

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 26th January 2023 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town Hall. Durham. DH1 3NJ

Present: Councillors A Doig (in the Chair), L Brown, V Ashfield, E Ashby, C Lattin, N Brown, R Friederichsen, R Ormerod, E Scott, S Walker and H Weston.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Inspector Dave Clarke (Durham Police), Ms Zara Worth, Mr Roger Cornwell, Mr John Ashby and Mr Barry Gower (members of the public).

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

Apologies were received from Councillors R Hanson, G Holland and D Freeman.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor L Brown declared an interest in relation to the STACK application and took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

In agreeing the minutes of the meeting of 24th November 2022, it was also **agreed**, following a proposal by Cllr E Ashby, that, where a motion has been amended during the meeting (and the final agreed motion is already minuted), the original motion is also minuted for ease of reference.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms Zara Worth advised that she was attending the meeting on behalf of the Elvet Residents Association with a general interest in all Agenda items.

Mr Roger Cornwell advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on STACK application item.

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

Mr Barry Gower advised that he was attending the meeting as Chair of the Durham Access for All Group and, with the Chair's permission, would like to contribute to the discussion under item 7 of the Agenda.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor S Walker presented the minutes from the Planning and Licensing Committee meetings held on 11th November, 25th November and 9th December 2022. There being no questions from Members, Councillor S Walker moved on to Committee reports.

- **To consider the outcome of the recent licensing application for STACK, 4-6 Silver Street**

Councillor S Walker reminded Members that the recent licensing application for STACK at Silver Street was recently approved at the Council Council's Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee held on Thursday 19 January 2023. Councillor S Walker highlighted that this is a major proposal within the parish area and the application was the subject of a number of local objections, including local Residents' Associations, the City of Durham Trust and the Parish Council.

No responsible authority (in relation to the Licensing Act 2003) objected to the proposals although the Fire Authority had requested that a suitable and sufficient fire safety risk assessment must be carried out in order to comply with the above Order."

Councillor S Walker reminded Members that, in particular, the Planning and Licensing Committee were concerned about impact in terms of noise disturbance to local residents associated from the roof terrace area of the premises and takeaway food as well as concerns about the proposed emergency exit of Moatside Lane, which is unlit, on a gradient, extremely narrow and cobbled.

Councillor S Walker advised that the Planning and Licensing Committee meeting of 20th January 2023 considered whether an appeal of this decision would be possible and it was agreed that this matter should be put forward to Full Council.

The Clerk highlighted the importance for Members to consider that there is a financial and reputational risk to the Parish Council if such an appeal were unsuccessful. The Clerk advised that he is looking into costs for legal representation at the Magistrates Court.

Councillor E Ashby expressed disappointment that this proposal had now been approved with so many outstanding matters relevant to how the premises operates being left to supplementary documents.

Councillor E Ashby also highlighted a recent example of another licensed premises where the fire exit was totally unsuitable but which had been approved by the Fire Authority. Councillor E Ashby advised that she felt that the arrangements for STACK were equally unsuitable in terms of its fire exit.

Councillor N Brown asked if the Parish Council might be able to invite the Fire Service to a future meeting in order to talk through their processes for reviewing fire exits.

Councillor E Scott advised that she welcomed the proposal of STACK coming to Durham and advised that she had full confidence in the Fire Authority to review this case appropriately.

Councillors S Walker and R Ormerod advised that, whilst there were certainly aspects of the proposal which concerned them, they did not believe an appeal would be successful.

Mr Roger Cornwell also confirmed that the City of Durham Trust would not be supporting an appeal of this decision but confirmed that they would be putting a robust objection to the planning application for this premises.

It was **agreed** (by 8 votes in favour and 2 against) that the Parish Council should not appeal the recent decision by Durham County Council in respect of the STACK licensing application.

- **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from Environment Committee meetings held on 8th November and 13th December 2022. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee updates.

- **Report by Cllr R Friederichsen on Climate Emergency Response: Update and suggested actions for 2023**

Cllr R Friederichsen presented a report to update Full Council on Durham County Council's current Climate Emergency Response Plan (2022-2024) and its reception by Durham city and county residents.

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that his report sets out a number of actions for the City of Durham Parish Council to contribute to a more effective and participatory local government response to the climate emergency.

