

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 7:00pm in the Main Hall of the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Rd, Durham DH1 3QF.

Present: Councillors S Walker (in the **Chair**), G Bignardi, T Cleaver, R Cornwell, D Freeman, R Handy, G Holland, C Lattin, P Layton, F Robinson, E Scott and L Wilson.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 4 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillors L Brown, V Ashfield and E Hopgood.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor S. Walker declared an interest in the item concerning the Merryoaks Community Hall Energy Resilience Project and withdrew from the room during its consideration.

Councillor E Scott also declared an interest in item 10 as an existing Board Member of Redhills and took no part in the discussion or vote on this matter.

3. PRESENTATION BY MR ARTHUR LOCKYEAR MBE, VOLUNTEER REMEMBRANCE COORDINATOR, ON THE DURHAM CITY REMEMBRANCE PARADE

Mr Arthur Lockyear MBE, Volunteer Remembrance Coordinator, presented an update on the organisation of the 2025 Durham City Remembrance Parade.

Arthur outlined the coordination work undertaken with partners such as Durham Cathedral, Durham County Council, the Police and event contractors and took the opportunity to particularly thank the Clerk, Chair and Councillor E Scott for their continued support in the delivery of this important event.

Arthur highlighted the significant work undertake in relation to risk assessments, insurance arrangements and close communication with the Lumiere organisers to prevent scheduling conflicts this year.

Arthur advised that he hoped that as many Members as possible would be able to attend the parade this year. Following the showing of a video from last year's parade, Members thanked Arthur for his continued dedication and civic service.

4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 23RD JULY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Lucy Szablewska raised the issue of the A1(M) junctions 60-64 improvement works with the Parish Council. Lucy highlighted that residents living along the A167 through Durham have put up with heavy lorry traffic throughout the night since 7th July 2025 and this was supposed to end in mid-September. Lucy asked if the Parish Council could contact the National Highways team about this, in order to understand why this traffic is still being diverted along the A167 instead of allowing traffic to travel one lane of the A1(M) rather than shut off the entire motorway. The Parish Council **agreed** to contact National Highways on this matter.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor G Holland presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 11th July and 25th July 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor G Holland moved on to Committee reports.

Consultation on proposed countywide Article 4 Direction to improve the management of HMOs

Members considered the Durham County Council consultation on a proposed Countywide Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Members reviewed detailed evidence regarding the existing Article 4 areas within Durham City, Framwellgate Moor, Newton Hall, Pity Me, Mount Oswald, Carville, and Belmont. Members noted that the new proposal sought to extend control over small HMOs (Class C4) throughout County Durham, requiring planning permission for any new conversion from dwelling houses (Class C3).

Members expressed support for extending Article 4 coverage to the Aykley Heads area of Durham City, noting that this remains one of the few urban parts of the Parish not currently covered. However, the Council considered that applying the Direction to the entire County was disproportionate and inadequately evidenced. It was also noted that Policy 16.3 of the County Durham Plan provides clear guidance for Durham City but no equivalent policy exists for other County areas.

The Council further discussed the administrative and legal implications of introducing a Countywide Article 4, noting potential increases in appeals, workload, and cost.

Councillor Cornwell recommended that the Parish Council call for stronger evidence, targeted application and parallel introduction of an additional licensing scheme for small HMOs to enable effective monitoring and this was supported by all Members.

Members unanimously **approved** the submission of the Parish Council's response to Durham County Council as drafted by Councillor R Cornwell.

Proposal to support the consultation and engagement for the Durham Castle and Cathedral UNESCO World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035

Members were informed that all UK World Heritage Sites were required by UNESCO and UK Government policy to have an up-to-date Management Plan. The draft Plan for 2025–2035 provided a strategic framework organised around the themes of conserving, sharing, and regenerating the site and had been developed collaboratively with partners and stakeholders.

The Clerk reported that the Management Plan would be subject to a full public consultation in October 2025, coordinated by Durham County Council through its Let's Talk platform. To ensure accessibility, DCC Design Services had provided a quotation of £1,680 to design, format, and prepare the 109-page document as a fully accessible PDF.

