

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 28th July 2022 at 19:00 in the Ritson Hall, Alington House, 4 North Bailey, Durham. DH1 3ET.

Present: Councillors A Doig (in the Chair), L Brown, V Ashfield, E Ashby, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, G Holland, G Nair, R Ormerod, S Walker and H Weston.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Ms Amy Bell and Ms Susan Robinson (Durham County Council), Mr John Ashby and Mr Alan Hayton (members of the public).

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

Apologies were received from Councillors C Lattin, N Brown, R Hanson and E Scott.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PRESENTATION BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE DURHAM CITY LEVELLING-UP FUNDING BID

The Chair welcomed Amy Bell and Susan Robinson to the meeting. Amy Began by thanking the Council for the opportunity to discuss the Durham City levelling-up bid to Government with the Parish Council.

Amy Bell advised that, in the 2021 Budget, Central Government announced the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), to provide investment in regeneration and growth in places with low productivity and poor connectivity.

Amy advised that County Durham has been identified as one of the areas of greatest need of levelling up in the UK and has been classified as a Tier 1 area by Central Government. The Round 1 submission for the Bishop Auckland Parliamentary Constituency: Rural Connectivity and Cultural Connectivity, was successfully awarded £20 million Levelling Up Funding in the Autumn Statement, October 2021. The LUF is a competitive fund totalling £4.8 billion nationally, with £1.7 billion awarded to successful applicants in Round 1. This leaves £3.1 billion for future rounds.

Amy advised that each parliamentary constituency within the Local Authority area can submit one bid for a Government grant of up to £20 million. County Durham,

with six parliamentary constituencies, can submit up to six bids in total. The Government guidance states that a minimum of 10 percent match funding is required to support each bid. Amy advised that the scheme for Durham City constituency had attracted nearly 25% match funding – including significant private sector investment.

Amy advised that a range of potential schemes has been developed across the remaining parliamentary constituencies to support transport connectivity, culture, heritage and regeneration in the city, town centres and villages.

Amy advised that a £20 million Levelling Up government grant is being sought to contribute to the delivery of three schemes that will collectively enhance and maintain Durham City's economy. The schemes support economic development through transport and cultural led regeneration. Amy advised that the schemes proposed are:

- a) Bowburn Relief Road – tackling traffic capacity constraints to bring forward Phase 3 of Integra 61, by reassigning traffic away from Junction 61 and Bowburn village (A177);
- b) City Centre active mode connectivity, linking new and existing cultural attractions; Cultural attractions including the DLI, Wharton Park, Crook Hall, Elvet Park, Peninsula, and the Riverbanks will be better linked for visitors. Health and wellbeing will be enhanced through active mode connectivity linking residential areas with the city centre.
- c) Stabilisation of A690 – ensuring the A690 remains open and there are no adverse impacts on the A1 or the wider city.

Amy advised that the proposals being progressed for Elvet Park were subject to quite significant public consultation in 2017 and the scheme being proposed in this bid was overwhelmingly the preferred option for Elvet Park.

Amy advised that the outcome of this bid is expected in Autumn 2022 and the deadline for submission is within the next few days.

Amy highlighted that part of criteria for the bid is support from local Parish and Town Councils and advised that the team would be grateful if the City of Durham Parish Council would consider a letter of support for these schemes.

Amy highlighted that the local Member of Parliament had expressed her support for these schemes and the funding bid.

Alan Hayton expressed his disappointment at the proposals for Elvet Park. Alan advised that all residents in the area were looking for was an enhanced open space for children to play and for residents to have an enjoyable walking experience. Alan advised that the scheme added an additional venue where residents already have complaints about noise from City venues. Alan also advised that he felt the opening up of the River from the park was unwelcome and also asked why the pavilion which was on site for many years prior was not being reinstated.

Amy highlighted that the scheme was the preferred scheme when it went out to public consultation some years ago and DCC is honouring this. Amy advised that she was unaware of the issue of the pavilion but would look into this for Alan.

