in the student accommodation market in DH1.
- Report by Councillor S Walker on the latest meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC).

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 22nd July 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, R Cornwell, D Freeman, G Holland, R Handy, E Hopgood, C Lattin, P Layton, F Robinson, E Scott and M Wikes.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 3 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors V Ashfield and L Wilson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor L Brown declared an interest in item 14 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussion on this item.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH JUNE 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2026 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

In approving the minutes, the Chair raised two issues arising from the previous minutes. Firstly, the Chair advised that the County Council and Police had now responded to the matter of the Parish Council's letter on the future highways management of Lowes Barn Bank and it was agreed that the Planning and Licensing Committee should look into this matter on behalf of Full Council.

Secondly, the Chair raised the cost implications of having a facilitator at the Council's Strategy Away and this cost was approved by a majority of Councillors who felt that having a facilitator at this Strategy Day was an important provision and a good investment by the Parish Council.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor L Brown presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meeting held on 22nd June 2026. There were no queries from Members.

• Environment Committee

Councillor C Lattin presented the Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 9th June 2026. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

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

Councillor C Lattin presented Item 5, outlining a proposal for a collaborative environmental improvement project involving the Parish Council, Linden Cleaning Services, and local resident volunteers to restore the appearance of streetlights and associated street furniture across the parish. Councillor Lattin drew attention to the ongoing voluntary road sign cleaning undertaken by Linden Cleaning Services throughout Durham, praising their strong community ethos and noting the overwhelmingly positive public reception to their work.

The report highlighted that although ultimate maintenance responsibility for street lighting columns rests with Durham County Council, many lampposts across the parish have suffered from long-term neglect, accumulating obsolete planning notices, redundant cable ties, adhesive residues, stickers, and dirt.

To address this proactively, Councillor Lattin advised that the Environment Committee was proposing a dual-phase approach where local volunteers undertake initial preparatory work—safely clearing surface debris and old notices—before Linden Cleaning Services are commissioned on a day-rate basis to complete specialised deep cleaning to remove stubborn residues and staining.

Councillor C Lattin emphasised the need to start this effort in areas with the highest concentration of neglected assets before expanding parish-wide, supported by public appeals and promotion via Council communication channels, while noting that Linden Cleaning Services would continue their separate road sign cleaning voluntarily.

Councillor F Robinson commended the Environment Committee on a fantastic project and this was echoed by Councillors G Holland and L Brown.

Councillor M Wilkes highlighted his concerns that there is no budget within DCC for street light columns cleansing and advised that he fully supported this scheme.

Councillor E Scott expressed her concerns about the Parish Council carrying out works which are the responsibility of the County Council as well as other health and safety concerns she has about the proposals. Councillor E Scott advised that she did not support this project.

The Parish Council resolved to **approve** (by 11 votes in favour and 1 vote against) the establishment of the joint environmental project and authorised the commissioning of Linden Cleaning Services on a day-rate basis to execute the professional cleaning of street lighting columns.

The Council further **agreed** (by 11 votes in favour and 1 vote against) that funding for the initiative would be drawn entirely from existing approved budget allocations without requiring additional financial provision, specifically authorising

the combination of the £2,000 Emergency Box Fund and the £500 Partner Award Scheme allocation.

Having approved the establishment and financing of the scheme, Members formally **agreed** to delegate full operational responsibility for the delivery, priority-area planning, and volunteer coordination of the project to the Parish Council's Environment Committee.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 24th June 2026 as follows:

The Chair offered sincere congratulations to everyone involved in organising the Durham City Run Festival, noting that the event brought runners, families, volunteers, and spectators together to celebrate sport and community while showcasing Durham at its best, and recognising the hard work of organisers, partners, and volunteers on the tenth anniversary of the 5K and 10K races.

The Chair expressed thanks and congratulations to all those involved in organising the Durham Brass Festival and the Durham Miners' Gala, noting that these iconic events filled the city with outstanding music and energy, brought communities together, and welcomed numerous performers and visitors.

The Chair announced that The Light Durham centre is set to open its doors on Saturday, 22nd August 2026, creating a major destination for art, history, and innovation as the first venue in County Durham to showcase contemporary art of national and international significance on this scale, and extended thanks to Councillor Elizabeth Scott for spearheading the future of the site during her time as Portfolio Holder.

The Chair highlighted that Summer 2026 features major flagship events including the Durham Fringe, Jazz Festival, Folk Festival, and the city-wide Lego trail, which transform the city centre into a vibrant hub, drive essential footfall to the high street, and boost the tourism economy, while thanking the Business Committee and the Clerk for their work in delivering these events.

The Chair thanked Councillors Mark Wilkes and Fred Robinson for representing the Parish Council and city during the Northumbria in Bloom judging visit, expressing hope for another gold award and noting the judges' praise for shop frontage hanging baskets, the fruit tree giveaway, and Spring bulb planting initiatives led by the Environment Committee.

The Chair expressed appreciation to the Environment Committee for their ongoing work through the landlord appeal project, which funded the collection of 132 tonnes of litter from local streets this year alone through additional waste collections and received positive feedback on social media.

The Chair reported that 14th October 2026 has been proposed for the Councillors' Strategy Away Day, noting that following requests for professional facilitation, an initial quote of £1,200 for two days of work was received, and confirmed that the

Clerk is consulting CDALC to identify alternative recommended facilitators to reduce costs.

