



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 8th September 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/88575590261>

Meeting ID: 885 7559 0261

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 14th JULY 2026**
- 4. TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS**
- 5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT**
- 6. PROPOSED ARCHEOLOGICAL STUDY OF NEVILLE'S CROSS BATTLEFIELD**
- 7. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE ELVET GREEN SITE**
- 8. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT HERITAGE BLUE PLAQUES TRAIL MAPS**
- 9. UPDATE ON THE LAMPPOST CLEANING PROJECT**
- 10. UPDATE ON THE UPCOMING STUDENT MOVE-IN OPERATION**
- 11. PLANTING PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27** – to include the trees at the Sands, bulb planting and fruit tree giveaway project.
- 12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

13th October 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

10th November 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 14th July 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

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

Also present: Mr Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), Councillor R Cornwell and Professor Bennett Zon.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Councillor Carole Lattin welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted, and attendees confirmed the presence of members online, welcoming Mr Bennett Zon as a guest presenter.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No declarations of interest were declared by members present.

3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th JUNE 2026

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 9th June 2026 were reviewed and unanimously **approved** as a correct record.

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

There was no public participation registered for the agenda items.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Clerk highlighted that the latest Neighbourhood Warden report was heavily dominated by the extensive logistics and operations surrounding the end-of-term student Green Move-Out scheme. The Committee recorded its formal thanks to Wardens Ant, Lorna and the team for their dedicated work on the ground to manage the street clearance operations across the city.

6. REPORT ON THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE COUNTY HALL MOSAIC

Professor Bennett Zon presented a detailed status report regarding the ongoing campaign to save and relocate the historic County Hall ceramic mosaic prior to the planned demolition of the building. He informed the Committee of an upcoming hour-long meeting scheduled for 3:30 PM at Corten House with Senior officers of Durham County Council, including Corporate Director Tony Hanson and officer Gillian Kirkbride. Bennett detailed the structure of the presentation, which would feature a ten-minute PowerPoint overview, expert contributions from leading conservators, and an extensive question-and-answer session. He highlighted that

the specialist team in attendance would comprise twelve expert representatives split between in-person and online participation, including David Mitchell (North End resident), Kelly Smith (Spelk Design Studio and Northeast Design Community), Polly Lowe (Elvet Residents Association), Councillor Carole Lattin, Alexandra Earl (Durham University and local residents), Leslie Durbin (Jackfield Conservation Studio and Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society), Rob Higgins, Rhiannon Hiles (CEO of Beamish), Michael Ravelli (Ravelli Ceramics Conservation and Restoration), Dr Mary Brooks (Textile Conservation and Heritage Specialist, Durham University), and artist Alex McCallum (Pineapple Award 2026 winner). Apologies had been received from Jonathan Ruffer, who expressed strong personal support for the initiative.

In outlining the core strategy, Bennett clarified that Durham County Council's initial resistance stemmed from internal structural assessments focused strictly on demolition ease rather than specialist conservation methods. He explained that expert assessments by eminent conservators such as Leslie Durbin demonstrate that dismantling the ceramic mural from its concrete backing is entirely technically viable and routine for high-profile heritage sites. He outlined a clear three-phase approach for the campaign: securing an immediate stay of execution during demolition planning, commissioning formal specialist conservation reports on the mural's condition and removal logistics, and initiating a dedicated development project to secure external funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund, private philanthropists, and national partner bodies. He highlighted that the campaign has gained widespread momentum and support from national organisations, including the 20th Century Society, the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society (TACS), the British Institute of Interior Design, and upcoming coverage by the BBC.

The Committee supported the campaign's direction. Councillor Mark Wilkes highlighted that the primary technical point to establish with Council Officers is that the safe extraction of the mosaic will be fully externally funded and will not disrupt or delay the overarching demolition timetable for County Hall. It was **agreed** that Councillor Mark Wilkes should attend the meeting to observe and report back to the Parish Council.

At this point, the Chair thanked Bennett for his time and presentation and Bennett left the meeting.

7. DISCUSSION IN RELATION TO THE VOLUNTEER CLEANING OF ROAD SIGNS IN AND AROUND DURHAM CITY

The Clerk presented an item regarding a high-profile voluntary civic initiative undertaken by Linden Cleaning Services, a local professional firm that has been independently cleaning long-neglected road signs and street infrastructure around Durham City.

The Clerk highlighted that the campaign had gained substantial traction online and presented visual evidence illustrating severe visual clutter across main thoroughfares, specifically detailing lampposts and street furniture covered in decayed plastic cable ties and out-of-date paper planning application notices dating as far back as 2017.

The Clerk noted that while Durham County Council rules instruct applicants to remove site notices following planning decisions, this is rarely enforced, leaving severe physical degradation and potential hazards along pedestrian walkways.

