

# **Community Residents' Association Forum meeting - Agenda**

Forum contact details:

Telephone 07704 525630

Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023

Dear Forum Members,

I hereby invite you to a meeting of the **Community Residents' Association Forum** will be held in **CLAYPORT LIBRARY, DURHAM, DH1 1WA** on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 17:00pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. Welcome and apologies**
- 2. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Forum meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**
- 3. Addressing ASB/ progressing the Service Level Agreement with Durham Police for enhanced policing**
- 4. Paper from the Convener on feedback on the Forum from the Whinney Hill Community Group**
- 5. Dates of future meetings in April 2023 (AGM), July 2023, October 2023**

We look forward to welcoming you to this meeting.

Kindest regards,

**Adam Shanley**  
**Forum Secretary**

## **Minutes of the Community Residents' Association Forum meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Present:** Adam Shanley and Alan Doig (City of Durham Parish Council) Richard Hornby and Carole Lattin (Gilesgate Residents Association), Alan Hayton and Des Ward (Whinney Hill Community Group) Roz Layton (Elvet Residents Association), Sarah Wilkinson (Crossgate Community Partnership), David Rosser (Sheraton Park Residents Association), Mike Costello (Distressed Residents in the Viaduct Area), Janet George (St. Nicholas Community Forum), Walia Kani (Durham University Residents Forum) and Dave Clarke (Durham Police).

Alan Doig in the **Chair**

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Simon Priestley (Crossgate Community Partnership) and Kirk Lester (St. Nicholas Community Forum). The Secretary advised that Sarah Wilkinson and Janet George had been nominated by both respectively to represent each Residents' Association at this meeting.

### **2. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Forum meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the reference to "City" being amended to "parish" under item 5 of the minutes.

In approving the minutes, the Secretary noted that whilst DCC had acted swiftly to address a number of the issues raised regarding the doitonline service, the request to add "bins left out" as a reporting option had not yet been achieved. The Secretary advised that he is continuing to pursue this matter with DCC.

Carole Lattin also highlighted under item 7 of the minutes that a number of meetings were taking place regarding the issue of Warm Spaces. Carole advised that David Loudon, at the last Lived Environment sub-group, had confirmed that the University is keen to help use its estate as part of efforts around Warm Spaces, which is very positive news.

Richard Hornby also added that Gilesgate Residents Association is doing a lot of work to publicise where there is Warm Spaces provision in the Gilesgate area.

The Secretary advised that the City of Durham Parish Council is focusing on support at home for the most vulnerable residents.

Under item 7, Mike Costello also proposed that CRAF writes formally to DCC to express its unhappiness at the lack of protection for the land which was the former coach park at the Sands since its de-registration. The Convener advised that he would raise this during one of the regular meetings the Parish Council and the Freemen are having with DCC on this subject.

### **3. Update on progressing the Operation OAK initiative for Durham City**

The Convener reminded Members of the ongoing efforts to provide real time late-night policing of the parish.

The Convener highlighted that the Secretary is due to have a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen about this alongside Dave Clarke, Durham City Neighbourhood Inspector.

Dave Clarke advised that he had looked closely into Operation OAK in Newcastle (Jesmond) and confirmed that this is an additional safety operation led by Northumbria Police and which is jointly funded by both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities.

Dave advised that to initiate a similar model in Durham would require approximately £150,000 and it would need to be covered through overtime from existing officers with the Police as opposed to newly recruited officers.

Dave also highlighted that the University's Community Response Team (a private security firm) is responding to issues within the parish within 30 minutes; something his officers would not be able to do as he presently only has 3 officers covering the City.

Alan Hayton advised that he would like to see a return to the previous system under PCSOs Kay and Rebecca, which did work and which had public confidence.

Walia Kani also highlighted that a number of residents were advising her that they are not receiving feedback from the Nuisance Action Team once a complaint is made. Dave advised that the Police have a similar issue in terms of feedback.

Richard Hornby advised that he felt that the University has a duty of care to its students to provide additional policing from a safety perspective.

The Secretary asked if additional provision from a safety perspective could be delivered if the Parish Council were to put in additional funding. Dave advised that he believed this would be possible and highlighted that Safer Streets 4a) funding may be applicable to this scheme.

The Convener asked the meeting for their views if the Parish Council increased the precept in order to deliver this additional provision. The increase to the Band D charge being around £12. Forum Members advised that they would need to take this back to their membership to discuss further.

It was highlighted that the City of Durham parish precept is very low and has not been increased since the inception of the Parish Council.

The Convener also highlighted that he felt that the funds raised through the Charter Trust could be re-allocated towards such a project.

The Forum **agreed** that the Secretary should meet with Joy Allen and Dave Clarke next week to explore options for additional safety across the parish through making the Safety Hub in the City centre a more mobile operation and for police to be on active patrol throughout the parish area.

#### **4. Durham County Council consultation on draft ASB Strategy**

The Forum considered the draft ASB Strategy by Durham County Council.

The Forum felt that this Strategy was very light on specific details relating to how certain services – such as better call handling, victims support, etc would be delivered.

The Forum also felt that more proactive work was needed around promoting and publishing stats relating to the community trigger referenced within the Strategy.

Alan Hayton highlighted that a lot of the actions referenced in the Strategy required the work and support of the Police in order to deliver.

Alan Hayton also advised that late-night noise disturbance should be seen as a key aspect of ASB for the City.

The Forum agreed that the Strategy was not specific to the City which has its own unique issues of ASB because of the demographic of the population, size of late night economy, etc. The only reference to the City in the Strategy at all being the PSPO on alcohol seizures.

