

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the City of Durham Parish Council's Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 10:30pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C. Lattin (in the **Chair**), V. Ashfield, G.Holland, G. Bignardi and F. Robinson.

Also present: Mr Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), Councillors L Brown and D Freeman.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor T Cleaver. The Chair accepted that Councillor L Brown was substituting for Councillor T Cleaver for the purposes of the meeting today.

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 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 11 November 2025 were presented for approval. Members confirmed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and no amendments were proposed. The minutes were therefore approved.

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

No members of the public were present and no public participation took place.

5. TO CONSIDER THE LATEST NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

Members received and considered the latest Neighbourhood Warden Report. The Chair invited comments, and Members expressed collective appreciation for the continued effectiveness and visibility of the wardens across the City. Specific reference was made to their intervention in resolving refuse-related issues at Metropolitan House and to their proactive engagement with both residents and students.

Members discussed ongoing concerns regarding refuse bins being left permanently on Back Western Hill, noting the obstruction caused to pedestrians and vehicles, as well as the associated litter and visual impact. It was acknowledged that a

previous warning letter had been issued but that the issue remained unresolved. Members agreed that a firmer approach was now required, including targeted enforcement action by the wardens and the issuing of a further, more explicit letter addressing Back Western Hill specifically.

The Clerk confirmed that this would be progressed in coordination with the Neighbourhood Wardens. Members also raised concerns regarding a collapsed wall on Back Western Hill which has remained in a dangerous and unsightly condition for an extended period.

It was reported that planning permission had been granted but that no remedial works had yet taken place. The Chair confirmed that Building Control had been asked to review the situation, and Members agreed that further follow-up was required to ensure progress.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

I) To approve the judging criteria for the Durham City Landlord of the Year Award

The Clerk presented a briefing note on proposed judging criteria for the Durham City Landlord of the Year Award, following a request from Full Council for greater clarity. Members undertook a detailed discussion on the purpose and scope of the award, agreeing that it should focus specifically on student landlords and not include purpose-built student accommodation providers or Durham University.

Members **agreed** that the *Rate Your Landlord* platform should be used solely to generate an initial shortlist based on tenant feedback, but that the Parish Council's assessment should then focus on matters not captured by the platform. These include the external appearance and upkeep of properties, responsiveness to Neighbourhood Wardens, cooperation in addressing anti-social behaviour, refuse management, and the wider impact on residential amenity and the City's appearance.

Members also **agreed** that consultation with residents' associations should form part of the assessment process and that Committee Members may undertake external inspections of shortlisted properties to inform decision-making.

It was **agreed** that the award title should be refined to clearly reflect its student housing focus and community impact, and that the final judging criteria should be presented as an appendix to the existing report rather than rewriting it entirely. The Clerk undertook to draft and circulate the proposed criteria for comment.

II) To consider the planting priorities for the City in financial year 2026/27

The Committee considered planting priorities for the forthcoming financial year, with particular reference to the fruit tree giveaway and bulb planting schemes. Members noted the significant success of the November fruit tree giveaway, both in terms of community engagement and increased footfall for local independent traders. It was agreed that the scheme should become an annual November event, recognising that this is the optimal time for planting bare-rooted trees and that regularity would help manage expectations.

Members **agreed** the following provision priorities and budget allocations for planting during 2026-27:

City planting plan	Budget
Spring bulbs (parish wide)	£4,000
Fruit trees (Market Day in November)	£4,000
Viaduct planters (replacement x 4)	£1,500
Viaduct planters (maintenance for all in Summer)	£2,500
Hanging baskets (Lower Claypath)	£2,000
Lamp post baskets (North Road)	£6,000

III) To consider priorities following decision on Section 106 application to fund new green roof bus shelters

Members noted the outcome of the Section 106 application relating to green roof bus shelters and acknowledged that, while funding had not been secured, the work undertaken had informed wider discussions on greening infrastructure and clean air priorities. Members agreed that every reasonable attempt had been made to try and secure this funding for this priority and **agreed** to not pursue this initiative any further for the foreseeable.

IV) To consider the response from DCC Portfolio Holder regarding Clean Air and upcoming Environmental Plan

Members noted the response received from the Durham County Council Portfolio Holder regarding clean air and the forthcoming Environmental Plan, agreeing that this would be revisited once further detail becomes available.

6b. To complete:

I) Update on the duckpond project initiative

The duckpond project was reported to be progressing, with further engagement planned to identify practical next steps. The Clerk highlighted that the information board had now been completed and that he was seeking the relevant permissions to install the information board and new trough into the Duck Pond area.

II) Update on the Shincliffe boundary stone project

The Shincliffe boundary stone project was reported to be nearing completion, subject to final permissions and installation arrangements. The Clerk advised that he was liaising with the relevant teams within DCC to complete this.

III) Update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Dr Mo Mowlam

Members also received an update on the proposed new blue plaque commemorating former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Dr Mo Mowlam. It was reported that initial discussions had been positive and that further liaison with relevant stakeholders within the University would continue.

7. AOB

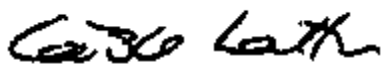
None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

10th February 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom
10th March 2026 at 10:30am via Zoom

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

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(10th February 2026)**