Councillor R Friederichsen highlighted that the summer of 2022 has seen an acceleration of the climate crisis. Record temperatures were recorded across the UK, including 36.9 degree Celsius measured on 19 July in Durham City. The summer's drought across large parts of continental Europe is thought to have been the worst in 500 years. The continuing acceleration of the climate emergency makes it more urgent than ever to retain the focus on climate action across all areas of the City of Durham Parish Council (CoDPC) and all levels of government. This encompasses mitigation and adaptation measures.

Councillor R Friederichsen highlighted a number of important issues which may necessitate the Parish Council's engagement as follows:

- 1. Parish Councils are yet to play a clear and active role in CERP 2 and its successors:** Parish Councils are only mentioned indirectly in CERP 2, in connection with Area Action Partnerships. This almost complete absence of Parish Councils in CERP 2 represents a strategic gap in it because climate action will increasingly require behavioural changes affecting everybody's everyday life and the most local layer of local government should play a key role in effecting

behavioural changes by leveraging its close connections to residents.

Suggested action: CoDPC should request clarification from DCC on how they intend to ensure that Parish Councils across the county become active supporters of and contributors to the implementation of CERP 2.

2. DCC must account to residents on adherence to decarbonisation targets:

The concept of carbon budgets is introduced, laudably, in CERP 2 as the overall measure of success of DCC's climate action; this includes accounting for CO₂ sequestration through ecosystem protection and restoration. There is, however, no mechanism set out for Durham citizens to know whether DCC is meeting its decarbonisation targets (see CERP 2, page 8).

Suggested action: CoDPC should request clarification on how all parish councils will be regularly informed about progress as assessed by the Net Zero Carbon Board (see page 87, CERP 2) to ensure accountability. CoDPC should consider what role it wants to play in the 2023 Durham Citizens' Forum on Climate Action which offers a means to inform and engage residents in CERP 2-related efforts.

3. Reduce air travel: The need to reduce air travel (change target 7; see Appendix 1) is not mentioned in CERP 2, despite County Durham holding investments in Newcastle Airport. This clear internal contradiction led independent researchers to demand that "County Durham seriously consider strategies for significantly limiting emissions growth from aviation and shipping".

Suggested action: CoDPC should request clarification on DCC's position on reducing air travel, the plans for investment in Newcastle Airport, and what action DCC is taking to encourage behaviour change towards less air travel, and the importance of consumption patterns in its climate change communication.

4. Make key CoDPC work strands address the climate and biodiversity emergencies: Among the CoDPC's biggest spending items are Durham in Bloom and a retail consultant's advice being offered to Durham city businesses.

Suggested action: For full council to invite the Business and Environment Committees to review and amend, if necessary, the contractual arrangements for Durham in Bloom and the retail consultancy support to businesses to ensure they align with the relevant CSE's change targets. This means that future contracts must include as priorities one or several of the overall aims and actions to a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, b) support local adaptation to climate change, and c) restore biodiversity and natural carbon sinks.

Members thanked Councillor R Friederichsen for his report. Members **agreed** (by 9 votes in favour and 2 against) to the suggested actions under points 1-4 above.

- **Proposal to fund the Durham City heritage trail map as part of the 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust**

Councillor C Lattin reminded Members that the Parish Council had recently launched a 7 Hills trail map of Durham which was designed and created by David Miller. Since the creation of these leaflets, 5,000 have been distributed across the

Parish Council area and the user experience feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor C Lattin advised that, in order to mark the important 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust, Members had previously agreed to progress the creation of a Durham City Heritage trail map and this has again been designed by David Miller and a copy of this map was included in all hard copies of the Agenda and provided at the meeting tonight.

Since gaining the endorsement of the Environment Committee and an agreement for a virement of funds from the Parish Council's Finance Committee, Councillor C Lattin highlighted that the Clerk has been working with both David Miller and John Lowe, Chair of the City of Durham Trust on the design of the works.

Councillor C Lattin advised that much of the content from the 7 Hills map was able to be re-used by the same designer and this has significantly cut the costs of producing this leaflet. The Clerk also advised that David Miller has confirmed his acceptance of the content of the map as is now produced.

The Clerk advised that the total costs for production and printing were £1,882.90. However, the City of Durham Trust has agreed to fund 50% of the total cost of producing this leaflet.

