



**annual
review
2020-2021**

CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

The Trust was founded in 1942. On 8 April 2021 it became a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation”, remaining registered as charity No. 502132.

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SEVENTY – NINTH ANNUAL REVIEW BY THE TRUSTEES 2020 – 2021 (September 2021)

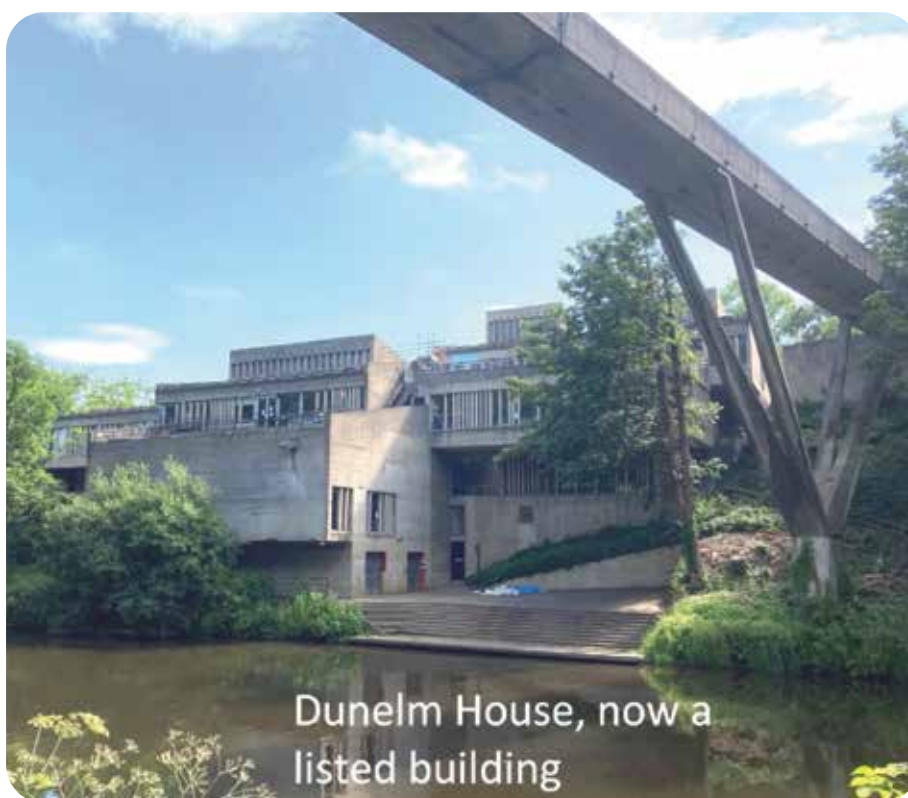
This has been a unique and decisive year for the City. It has seen the adoption of two significant local plans, an unprecedented change in the political administration of Durham County Council, and the continuation of major building schemes, all in the destabilizing context of a cruel pandemic whose end has seemed ever to recede. The year also saw the submission to UNESCO of a plan significantly to extend the area of City’s World Heritage Site, currently stalled, as Michael Hurlow describes in these pages.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The AGM of 2020 was held by video link late last September. The date this year was held back to be able to offer a traditional meeting in person as the pandemic was hoped to recede. Members are invited to the **Assembly Rooms Theatre, 40 North Bailey, on Wednesday 27 October, 7.00 - 9.00 pm**. For those who prefer it, the event can also be accessed and participated via Zoom. To request a link for the online meeting mail zoom@durhamcity.org.

The sensitively revamped Assembly Rooms received the Trust’s Annual Architectural Award for 2019. There will be a brief, belated presentation of the award to the manager, Kate Barton. Members will have a chance to admire the attractive restoration.

An agenda for the AGM can be found at the end of this document. At 8.00 the former Honorary Secretary **Dr Douglas Pocock** will give an illustrated talk entitled “**A City in Trust: Eight Decades of Caring for Durham**”. The Trust was founded in 1942 and Douglas will offer “a review of eight decades of the City’s architectural change with reference to the Trust’s attempts to persuade developers and authorities to consider or reflect on the consequence of their proposals, and to listen to what the landscape is saying”.



21 September saw the first meeting of Trustees in person since March 2020. They had become hardened to holding their monthly meetings by Zoom, clumsy though it can be. The medium downgraded much sense of occasion in passing the milestone of the 600th meeting of Trustees since foundation of the Trust.

Although to meet through video links is frustrating, the experience has also had benefits. Audiences of over a hundred tuned in for **Martin Roberts’s** illustrated online talk on Kepier Hospital in early December 2020. Similar numbers “attended” the spring meeting in April 2021. This saw **Rebecca Watkins** talk about the restoration of Beaufort by “Dream Heritage”, the remarkable company she leads with its uniquely local community-centred approach to heritage projects. With audience figures like these the Trustees are grateful to keep video meetings in their repertoire, enabling talks on occasion that with suitable links can be given from anywhere and to anywhere.

The Trust Online.

2020-21 saw the launch of the **Trust's rich new website**, at <https://durhamcity.org/> as described in the spring bulletin. Notable postings since that time include Douglas Pocock's substantial review of Martin Roberts's outstanding revision of Pevsner's *The Buildings of England: County Durham* (2021), as it relates to Durham City. The website's "News" section has a blog facility for members to comment themselves on local developments. All feedback, comment and suggestions are welcome.

The Trust has set up an account with **Instagram**, the internet site that allows people to share images or videos of interest. Members who use or who are registered with Instagram are invited to explore and to add to our site celebrating the heritage and landscape of the City, or to highlight related issues there (<https://www.instagram.com/cityofdurhamtrust>). The Trust's Instagram name is cityofdurhamtrust .

