

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Thursday 16th March 2023 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R Friederichsen.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th FEBRUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

In agreeing the minutes, Councillor V Ashfield asked that the Parish Council seeks an update on the proposed City-wide clean air consultation in order to assess its remit and timescales. The Clerk **agreed** to contact the Cabinet Member responsible for this.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

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 were continuing to liaise with DCC and Durham University in order to gain agreement for more bins along the riverbanks on the Pelaw Woods side of the river. At present, the University has agreed to install a bin by St. Hild and St. Bede College but the Chair advised that she hoped to gain agreement for one more bin closer to the Bent House Lane access to the riverbank.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) To discuss the proposal to request a voluntary contribution from landlords to the Parish Council's precept

The Chair reminded Members of the previous discussions on this proposal. As per Full Council agreement, the Chair advised that she had met with the Chair of the Parish Council's Business Committee and both had agreed that this proposal should be progressed as follows:

- That any communication should not go out too soon after the most recent communication (survey) to landlords.
- That a sympathetic landlord be approached as a starting point with a view to getting the supporting this initiative by the Parish Council and encouraging others to take part.
- That any monies raised should not be for general expenditure but for a targeted purpose where landlords may see some mutual benefit, e.g., an additional Neighbourhood Warden to tackle the issue of waste directly with the tenants.

The Committee **agreed** with this proposal and to support this at the next Full Parish Council meeting. Committee Members also suggested that the Council draws on the experience of Councillor H Weston as a student property owner in the City to see if she would support this proposal. The Chair **agreed** to discuss this with Councillor H Weston.

II) Proposal by Cllr R Friederichsen on integrating Durham in Bloom with work tackling the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies

The Committee considered a report by Cllr R Friederichsen. The report provided a summary and expanded on the Environment Committee's previous discussions on how to ensure the Parish Council's funding toward Durham in Bloom can best contribute to its priority aims relating to climate action and the protection and restoration of biodiversity.

The report proposed a set of requests and questions to be raised with Durham County Council as follows:

1. Using permanent containers
2. Using plant guilds with emphasis on perennial, pollinator, and edible plants
3. Educational displays that explain a) the choice of plants and how CERP2, EEAP, and Durham in Bloom are connected; and b) send a positive and practical message to tourists inviting them to contribute to protect biodiversity and the climate in e.g., three ways (reducing carbon footprints as part of their visit to Durham through using public transport; eating a plant-based diet; and avoiding the use of peat and pesticides in their gardening)

Committee Members welcomed this report as a good aspirational document. Councillor L Brown highlighted that peat free compost was difficult to purchase at present.

Councillor S Walker particularly welcomed the proposal of having more plants for pollinators as part of Durham in Bloom.

Councillor V Ashfield **agreed** to work with Councillor R Friederichsen to take this paper forward.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on the enhanced police service for Durham City

The Clerk highlighted that the SLA with Durham Police had now been agreed by both parties and the new police officers were due to commence at the beginning of April as per the agreement.

The Clerk advised that the remaining aspect of the SLA to be finalised is the new Coordinator role for this Operation. The Clerk advised that a Coordinator had previously been recruited for this post but had now left this post for a new role. The Clerk advised that he and the Chair of the Parish Council are due to meet with the Police and Crime Commissioner later this month in order to arrange the recruitment of a suitable officer for this post.

II) Update on the EV charging station funded by the Parish Council

The Clerk advised that the proposed location of outside St. Cuthbert's Church in Durham City for the new EV charging point is now not possible due to the high costs for connection being quoted by Northern Powergrid.

As a result, the Clerk advised that he had contacted the officers leading on this at DCC to request a list of possible other locations within the parish area so that Members could decide on an alternative location for this. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council's Environment Committee has delegated responsibility from Council to deliver this scheme and to decide on an appropriate location.

The Clerk advised that he would contact Members as soon as possible with a list of alternative locations.

III) Update on the Terracycle scheme in Durham City

The Chair advised that the boxes at Boots are nearly full and there is a need to purchase more boxes to replace these.

The Committee noted how popular this scheme had become and agreed to continue its support for Terracycle at Boots. The Committee also noted the increasing costs of this scheme and **agreed** that Framwellgate Moor Parish Council and Belmont Parish Council should be contacted to see if they might purchase Terracycle boxes for their own areas in order to provide some relief for the boxes in Boots in the Market Place.

It was also **agreed** that Shincliffe Parish Council should be asked if they might make a contribution to the Terracycle boxes in the Durham City Boots given that residents from outside the City appeared to also be using these boxes.

The Clerk **agreed** to contact all of the above-mentioned Parish Councils to seek their support in the continued delivery of this scheme.

The Clerk also **agreed** to purchase 2 further boxes for Boots and to seek a bulk order discount from Terracycle.

IV) Update on the Wear Rivers Trust project

The Clerk advised that the leaflet advertising the work of the Wear Rivers Trust and calling for more volunteers for the INNs project would be delivered w/c 10th April 2023 alongside the Coronation Booklet (which would cut down costs for both projects).

V) Update on the Heritage Trail map project

The Clerk advised that the new Heritage trail leaflets had now arrived and he would be looking for support in distributing these leaflets around areas of the City. The Chair also highlighted that she and Councillor V Ashfield had been part of a test walk with David Miller and others and this had been fantastic.

7. AOB

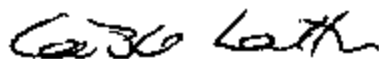
None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

11th April 2023
9th May 2023
13th June 2023

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

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(11th April 2023)**