The Clerk asked whether any part of the Elvet Park scheme would be subject to planning applications in the near future. Susan Robinson advised that some parts would be and this would need to go through the usual statutory process. Susan stressed that the funding was time limited and needed to be allocated relatively speedily and assured the Council that DCC was working proactively to move this process forward.

Cllr V Ashfield asked if some aspects of Elvet Park could be altered if local residents felt that some things needed to be changed to suit their needs. Susan advised that the scheme could be changed slightly but not substantially as there is an expectation that the scheme will be delivered as proposed in the funding bid.

Cllr R Friederichsen expressed his concerns about the creation of the new relief road and felt that funding should instead be allocated to improving and promoting more sustainable transport schemes. Susan advised that the County Council is working very proactively on promoting more sustainable transport and part of this bid focused on improved walking and cycling routes.

There being no further queries, the Chair thanked Amy Bell and Susan Robinson for their presentation. At this point, Amy and Susan left the meeting.

The Chair proposed that the Parish Council submits the letter of support as provided by the Clerk in advance of the meeting for this funding bid. This was seconded by Cllr D Freeman. The Council **agreed** – by 10 votes in favour and 1 abstention – to support the scheme and to instruct the Clerk to submit the letter of support.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr John Ashby advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning Committee

Cllr G Holland presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 24th June and 7th July 2022. There being no queries from Members, Cllr G Holland moved on to Committee updates.

Report providing an update on the Sniperley Park development

Cllr G Holland reminded Members that the issue of the Sniperley Park development, located outside of the parish area, has been discussed at a number of Parish Council meetings.

On 15th October 2021, ahead of the adoption of the Masterplan, the Co. Durham Land LLP submitted plans for the demolition of existing buildings adjacent to the B6532 and an outline planning application for a maximum of 1,550 dwellings, a local Centre, public house (use class sui generis) and primary school (use class F1), associated infrastructure and landscaping.

On 1st July 2021, ahead of the adoption of the Masterplan, Bellway Homes submitted a hybrid planning application for outline permission for an extension to the Sniperley Park and Ride and full planning permission for the development of 370 dwellings associated access and works and demolition of former farm buildings.

In both cases, Cllr G Holland advised that the City of Durham Parish Council had objected to these applications, on the grounds that a full and comprehensive Masterplan for the site – as required by CDP Policy 5 – has yet to be agreed.

On 10 January 2022, the City of Durham Parish Council submitted their detailed comments on the consultation on the Sniperley Park Masterplan, primarily highlighting the inadequacies of the present proposals in terms of their sustainability and impact on climate change as well as the highways network to and from the City.

Cllr G Holland reminded Members that the Parish Council had fully endorsed the below energy solutions at the Sniperley Park development:

Energy solutions at the Sniperley Park development:

1. An Energy Assessment for the entire site designed to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions with all properties satisfying the 2030 operational energy and embodied carbon targets set by the RIBA 2030 Challenge which identify the optimal set of energy solutions to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
2. All homes and buildings to be built to EPC A rating standard as a minimum.
3. No connection of the site to the national gas network.
4. Photovoltaic panels / and battery storage in all homes and buildings.
5. Ground and/or air source heat exchange systems for all homes and buildings.
6. District heating system using any potential geothermal energy.
7. All houses to have electricity supply points for electric cars.

Following on from this, Cllr G Holland reminded Members that the Parish Council, the City of Durham Trust and the Western Relief Road Action Group had submitted a joint letter to County Councillor and Cabinet Member Mark Wilkes, again stressing the need for as sustainable a development as possible at Sniperley.

Immediately prior to the submission of this letter, the Parish Council was advised that the Sniperley Masterplan was adopted under delegated powers at DCC. A full copy of the Masterplan can be found here:

<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=20563>

Cllr G Holland advised that the Parish Council's Planning Committee is presently investigating the content of the Masterplan and is set to respond in due course.

Members **agreed** to note the report and the content of the recently adopted Masterplan for Sniperley and await further feedback from the Parish Council's Planning Committee.

