



City of Durham Parish Council

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SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee: Councillors C Lattin, V Ashfield, T Cleaver, G Holland, F Robinson and M Wilkes.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Environment Committee meeting** to be held **via Zoom at 10:30am on Tuesday 9th June 2026** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown. The link to join this meeting is below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81439415945>

Meeting ID: 814 3941 5945

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 12th MAY 2026**
- 4. TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS**
- 5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT**
- 6. DAMAGE TO WOODLAND BY UNAUTHORISED CONSTRUCTION OF BMX TRACK IN FLASS VALE**
- 7. UPDATE ON THE BLUE PLAQUES TRAIL MAP**
- 8. COORDINATING GREEN MOVE IN/ MOVE OUT FUNDRAISING AND OPERATION**
- 9. REPORT ON PLANTING PRIORITIES FOR 2026-27** (to include discussion on Gilesgate carpet bed/ sunflowers for solar project)
- 10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

14th July 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

8th September 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 10:30pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C. Lattin (in the **Chair**), V. Ashfield, T Cleaver and G.Holland.

Also present: Mr Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), Councillors D Freeman and M Wilkes, Mr David Miller (member of the public) and Mr Joe Peat and Mr Toby Dunne (Durham County Council).

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F. Robinson.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited declarations of interest from Members. No declarations of interest were made.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2026

Following consideration, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2026 were **approved** as a correct record.

4. Public Participation

There were no formal public participation comments on the agenda items. However, invited guests participated in discussions under the relevant agenda items.

5. To consider the latest Neighbourhood Warden report

The Clerk reported that the latest Neighbourhood Warden report had not yet been received due to annual leave commitments but would be circulated to Members when available. Members were advised of changes within the Neighbourhood Warden service, including the temporary redistribution of the additional hours funded by the Parish Council. The Committee heard that Brad, one of the wardens supported through the Council's funding arrangement, was undertaking training for a team leader role and therefore would not currently be undertaking the additional Parish Council-funded hours. These hours were being covered by other wardens, including Lana McCall and Ant Waterson.

The Clerk updated Members on recent work undertaken by the wardens, including activity to address fly-posting across the city. Members discussed the continuing value of the Parish Council's financial contribution towards additional warden hours and noted the responsiveness of the service in dealing with issues raised by residents and councillors.

A wider discussion took place regarding potential future reductions to Neighbourhood Warden numbers across County Durham. Members expressed concern about the impact of possible staffing reductions and emphasised the importance of monitoring future County Council budget decisions. It was noted that the Parish Council's additional funding continued to provide a tangible benefit by enabling work to be directed towards local priorities identified by the Parish Council and residents. Members agreed that the situation should continue to be monitored closely.

6. Update on the proposal to create a Durham City plaques walking trail map

The Chair introduced the item and thanked David Miller for the significant amount of work undertaken in developing the Parish Council's existing walking trail maps. Members heard that the proposed Blue Plaques Walking Trail was intended to complement the successful Heritage Trail and Seven Hills Trail publications and would showcase the Parish Council's growing collection of blue plaques and heritage interpretation projects.

David Miller provided a detailed overview of the latest proposals. He explained that the revised concept had evolved following discussions at the previous meeting and would focus upon a shorter and more manageable walking route incorporating the majority of the Parish Council's blue plaques within the city centre. More distant sites, including those associated with Mo Mowlam and Daisy Edis, would continue to be included as points of interest but would be shown as outlying locations rather than forming part of the principal walking route.

The Committee discussed the format and design of the publication, with Members expressing support for maintaining consistency with the Parish Council's existing trail maps. David Miller presented draft designs showing a central route map surrounded by historical information relating to each plaque and location. Members considered the route itself and agreed that it would provide an attractive heritage walk linking a number of significant sites across the city.

The Clerk updated Members on the current stock levels of existing trail maps and advised that the Seven Hills Trail remained extremely popular, with over 12,000 copies having been distributed. Members discussed the possibility of reprinting the Seven Hills Trail alongside production of the new Blue Plaques Trail and noted that heritage budgets had been established to support ongoing projects.