The Chair extended thanks to the Planning and Licensing Committee for their extensive work on the County Durham Plan scoping consultation alongside professional support from Jo-Anne Garrick, aiming to complete draft responses by 3rd August 2026, while acknowledging resident concerns and communications regarding proposed sites and the defence of the green belt.

The Chair concluded by wishing everyone a relaxing summer and safe travels over August, reminding members that the Council does not sit in August, highlighting the return in September, and reminding members of the circulated meeting calendar and the Christmas Civic event scheduled for Tuesday, 8th December 2026.

7. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR R CORNWELL ON THE NEW NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor R Cornwell proposed and Councillor L Brown seconded a motion regarding the government's draft guidance on the new national scheme of delegation for planning functions.

During the discussion, Councillors M Wilkes and G Holland expressed strong concerns regarding the democratic deterioration caused by the new scheme, highlighting in particular that County Councillors' ability to call in planning applications of concern to a planning committee has been taken away.

In his summing up, Councillor R Cornwell echoed those concerns, stressing that while nobody is arguing that every planning application needs to go before a committee—and noting that call-in powers are used very sparingly—planning decisions that appear small from Whitehall can have a major impact on local residents.

Councillor R Cornwell emphasised that when genuine local concern exists, residents should have the right to ask their elected representatives to ensure those concerns are heard in public, adding that removing this safeguard is the complete opposite of devolution and he urged the Government to think again to make the planning system efficient without removing local democracy.

Following debate, the Parish Council resolved unanimously to approve the motion as follows:

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:

- commend the Town and Country Planning Association for expressing so well the reasons why this draconian measure is a retrograde step;*

- *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;*
- *resolve to raise this matter with other Parish Councils via the County Association and individual contacts to make them aware of this threat; and*
- *resolve to work with other bodies to oppose this measure and seek its reversal."*

8. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR M WILKES ON AYKLEY WOODS NATURE RESERVE

Councillor M Wilkes proposed and Councillor G Holland seconded a motion regarding the inclusion of Aykley Woods Nature Reserve in the County Durham Plan scoping consultation.

During the discussion, Councillors R Cornwell and C Lattin expressed serious concerns regarding the proposal, highlighting that Aykley Wood is a valued local nature reserve, forms part of the greenbelt, and includes areas designated as registered common land, making its consideration for potential housing development entirely inappropriate.

Following debate, the Parish Council resolved unanimously to approve the motion as follows:

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."

9. STRENGTHENING THE OPERATION OF THE DURHAM CITY SAFETY HUB

The Clerk presented a report on strengthening the operation of the Durham City Safety Hub, outlining the Council's historical financial support of £10,000 per annum since financial year 2022/23 and detailing the Hub's origins under the 2021 Safety of Women and Girls at Night (SWaN) initiative.

The Clerk explained that operating out of St Nicholas Church between 9pm and 3am, the Hub provides vital welfare, mental health, and safety support to vulnerable individuals on peak nights.

Members noted that while operational efficiency measures have been implemented, such as reduced venue hire rates and streamlined security contracts, the Hub's operational costs are currently approximately £69,000/annum, shared among key partners.

The Clerk highlighted an operational gap resulting from the loss of free medical support previously provided by the charity City Safe, noting that private medical cover options were financially prohibitive at over £70,000 per year. It was highlighted that the Hub acts as a key preventative healthcare initiative by managing minor injuries, acute intoxication, and welfare crises, thereby reducing

ambulance conveyances, preventing unnecessary Accident and Emergency admissions, and delivering significant cost avoidance for the NHS.

Following consideration of the report, Members unanimously **agreed** to the recommendation to write jointly with Durham BID, and any other appropriate partner organizations, to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. The joint letter will formally invite the NHS Trust to become a strategic partner of the City Safety Hub and explore supporting the facility through the provision of supervised trainee healthcare professionals, such as nurses, paramedics, or medical students, or other appropriate clinical support.

10. RESIDENT CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk presented a report proposing a comprehensive parish-wide public consultation to inform the Parish Council's Strategic Priorities and the budget-setting process for the 2027/28 financial year.

The report outlined that the consultation will run from 30th July 2026 to 30th September 2026, gathering resident views on current services, future investment priorities, and overall Council performance. To ensure inclusive engagement across all demographics and prevent digital exclusion, a mixed-method approach will be utilized, combining electronic surveys promoted via social media and newsletters with physical paper questionnaires and collection points at accessible community venues such as Clayport Library.

The findings will be compiled into a summary report to be presented to Members in advance of the Councillors' Away Day in October 2026, directly shaping the Council's Strategic Plan and Medium-Term Financial Planning process, with costs met from existing communications and administration budgets.

Following consideration of the report, the Parish Council unanimously **agreed** to launch the parish-wide public consultation on the strategic priorities of the Parish Council as set out in the report.

11. SMALL GRANTS IMPACT REPORT FROM GRANTS AWARDED TO ORGANISATIONS IN 2025-26

The Chair presented the report for grant awards distributed to voluntary, community, and charitable organisations during the 2025/26 financial year.

The Chair warmly welcomed the overwhelmingly positive report and emphasised that supporting local voluntary and community groups represents one of the most vital and rewarding aspects of the Parish Council's work.

The Chair detailed how the Council's grant scheme invests public funds into projects that directly improve health and wellbeing, reduce isolation, strengthen community resilience, protect the local environment, celebrate culture and heritage, and enhance shared community facilities.