• **Environment Committee**

Cllr V Ashfield presented that Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th June 2022. There being no queries from Members, Cllr V Ashfield moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to support improvements to the River Wear

Cllr V Ashfield reminded Members that, in approving its budget for 2022/23, the Parish Council had agreed to allocate £6,000 towards improvements to the River Wear.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that, as part of the Environment Committee's efforts to improve the River Wear, the Committee has proposed a partnership to support the work of the Wear Rivers Trust in their WINNs project. This project has previously been supported by the Parish Council.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Wear Rivers Trust is working to tackle three of the worst invasive non-native species (INNS) in the Wear catchment: Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. These have been increasing in the area for many years following their introduction to the UK in the 19th Century. All three species grow in large clusters which smother native vegetation and leave riverbanks vulnerable to erosion during winter dieback.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Trust and the Environment Committee have provisionally agreed on an ambitious work programme for the year ahead, identifying that the work to tackle this serious issue on Durham's riverbanks is likely to be very labour intensive and therefore there is a requirement to educate the public about these issues as well as to recruit more volunteers for this work.

Cllr V Ashfield highlighted that there is a great desire amongst local residents of the City to see that the riverbanks become more healthy and usable spaces for all to enjoy.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the following work programme has been devised by the Wear Rivers Trust and the Parish Council's Environment Committee to help support improvements to Durham's riverbanks.

Item	Rate	Frequency	Total
PA1 & PA6AW/INJ training (complete training required by an individual to apply herbicide using a knapsack sprayer or stem injector next to water)	£600.00	3 people	£1,800.00
Replacement or additional equipment, PPE, and consumables	£1,000.00	N/A	£1,000.00
WRT staff time for training arrangements and potential direct management action	£300.00	2 days	£600.00
WRT staff time for education sessions	£300.00	2 days	£600.00
Production and distribution of leaflets* to advertise work and volunteering opportunities around the Peninsula	£1,300.00	1 leaflet drop	£1,300.00
WRT staff time to design leaflets and consult relevant partners	£300.00	2 days	£600.00
WRT mileage	£0.45/mile	220 miles	£99.00
TOTAL			£5,999.00

*Leaflets to be designed by WRT and produced/distributed by the Parish Council

Members unanimously **agreed** to fund the project to improve the River Wear – in partnership with the Wear Rivers Trust – as set out in the report provided.

• **Licensing Committee**

Cllr S Walker presented that Licensing Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20th June 2022. There being no queries from Members, Cllr S Walker moved on to Committee reports.

Response to the consultation on proposed changes to the County Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles Policy 2021-2026

Cllr S Walker advised that the County Council has recently consulted on amendments to its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Cllr S Walker reminded Members that the Council consulted on this in 2020 but the policy as proposed (following 2020 consultation) was pulled and further changes were proposed to be made, taking account of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the taxi trade.

From feedback received, Cllr S Walker advised that Members accepted many of the changes made to the 2020 proposals.

Cllr S Walker advised that the Parish Council's Licensing Committee is responsible for responding to this consultation on behalf of the Parish Council and the consultation deadline closed on 17th July 2022.

Cllr S Walker advised that the Parish Council's main comments to the latest consultation centred around the changes to vehicle emissions standards and Cllr

S Walker presented the submitted response to the consultation to the Parish Council.

Members thanked the Licensing Committee for their work on this and **agreed** to await feedback on the adoption of the new 2022 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle policy.

- **Business Committee**

Cllr R Ormerod presented the Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 11th May 2022. There being no queries from Members, Cllr R Ormerod moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to support the Durham City Children's Book Festival 2022

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has agreed a total budget of £22,000 for this financial year towards hosting events in the City.

To date, thanks to the support of the contribution towards Jubilee events from the four County Councillors, the Clerk advised that the only event expenditure from this financial year is approximately £3,000 directly from the Parish Council for the Jubilee events.

The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council and the Durham Markets Company have established a very close working relationship to deliver events for the City. As such, the Parish Council has received a request for support to once again host the Durham City children's book festival in 2022 from the Markets Company:

The Clerk advised that, in 2021, with the support of Parish Council, the Markets Company held the first children's book festival, ably assisted by local children's author Jenny Pearson.