Members unanimously **approved** 50% of the associated total costs of producing and printing the Durham City Heritage trail map as part of the 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust.

Members unanimously **agreed** to write formally to David Miller to thank him for his exceptional work on this new leaflet.

• Finance Committee

Councillor A Doig presented the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2022. There were no queries from Members.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 24th November 2022 as follows:

The Chair thanked all Members who have participated so actively over the last few months in the budget setting process. The Chair advised that he was aware of how much work has gone into this at an early stage.

The Chair expressed his delight at the great success of the Parish Council's new Teracycle boxes in the Boots Market Place store and thanked both Councillors Ashfield and Lattin for negotiating this so well with Boots. The Chair advised that he looked forward to seeing that continuing as it appears to have been very popular to date and a real gap in the recycling market here in Durham.

The Chair also extended his thanks to both Councillors Brown and Lattin for managing to negotiate Shopmobility's involvement in major events such as Lumiere and Durham Miners' Gala. The Chair advised that he was aware that this has been an issue raised at previous Access for All Groups and we are delighted to have worked with all parties to a satisfactory outcome. The Chair expressed that no person should be disenfranchised from enjoying any event in Durham City due to their mobility.

On the subject of events, the Chair expressed his delight at seeing Durham City so busy for Chinese New Year last weekend. Once again, the Durham Markets Company have shown that they can put on a wonderful event. Both the Christmas Festival and the Chinese New Year events added huge footfall to the City and – we hope – more cash behind the tills of Durham shops.

The Chair expressed his disappointment to see the resignation of one of the Parish Council's Committee Chairs earlier this month. The Chair advised that Elizabeth has been a fantastic Chair of our Business Committee and it has been wonderful to work with her in this capacity. The Chair advised that Members will want to thank Elizabeth for her work on this Committee, particularly noting Elizabeth's work to promote events in the City centre.

The Chair echoed his serious disappointment and frustration after the announcement that County Durham will not be receiving any cash from the Government's Levelling Up bids. The Chair highlighted that Durham County Council officers worked tirelessly on those bids and to near impossible deadlines. The Chair advised that the Government's Levelling Up agenda means nothing if rich constituencies in the South East, London and Richmond are given priority over areas of the North in desperate need of funding. The Chair proposed that the Council writes to our MP and the County Council to seek feedback on how and why the bids were unsuccessful.

The Chair thanked the Planning and Licensing Committee for all of their extraordinary work over the last month or so. The Chair advised that it is astonishing to see the level of detail this Committee goes into when responding to major schemes either in our parish or which have a significant impact on our area. The Chair noted that the new applications for Sniperley are now in and the Parish Council will be assessing these against relevant local plan policies as well as the adopted masterplan.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the staff of our night hub in the City. The hub is doing extraordinary work and the Chair welcomed the recent report that the lives of two men were saved 3 weeks ago on Milburngate Bridge. The Chair advised that the value of this service is exceptional and we must safeguard this into the future.

The Chair advised that, at next month's meeting of Full Council, the Parish Council will be hearing from an organisation called "STAR" – Student Action for Refugees in Durham. This is a serious issue at a national level at the moment and we look forward to hearing about the work of this organisation.

Finally, the Chair welcomed the news that the Parish Council's application for Quality Gold Award status has passed the first hurdle and we are expecting further feedback on our bid in the coming days.

7. UPDATE AND CORRESPONDENCE ON THE DURHAM ACCESS FOR ALL GROUP

The Chair welcomed Mr Barry Gower, Chair of the Durham Access for All Group to the meeting and thanked Barry for his recent correspondence. The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council is proud to work in partnership with the Group to ensure that all areas of the City are accessible to everyone regardless of their mobility. The Chair highlighted that Councillor L Brown takes an active role on this Group as Parish Council representative.

Barry advised that he felt that the Access for All Group was a useful Group but needed more support in recruiting new Members. Barry also advised that he would like to reach a stage whereby the Group may be consulted more on accessibility issues in the City.

Barry highlighted that A boards on certain streets were a significant impediment to those with a mobility issue and that the signage is extremely poor around the City. Barry also asked that the Access for All Group be consulted on the new Heritage Trail map.

Barry highlighted the Access for All Group's serious concerns regarding the underpass connecting the Milburngate and Riverwalk developments. Barry advised that this made access between these two sites nearly impossible for a wheelchair user.