Trust communications. If you do not already receive communications from the Trust by email but are willing to do so, **please send your email address to membership@durhamcity.org** . We shall of course continue to send mailings to those who wish to receive them through the post, even though we have your email.

CHANGE OF STATUS

Last year's AGM approved the proposal to change the official status of the Trust from that of a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee to that of a "Charitable Incorporated Organisation". This finally came to fruition in April this year, and Trustees at once elected John Lowe as chair of the technically new body. The advantages of the change of status are entirely administrative. Members will see no change in the work of the Trust.

Trustees planned simultaneously to update the wording of the Trust's 1942 constitution, but they were informed this must be done separately. Time is too tight this year for the various formalities and the approval will demand a 75% majority vote at a future AGM.

THE COUNTY PLAN AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The new **County Durham Plan** has now been in place since late October 2020 and replaces The City of Durham Plan as the overarching planning document for the area. It can be found online at <https://bit.ly/CDP-2020> . A summary of the main points for Durham City was given in last autumn's bulletin.

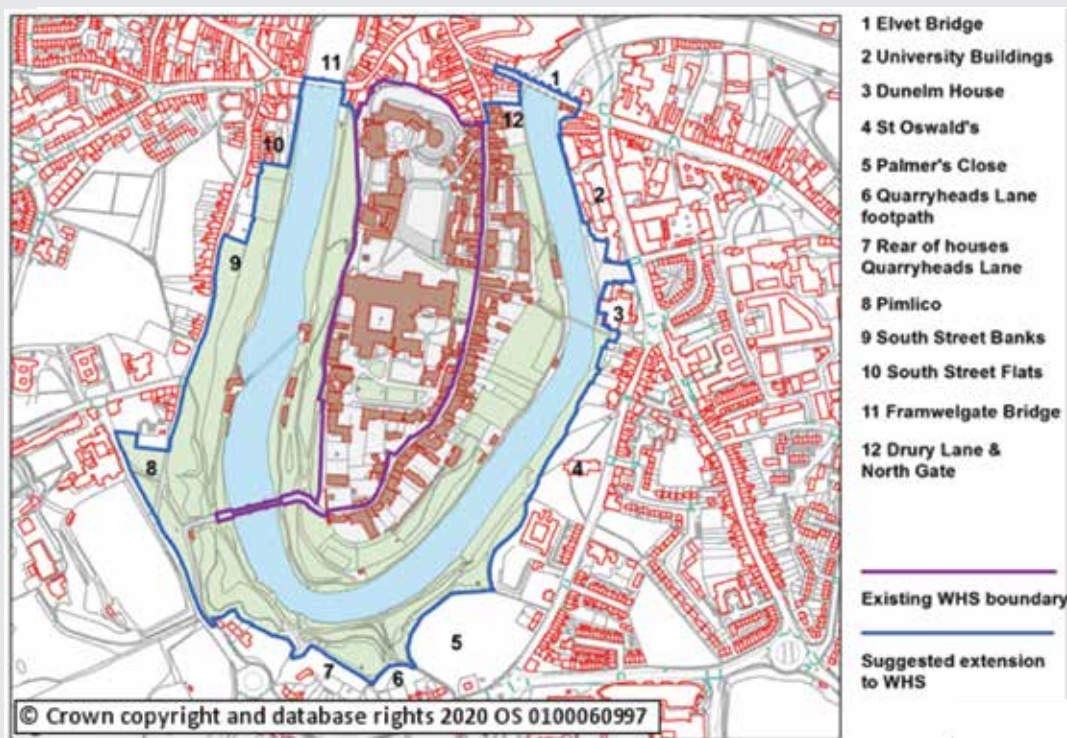
The more local, focused **Neighbourhood Plan** was overwhelmingly endorsed in the referendum of 6 May, with 85.6% of valid ballots in favour (4,306 votes). This detailed document, described in a special bulletin last April, becomes the statutory plan for the area covered by the City of Durham Parish Council, <http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/the-plan/contents/> . While the Trust covers a broader area, a role of **Guardian of the Plan** now surely falls to it, not least because five Trustees were crucial in the drafting.

Associated with the Plan is the non-statutory document "**Looking Forwards**" (<http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/the-plan/looking-forwards/>). This publishes additional suggestions that arose in public debate on the Neighbourhood Plan and which are endorsed by the Parish Council. Readers will find this a trove of ideas for the City.

Both official plans should strengthen protection of the World Heritage Site. However, the relative inexperience of an often-new set of County councillors after the May elections proved a worrying feature of a recent planning meeting. Prior to May some backsliding on the County Plan had already been seen. The first building given planning permission for a proposed Aykley Heads business park did not meet the Plan's own standards of energy use. Worse, the Trust's appeal to the Secretary State concerning this breach was refused by his officials in December, on the grounds of respecting "**localism**" in decisions. Refusal of this kind is very worrying: it effectively absolves central government from its crucial role of ensuring that local plans are respected.

JUST “A CERTIFICATE ON A WALL”? AN UPDATE ON THE EXPANSION OF DURHAM’S WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The purpose of extending the World Heritage Site (WHS) boundary is to include all the castle walls and their terraces, the gorge forming the Peninsula ‘moat’, and the historic bridges and mill sites/buildings. It would recognise the significance of the riverbanks, former gardens, and tree setting. See the map below, reproduced by permission of the City of Durham Parish Council.



The July 2021 meeting of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) WHS Committee decided to delist Liverpool and to list the Slate Landscape of Wales. It decided that the principle of extension at Durham was acceptable but referred the matter back to the UK for more work. The referral to the State party (UNESCO terminology for central government) is to provide reassurance about

WHS protection and add open spaces around the riverbanks. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) provides UNESCO with reviews of sites, controversial planning proposals and undertakes missions. A further recommendation to consider a buffer zone was not required by UNESCO but remains as ICOMOS advice to the State Party.