The Forum agreed that PSPOs were an important tool to tackle ASB but highlighted that PSPOs which had previously been consulted on – e.g. aggressive begging – had not been introduced by DCC in spite of the support for this from the Police.

The Forum also highlighted that private landlord – whether licensed or not – formed an important part of addressing ASB in the parish area.

Mike Costello asked that, in the absence of selective licensing, the Parish Council should pursue DCC getting approval for “additional licensing” of HMOs; a matter he has been pursuing since 2010 when the proposal was first introduced.

The Convener advised that the Parish Council would be drafting a formal response to the ASB Strategy consultation this week, ready for approval by the Parish Council at its meeting next week.

Mike Costello asked for sight of this draft response before it was sent to the Parish Council. The Convener advised that this would depend on the Secretary’s time to do this.

## **5. Report by the Forum Convener on operation of CRAF into the future**

The Convener thanked Alan Hayton for raising important matters as to the operation of CRAF going forwards and advised that he would be bringing a formal written paper on this matter to the next meeting of CRAF for Forum Members’ consideration.

## **6. Dates of future meetings in January 2023 and April 2023**

The Convener advised that the Secretary would be in touch in due course with a confirmed date in January 2023 for the next CRAF meeting.

There being no further business, the Convener thanked all members for their attendance and contribution and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Forum Convener  
(25<sup>th</sup> January 2023)**

## **ITEM 4: PAPER FROM THE CONVENER ON FEEDBACK ON THE FORUM FROM THE WHINNEY HILL COMMUNITY GROUP**

### **1. CRAF Remit**

Alan notes the intended role of CRAF as addressing on-going issues of concern to residents within the Parish but expresses concern over: extensive agenda items rather than those affecting individual residents, wider group membership than that covered by the PC area, and a failure to put residents' suggestions at the forefront.

**Response:** in procedural terms, only groups with formal memberships and constitutions may be members of CRAF, although adjacent groups are invited as observers where there are shared issues (e.g. student numbers in the private rented sector). In terms of the business of CRAF, and accepting Alan's comments about DURF, part of the problem is that no community association member wants to be the convener and thus exercise greater control over the agenda. A consequence is that the PC may tend to draft an agenda that reflects what it thinks community associations may be interested in or what it is doing more generally. The answer to that is that a convener steps forward and devises the agendas primarily based on issues proposed for discussion by community associations; the PC will primarily report back on progress, etc., on those issues as well as raising issues it thinks are relevant to the CRAF.

### **2. Issues**

An alternate way of approaching this would be to establish a number of standing items that are specific to or common to community associations, where the meetings discuss progress, or lack of it, and consider suggestions from community associations to address the latter. Alan lists a number as follows:

1. Update on the enhanced Neighbourhood Warden contract with DCC and effective accountability;
2. Report back on the issue raised in which the Police claimed that ASB issues were a minor issue in the City and yet they were reportedly a major issue in other parts of the County and dealt with differently;
3. Discuss the lack of progress on the Elvet Riverside Bowling Green project;
4. Update on the effectiveness of the CRT, and residents' response;
5. Update on progress regarding mandatory HMO Licencing within the City Centre;
6. Concerns regarding the changes taking place within the City regarding its traditional skyline and shop/bar frontages;
7. What can be done to apply pressure for the various owners of the river banks and the river itself, to maintain it and remove the build-up of accumulating debris;
8. What concerns have the Parish Council regarding continuing expansion of the University both in terms of infrastructure and student numbers on vital public services and amenities and its impact on the permanent population within the Parish;
9. What measures can be taken to stop the ever increasing noise and disruption for permanent City residents who do not want to be 'entertained' in this manner throughout the year;
10. What action/s does the Parish Council take in order to put pressure on the various organisations which have the control and authority to implement the changes residents wish to see, and how effective are they;
11. What action or representation has the Parish Council made to DCC/Central Government to address the imbalance in permanent residents paying increasing Council Tax for diminishing services and amenities and yet the massively increasing number

of HMO properties and student tenants living within our City Centre Communities do not;

12. Public Meeting: Has the Parish Council made any representation to our local MP to hold an Open Public Meeting in the Town Hall to address some of our key issues surrounding Durham University's expansion;
13. What pressure can the Parish Council bring in order to have Permitted Development Rights removed from the Article 4 areas - which can be done if there is a specific issue to be addressed and there is? Planning applications can still be submitted but need to be approved;
14. What additional financial contributions and services does the Durham City Parish Council provide within the Parish area which DCC said they would continue to provide after the Parish was formed and why;
15. How effective was the Green Move-Out this year and did the Durham City Parish Council contribute financially to this.

**Response:** apart from 4, which belongs to DURF, all of the above would be suitable standing agenda items - and we can address a number of them in terms of PC responses at the next meeting. In fact, I as Chair (and current CRAF Convenor) would have no objection to these being the agenda for the next meeting and we can work our way through them in terms of (a) any current response or information the PC may have, (b) identifying which should stay as standing agenda items and (c) identifying further standing agenda items.

### **3. Conclusion**

Alan's note raises a number of valid concerns. There is a tendency for any permanent organisations, including the PC, to view bodies like CRAF (and DURF) as bodies to be reported to or informed about what it, the permanent organisation, is doing; this sets a potential imbalance in 'talking to' the body or seeking only feedback on what it, the permanent organisation, is doing. There are ways of addressing that - whether taking ownership of the agenda through who is the convenor or fixing the agenda with standing items to avoid drift - and we can discuss these at the next meeting.