

City of Durham Parish Council

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27th February 2019

Dear Councillor,

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 I hereby give you notice that a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in **ROOM 1, ALINGTON HOUSE, 4 NORTH BAILEY, DURHAM, DH1 3ET on 5TH March 2019 AT 17:30** to transact the following business: -

- 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2019.**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**
- 5. MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY RE: SNOW CLEARANCE VOLUNTARY PROJECT** – report included.
- 6. MEETING WITH DCC CLEAN AND GREEN TEAM** – report included.
- 7. CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESOLUTION** – report included.
- 8. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES,
KEY PRIORITIES**
 - (i) Involving young people: oral report**
 - ii) Clean and Green a) business frontages;
b) (dealt with above)**
 - iii) A167: receive oral report**
- 8. AOB** (Please note for discussion only, not decision making)
- 9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.**

19th March; 16 April (proposed)

And pursuant to the provisions of the above-named act, I Hereby Summon You to attend the said meeting.

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CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 12th February 2019 at 17:30 in Room S1, St. Leonard's School Sixth Form Block, Durham. DH1 4NG

Present:

Councillors V Ashfield (Chair), E Ashby, J Elmer, M Ross, J Atkinson and R Ormerod.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, 3 members of the public and Oliver Sherratt, DCC Head of Direct Services.

1. WELCOME AND RECEIPT FOR APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all attendees. Apologies were received from Cllr S Cahill

2. PRESENTATION FROM OLIVER SHERRATT, DCC HEAD OF DIRECT SERVICES.

The Chair welcomed Mr Sherratt and thanked him for attending the Environment Committee meeting. Mr Sherratt firstly started by stating that he was no longer a Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services at DCC but had changed roles to Head of Direct Services at Durham County Council.

Mr Sherratt began his presentation by discussing the success of Durham City in the Britain in Bloom competition. Mr Sherratt advised that this sits within his own team's responsibility and he was delighted that Durham won the gold award in the best city category. Mr Sherratt credited the success to a lot of partnership working within Durham to achieve this prestigious award. Further to this, Mr Sherratt advised that, not only had Durham City won in this category, but had also been invited back to take part in a champion of champions competition this year. Mr Sherratt advised that he, his team and other partners will be keen to continue this work. Mr Sherratt advised that he was also keen to work with the Parish Council on this and to hear our ideas further.

Mr Sherratt also advised that one of his current top priorities was to improve the appearance of Durham's towns and villages. Mr Sherratt advised that the County Council had consulted on ways in which to improve the quality of towns and villages. One of the initiatives which had arisen from the consultation was "Operation Spruce Up" – an initiative whereby Mr Sherratt's team went around the towns and villages of Durham, focused on one per month and really worked to vastly improve the quality of that area. Mr Sherratt advised that that too had won a national award from the "Keep Britain Tidy" campaign.

Mr Sherratt also discussed the large number of events happening in the City of Durham Parish soon, not least the Durham Lumiere, the Miner's Gala and the 5K run. Mr Sherratt advised that his team were doing their very best to facilitate these events and get cleared up after the events as soon as possible afterwards. One issue Mr Sherratt did remark on was the issue of recycling. Mr Sherratt advised that a report on single-use plastic had been put before the Cabinet of

DCC and they had approved this and hoped that others would take up the pledge to cut out single-use plastics.

Mr Sherratt advised that one of his key priorities was around future-proofing key services. Mr Sherratt advised that the Government had issued a Waste Strategy from 2023 and this could potentially mean that a separate food collection may become mandatory from 2023 which would have a big impact on services. Equally so would the introduction of deposit schemes.

Mr Sherratt also spoke about the issue of garden waste – a paid for service from users of garden waste bins – advising that DCC continued to pay for this to be composted. That said, Mr Sherratt also advised that DCC had just gained planning permission to introduce composting pods in Coxhoe to allow for a much more efficient method of composting garden waste in the County.

Mr Sherratt also advised that a big issue in the City of Durham Parish is the issue of trade waste. He advised that the use of several different private collectors of waste was not best practise and that he and his team were looking to see what could be done in the long-term to resolve this matter.

Neighbourhood protection, neighbourhood watch and the prevention of enviro-crime were also large parts of Mr Sherratt's team's remit. Mr Sherritt advised that fly tipping across the County had dropped by 8% in comparison with the same figures from last year. Mr Sherritt advised that what some Parish Councils have done is to hire their own wardens to try and further prevent the issue of fly tipping. He advised that this may be something which the Parish Council may wish to consider in future.

