

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 26th November 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**), V Ashfield, L Brown, T Cleaver, R Cornwell, D Freeman, R Handy, E Hopgood, G Holland, C Lattin, P Layton, F Robinson and E Scott

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

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

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillors G Bignardi and L Wilson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 22ND OCTOBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor L Brown presented the Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from the meetings held on 17th and 31st October 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor L Brown moved on to Committee reports.

Response to the proposed World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035 consultation

Councillor L. Brown presented a detailed report concerning the Parish Council's proposed response to the consultation on the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025–2035. Councillor Brown reminded Members that the draft Management Plan sets out a long-term strategic framework for the protection, management and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and that the consultation seeks to ensure the Plan is informed by local perspectives, priorities and community engagement.

Members were advised that the Parish Council had recently supported the World Heritage Site Coordinator and Durham Cathedral in delivering a public consultation event at the Town Hall, which had received positive feedback.

Councillor Brown outlined the key objectives of the draft Plan, including safeguarding the architectural and historic fabric of the Site, preserving its setting and important views, guiding sustainable development and visitor management, and linking the Site's heritage value to wider benefits such as education, community identity and the local economy.

It was noted that the Plan is intended to act as a material consideration in planning and development management and to underpin future policy documents, including the County Durham Plan and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. Members were further advised that the Plan seeks to align with the wider visitor economy agenda, enhancing vibrancy, pride of place and inward investment, and that the consultation period remains open until 4 December 2025.

Councillor L Brown presented the substantive response proposed by the Planning and Licensing Committee. This placed on record the Parish Council's unreserved support for the Management Plan and emphasised that Durham Castle and Cathedral are living heritage assets at the heart of the City, continuing to serve roles in worship, learning, research and community life. The response highlighted the Plan as a shared vision for stewardship, conservation, access and regeneration, and commended the World Heritage Site Partnership Board and partners for producing a comprehensive, collaborative and people-centred document that reflects both UNESCO requirements and the aspirations of local communities.

Particular support was expressed for the Plan's emphasis on improving accessibility, interpretation and public engagement, especially the actions associated with the "Share" theme. Councillor Brown reported that the Parish Council welcomed the focus on increasing access to stories, spaces and experiences that have historically been less visible, and reaffirmed its longstanding view that the Fulling Mill should be brought back into meaningful public use as an interpretative and engagement asset.

Members noted that this direction had been discussed positively at the public engagement event co-hosted by the Parish Council on 4 November 2025. The response also reflected consultation feedback indicating a strong desire for improved physical access, better storytelling of social history and clearer wayfinding across the Site, and welcomed recent progress such as extended Cathedral bus services, new signage, improved accessible facilities, works at the Deanery Garden and forthcoming plans relating to riverbanks and public rights of way.

Councillor L Brown addressed the issue of the World Heritage Site boundary and buffer zone. Councillor L Brown reported that, although the Parish Council had previously supported the principle of extending boundaries or establishing a buffer zone where this would strengthen protection of the Site's Outstanding Universal Value, the detailed explanation provided within the draft Plan had been carefully considered.

In light of UNESCO guidance and the conclusions set out in the Plan, the Clerk advised that the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee had accepted that a formal buffer zone would not, at present, deliver additional protection. Instead, Members welcomed the alternative and more precise measures proposed, including strengthened planning controls, clearer definition of the Site's setting, systematic use of Heritage Impact Assessments and the integration of World Heritage considerations into statutory planning documents.

Members unanimously **approved** the Parish Council's response to the World Heritage Site Management Plan consultation, as set out in the above report.

• **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the Environment Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th October 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal to support the establishment of an annual Durham Landlord of the Year Awards scheme in collaboration with *Rate Your Landlord*.

Councillor C. Lattin presented a report proposing that the Parish Council supports the establishment of an annual *Durham Landlord of the Year* awards scheme, to be delivered in partnership with the independent housing review platform *Rate Your Landlord*.

Councillor C Lattin explained that the purpose of the scheme is to recognise high-performing landlords, celebrate good practice in property management and encourage higher standards within the private rented sector. Members were advised that *Rate Your Landlord* was introduced in Durham in September 2025 through a partnership between Durham University and the Durham Students' Union and is already providing students with a transparent means of sharing feedback on their renting experiences.