The proposal was held over from last year because of COVID delays. It has been a decade or more in careful negotiation and preparation leading to its inclusion in the WHS Management Plan 2017-23 and in both County Durham and Durham City Neighbourhood Plans. Referral at this late stage is an unwelcome setback for those who supported the expansion submission.

Durham’s timing in coming before the committee was unlucky. It follows concerns about Stonehenge and its A303 road tunnel, Westminster (and previously the Tower of London) and tall buildings, Edinburgh and its prominent new city hotel and, of course, Liverpool and its developments.

Recently, ICOMOS has been expressing growing concern in its reviews about WHS settings, new development, and buffer zones (an area of protection surrounding the WHS) - only approx. 60% of sites have one. Developments in the UK have been in the headlines and, to some extent, we in Durham are paying the price. The ICOMOS report can be seen here <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/44COM/documents> , item **WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1**.

Bad developments or their threat elsewhere in the UK may have set the scene, but the County Council has also been provocative in its actions. It is possible that the County Council headquarters aroused ICOMOS interest, the University’s Business School proposal at Elvet certainly did, and their response was clear and critical (Annex to letter CLT/WHC/EUR/19/12861).

The implications of the UNESCO resolution and ICOMOS recommendation need to be understood. In

relation to the resolution, with the excellent policies of the Neighbourhood Plan we may have a chance of persuasion about protection, and, if the stakeholders agree, the further inclusion of open space can be tackled.

When Durham was nominated as a WHS, its submission was eight pages, the Lake District's submission needed a wheelbarrow to deliver it. Creating a buffer zone would cost much and take a considerable time to define. This is due to its size, complexity, and the need to agree what new protection is possible given the planning context. However, instilling confidence in Durham's collective ability to protect the WHS setting without a buffer zone is now more difficult.

What next? It is possible to withdraw the application for expansion, but we are already firmly under ICOMOS scrutiny, and this would not change that, it would only induce greater suspicion about protection. At time of writing, the University has indicated that it is not going to proceed with the controversial proposal for a new Business School, although other uses have yet to emerge. There are other buildings and urban expansion that could aggravate the position if attention is drawn to them. The proposed upward and rear enlargement of the former Marks and Spencer building on Silver Street has been approved and it too could prompt concern.

We cannot expect much from central government – it is sailing off in the opposite direction. We need help from Historic England centrally and regionally. The WHS landowners and County Council could start by giving greater credibility to community concerns and encourage involvement. The WHS, its setting and importance are a vital part of Durham's future and should be far more seriously considered before giving way to short term economic and developer pressure. This should be demonstrated by the quality of decisions and implementation of existing planning policies. Working together we might just avoid the imposition of a buffer zone.

The title of this article is borrowed from Oliver Wainwright (Guardian) quoting the former mayor of Liverpool referring to the also former WHS in Liverpool. UNESCO designation springs from the intrinsic value of a site as supported by local people, organisations, appreciation nationally and recognition internationally – it is not imposed by UNESCO. We await a UK response and others may see different ways forward. However, there are clear points for action to uphold the value of our “certificate on the wall”.

Michael Hurlow, 14/09/21

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL: ALL CHANGE

The May elections produced a historic change in local politics, with Durham County Council moving to no overall control for the first time. The Trust cannot be party-political, but a less politically homogenous regime will surely entail more meaningful debate among councillors, raising hopes that the Council will not be so able in future to bulldoze schemes through against at times massive local opposition. The extent of the unitary County Council's hegemony since its inception in 2009 appears in an exercise undertaken a few months ago by Roger Cornwell. His search of the local planning portal showed 220 planning applications for which the Council was the main applicant, and that all of them went on to be approved by its nominally independent planning committees.

Since its establishment in 2009 with the abolition of the County's local district councils the unitary authority has placed what has seemed at times an excessive reliance on development in Durham City as a supposed economic engine to lift the county as a whole, at the expense of the City's historical character. The new County Council signalled what might be a new start by announcing reviews of two of its predecessor's most controversial decisions, the closure of the **Durham Light Infantry Museum** in 2016 and the decision to build a **new Council headquarters** right next to the river at the Sands. Press reports appearing as this review goes to press suggest that the old County Hall will not escape demolition, but that a replacement might be built at Aykley Heads instead, meaning the new office building on the river would become available for other uses, perhaps by the University. Council meetings studying reports on these matters began during September and Trustees are now considering the arguments. The former DLI building in the inner Green Belt still lies empty and neglected in an attractive quiet corner of the City, recognised as a local

green space in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council agrees that the building and its grounds call out for civic use of some sort, with repairs to reverse the building's inevitably deteriorating condition, even if current plans to exhibit DLI material at the new Durham History Centre at Mount Oswald's were to stay in place.

Major issues confronting the new Council include the design and development of **new housing estates in Durham City** on former green belt land, as approved in the County Plan, with a proposed capacity of 1,700 new houses at **Sniperley** and another 420 **off Sherburn Road**, as well as an extension by 50 houses of the new Aykley Woods estate into the area of the **old police skid pan at Aykley Heads**. With this last, Persimmon are applying for permission to fit in 57 houses in an off-the-shelf design. It is a relatively small but sensitive site and the Trust submitted a 13-page objection.

