

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.