

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley and Ms Alice Evans (OASES)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor D Freeman.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2024 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS.

None received.

5. DISCUSSION WITH OASES ON PROGRESSING THE PROJECT WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS ON CLEAN AIR

The Clerk reminded Members that, in agreeing its budget for 2024-25, the Parish Council had agreed to provide £2,500 towards a joint project with OASES working with local schools of their Breathe Clean Air project.

The Chair welcomed Ms Alice Evans to the meeting from OASES and thanked her for her time in coming to present details of the project to the Committee today.

Alice thanked the Parish Council for their support and for allowing her to make a presentation to the Committee.

Alice advised that the Breathe Clean Air project by OASES will enable Durham city schools to engage with Clean Air Day (June 20th 2024). The

project will make schools aware of the importance of clean air, and how action to improve air quality benefits human health and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Alice advised that OASES will also investigate the barriers to action - the children will design a survey to establish current knowledge and awareness of the issue and what/why current travel choices are made within their whole school community. OASES staff will work with children and teachers at three schools (St Oswald's, St Margarete's, and Neville's Cross primary schools).

Alice advised that the project aims, objectives, and deliverables will include raising awareness of the co-benefits of reducing air pollution by and for the school community, and to encourage behaviour change. The objectives of the project are to:

1. Motivate schools, children and parents to take action to reduce school-related air pollution.
2. Investigate the barriers to related action.
3. Identify potential priority areas for follow up to support behaviour change.

Alice also advised that the deliverables of the project will be:

1. a survey, co-created and analysed with children, and a final report which will be made available to schools and the Parish Council, and which will inform the
2. whole-school assembly on the topic (covering key facts, challenges and solutions), and
3. two class sessions about the topic at each school.

Alice also advised that this project will also establish the potential for follow-up projects that facilitate more direct action; e.g. supporting the increased use of e-bikes to transport children to and from school, creating and supporting walking buses, and other ways to reduce car travel to and from schools.

Alice highlighted that the intention within the allotted budget for this project was to work with the 3 schools and 1 class per each year group. Councillor V Ashfield highlighted that a number of the primary schools identified within the report had 2 classes per year group and that she would be in favour of increasing the budget slightly to ensure that all classes were able to partake in this initiative. This was unanimously **agreed** by the Committee.

The Chair thanked both Alice and Councillor R Friederichsen for leading on this project. At this point, Alice and Councillor R Friederichsen left the meeting.

6. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

Members warmly welcomed the latest positive report from both Kirk Thiis and Antony Waterson on their work in the parish area. Members particularly welcomed the additional work carried out by Kirk and Antony to support the Police in tackling the use of drugs in the City.

Members also noted with disappointment that the bus station continues to be a hotspot for anti-social behaviour in the City and asked the Clerk to liaise with the Police in order to address a number of the issues raised in the Warden's report.

Members also noted the concerns relating to Fowler's Yard and the proliferation of bins in the area. The Clerk advised that the Business Committee is presently liaising with the businesses who do have a waste bin in the area and is hoping to host a roundtable meeting with all concerned in the coming weeks, in order to try and address this.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

I) To consider the proposed Nature Recovery Strategy consultation by Durham County Council.

Members warmly welcomed the Council's proposed Nature Recovery Strategy and agreed to write to Stuart Priestley (DCC ecology) commending him for this excellent piece of work.

The Clerk and Chair advised that they had recently attended the drop-in session on this document and were highly impressed by all of the discussion and content of the document.

II) An update on the Boots Terracycle scheme and seeking joint funding for this initiative

The Committee noted with disappointment that the Boots Terracycle scheme had come to an end without any notice or clear reason. The Clerk advised that he and the Chair had a meeting with the Head of Boots' sustainability and environment and hoped to get both further clarity on the reasons as to why this had ended and also receive some reassurance that an alternative scheme could be re-introduced as soon as possible.

The Chair and Vice-Chair advised that they had been working to locate an alternative location for these Terracycle boxes in the meantime; noting that the boxes must be located in a pharmaceutical/ doctors surgery environment for insurance purposes.

The Clerk advised that he would keep the Committee updated on the forthcoming meeting with Boots.

III) Progressing the Community Emergency Plan initiative for the City of Durham parish area.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for his support in getting the leaflet distributed around the parish area and advised that a number of volunteers had now contacted her directly to get involved with this initiative.

The Chair advised that she and the Clerk were now organising a meeting with all volunteers on 10th April at the Town Hall in order to progress this initiative. The Chair advised that she would keep the Committee updated on how this initiative progresses.

IV) Funding for the planters in the Viaduct Area of the City.

Councillor V Ashfield highlighted that a number of the planters required additional plants and asked for agreement to purchase further planting for these. The Committee unanimously agreed this.

The Clerk also highlighted that the County Council has requested an uplift in funding towards the clearing of the Laburnum Avenue/ Lawson Terrace area due to an increased cost from their sub-contractor. The Committee advised that it may be minded to allocate a further £1,000 towards this work as a gesture of goodwill but advised that this would need to be agreed by Full Council. It was therefore agreed to put this on the Full Council Agenda in March.

V) Proposal to fund a blue plaque for Prof. Dame Rosemary Cramp

The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council has funded the production of new blue plaques around the parish area, as part of its aim of promoting the rich and diverse heritage of the City.

The Chair advised that she and Councillor V Ashfield had been discussing the possibility of a plaque for Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp with Elvet Residents Association and wished to nominate Professor Dame Cramp for a plaque at her former home of 12 Church Street.

Cognisant of the 20-year rule, the Chair and Councillor V Ashfield recommended that the plaque be for 12 Church Street as the former home of Professor Dame Cramp. This would be similar to the arrangement for the

blue plaque awarded to Bow Cottage as the former home of Dr Fenwick Lawson.

Councillor L Brown expressed concern about setting a precedent with overturning the 20-year rule and advised that she felt that there was a special case for the Bow Cottage plaque in that this was the location where much of Fenwick's work was done.

The Chair also reported that South Shields had recently awarded a plaque to Professor Dame Cramp which was excellent. The Committee felt that the University should be encouraged to carry out some form of commemoration for Professor Dame Cramp.

7b. To complete:

I) Progressing the plans for the new layout of Durham Market Place.

Members considered the revised plans for the Market Place as presented by Durham County Council.

The Clerk highlighted that the Durham Markets Company had some concerns over a number of the bollards not being retractable, however Members felt that the two retractable bollards at the bottom of the Market Place next to St. Nic's Church served this purpose and felt, on balance, that not allowing vehicles to enter this important historic Market Place in the City was a higher priority.

The Clerk advised that he would write to the lead officer and ask for confirmation of the next steps to progress this proposal.

8. AOB

None received.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 14th May 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 1pm

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
(9th April 2024)**