Mr Sherratt advised that he was also aware that the Parish Council had been in discussions with DCC about the transfer of the Allotments on Larches Road. He advised this sat within his team.

Mr Sherratt finished by saying that his remit is soon to be changing and he will shortly be losing "building control" from his remit and would instead have "environment and design" as part of his new remit.

The Chair asked Members if they had any queries for Mr Sherratt. Cllr Ormerod asked whether or not the garden waste collection – a paid for service by residents – generated a profit. Mr Sherratt advised that this year it may be the case that this just about broke even on costs, however previously this was not the case and this therefore had to be a subsidised service.

Cllr Elmer touched on the forthcoming meeting between reps of the Parish Council and Jimmy Bennett and his "Clean and Green" team. He asked how the Parish Council could best add to services already provided. Mr Sherratt advised that he would be happy to support the Parish Council on this and that this needed to be a Parish-led project.

Cllr E Ashby advised that she was pleased that the Environment brief was moving to Mr Sherratt's team and not sitting within planning. She asked whether there would be a possibility of introducing green walls in Durham. Mr Sherratt advised that this was something which had been looked at however concerns

were raised at the time regarding the maintenance of these sorts of walls but that he was aware of other areas which did do this sort of thing. A member of the public advised that the M&S store in Newcastle had this exact same thing.

Cllr E Ashby also asked whether there was any possibility of expanding Britain in Bloom to outside areas such as Neville's Cross. Mr Sherratt advised that this could potentially be possible county-wide. As an example, Chester-le-Street had recently won in their category of Britain in Bloom.

Cllr Elmer remarked that he felt that DCC ought to explore introducing wildflower meadows, which require less maintenance and stay beautiful for longer.

The Clerk asked whether there was anyone at DCC who may have data on how many HMOs existing within the City of Durham Parish. Mr Sherratt provided the name of an officer to speak to about this as a starting point.

The Chair requested whether green walls were something which could be done retrospectively. Mr Sherratt advised that this was certainly possible.

The Chair also asked if the logo (when finally agreed) of the Parish Council could also be represented by flowers on green land in the Parish. Mr Sherratt advised that this is possible and he felt this was a good idea.

Cllr Elmer asked about the food collection and whether any of the food collection could be used for digestion and energy production. Mr Sherratt advised that this may be the cause, however if this proved too expensive, subsidies would be required from Central Government.

3. DECLERATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R Ormerod declared an interest in all matters relating to discussion about the A167 due to him living in close proximity to the road.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST TWO MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meetings held on the 15th January 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record, subject to "diesel-run generator" being changed to "diesel-run vehicle" in item 2 of the Minutes and - under the same item - the phrase "...using a diesel-run generator" be amended to state "...using a diesel-run vehicle or generator".

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the St. Leonard's School Council attended the meeting and asked if the Council could consider a bike trail or a dog trail in Whorton Park and, as part of Britain in Bloom, whether a flower trail could also be introduced into the park.

One of the representatives also advised that the School Council had explored whether an ice rink could be possible in the park so the park is used all year round and not just in the summer. Parish Council Members advised that a

temporary skating rink had been done previously and had again been explored recently, however the cost implications meant that this idea did not go any further.

Another representative of the School Council also asked about the provision of playing fields and how the two new developments of New College and Aykley Heads would mean that there would be a substantial reduction in provision of fields for sports and leisure use. There was some concern from a member of the public that 80% of the land used for school recreation would be lost due to the Aykley Heads development. Mr Sherratt advised that he would ask someone from planning to contact the school directly about this. Cllr E Ashby felt that there may have been provision within legislation that the developer would need to provide alternative facilities for sports and leisure activity.

The Chair asked school Council reps what they thought about the introduction of a skate park in Whorton Park. They advised that they were aware of alternative provisions for this in other areas and expressed concern that skate parks may bring anti-social behaviour.

6. YOUTH PROJECTS

- (i) The Chair advised that she and Cllr M Ross were taking the proposed skate park idea forward and would report back to Committee.
- (ii) On volunteering project, Cllr E Ashby advised that she had an update on snow clearance for later in the Agenda.

7. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

- (i) Clean & Green – Cllr V Ashfield asked for an update on the business frontages project. Cllr J Atkinson reported that she had received contact details of a DCC Officer from Cllr Elmer and would be taking this issue forward.
Traffic / Air condition – The Chair felt that the issue of the 181 and heavy vehicles rerouting to A190 needed to be looked at and she would take this forward.
Cllr J Elmer also advised that he was disappointed by the response by DCC as to the query raised at the last Environment Committee meeting in relation to air quality and traffic flows and had requested whether or not SCOOT had improved congestion. Cllr J Elmer also advised that he had received a copy of an FOI request response on this very matter and had found this vague and had had it reported that aspects of the queries wouldn't be looked at as it would result in workload over that of 18 hours. Cllr Elmer expressed concern that the data as to the outcomes of SCOOT were being withheld and that DCC ought to take an evidence-based approach.
Cllr E Ashby advised that it may not be worth pursuing the same line of inquiry again as it was clear the information requested was not forthcoming.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that DCC ought to have the data to hand in order to access the success or otherwise of the SCOOT initiative. Cllr R Ormerod advised that he had received feedback from residents that they felt this had improved traffic flows, however felt that this needed to be backed up by the science as well as the perception.

- (ii) A167 – Cllr E Ashby advised that a working group had yet to be set up to look into this, however that she hoped at least 3 would join this from local residents' groups.

8. CITY SCENE TEAM UPDATE.

Cllr E Ashby felt that the name "City Scene Team" ought to be adopted as the working groups official name. All members were in agreement with this.

As part of preparations for the meeting with Jimmy Bennett and Andre from the Clean and Green team at DCC, Member deliberated over what they would like to see come out of the meeting. The Clerk advised that he would like Jimmy and his team to provide a steer on where the Parish Council could add value to existing services already provided by Jimmy's team at DCC. Councillors agreed a list of tasks they'd like any new contracted out service to carry out to enhance the area. There was some discussion on allotments and the Clerk advised that it was highly unlikely that the Parish Council would want to carry this out as the current site on Larches Road is maintained on a self-managed basis.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Councillors unanimously agreed to recommend the proposed Environmental and sustainability policy to the Full Council for this to be formally adopted.

Cllr E Ashby made the point that she felt that all communications from the Parish Council should also include some green/environmental accreditation.

10. AOB

Cllr Elmer advised that he had been made aware of a climate emergency motion to become carbon neutral within 12 years had been put forward for the next Full County Council meeting. He advised that he would ask for this to be on the Agenda for the next Environment Committee meeting.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Environment Committee would take place on the 5th March 2019 - 17:30 to 19:30 hrs

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

Signed

Chair City of Durham Parish Council Environment Committee

ITEM 5: MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY RE: SNOW CLEARANCE VOLUNTARY PROJECT

Meeting: Charlie Walker Opportunities Officer DSU. PC Cllr Esther Ashby 14.02.19

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of a joint student volunteer / Parish Council project to support members of local communities in need of assistance e.g. during bad weather.

Aims

- to build neighbourhood cohesion
- to combat social isolation
- to provide support for those needing assistance in e.g. path clearance
- to provide opportunities for using students' skills and strengths

The following areas were discussed

Insurance - DSU has insurance for students in projects organised and managed in house. Charlie will check with their appropriate officer the PLI aspect.

Client identification - GDPR issues mean this couldn't be PC based e.g. via residents' groups because details would then need to be shared with DSU. Better that DSU creates a register direct. This would probably be via an online form with volunteers delivering and offering help to fill in a paper copy if needed. Charlie will check this with his legal colleagues.

Resources - Equipment would be held at a central location, probably Dunelm House. It would be signed in and out at Reception by volunteers using their campus card as a deposit.

When required e.g. in snow volunteers would be summoned to Dunelm House and bussed out to site in small groups. DSU has a minibus.

There would be a phone number /e mail address for clients to contact the service which would be run/ monitored by the service leader with whom DSU would liaise.

Charlie did not consider the project to be outside their consideration - they currently have about 250 projects on their books.

Action –

He will circulate their mailing list to test the water by advertising for someone interested in the position of Service Leader for a new project.

He will do the necessary checks with DSU's legal team.

He does an 'Opportunities for Volunteers' e mail once a fortnight or put it in a 'Presidents' e mail to every student.

EA expressed reservations about promotion on Facebook at this early stage and he agreed. EA will contact Charlie again after PC has discussed.

ITEM 6: MEETING WITH DCC CLEAN AND GREEN TEAM–NEEDS ANALYSIS. 15.2.19

Present DCC Officers Andrew Jackson, Jimmy Bennet, Cllrs Jonathon Elmer, Esther Ashby, CofD Parish Clerk Adam Shanley

Allotments - Larches Road will continue under current management committee.

