

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley and Mr David Miller (member of the public).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor V Ashfield.

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 12TH MARCH 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2024 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

Mr David Miller advised that he was attending the meeting under item 5 of the Agenda.

5. DISCUSSION WITH DAVID MILLER REGARDING A PROPOSED WALKING FESTIVAL EVENT

The Chair welcomed David Miller and thanked him for his time in coming to speak with the Committee on this matter.

David thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak with them today and began by highlighting that there are a wide variety of new walking festivals springing up based on counties, districts, towns and villages. David advised that his proposal was to identify the potential in Durham and then to invite individuals and organisations to set up a small group to make it happen.

David advised that the walking festival would need to consider some substantive guidelines:

1. A necessary vision. The City of Durham could be an attractive destination for walkers for its powerful image of the Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site surrounded by excellent walking countryside. There are experienced walk leaders capable of managing visitors on the many well-established walks of varying length and subject matter. Many local businesses will be beneficiaries including accommodation and catering.

2. Establishing the nature of a walking festival for 2025. Based on experience elsewhere, a walking festival here might have the following character:
 - Festival duration from 3 to 5 days, possibly between April to October depending on availability of accommodation, other festival events including the North Pennines walking festival.
 - Between 20 to 25 walks of varying length and themes from town walks of 2 to 5 miles up to country of 10 to 15 miles covering a range of townscapes and landscapes. Use of experienced tour guides and based on well-established popular walks from existing walk programmes. Up to 20 max. per walk.
 - Full participation of community groups to coordinate walks, talks and events e.g. showcasing local food and drink, which can widen the interest and appeal of the festival including a central meeting point as a starting and/or finishing point with refreshments.

David also advised that he saw the roadmap for planning such a festival as follows:

- First step is to form a group of volunteer walk leaders, local experts and partner organisations including DCC, Parish Councils, Durham University, World Heritage Site, National Trust, and 'Visit Durham'.
- Finance and help in kind from supporting bodies for design and delivery of website and publicity, public liability insurance, health and safety on walks. Decisions on charging for walks (£3 to £5 per walk is common) and payment for professional guides. Seek recognition and support by Walkers are Welcome accreditation. Aim to be self-funded after the first year.
- Create a website, leaflets, posters, banners, and brochures to promote the festival and include an online booking portal.
- The intention is to plan this in Autumn 2024 for a launch in the new year.

David advised that he hoped that the bodies mentioned will give their support and use of their logos. David advised that it is his hope that the festival would be 'owned' by the City of Durham Walking Festival Organising Group.

The Committee agreed to support this initiative in principle and the Chair advised that Councillor V Ashfield was particularly keen to support this excellent initiative. The Clerk advised that he could facilitate a meeting space for the first meeting of the group and David agreed to progress this.

The Committee thanked David for his work on this initiative. At this point, David thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

6. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Committee warmly welcomed the excellent report from Kirk Thiis and Antony Waterson and thanked them wholeheartedly for their work. The Committee

particularly thanked the Wardens for their support in tackling litter and for promoting to the City's resident-led *Shhh...11pm to 7am* campaign.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

I) To consider the latest update on the proposed Terracycle scheme and seeking joint funding for this initiative.

The Chair advised that she has now secured the agreement of Whitfields on Sunderland Road to host the new Terracycle pill packet/ blister packs for residents to recycle these.

The Chair highlighted the clear demand for this service and expressed her gratitude to everyone who has supported this very successful scheme. The Chair advised that Boots is hoping to launch its own scheme in October 2024 but in the meantime the Parish Council could fund £2,000 worth of boxes as an interim recycling facility ahead of Boots getting their own scheme up and running.

The Chair also highlighted that Belmont Parish Council has considered part funding this initiative at Whitfields too and this is going back for a decision at Belmont Parish Council's Environment Committee and the Chair advised that she would keep Members updated on this.

The Committee agreed to fund the £2,000 worth of Terracycle boxes at Whitfields and await a decision from Belmont Parish Council in the meantime. The Committee thanked both Councillors Ashfield and Lattin for their exceptional work on this successful scheme.

7b. To complete:

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

The Chair advised that she is hosting a big meeting tomorrow of local volunteers who have signed up to take part in producing the community emergency plan. The Chair thanked the Clerk for his support in making the necessary arrangements for this meeting to take place and advised that she would be providing a report back to Committee on this initiative and how the meeting progresses.

II) Funding for the planters in the Viaduct Area of the City

The Committee **agreed** the funding for the additional plants for the planters in the Viaduct Area. Councillor S Walker agreed to liaise with Councillor V Ashfield on this to arrange the new plants.

III) To consider the latest updates on the OASES Breathe Clean Air project with local schools.

The Clerk reported that he had liaised with Alice from OASES on this project and had now provided her with the contact details for all of the target schools as part of this initiative. The Clerk advised that OASES have now confirmed that they are

able to cover all the target classes requested at a total cost of £2,600 which, although higher than the original budget, is still slightly lower than expected with the additional class groups.

The Committee advised that they looked forward to seeing the outcome of this initiative.

IV) To consider the latest updates on the blue plaque for Prof. Dame Rosemary Cramp.

The Clerk advised that he had now completed the heritage statement and that a planning application has now been submitted for this proposal. The Committee thanked the Clerk for his work on this initiative.

V) To consider the latest updates on the blue plaque and unveiling event for the former Durham City Ice rink.

The Clerk advised that plans were well underway on the unveiling event with Torvill and Dean and the Sixth Form college. The Clerk advised that the plaque will be installed on Tuesday 23rd April, with the unveiling event and follow-up reception taking place on Friday 26th April.

The Committee thanked the Clerk for all of his exceptional work on this initiative.

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

The Clerk advised that he was still awaiting confirmation of the next steps with this project from DCC and would report back ASAP.

8. AOB

None received.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 14th May 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 1pm
Tuesday 9th July 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
(14th May 2024)**