

The City of Durham Trust
(Registered charity number 502132)

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 Liz 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). 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 Phillip'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 (eg 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.