Bike racks

Provision of bike racks

a. flower tubs in Fowler's Yard (back of Market Hall). *Action – discuss with Victoria Lloyd*

b. other locations *Action - consider proposals from members as appropriate.*

Churchyards

Most are the responsibility of the parent church. Some are maintained by DCC. *Action - none but propose PC supports action for biodiversity gains if opportunities arise (N Plan.)*

Dog bins and litter

Dog bin locations are problematic. Normal bins can be used for dog waste but advice stickers are not allowed under Heritage rules. DCC officers recommended employing/contracting an Environmental Enforcement Officer who could issue fines to individuals and businesses and has statutory powers to make businesses clear litter. *Action – bring into wider procurement exercise OR pay for service extension from DCC (DCC can train Parish Staff to take enforcement action and Parish can adopt powers)*

Grass cutting

DCC officer will forward their annual grass cutting etc schedule. Most areas cut 12 – 16 times *pa* depending on weather. Steep banks and roundabouts made financially impossible by H and S requirements and need to control traffic during work.

Cutting of Walkergate riverside below Milburngate Bridge pending.

The riverbanks from The Racecourse upstream to The Sands. Popular with locals and visitors, especially the peninsula. The immediate surrounds are not cut, invasive weed becomes established and debris accumulated in the river to the sides. (see final para below.)

Crossgate Peth - the tree area on one side and the overgrown area opposite, needs attention. *Action - Grass cutting to be part of broader procurement exercise.*

Potential for PC sponsorship of roundabout maintenance.

Snow clearance and gritting

DCC have several multipurpose vehicles for a variety of uses which other PC's already use on a *quid pro quo* basis e.g. grass cutting/provision of flower beds.

DCC service might be supplemented by PC on

Priority 2 areas – clearing and gritting of bus shelters

Priority 3 areas – bungalows and steep access residential properties

Some PC's have SLA's to clear P3 areas.

(Any contractor must have legal cover) Action – further discussion required with Highways to identify how best to add value on clearance and grit supply.

Gum and graffiti removal

DCC currently clean Market Place to Magdelene Steps to Mil. Square fortnightly.

DCC carried out major gum clearance in city centre June/July '18 with deep cleaning and surface treatment to aid removal in future (Nordic Chemicals). DCC very keen to get PC support with this - economies of scale to reduce cost.

DCC + PC proposal to carry out gum removal from North Road to Providence Row traffic lights and add this area to the fortnightly clean schedule. *Action – 1. Obtain costs for pre-treatment, then for extension of DCC cleaning coverage. 2. Investigate additional funding from BID, Student Castle 106 money and the University.*

Graffiti removed free within 24 hrs from householder's property if offensive otherwise with 3 days' notice. Fee for business property.

Parks

DCC responsible for Wharton Park. 'Pocket parks' at Allergate, Laburnun Avenue and Lowes Barn bank.

Need to tidy up land at Highgate (owned by DCC) and potentially turn into sensory garden/park? *Action – create landscape design for Highgate.*

Elvet Park Awaiting DCC action on final design. Officer to provide PC with map of the area of the river banks in DCC ownership.

DCC officer suggests green mini park area on grass slope between Walkergate slip road and Mill Bridge. Action PC to investigate.

Greening of Millennium Square on hold due to DCC's RED's ongoing designs for improvement. Action Continue with proposal for PC logo in green format.

Sweeping/ path clearing/ litter picking

Potential need for PC employee for 15 hours per month – litter picking, sweeping road sides and general maintenance. *Action – part of wider procurement exercise*

Planting

Become a Brit in Bloom partner with branding gain. Sponsor flower displays for B in B and/or seek quotes from DCC for PC's own design. Opportunities for partnership working on other projects eg flower beds along the A167.

Action: Part of wider procurement exercise

Other matters for possible PC Environment Committee action.