The Chair highlighted that annual impact monitoring ensures accountability for public funds and demonstrates how relatively modest financial contributions

generate immense additional value through volunteer time, partnership working, and long-term community benefits.

The report provided detailed outcomes for each of the grant recipients funded during the 2025/26 financial year. Alington House Community Association (£750 awarded) successfully redeveloped their community garden by purchasing essential tools, equipment, compost, and plants, transforming a previously neglected outdoor area into a safe, accessible, and attractive space that engaged new volunteers—including young people with additional needs from The King's Trust—and laid the groundwork for a future community café and sensory garden project. Durham Hospital Radio (£1,570 awarded) used their grant to purchase a replacement mixer desk for Studio 3, enabling the volunteer-led charity to maintain high-quality, reliable bedside broadcasting that offers comfort and entertainment to hospital patients while preserving national award-winning standards. Durham Scratch Choir (£300 awarded) purchased a multifunction printer/copier, which facilitated the creation of a dedicated Library Team, improved administrative efficiency, reduced paper use through double-sided printing, and supported rehearsal and performance preparations for events such as the Durham Fringe Festival.

Further environmental, social, and cultural projects were also detailed in the Chair's presentation. Friends of Durham Woodland Cemetery (£500 awarded) received funding for essential operating and insurance costs, which stabilized the charity financially, restored public confidence, and enabled new trustees to conserve the cemetery and better support bereaved families. Friends of Pelaw Woods (£350 awarded) carried out vital conservation work, including path maintenance, mowing, and installing a new pond liner to enhance local biodiversity and keep woodland footpaths accessible to residents. Seven Stories (£2,700 awarded) brought 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' exhibition and free storytelling sessions to the Two Tales pop-up in Durham, attracting over 14,000 visitors, including school groups and families, to promote early reading and creative learning.

Finally, the report outlined capital and community enhancement grants. St Nicholas Community Forum (£2,964 awarded) constructed a sustainable timber shed, a sheltered potting area, and a refurbished polytunnel using recycled materials and volunteer labour, creating a thriving community asset centred on food growing, skill sharing, and mental wellbeing.

St Margaret's Centre (£2,000 awarded) purchased horticultural equipment to support therapeutic gardening groups and expand allotment provision, delivering crucial practical skills and mental health recovery support for participants. St Oswald's Church Institute (£12,000 awarded) completed a comprehensive kitchen replacement, modernizing their catering facilities, increasing daytime venue use for local groups, youth organizations, and social events, and securing long-term financial sustainability for the facility.

As the report was submitted for information only and required no formal decisions, Members **noted** the report with thanks, expressing their sincere appreciation to all the funded organisations and volunteers for their dedication and positive impact across the parish.

12. REPORT ON COMMUNITY CENTRE SUPPORT SCHEME PROJECT 2026-27

The Clerk presented a report on the Community Centre support scheme for 2026-27, detailing progress on these initiatives supporting Alington House and the City Theatre. Regarding Alington House, the report noted that terms and conditions for grant funding have been agreed, a contractor has been identified, and a listed building consent application (DM/26/01581/LB) has been submitted for five replacement double-glazed timber windows to significantly reduce energy costs.

The Clerk highlighted that through pre-application engagement with the Design and Conservation team and preparing the Heritage Statement in-house free of charge, the total application cost was reduced to £415.00, leaving over £3,000 of the original £3,600 planning budget unallocated.

Regarding the City Theatre, the report outlined the completion of the Phase 1 Discovery and Strategic Positioning Report by a professionally contracted bid writer, which confirmed the theatre's vital role as a volunteer-led cultural asset and established a strategic external funding pipeline.

The report emphasised that a comprehensive building condition survey is an essential pre-requisite to securing major grants from bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and recommended reallocating the unspent Alington House planning funds to commission this survey alongside a financial contribution from the Theatre Trust.

The Clerk also highlighted the need to contract the services of a professional quantity surveyor to support the costing up of this project. The Clerk highlighted that whilst professional quotes received to date made this rather cost prohibitive, the Clerk had been given the details of a retired Quantity Surveyor who expressed his willingness to support this work, in exchange for a £1,000 donation to St. Cuthbert's Hospice.

Members noted the positive progress made on both the Alington House and City Theatre projects.

Members also unanimously **approved** the reallocation of the unspent balance from the Alington House planning application budget to commission a professional building condition survey for the City Theatre, subject to an appropriate financial contribution being provided by the Theatre Trust, as well as the contracting of a retired Quantity Surveyor to support the costing of this project.

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

Councillor E Scott presented the following report on the latest meeting of the 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.

Kerry Walker was 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.

End of report

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

Councillor S Walker provided a report on the latest meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC), which focused primarily on a presentation by James Cook, Durham County Council's Planning Policy Manager, regarding the new County Durham Plan.

Councillor S Walker explained that the presentation provided vital context for the ongoing County Durham Plan Scoping consultation, which runs until 17th August 2026, marking the initial 30-month plan-making stage ahead of a targeted formal adoption in early 2029. Councillor S Walker highlighted that a new plan is required following statutory 5-year review rules and updated central government housing targets, which have increased County Durham's baseline housing need by 53% from 1,308 to 2,011 homes per year, necessitating site allocations for at least 7,150 homes over a 10-year period or 17,500 homes over a 15-year period.