The Committee also considered access arrangements to the former Hild Bede site, where one of the plaques is located. The Clerk reported that discussions with the College Principal had identified a practical solution whereby the plaque could be relocated to a more visible and accessible position at the entrance to the site, improving public visibility and making inclusion within the trail map more straightforward.

Members welcomed the proposals and agreed that work should continue on finalising the route, design and production costs, with the aim of producing the publication during the current financial year.

7. Update on the joint 'Sunflowers for Solar Panels' project with Houghall College

The Chair provided an update on the Sunflowers for Solar Panels project and reported that discussions with Houghall College had continued positively. Members heard that the recent site visit and engagement with the College had strengthened relationships and created opportunities for further collaboration.

Discussion took place regarding the availability of sunflower seeds and ongoing community participation in the project. Members remained supportive of the initiative and agreed that it continued to provide an effective means of promoting environmental awareness and community engagement while supporting wider sustainability objectives. The Committee noted the progress made and agreed to continue supporting the project as it developed.

8. Update on planting priorities for 2026/27 – including Gilesgate Roundabout Floral Bed

The Chair invited the Clerk, together with representatives from Durham County Council, to provide an update on planting priorities for the coming year.

The Committee heard that arrangements had now been finalised for the installation of approximately ninety additional hanging baskets across the city centre. The Clerk expressed appreciation to Joe Peat, Toby Duane, Members of the Committee and participating businesses for their assistance in developing the scheme. Members were advised that the baskets would be installed in prominent locations across the city, including shopping streets, public spaces, bridges and visitor gateways, and would remain in place throughout the summer season. Durham County Council confirmed that maintenance and watering arrangements were included within the agreed programme.

A substantial discussion then took place regarding the future of the Gilesgate roundabout carpet bed. Members were advised that Durham County Council had ceased funding the annual floral display as part of budget savings measures and that the bed would remain unplanted unless an alternative arrangement could be identified. The Chair noted the significance of the site as one of the principal gateways into Durham and highlighted the strong public affection for the display.

Members expressed differing views regarding the possibility of the Parish Council assuming responsibility for the site. Some Members felt strongly that the roundabout formed an important visual entrance to the city and should continue to contain an attractive floral display. Suggestions included the possibility of incorporating the Parish Council logo into a future carpet bed design and exploring sponsorship opportunities to offset costs. Other Members urged caution, noting the significant financial commitment involved and questioning whether expenditure of that scale represented the best use of Parish Council resources.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the likely costs of both installation and maintenance. Members requested further information from Durham County Council on the full costs involved, including watering and ongoing maintenance, before any long-term decision could be taken. Consideration was also given to the

possibility of interim planting using existing nursery stock to avoid the appearance of a bare and neglected site during the current year.

Following discussion, Members agreed that further costings should be obtained from Durham County Council, including indicative costs for a future Parish Council-branded carpet bed. The Committee also agreed that officers should explore whether a temporary planting solution could be implemented using available stock in order to improve the appearance of the site while longer-term options were considered.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee noted that the next meetings of the Environment Committee would take place on 9 June 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom and 14 July 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(Tuesday 9th June 2026)**

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 10:30pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C. Lattin (in the **Chair**), V. Ashfield, G.Holland, G. Bignardi and F. Robinson.

Also present: Mr Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), Councillors L Brown and D Freeman.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor T Cleaver. The Chair accepted that Councillor L Brown was substituting for Councillor T Cleaver for the purposes of the meeting today.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 11 November 2025 were presented for approval. Members confirmed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and no amendments were proposed. The minutes were therefore approved.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS

No members of the public were present and no public participation took place.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

Members received and considered the latest Neighbourhood Warden Report. The Chair invited comments, and Members expressed collective appreciation for the continued effectiveness and visibility of the wardens across the City. Specific reference was made to their intervention in resolving refuse-related issues at Metropolitan House and to their proactive engagement with both residents and students.

