

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillor R Friederichsen declared an interest as a Director of Climate Action Durham Ltd and took no part in the vote on the Climate Emergency Response paper.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11th OCTOBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th October were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2023/24

The Committee **agreed** its strategic aims for 2023/24 as follows:

Environment Committee

Council priorities 2023/24	Environment Committee priorities 2023/24	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	Theme 1: A City With A Sustainable Future Theme 5: A City With A Modern And Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

	time noise. Sustainable travel	
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. To fight for zero-carbon, sustainable housing and businesses	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. Improve the quality and appearance of the River Wear. To lobby for more space for the re-establishment of a tourist information centre.	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

6. TO CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S BUDGET FOR 2023/24

The Committee **agreed** its budget for 2023/24 as follows:

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	50,000.00

Safety of Women at Night hub	10,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the Shhh campaign	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Durham in Bloom	10,000.00
2 x Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Clean Air and Active Travel)	6,000.00
Tackling residential car parking in the City	0.00
PRIORITY 4: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	10,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Recycling	
Continuation of Terracycle scheme	2,000.00
Green Award for Businesses in the parish	1,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust	3,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	94,000.00

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

I) To discuss continuing efforts to establish Warm Hubs in Durham

Members noted that the Warm Homes Working Group had recommended that support for people staying warm within their own homes should be a priority for the Council.

The Clerk highlighted that, to date, Alington House and Clayport Library were now registered as warm hubs in the Parish area. The Committee agreed that it was right and appropriate that support should be provided to approved Warm Hubs only – given that they will have had to have satisfied a list of criteria by DCC in order to have become approved, e.g. having appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

Members **agreed** that both organisations should be approached to ask if they would like some free wheat bags (so called "hotties") to give out to vulnerable residents to support them staying warm in their homes. Subject to the approval of both organisations, the Committee **agreed** that 10 wheat bags per organisation should be purchased as a test run of how they are received from the residents. The Clerk **agreed** to liaise with the relevant organisations.

II) Report by Cllr R Friederichsen on the Climate Emergency Response

Councillor R Friederichsen presented a report on the Climate Emergency Response to the Committee.

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that the purpose of the report was to update the Environment Committee on Durham County Council's current Climate Emergency Response Plan (2022-2024) and its reception by Durham City and county residents. The report made a number of recommendations, specifically that

the Committee requests additional information from Durham County Council and recommends steps for the City of Durham Parish Council to contribute to improving the effectiveness of and levels of public engagement with the local government (Parish and County Council) response to the climate emergency.

The report also proposed that the Parish Council commits to review its current relevant contractual arrangements and add as priorities a) Greenhouse Gas reduction, b) climate change adaptation, and c) the restoration of biodiversity in the aims to be achieved through Durham in Bloom and the retail consultancy support to businesses.

The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council's retail consultant may not be in a position to provide businesses with the sort of advice highlighted within the report. With this amendment and some further minor editorial amendments to the report, the Committee **agreed** that this should be presented to the November Full Council meeting, with the Committee's endorsement.

III) Proposal to host an Elvet active travel public meeting with the Elvet Clean Air Group

Councillor R Friederichsen highlighted that the Committee had previously agreed to host a meeting in Elvet regarding the issue of clean air and active travel and requested approval for funding such a meeting, including catering, literature and a facilitator to manage the meeting.

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that he had already identified a facilitator for such a meeting and highlighted that the Elvet Clean Air Group were keen to move forward with this proposed.

Councillor R Friederichsen also highlighted that this would be an opportunity for residents to meet and discuss ideas on how clean air and active travel could be improved in the Elvet area of the City.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he was very much in favour of residents being able to meet and to explore ideas on these important matters but highlighted that the County Council is unlikely to be undertaking any major schemes in the area in the near future and officers had previously met with the Committee to advise that they would not be able to pursue specific proposals put forward e.g. around changes to Church Street.

Councillor D Freeman highlighted that the County Council would soon be launching a consultation on its Air Quality Action Plan in Spring 2023 and it may perhaps be more appropriate to wait until the details of this consultation became clearer so that residents could meet and agree their views.

The Chair and Cllr L Brown expressed their hope that such a meeting could be a City-wide meeting involving all local residents' associations of the City parish, as opposed to specifically an Elvet only event. Cllr L Brown highlighted that the worst area for air quality in the City is actually in the Gilesgate part of the parish.

Councillor V Ashfield expressed the concern that such a meeting may end up raising residents' expectations on schemes which may not be delivered as

expected. Councillor V Ashfield also advised that a City-wide approach may carry more weight with organisations such as Durham County Council.

The Clerk advised that he was unaware of the governance and composition of the Elvet Clean Air Group and also expressed concern at hiring a facilitator for such a meeting.

The Committee **agreed** that the Parish Council should organise a meeting of all local residents' groups in the parish area, in response to the consultation on the County Council's Air Quality Action Plan once this is launched.

7b. To complete:

I) To consider the purchase of an electric vehicle charging point in the City

The Clerk advised that he was liaising with the Tracy on the new EV charging point outside St. Cuthbert's Church in Neville's Cross, following on from the Parish Council's agreement to fund this.

The Clerk also highlighted that the budget for 2023/24 also makes provision for a further two EV charging points in the parish and asked for further ideas on locations for these. The Committee **agreed** to consider other locations.

II) Durham in Bloom priorities – including bulb planting across the parish

The Chair thanked Councillors L Brown, V Ashfield and S Walker for their tremendous work and support in organising the distribution of the bulbs across the parish area.

Councillor L Brown advised that she had 200 bulbs remaining to be planted in the Margery Lane area of the parish and advised that she would be looking for volunteers for this.

The Chair congratulated everyone on a superb effort in getting thousands of bulbs planted around the parish and expressed her keenness to see these in bloom over the Spring 2023.

8. AOB

None received.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

13th December 2022
10th January 2023
14th February 2023

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all those present for attending and for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Lath'.

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(13th December 2022)**