Councillor S Walker advised that the CDALC meeting emphasised the critical importance of this early scoping stage, describing it as starting with a blank canvas to identify key strategic priorities, spatial themes, and community needs. It was noted that this initial consultation represents the primary opportunity for parish councils and residents to put forward proactive ideas and shape high-level principles, rather than waiting for later stages when consultations will focus on responding to specific, pre-determined proposals.

Councillor S Walker reported that several Council representatives at the CDALC meeting raised the topic of Neighbourhood Plans and discussed strategic approaches for alignment. It was emphasised that both adopted Neighbourhood Plans and those currently under preparation will need to maintain strategic alignment with the emerging policies of the new County Durham Plan as it progresses toward adoption.

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.

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

Members **noted** that planning applications would soon be forthcoming from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in respect of the Ove Arup Telecoms Mast at Aykley Heads. Members thanked the OPCC for their positive pre-engagement on these applications to date.

Members **agreed** to await further information on these applications via the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee.

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

Signed,

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(23rd September 2026)**

ITEM 5: REPORT ON DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S FIVE-YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY POSITION STATEMENT

This report provides a formal assessment of the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement published by Durham County Council in July 2026.

A full copy of this Position Statement can be found here: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/46628/Five-Year-Housing-Land-Position-Statement/pdf/5YearHousingLandSuppPositionState2026.pdf?m=1789130834227>

The document establishes that Durham County Council can no longer demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land as required by national planning policy.

As of 1 April 2026, the local authority's housing land supply stands at 3.92 years, representing a significant drop from previously reported levels. This reduction fundamentally alters the decision-making framework for planning applications across County Durham, drastically weakening the local planning authority's ability to refuse unallocated or speculative residential developments.

The primary driver behind this deficit is the mandatory transition to the Government's Standard Method for calculating local housing need. Having passed the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the County Durham Plan on 21 October 2025, national policy dictates that five-year supply assessments must move away from the adopted Plan requirement of 1,308 dwellings per annum and adopt the Standard Method.

For Durham, this has increased the base annual housing target to 2,036 dwellings per annum. Adding the required 5% buffer creates an overall five-year requirement of 10,689 dwellings (or 2,138 per annum). Although the Council has achieved strong historical delivery figures—generating a cumulative surplus of 1,739 dwellings against past plan targets—it has taken a precautionary approach by applying no historic surplus to lower the newly established Standard Method requirement.

A substantial portion of the resulting supply deficit is directly attributable to non-delivery on major allocated sites within and adjacent to the parish, most notably at Sniperley Park. Allocated under Policy H5 of the County Durham Plan for up to 1,700 homes, the Sniperley allocation was released from the Green Belt in 2020 specifically to meet identified long-term housing needs. While the parcel developed by Bellway is underway and projected to deliver 250 dwellings within the next five years, the larger parcel controlled by County Durham Land contributes zero units to the five-year supply.

Despite holding outline permission, no reserved matters applications have been submitted, and the permission is due to expire in 2027. Consequently, six years after its Green Belt release, over 1,500 planned homes on this major site remain entirely deliverable-inactive, stripping over 1,000 anticipated units from the immediate five-year trajectory.

The overall calculation set out in the Position Statement demonstrates a gross deliverable supply of 8,480 dwellings over the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. After applying a standard precautionary 53% lapse deduction to unstarted small sites (reducing supply by 105 units), the net deliverable supply stands at 8,375 dwellings. Set against the requirement of 10,689 dwellings, County Durham faces a net shortfall of 2,314 deliverable homes. The Council's position is further compounded by cautious analytical modelling, which completely excludes major unallocated windfall sites and excludes Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) from contributing to general market housing supply.

This cautious approach is exemplified by paragraph 6.3, which says As of 1 April 2026, there are extant commitments (Including units to be built on sites under construction and those with an outstanding planning permission or s106) for 12,564 housing units within County Durham. However, not all commitments can automatically be assumed to be deliverable within five years and therefore a detailed assessment of individual sites has been undertaken.

The policy implications of this shortfall for the City of Durham Parish are immediate and critical. Under Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, the absence of a five-year housing land supply triggers the "tilted balance". This means that the policies most relevant for determining housing applications are deemed out-of-date, and planning permission must be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. While the County Durham Plan and the Made Durham City Neighbourhood Plan remain part of the statutory development plan, their policies regarding housing supply and settlement boundaries will carry reduced weight in planning decisions and appeals.

In response to this vulnerability, Durham County Council formally announced on 25 March 2026 its intention to commence preparation of a new County Durham Plan to reset its strategic housing framework.

However, during the interim period required to draft and adopt a new plan, the parish faces a heightened risk of speculative planning applications on unallocated greenfield sites.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	For Members to agree to: 1) closely monitor all incoming residential planning applications, collaborate with DCC to press slow-delivering landowners to progress allocated sites, and robustly scrutinise speculative proposals to ensure that local environmental and infrastructure harms are fully represented under the tilted balance framework. 2) alert the local MP of this failure by County Durham Land to build out the Sniperley site, which would have contributed to the Government's target of 1.5m new homes in five years.
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ITEM 5: REPORT BY COUNCILLOR V ASHFIELD ON THE UPCOMING RECONSTRUCTION OF BATHS BRIDGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ELVET GREEN

Background

There has been much consternation among residents of our Parish about the lack of clarity from Durham County Council on their plans for Elvet Park, the land adjacent to the former swimming pool, which was "gifted to the people of Durham in perpetuity" and its wider area, one of the most picturesque in our enviable city.

