

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Business Committee held on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 13:00 via Zoom

Present: Councillors E Scott (in the Chair), E Ashby, G Holland, R Ormerod and N Brown.

Also present: A Shanley (Clerk) and Ms Emma Wright (Durham BID).

1. Welcome and apologies

None received.

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members

None received.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 15th September 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th September were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.

None received.

5. Report by retail consultant Graham Soutt on work in Durham City

Graham Soutt provided a presentation on his work as Parish Council retail consultant since the last meeting.

Graham advised that he had met with a number of new businesses in the City, including the new Durham Ginstitute on Silver Street, Bookwyrn and the new Christmas pop-up at Prince Bishops.

Graham advised that he had recently been on BBC Look North talking about business rates and promoting a positive image of Durham City. Graham advised that 35 new businesses had opened up since the lockdown in Durham City.

Graham highlighted that Tortilla had recently opened in Durham City (where Clintons was originally located) and had been featured in the Northern Echo.

Graham also advised that the Northern Echo had recently run a story highlighting that "Independents were key to Durham City's future".

Graham also advised that he had attended the recent "Future of the High street" event and had spoken about the positives of Durham.

Graham also advised that he had recently met with the organisers of the Durham Fringe Festival – a fantastic event for the City – and Graham advised that he is working with the organisers to promote this event into the future.

Graham welcomed the renewal of the Durham BID ballot and advised that he continues to work proactively with Paul Howard, Durham BID Manager.

Graham also advised that he was meeting with Durham Distillery and Danielli Holdings (STACK). Graham advised that he is keen that STACK includes some retail element to it and not just food and drink vendors.

Graham advised that he had been promoting pop-up business opportunities for Prince Bishops over the Christmas period.

Graham particularly highlighted that Silver Street is looking much better with new businesses coming in, including Vodafone to the old Post Office building.

Cllr E Ashby advised that she was opposed to licensed premises along Silver Street and highlighted that STACK has already confirmed that there will be no retail going into STACK.

The Chair thanked Graham for his excellent report.

6. Update from the Chair on her work as Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships

The Chair advised that she is due to meet with the new owners of Prince Bishops soon and she expected that accommodation to the upper floors would be part of their plans.

The Chair also advised that she was pleased to see Silver Street looking a lot better than it did 12 months ago with 6 new businesses having now entered the street.

The Chair remarked how pleased she is to see the weir at Milburngate being cleared and thanked the County Council for taking on this difficult task.

The Chair advised that she was also able to arrange some additional financial support from the County Council for the Christmas festival and thanked Colin Wilkes for his exceptional work on this.

The Chair advised that she had recently met with the organisers of the Durham Fringe Festival and she was pleased to see that Visit County Durham is now supporting this event. The organisers of the Fringe are also talking about having some live Shakespeare on Palace Green too, which sounds like a fantastic idea.

The Chair also advised that DCC is considering making the Park and Ride service a 7 day per week service (including on a Sunday). The Chair also advised that the Free After 2pm scheme is also set to come to an end and this may be picked up again in quieter times.

7. To review the Business Committee's strategic aims for 2023/24

Members **approved** the following strategic aims for the Parish Council's Business Committee as part of its work for 2023/24:

Business Committee

Council priorities	Business Committee Priorities	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with local businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promoting responsible businesses Promoting a good experience for disabled visitors of the City	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy

3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Supporting new businesses in empty units across the city	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Marketing Durham as a place to visit Promoting a good experience for disabled visitors of the City Hosting events and contributing through a wider partnership that add footfall to the City centre	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 5: A City with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure
	Contracting professional support for local businesses in the city	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Promoting businesses in the city centre and encouraging a variety of businesses to ensure wide range of choice for visitors	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Lobbying for extended hours of the Park and Ride service Lobbying for delivery companies to use alternative, zero-carbon transport Recognising businesses who recycle and use less packaging.	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life

8. To consider the Business Committee's budget for 2023/24

Members **approved** the following expenditure for the Business Committee as part of its work for 2023/24:

Business Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Supporting Independent businesses	
Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	10,800.00
PRIORITY 2: Increasing footfall through events	
Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, Coronation 2023, miscellaneous).	25,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Business frontages awards	

Running a best Business frontage awards scheme	1,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	36,800.00

9. Update on proposals relating to ongoing engagement with local landlords

The Clerk presented a copy of a proposed landlord survey to the Committee.

Councillor E Ashby advised that she would also like for the survey to be in an electronic format for ease of return by the landlords. Councillor E Ashby also advised that she felt that the surveys should be posted – as opposed to hand delivered – in order to cover the large numbers of landlords in the City.

Councillor E Ashby advised that she had concerns about Box 3 included as part of the survey and felt that this may negate the effects of the rest of the survey.

Councillor G Holland advised that he would prefer it if Box 3 could be removed entirely from the survey.

It was **agreed** that the question of asking landlords for a contribution towards the Parish Council precept should be put to Full Council in February 2023 after the precept and Band D charge had been agreed by Council in January 2023.

It was **agreed** that Box 3 should be replaced with the question "*what more can the Parish Council do to work in partnership with the private rental sector in Durham City?*"

It was also **agreed** that the survey should also include a note saying "*thank you for taking the time to complete this survey*".

It was **agreed** that the final sentence should read "*would you like to be kept updated on this Parish Council initiative?*"

It was also **agreed** that this survey should be launched in the New Year.

10. Update on events in the City planning

The Clerk advised that the last aspects of planning for the Remembrance Sunday event are well underway and all was going well.

The Clerk advised that he had received some outstanding feedback about the Paw Patrol event and he had asked for some footfall stats from the Durham BID manager. The Clerk advised that he thought it was brilliant to see the half-term holiday week so busy for events.

The Chair advised that Durham Lumiere is happening once more in 2023 and the County Council has just received the Arts Council grant for the event.

11. Proposal to establish a railway station adoption group

It was **agreed** to defer this item until a later meeting whilst other projects are ongoing.

12. Update on the work of Durham BID

Emma advised that a pop-up museum focusing on sports history is taking place at Walkergate.

Emma also advised that the Gruffalo character is going to be in place at Clayport Library.

Emma advised that the Christmas light switch on is taking place once more this year and the BID is excited to be welcoming Joe McElderry to the event to carry out the official switch on.

Emma also advised that the BID is arranging a series of Christmas events over the December period – including street entertainment, the Grinch and various other events.

The Committee thanked Emma for her positive update.

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

**Chair of the Parish Council's Business Committee
(31st January 2023)**