Members noted that the World Heritage Site Coordinator, Dr Anne Allen, had invited the Parish Council to support the hosting of an in-person drop-in consultation event in Durham City. The event would provide residents with the opportunity to view the Plan, ask questions, and provide feedback directly, complementing the online consultation and ensuring inclusivity.

It was also reported that Durham University had committed £1,500 towards the production of a summary prospectus and case-for-support document to accompany the Plan, and that the City of Durham Trust had contributed £100 towards the design costs. This companion publication would present the Plan's key messages in a concise and engaging format, enhancing public understanding and outreach.

Members recognised the Parish Council's custodial role as the elected body for the historic core of Durham City. Members also noted that a total of £7,350 had been agreed as part of the Planning and Licensing Committee's budget for professional planning support, including carry-over funds relating to ongoing work such as the Article 4 report.

An additional £2,000 had been agreed to support the Parish Council's involvement in the County Durham Plan review. It was noted that due to delays in the review timetable, it was unlikely that this allocation would be required in the current financial year.

Members further noted that only £800 of the £7,350 budget had been spent to date, and therefore sufficient funds were available to support the proposed contribution.

Members unanimously **agreed** to contribute £1,580 towards the production of the accessible consultation document for the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025–2035 and also agreed to support the hosting of a drop-in consultation event at Durham Town Hall in November 2025, to be

organised in partnership with the World Heritage Site Coordinator and Durham Cathedral.

Environment Committee

Councillor C Lattin presented the Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 8th July 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to support the re-siting of the Houghall Boundary Stone between the City of Durham and Shincliffe parish boundaries at Maiden Castle

The Clerk presented a report outlining the historic background and significance of the Houghall Boundary Stone, situated between the City of Durham and Shincliffe Parish boundaries near Maiden Castle, and setting out proposals for its re-siting close to Houghall College on the A177.

Members noted that research undertaken by Steve Bryan, Secretary of the Shincliffe Local History Society, had traced the original location of the boundary stone to the 1870s, with evidence of its subsequent relocation following the construction of Houghall College in the 1930s. Members also noted that the stone was a Grade II listed structure and an important historical landmark marking the boundary responsibilities of the former Durham Urban Sanitary Authority and the Durham and Chester-le-Street Highway Board.

It was reported that consultation would be required with Durham County Council (DCC) regarding the proposed siting and the need to secure a firm foundation for the stone. Members noted advice suggesting that an aluminium rod may be necessary to ensure the internal stability of the stone. Members further noted that, following recent gas works along the A177, reassurances would be sought from DCC that any future works would not impact the stone or accompanying information board once installed.

An estimated total cost of £2,000 was presented for the project, including approximately £379 for the planning application, £700 for the design and production of an information board, £500–£600 for the construction of a suitable base for the stone and board, and provision for a small reception at the unveiling ceremony. Members noted that while the original location was unsuitable, the proposed new location—at the rear of the footway between the path and the Houghall hedge—appeared appropriate, subject to discussions with DCC Highways and Houghall College.

The proposed next steps were outlined as:

- Liaising with Highways to agree the final location and any technical requirements;
- Agreeing the final content for the information board prior to submitting a planning application;
- Submitting the planning application to the Local Planning Authority;
- Commissioning DCC or an approved contractor to undertake installation work following planning approval; and
- Completing the installation and unveiling before March 2026.

Members were reminded that the Parish Council had allocated £5,000 in the current financial year towards heritage projects.

Although this was originally intended for the blue plaque initiative, no expenditure had yet been made from this fund, and the Environment Committee had indicated its willingness to allocate £2,000 from this budget to support the re-siting of the Houghall Boundary Stone.

Following discussion and a proposal by Councillor D Freeman, Members unanimously **agreed** to reach out to colleagues at Shincliffe Parish Council, in order to seek a financial contribution towards this project. Depending on the response, the Parish Council **agreed** to allocate up to £2,000 from the heritage project budget to support the re-siting of the Boundary Stone as outlined in the report.

