



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of Summons: 6th November 2024

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee: Councillors V Ashfield, L Brown, N Brown, D Freeman, R Friederichsen and C Lattin

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Environment Committee meeting** to be held **via Zoom at 13:00pm on Tuesday 12th November 2024** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

The link to join this meeting is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83559601269>

Meeting ID: 835 5960 1269

Members of the public and press are also cordially invited to attend. Members of the public may address Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings for up to three minutes, with the agreement of the Chair of the meeting, provided that the statement is related to an item on the agenda. The speaker should approach the Clerk before the meeting commences to request to speak during the meeting.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Civility and Respect and Human Rights plus Social, Economic and Environmental matters.

Yours faithfully,

A. Shanley

Mr Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS.**
- 3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th OCTOBER 2024**
- 4. TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS**
- 5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT**
- 6. TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2024/25**
- 7. TO CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S BUDGET FOR 2025/26**
- 8. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:**

7a. To decide:

- I) Report by the Durham City Riverscape Community Group on safe entry to the river.
- II) Proposal to carry out litter picking in the Fowler's Yard part of the parish area.
- III) Proposal to support the introduction of No Mow May signs in Durham for Spring 2025.
- IV) Proposal to support the use of Council-run car parks in the City for EV-charging for residents.
- V) Proposal to support the work of the Wear Rivers Trust with the Invasive Non-Native Species project.

7b. To complete:

- I) Update on the work of the BID writer/ fundraising efforts to fund new green roof bus shelters/ topiary statues.
- II) To consider the report by OASES on the Breath Clean Air project in local schools.
- III) Update on the production of a Community Emergency Plan.
- IV) Follow up with local schools on the OASES Breath Clean Air project.

7c. To note:

- I) Update on Durham Tidy Gardens/ Recycling leaflet as part of the landlord funding
- II) Update on the distribution of bulbs and the purchase of new trees as part of the Parish Council's work to green the parish area.
- III) Update on the scheme of planting across the parish for next Spring/Summer season.

9. AOB (please note for information only and not for formal decisions).

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 14th January 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 11th February 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 11th March 2024 at 1pm

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 8th October 2024 at 16:00pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C Lattin (Chair), V Ashfield, L Brown, D Freeman and S Walker.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Prof. Steve Lindsay and Mr Matthew Phillips.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Meeting called to order by Chair Carole Lattin. Apologies were received from Councillor Nicola Brown and Councillor Rupert Friederichsen and the Chair **accepted** that Councillor Susan Walker was attending as a substitute for Councillor N Brown.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No declarations of interest were received from Members.

3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th SEPTEMBER

The minutes from the previous meeting on 19th September 2024 were received and **approved** without any issues raised.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Professor Steven Lindsay and Mr Matthew Philips from the Elvet Clean Air group advised that they were attending to participate in the discussion under item 5 on the Agenda.

5. REPORT BY PROF. STEVE LINDSAY ON A PROPOSAL FOR A DURHAM CLEAN AIR ZONE

The Chair welcomed Professor Steve Lindsay and Mr Matthew Phillips to the meeting.

In the presentation and subsequent discussion on the proposed Durham City Clean Air Zone, Steve, representing the Elvet Clean Air working group, highlighted the severe impact of air pollution in Durham, particularly in areas like Church Street where vulnerable populations, such as children and elderly residents, are disproportionately affected. The focus was on reducing vehicle emissions, especially from diesel buses and through-traffic, which contribute significantly to the city's pollution levels. Steve shared data visualizations demonstrating how air quality has fluctuated over time and noted a natural experiment during lockdown when air pollution levels dropped due to decreased traffic.

Steve proposed creating a Clean Air Zone by diverting high-pollution vehicles away from the city centre onto the existing ring road, with a congestion charge imposed on vehicles entering the zone. The goal is to shift traffic patterns and reduce pollution while still allowing essential vehicle access. He cited successful examples

from London and Newcastle, where similar schemes have led to substantial reductions in air pollution.

In response, Matthew Phillips pointed out that schemes like low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) often lead to behavioural shifts rather than increased congestion on boundary roads, as more people opt for alternatives like walking or cycling. He added that such schemes could also generate revenue that might fund public transport projects, including park-and-ride facilities, further encouraging people to leave their cars outside the city.

Overall, the discussion suggested that while the proposed Clean Air Zone may face political and logistical challenges, it could yield health benefits for Durham residents and set a precedent for other cities seeking to improve urban air quality.

Members raised several key concerns during the discussion, highlighting both support and scepticism about the current proposal.

