

Community Residents' Association Forum meeting - Agenda

Forum contact details:

Telephone 07704 525630

Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

12th January 2024

Dear Forum Members,

I hereby invite you to a meeting of the **Community Residents' Association Forum** will be held in **Clayport library meeting room** on **Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 17:00pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. Welcome and apologies**
- 2. Approval of the minutes of the Forum meeting held on 8th November 2024**
- 3. To receive an update on ongoing Parish Council issues** – including the budget setting process for 2024/25
- 4. Update on Section 106 monies for the Elvet and Gilesgate division**
- 5. To discuss improving clean air within the parish area**
- 6. To receive an update on student housing issues in the parish area**
- 7. To agree the dates of the next meetings of this Forum**

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 Wednesday 8th November 2023

Present: Adam Shanley and Alan Doig (City of Durham Parish Council) Christine Powell and Carole Lattin (Gilesgate Residents Association), Susan Walker (Neville's Cross Community Association), Walia Kani and Roz Layton (Elvet Residents Association), Angela Tracy and Ian Horridge (Sidegate Residents Association), Kirk Lester and Janet George (St. Nicholas Community Forum), Simon Priestley (Crossgate Community Partnership), David Rosser (Sheraton Park Residents Association).

Alan Doig in the **Chair**

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Fyona Adamson, representative of the Mount Oswald Residents Association. In welcoming Forum Members, the Convener noted that the representatives of the Whinney Hill Community Group had decided to resign from this Forum and thanked them for their work and engagement with the Forum.

2. Approval of the draft minutes of the Forum meeting held on 26th April 2023

The minutes of the Forum meeting held on 26th April 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. Consideration of the Terms of Reference for this Forum

Forum Members unanimously **agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Forum as follows:

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

The Parish Council Community and Residents' Associations Forum is established to ensure meaningful resident consultation and be an effective forum for expressing views that would inform the work of the Parish Council.

The Forum is not a decision-making body of the Parish Council. Its primary role is to comment on and add value to the Council relating to its work throughout the year and to work towards providing a collective voice on matters of shared concern from local residents.

2. STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS FORUM

Forum Composition and voting

The membership of the Forum comprises each formally constituted community and residents' association within the Parish Council area which are open to all residents within their area, have a valid constitution and hold an annual AGM.

Existing members shall confirm they still satisfy the requirements; new associations within the Parish area should provide the Clerk with the relevant information for consideration by the Forum. Both should provide the two names of their representatives or delegates.

Existing associations inside the Parish area who do not satisfy the requirements but attend with observer, non-voting status should confirm that their circumstances remain as stated.

New associations within the Parish area should contact the Clerk with the relevant information and the Forum will decide on acceptance and status.

All should provide the two names of their representatives or delegates.

Parish Councillors may attend as representatives of their association if the association so decides.

All members have equal rights and votes will be taken on contentious issues or where consensus is not achieved on those items where the Forum wishes to make a formal statement or proposal. In the case of an equality of votes, the Convenor (or Deputy if the Convenor is absent) shall have a second or casting vote.

The Forum operates on a one member, one vote basis.

The quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the Forum shall be no less than one third of members of the Forum.

Officers of the Forum

The membership of the Forum shall elect from their own voting membership a Convenor, a Deputy Convenor and a secretary for a period of 12 months, from the date of the first full meeting of the Forum.

Relations with the Parish Council

At the moment, the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Parish Council shall attend meetings of the Forum in a non-voting, non-speaking capacity to represent the Parish Council and facilitate, as and when required, communications between the Forum and the Parish Council. The Forum may invite to any meeting any stakeholder, including Parish Councillors, to facilitate their work. Parish Councillors may offer, with the agreement of the Forum, to attend meetings to facilitate the work of the Parish Council or the Forum.

Following discussions during the year, the AGM will review the Constitution in case any association wishes a non-councillor to chair meetings and/or take on joint secretarial roles as the Terms of Reference allow.

Either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Parish Council will attend each meeting in a non-voting capacity.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS FORUM

The Forum shall be responsible for:

- Representing the interests of affected residents in their consideration of relevant issues affecting the Parish.
- Promoting equality in the work of the Forum and in the development of relevant projects.
- Working with the City of Durham Parish Council and other stakeholders to implement proposals to the benefit of all residents.
- Providing information and sign posting assistance to residents.
- Making representations to the Parish Council, Parish Council committees and other stakeholders on a range of issues which are (either negatively or positively) impacting local residents, as appropriate.

Members of the Forum will be expected to:

- Represent the interests of all residents;
- Use their best endeavours to work together to enable the Forum to meet its responsibilities;
- Treat others at the meeting with respect.
- At all times, ensure that all information/documents marked as confidential remain as such and are not shared outside the forum

4. PROCEEDINGS AT MEETINGS

Notice of Meetings

Items for inclusion on the Agenda should be submitted to the Convenor and Secretary no later than 10 working days prior to a meeting.