This is one of the most beloved areas in the city for riverside walks for residents and visitors to the city and there is strong local interest in it. Last year the community responded strongly to a proposal to turn the green into an outdoor gym and offered many suggestions for alternative more "natural" use of the area.

The Environment Committee discussed the subject and learned that the former toilet block has been sold "subject to contract", but plans for its development are likely to be delayed due to the rebuilding of Baths Bridge.

Regarding the works to be carried out on the bridge, there have been rumours, not yet denied by DCC, that they are proposing to use this precious preserve for wildlife as a building depot. Witness to this likelihood, at the beginning of September the park was suddenly fenced off, then just as suddenly unfenced, with no explanation given.

Residents are seriously anxious about the destruction this would bring to the area. Using the park in this way will not only prevent access, but will damage the paths, grass and planting and therefore seriously harm its established wildlife habitat. Turf can be easily replaced, but hedges cannot and the return of wildlife to the area cannot be legislated for.

There has been no consultation about the use of this area and while residents recognise the need for the bridge to be replaced, some associations have already written to DCC asking that they seek an alternative area for their building depot and suggested that they should approach the university to ask for the use of their informal carpark which is even nearer to the bridge.

The Environment Committee supports this proposal and has written to the University Estates Manager to ask if he will give serious consideration to this request. The Vice Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellor have also been made informally aware of this request.

There are further concerns for the informal community group which has worked voluntarily to keep the place safe from litter and discarded needles and have been responsible for all the improvements in this area since lockdown, before which DCC had abandoned its care.

They have made a brilliant impact by carrying out gardening and other improvements, paths have been rediscovered and remade and in addition to many flower beds they have planted fruit bushes, hung up bird feeders and provided picnic benches.

DCC is opposed to this group and while it is true that some of the members were on medically prescribed cannabis for long term pain, there has been no sign of any illegal activity there for at least a couple of years (and they have rejected their former provocative title "Hemp Garden"). Local residents have never complained of disturbance from this group and are mostly very grateful for the work they have carried out. In fact this group actually carries out a good community service, providing a voluntary activity for disabled people who have been unable to work and have experienced isolation and loneliness. (DCC would do well to support and expand their work through Adult Services and make a virtue from a problem).

Recently the group received information from DCC that unless they abandon their use of the area, they will receive an injunction to keep them out. There is much local support for the community group which is currently looking after the land, and residents would not like to see them being prevented from continuing their impressive work. Residents have asked on what grounds there might be for their exclusion and if their beneficial work could perhaps be encouraged and supported.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	For Members to agree that the Parish Council should contact DCC to: 1) Commend the work they are doing to replace the important Baths Bridge; 2) Ask them to avoid, if at all possible, the destruction of this important wildlife and recreation area; 3) Encourage them to work with, rather than against, the community group: support what they are doing that is positive and work with them to ensure they don't unwittingly break any bylaws.
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ITEM 5: PROPOSED ARCHEOLOGICAL STUDY OF NEVILLE’S CROSS BATTLEFIELD

This background paper to the City of Durham Parish Council sets out the rationale for formally supporting and allocating £2,000 towards the production of a comprehensive desk-based study for the Battle of Neville’s Cross.

Fought on 16 October 1346 between the armies of King David II of Scotland and an English force, the engagement remains one of the most pivotal medieval battles in northern England and British history.

Following a positive meeting on 2nd September between the Parish Council, Jon Johnson (project lead) and Durham County Council, all partners recognised the critical importance of undertaking an evidence-led desk-based study as the foundation for future heritage protection and planning policy development.

As Members are aware, the City of Durham Parish Council, in its formal submission to the County Durham Plan scoping exercise, asked for the boundary of the existing battlefield to be revised and for the wider landscape of Neville’s Cross to carry a great weight of protection.

Whilst Historic England designates the core site as a Registered Battlefield (NHLE 1000024) due to its national historic significance, the historic landscape associated with the battle extends far beyond this current administrative boundary. Prior to the engagement, the Scottish army likely camped at Beaurepaire/Bearpark before advancing south-eastwards towards Redhills, becoming funnelled between the River Browney, the steep slopes of Crossgate Moor, and the ravine near Arbour House, while the English army approached from Auckland through Merrington. Furthermore, contemporary medieval accounts and the Battlefields Trust confirm that the final, chaotic phases and pursuit of defeated forces extended for several miles north and north-west towards Bearpark Moor and Findon Hill.

A central reason for commissioning the desk-based study is that current planning protections rely heavily upon the boundary of the presently Registered Battlefield. Historic England’s own 1995 assessment notes that while the registered boundary defines the outer reasonable limit of the focal battle area, it explicitly does not include areas over which fighting took place subsequent to the main engagement.

Relying solely on the designated boundary creates a significant risk that nationally important archaeological evidence outside that line—including approach routes, preliminary skirmishes, temporary encampments, casualty concentrations, retreat pathways, and scattered medieval weaponry—could be inadequately identified or protected during future development.

This risk is further highlighted by ongoing academic research. The Battlefields Trust currently lists its entry for Neville’s Cross as under review due to recent studies suggesting the main site of engagement may have occurred further to the north of the currently registered area. Eminent battlefield historians, including Dr. Glenn Foard, have previously emphasised that a detailed battlefield survey and landscape re-evaluation are long overdue. Consequently, it is vital that the County

Durham Local Plan process does not treat land outside the current boundary as unconstrained without prior archaeological assessment.