- Provision of lifebuoys
- Tidying of the river banks between the Race course and the Sands.
- Funding for community groups' environment projects.
- Window screening for empty retail premises.
- Tidying of Crossgate Peth (maybe plots in private ownership).
- Maintenance of signage for the city sculpture trail

Item 7 - Climate Emergency Resolution

To facilitate the reduction of carbon emissions, the council resolved to:

- I. Commit to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, to include scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions². Create a carbon audit and roadmap for achieving this aim by the end of 2019.
- II. Create a grant pot to encourage and enable carbon-reduction schemes within Durham. The primary criterion for applications to the fund should be CO2 savings per pound spent. This pot will be £10k for the 2019-20 financial year.
- III. Include environmental implications of recommendations in officer reports alongside legal, financial and equality implications. These will include the impact of recommendations on CO2 emissions as well as any other relevant environmental factors.
- IV. Seek ways to facilitate and encourage our community in reducing direct and indirect CO2 emissions and to become resilient to changes caused by the changing climate. We will take active steps where possible to encourage:
 - a) More sustainable transport
 - b) Reductions in energy use in homes, businesses and elsewhere
 - c) Co-operation with organisations seeking to develop low carbon and community-led affordable housing in Stroud
 - d) Use and development of renewable energy sources
 - e) Production, sale and consumption of locally sourced food
 - f) Reduction in consumption of animal products
 - g) Any other methods of achieving the aims above

Background

IPCC report and context

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report in October 2018¹ on the subject of 'Global Warming of 1.5°C'. The report is an international effort to summarise the current scientific consensus on how society might limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, as well as the likely consequences of this and greater levels of warming. The report states that:

- Human activity has already caused 1°C of warming to the earth.
- To limit warming to 1.5°C it will be necessary to halve global carbon emissions by 2030 and to achieve near-zero net emissions by 2050.
- The consequences of 2°C warming are significantly worse than 1.5°C warming across all areas considered in the report.

At present, humanity is falling far short of the action necessary to limit warming to even 2°C. The likely global failure to achieve this target would result in increasingly severe consequences including very large scale water and food shortages, widespread flooding, heat related morbidity and large scale destruction of the natural world. These would result in substantial political and economic instability. The magnitude of the changes is difficult to quantify exactly, but the likely results are grave, both internationally and more locally. These changes are already in progress, and are likely to severely affect all of society before the end of the century.

Our place in reducing CO2 emissions

- City of Durham Parish Council acknowledges the urgent need for global society to reduce carbon emissions. We recognise the part which we have to play and commit to taking an active role in achieving this, by:
- Pro-actively reducing our CO2 emissions as an organisation
- Seeking to encourage and enable our community to decrease their emissions and improve their resilience to climate change
- Seeking to influence the policies of other organisations to encourage them to reduce their emissions.
- The council acknowledges that 'business as usual' is not an option in the face of the climate emergency, and that society in its current form is unsustainable. Therefore, to meet our obligations below, we may need to strategically reassess and adjust the scope of our current activities.

References and notes

1. www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/
2. "Scope 1 and 2 cover direct emissions sources (e.g., fuel used in company vehicles and purchased electricity), scope 3 emissions cover all indirect emissions due to the activities of an organization."
www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions/

ITEM 8: Environment Committee Frontages Awards Project

Meeting: Cllrs. Judith Atkinson Esther Ashby Feb 18th, 2019

The purpose of the meeting was to begin to draw together a proposal for a possible City Frontage Improvement award. This would run during the summer months with the aim of promoting the city centre as a welcoming and attractive place to live and visit.

1. Aim for the project - to identify and reward city centre premises between the Viaduct and Gilesgate including the Peninsula and Elvet that can evidence either:
 - improvement in the cleanliness and healthiness of their frontage
 - an addition to the cultural offer of their frontage
 - improvement in the environmental attractiveness of their frontage
2. Which frontages - both commercial and residential, perhaps in separate categories.
3. Financial support - Env. Comm. budget, AAP City Centre promotion T & F group, BID Budget needed for:
 - promotion in local press
 - awards ceremony
 - prizes
 - judge hospitality
 - admin
4. Competition to run from May 1st to end of September
5. Entries to be invited after promotion in press and on Parish website. Applications online
6. Judging by:
 - a) portfolio of evidence and,
 - b) visit by team of 3 judges - Possibly reps from VCD, DCC C & G team and A N Other.
7. Small awards presentation ceremony in the Town Hall first week in October
8. Award to be by framed certificate and use of logo on promotional materials etc. Possible trophy or plaque to display for the year
9. Next: Action 1 - Need to consult with City Centre manager and BID to avoid duplication and clashes with already programmed events
10. Next: Action 2 - Need to refine criteria for judging e.g:
 - attractive, welcoming windows and entrance
 - services offered, disabled access and seating
 - pavement cleaning, sweeping, anti-litter provision
 - greening, biodiversity awareness
 - provision for particular groups e.g. the elderly, children.