Proposal to support the Merryoaks Community Hall Energy Resilience Project

At this point in the meeting, Councillor S Walker left the room and Councillor D Freeman took over the chair.

Councillor C Lattin presented a report outlining a proposal for the Parish Council to support the Merryoaks Community Hall Energy Resilience Project. Members were reminded that when the Council had set its budget for the current financial year, a total of £2,500 had been allocated towards a clean air initiative, though no specific project had been designated for this funding at that time.

Councillor C Lattin advised that the Environment Committee had now proposed that this allocation be redirected to the Merryoaks Community Hall project, as it directly supported the Council's objectives of fostering a greener and more climate-resilient community.

Councillor C Lattin reported that the Lowes Barn Community Project (LBCP) had successfully secured a £20,000 grant from the Northern Powergrid Foundation to fund the installation of additional solar panels, battery storage, and a hybrid inverter at Merryoaks Community Hall. The total cost of the project amounted to £24,883.25, leaving a shortfall of approximately £4,883. Members were advised that the Hall itself would contribute £2,383, with the remaining £2,500 sought from the Parish Council to enable the project to proceed without delay.

Members noted that the project aimed to improve the Hall's energy resilience, allowing it to operate independently from the mains electricity supply during power outages. This would enable the Hall to serve as a local resilience hub—providing heat, lighting, hot food and drinks, and charging facilities for phones and medical equipment during prolonged power cuts. The project was expected to be of particular benefit to vulnerable residents, including older people, those with health conditions, individuals living alone, and those experiencing fuel poverty.

In addition to supporting emergency preparedness, Members noted that the project would also reduce the Hall's ongoing energy costs through renewable energy generation and storage. These savings would be reinvested into community services, strengthening the Hall's financial sustainability. The project

would therefore not only support the Council's environmental aims but also contribute to social wellbeing and local resilience.

Members further noted the wider community benefits, including greater energy security during emergencies, reduced fuel poverty, and lower carbon emissions through the increased use of renewable energy. By serving as a safe and powered neighbourhood hub, the project would also enhance community cohesion and mutual support among residents.

Councillor E Scott advised that she felt that this project could be seen as a pilot for the Parish Council's wider aims of supporting community centres and facilities across the parish area. Councillor D Freeman supported this and proposed that, in approving this grant, Merryoak Community Hall should not be invited to submit an Expression of Interest for the proposed wider funding set for 2026-27 to support community centres/ facilities and this was agreed by Members.

Following discussion, Members **agreed** to approve the allocation of £2,500 from the clean air initiative budget towards supporting the Merryoaks Community Hall Energy Resilience Project. This funding would provide the necessary match contribution, secure the external grant already awarded, and enable the timely installation of the infrastructure to deliver lasting benefits for the parish community.

Councillor S Walker returned to the room and resumed the Chair.

Business Committee

Councillor E Scott presented the Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 10th July 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor E Scott moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to provide further support to the City's ShopWatch initiative

Councillor E Scott presented a report seeking Members' approval for the allocation of £2,000 in additional financial support to the Durham City ShopWatch scheme.

Councillor E Scott reminded Members that this funding would cover the hire of eight further ShopWatch radios for a twelve-month period, with the aim of extending the scheme's coverage to include a number of charity shops and Durham Market traders. The Clerk highlighted that this initiative was intended to strengthen crime prevention measures and enhance community safety throughout the city centre.

Members noted that the ShopWatch scheme had been relaunched in November 2022 by PCSO Michael Ashurst, in partnership with Durham Constabulary and local daytime-economy businesses. The scheme functioned as a business crime reduction partnership, linking retailers, the police, and other stakeholders via a dedicated radio network and the SentrySIS crime reporting platform. This enabled the rapid sharing of information about incidents, improving response times to shoplifting, anti-social behaviour, and suspicious activity.

Councillor E Scott highlighted that ShopWatch had provided a vital communication link between retailers, Durham County Council's CCTV team, and the police, creating a rapid alert system that had led to a tangible reduction in retail crime. Retailers had reported improved safety, fewer incidents of stock loss, and greater confidence among staff and customers. There were currently 65 retailers and venues using the radios, and ShopWatch continued to meet monthly with the police, chaired by the Manager of Next in Durham City.