The proposed desk-based study will adhere to best practice methodologies set out in the Battlefields Trust Policy and Guidance for Investigating Battlefields. The work will encompass a thorough synthesis of primary accounts and secondary literature, a reconstruction of the 1346 historical landscape using historic maps and LiDAR elevation data within Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and a historically sensitive KOCOA analysis to evaluate terrain from a 14th-century tactical perspective. It will also curate existing finds data, including records from the Portable Antiquities Scheme and museum items such as the Western Lodge crucifix, to inform future non-invasive survey strategies.

The wider Neville's Cross Battlefield Investigation Project brings together an extensive coalition of key partners. These include Durham County Council's Archaeology and Landscape teams, Historic England, the Battlefields Trust, Durham University Department of Archaeology, Durham Cathedral Museum, Durham Historical Society, and local detecting groups operating under strict Trust standards. In addition, the project prioritises public involvement by partnering with local Ward Members and schools, such as Neville's Cross Junior School and Durham Johnston School, to re-connect younger generations with the history underlying their local landscape.

The Parish Council's proposed contribution of £2,000 will directly enable the execution of this baseline desk-based assessment, with the remaining costs drawn from outside sources (total cost estimated at £3,500). In turn, it is hoped that the desk-based assessment will serve as the necessary feasibility baseline to unlock larger external grant applications for subsequent phases (such as detailed metal detecting, LiDAR analysis, interpretation boards, and walking trails).

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to formally approve the allocation of £2,000 to fund the desk-based study of the Battle of Neville's Cross and its wider historical landscape, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 7: ADOPTION OF NEW HR POLICIES FOLLOWING THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT

This report recommends the formal adoption a suite of model Human Resources policies published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) following the enactment of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

The Parish Council's Personnel Committee has carefully considered the model Bereavement Policy, Paternity Leave and Pay Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and recommends their formal adoption in order to maintain operational compliance and uphold the Parish Council's statutory obligations as an employer. A full copy of all of these policies is included with this Agenda.

The Employment Rights Act 2025 introduces extensive statutory reforms across UK employment law aimed at expanding worker protections, modernising workplace entitlements, and setting higher standards for workforce management. While parish councils operate on a local scale, they remain legally bound as public employers to satisfy all statutory employment provisions. Adopting these updated frameworks ensures the Council avoids severe statutory liability, procedural failures, and potential employment tribunal claims.

Bereavement Policy: Section 18 of the Employment Rights Act 2025 expands statutory entitlements relating to bereavement leave. The recommended policy establishes clear parameters for statutory Parental Bereavement Leave as a "day one" right regardless of service length. It also incorporates provisions for Bereaved Partners' Paternity Leave, granting eligible employees extended leave rights and protection against detriment or dismissal following the tragic loss of a child or primary carer.

Paternity Leave and Pay Policy: Section 16 of the Employment Rights Act 2025 removes the historical qualifying period of employment for paternity leave, establishing it as a statutory entitlement from day one of employment. The updated policy reflects these updated notice windows, flexible two-block leave options, protection for pay increases awarded during leave, and statutory rights regarding antenatal appointment attendance.

Whistleblowing Policy: Sections 20 to 23 of the Employment Rights Act 2025 significantly strengthen employer obligations regarding workplace protections, specifically introducing heightened duties under Section 20 to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and third-party harassment. The policy updates the definition of qualifying protected disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act to explicitly incorporate reports of sexual harassment, ensuring robust protection against victimisation or detriment for reporting wrongdoing.

To ensure the Parish Council remains fully compliant with sector best practice, all policies within this suite will be subject to a formal review on an annual basis every May, beginning in May 2027.

The Parish Council is formally recommended to approve and adopt the suite of updated HR policies as recommended by the Personnel Committee, and to note

that these policies will enter the Council's regular annual policy review cycle every May.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to formally approve the adoption of a Bereavement Policy, Paternity Leave and Pay Policy and Whistleblowing Policy, as set out in this report.
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ITEM 8: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD FOR 2026/27

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services has agreed a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances applicable from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and are encouraging employers to implement this pay award as soon as possible.

The approved mileages rates for tax year 2026/27 have also been approved at 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles in the tax year, then 25p per mile thereafter although the Clerk has never claimed any mileage allowances.

The Clerk's salary increases by a single spinal pay column at the start of each financial year and the Clerk's salary presently sits at spinal pay column 46 (LC4 below substantive range).

The table below lists the new pay scales for parish clerks and other employees employed under the green book employee terms and conditions. Hourly rates have been calculated using the NJC-agreed formula: annual salary divided by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) divided by 37 hours (the standard working week).

Sufficient funding was allocated in the 2026/27 budget setting process in order to accommodate this increase.