The County Plan stipulates that comprehensive masterplans to a high standard must be in place for the whole of the larger new estates. The Trust has been assured by several leading county councillors that acceptable masterplans are certainly required and that piecemeal applications will not be regarded with favour. This stance must surely apply to two ongoing planning applications to which the Trust is responding. The first is from Bellway Homes, for only part of the newly released area at Sniperley, for 370 rather dull houses without reference to the required overall masterplanning. The second is from Banks Property, for up to 500 houses on the Bent Lane/Sherburn Road site, offering its own rather perfunctory masterplan. Trustees see it as vital that these estates meet the highest design standards, reflecting local character, and with measures to prevent them becoming just more banal and car-dependent outliers.

The inquiry into developer appropriation of common land at the Sands has concluded. We now await the Inspector.

RESTORATION OF REDHILLS; CONTINUED CLOSURE OF CROOK HALL

The future looks exciting for the **Durham Miners' Hall**, headquarters of the Durham Miners' Association with its famous Pitman's Parliament (imaged below, with thanks to Redhills). Major repairs were approved



last year, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Grant (£400,000) and the Durham Miners' Association. A major award of lottery funding for £4.5 million was announced this April, and Durham County Council pledged an additional £1.1m of match funding. This goes towards an ambitious £7.25m project, warmly supported by the Trust.

The plan is to restore this Grade II-listed building and to add new buildings and equipment. This will make Redhills a centre for local culture and education, for preserving the County's mining heritage and celebrating the communal ethos of the county's former mining communities, their anticipation of, for example, elements of what was to become the UK's welfare state.

Redhills will host exhibitions, talks, film screenings, educational workshops and more events such as the carol concert given (by video link) last Christmas Eve by the Durham Miners' Association Brass Band. More details and the latest news on the project will be found at www.redhillsdurham.org.

The Durham Miners' Gala was cancelled this year due to the pandemic, 150 years since the first Gala was held in Wharton Park in 1871. A small celebration was held there this August, with speeches, poetry and music.

Crook Hall and Gardens entered liquidation in the summer of 2020. Crook Hall is still for sale as of September 2021.

DUNELM HOUSE

Dunelm House, home of the Durham Students' Union, has at last become a Grade II-listed building. This grants it extremely high levels of protection from inappropriate development and almost certainly neutralises plans for the building's demolition in the University Masterplan. The University had sought a certificate of immunity from listing in 2016, fearing a cost of almost £15 million for needed repairs, refurbishments and improvements to internal access. However, the broadly supported campaign by the Twentieth Century Society finally convinced central government.



This five-level building (1963-66) is seen as a masterpiece of brutalist architecture. Celebrations of it refer to its successful composition with Ove Arup's adjacent Kingsgate Bridge, itself Grade I-listed, and to the harmonious shaping of the building into the slope of the river gorge. It was the work of *Architects Co-Partnership* (designer and job architect Richard Raine)

with *Ove Arup & Partners* as structural engineers. It remains a controversial building, one celebrated by architects and landscape designers but still denigrated by some members of the public. Upkeep and cleaning are clearly overdue — concrete ages badly in damp conditions as the inset image shows — and this is reflected in the fact that Historic England's request for a slightly higher listed status of Grade II* was tempered downwards to a simple Grade II. Difficulty of use for the building had been given as one reason for its demolition. The interior is dominated by a broad, uncompromising staircase, a sort of internal street that drops from the very top storey to river level, with progressively larger rooms being reached to its side, and a sizeable hall at the bottom, temporarily adapted as a supplementary lecture hall to accommodate the ever-growing student numbers.



The Vice Chancellor responded to the news of listing by pledging carefully to work through “options for the building, while continuing to work with our students, staff and stakeholders”. The Trust has been assured that the University is now committed to preserving the building and its architectural character.

An essay for the University's **Centre for Visual Arts & Culture** by historian (and Trustee) Adrian Green celebrates the ethos of Dunelm House and Kingsgate Bridge, *Durham's Modern Moment: Creating Human Community in Dunelm House and on Kingsgate Bridge*.

DURHAM CITY, DURING COVID 19 AND AFTER

A statement made by Ulrich Beck some 20 years ago seems fitting: “We live in the age of unintended consequences”.

Transport and Traffic

Last year's annual review observed that “The lockdown, albeit at enormous cost, was a revelation of what the City and its suburbs could be like freed from the noise, violence and pollution of thousands of cars”. That moment seems long past, with traffic levels since approaching more familiar levels. The amount of traffic for the immediate future seems set to reflect the tension between two unknowns, the extent of continued home working on the one hand, reducing the need to commute, and the effects of people still avoiding public transport on the other.

What of the longer term? Matthew Phillips researched a paper in May for the Trust's new website on how

the demands of the climate emergency should affect the minutiae of local planning, demonstrating that “virtually any proposals that involve accommodating additional motor traffic are counterproductive” (<https://durhamcity.org/2021/05/25/transport-priorities/>). This must discredit, for example, any proposal to dual the A167 at Durham as a response to the expansion of the City. Measures for more sustainable transport could be partly financed, he suggests, by developer contributions from Durham’s new estates at Sniperley and off Sherburn Road.

The North East Transport Plan, covering the period up till 2035, was adopted by the **North East Joint Transport Committee** in March. Its area is that of the two local combined authorities (the North of Tyne Combined Authority covering Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland, and the North East Combined Authority covering County Durham, Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside). The Plan presents itself as a wish-list of 243 measures, costing almost £7 billion. The Plan is strong on progressive rhetoric about enabling people to make the “right travel choice”, but, on inspection, it engages with the dominance of the private car largely by strategies of adaptation and mitigation, and it still includes road schemes such as the dualling of the A1 to the border. Mostly focused on the North East’s conurbations, it is a poorly-produced document lacking detail and its overall status remains unclear.