Barry also took the opportunity to thank the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk for their support in making the Post Office in Durham City more accessible to wheelchair users and the work they have done to ensure that Shopmobility can operate during big events such as Lumiere and Durham Miner's Gala.

Councillor S Walker offered her support in recruiting new members for the Access Group.

Councillor C Lattin also advised that she will ensure that the Access Group is consulted prior to the printing of the Heritage Trail map and apologised for not consulting the Group earlier.

Councillor E Scott advised that she is hoping to establish a City Signage Working Group of all major stakeholders to look at the very serious issue of signage in the City.

Barry Gower thanked the Parish Council for their continued support.

8. PROPOSED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH DURHAM POLICE FOR ENHANCED POLICING OF THE PARISH AREA

Members considered a proposed Service Level Agreement with Durham Police to provide an enhanced policing service for the parish area.

The Chair thanked both Dave Clarke and the Parish Clerk for their work in producing this document and expressed his hope that Members would support this as presented. The Chair highlighted that he was aware that the issue of more policing of the parish was a major issue for local residents, as evidenced by the recent consultation carried out by the Parish Council.

The Chair highlighted that the need for this additional policing is made more urgent due to the decision by Durham University to cut its funding for policing of the City.

Dave Clarke advised that he is very pleased to be working so closely with the City of Durham Parish Council. Dave highlighted that he presently has only 3 officers covering the whole of the City and expressed his concern at the impact on resources caused by the growth in the night time economy.

Dave advised that the work of these new officers will be supported by a new Safer Streets Coordinator who will be responsible for providing anyone contacting 101 or 999 with feedback.

Dave also advised that the County Council has recently recruited a new Public Protection Officer through the new University funding and he was a fantastic Officer.

Dave advised that the Police would fund the vehicle driving around the parish area for the two new officers as part of the match funding agreement.

Members unanimously **agreed** to the proposed SLA with Durham Police, to commence from 1st April 2023 and subject to Durham Police legal agreeing the content of the SLA.

9. PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COUNTY COUNCIL, THE FREEMEN AND THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL RELATING TO THE DURHAM CITY BEACON

The Clerk reminded Members that the Freeman have recently funded the creation of a beacon for the City by a renowned artist at a cost of over £10,000. The beacon is set to be completed by the end of February and installed at Jubilee Walk thereafter.

The Clerk highlighted that the project has also resulted in significance costs for the County Council with estimates of costs incurred being around £60,000-£70,000 for the project. The scheme gained planning approval in 2022 and is intended to be in place ahead of the Coronation of the new King in May 2023.

The Clerk advised that representatives from the County Council, Parish Council and the Freeman recently met to discuss a Memorandum of Understanding between all three parties in relation to the ongoing use, maintenance and insurance of the beacon.

The Freeman regard the beacon as a gift to the City and this will be supplemented by two interpretation boards to advertise the project and the artist who has

worked on the beacon. The County Council has agreed to take on the maintenance and insurance of the beacon, except the burner unit.

The Clerk advised that the County Council has asked if the Parish Council would consider taking over this element of the project and also manage any events associated with the lighting of the beacon as set out in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding below.

The Council is currently investigating the possibility of a specialist company providing, storing and installing the fire burner for use during events. It is likely that the total cost for this service will be around £1,000.

The County Council will continue to maintain the Jubilee Walk area as part of the wider DLI Museum project.

Members **agreed** (by 9 votes in favour and 2 against) to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding included in the Agenda papers, subject to further clarification on which party is referred to in each section of the MoU where an "either / or" option is referenced.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY 2023/24

The Chair reminded Members that the aim of the Parish Council's strategy is to give local residents, Councillors and Officers a clear understanding of what the council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver its aims and objectives. The strategy sets out what the areas of development or change the Council intends to focus on over the next year outlining those areas of service that are identified as priority aims and objectives.

Members unanimously **agreed** that the five overarching priorities for the Parish Council are:

- 1.** Being an ambitious voice for the city
- 2.** Enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish
- 3.** Upholding the Neighbourhood Plan and representing the parish on planning matters
- 4.** Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish
- 5.** Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.