Councillor C Lattin outlined that the proposed award would be based on a combination of tenant feedback gathered through the *Rate Your Landlord* platform and qualitative input from the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Wardens. This approach would ensure that the assessment reflects not only the tenant experience but also wider community impacts, such as property upkeep, responsiveness to issues and cooperation in addressing neighbourhood concerns.

Councillor C Lattin proposed that the Environment Committee be responsible for reviewing shortlisted landlords and determine the final award recipient, ensuring an evidence-based and balanced process.

Members were advised that the Environment Committee has requested a budget allocation of £500 for the establishment of the award and that, if approved, it is proposed that the award be presented annually at the Parish Council's Annual Meeting of the Parish from May 2026.

Councillor C Lattin highlighted that the scheme would benefit students, residents and landlords alike, while supporting the Parish Council's wider objectives of

improving housing standards and neighbourhood wellbeing. Members were asked to consider and approve the proposals set out in the report.

Councillor E Scott advised that she would like to see more detail about the assessment criteria for this award and Councillor V Ashfield proposed that this be taken back to the Environment Committee to propose a set of criteria to the next Full Council meeting.

A decision on this proposal was deferred, subject to an appropriate set of criteria for this award coming forward to the next Full Council meeting in January.

- **Finance Committee**

Councillor S Walker presented the Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 10th September 2025. There were no queries from Members.

- **Business Committee**

Councillor E Scott presented the Business Committee minutes from the meeting held on 16th September 2025. There were no queries from Members but Councillor E Scott took the opportunity to highlight to Members the upcoming Jazz Festival in October 2026 and the decision by the Committee to support this multi-day festival with a grant of £5,000. Members welcomed this initiative as a means of driving footfall to the City and offering visitors something new.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATES

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd October 2025 as follows:

The Chair reported on a number of matters arising since the previous meeting. The Chair firstly offered sincere congratulations to all those involved in the planning and delivery of the recent Remembrance events in the City, including the Festival of Remembrance, Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. Particular thanks were extended to Arthur Lockyear and his team for their significant efforts, and to Members who attended the Remembrance Sunday service and parade. The Chair noted that this had been the busiest Remembrance event in living memory and reported that the Lord-Lieutenant had conveyed her congratulations and thanks to the Parish Council via the Clerk.

The Chair informed Members that His Majesty The King has appointed Brigadier Michael Butterwick (Retd) CBE DL as the new Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, with effect from 1 April 2026. The Chair advised that congratulations had already been conveyed to Brigadier Butterwick on behalf of the Parish Council and expressed confidence that the Council would work closely with the new Lord-Lieutenant, particularly in relation to future Remembrance events.

The Chair also thanked Members for their support of the recent blue plaque unveiling in honour of former Crossgate Councillor Sam Green. Members were advised that the event was well attended, including by Sir Ed Davey, and that thanks had been extended to Roger and Jean for hosting the plaque, as well as to speakers at the reception and to Professor Simon Forrest of Hild/Bede College for

hosting the event. The Chair noted that the event had received positive coverage across local television and print media.

Members were reminded of the ongoing consultation on Durham County Council's budget and medium-term financial plan. The Chair expressed disappointment that comments made by the Parish Council during the first phase of consultation appeared to have had limited influence on the second phase. Members were encouraged to engage with the Clerk, who is preparing the Parish Council's formal response.

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council will host its annual Durham City Christmas Civic event on 9 December and thanked partner organisations and colleagues who have confirmed their attendance. Members were also reminded that the Environment Committee will be leading a fruit tree giveaway in the Market Place on the forthcoming Saturday and were encouraged to volunteer where possible. The Chair reported positive feedback from local businesses in relation to the initiative, which includes encouraging recipients to support local independent traders.

The Chair further reported on the Parish Council's involvement in forthcoming events, including the Christmas light switch-on, the Christmas Festival and Lunar New Year celebrations, and thanked the Business Committee for its work in supporting these events and driving footfall and business viability in the City. Finally, Members were advised that the Parish Council office will relocate to the Redhills site from 1 December, with arrangements being overseen by the Clerk.

7. PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGY 2026/27

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 2026/27 should be as follows:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Council priorities 2026/27	Planning priorities 2026/27	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
	Protect existing Rights of Way and promoting the creation and adoption of new Public Rights of Way and ensuring that they are accessible to all. Ensuring that all accommodation, including that for students, is safe and of a suitable standard.	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	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future

	used to the best possible public benefit.	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. Representing our residents during the review of the 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

Council priorities 2026/27	Licensing priorities 2026/27	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
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. Lobbying central Government on ensuring that health impacts become the fifth 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 by supporting DCC's new online licensing portal	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 representing the parish on planning matters.	Ensuring that the objectives of licensing and planning are aligned.	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
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

Environment Committee

Council priorities 2026/27	Environment priorities 2026/27	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 Supporting the creation of a Community Emergency Plan	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	Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live

	in all planning matters. Sustainable housing	
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.	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 resilience. Encourage sustainable Travel Increased awareness and action on climate change. Tackle the ecological emergency	Theme 1: A City with A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

Business Committee

Council priorities 2026/27	Business priorities 2026/27	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with local businesses, including improving the visitor economy	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 and environmentally sound businesses	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the	Supporting new businesses and attempting to fill empty units across the City and promoting the overnight stay	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy

parish on planning matters.	economy/ businesses across the city	
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Marketing Durham as a place to visit, particularly the overnight stay sector	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 5: A City with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure
	Promoting footfall 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.	Reducing food miles by encouraging the use of local suppliers and emerging green technologies and services	Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life

8. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the proposed Parish Council budget for the Financial Year 2026/27. Members were reminded of the statutory requirement for the Parish Council to agree its budget and submit its precept request to Durham County Council by the end of January 2026.

The Clerk advised that all Committees of the Parish Council had now met and submitted their proposed expenditure requirements, and that the budget proposals before Council reflected those submissions alongside the Council's agreed medium-term priorities.

Members were further reminded that the budget-setting process had been informed by an online questionnaire, an informal strategy session in July 2025 and a Members' Away Day held in September 2025, through which a number of key strategic principles had been agreed.

Whilst Members approved most of the strategic principles agreed through this process, it was however **agreed** that the principle that: *"the precept should only rise in line with inflation over this term of the Parish Council, unless an emergency issue occurs"* should be removed entirely.

Members considered the budget proposals and unanimously **agreed** the budget for 2026/27 as follows:

Budget for 2026/27 (expenditure only)

Planning and Licensing Committee

Item of 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
Review of County Durham Plan policies	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving the licensed economy	
Enhanced drug searching scheme with Durham Police	£600.00
PRIORITY 3: Tackling shoplifting and anti-social behaviour	
Best Bar None	£2,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£9,600.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Noise abatement	
<i>What to do if you have a local issue in Durham leaflet...</i>	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Planting budget	£20,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Emergency plan	
Community emergency plan – emergency boxes	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Improving the appearance of our City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA	£13,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Promoting the heritage of our parish area	
Heritage project	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust (Education and INNs)	£2,500.00
PRIORITY 7: Improving housing standards for students	
Rate Your Landlord annual awards scheme	£500.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£45,000.00

Business Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Increasing footfall through events	
Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, D-Day Anniversary, miscellaneous).	£45,000.00
Sponsoring community events with local businesses – a specific focus on improving the early evening economy	£15,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving shop frontages in the City	
Christmas Frontage Awards (previously under Environment Committee)	£1,500.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£61,500.00

Finance Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
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PRIORITY 1: Improving community facilities	
Community centres/ facilities fund	£40,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£40,000.00

Full Council

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council	
(Office rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website and other expenditure)	£22,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training of staff and Councillors	
Training budget	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: supporting local community and voluntary organisations	
Grants budget	£15,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Staffing costs	
Clerk salary (including salary, pension, NI on costs)	£90,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£129,000.00

Contingencies	£15,000.00
Election reserve	£5,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2026-27 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£20,000.00

Committee	Cost (£)
Planning and Licensing Committee	£9,600.00
Environment Committee	£45,000.00
Business Committee	£61,500.00
Finance Committee	£40,000.00
Full Council	£129,000.00
Contingencies and election reserves (to be added)	£20,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025/26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£305,100.00

9. PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT REQUEST FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

The Chair reported on the proposed Parish Council precept request for the Financial Year 2026/27. Members were reminded that, following approval of the budget under Item 8, the Parish Council is required to submit its precept request to Durham County Council by the end of January 2026.

The Chair advised that details of proposed expenditure by Committees had been set out in the preceding budget report and formed the basis for calculating the required precept.

Members were informed that the City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base for 2026/27 has been calculated at 4,688.8, representing an increase of 65.9 compared to the 2025/26 figure of 4,622.9.

