

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Councillor J Ashby and Prof. Steven Lindsay and Mr Matthew Phillips (members of the public)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillor N Brown.

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 11th FEBRUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

The Chair welcomed the public attendees. Prof. Steve Lindsay and Mr Matthew Phillips advised that they were attending the meeting specifically for item 6a(i) on the Agenda. No further comments were raised under this item.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Committee noted the latest Neighbourhood Warden report. Cllr Ashfield and the Clerk, Adam Shanley, praised the wardens for their rapid and effective response to issues such as noise complaints and litter. The Committee particularly commended their work around fly-tipping and enforcement around street drinking and drug-related behaviour. The Clerk highlighted the significant impact of recent Community Behaviour Orders (CBOs) issued and noted a successful police operation at the bus station identifying harmful drug substances.

Members discussed ways to show appreciation for the wardens, including nominations for Citizen of the Year and the possibility of providing a training budget or a token of thanks. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would write a formal letter of appreciation on behalf of the Committee and residents.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) Discussion document on reducing air pollution in Church Street and surrounding streets - suggestions for interventions.

Prof. Steven Lindsay and Mr Matthew Phillips presented a comprehensive discussion document developed by the Elvet Clean Air group. The report detailed current air quality issues and proposed four main interventions:

- Traffic Filter on Elvet Bridge: Limit access to emergency vehicles, buses, taxis, and cycles. Evidence from COVID-19 lockdown closures showed a marked decrease in air pollution.
- Extension of the Congestion Charge Zone: Expand the existing zone to cover Elvet, with camera enforcement, limited to low-emission vehicles and residents.
- One-Way System: A possible one-way system through Elvet to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety, subject to 20mph speed limits and traffic calming measures.
- Restriction on Student Car Parking: A University-led scheme to discourage unnecessary student car use.

The Committee carefully considered each proposal as well as the balance between local and city-wide impacts, the importance of modelling alternative traffic flows, and the feasibility of electric buses. Cllr Ashfield proposed the addition of electric buses as a fifth recommendation. The Committee endorsed three immediate priorities:

- Electric buses in Durham City
- Local congestion charging zone expansion to include Elvet
- Reducing student car usage

It was **agreed** that a revised version of the Elvet Clean Air document should be submitted to Durham County Council from the Parish Council, noting the scope is parish-based and requesting broader city-wide modelling and solutions from the County Council. Prof. S Lindsay advised that he would look at this again and produce a follow-up report to the Parish Council on this matter.

II) To approve a draft letter to DCC and other Local Authorities in the LA7 in relation to the proposed new Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility (TVERF) in Teesside

The Committee reviewed the draft letter of opposition to the proposed TVERF. While the principle of opposition remained supported, Cllr Freeman expressed concern that the letter lacked viable alternatives. Cllr Ashfield and Cllr Friederichsen **agreed** to revise the letter to include concrete proposals around increased recycling and reference the Climate Emergency Response Plan. It was **agreed** that a revised letter should be circulated for approval before submission.

6b. To complete:

I) Update re: fundraising efforts to fund new green roof bus shelters

The Clerk reported on recent discussions with DCC regarding site selections. Three shelters are now being progressed and would include two on Lower Claypath and one on Church Street. The Clerk advised that Claire Murray-Kemp is presently drafting the S106 grant application for this project and this is underway and will be circulated shortly. The Committee thanked the Clerk and Claire for their excellent work on this.

II) Update on the proposal to reinstall the boundary stone between the City of Durham and Shincliffe parishes

Cllr Ashby reported that the stone remains in storage. A draft design for an interpretation board has been proposed but advice from DCC Highways has prompted a delay pending safety assessments. Councillor J Ashby advised that he is presently liaising with the Shincliffe History Group on this initiative and would report back in due course.

III) Update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Crossgate Councillor Sam Green

The Clerk advised that the final wording of the blue plaque has been agreed in consultation with key stakeholders. The Committee advised that it would consider a suitable person / persons to unveil the blue plaque, with the Chief Executive of Stonewall proposed as a possible guest.

IV) Update on the production of a Community Emergency Plan

Councillor C Lattin confirmed the Emergency Plan is now live and thanked all who contributed to its production. Councillor C Lattin also advised that approval will be sought from Full Council to proceed with printing a public-facing emergency card using the earmarked budget of £2,000 towards this. The Committee once again thanked Councillor C Lattin for her exhaustive efforts on this initiative.

6c. To note:

I) To consider the Committee's budget (following Full Council agreement in January) for financial year 2025/26

The Clerk shared the finalised budget and noted adjustments made at Full Council. The Clerk reminded Members that the portion of the funds earmarked for climate groups and a city planting scheme had either been removed or reallocated. The Clerk confirmed that the funding achieved through the landlords' levy remained ring-fenced.

II) Meeting regarding the Durham City Green Corridor project being delivered by DCC and the National Trust

The Committee **noted** that there will be a joint meeting on 17th March 2025 with the National Trust regarding their Durham City Green Corridor project. The Clerk confirmed that Councillors V Ashfield, C Lattin, L Brown and E Ashby had confirmed their attendance at this meeting.

III) Update on the Wear Rivers Trust/ Durham City Riverscape Community projects

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has now agreed the funding for both the Wear Rivers Trust and Durham City Riverscape Community as approved at the most recent Full Council meeting. The Clerk advised that he would be liaising with both organisations on the allocation of this funding towards their respective projects.

7. AOB

None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 1pm

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all participants for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(8th April 2025)**