

City of Durham Parish Council

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8th April 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 **LANTERN ROOM, DURHAM TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, DURHAM, DH1 3NJ** on **16TH APRIL 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. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 4. DISCUSSION WITH IAN HOULT, DCC NEIGHBOURHOOD PROTECTION MANAGER ON ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT OFFICER PROPOSAL.**
- 5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH MARCH 2019.**
- 6. MATTERS ARISING**
- 7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES,**
 - i) Update on DSU Snow Clearance Voluntary Project**
 - ii) Update on Clean and Green tasks**
 - iii) Involving young people**
 - iv) Business frontages**
- 8. AOB** (Please note for discussion only, not decision making)
- 9. TO IDENTIFY FUTURE TOPICS FOR DEBATE WITH DCC OR OTHER PARTNERS**
- 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

Tuesday 14th May – 17:30pm – venue to be confirmed.

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 19th March 2019 at 17:30 in Room 1, Alington house, 4 North Bailey, Durham, DH1 3ET.

Present:

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Andrew Jackson, Sarah Billingham and Amy Hamilton (DCC Officers) and Cllr L Brown.

1. WELCOME AND RECEIPT FOR APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all attendees. Apologies were received from Cllr M Ross.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr S Cahill declared an interest in Item 8 on the Agenda, owing to his employment at Durham Students Union.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2019.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2019 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to an amendment requested by Cllr E Ashby on the gum removal task identified under item 6 of the Agenda.

4. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising from the Minutes of 5th March 2019.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

The Chair invited Cllr L Brown to speak prior to the item relating to Regeneration and Local services. Cllr L Brown attended the meeting to discuss the matter of a skate park in the Parish for young people. Cllr Brown advised that she had looked all over Neville's Cross for a suitable location and had found none, however the former bowling green site had been suggested as a possible location for such a skate park and Cllr L Brown advised that she wished to raise this with the Environment Committee as she was aware this sat within the Committee's priorities.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she and Cllr M Ross had carried out consultations with local schools and there wasn't much appetite for a skate park – particularly in a location such as Whorton Park, which is a multi-users space. Some of the schools had conducted a survey amongst students and there was a feeling that such a skate park would result in anti-social behaviour.

Cllr L Brown advised that she felt that if the University Business school application had any S106 money attached, this may be able to be used to pay for this facility and, in addition to this, Cllr Brown advised that there may be

additional funding available for such a facility with skateboarding now becoming an official Olympic sport.

Cllr J Elmer asked whether DCC were still considering making the former bowling green a playpark area. Andrew Jackson advised that this was only a proposal and Amy Hamilton advised that although a high-level consultation had been carried out on this proposal, there was no funding available for such a scheme.

Cllr J Elmer advised that DCC may have carried out an Open Space Needs Assessment that would identify current levels of provision for different types of open space and whether the met local needs. Cllr V Ashfield asked if Officers might be able to provide this to the Parish Council.

Cllr L Brown thanked the Committee for their time and left the meeting.

6. DISCUSSION WITH ANDREW JACKSON, SARAH BILLINGHAM AND AMY HAMILTON ON CLEAN AND GREEN PRIORITIES

The Chair welcomed Sarah Billingham and Amy Hamilton to the meeting. The Clerk advised that Sarah and Amy had attended the meeting to discuss the issue of temporary screening of empty shop units in the City centre. Sarah began by thanking the Committee for inviting them along to the meeting. The Clerk asked whether this project would be a financially viable one for the Parish Council and whether DCC had a preferred supplier for this service. Sarah advised that DCC does have a preferred supplier for this service, who was procured last year. Sarah advised that the County Council had mainly focused on Silver street where there were a number of empty units and had contacted landlords to see if there was any interest in allowing the County Council to install some temporary screening to improve the appearance of the High street. Amy advised that the only take up of the scheme thus far had been the former Marks and Spencer unit. The County Council had submitted a planning application to install temporary outdoor vinyl advertising screens to the former Marks and Spencer unit and the cost for the design, planning permission, creation and installation was approximately £25-30,000. The Clerk advised that this would be well beyond the scope of the Parish Council.

The Clerk asked if it were possible to seek contributions from other businesses and/or organisations to advertise their goods and services in the temporary screening. Amy advised that this would entail an uplift in the business rates and was generally not something which was pursued.

Cllr E Ashby asked whether the Parish Council would need to seek three quotations for providing the screening. The Clerk confirmed this to be the case.

Cllr V Ashfield asked whether some alternative screening such as the provision of internal stand-up roller banners could be provided instead. Amy and Sarah confirmed that this could be possible and they did not feel a planning application would be needed for that sort of screening, however they advised that they would send guidance notes on this to the Clerk.

The Chair thanked both Amy and Sarah for their time and they both left the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Andrew Jackson to the meeting and thanked him for coming along to discuss the clean and green priorities identified at an earlier meeting with Andrew Jackson and Jimmy Bennett.