The Clerk advised that the single event was very well received with a mix of authors and illustrators throughout the city centre alongside free children's entertainment. The restrictions imposed by Covid last year limited some of the numbers but nevertheless the feedback was such as to encourage us to try and go bigger and better this year.

The Clerk advised that the rationale behind the event is not only to encourage children to engage in reading and illustrations in a safe, non-competitive space, but to provide an event in these constrained times which is mostly free at point of delivery and encourage more families back into the city centre with something for them to amuse and occupy their families.

The Clerk highlighted that, with the event running over 2 days, the cost of putting on such an event has significantly increased and the Markets Company has requested financial support from the Parish Council in the region of £3000.

Cllr R Ormerod advised that he is supporting this event through his local Members fund and also highlighted that the Business Committee had also agreed to support this event.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support the Children's Book Festival with the proposed funding of £3,000 plus any additional costs for advertising this event.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 30th June 2022.

The Chair reminded Members that Durham County Council is launching a major recycling campaign across County Durham. The Council is placing stickers on all household rubbish and recycling bins to reduce contamination of recycling. The Chair advised that the Council has seen a significant increase in the amount of waste and recycling produced since the pandemic, in line with other authorities across the country. Unfortunately, this has also resulted in contamination levels rising in recent years, which has a significant cost implication for the authority. The Chair advised that he was aware that this is something which the Parish Council's Environment Committee has long called for and he was pleased to see this roll out and hoped it would have the desired impact.

The Chair warmly welcomed the excellent news that the Police and Crime Commissioner's recent bid to central Government for additional safer streets funding has been successful. In total nearly £1.5m additional funding has been allocated across Durham Police's area with the total funding allocated to Durham City centre and Darlington Town Centre being £632,720. The Chair advised that the Clerk has circulated details of how this funding is going to be allocated on measures to tackle ASB and make our streets safer. The Chair advised that he particularly welcomed the additional funding for the Safety of Women at Night hub in the City which safeguards this service longer term.

The Chair advised that the Queen's Baton Relay event which took place earlier this month was a great success. The Chair took the opportunity to say a big thank you to Cllr Liz Brown for representing the Parish Council so brilliantly at this event and offered his congratulations to DCC and Visit County Durham who put so much work into this event.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's Environment Committee has asked all Members to take an active role in the organisation of the City-wide litter pick later this year. The previous event was postponed owing to a clash with another event and the work taking place in planning the Jubilee events. The Chair reminded Members that the new date for this litter-picking event is Saturday 15th October.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's local issues leaflet to all residents will be distributed towards the end of August. The Chair offered his thanks to all those involved in this work and asked Members to please notify the Clerk if there are any gaps in delivery.

The Chair advised that the Environment Committee has been in frequent dialogue with relevant agencies regarding the clearing of the Weirs and expressed his delight to hear that this work is currently being scheduled for September this year. The Chair advised that this work hasn't happened as swiftly as some residents may have liked, however the ecological impact of carrying out this work

as well as the logistics involved in clearing very heavy vegetation mean that this cannot happen without detailed planning. The Chair welcomed the good news to see this progress as a number of residents have raised this with the Parish Council.

The Chair thanked everyone who took part in the Wear Rivers Trust balsam bashing event earlier this month at Hopper's Wood. The Chair advised that there is still much to clear and the Clerk has circulated details of a follow-up event at the same location, taking place tomorrow at 10am led by the Wear Rivers Trust. The Chair advised that he was delighted to hear of the Planning Committee's recent success at appeal in protecting the greenbelt at Fernhill from development. An application originally set for approval, Cllr Grenville Holland successfully argued our case at Committee and had this refused and the Inspector upheld this refusal. The Chair advised that the protection of our precious greenbelt is of paramount importance and that he was very grateful to all those involved.

Finally, the Chair took the opportunity to say a huge congratulations to the Clerk for being named a finalist in NALC's National Clerk of the Year competition. The Chair advised that the Clerk now goes up against 4 other Clerks – all from Town Councils, we are the only Parish Council – and the results are expected in October this year. The Chair wished the Clerk the very best of luck.

8. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

The Clerk reminded Members that, on 4th July 2022, he wrote to all Members highlighting a number of issues relating to Parish Council Committee meetings.

The Clerk advised that this followed a number of recent meetings where some Committees have experienced difficulty in making formal decisions as a quorum of Members were not present and/or unable to vote on a particular item of business.

In the correspondence of 4th July 2022, the Clerk had asked Members to consider the following:

1. To confirm if they are able to commit to the timetable and work of the Committees they sit on at present.
2. To let the Clerk know if the current timing of meetings isn't working for them – the Clerk has advised that he is able to work outside of his contractual hours to have meetings in the evening for Members who work etc. during the day.
3. To consider - as was proposed at the last Full Council meeting - whether the nomination of a substitute Member in your place for a Committee meeting is a practical way forward.
4. To ensure that all apologies (if you are unable to attend a meeting) are given to the Clerk no later than 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time please.

The Clerk advised that it is clear from the feedback received to date from Members as well as experience from recent meetings that there is clearly an issue with forming a quorum on both the Planning and Licensing Committees. In order to overcome this issue, Cllrs G Holland and S Walker proposed that the Planning and Licensing Committees merge to form one Committee and the timing of this meeting was proposed to be every two weeks on a Friday at 2pm.

The Clerk also advised that Members have highlighted that the workload on the Environment Committee is significant and there is a need to ensure that work is distributed evenly amongst Members of this Committee and the Clerk. There is also a desire to move the timing of this Committee meeting back to start at 2pm as opposed to 1pm but keep the date of this meeting as every second Tuesday of the month.

The report set out to Members that, if the merge of both the Planning and Licensing Committees is accepted by the Council, it is proposed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of this new Committee are re-elected at the next meeting of this new Committee. It was also proposed that the Membership of this Committee becomes 7 Members as opposed to 6. The Terms of Reference for both the Planning and Licensing Committees will also be re-drafted to include all aspects of the work of these Committees.

The Clerk advised that the Personnel Committee has not met since May 2022 and therefore there is presently no Chair and/or Vice-Chair of this Committee.

The Clerk also highlighted that all Members have agreed that apologies must be submitted no later than 24 hours in advance of the scheduled Committee meeting.

Cllr G Holland also proposed that the Parish Council considers introducing a substitution rule for Committees and to include the following wording to the Parish Council's Standing Orders:

1. **MEETINGS GENERALLY**

Full Council meetings 

Committee meetings 

Sub-committee meetings 

  **e. acceptance of membership of a committee or committees assumes that members agree to confirm if they are able to commit to the timetable and work of the Committees they sit on at present.**

  **f. acceptance of membership of a committee or committees and attendance at full meetings of the parish Council assumes that members agree to confirm that apologies (if they are unable to attend a meeting) are given to the Clerk no later than 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time.**



g. where members are unable to attend a meeting of a committee, they may nominate to the Chair of the Committee a substitute Member for that specific meeting and it for the Chair of that Committee to decide whether or not to accept the nomination.

- **any Member of the Parish Council will be permitted to act as a substitute on a Committee.**
- **a substitute Member will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary Member of the committee but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting.**
- **Substitute Members may attend meetings in that capacity only:**
 - a) to take the place of the ordinary Member for whom they are designated substitute.**
 - b) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting;**
 - c) where the ordinary Member has notified the Chair of the Committee and the Proper Officer of the intended substitution no later than 24 hours in advance of the meeting.**

Members **agreed** to the proposed merge of both the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee to form one Committee.