* Hourly rate

	1 April 2025		1 April 2026		Scale ranges
SCP	£ per annum	* £ per hour	£ per annum	* £ per hour	Based on SCP
1	Deleted with effect from 1 April 2023				Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
2	£24,413	£12.65	Deleted with effect from 1 April 2026		Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
3	£24,796	£12.85	£25,614	£13.28	Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
4	£25,185	£13.05	£26,016	£13.48	Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
5	£25,583	£13.26	£26,427	£13.70	Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
5	£25,583	£13.26	£26,427	£13.70	LC1 (below substantive range)

6	£25,989	£13.47	£26,847	£13.92	LC1 (below substantive range)
7	£26,403	£13.69	£27,274	£14.14	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
8	£26,824	£13.90	£27,709	£14.36	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
9	£27,254	£14.13	£28,153	£14.59	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
10	£27,694	£14.35	£28,608	£14.83	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
11	£28,142	£14.59	£29,071	£15.07	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
12	£28,598	£14.82	£29,542	£15.31	LC1 (substantive benchmark range)
13	£29,064	£15.06	£30,023	£15.56	LC1 (above substantive range)
14	£29,540	£15.31	£30,515	£15.82	LC1 (above substantive range)
15	£30,024	£15.56	£31,015	£16.08	LC1 (above substantive range)
16	£30,518	£15.82	£31,525	£16.34	LC1 (above substantive range)
17	£31,022	£16.08	£32,046	£16.61	LC1 (above substantive range)
18	£31,537	£16.35	£32,578	£16.89	LC2 (below substantive range)
19	£32,061	£16.62	£33,119	£17.17	LC2 (below substantive range)
20	£32,597	£16.90	£33,673	£17.45	LC2 (below substantive range)
21	£33,143	£17.18	£34,237	£17.75	LC2 (below substantive range)
22	£33,699	£17.47	£34,811	£18.04	LC2 (below substantive range)
23	£34,434	£17.85	£35,570	£18.44	LC2 (below substantive range)

24	£35,412	£18.35	£36,581	£18.96	LC2 (substantive benchmark range)
25	£36,363	£18.85	£37,563	£19.47	LC2 (substantive benchmark range)
26	£37,280	£19.32	£38,510	£19.96	LC2 (substantive benchmark range)
27	£38,220	£19.81	£39,481	£20.46	LC2 (substantive benchmark range)
28	£39,152	£20.29	£40,444	£20.96	LC2 (substantive benchmark range)
29	£39,862	£20.66	£41,177	£21.34	LC2 (above substantive benchmark range)
30	£40,777	£21.14	£42,123	£21.83	LC2 (above substantive benchmark range)
31	£41,771	£21.65	£43,149	£22.37	LC2 (above substantive benchmark range)
32	£42,839	£22.20	£44,253	£22.94	LC2 (above substantive benchmark range)
33	£44,075	£22.85	£45,529	£23.60	LC3 (below substantive range)
34	£45,091	£23.37	£46,579	£24.14	LC3 (below substantive range)
35	£46,142	£23.92	£47,665	£24.71	LC3 (below substantive range)
36	£47,181	£24.46	£48,738	£25.26	LC3 (below substantive range)
37	£48,226	£25.00	£49,817	£25.82	LC3 (substantive benchmark range)
38	£49,282	£25.54	£50,908	£26.39	LC3 (substantive benchmark range)
39	£50,269	£26.06	£51,928	£26.92	LC3 (substantive benchmark range)

40	£51,356	£26.62	£53,051	£27.50	LC3 (substantive benchmark range)
41	£52,413	£27.17	£54,143	£28.06	LC3 (substantive benchmark range)
42	£53,460	£27.71	£55,224	£28.62	LC3 (above substantive benchmark range)
43	£54,495	£28.25	£56,293	£29.18	LC3 (above substantive benchmark range)
44	£55,801	£28.92	£57,642	£29.88	LC3 (above substantive benchmark range)
45	£57,139	£29.62	£59,025	£30.59	LC3 (above substantive benchmark range)
46	£58,523	£30.33	£60,454	£31.33	LC4 (below substantive range)
47	£59,922	£31.06	£61,899	£32.08	LC4 (below substantive range)
48	£61,198	£31.72	£63,218	£32.77	LC4 (below substantive range)
49	£62,852	£32.58	£64,926	£33.65	LC4 (below substantive range)
50	£64,373	£33.37	£66,497	£34.47	LC4 (substantive benchmark range)
51	£65,925	£34.17	£68,101	£35.30	LC4 (substantive benchmark range)
52	£68,053	£35.27	£70,299	£36.44	LC4 (substantive benchmark range)
53	£70,176	£36.37	£72,492	£37.57	LC4 (substantive benchmark range)
54	£72,307	£37.48	£74,693	£38.72	LC4 (substantive benchmark range)
55	£74,454	£38.59	£76,911	£39.86	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)

56	£76,572	£39.69	£79,099	£41.00	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
57	£78,718	£40.80	£81,316	£42.15	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
58	£80,821	£41.89	£83,488	£43.27	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
59	£82,815	£42.93	£85,548	£44.34	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
60	£84,852	£43.98	£87,652	£45.43	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
61	£86,939	£45.06	£89,808	£46.55	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)
62	£89,081	£46.17	£92,021	£47.70	LC4 (above substantive benchmark range)

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to approve the 3.3% increase in pay rate for the Clerk as well as allowances applicable from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and to agree to back date this payment to 1 st April 2026 in the next pay run.
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ITEM 10: REPORT ON PLANNING FOR THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2026 EVENT.

As Members are aware, the City of Durham Parish Council has civic responsibility for the Remembrance Sunday event in Durham City, which takes place on Sunday 10th November this year. In November 2025, Members approved a total budget of £45,000 towards events in the City, with the Remembrance parade being a key aspect of the Council's calendar of events for financial year 2026-27.

Road and traffic matters:

The Clerk will be submitting a road closure order for the event; this is done free of charge by the County Council as per their own policy for Remembrance Sunday. The Clerk is also arranging for the County Council to organise the alternative public transport route during the timing of the event. This only affects Claypath services which divert via Leazes Road. The Clerk is organising the traffic management support (including four road closed signs and advances) and DCC Highways will attend the event to organise this on the day at no additional charge to the Parish Council.