Members also unanimously **agreed** that the priorities for each Committee in 2023/24 should be as follows:

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

Environment Committee

Council priorities 2023/24	Environment Committee priorities 2023/24	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with and responding to residents of all ages and backgrounds in environment-related work Mobilise Volunteer groups Work with young people and respond to their concerns	Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life.
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promote cleaner air, a cleaner river, green spaces, and streets for living across the city. Reduction in light pollution. Reduction in night time noise. Sustainable travel	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Work with all relevant committees to ensure the climate and ecological emergencies are considered in all planning matters. To fight for zero-carbon, sustainable housing and businesses	Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Improve and protect the appearance of the city and its heritage. Improve the quality and appearance of the River Wear. To lobby for more space for the re-establishment of a tourist information centre.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Be proactive and collaborate with all partners (including Parish Council committees, Durham County Council, residents, developers, landlords, and other businesses) to coordinate our impact on the climate and ecological emergencies and increase community	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

	resilience. Encourage sustainable travel Increased awareness and action on climate change. Tackle the ecological emergency	
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Planning Committee

Council priorities 2023/24	Planning Committee priorities 2023/24	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish as a consultee on planning matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Consulting the Parish on planning matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring schemes deliver the required levels of affordable housing and adapted housing for the disabled and elderly.	Theme 4. A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Promoting the creation and adoption of new Public Rights of Way and ensuring that they are accessible to all.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

	Protecting our green infrastructure and assets within our parish boundary and ensuring that they are used to the best possible public benefit.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Upholding the development plans for the area i.e. Neighbourhood Plan and County Durham Plan.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	To maintain and develop an evidence-base to update the Neighbourhood Plan and comment on planning applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Protecting our World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas and designated and non-designated heritage assets.	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City

	Delivering a Conservation Area Management Plan	Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Protecting against overdevelopment	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Supporting accommodation above retail units in the City centre.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 4: A City With Attractive And Affordable Places To Live
	Supporting tourist attractions and transport infrastructure for the visitor economy	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Putting green future at the heart of planning considerations	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Resisting schemes which do not deliver net zero by 2030 and supporting those which do.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

Licensing Committee

Council priorities 2023/24	Licensing Committee Priorities 2023/24	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
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1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Representing the Parish on licensing matters	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Ensuring that all new licensing applications and existing premises promote the four licensing objectives.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Empowering our residents to make informed representations on licensing matters.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Supporting a cumulative impact policy for the parish Supporting a late night-levy on licensed premises in the parish.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
	Making licensing as open as possible through hosting an online licensing map	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City
	Making the City more accessible to all by representing the needs of all users in relation to pavement and outdoor seating applications.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and	Ensuring that the objectives of licensing and planning are aligned.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

representing the parish on planning matters.		Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic 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	Promoting the early evening economy to families and tourists	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 2: A Beautiful And Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	To encourage all new taxi licenses granted by DCC to be for low emissions/ electrical vehicles only.	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

11. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24

The Clerk reminded Members that there is a need for the Parish Council to have agreed its budget and to submit its precept request for the forthcoming Financial Year by the end of January 2022. In order to support this work, all of the Parish Council's Committees met last year and have submitted the following budget proposals for their work from April 2023:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Representing the parish on planning and licensing matters	
Professional support in responding to planning applications and licensing hearings	5,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving the licensed economy	
Enhanced drug searching scheme with Durham Police	600.00
PRIORITY 3: Hosting (separate) planning and licensing training events with the community	
Hosting a licensing training event	1,000.00
Hosting a planning training event	250.00
PRIORITY 4: Review of HMO licensing arrangements	
Production of a report into HMO licensing options	5,000.00

PRIORITY 5: Delivering a Conservation Area Management Plan	
Conservation Area Management Plan	5,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	16,850.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Additional policing and safety for the parish area	
Enhanced SLA with Durham Police for late night policing	50,000.00
Safety of Women at Night hub	10,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the Shhh campaign	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Durham in Bloom	8,000.00
2 x Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Clean Air and Active Travel)	6,000.00
Tackling residential car parking in the City	0.00
PRIORITY 4: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	10,000.00
Christmas frontages awards	2,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Recycling	
Continuation of Terracycle scheme	2,000.00
Green Award for Businesses in the parish	1,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust	3,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	94,000.00

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

Full Council

Item of Expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council (rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website, other expenditure)	17,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training budget	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: grants for local community and voluntary organisations	15,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Staffing costs – including salary, National Insurance contributions and workplace pension	60,516.56
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	94,516.56

Committee	Cost (£)
Planning and Licensing Committee	16,850.00
Environment Committee	94,000.00
Business Committee	36,800.00
Full Council	94,516.56
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-2024 AGAINST PRIORITIES	242,166.56

It is expected that the Parish Council will finish the current Financial Year (2022-23) with (approximately) £60,000 remaining in the bank account.

