

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Liz Brown.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12th SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 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

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 huge scope of the role Kirk and Ant have as Wardens and all they do for the City of Durham parish area. From taking discarded clothes to charity shops, helping someone who had fallen whilst out on patrol, dealing with abandoned vehicles, to the everyday clearing and keeping our City clean.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

- i) To consider a proposal to create an Emergency Plan for the parish – documents attached.**

The Chair reminded Members that she had previously proposed the creation of an Emergency Plan to the Committee and advised that she was still very keen to pursue this project.

The Chair particularly highlighted the support available for such a project through DCC's specialist civil contingencies team, the work for which is led by Laura Dobson at DCC.

The Chair also highlighted that this Plan would not replace the work of emergency services but would rather offer extra reassurances during events such as Storm Arwen, etc. about the availability of volunteers and particularly those volunteers with any specialist skills, etc.

The Chair advised that she would like to arrange a meeting with each of the Local Residents Groups across the parish area to seek their support with this initiative. The Committee fully supported this project and the Clerk advised that he would ensure that this formed part of the Agenda for the next Community and Residents' Association Forum (CRAF) meeting.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their support with this project.

ii) Update on DCC's progress on climate action and to discuss DCC engagement with the Town and Parish Council sector

Councillor R Friederichsen advised that the Parish Council was still awaiting a response to its letter on climate action and what proactive role the Town and Parish Council sector can take in the consideration of the Council's next stages of the Climate Emergency Response Plan. Councillor R Friederichsen advised that he was aware that the Cabinet would soon be considering a proposal in relation to the next stages of the Response Plan.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he understood that a response had been sent but confirmed that he would chase this up on behalf of the Committee.

iii) To consider the proposed draft plans for the works to Durham Market Place – plans and report to be distributed

The Clerk advised that the officers leading on this project at DCC had been unable to draft the plans for these works in time for this meeting and it was therefore **agreed** to defer this item until the October Environment Committee meeting.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on the recently launched Green Award for local businesses

The Clerk confirmed that to date 8 responses had been received as part of the Parish Council's Green Business Award competition. The Clerk thanked Councillors for their ongoing support to promote this and advised that a decision on the winner would be decided at the October Environment Committee meeting.

II) Update on improvements to the community garden area at the top of Lawson Terrace

Councillor S Walker advised that the clearing of the land had taken place successfully and took the opportunity to thank DCC and colleagues for their work and support with this project.

Councillor S Walker confirmed that the trees order had been submitted and that the intention was to carry out a planting day in November with the trees and perhaps some other plants.

The Committee thanked Councillor Walker for her work on this project.

6c. To note:

I) To note the ongoing efforts to make Boyd Street an exemplar of a predominantly student-occupied street through ongoing landlord engagement.

The Clerk highlighted the interest from Elvet Residents Association to make Boyd Street an exemplar street of how an area with a high student population living within it should look. The Clerk advised that he had raised this with Clean and Green and the Highways teams at DCC and, although options were limited due to the lack of available public space, ERA and a local landlord were keen to have a site visit and explore options to improve the appearance of the street.

The Clerk advised that he was aware that ERA had invited Helen Weston, another local landlord in Boyd Street, to this site visit and that Helen had confirmed she would like to attend and support such a project.

Members liked the idea of green/ sedum-roofed bin shelters down the sides of the properties at the end of the road and noted that there were concerns from Highways regarding hanging baskets over the public highway.

The Clerk advised that he had provisionally arranged a site visit on 18th October and asked if any Member might wish to attend this meeting. Councillor V Ashfield confirmed that she would be available to attend this meeting with officers.

7. AOB

The Clerk highlighted that the PRoW volunteer day would be taking place on 14th October 2023 and thanked all those Members involved in this project.

The Clerk also highlighted that he was pursuing the project of a mural on East Atherton Street and the Committee asked that there be more of a focus on greenery as opposed to mining heritage as part of the design of the mural and expressed a preference to receive 3 design concepts for this project.

The Committee advised that they would like to see the Parish Council pursue the idea of seeking some administrative support for the Clerk as part of the work of this Committee.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14th November 2023

9th January 2024

13th February 2024

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 October 2023)**