

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 13:00pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C Lattin (Chair), V Ashfield, D Freeman and R Friederichsen.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Councillors G Holland and A Doig, Mr David Miller (member of the public), Beth Holloway and Leo (Local Energy Systems) and Dave Clarke (Durham Police).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors L Brown and S Walker.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13th DECEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2022 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor G Holland advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items.

Councillor A Doig advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 6a I on the Agenda.

Mr David Miller advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 6a. II on the Agenda.

5. DISCUSSION WITH BETH HOLLOWAY OF LOCAL ENERGY SYSTEMS LTD ON LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS.

The Chair welcomed Beth and Leo to the meeting and thanked them for joining the Parish Council.

Beth thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to speak with the Committee today. Beth advised that she and Leo are both Directors of the company Local Energy Systems Ltd; a Durham-based company which works with local authorities to help them unlock the renewable energy opportunities in their area. Beth advised that the main supporter for the project is Durham University.

Leo advised that the need for renewable energy is unquestionable and the current energy crisis has highlighted the geopolitical vulnerabilities of our energy supplies.

Leo advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd had identified 3 main obstacles for local authorities to invest in renewables:

- A major learning curve to understand the new technologies and site selection methodologies.
- High initial up-front costs for feasibility studies to take place.
- A misalignment between the aims of local authorities with long-term sustainability goals and consultants who are more sales driven and operate on short-term goals.

Leo advised that the funding model for Local Energy Systems Ltd was different in that it did not charge up-front for a feasibility study but rather charged for their involvement throughout the project as an active stakeholder.

Beth advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd only pursue projects which are within the budgetary constraints of the organisations with whom they work.

Leo advised that the Parish Council can get involved with Local Energy Systems Ltd in one or more of the following ways: a) as an investor b) as an Offtaker or c) from a community engagement perspective.

Beth advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd had already identified one site within the boundary of the City of Durham Parish Council with good potential for hydro-power, namely a site on the River Brownley. Beth advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd would be able to provide a free-of-charge feasibility study for the site if the Parish Council is interested in this proposal.

The Chair asked if Local Energy Systems Ltd has undertaken a survey of the Parish area and identified a project within the parish which would be a high-potential site for renewables. Leo advised that this has not yet been pursued.

The Clerk asked who the landowner is for the River Brownley site. Leo advised that this sits between the Burn Hall Estate and land owned by Northumbrian Water.

The Clerk also asked if Local Energy Systems Ltd had engaged with DCC on any projects at all. Leo advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd are currently working with DCC on the incubator programme.

Councillor V Ashfield asked if Local Energy Systems Ltd would consider any solar projects in the area. Leo confirmed that Local Energy Systems Ltd would be happy to look at solar projects. Councillor V Ashfield advised that she would be able to link Local Energy Systems Ltd up with Believe Housing on an idea to progress solar panels on the roof of the flats at the Sands. Councillor V Ashfield advised that Believe Housing has had to delay its plans for over a year on this. Leo advised that he'd be happy to work with Believe Housing on this.

Councillor R Friederichsen congratulated Beth and Leo on establishing this Limited company. Councillor R Friederichsen asked about the timescales and costs for each project. Leo advised that this would depend on the site itself and what was being proposed. Leo confirmed that the pre-feasibility study would be free-of-charge to the Parish Council.

Leo also advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd could also work with the Parish Council on funding opportunities.

David Miller asked if Local Energy Systems Ltd had been involved in the Sniperley Park developments at all. Beth advised that she was happy to work with the developers at Sniperley Park on this.

Councillor G Holland asked what Local Energy Systems Ltd's relationship was with the Durham Energy Institute. Leo advised that Local Energy Systems Ltd has no formal relationship with the Institute.

There being no further questions, the Chair thanked Leo and Beth for their time and presentation. At this point, Leo and Beth left the meeting.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) Proposal to fund an enhanced police service for Durham City

Members considered the content of a draft Service Level Agreement between Durham Police and the Parish Council. The Clerk thanked David Clarke for producing this document and for working with the Parish Council over many months to reach this stage.

Members agreed that more policing and more neighbourhood wardens for the City was a top priority for local residents and that this SLA should therefore be approved by Full Council.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend to Full Council acceptance of this SLA with a budgetary commitment of £50,000 for the year. In doing so, Members **agreed** that this should be a 12-month trial scheme and this should be reviewed at the end of month 11.

II) Consideration of the draft Heritage trail map for the 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust

The Chair reminded Members that, in order to mark the important 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust, Members had agreed to progress the creation of a Durham City Heritage trail map and this has again been designed by David Miller.

Since gaining the endorsement of the Environment Committee and an agreement for a virement of funds from the Parish Council's Finance Committee, the Clerk advised that he has been working with both David Miller and John Lowe, Chair of the City of Durham Trust on the design of the works.

Much of the content from the 7 Hills map was able to be re-used by the same designer and this has significantly cut the costs of producing this leaflet. David Miller has confirmed his acceptance of the content of the map as is now produced. The associated costs for this work are £1,882.90 in total. However, the City of Durham Trust has agreed to fund 50% of the total cost of producing this leaflet.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend to Full Council agreement of the production and printing of this map at a rate of 50% of the total costs.

The Committee also took the opportunity to thank David Miller for his exceptional work on this project.

III) Progressing the Terracycle scheme in Durham City.

The Chair highlighted the superb success of the Terracycle scheme in Boots to support residents to recycle empty pill packets. The Chair advised that this has been so successful that the large boxes had filled within a week and Boots were now in need of some more boxes.

The Clerk advised that – whilst we await the new boxes – the management at Boots had agreed to take any empty packets for recycling and store them until the new boxes arrive and these can then be recycled.

The Committee **agreed** that two further large Terracycle boxes should be purchased and that the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair should meet with the manageress at Boots and discuss a way forward – perhaps with Boots funding some boxes too.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on planning for the clean air and active travel public meeting in Elvet

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that planning for the clean air and active travel event was going well and he looked forward to discussing ideas with local residents and the facilitator at the St. Oswald's Institute on the very serious issue of air quality in this area. Councillor R Friederichsen also advised that the City of Durham Trust and Elvet Residents Association had provided support for this event.

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council had agreed to fund the literature and catering for this event.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he was not aware of the details of this event and asked that information be circulated.

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

The Chair advised that she understood that St. Giles Church had now registered as a Warm Hub with the County Council. The Clerk advised that he would check this. If so, the Committee agreed to fund some additional hot wheatty bags for the Hub.

7. AOB

None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14th February 2023
14th March 2023

11th April 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 'C. J. Lath'.

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(10th January 2023)**