Councillor E Scott reminded Members that, in September 2023, the Parish Council had provided funding for the hire of fourteen radios for twelve months, supplied free of charge to businesses to demonstrate the scheme's benefits. All fourteen businesses had subsequently chosen to continue their radio contracts independently, citing improved liaison with police, a strong deterrent effect on offenders, and reassurance for staff.

Members **agreed** that the proposed funding for eight additional radios should be allocated in the same way, as a one-year commitment with no ongoing obligation. The additional radios would be distributed to local charity shops and market traders, who were often more vulnerable to theft but lacked the financial means to join the scheme independently. Members noted that this targeted support would help create a more inclusive and cohesive city-centre safety network, ensuring that all sectors of the retail community benefited equally from the initiative.

The Clerk confirmed that the £2,000 cost had already been included in the Parish Council's approved 2025 budget, with no further financial commitment required beyond this period.

Following discussion, Members **agreed** to approve the allocation of £2,000 from the ShopWatch budget to fund the hire of eight additional ShopWatch radios for twelve months.

Members further **agreed** that the direct beneficiaries of this support would be local charity shops and Durham Market traders, thereby extending the benefits of the scheme to smaller and independent businesses and further strengthening crime prevention efforts across the city centre.

Finance Committee

Councillor S Walker presented the Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20th June 2025. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATES

The Chair opened the meeting by extending a warm welcome to all Members, expressing the hope that everyone had enjoyed a pleasant summer break and had returned well rested and ready to resume Parish Council activities.

The Chair reported the significant news that Durham University had been named the UK's top university by The Times and The Sunday Times, surpassing Oxbridge for the first time. The Chair confirmed that a letter of congratulations had been sent to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Karen O'Brien, conveying the Parish Council's warmest congratulations and gratitude for the outstanding work of the University and its staff in achieving this honour.

Turning again to the University, the Chair extended best wishes to all new students arriving in Durham for Orientation Week, welcoming them to the City and wishing them success in their forthcoming studies.

The Chair congratulated all those involved in organising the annual Christmas Festival, noting with pride that Travel and Tour World had named the Durham Christmas Festival the UK's "Top Hidden Gem" for the year. The Chair emphasised that it was the shared responsibility of the Parish Council and its partners to ensure that the Festival continued to grow in visibility and attract visitors from across the world.

The Chair expressed appreciation to the Parish Council's Business Committee and Councillor Elizabeth Scott for their work on the Business Events Grants initiative. The Chair reported delight at the publicity already generated by events such as Durham Wine Week, the Elysium Theatre, and the Jazz Festival, describing the programme as a tremendous initiative by the Committee.

The Chair also offered best wishes to Dan, Donna, and their team following the launch of their new venture, Veenoo, at Riverwalk. The Chair had been pleased to attend the official opening of the venue alongside the Mayor, Councillor Gary Hutchinson, and wished the team every success with this, their sixth restaurant in the chain.

The Chair extended sincere thanks to Arthur and his team, members of the Remembrance Organising Group, for their exceptional work in preparing this year's Remembrance events. The Chair recognised the importance of this period in the City's calendar as a time to honour those who have served, and continue to serve, in the armed and civilian services in the pursuit of peace.

Finally, the Chair reminded Members of a forthcoming special meeting of the Parish Council's Finance Committee. The purpose of the meeting would be to review Durham County Council's budget consultation for 2026/27 and the associated Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Chair observed that the consultation document and the County Council's financial position made for sobering reading. It was noted that the current Administration had prioritised a freeze on Council Tax, and Members were encouraged to give the consultation the serious consideration it deserved, given the significant impact of the Council's decisions on the wider community.

8. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CENTRES/FACILITIES AS A KEY STRATEGIC AIM OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk presented a report outlining a proposal for the establishment of a new initiative to support community centres and facilities across the City of Durham parish area. Members were reminded that this initiative reflected one of the Council's key strategic commitments, made through earlier strategy sessions, to place support for community facilities at the heart of its work during the current Council term to May 2029.