The measure most affecting Durham City would be the stated ambition to reopen the **Leamside railway line**. This originally ran from Pelaw in Gateshead to the East Coast Main line at Tursdale, passing Durham at Belmont. However, there is little detail. The Plan also outlines an expansion of rail and metro links in the region, but the Trust’s hope for an extension of the Tyne & Wear metro to Durham is not realised.

The Plan can be seen online:

www.transportnortheast.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AST004-Transport-Plan-A4-v53clean-Ben-v2.pdf

The Trust responded more warmly to a far more professional consultation document from **Transport for the North** on possible strategies for decarbonizing transport. Its overview of environmental demands and possible mitigations will be an invaluable national resource for anyone wanting to examine or critique new transport proposals. The full text and our response are on the Trust’s website (<https://durhamcity.org/2021/09/06/decarbonisation-strategy/>).

University Futures

The pandemic meant that in 2020-2021 students endured multiple uncertainties about online teaching and exam modes, accommodation costs and location — to reside in Durham or not? — amid what was felt to be confusing guidance from central government.

The numerous uncertainties associated with the pandemic have also meant that expansion of the University’s built estate is currently on hold, including the planned demolitions in New Elvet, the **Elvet Riverside** building as well as the proposed demolition of Dunelm House, now thankfully forestalled.

The University is abandoning its plan for a **new Business School** on the site of the dilapidated old swimming baths at **Elvet Waterside**. Other University uses for the site will be considered. The Environment Agency in May 2020 highlighted the risks of flooding. UNESCO later objected to central government about the impact threatened to the environs of the World Heritage Site. Historic England objected on similar grounds, stressing the incongruous size of the planned build.



The difficult academic year 2020-21 still saw the opening of **South College** at Mount Oswald and of the buildings for the relocated **John Snow College**. The £42 million “**Mathematical Sciences and Computer**

Science” building was completed in January 2021 at Upper Mountjoy. It now sits alongside an intrusive, large car park, very visible from the new access route that now breaks apart the old hedge-line in Hollingside Lane. The Trust had questioned the need for the additional car park and the access road leading into the quiet lane: “provision of a car park runs counter to the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan”.

The University has been undertaking the greatest expansion of its estate since the 1960s. That decade had seen broad architectural successes with St Aidan’s College, Trevelyan College with its sensitive landscaping, the Palace Green Library extension, Dunelm House and Kingsgate Bridge. Adrian Green, celebrating the now protected status of Dunelm House, writes that “It was built to embody 1960s values about turning students into cultivated citizens [...]. The engineer Ove Arup commented – ‘There are two routes to happiness. One is to grab directly, the other is to recognise ourselves in human community.’ For Arup, Dunelm House and Kingsgate Bridge embody the latter.” Daniel Libeskind’s bold if controversial design for the **Ogden Centre for Fundamental Physics** was recognized in a Trust award in 2016, but, compared to the architecture of the 1960s, **the new colleges at Mount Oswald** make an unambitious, even rather perfunctory statement – the expression of an institution dedicated to increasing student numbers as a business input?

Student houses and accommodation blocks. There seems no prospect of any easing in student pressures to colonise local housing. Many of the City’s residents already perceive the University as selfish and socially irresponsible in this matter. A lack of neighbourly consideration from a minority of students can lead to a widespread scapegoating of the student body overall. They become fellow victims of an expansion policy already well beyond the reasonable capacity of a small historic city. The University Masterplan describes a growth in student numbers from 15,500 in 2017 to an envisaged 21,500 in 2027, a growth of 6,000. For the academic year 2020-2021 the number already stood at 20,268 (19,368 full time and 900 part time students), so the target for 2027 was already close to realization, only 1,232 students short. On top of this, this summer a glut of pupils achieving higher grades for A level and the like under the pandemic’s emergency exam procedures had obliged the University to offer 1100 more places than planned. This led to negotiations with local accommodation blocks to take the excess, and an offer of £5,000 to students who defer their arrival.

Earlier in the year Trustee John Ashby looked at all the available information on student numbers and plans for purpose-built student accommodation over the next 5-6 years. He found that there should be more than enough either already under construction, approved or allocated to cater for 21,500 students – given the target date of 2026/27. However, the unplanned acceleration in student numbers must now put unsustainable pressure on the University’s commitment that at least 50% of its student should count as “living in”. That will also depend on how many of the new establishments would be sufficiently college-like in facilities to become affiliated with the University. At present the number of possible affiliates is certainly too low.

Is this settler colonization of the City set to continue even beyond the 21,500 target? During the examination of the County Plan in 2019, the University’s representative could not say what its plans would be post 2027. A crucial paragraph in the inspector’s final report of the County Plan reads:

whilst the Plan should be effective in accommodating the currently identified growth in student numbers, the limited size of the city and its particular physical and historic character mean that there may be limited capacity for further growth in the city in the longer term.

An early but soon abandoned response to the pandemic from some in University management was to propose a massive switch to online and distant teaching (the limited space of the City was given as one context for this), but the most recent prospectus shows very limited ambition of that sort. The Trust’s stance remains that the University Masterplan should be subject to a full sustainability appraisal, alert to all its social, economic and environmental impacts on the City. The current situation is of a creeping urban deformation through piecemeal planning applications.

The overall implication of current trends is that unless the University moves responsibly to reduce its student intake, pressure on local housing must intensify and the resentment of many residents can only deepen. Much may depend on the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Karen O’Brien, who is to take up her post in January. The University website has her profile, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/news/newsitem/?itemno=44501>

City Centre Retail

The impact of the pandemic on the nation's high streets has been dramatic, hastening the end of some major national retail chains. Shops in traditional town centres are reported as having been far more badly hit than retail parks and suburban convenience stores. In this respect the County Plan seems essentially a pre-pandemic document and begins to look awry. Weighing up the future demands of the City centre and of retail parks like Dragonville and the Arnison Centre, the Plan aims to encourage the latter "increasingly [to] perform a town centre role", but this must surely only exacerbate a polarization of uses that is already striking. For many in Durham shopping now means largely the outlying parks or a delivery, while the old centre, if visited at all, is reserved for leisure trips. Durham City also has what already seems an unviable excess of food and drink outlets, with more to come in the Milburngate development under construction.