Members discussed ongoing concerns regarding refuse bins being left permanently on Back Western Hill, noting the obstruction caused to pedestrians and vehicles, as well as the associated litter and visual impact. It was acknowledged that a previous warning letter had been issued but that the issue remained unresolved.

Members agreed that a firmer approach was now required, including targeted enforcement action by the wardens and the issuing of a further, more explicit letter addressing Back Western Hill specifically.

The Clerk confirmed that this would be progressed in coordination with the Neighbourhood Wardens. Members also raised concerns regarding a collapsed wall on Back Western Hill which has remained in a dangerous and unsightly condition for an extended period.

It was reported that planning permission had been granted but that no remedial works had yet taken place. The Chair confirmed that Building Control had been asked to review the situation, and Members agreed that further follow-up was required to ensure progress.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) To approve the judging criteria for the Durham City Landlord of the Year Award

The Clerk presented a briefing note on proposed judging criteria for the Durham City Landlord of the Year Award, following a request from Full Council for greater clarity. Members undertook a detailed discussion on the purpose and scope of the award, agreeing that it should focus specifically on student landlords and not include purpose-built student accommodation providers or Durham University.

Members **agreed** that the *Rate Your Landlord* platform should be used solely to generate an initial shortlist based on tenant feedback, but that the Parish Council's assessment should then focus on matters not captured by the platform. These include the external appearance and upkeep of properties, responsiveness to Neighbourhood Wardens, cooperation in addressing anti-social behaviour, refuse management, and the wider impact on residential amenity and the City's appearance.

Members also **agreed** that consultation with residents' associations should form part of the assessment process and that Committee Members may undertake external inspections of shortlisted properties to inform decision-making.

It was **agreed** that the award title should be refined to clearly reflect its student housing focus and community impact, and that the final judging criteria should be presented as an appendix to the existing report rather than rewriting it entirely. The Clerk undertook to draft and circulate the proposed criteria for comment.

II) To consider the planting priorities for the City in financial year 2026/27

The Committee considered planting priorities for the forthcoming financial year, with particular reference to the fruit tree giveaway and bulb planting schemes.

Members noted the significant success of the November fruit tree giveaway, both in terms of community engagement and increased footfall for local independent traders. It was agreed that the scheme should become an annual November event, recognising that this is the optimal time for planting bare-rooted trees and that regularity would help manage expectations.

Members **agreed** the following provision priorities and budget allocations for planting during 2026-27:

City planting plan	Budget
Spring bulbs (parish wide)	£4,000
Fruit trees (Market Day in November)	£4,000
Viaduct planters (replacement x 4)	£1,500
Viaduct planters (maintenance for all in Summer)	£2,500
Hanging baskets (Lower Claypath)	£2,000
Lamp post baskets (North Road)	£6,000

III) To consider priorities following decision on Section 106 application to fund new green roof bus shelters

Members noted the outcome of the Section 106 application relating to green roof bus shelters and acknowledged that, while funding had not been secured, the work undertaken had informed wider discussions on greening infrastructure and clean air priorities. Members agreed that every reasonable attempt had been made to try and secure this funding for this priority and **agreed** to not pursue this initiative any further for the foreseeable.

IV) To consider the response from DCC Portfolio Holder regarding Clean Air and upcoming Environmental Plan

Members noted the response received from the Durham County Council Portfolio Holder regarding clean air and the forthcoming Environmental Plan, agreeing that this would be revisited once further detail becomes available.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on the duckpond project initiative

The duckpond project was reported to be progressing, with further engagement planned to identify practical next steps. The Clerk highlighted that the information board had now been completed and that he was seeking the relevant permissions to install the information board and new trough into the Duck Pond area.

II) Update on the Shincliffe boundary stone project

The Shincliffe boundary stone project was reported to be nearing completion, subject to final permissions and installation arrangements. The Clerk advised that he was liaising with the relevant teams within DCC to complete this.

III) Update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Dr Mo Mowlam

Members also received an update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Dr Mo Mowlam. It was reported that initial discussions had been positive and that further liaison with relevant stakeholders within the University would continue.

7. AOB

None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

10th February 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom
10th March 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(10th February 2026)**