Members noted that community centres and facilities provided essential spaces for residents of all ages and backgrounds, supporting social cohesion, inclusion, education, safety and wellbeing. Many such facilities were managed by volunteers and community groups, and they faced increasing pressures in maintaining services and premises.

The report proposed the creation of an annual funding stream to support these facilities, to be made available each year between 2026–2030. Funding would be awarded on a competitive basis, with the aim that at least one centre would receive support in each financial year. The fund could be used flexibly to address a range of needs including building improvements, accessibility works, or service expansion, with applications welcomed from both secular and faith-based organisations, provided the activity was of a non-religious community benefit.

Members also considered the draft Expression of Interest letter (Appendix A), a list of proposed community facilities to be contacted (Appendix B), and draft application questions (Appendix C), as prepared by the Clerk. The report sought approval for these documents and for the approach to engagement with local community facilities.

During the discussion, Members expressed support for the principle of engaging directly with community centres but did not approve the documents as presented. Instead, Members agreed that a Working Group be established to review the documents in more detail and oversee the next steps of the initiative.

It was **agreed** that the Working Group would comprise Councillors E. Scott, C. Lattin, R. Handy, F. Robinson, and G. Holland, who would be delegated authority to review the documentation and write to each community centre and facility on behalf of the Parish Council.

Following a proposal by Councillor E. Scott, Members **agreed** that the Parish Council should not specify a funding amount at this stage, but instead seek further information from community centres and facilities about their own development plans and to identify potential barriers they faced in maintaining or improving their operations.

It was therefore **agreed** that the Working Group would report back to the Parish Council in due course with recommendations for the development of this initiative, informed by the feedback received from local community organisations.

9. MID-YEAR REVIEW OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The Chair presented a report reminding Members that, when the Parish Council agreed the membership of each of its Committees at the Annual Meeting in May 2025, it had also been agreed that a mid-year review of Committee membership would take place in September 2025.

It was reported that, following a review of Committee Terms of Reference, in July 2025, the number of Members on each Committee had remained the same, with the exception of the Personnel Committee, which had been increased to six Members.

During the discussion, Councillor S Walker advised the meeting that she wished to step down from the Planning and Licensing Committee. Following this, Members discussed the future composition of the Committee. After a vote was held, Members **agreed** (6 in favour, 3 against, and 3 abstentions) that the Planning and Licensing Committee should be reduced to a six-member Committee.

It was also agreed that Councillor Tony Cleaver would join the Personnel Committee to fill the remaining vacancy.

Following consideration of the report and discussion of the proposed adjustments, Members agreed the revised membership of each Committee for the remainder of the municipal year. It was further agreed that Committee memberships would be reviewed again at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2026.

The Committee Membership therefore **agreed** was as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee (6 Members) Grenville Holland Liz Brown Carole Lattin Roger Cornwell Philip Layton Rory Handy	Environment Committee (6 Members) Carole Lattin Victoria Ashfield Tony Cleaver Giuseppe Bignardi Grenville Holland Fred Robinson
Personnel Committee (5 Members) Susan Walker David Freeman Roger Cornwell Giuseppe Bignardi Victoria Ashfield Tony Cleaver	Business Committee (6 Members) Philip Layton David Freeman Elizabeth Scott Ellie Hopgood Rory Handy Les Wilson
Finance Committee (6 Members) Susan Walker Liz Brown Ellie Hopgood Elizabeth Scott Victoria Ashfield Les Wilson	

10. PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE

The Clerk presented a report setting out options for the possible relocation of the Parish Council office. Members were reminded that Office 3 within Clayport Library had been the registered Parish Council office since 2019 and was currently held on a rolling lease with Durham County Council (DCC), which could be terminated by either party with one month's notice.