Amidst these uncertainties Durham's distinctive covered market has adapted and continued, a diverse and lively kernel of small independent retailers. An online shopping facility was set up in 2020 (<https://durhammarkets.co.uk/>).

Central Government's response to the crisis in the High Street is summarized in its "Build Back Better High Streets" publication of July 2021. One crucial element is greatly to expand the scope of "permitted development rights", i.e., removing a developer's need to apply for planning permission in order to change the use of a building, though still needing "prior approval" on some impacts. For instance, since 1st August 2021, changing the use of a building from commercial to residential has become "permitted development". This policy enabling easier changes of use embraces most notably shops, restaurants, offices, gyms and nurseries. The Government argues this will help regenerate the traditional high street, but the Town and Country Planning Association published evidence that it could well devastate it, replacing shops and other vital local services with sub-standard but more profitable residential uses. Trustees will watch carefully to gauge the impact of the August changes, and what sort of local response to them might be possible.

ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS 2020-2021. OTHER NEW BUILDS

The unique conditions of 2020 prevented the usual site visits needed to judge candidates for the Trust's annual architectural award. Awards for 2020 will be revisited in late 2021, when those for 2021 are judged.

As noted in our spring bulletin, a vital renovation scheme at 34-35 Saddler Street that might normally be a strong candidate for an award was botched in its final realization. Other significant but undistinguished new builds can be noted for 2020. Mount Oswald has seen both the opening of **South College** and the completion of the new buildings for **John Snow College**, formerly at the Stockton Campus. **Edmund's Vale** is a large 4-storey block (35 apartments) opposite the Sands on the site of the former Kepier House. More centrally, a long, extended building appeared off the very end of **Church Street**, numbers 31-33, at the junction with New Elvet, continuing at right angles towards the river gorge. This is student accommodation, "Metropolis House", with the rather prominent black roofing continuing over part of a new terraced Mexican Restaurant, which becomes 34 Church Street.



PERSONALIA

John Lowe has continued his dedicated and very focused chairmanship as the Trust has evolved and expanded, even during the pandemic with all its enforced adaptations. He represents the Trust on the management body of the World Heritage Site. He also continues to arrange and forward most of the Trust's responses to local planning applications, responses often drafted together by the Trust's veteran

professional planners, and with **Malcolm Reed** and **Matthew Phillips** contributing their special expertise on transport. **Michael Hurlow** also provides initial, illustrated reports each week on significant cases in the Council's weekly planning list. **John Lowe** oversaw this year the switch to Charitable Incorporated Organization status, while **Malcolm Reed** as Treasurer has adapted the Trust's financial accounting to the simpler procedures this makes possible. **Matthew Phillips** continues to oversee the Trust's stock of publications, **Timothy Clark** to draft the Trust's bulletins and **Sue Childs** to oversee the new website. Full and detailed minutes of Trustees' monthly meetings are kept by **Jan Hutchinson** along with monthly summaries of the Trust's main actions. After the local elections in May, **Liz Brown** continues to combine the roles of Trustee and of both Parish and County Councillor.

There has been some rejigging of officer roles, with **Francis Pritchard**, a newly co-opted Trustee, taking on the role of Honorary Secretary, now understood primarily as that of a membership secretary, subject to confirmation at the AGM. Francis's technical expertise has been essential in setting up online meetings during the pandemic. **Roger Cornwell** has stepped down as Vice-Chair, an advisory role he felt had become superfluous.

Honorary Membership. **Fenwick Lawson** has been made an honorary member, in recognition of his long-standing contribution to the artistic life of the City. The Chair also proposed that the following people be awarded honorary membership of the Trust in recognition of their dedicated work in or for the Trust over many years: **Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, Dr Douglas Pocock, Martin Roberts, Mary Sales.** Trustees warmly endorsed all the nominations.

Finally, Trustees extend a warm thank you to the person who has made the Trust an anonymous donation of £430.

The Trustees

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The 79th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Assembly Rooms, North Bailey, on Wednesday 27 October 2021, starting at 7.00 pm. It is also planned to make the meeting available online. To request a link to join the meeting please email zoom@durhamcity.org.

At the start of the meeting the Trust's Architectural Award (2019) will be presented to Kate Barton,
Theatre Manager of the Assembly Rooms

- 1 Welcome and apologies for absence.
- 2 Minutes of the 78th Annual General Meeting (Wednesday 30th September 2020).
- 3 Matters arising from the Minutes.
- 4 Report of the Trustees and the Presentation of Accounts of the Trust for the period ended 7th April 2021: to be presented by the Honorary Treasurer, Malcolm Reed.
- 5 Amendments to subscription Rates (see resolutions on next page).
- 6 Appointment of Trustees.
- 7 Appointment of the honorary officers of the Trust.
- 8 Honorary Secretary's report.
- 9 Chairman's remarks.
- 10 Any other business which may be brought forward by members. It would be helpful if notice of this could be given to the Chair in advance.

After the formal agenda Dr Douglas Pocock will present an illustrated talk:
A City in Trust: Eight Decades of Caring for Durham

Any member wishing to stand for election as a trustee or officer please email chair@durhamcity.org as soon as conveniently possible and not less than 2 days before the AGM itself.