The Chair also reported that no Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant will be payable to the Parish Council for 2026/27, noting that no grant was received in

2025/26 and that Durham County Council proposes to cease payment of this grant to parish and town councils from 2026/27.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council's current Band D precept charge stands at £63.20 and remains among the lowest in County Durham, despite the City's relatively high population and reduced tax income arising from the significant number of council tax-exempt student properties.

The Clerk highlighted that the Finance Committee met on 19th November 2025 and unanimously recommended that the precept be increased in line with the current rate of inflation at 3.81%. This would result in an increase of £2.41, setting the Band D charge at £65.61 for 2026/27 and generating a total precept of £307,632.17, which would provide a modest surplus against the proposed budget.

Members unanimously **agreed** to increase the precept by 3.81% in line with inflation.

10. COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The Chair reported that the City of Durham Parish Council, as a member council of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC), has been invited to consider nominations to the CDALC Executive Committee following structural changes agreed at the recent CDALC Annual General Meeting.

The Chair outlined the role of CDALC as the representative body for parish and town councils across County Durham and explained that the Executive Committee acts as its principal governing and strategic decision-making body, overseeing operational work, responding to consultations, coordinating representation and supporting the Executive Officer. Members were advised that the revised structure is intended to strengthen governance, ensure wider participation and provide clearer representation of both larger and smaller councils.

The Chair further reported that nominations are being sought for all positions on the Executive Committee, with a deadline of 31 January 2026, and that all appointments will be confirmed at a Special General Meeting provisionally scheduled for March 2026. Members were advised of the commitment expected of Executive Committee members, including attendance at quarterly meetings and relevant forums, and of the requirement for nominations to be submitted by the Clerk using the designated online process, with supporting statements where applicable.

The Chair invited Members to consider whether the Parish Council wishes to nominate candidates for any of the available positions within the revised Executive Committee structure.

Members unanimously **agreed** to nominate local MP Mary Kelly Foy as CDALC President, Councillor A Blakemore as Honorary Treasurer and Councillor S Walker as a Member of CDALC's Executive Committee.

11. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor S Walker presented the following report relating to the County Durham Association of Local Council's (CDALC) Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 25th October 2025:

Membership Fees 2026/27

- CDALC fee: to rise by 3.3%, from 15p to 15.5p per elector. NALC fee: proposed at 8.6p per elector, subject to ratification at the NALC AGM on 13 November 2025.
- This gives a combined total of 24.1p per elector for 2026/27.

The increases are in line with inflation and designed to maintain a balanced budget.

Executive Committee reform

Following the abolition of the County Council's Area Action Partnerships, CDALC agreed to move to a new structure for its Executive Committee based on council size (larger/smaller) rather than geography.

- *Nominations will open in November 2025, closing end of January 2026*
- *A Special General Meeting will be held in late February or early March 2026 to elect the new Executive Committee and approve related constitutional amendments.*
- *Existing Executive members will continue until the new structure is in place.*

Future Meetings (2026)

- *Forum meetings: 19 Feb, 21 May, 16 Jul, 19 Nov*
- *Executive Committee: 18 Mar, 17 Jun, 16 Sep, 2 Dec*
- *AGM: 24 Oct*

North East Combined Authority Presentation

Tracey Elvin, Assistant Director of People and Transformation at NECA, gave a presentation outlining the Authority's achievements in its first year, including:

- *£70m NE Investment Fund for small businesses*
- *£800m transport investment (including Metro expansion, zero-emission buses, and new cycling routes)*
- *Programmes for skills, housing, and child poverty reduction*

Councillors raised questions about communication between NECA and local councils, to which Ms Elvin committed to improving dialogue and returning with future updates.

Health and Well Being as a Statutory Licensing objectives

- *CDALC will continue to lobby for health and wellbeing to become a statutory licensing objective.*

- *Parish councils were encouraged to respond to the current government consultation on licensing reform.*

End of report

Due to the confidential nature of the following items, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in 3 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972 Act and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. At this point in time the press and the public were asked to leave the room.

12. NOMINATION FOR A 'FREEDOM OF THE PARISH' AWARD

Members received a nomination for the *Freedom of the Parish* Award, recognising the outstanding contribution of Inspector Dave Clarke to community safety, partnership working and public wellbeing within the City of Durham parish area.

Members unanimously **agreed** that the nomination clearly demonstrated exceptional dedication and significant impact to the wellbeing of the City. It was therefore **unanimously agreed** that the nomination be approved as submitted and that Inspector Dave Clarke should receive the Freedom of the Parish Award.

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
(28th January 2026)**