Members **agreed** that the Membership of Parish Council Committee should be as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee (7 Members) – proposed to meet once every two weeks on a Friday at 2pm Grenville Holland Victoria Ashfield Carole Lattin Susan Walker Richard Ormerod Esther Ashby Govind Nair (Chair and Vice-Chair TBC)	Environment Committee (6 Members) – proposed to meet every second Tuesday of the month at 2pm Carole Lattin (Chair) Victoria Ashfield (Vice-Chair) David Freeman Liz Brown Susan Walker Rupert Friederichsen
Personnel Committee (5 Members) – Meets as and when required, typically once per year. Elizabeth Scott Alan Doig Govind Nair Victoria Ashfield Grenville Holland	Business Committee (6 Members) – Meets once every two months, dates and times agreed at Committee level. Elizabeth Scott (Chair) Richard Ormerod (Vice-Chair) Nicola Brown Grenville Holland Esther Ashby

(Chair and Vice-Chair TBC)	Govind Nair
Finance Committee (6 Members) – meets once per quarter, dates and times agreed at Committee level. David Freeman (Chair) Alan Doig (Vice-Chair) Robert Hanson Victoria Ashfield Helen Weston Liz Brown	

Members **agreed** to introduce a substitution, as set out in the report provided.

Members **agreed** the Clerk should make the necessary amendments to the Terms of Reference of the new Planning and Licensing Committee as well as the Council's Standing Order, in light of these changes.

Members also **agreed**, following a proposal by Cllr E Ashby, to keep these new arrangements under constant review.

9. KEEP BRITAIN TIDY'S LOVE PARKS WEEK 2022

Cllr R Ormerod highlighted that Love Parks Week, first established by the campaign group 'Keep Britain Tidy', will be taking place between July 29th to August 5th.

Cllr R Ormerod advised that the goal of 'Love Parks Week' is to get as many people as possible, young and old, out into the great outdoors to take advantage of their local park.

Cllr R Ormerod highlighted that the campaign this year is running in partnership with Regatta and is made possible thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery.

Cllr R Ormerod highlighted that, in order to help parks managers, local authorities, town and parish councils and land owners take part in Love Parks Week and amplify the campaign, Keep Britain Tidy have developed a digital resource pack to download. The pack contains artwork for social media resources and artwork for posters and banners.

Members **agreed** to support the 'Love Parks Week' and to promote this on the Parish Council's social media page and website.

10. NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ASB-SUB GROUP

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has been an active member of the Durham City Safety's ASB sub-group since the sub-group was first established in 2019.

The establishment of this sub-group followed the Parish Council's ASB conference in October 2019 and involves a number of key stakeholders such as Durham Police, DCC, the Parish Council, Durham BID, Durham University and Durham Students Union.

The Clerk advised that he has requested further clarity on the position of this group as a) it has not met on a regular basis for some time now and, b) the Chair of the sub-group has now left the County Council.

On 18th July, the Clerk advised that he had met with the Chair of the Durham City Safety Group Alan Patrickson in order to discuss arrangements going forward. Alan advised that the role of the ASB sub-group has recently been reviewed and it is proposed that this sub-group be closed and that the Parish Council instead joins the main City Safety Group.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Durham City Safety Group was set up in January 2015 as a multi-agency approach to improve public safety in Durham City following a series of river related incidents. These incidents, some of which resulted in fatalities, followed nights out in Durham bars and clubs.

Since then, the role of this group has developed, such that it now encompasses anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder matters, etc.

The group meets on a quarterly basis and also includes senior officers from the partner organisations identified above. The Parish Council has not been invited on to this group previously.

The Clerk advised that it is still a requirement of this group that it be officer-led and therefore the offer of a position on this group necessitates the Clerk to agree to be part of this group.

At the meeting of 18th July, Alan also advised that the County Council is currently working on an ASB Strategy for the County and this is likely to go out to public consultation in October/ November 2022.

Members **agreed** that the Parish Council should be represented on the City Safety Group and that the Clerk join this group.

11. REQUEST FOR A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION FROM LOCAL LANDLORDS TO THE PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT

Cllr V Ashfield highlighted, in the financial year 2019/20 a total of £7,429,000 was lost in Council tax revenue in Durham due to Class M and Class N (student) exemptions. This figure for 2020/21 has increased by £1,368,335 to £8,797,335. In addition to which £41,174 was also lost due to 'Student Disregards'.