Members noted that the current office provided several advantages, including a central and secure location, low rent (£370 per month / £4,440 per year) inclusive of utilities and internet, and access to an adjoining meeting space for up to fifteen people at no additional cost. However, Members also acknowledged a number of challenges associated with the current premises, including limited vehicular access for deliveries, the uncertain future of the Clayport Library building, the fragility of the lease arrangement, and the fact that the office—originally a windowless

storage area—did not comply with Health and Safety Executive ventilation requirements and must be vacated by 7pm each evening.

Members were advised that, following the closure of the Customer Access Point at Clayport Library and informal indications that the library service might relocate as part of wider DCC cost-saving measures, the Clerk had been asked to investigate alternative accommodation options. The Clerk currently worked on a hybrid basis, being in Durham approximately three days a week, and working remotely the remainder of the time.

It was noted that affordable, long-term office accommodation within the city centre was limited. However, the Clerk had identified two potential options for Members' consideration:

Option A – Redhills (Viaduct Area)

Members noted that office space within the former Enginemen's Secretary's Office at Redhills was available at a cost of £6,055 per annum, inclusive of all utilities and internet. The office offered 16.1m² (173 sq ft) of space, included some storage, and was located in a secure site with free parking for tenants. The lease would require a minimum six-month commitment and could be terminated with one month's notice. Members further noted that the office was fully accessible, suitable for meetings of around six people, and that larger meeting rooms within Redhills could be booked when needed. The Clerk confirmed that the building was owned and managed by a charitable organisation, not politically funded, and that the owners were keen to host community-based tenants such as the Parish Council.

Option B – Harrison House (Hawthorn Terrace)

Members were informed that office accommodation at Harrison House offered 37m² (400 sq ft) of space at a cost of £9,600 per annum, including utilities and service charges. The site was secure, provided shared WC and kitchen facilities, and included car parking to the rear for tenants on a first-come basis, along with nearby public parking. The lease required a minimum twelve-month commitment, and a separate broadband/telephone contract would need to be arranged. The space was considered sufficient to accommodate a small meeting area.

In both cases, Members noted the proximity to the rail and bus stations, providing good accessibility for staff and visitors.

The Clerk also reminded Members that no formal notice to vacate had been received from DCC, meaning that remaining at Clayport Library remained a viable Option C. Other potential premises, such as Merryoaks Community Hall and shared accommodation with Durham BID/Citrus Group, had been reviewed and discounted as unsuitable.

Following consideration, Members unanimously **agreed** that the Parish Council should relocate its office to Redhills and asked the Clerk to make arrangements for this to happen as soon as possible.

11. COMPLETION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25

This item was deferred as the Parish Council had not yet received notice of completion of the external audit for financial year 2024/25.

12. REPORT ON PLANNING FOR THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2025 EVENT

The Clerk presented a report updating Members on preparations for the Remembrance Sunday 2025 event, to be held on Sunday 9th November 2025. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had civic responsibility for organising the event, which formed a key part of the Council's annual calendar, and that funding for it had been included in the 2025–26 events budget.

Members noted that the Clerk was progressing arrangements for the road closure order, which was being processed by Durham County Council (DCC) free of charge in accordance with their policy for Remembrance Sunday. Alternative public transport routes were also being coordinated through DCC to ensure minimal disruption to services. It was reported that DCC Highways would provide traffic management support on the day, including signage and supervision of road closures, at no cost to the Parish Council.

Members were informed that road closures would be in place between 9:00am and 2:00pm, affecting Framwellgate Bridge, North Bailey, Claypath at Providence Row, and sections of the A690 near the Library and Prince Bishops roundabout. The Clerk reported that permission was being sought from Durham University for the temporary use of Palace Green and the Market Place for the event, with both the University and DCC having already been made aware of the plans. The Parish Council would be arranging for the dais for dignitaries to be installed on the day.

Members noted that the event was covered by the Parish Council's public liability insurance and that the Clerk had completed a risk assessment. The police would also carry out a security assessment (SECCO) to determine the level of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) required, with DCC agreeing to fund the necessary installations. The Clerk was arranging for Showsec, DCC's preferred supplier, to provide crowd management, and had also contracted Nerams Ltd for medical provision on the day. Police officers would be present to manage any incidents or anti-social behaviour.