Of the remaining £60,000, the following was **agreed** to be ring fenced for 2023/24:

General Reserves	£45,000.00
Contingencies	£15,000.00
TOTAL	£60,000.00

12. PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT REQUEST FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24

The Clerk advised that the 2023/24 tax base for the City of Durham parish area is 4,641.5. The 2022/23 City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base was calculated

at 4,494.9. The Clerk highlighted that the tax base has therefore increased by 146.6.

The Clerk also advised that the LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2023/24 is £0.

The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council's precept has been frozen at a Band D charge of £34.87 since 2018. Although the City of Durham Parish Council area has a high population, its tax income is lower than areas of similar size due to the significant number of properties exempt from Council tax because of their use as student accommodation.

The Chair also highlighted that the Band D charge in the City of Durham parish area remains one of the lowest in County Durham.

The Chair advised that the major expenditure proposed as part of this budget is the SLA with Durham Police for an enhanced policing service for which there are 3 proposed options as set out below:

Option 1

The full £65,000 costs of two additional officers met by the Parish Council (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights, 12 months of the year) equates to an increase of £12.90 on a band D precept.

Total precept: £257,166.56 (band D - £55.41)

Option 2

£50,000 of the total cost (£65,000) of two additional officers met by the Parish Council (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights, 12 months of the year) equates to an increase of £9.67 on a band D precept. The remaining funding of £15,000 could be met through a funding bid to the local AAP.

Total precept: £242,166.56 (band D - £52.17)

Option 3

No additional policing provision provided by the Parish Council - in which case there will be no increase in the precept in respect of policing. However, **please note** if the Council is minded to agree to the other priorities of each Committees (identified and agreed at Committee level), this will necessitate an increase to the band D precept charge of £6.53.

Total precept: £ 192,166.56 (band D - £41.40)

Councillors unanimously **agreed** that the precept for the Parish Council for financial year 2023/24 should be, as set out in Option 2 above, £242,166.56 and therefore the Band D charge for the City of Durham Parish Council area should be £52.17.

13. ANNUAL REPORT ON PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL CONTROLS

Members unanimously **agreed** to the appointment of Mr Gordon Fletcher as the Parish Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2022/23.

Members unanimously **agreed** the following report on the Parish Council's internal controls:

1. RESPONSIBILITY

Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2011 requires Councils to carry out a review of their internal controls annually before the end of the financial year.

The City of Durham Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.

In discharging this responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

The Parish Council has adopted a risk register and this is under continuing review by the Clerk and any issues arising from risk assessments carried out will be reported to full Council.

The Council

The Council has elected a Chair who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and together with the Clerk for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January full Council meeting each year. The January meeting of the Council also approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Full Council meets at least 10 times per year. The Parish Council does not usually meet in August and December.

A budget report is prepared and submitted to all of the Parish Council's Finance Committee meetings showing income and expenditure together with a budget update for all Committee spends. Any budget revision reports are also reported for information and these set out any changes to the budget as per Council decisions or any known budget over or underspends.

Clerk to the Council

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations and advises the Council on managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to. The Clerk also manages projects agreed by full Council and works with all suppliers and contractors agreed by full Council to carry out functions on behalf of the Council.

In 2022, the Council agreed a Scheme of Delegation. The power to delegate functions is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s 101. The intention of the delegation scheme is to allow the Council to act with all reasonable speed. Decisions should be taken at the most suitable level. Therefore, the Clerk is given powers over the day-to-day administration of the Council or committees to decide matters within the Terms of Reference and matters of major policy should be recommended to the Full Council.

Whilst delegation is necessary it is the Council's policy that Members and the press and public should have the fullest information. Therefore, the Clerk reports all major decisions taken under delegated powers at the next Council or Committee meeting.