Cllr V Ashfield also highlighted that, as of 1st December 2021, there are 22,219 active students at Durham University, of these 18,276 live within DH1 of which 7,328 are in college affiliated accommodation, either owned by the University or

leased from the private sector. Next year the University expects the numbers in college affiliated accommodation to rise to 7,528. There are also 965 students that reside at home and a further 434 in rented accommodation outside of DH1, all within regular commuting distance of Durham City.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that residents have reported the waste in areas with high student populations has been the worst they have experienced in the City and DCC have put in extra resources to deal with these issues.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Environment Committee recently met to discuss this issue and took the opportunity to commend the work of DCC officers on the ground dealing with these issues. Committee Members highlighted that much of the resources of the County Council are as a result of activities from the non-Council tax paying population of our parish.

Cllr V Ashfield also advised that although the report indicates that the grant from Central Government to local Government to cover the loss of class N exemptions has been significantly reduced since 2010, her understanding is that this grant has been wiped out entirely.

The Parish Council's Environment Committee has highlighted that a huge increase in resources is clearly required to deal with the environmental issues associated with such a high student population in a compact city centre.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the Environment Committee is therefore proposing that the Parish Council formally requests a voluntary contribution from local landlords towards the Parish Council's precept in order to meet this resource need. If accepted by the Council, it is anticipated that any additional funding acquired from this appeal to landlords will be directed towards additional bin provision, warden and/or officer time to deal with bins and other issues.

If accepted, the Parish Council will write to all of the private landlords in the City stressing the need for greater resource. Furthermore, the Parish Council will indicate that any and all contributions towards the precept will be published to promote those landlords who do contribute to the City and its well-being.

Cllr E Ashby advised that, whilst she fully supported the principle of this proposal, she was aware that the Business Committee is currently looking to work more closely with the private-rented sector in the City in a much more collaborative way than previously and she was concerned that this proposal may adversely impact on the important way taking place by the Business Committee.

Cllr E Ashby asked that, before the Council **agreed** to this proposal in principle, that the Chairs of both the Environment Committee and the Business Committee, meet to discuss this in more detail in order.

The Council **agreed** to defer a decision on this item until the Chairs of both the Environment Committee and the Business Committee had met to discuss this.

12. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- Report by Cllr E Ashby on the most recent meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils.

Cllr E Ashby presented the following report to Members from the latest CDALC Larger Councils Forum meeting held on Thursday July 14th 2022:

The Clerk and I were among approx. 25 representatives from the 19 Town and Parish councils who form the Larger Councils Forum.

Following a warm welcome from the new Chair, Cllr A. Chandran, and agreement of the minutes of the meeting on May 19th, Steve Ragg gave a verbal report from the CDALC Executive Committee meeting on June 1st. He referred to

- DCC's ongoing work on ways of separating waste for recycling, and updates on this from target areas eg Bishop Auckland and Durham City.
- The matter of double taxation was currently subject to no further action by the Association.
- The Chair signed DCC's COP26 Climate Pledge on behalf CDALC on June 30th as had the Chair of the Smaller Council's Forum. It was hoped to have a video for circulation in the near future.
- The likely Association budget deficit was slightly below what had been estimated but still required a decision about whether to reduce reserves or raise the subscription rate which had been 10p per elector since the mid 20teens. One cause of the problem is the loss of income to CDALC due to withdrawal of paper copies by publishers of the Local Government Review. Talks about this with NALC are ongoing.
- Concerning the advice to all councils to have in place appropriate Human Resource Policies and Documents: further information about this would be circulated after the summer recess.
- Now that DCC's policy on street naming had been changed, councillors are urged to be proactive in this e.g. *by drawing up lists of possible names and engaging with officers early on.**

The meeting of the Local Councils Working Group on July 1st had been cancelled.

The first agenda item for general discussion, tabled by Horden, concerned what partnership agreements member councils had with DCC around roadside planting and roundabouts. A variety of wishes and experiences emerged particularly about re wilding and the practicalities of 'installing' and maintenance. The use of boiling water to control weeds in preference to spraying was being trialled by one council.