Subscription Rates Resolutions for 2021 AGM. This meeting resolves that:

A Effective from 1 January 2022, the present Ordinary and Concession rates of annual membership subscriptions to the City of Durham Trust will be replaced by a uniform rate of £10 for individual members or of £12 for two members residing at the same address. Each joint member shall have full attendance and voting rights, but only one set of Trust communications will be sent to their joint address.

B For new members, annual membership shall commence on the date on which their application is accepted, and renewal will fall due on the equivalent date in the next calendar year. In the case of new members joining during 2021, their first renewal date will be extended pro rata to reflect the difference between the subscription rate applicable when they joined and the rate applying from 1 January 2022.

C For existing members who joined before 1 January 2021, the renewal date for annual subscriptions will continue to be 1 January each year. Where existing members do not wish to alter any standing order for subscription payments, any overpayment will be treated as a donation to the Trust and acknowledged as such for their tax records.

D Life membership subscription rates shall remain unchanged at £200.

MINUTES OF THE 78TH (VIRTUAL) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TRUST (DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS) ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2020, COMMENCING AT 19.00.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. The Chair (John Lowe) welcomed all attendees to the virtual AGM and shared instructions on how to speak/vote. Apologies were received from Lis Wilkie, Keith Cummings, Michael Sadgrove, Adrian Green, Gary Hindmarsh and Marie-Therese Pinder. Two new Patrons were gained this year - the author and former Chancellor of Durham University, Bill Bryson, and the former MP for the City of Durham, Roberta Blackman-Woods. The Chair welcomed the latter to the meeting. She thanked the Trust for the honour of becoming a Patron and pledged to work with the other Patrons to promote the Trust's crucial work. She then gave an informative talk on "The Planning White Paper: enhancing or eliminating local democracy?", answering questions raised afterwards. She was thanked by the Chair and agreed to share the slides from her talk with members.

2. MINUTES OF THE 77th AGM (22 May 2019). Following corrections of the Registered Charity Number and an amendment to Para. 5 (regarding the procedural election of the Chair), they were accepted as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. On Para. 4b, John Pacey stressed the need for the Trust's membership to be sustained and asked about changes in the membership level so far in 2020. The Membership Secretary (Lucy Szablewska) confirmed numbers were stable (losses compensated by new joiners). John Pacey will share ideas with Trustees on expanding membership. The Vice-Chair (Roger Cornwell) urged members to get friends to join now as they would get 15 months' membership for the price of 12 months. Lucy suggested a note for the AGM minutes to include membership types/figures in the next AGM report in 2021.

4. REPORT OF TRUSTEES AND PRESENTATION OF THE TRUST'S ACCOUNT (year ended 31 December 2019) –presented by the Honorary Treasurer Malcolm Reed. Malcolm reported that the accounts had been tricky to gather together in this unusual year and thanked the Independent Examiner for their speedy turnaround despite the fact that they too were working from home and it had not been possible to hold the usual meetings to finalise the accounts. However, the summary of the Accounts had been circulated to members in the Annual Review and the full accounts were available on the Trust's website. Reserves are fine as, despite lower publication sales during the lockdown, expenditure will be lower in 2020 (no room hires etc after March) but he agreed that funds need to be built up going forward by increasing membership. Malcolm asked if there were any questions regarding the published figures. There were no questions. The 2019 Annual Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted.

5. APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY OFFICERS OF THE TRUST. The Chair explained that the Chair and

Vice-Chair are required to stand down annually at the first meeting of the Trustees after the AGM and it is up to the Trustees whether to re-appoint them. Hence, they don't appear in this list of Officers to be appointed at the AGM. Proposed by the Chair, and carried by acclaim, the following were elected: Dr Malcolm Reed as Honorary Treasurer, Dr Lucy Smout Szablewska as Honorary Secretary, Azets as Independent Examiners, and Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP as Honorary Solicitors.

6. APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES. The Chair paid tribute to Paul Beard, a long-standing Trustee who retired this year, and thanked him for his valuable contribution. Three Trustees who are retiring and willing to continue, John Ashby, Prof. Tim Clark and John Lowe, were proposed and re-elected. Trustees co-opted during the year, Michael Hurlow and Sue Childs, were proposed and confirmed.

7. ADOPTION OF CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO) STATUS. This issue was raised at last year's AGM and since then Trustees have given the matter careful consideration and judge that it is the right change to make. A summary of the issue was provided to all members with the AGM agenda, along with the full text of the resolution for the City of Durham Trust to convert to CIO status. Trustees have agreed the new CIO constitution draft (25 pages) and the next step is to seek Charity Commission approval. The Chair asked if there were any questions regarding the new constitution. None were raised, so the Chair read out the resolution. The resolution was carried by a unanimous vote (show of hands at the meeting and 25 postal votes). The Treasurer reassured members that the charity number and bank accounts remain the same. John Ashby thanked John Lowe for the phenomenal amount of work he has put into this.

8. CHAIR'S REMARKS. The Trust has had notable success in this unprecedented year with the improvement of the County Durham Plan via our involvement in the EiP and the consultation on the Main Modifications (with the Trust commenting on over 60 of them). [To highlight the collaborative nature of Trustees' work, the Chair invited colleagues to describe aspects of such work]. Sue Childs highlighted the strong cooperation the Trust had with the Parish Council, community organisations and local campaign groups, to strengthen stances and share seats at the EiP. On transport matters Malcolm Reed agreed the collaboration between local groups was very helpful, and he noted the difficult job of the Inspector and his insightful but subtle tweaks on sustainable transport issues. The Chair thanked Malcolm for his transport expertise. John Ashby also acknowledged the crucial work of the local relief road campaign groups and recognised what a vital cause the interim policy on HMOs was to chase down (with Roberta Blackman-Woods also involved), but he thought it was disappointing that it took an independent national Inspector to bring DCC back in line on this. John Pacey acknowledged the wonderful expertise of Trustees that had been shared during the EiP, the excellent summary of the EiP experience printed in the Trust's Annual Review, and he hoped to continue the collaboration on ongoing sustainable transport issues.