To address the problem proactively, the Clerk proposed establishing a joint restoration model using available parish council funds, specifically reallocating unused allocations of £2,000 for emergency boxes and £500 for partnership awards. Under the proposed structure, the parish council would organise volunteer action days where residents, local groups, and Councillors would go out equipped with scissors and protective equipment to clip away old plastic cable ties, scrape off commercial promotional stickers (such as widespread vape advertising on public litter bins), and strip expired planning notices. Following this initial preparation, the parish council would engage a company on a commercial day-rate basis to perform heavy-duty jet-washing, chemical scrubbing, and deep-cleaning of the stripped lampposts and street furniture.

The Committee engaged in a broad discussion regarding execution, logistics, and publicity. Councillor Mark Wilkes suggested exploring protective transparent film overlays on clean street bins to allow easy removal of future stickers. Councillor Grenville Holland and Councillor Victoria Ashfield emphasised the importance of clear logistical planning, proposing that a targeted Facebook callout be launched encouraging residents to clear ties and notices off their immediate street lampposts and report them to the Clerk, thereby creating a precise hit-list of locations for the professional cleaning team to target on action days.

Councillor Grenville Holland also highlighted that the project offered an exceptional leadership story for the Parish Council, suggesting regional press and television coverage (such as BBC Look North) to promote civic pride. The Clerk confirmed he would conduct a formal Zoom planning meeting with Linden Cleaning Services on Thursday, 16th July at 12:00pm to finalise operational details and bring a fully costed recommendation to the next Full Council meeting.

8. REPORT ON THE SUNFLOWERS FOR SOLAR PANELS PROJECT

Councillor Victoria Ashfield provided a comprehensive progress report on the "Sunflowers for Solar Panels" community initiative, being delivered in collaboration with the Climate Action network and Big Solar Co-op. Councillor Ashfield reported that dual-sided promotional leaflets—combining core educational material from Big Solar Co-op with local project details—had been successfully distributed to the public during Durham Miners' Gala day.

Councillor Ashfield explained that the overarching objective of the campaign is to encourage local residents and community groups to grow sunflowers across public and private spaces in Durham to raise public awareness and drive micro-donations toward installing free solar panel infrastructure on local community buildings.

Councillor Ashfield outlined key upcoming milestones, centred around the City of Durham Show scheduled for Sunday, 13th September 2026. The show will feature formal competitive judging categories for locally grown sunflowers. Furthermore, growers across the city will be mobilised around the show weekend to walk

through Durham City carrying harvested sunflower bouquets and handing out promotional leaflets containing QR code donation links.

Councillor Ashfield also reported an initial delay in site assessments for new solar panels. Councillor Ashfield committed to re-engaging Big Solar Co-op head office immediately to reconnect the technical assessor with Councillor Fred Robinson and John Lowe of Allington House. Councillor Fred Robinson updated the Committee that Waddington Street United Reformed Church (URC) was making steady progress toward project readiness, working through preliminary structural evaluations and moving toward formal tendering for solar panel installation over the coming months.

9. REPORT FOLLOWING THE DURHAM CLEAN AIR DAY

Councillor Ashfield presented a detailed debrief on the outcomes of the recent Durham Clean Air Day event, which took place in Durham City centre. Councillor Ashfield reported that the morning session featured a highly successful, high-level round-table discussion held in the Lantern Room of the Town Hall, bringing together key regional decision-makers and organizational representatives from bus operators, local colleges, Durham University, and environmental groups.

Councillor Ashfield advised that a key highlight of the roundtable was an opening presentation by primary school pupils from Gilesgate Primary School, who presented direct arguments to the panel regarding air quality, health, and environmental stewardship. Outside in the Market Place, a newly commissioned electric bus was placed on public display, drawing significant public footfall and interest, though public feedback gathered on board strongly emphasised the urgent need for overall service reliability alongside fleet electrification.

In the afternoon, a public climate fair was hosted in the Main Hall of the Town Hall, featuring interactive displays and project proposals from various local climate groups. To gauge public support, attending visitors were issued two-pence coins upon entry to vote for their preferred green initiatives by dropping coins into project voting boxes. Councillor Ashfield noted that formal statistical data from the voting tokens was currently undergoing analysis. In addition, extensive educational outreach was achieved across seven local primary schools, resulting in a large portfolio of student climate posters. These artwork collections were displayed on large exhibition boards in the Town Hall during the event and have since been placed on public display in Durham City Library.

Councillor Ashfield confirmed that a full evaluation report would be co-authored with Rupert Friederichsen and submitted to Full Council in order to satisfy grant funding requirements. Following a suggestion from Councillor Grenville Holland regarding civic praise for young people, the Committee discussed providing formal recognition for the participating schools. Councillor Ashfield highlighted that Gilesgate Primary School stood out as an exemplary green school, maintaining active student allotments, individual nursery raised beds, and dedicated wildflower

Quadrant survey plots on their grounds to measure biodiversity improvements. Councillor Ashfield **agreed** to liaise with Climate Action and contact the Mayor, Councillor Amanda Hopgood, to arrange an official Mayoral visit and present

formal certificates of achievement to Gilesgate Primary School and the six other participating primary schools.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates for the upcoming meetings of the Environment Committee were noted as follows:

- 8th September 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom
- 13th October 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

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

Signed,

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(8th September 2026)**