The closure points between 8:30 – 13:00 would be:

1. Framwellgate Bridge (no entry signs near fighting cocks PH)
2. North Bailey just below the entrance to Hatfield College Car Park
3. Claypath junction with Providence Row
4. A690/ One-way slip (side of library)
5. Two-way slip above Prince Bishops mini-roundabout

Use of land:

The Parish Clerk is seeking permission from the University for the temporary occupation of Palace Green and the temporary occupation of the Marketplace. Both Durham University and DCC are aware of the event taking place this year as usual and this is a formality. As is custom, the Mayor's office has also arranged for a dais to be installed on the day in the Market Place. The Mayor's office usually funds this, although the Clerk has made arrangements for the new and more substantial dais for the 2024 event following feedback that the previous dais needed replacing and the success of this dais at the 2023 event.

Health and safety:

The event is covered by the Parish Council's own public liability insurance. The Clerk has carried out a Risk Assessment for the event. In addition, the Police will be carrying out their own security assessment (SECCO assessment) for the event. What level of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVMs) methods installed on the day depends on the outcome of the police's SECCO report. The County Council has agreed to fund the installation of the necessary HVMs for this event.

There will also be a need for crowd management control in order to facilitate the day. The Parish Council usually contracts the services of Showsec (preferred

supplier of DCC) for this and the Clerk is arranging for this to happen for the 2026 event.

The Parish Council will also need to fund the medical provision on the day. The Clerk has now contracted the services of Nerams Ltd (DCC's preferred supplier). The Clerk has also arranged for the police to be on hand on the day to manage any incidents of disruption or anti-social behaviour.

The Town Hall will once again be used as a meeting point for missing persons if needed.

Notification of event:

The Clerk will also be letting local traders in the affected area know about the plans for the event and the event will also be publicised on the Parish Council's website and Facebook page. A letter drop will be taking place on 2nd November to all traders in the area.

Service at the Cathedral and the parade:

The order of service within the Cathedral would be managed entirely by the Clergy of the Cathedral and the Parish Council would not have any involvement with this but the seating of the Parish Councillors will be arranged with the Cathedral. The Parish Council will be expected to lay a wreath on Remembrance Day and the Chair of the Council would do this on the Council's behalf. The Clerk has arranged for the wreath to be provided. Durham City Parish Councillors now form part of the official procession from the Cathedral to the Town Square with their position in this procession is to be determined in due course. A meeting has now taken place with the Cathedral and army personnel to run through the order of service and arrangements on the day. Access to the service is to be managed by the Cathedral staff.

Miscellaneous

The Parish Council's Parade volunteer Arthur Lockyear continues to support this event with fundraising and working with the Parish Council to enhance the parade. Arthur is hoping to once again gain funding for 3 bands and catering after the event. The Parish Council has usually supported the costs for this.

The Parish Council will once again be supporting the Festival of Remembrance on Saturday 7th November this year.

The event will take full account of and be fully risked assessed against new requirements associated with Martyn's Law and the event will once more go through the usual Safety Advisory Group process.

All Members wishing to attend the Remembrance Day Service event and parade should make the Clerk aware as robes are usually worn by Members on the day and the Clerk will place an order for these accordingly.

**DECISION
REQUIRED**

For Members to note the above report and the preparations being made for this event and to delegate all organisational and budgetary responsibility for this event to the Clerk.

ITEM 11: REPORT BY COUNCILLOR S WALKER ON THE LATEST MEETING OF THE COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CDALC).

Local Councils Charter and local representation

CDALC is developing a new Local Councils Charter with Durham County Council. The Forum supported taking the draft forward and stressed the importance of meaningful representation for parish and town councils within emerging County Durham governance arrangements.

DBS checks for Councillors

The Forum considered motions from Great Aycliffe and Shincliffe concerning DBS checks for councillors. Concerns were raised about unnecessary checks where councillors are not involved in regulated activity, together with cost and the potential impact on people standing for election. The Shincliffe motion, opposing mandatory DBS checks unless legally required or linked to regulated activity, was carried at both the Smaller and Larger Councils Forums and will be taken forward to the CDALC Executive, with a request for consideration at the AGM.

Planning – National Scheme of Delegation

The Forum discussed the implications of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 and the new National Scheme of Delegation. There was considerable concern that the changes will reduce opportunities for parish and town councils and County Councillors to request that planning applications are considered by committee. The Parish Council should continue to monitor the impact on local democratic involvement in planning.

County Durham Plan

The Scoping Consultation for the new County Durham Plan was discussed. The consultation deadline has now passed and the matter has already been considered by the Planning Committee. The Parish Council should remain engaged with subsequent stages of the Plan, which is currently expected to be adopted in early 2029.

NALC update

NALC is consulting on revised Model Standing Orders. The Star Council Awards 2026/27 are open for nominations until 25 September, and councils were encouraged to consider nominations. Councils were also encouraged to adopt or reaffirm the Civility and Respect Pledge.

Payroll

The Forum discussed the withdrawal of Durham County Council's payroll service for parish councils. CDALC is collecting information about alternative arrangements used by member councils and intends to share this with councils.

CDALC finances

CDALC remains in a positive financial position, with reserves of £66,831 at the end of 2025/26 and a small surplus. The 2026/27 budget anticipates a broadly balanced position.