Liz Brown emphasized the need for improved public transport, noting that some residents, including herself, rely on accessible public transport due to mobility limitations. Matthew Phillips agreed, pointing out that reducing city-centre traffic would make public transport more efficient by reducing delays caused by traffic jams, which also increase operational costs for bus services. He suggested exploring options like bus gates on certain roads to prioritize public transport and limit through traffic.

Carole Lattin expressed frustration over past challenges in regulating large delivery trucks on Sandland Road, which add to congestion and pollution. This resonated with the group's concerns about heavy vehicle traffic and the need for more restrictive measures.

The Clerk expressed appreciation for the work done by the Elvet Clean Air group and supported the push for electric buses. However, he raised concerns about the proposed clean air zone's potential to overload certain roads, especially the A167 and Neville's Cross traffic lights, with additional vehicles. Adam noted that diverting traffic might create gridlock and exacerbate air pollution in other areas of the parish. He also expressed hesitation to support the current plan without viable alternative routes to manage diverted traffic effectively.

In summary, while there was clear support for measures to reduce air pollution, including electric buses and enhanced public transport, concerns remained regarding the feasibility of the proposed clean air zone. The impact on traffic congestion and the potential displacement of pollution to surrounding areas were major points for reconsideration before advancing the proposal.

Members **agreed** to write directly to the North East Mayor Kim McGuinness to lobby for more zero emission bus services to the Church Street area of the parish where it was highlighted that emissions from buses alone represented nearly 60% of total emissions.

The Chair thanked Steve and Matthew. At this point, both Steve and Matthew left the meeting.

6. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Clerk advised that he had not yet received a report from the Wardens owing to Kirk Thiis being off on sick at present. The Committee thanked the Clerk for this update and wished good health and a speedy recovery to Kirk.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

I) To agree a scheme of planting across the parish for next Spring/Summer season

The Chair highlighted that no fewer than 70,000 bulbs were being distributed to community groups and volunteers for planting around the parish area and thanked all those involved in this work.

The Committee also **agreed** to order addition three-tier planters in locations such as Silver Street, Back Silver Street and Milburngate coach drop-off.

The Chair reported that DCC is looking to cut back on its planting commitments and were considering sustainable planting for the Leazes Bowl area instead of the usual carpet bedding.

II) To decide on the purchase of new trees for the parish area

It was **agreed** that Councillor S Walker and the Clerk should arrange for the purchase of more fruit trees for the parish area up to a budget of £1,500. Councillor L Brown asked that some of these trees be installed at Peskies Park.

III) Preparing to decide the Environment Committee priorities and strategy for 2025/26

The Committee **agreed** to review the current Strategy and Budget at its next meeting in November and Members were encouraged to consider their priorities for the forthcoming meeting as well as the Councillors' Away Day.

7b. To complete:

I) Update on Durham Tidy Gardens/ Recycling leaflet as part of the landlord funding

Councillor Victoria Ashfield presented a revised draft letter focusing on student residents. This letter aims to encourage tidy gardens and proper recycling practices and the Committee unanimously **approved** the letter with minor adjustments. Free bulbs are to be offered at the Palatine Centre as part of the initiative.

II) Update on the distribution of bulbs as part of the Parish Council's work to green the parish area.

Bulbs have been distributed to various resident groups and volunteers. Additional locations for bulb planting being considered, including Mill Hill Lane

III) Update on proposal to request that BT audits its clear glassed telephone boxes.

The Clerk confirmed that a formal letter has been sent to BT regarding the phone box locations and the need for their ongoing maintenance. The Clerk advised that he was awaiting a response from BT.

IV) Update on the recruitment of a grant bid writer for the green roofed bus shelters project.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had received one expression of interest from the advert towards a contract fundraiser.

The Clerk advised that he was awaiting further details from the applicant in relation to a proposed day rate prior to putting this to Full Council. The Clerk advised that he and Councillor C Lattin and V Ashfield had met with Claire and expressed how impressed they all were with her experience.

The Committee **agreed** that, in light of forthcoming S106 funds becoming available across the parish area, the Committee should prioritise green roof bus shelters and topiary statues as part of this project.

V) Update on the production of a Community Emergency Plan

The Chair reported good progress was being made on developing the plan document and that she was aiming to have a draft of the Emergency Plan ready for January's Full Council meeting for approval.

The Chair reported positive engagement from resident groups in developing local area plans and advised that, once in place, the plan will require testing and approval from the Civil Contingencies Unit. Councillor V Ashfield took the opportunity to thank Councillor C Lattin for all her continued work on this Plan.

VI) Follow up with local schools on the OASES Breath Clean Air project.