The Clerk and the designated Safety Officer would attend on the day to conduct a pre-event inspection and walkthrough. It was confirmed that the Town Hall would once again be used as a meeting point for any missing persons. The Clerk had also liaised closely with Artichoke, organisers of the Lumiere Festival, to ensure that Lumiere infrastructure would not be installed until 2:30pm on Sunday 9th November, allowing the Remembrance event to proceed without obstruction.

Members were advised that Durham County Council was organising a Spitfire display at Millennium Place for the day of the event. Following discussions with the police, it was agreed that this display would not be located in the Market Place due to safety concerns. DCC would take full responsibility and liability for the display, and the Parish Council's insurers had requested that a formal agreement be drawn up between both parties clarifying responsibilities. At the request of the police, an additional hour had been added to the road closure period.

The Clerk confirmed that local traders in the affected areas would be informed of the arrangements and that details of the event would be publicised on the Parish Council's website and social media. A letter drop to all affected businesses would take place on 2nd November.

Members noted that the service at Durham Cathedral would be managed entirely by the Cathedral Clergy. The Clerk would liaise regarding the seating of Parish Councillors, and the Chair of the Council would lay a wreath on behalf of the Council during the ceremony. Parish Councillors would also take part in the official procession from the Cathedral to the Market Place, with final positions to be confirmed following a meeting between the Cathedral, the military, and the Clerk scheduled for 30th September.

Members were informed that Parade Volunteer Arthur Lockyear continued to support the event through fundraising and coordination with the Council, including efforts to secure funding for four bands and post-event catering. The Parish Council would again support these associated costs. It was also confirmed that the Council would support the Festival of Remembrance on Saturday 8th November 2025.

Following consideration, Members noted the report and **agreed** to delegate all organisational and budgetary responsibility for the Remembrance Sunday 2025 event to the Parish Clerk.

In closing this particular item, the Chair strongly encouraged all Members to attend this year's event as it was such an important occasion.

13. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor C Lattin presented the following report on the most recent meeting of Durham University's Community Engagement Task Force Lived Environment Sub-Group:

This was a really positive meeting, thanks to the new chair, Ian Rooney., the new Director of Estates at the University. It was also very brief – over in three quarters of an hour.

He began by asking what issues those members of the committee were experiencing.

I reported:

The dilapidated state of buildings, particularly the Swimming Baths, owned by the university all over the city which cause distress to us and our residents.

Ian has had commissioned structural surveys of condition appraisal of the University estate. Their portfolio of buildings is 274. He reported that things are very serious on Palace Green and that the Castle needs much work – a full survey of that is about to take place. He acknowledges the significance of the condition

of all buildings in an important civic area. The Bailey is also under consideration with work about to commence on replacing the windows in the Department of History. The university is planning to reduce its portfolio 'to reduce the university footprint' and to sell buildings and return them e.g. in Old Elvet, to residential use. Many of the older buildings are not fit for purpose. He assured us that the swimming baths was at the top of his priorities and promised action of some sort within 6 months. There are to be repairs at Dunelm House and repair the roof. There are concerns about Kingsgate Bridge.

The issue of illegal riders of electric and motorbikes over the university playing fields

The University is aware of these and some damage has been done, especially to a new cricket area. They are currently working to identify points of entry and are putting in measures hopefully to deter the bikers. University security and the police are aware of the issue but this is a great problem.

The spigot mortar gun emplacement

This is an ongoing issue for us as the university was alerted 4 years ago to the fact that they had this historic relic on their land. They cleared undergrowth around it and promised to erect an information board which has not happened. Matthew Wright has been charged with delivering this board by the end of October.

Swift boxes.

Walia raised, on behalf of DURF, the promised swift boxes which had been agreed, for Waterside building. We were assured that the Bio-diversity team are in the process of putting them in and they will be in place by the end of October.

Ian is introducing an action log, and will closely monitor the achievement of actions.

End of report

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

Signed,



**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(22nd October 2025)**