

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 14th February 2023 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Councillor Esther Ashby and Mr David Miller (member of the public)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10th JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor E Ashby advised that she was attending the meeting to hear and contribute to discussions on item 5 of the Agenda.

Mr David Miller advised that he was attending the meeting to hear and contribute to discussions on item 6b. II) of the agenda.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Committee welcomed the excellent report by the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Wardens and **agreed** to formally thank Kirk and Antony for their exceptional work.

The Chair advised that she and Councillor V Ashfield had recently joined a litter pick on the riverbank with the Neighbourhood Wardens and she felt that this had been tremendously successful with lots of positive comments received from members of the public passing.

The Chair also highlighted that all of the waste bins along the riverbanks on the Pelaw Woods side of the river had been removed and this was therefore causing a littering issue along this side of the riverbanks. The Chair advised that she had been able to discuss this in more detail with Joe Peat at Durham County Council and he had agreed to re-install a bin by St. Hild and St. Bede.

Councillor E Ashby asked if Kirk and Antony could communicate their engagement over business waste with the Parish Council's Business Committee, in view of the Committee's ongoing engagement with businesses.

Councillor E Ashby particularly highlighted the issue of Back Silver Street and highlighted that the waste in this area is a real concern.

The Clerk highlighted that all Councillors receive a copy of the Neighbourhood Warden's report.

Councillor D Freeman also advised that DCC Neighbourhood Wardens were looking into the issue of waste at Back Silver Street.

The Chair asked if the Business Committee could perhaps consider this matter at their next meeting as an agenda item. Councillor D Freeman as Vice Chair of the Business Committee advised that he would ensure this is included for the next meeting.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) To consider priorities for Durham in Bloom for 2023/24 – proposal to support the enhancement of the Market Place.

The Clerk highlighted that there were plans to change the way the Market Place is currently designed and functions both as a regular events space but also in attempts to tackle ongoing parking and access issues within the peninsula area. The Clerk advised that he had not yet received a copy of the draft proposals but he had been approached by DCC officers about potentially part-funding these changes.

The Clerk advised that he was aware that DCC were particularly keen to include all stakeholders in their plans for the area.

The Committee agreed that cars accessing this area particularly in the evening is a real problem in the City and should be tackled.

The Committee also **agreed** in principle to support the work of DCC and others to enhance and improve the market place on the basis that this included environmental and access improvements. Councillor R Friederichsen reminded Members of the agreement of Full Council to ensure that the Durham in Bloom contract with the County Council ensured the highest levels of biodiversity gain, benefits to the climate, etc.

The Clerk advised that he would liaise with DCC on this and ask for proposals to be presented to the Council at the earliest possible stage.

II) Report on the University's Snow Angels project

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council had previously tried to launch a project with local students volunteering to clear the footpaths of streets where older and more vulnerable residents were living during icy/ snowy weather. The

Clerk advised that this project had not come to fruition and that the equipment funded by the Parish Council remained in his office.

The Clerk advised that he had met with Katie Binks following feedback from the CRAF's Gilesgate representative that St Hild and St Bede had established a Snow Angels project – very similar to that proposed by the Parish Council in 2019.

Katie had advised that St. Hild and St Bede College do have such a group established and they mainly focus on footpaths between residential areas, Claypath Medical and the local Sainsbury's in Gilesgate.

Katie had advised that DCC provided training as well as materials for all the students free of charge and this work is being coordinated by a full-time paid volunteer coordinator at the College.

Katie had also advised that there may be a possibility to both extend the scheme further to other parts of the Claypath area and/ or establish a new scheme in Ustinov College where there is also another full-time paid volunteer coordinator in post to facilitate this.

The Committee welcomed this proposal and advised that the Merryoaks and Hastings Avenue area may benefit from such a scheme being run by Ustinov College.

The Clerk **agreed** to liaise with the relevant personnel at Durham University on this proposal.

III) Proposal by Cllr R Friederichsen on a free pre-feasibility report for the City of Durham Parish area by Local Energy Systems Ltd

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that he had contacted the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk following the last Environment Committee - where the Committee had heard from representatives of the Local Energy Systems Ltd – to see if it might be possible to progress a proposal within the City of Durham parish area. Councillor R Friederichsen highlighted that the organisation offers a free-of-charge pre-feasibility study on environmental projects.

The Chair advised that she was unsure what the Local Energy Systems Ltd team could do in the parish area.

Councillors D Freeman and V Ashfield advised that they felt that some of the projects highlighted by Local Energy Systems Ltd were beyond the remit of a small Parish Council.

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that he felt that this was a great opportunity to identify new renewable projects within the City of Durham parish area. Councillor R Friederichsen advised that he would be happy to look into this as and when he has capacity to look into this.

The Clerk advised that he would very much like to hear more about other similar projects that Local Energy Systems Ltd had managed.

Councillor V Ashfield offered to lead on this proposal and **agreed** to liaise with Local Energy Systems Ltd on this project after the summer 2023.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on the enhanced police service for Durham City

The Clerk confirmed that the SLA with Durham Police had now been agreed and would soon be signed by both parties in order that the SLA could commence from early April 2023.

II) Feedback from the Access Group on the draft Heritage trail map for the 80th Anniversary of the City of Durham Trust

The Chair reminded Members that Barry Gower, Chair of the Durham Access for All Group, had attended the previous Full Council meeting and has expressed a desire for the Access Group to be given some say over the content of the Heritage Trail map and ensure that this route was accessible.

The Chair expressed her gratitude to Barry for following up on this with his review of the leaflet in writing. The Chair advised that she, the Clerk, David Miller, John Lowe and Barry had jointly considered this feedback and were keen to move this forward.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk should seek to have the necessary changes added to the Heritage Trail map and gain the Access Group's approval of this. It was also **agreed** that David Miller and a representative of the Parish Council should attend the next Access for All meeting in March to discuss this with the Group in more detail.

III) Update on the Terracycle scheme in Durham City

The Chair reported that the Terracycle boxes in Boots were proving to be a tremendous success still and the Clerk had purchased two further large boxes. The Chair also reported that Belmont Parish Council were hoping to engage with local pharmacy/ drugstores to see if they would also host such a box.

IV) Report by Cllr R Friederichsen on the clean air and active travel public meeting in Elvet

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that the public meeting on clean air and active travel had gone ahead as planned and thanked Councillor D Freeman for also attending this meeting.

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that this had been a really good event providing residents with the opportunity to discuss ideas on improving the quality of air and environment in their local area in Elvet. Councillor R Friederichsen advised that these ideas had been collated into a document and attendees were keen to progress these proposals.

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

None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14th March 2023

11th April 2023

9th May 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
(16th March 2023)**