The Chair recognised the dedicated and talented team of Trustees we have, including Prof. Tim Clark's excellent editing of the Bulletin/Review, and Richard Hird's regular excerpts from the local/national press. Sue Childs has been working with Roger Cornwell and Matthew Phillips to prepare a new interactive website which will be important for new membership. The Chair also recognised Matthew Phillips's valuable work on the publications; Jan Hutchinson's excellent note-taking and summary documents; John Ashby's quick editing of DCC's weekly planning application lists; and Michael Hurlow's expert responses to them—allowing the Chair to submit, often lengthy, responses to DCC (e.g., 28 pages re the recent Aykley Heads hybrid application). Recent successes include revisions to the bus station plans and the refusal of some HMO applications. The Trust is continuing to collaborate with the Parish Council and Freemen to press the case against DCC's occupation of the Sands common land. The closure and sale of Crook Hall was noted with regret and the Chair repeated his plea for all members to help recruit new members as we approach the 80th anniversary of the Trust's foundation.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS. Lucy Szablewska thanked John Lowe for being an excellent Chair-working so hard behind the scenes, and for recruiting two such high profile Patrons. The Chair thanked Francis Pritchard for his technical assistance with this virtual AGM. The Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions and drew the meeting to a close at 20.35.

The Trustees

TREASURER'S REPORT ON 2020-21 ACCOUNTS

When the Trust's legal status changed from that of a registered company limited by guarantee to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 April 2021, preparation of the accounts for the 2020 financial year was at an early stage. To avoid the need for a second set of accounts for the period from 1 January to the company's closure on 7 April 2021, Trustees agreed to extend the 2020 accounting period to that date, and that for subsequent years the accounting period should run from April until 31 March in the following calendar year.

Consequently, the accounts to be presented at the 2021 AGM will not be directly comparable with those of previous or succeeding years. While this might have been an issue in more normal circumstances, the prolonged impact of the pandemic upon the Trust's activities means that the 15 months covered by the 2020-21 accounts cannot in any sense be regarded as representative of usual business. Extending the period has resulted in most of two years' subscription income being included, but sales revenue has been substantially reduced because of the closure of our main outlets for counter sales of the Trust's publications. At the same time, operating expenses have also been significantly lower, partly because room hire charges have not been incurred because of the enforced switch to virtual meetings, but also because of the ready willingness of many members to receive the Trust's communications electronically, saving both printing and postage costs. It is also encouraging to be able to report that, despite the loss of opportunities for face-to-face activities, the 2020-21 period saw a significant growth in new memberships, as well as several generous donations, some anonymous. These are all gratefully acknowledged, as are the efforts of existing members to recruit others to join the Trust and thus extend the organisation's collective strength.

Because of all these factors, the Trust ended its final period as a limited company with a surplus of £2,437, and total financial assets of £14,531 transferred automatically to the CIO. As usual, the full accounts will be posted on the Trust's website about a week before the AGM, but the extracts below, which have been approved by the independent Examiner, summarise the key information.

City of Durham Trust: Balance Sheet as at 7 April 2021

	Note	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	07.04.21 Total funds £	31.12.19 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	650	-	650	696
Cash at bank		<u>14,481</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,481</u>	<u>11,711</u>
		15,131	-	15,131	12,407
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(600)	-	(600)	(313)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>14,531</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,531</u>	<u>12,094</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>14,531</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,531</u>	<u>12,094</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>14,531</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,531</u>	<u>12,094</u>
FUNDS	13				
Unrestricted funds:					
General fund				<u>14,531</u>	<u>12,094</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>14,531</u>	<u>12,094</u>

City of Durham Trust: Detailed statement of financial activities for the period ending 7 April 2021
[This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements]

	07.04.21	31.12.19
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	100	250
Gift aid	1,217	1,836
Legacies	-	-
Subscriptions	5,962	2,727
Neighbourhood Planning Forum	-	-
	<u>7,279</u>	<u>4,813</u>
Other trading activities		
Bonomi	3	-
Christmas cards	63	101
Durham in Paintings	98	181
Unallocated sales	35	32
Durham Cathedral Architecture	382	1,507
Durham in Poetry	81	51
Trust Architecture awards	-	3
Futures of Durham	-	3
A perfect little city?	96	443
Unmaking of the market place	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	763	2,325
Investment income		
CAF account interest	-	1
Virgin account interest	<u>41</u>	<u>74</u>
	41	75
Total incoming resources	8,083	7,213
EXPENDITURE		
Other trading activities		
New edition of Cathedral Architecture	-	1,466
Renewal of publications shelving	115	-
Christmas cards	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	115	1,466
Charitable activities		
Insurance	464	367
Restoration of Saddler Street teapot	-	-
County Durham Plan	-	2,466
Plaques for annual award	220	220
Postage, stationery and secretarial	2,373	1,236
Subscriptions and grants to other bodies	<u>206</u>	<u>346</u>
	3,263	4,635
Support costs		
Management		
Meeting expenses	90	418
Development committee agendas, bulletins, etc.	<u>1,566</u>	<u>950</u>
	1,656	1,368
Governance costs		
Accountancy and legal fees	600	300
Filing fee	<u>13</u>	<u>-</u>
	613	300
Total resources expended	<u>5,647</u>	<u>7,769</u>
Net Income	2,436	(556)