The Agenda and papers for discussion shall be circulated no less than 7 working days prior to the meeting.

Late items will be accepted at the discretion of the Convenor and shall only be matters that are urgent and could not be included in the Agenda.

Dates, times and means of access to meetings will be publicised on the Parish Council website. As far as possible, members should also publicise dates, times and means of access to meetings on their own websites.

Servicing of Meetings

Servicing of meetings will be arranged by the Forum Secretary. Minute taking and reports will be the responsibility of the Forum Secretary in consultation with the Convenor and Deputy Convenor. Approval of minutes will be sought at the next scheduled meeting of the Forum.

Frequency of Meetings

The Forum will meet once every 3 months. The Convener, after consultation with the Forum Secretary, may convene an extra-ordinary meeting outside the agreed schedule to discuss any urgent issues that cannot wait until the next regular meeting.

Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed once every 12 months from the date of the first full meeting of the Forum.

Date agreed: November 2023

Date to be reviewed: November 2024

End of report

4. To receive an update on ongoing Parish Council issues

The Secretary highlighted that the County Durham Plan is soon set to be reviewed and that he was aware of requests to particularly see Policy 16 reviewed as part of this process. Forum Members agreed that this was a top priority, particularly in light of recent news that the Parish Council's income is set to be reduced by approximately £10,000 due to the volume of Change of Uses to Class N exemptions.

The Secretary advised that the Parish Council is being as proactive as it could be on this issue, particularly with recent planning successes in overturning recommendations to approve more student housing at Committee meetings. In addition, the Convener advised that the Council is set to engage the services of Jo-Anne Garrick (planning consultant) to review strengthening Policy 16 as it is becoming clear that this policy is insufficient in protecting certain parts of the parish area.

Roz Layton and Walia Kani particularly welcomed this news and thanked the Parish Council for their excellent work in seeing schemes such as the one at 1 Boyd Street being overturned and refused.

Simon Priestley and Janet George also thanked the Parish Council for their work on this issue.

Susan Walker advised that she felt that the Neville's Cross part of the Parish in particular could benefit from this work and advised that she had been part of several Committee hearings and that she genuinely could see that the tide is turning and the Committee is refusing applications for yet more HMOs.

The Secretary advised that decisions on recent planning appeals are due imminently and it will be crucial to win these appeals to safeguard parts of Durham from yet more family homes being lost.

The Secretary also highlighted that the Parish Council is set to consult on its budget for financial year 2024/25 and it may be that the precept needs to be increased, in order to address all of the issues raised with the Parish Council. Forum Members expressed their gratitude to the Council and felt that, even with a modest increase to meet the shortfall, the Parish Council is excellent value for money.

Forum Members particularly stressed the need to retain funding for the Safety of Women at Night hub and the Police, as these were crucial matters for the parish. Roz Layton and Carole Lattin advised that they felt that the Hub was doing an extraordinary job in keeping people safe at night.

5. To receive an update on student housing issues in the parish area

Forum Members expressed their shock at a recent report that a large percentage of licensed HMOs did not even have gas or electricity certificates according to the most recent register on the County Council's website.

The Convener advised that the Parish Council is seeking clarification on whether this is simply an administrative error or a genuine case of standards not being met across the board. The Convener advised that, if the latter proved to be the case, this was a shocking omission and one which ought to be addressed urgently.

Janet George expressed shock at these statistics and advised that many members in the community had been pushing for an additional licensing scheme for some time now but had faced resistance from the County Council.

The Secretary urged all Forum Members to communicate back to their membership to ensure that any and all issues are reported via the Council's doitonline system. The Secretary advised that emails and reports into the Parish Council did not form part of the official statistics when the Council comes to review whether further regulation such as additional licensing is required and/ or justified in an area.

6. To consider the proposal to adopt a Community Emergency Plan for the parish area.

Carole Lattin highlighted to Forum Members the work that she and the Parish Council's Environment Committee were undertaking to create of an Emergency Plan for the community/ parish. Carole advised that she is very keen to pursue this project, particularly in light of recent weather events such as flooding, storms and power outages.

Carole particularly highlighted the support available for such a project through DCC's specialist civil contingencies team, the work for which is led by Laura Dobson at DCC.

Carole stressed that this Plan would not replace the work of emergency services but would rather offer extra reassurances during events such as Storm Arwen, etc. about the availability of volunteers and particularly those volunteers with any specialist skills, etc.

Carole advised that she would like to arrange a meeting with each of the Local Residents Groups across the parish area to seek their support with this initiative but firstly wanted to raise this at this Forum meeting.

Forum Members fully supported this project and advised that they would welcome Carole to a future meeting of their respective Association meetings. Carole thanked the Forum for their support with this project.

7. To agree the dates of the next meeting of this Forum

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the Forum should take place at 5pm on Wednesday 17th January 2024.

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

Signed,

Forum Convener
(17th January 2024)