Agenda item 6 asked members to note and comment on a MoU between CDALC and the Police and Crime Commissioner. This specifically referred to ways of signposting support for those troubled by ASB. Following an event in November 2021 with the PCC there was some informal discussion with the PCC about CDALC entering into a pledge/memorandum of understanding with the PCC to demonstrate commitment on both sides to partnership working in order to try and help tackle anti-social behaviour. The following wording has been proposed:

"Durham Police and Crime Commissioner and County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) working in the County commit to work together to support those experiencing anti-social behaviour. We will improve signposting so that those experiencing anti-social behaviour know where to turn to for help, assistance and reporting of incidents. As partners, we will share intelligence, promote joint working and maximise the impact we can have collectively on community safety within County Durham".

The meeting agreed that each constituent Council should be asked for their own individual view on this pledge and to report this back to the next CDALC meeting.

When shown C of D's new leaflet on this very subject it was agreed to make this an agenda item at the next meeting.

Discussion next moved to improving 'working between tiers' i.e. between parish and town councils and DCC as the principal authority. *Members were asked to note and if possible register for NALC 's chargeable webinar on how to improve engagement and delivery of services across tiers.**

*In another NALC initiative, councils are invited to first look at the Dementia Friendly Councils Guide and also complete the survey aimed at gathering feedback on this subject.**

Under the item Civility and Respect Campaign councils were urged to take part in training courses organised by NALC on this subject and particularly take note of advice to look for support when problems begin to arise not wait until matters are serious. Horden suggested that training should be written into a council's culture.

The last item was a general discussion on NALC's written response to the Levelling up Bill and Shared Prosperity Fund the last point of which is a request for an amendment to allow councils to have the flexibility to hold remote meetings.

Finally it was agreed to hold the next CDALC meeting in Spennymoor.

The meeting ended at 12:30 and at 1pm members were invited to a guided tour of Hordens new Welfare Park.

End of report

Members **agreed** that they would wish for CDALC to enter into the PCC's pledge on anti-social behaviour, as set out in the report provided.

Members also **agreed** to fund the costs of any of the training set out in report provided.

The Chair thanked Cllr E Ashby for this report.

- Report by Cllr L Brown on the most recent meeting of the Durham Access for All Group

Cllr L Brown provided the following report from the latest meeting of the Durham Access for All Group held on 20th July 2022:

I've been successful in getting a dropped kerb on Hastings Avenue and was thanked by the Chair.

We began with an update about the disabled access for the underpass under Milburngate Bridge. Discussions are still ongoing between the developer and DCC about this.

This was followed by a discussion about the Market Place. Members identified various ongoing problems for those with disabilities. The steps are still a problem as they are difficult to see and the high vis paint on the edges is not renewed often enough. There are problems with the differentiation between pedestrians and vehicles (e.g. there's nothing that a guide dog could recognise as a kerb) There was also mention of the lack of arms on the seats in the centre of the square.

Members then moved onto the problem with street clutter with which members of the Parish Council are very familiar!

Finally we looked at a report on accessibility that came out of a visit that three members had made to Durham Cathedral. It was felt that the web site was difficult to navigate and there were areas that were identified as being in need of improvement. Discussions are continuing with the Dean and Chapter.

End of report

The Chair thanked Cllr L Brown for this report.

- Verbal update from the Chair on the latest meeting of the Parish Council's Community Residents Association Forum meeting

The Chair advised Members that the Parish Council's Community Residents Association Forum had met earlier today and the minutes have already been circulated from this meeting.

The Chair advised that the Forum had particularly highlighted issues with the Council's "doitonline" service and had agreed a letter to Alan Patrickson on this matter.

The Chair also advised that the Forum had discussed a proposal by Durham City Inspector Dave Clarke on an Operation OAK style provision for the City and had agreed that Option 1 as a proposal should be explored as a first step. The Chair advised that he hoped to meet with a representative of DURF in order to agree a joint approach to the Vice Chancellor of Durham University on potentially coming in as an additional funding partner for this type of provision for the City.

The Chair also highlighted that Mr Richard Hornby is making representations to Durham University regarding the establishment of Warm Hubs for the City, in light of the likely huge increase in energy bills from October 2022.

End of report

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. M.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(29th September 2022)**