

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Thursday 11th April 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

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 16th MARCH 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

1) Proposal by Cllr S Walker on greening up the Viaduct Area

Councillor S Walker advised that the Parish Council Planters have been in place for some time and are valued by local residents and businesses. Regular maintenance is being carried out via Parish Councillors, permanent residents, students and a local business and make this area of our City more attractive.

Councillor S Walker advised that there has been a proposal from Councillor Ashby to renovate Peskies Park. Currently, the park is under used, unmaintained and at first sight has little to offer the community. Councillor Ashby has asked Councillor Walker to progress the renovations. The initial proposal was to tidy up the park, add some additional seating, renovate the boat, add some additional play equipment (ideally multi age) and add some wetland plants to the boggy area.

Councillor S Walker advised that, as a first step in this process, a consultation has been undertaken. The Peskies Park project will continue including the input from the local community and the volunteers who signed up to help.

From that consultation, Councillor S Walker advised, has come the proposal to clear the land at the end of Lawson Terrace and plant a community orchard. This would be an excellent project for the Parish Council and could hopefully be at least in part maintained by members of the community, building on the networks established with maintaining the planters and the Peskies Park consultation. It was a community garden in the past and with the Parish Council's help, the volunteers could periodically be remotivated and new volunteers recruited to maintain the garden.

Councillor S Walker advised that it is possible that some funding for this could come from the Woodland Revival Project, but it is a project on the edge of their remit. It is a scant 0.1 Hectares (the minimum requirement) and is a trees project rather than a woodland project. However reasonably sized trees can be purchased from £30-£40, and small bare root stock considerably cheaper.

Members unanimously **agreed** to note the proposed project at Peskies Park and acknowledge that although this is a project by Parish Councillors it is not Parish Council Project. Members thanked Councillor S Walker for her work on this project.

Members also **agreed** in principle to funding clearing the end of Lawson Terrace and planting with suitable fruit trees. The Clerk advised that he would work with Councillor S Walker on this.

Members **agreed** not to pursue the proposal of registering the land as parish council land.

To discuss the offer of volunteers from Unite Students at the most recent meeting of the Crossgate Community Partnership

The Chair advised that she attended the presentation by Unite at the Crossgate Community Partnership and advised that it is actually staff who are undertaking this voluntary work.

The Chair advised that the group is looking for a project to undertake in Durham with a focus on litter picking and bulb planting. The Chair advised that the group is also asking for support in acquiring equipment etc.

The Chair advised that she felt that the Big Help Out volunteering day on 8th May would be an excellent opportunity to work with this group in Durham.

The Committee **agreed** to work positively with this group as part of the Big Help Out and beyond.

6b. To complete:

I) Progressing the proposal by Cllr R Friederichsen on integrating Durham in Bloom with work tackling the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies

Councillors V Ashfield and R Friderichsen advised that they had worked together on a letter to DCC on their work as part of Durham in Bloom to tackle the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies.

The Committee unanimously **agreed** to submit this letter to the most appropriate officer at DCC. The Committee asked that a response be requested for the 2nd week in May.

II) Update on Air Quality Action Plan consultation

Councillor D Freeman advised that DCC is currently undertaking a review of the Air Quality Action Plan for Durham City which has almost reached the stage of appraising a list of options (proposed measures) for inclusion in a revised Plan. An Air Quality Corporate Steering Group has been established to lead on this which comprises of senior officers from relevant internal sections of the Council. Councillor D Freeman advised that the appraisal will involve the ranking of the proposed options taking into consideration factors such as impact on air quality, cost, benefits and how easily they may be implemented. This is the final stage of the project before a revised Air Quality Action Plan document is established.

Councillor D Freeman also advised that there is uncertainty on when this stage will be completed by and the revised plan will have been drawn up, however, following this DCC is required to undertake a consultation exercise along the same lines that they did prior to adopting the current Air Quality Action Plan. In the first instance, it will be required to set out the consultation process and to report this to the relevant Council committees for approval.

Members thanked Councillor D Freeman for this update and **agreed** to take an active and positive role prior to and during the consultation stage of this Plan.

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 had met with the Police and Crime Commissioner earlier this month in order to arrange the recruitment of a suitable officer for this post and this is being done.

The Clerk advised that he would keep Members updated on this new role as part of the SLA.

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 a list had been provided but that all locations in this list were in Belmont. The Clerk also advised that the alternative proposal of the Sands had been knocked back by Highways.

The Clerk advised that he was happy to keep trying with the officers in order to find a suitable location for this. The Clerk reminded Members that the charging point at Merryoaks Community Hall was going ahead thanks to Councillors L Brown and E Scott.

The Committee **agreed** that every effort had been made to find a suitable location for this EV charging point in the City and, mindful of the additional 150 coming in to County Durham thanks to national funding, unanimously **agreed** to reallocate the funding of £3,000 to an alternative project for the City and to advise the officers accordingly.

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 Clerk reminded Members that he had agreed to contact Framwellgate Moor Parish Council and Belmont Parish Council 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. Additionally, the Clerk had agreed to contact Shincliffe Parish Council and ask 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 advised that he was aware that Belmont Parish Council is making every effort to pursue this but that he had not yet heard back from either Framwellgate Moor or Shincliffe Parish Councils on this request.

The Committee **agreed** that the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Clerk should work with Terracycle in order to achieve a bulk discount per unit on an order of up to £5,000 for this scheme. This should ensure that there are sufficient boxes to cover the entire year for Boots.

IV) Update on the Heritage Trail map project

The Clerk reminded Members 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 on 13th April. It was **agreed** that all Members should support with the distribution of these leaflets.

7. AOB

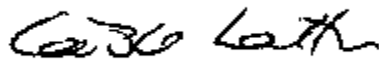
None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

16th May 2023
13th June 2023
11TH July 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
(16th May 2023)**