

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 13:00pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C Lattin (Chair), V Ashfield (Vice-Chair), T Cleaver, G Bignardi, G Holland.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Councillor R Cornwell and Mr Jonathan Ling (member of the public).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor C Lattin was nominated by Councillor V Ashfield and seconded by Councillor G Holland. There being no other nominations, Councillor Lattin was duly **elected** Chair of the Environment Committee.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor V Ashfield was nominated by Councillor C Lattin and seconded by Councillor G Holland. There being no other nominations, Councillor Ashfield was duly **elected** Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee.

3. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, including new members. Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillor F Robinson.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

5. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH APRIL 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings

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

Mr Jonathan Ling addressed the Committee on the issue of pollution in the River Wear and outlined his concerns regarding recurring foam pollution, particularly evident in the mornings, and his interactions with the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water. The Committee thanked Mr Ling for his contribution and agreed that action must be taken.

7. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Committee warmly welcomed the latest report and thanked Kirk and Ant for their outstanding work, particularly in resolving the encampment at the Sands and engaging proactively with recycling initiatives. The Clerk suggested incorporating the report into a broader monthly newsletter to improve public awareness of the service.

8. PARISH COUNCIL KEY PRIORITIES AND THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair provided an overview of the Committee's Terms of Reference and priorities for new Members, outlining the broad scope of the Committee's remit across environmental, social and planning matters.

9a. TO DECIDE:

I. Discussion regarding concerns reported about the level of pollution within the River Wear

The Committee heard a detailed report from Mr Ling and a subsequent discussion followed. Concerns were raised about water quality, potential health risks, and the adequacy of regulatory oversight. The Committee agreed the following actions:

The Clerk **agreed** to write to the Environment Agency to express the Parish Council's concerns over reports of high ammonia levels within the River Wear but on the basis that the Committee has data to support such an approach to the EA. As such, Councillor Grenville Holland **agreed** to contact an academic at Durham University about independent water testing and Councillor C Lattin **agreed** to engage with the Wear Rivers Trust and Paddleboard Club for further insight and cooperation.

II. Planning for Green Move Out/ Move In operation

The Committee agreed to re-launch the appeal for financial contributions to fund extra waste collections. The Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair **agreed** to produce a letter and revisit letting agents. Volunteers will be sought for envelope stuffing and delivery.

The Chair summarised the latest updates including the phased rollout of weekly food waste collections (2026) and soft plastics (2027). These initiatives were welcomed. The Committee also **agreed** to fund a reprint of the recycling leaflet for students, to be distributed both via post and through landlords at key collection times.

III. To consider a project to encourage student landlords to improve the exterior appearance of their properties

The Committee agreed this remained a key concern. After the Chair highlighted the specific case of a property in Gilesgate, the Clerk committed to continue to monitor this issue and update Members. Members supported a long-term project to highlight good practice among landlords and raise awareness of obligations around maintenance standards and agreed that the Parish Council should look to establish a "Rotten

Tomatoes" type of award to highlight poor practice as well as to highlight good landlords and well-maintained properties.

9b. TO COMPLETE:

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

The Clerk advised that the Council's funding application for new green roof bus shelters at Church Street and Lower Claypath was still under review and that the matter of ongoing maintenance had yet to be decided as DCC's Clean and Green team has indicated that they would not wish to maintain these shelters due to health and safety concerns about working at height.

The Committee suggested that the Clerk contacts the contractor who carried out the work to Lawson/ Laburnum so brilliantly for the Parish Council and assess the ongoing maintenance costs for this.

II. Update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Crossgate Councillor Sam Green

The Clerk advised that he is still seeking a VIP guest to unveil the blue plaque dedicated to Sam Green and thanked Councillor Cornwell for his support with this as the Clerk has now contacted the National LGBTQ+ Museum at Councillor Cornwell's suggestion, in order to enlist further support with this event.

The Committee **agreed** that the plaque should be unveiled by a VIP in order to highlight the national significance of this accomplishment. The Clerk advised that he would continue to work at this and keep the Committee updated.

III. Discussion on proposed meeting with DCC on recycling projects (TVERF)

The Clerk reported a positive early discussion with the new Head of Environment, Mr James Gilchrist, about joint working on sustainable planting and recycling. The Committee agreed that a formal meeting should be arranged to focus on joint recycling initiatives and community engagement, rather than re-opening objections to the TVERF decision.

Councillor G Holland proposed that the Committee arranges a visit to the existing incinerator facility in Teesside so that Members could gain an appreciation of the work involved with this facility.

IV. Update on planting plan for Summer 2025

The Committee discussed improvements to planters in the Viaduct area and agreed to prioritise this in the next phase of planting efforts.

10. AOB

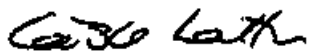
The Chair welcomed the enthusiasm of new Members and thanked all present for their ongoing commitment to the Committee's wide-ranging agenda. No further matters were raised.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 8th July 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom
Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom
Tuesday 14th October 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all participants for their attendance and 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
(8th July 2025)**