Payments

All payments made are reported to all Finance Committee meetings. The Parish Council now makes all payments via electronic banking. Two Members of the Council from the current list of five authorised signatories (excluding the Clerk who acts as administrator) must authorise every payment against invoices before authorising the payment using their own login details provided by the bank.

There is a facility for making urgent payments out of meeting if necessary. Such payments are also reported to the Parish Council's Finance Committee meeting and all decisions to spend funds as urgent action are ratified at the next Full Council meetings and minuted as such.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions. The Clerk makes an annual risk management report to the Council. A review of financial management risks is included as part of the review report.

Internal Audit

Last year, the Council appointed an independent Internal Auditor, Mr Gordon Fletcher, who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management

- Reviews
- Insurance cover

A review of internal audit must be carried out before the end of each financial year.

Gordon Fletcher has indicated that he is willing to carry out an audit of the Parish Council again next year. The cost of this service is £150.

Gordon was previously the Audit Manager at Easington District Council before retiring when the Unitary Council was formed and set up his own business by providing an internal audit service for Town and Parish Councils. This has grown to a current portfolio of 7 local Town Councils and 24 local Parish Councils.

Gordon is C.M.I.I.A. (Chartered Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors) qualified and has his own professional indemnity insurance.

External Audit

The Council's External Auditors are Mazars, appointed by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA). They submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council, together with a copy of their report listing any issues to be raised. At the end of the Audit the Council must display the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for 14 days and must make the Annual Governance and Audit Return (AGAR) and Final Accounts available on request. These are also displayed on the Parish Council's website.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has a responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- The Full Council
- The Clerk to the Council who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks
- The independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's systems of internal control
- Mazars, the Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the AGAR, which is completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor.

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The external audit report for 2021-22 was carried out by Mazars and was completed in September 2022. No issues were raised by the external auditors.

6. INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

The Auditors did not raise any issues as part of the 2021-22 Audit.

The Internal Auditor did recommend that the Council open a new bank account, not associated with its existing bank, in order to further protect its finances. At present, only £85,000 would be protected as part of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The Council has now opened an account with NatWest Bank and funds will be deposited into this account.

14. TO REVIEW THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Councillor Elizabeth Scott took the opportunity to thank the Chair of the Council and Members of the Parish Council's Business Committee for their support and work over the last few years of this Committee. Elizabeth highlighted her pride in the Committee's work with Graham Soult and in hosting great events for the City. Elizabeth advised that it was with a heavy heart that she had decided to resign as both the Chair and Member of the Parish Council's Business Committee. Elizabeth advised that the recent application for STACK on Silver Street and the Parish Council's objection to this proposal had highlighted a conflict of aims within the Council and she felt that she was therefore unable to continue in these roles as a result.

It was **agreed** (by 8 votes in favour and 2 against) that Councillor David Freeman should become a Member of the Parish Council's Business Committee.

15. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- **Report by Cllr L Brown from the latest meeting of the Durham Access for All Group.**

Members received the following report by Cllr L Brown from the latest meeting of the Durham Access for All Group:

Access for All meeting 11/1/2023

- Letter to Parish Council discussed. Hopefully will be brought up at next PC meeting. Secretary will try to attend. Pavement and vehicle obstructions around Durham a major problem. Need clarification re police dealing with obstructions of pavements
- Access to Lumiere discussed
- Cathedral Access Panel. Secretary read out a letter from Deans PA explaining delay in inaugural meeting and hoping to schedule for beginning of 2023
- WH Smith not user friendly. Parish Clerk and Secretary met manager and asked for removal of clutter. Concerns raised regarding fire procedures. Fire exit not wheelchair friendly and no evacuation chair

- Milburngate Pedestrian Underpass. Letter from Susan Robinson. Planning consent not given for disabled access (*Why???*). Letter details alternative access which is lengthy and not fit for purpose. Secretary following this up
- Meeting with people responsible for refurb and rebuild of DLI. Happy with what was said. Access routes are indeed accessible. Just hope the money is available.
- Problems with Care Connect. Lack of staff training. Equipment malfunctions. Cllr Brown to follow up
- Signing in Prince Bishops poor. Couldn't find toilets from lift lobby.

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, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a wavy line and a long horizontal stroke.

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(23rd February 2023)**