

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 13th June 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 and Councillor G Holland.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor C Lattin was elected as Chair of the Environment Committee. Proposed by Councillor V Ashfield and seconded by Councillor D Freeman.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor V Ashfield was elected as Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee. Proposed by Councillor C Lattin and seconded by Councillor L Brown.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R Friederichsen.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16th MAY 2023

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

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

7. 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 Committee particularly noted the additional work Kirk and Antony were doing in areas such as Fowler's Yard.

The Committee **agreed** to suggest that Kirk and Ant be put forward for an internal award at DCC for their exceptional efforts in the City.

8. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

8a. To decide:

I) To consider the criteria for a Green Award for local Businesses

The Committee agreed to launch a Green Award for local businesses. The Committee agreed that the award should have two layers – one which provides a Parish Council sticker in the window for businesses which recycle most of their waste and another award for a single, independent business only with a cash prize of £500 for a business which really goes above and beyond in tackling waste, high energy consumption, fuel emissions etc.

The Clerk **agreed** to draft a survey to local businesses and also a green award sticker and circulate this for approval.

II) To consider supporting the Green Move Out activities undertaken by DCC and Durham University this year

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council recently agreed to launch a voluntary contribution appeal to local landlords and letting agents in Durham City towards keeping the City clean and green.

Following the decision at Full Council in March 2023, an appeal letter was sent out in April to all landlords and letting agents who own property in the City. The appeal included a request that all contributions be received by no later than 16th June 2023.

The Parish Council requested a contribution of £52.00 per property from all owners/ agents – approximately the equivalent of the Band D tax charge within the City of Durham Parish area in financial year 2023/24.

The Clerk confirmed that to date the Parish Council has received a total of £1,508 from local landlord and agents. This figure was received from 8 individual payments – including one from Loc8me on behalf of several landlords – and a further 3 pledges of financial support have been made.

A reminder email to all agents was sent out in early June and the Parish Council's request generated a significant media, social media and public reaction.

In order to deliver on the aims of this funding, the Clerk advised that he and Councillors Ashfield and Lattin recently met with representatives of Durham University and Durham County Council, in order to decide on the most beneficial use of this additional funding.

During this meeting, it was highlighted that the background to this request centred around the experiences of Green Move Out day in 2022, which saw furniture and other items discarded in certain streets and a desire to combat this issue reoccurring. Albeit, it was recognised that 2022 was successful in ensuring that thousands of items were recycled/ donated to a local charity and that the team had been able to deliver this scheme in spite of the many challenges of Covid-19, increased student numbers, etc.

An early proposal that the funding could go towards the hiring of skips in certain streets in hotspot areas was rejected by all those involved in the operation as this

would go against the principle of Green Move Out and the desire to recycle goods. Other concerns centred around misuse of these skips as well as contamination issues.

Both Durham University representatives and the DCC Waste Management team advised that they felt there is a gap in the Green Move Out operation insofar as the two Sundays during move out are not currently covered from a waste collection point of view and therefore waste left on a Saturday will remain in place until Monday at the earliest.

Durham County Council has confirmed that they would be able to cover both Sundays at a cost of £2,000 in total for both days and Durham University very much welcomed this proposal at the meeting. This would ensure that any waste could be recycled and any furniture discarded may be re-used or donated to a local charity (e.g. British Heart Foundation).

The Committee **agreed** to recommend to Full Council that this funding be allocated towards the additional officer time on both Sundays during Move Out.

III) To consider the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation on Solar Energy

The Committee considered the report from Councillor R Friederichsen and commended him for his extensive work and for reviewing this important SPD document.

The Committee agreed with much of this report and **agreed** to take an active role in the forthcoming meeting being hosted by the Clerk with local stakeholders in reviewing this SPD along with other planning documents currently being consulted on.

The Clerk advised that Councillor Friederichsen's report will help form the basis of the formal response from the Council on this consultation.

8b. To complete:

I) Progressing the proposal to improve the community garden area at the top of Lawson Terrace

The Clerk confirmed that this work was now programmed in for early September for completion and that the works would take approximately 3 days to complete.

The Committee **agreed** to consider new planting and a layout for the new community garden. The Committee thanked Councillor S Walker for all her work on this as Councillor Walker also advised that she would be making local volunteers aware that this work would be undertaken.

II) Update on the enhanced police service for Durham City – recruitment of the safer streets coordinator

The Clerk confirmed that the new Safer Streets Coordinator associated with the Operation Lentil had now commenced her new role and she hopes to attend a future meeting of the Full Council. The Clerk advised that the reports from the

coordinator would be back-dated to April 2023 (the beginning of the Operation) so that Members can assess the impact of this additional funding.

III) To arrange the distribution of additional copies of the 7 Hills Trail map

The Clerk confirmed that the new 7 Hills Trail maps have now arrived and he would be circulating details of a distribution plan in due course and hoped that Members would help get the maps out to various locations.

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

None received.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

11th July 2023

12th September 2023

10th October 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 July 2023)**