The Committee **noted** that a formal report from OASES on the impact of the Breath Clean Air project was due to be received imminently.

7c. To note:

I) Progressing the plans for the new layout of Durham Market Place

The Committee expressed frustration with the lack of progress on planned improvements to the Market Place and highlighted that there ongoing issues with proposed frontage designs for Stack building. Parish Council pushing for action on planters and other enhancements Concerns about continued parking problems damaging paving

II) Update on the City Safety and Wellbeing card

Members warmly welcomed the updated City Safety and Wellbeing card, as presented by the Parish Clerk and thanked the Clerk for his work

The Committee particularly welcomed that the card includes a QR code for donations to Durham City Street Friends and will be delivered alongside other parish communications.

8. AOB

None received.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 1pm

Tuesday 14th January 2024 at 1pm

Tuesday 11th February 2024 at 1pm

ITEM 6: TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2024/25

Councillors are reminded that the Parish Council has agreed to formulate its strategy for 2025/26 ahead of the budget setting process in January 2025.

As part of this, all Parish Council Committees are being asked to agree their priorities for the forthcoming financial year so that this can feed into the Parish Council's budget agreement.

For this current year, Members have agreed that the five overarching priorities for the Parish Council are as follows:

- 1.** Being an ambitious voice for the city
- 2.** Enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish
- 3.** Upholding the Neighbourhood Plan and representing the parish on planning matters
- 4.** Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish
- 5.** Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.

Looking Forwards

The 'Looking Forwards' document has also been included as part of this work. 'Looking Forwards' is a companion document to the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan and has been developed by the City of Durham Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. It is built on the aspirations and views as expressed by local people for their City during the five years of preparation of the Plan. It looks forward to greater involvement of the community in making Durham a more creative and sustainable City.

In addition to the five overarching aims of the Council, the Environment Committee also agreed the following priorities for this year:

Council priorities 2024/25	Environment priorities 2024/25	Looking Forwards initiative(s)
1. Being an ambitious voice for the city	Engaging with and responding to residents of all ages and backgrounds in environment-related work Mobilise Volunteer groups Work with young people and respond to their concerns	Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life.

2. Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and addressing inequalities in our parish	Promote cleaner air, a cleaner river, green spaces, and streets for living across the city. Reduction in light pollution. Reduction in night time noise. Sustainable travel Supporting the creation of a Community Emergency Plan	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure
3. Upholding the neighbourhood plan and representing the parish on planning matters.	Work with all relevant committees to ensure the climate and ecological emergencies are considered in all planning matters. Sustainable housing	Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live
4. Creating a positive environment for businesses and encouraging tourism to improve prosperity of parish	Improve and protect the appearance of the city and its heritage.	Theme 2: A Beautiful and Historic City Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
5. Taking action to combat the climate and ecological emergencies.	Be proactive and collaborate with all partners (including Parish Council committees, Durham County Council, residents, developers, landlords, and other businesses) to coordinate our impact on the climate and ecological emergencies and increase community resilience. Encourage sustainable Travel Increased awareness and action on climate change. Tackle the ecological emergency	Theme 1: A City with A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to consider the above report and agree the Environment Committee priorities for 2025/26.
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ITEM 7: TO CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S BUDGET FOR 2025/26

As Members are aware, the Parish Council is required to agree its budget and precept request for the forthcoming financial year in January 2025. In order to assist the Council in agreeing both the budget and precept for 2025/26, each Committee of the Council is being asked to propose a budget against their individual identified priorities for next year.

Members are reminded that the Parish Council has recently renewed its Service Level Agreement for an enhanced neighbourhood warden service in the parish with Durham County Council for a further 2 years.

Members are also reminded that the Parish Council has previously committed to co-fund the Safety of Women at Night hub in the City with other partners.

In view of these ongoing commitments and other projects by the Environment Committee, the following budget is proposed:

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Additional policing and safety for the parish area	
Enhanced SLA with Durham Police for late night policing	£30,000.00
Safety of Women at Night Hub	£10,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the <i>Shhh...11pm to 7am</i> campaign	£2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Planting budget	£10,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Engaging the youth in the work of the Parish Council	
Project working with young people	£2,500.00
PRIORITY 5: Improving the appearance of our City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA	£10,000.00
Christmas frontages awards	£1,500.00
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust	£5,000.00
PRIORITY 7: Emergency planning	
Supporting our community in preparing for emergency events	£2,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2025-26 AGAINST PRIORITIES	£73,000.00

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to consider the above report and agree a proposed budget for the Parish Council's Environment Committee.
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