The Clerk advised that (at the previous Environment Committee meeting) the following tasks had been identified and the Committee considered these one by one with Andrew Jackson: (Items in bold were agreed at the 5th March Environment Committee meeting):

- Provision of bike racks/ flower tubs in Fowler's Yard (back of Market Hall) – Cllr E Ashby advised that she was intending to look into the ownership of this land with Colin Wilkes, however as he is presently away, she had been unable to do so. Andrew Jackson advised that he felt that the land in question is within the ownership of the County Council. The Clerk advised that he would send a picture of the sort of bike rack/ flower tub the Committee had in mind. Cllr E Ashby also advised that she would enquire as to whether the structures themselves could be provided free of charge still. The Clerk advised that the planting of flowers in the tubs would need to be carried out according to the Council's procurement processes.
- **Employing (contracted) an Environmental Enforcement Officer who could issue fines to individuals and businesses and has statutory powers to make businesses clear litter – the Committee agreed to take this forward as a proposal for 2 half days (8 hours) per month at the last meeting and the Clerk confirmed that he was in ongoing discussions with Ian Houlton on this.**
- Grass cutting of Gilesgate Bank – the Committee decided at the last meeting not to proceed with this due to the high cost of compliance with the health and safety aspect of carrying this out. Cllr V Ashfield advised that she is contacted by residents on this particular issue. Andrew Jackson advised that this area is cut once per year and Highways are adverse to this happening more frequently as this would involve the closing of the road which creates a lot of disruption.
- **Grass cutting of area opposite Walkergate – although the Committee agreed to take this forward as a proposal, Andrew Jackson advised that if the Parish Council were to fund the initial works to the site, the County Council would thereafter carry out 14 cuts per season to the site at no further charge to the Parish Council.**
- **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 – the Committee decided to look into this further at the last meeting and Andrew Jackson advised that the riverbanks were largely owned by either the University or the Cathedral. Andrew advised that the AAP formerly funded someone to take care of this area and this may be a good place for the Parish Council to look into investigating cost implications, etc.**

- Crossgate Peth - the tree area on one side and the overgrown area opposite, needs attention – at the last meeting the Committee decided not to take this forward until questions over land ownership were clarified, however Andrew Jackson advised that he would look into this matter further and report back to the Parish Council.
- **Snow clearance and gritting of Priority 2 areas and Priority 3 areas – the Committee was already looking to progress this through the snow clearing project with the Students Union and therefore this was dealt with under a separate item on the Agenda.**
- **Need to clean and carry out gum removal of North Road all the way to Providence Row traffic lights – need to carry this out once every two weeks. The Committee agreed to take this forward as a proposal at the last meeting and also investigate shared cost of phased surface treatment of North Road and Claypath to assist ongoing gum removal. Andrew Jackson advised that this would be very expensive and potentially beyond the scope of the Parish Council. Cllr R Ormerod said he felt this would make a huge difference and ought to be pursued. The Clerk asked Andrew Jackson to send a cost for the treatment work, which Andrew advised would make cleaning gum a lot easier.**
- **Need to tidy up land at Highgate (owned by DCC) and potentially turn into sensory garden/park - the Committee agreed to take this forward as a proposal. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council may wish to look into this further with a section 106 agreement money being attached to this. Cllr R Ormerod advised that all section 106 money for the Elvet and Gilesgate division had all been allocated to the Elvet Park proposals. Cllr V Ashfield advised that she felt that the Highgate project could be moved on very rapidly compared to the Elvet Park project which was at proposal stage at present. Andrew Jackson recommended that the Committee carry out a site visit with DCC Officers and it may be the case that DCC could carry out some basic works to the site at no charge to the Parish Council.**
- **Member of City Scene staff for 15 hours per month – litter picking on road sides and washing street signs – Andrew Jackson advised that for 15 hours per month of this work, the Parish Council would be looking at a cost of around £465 if procured through the County Council.**
- **Finance flower towers for Durham in Bloom, street weed control and sustainable planting down Walkergate – the Committee agreed a proposal by Cllr V Ashfield to look to finance a large piece for the Durham in Bloom competition at a cost of £2,500 (ex VAT). The display would be based in the Market square after the Miner's Gala up until October and the Parish Council would be credited for this accordingly. This would be put forward as a recommendation to Full Council.**
- **Provision of temporary screening for empty shops – this item was discussed earlier in the meeting.**

The Chair thanked Andrew Jackson for attending the meeting and advised that the Clerk would be in touch to arrange dates for a site visit to both Highgate and Millburngate. Andrew Jackson left the meeting.

7. USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES FOR ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES.

The Clerk asked that this item be deferred until a later date.

8. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

i) Update on DSU Snow Clearance Voluntary Project.

Cllr S Cahill advised that he had discussed the matter of insurance further with his colleague and had been advised that students carrying out this project would be covered by the liability insurance of the DSU.

Cllr V Ashfield asked that Cllr S Cahill request that the DSU now look to gather a group of volunteers and the Parish Council would be able to provide the equipment for carrying this out thereafter. The Clerk reminded the Committee that the decision to purchase the equipment for this had been delegated to both the Chair of the Parish Council and the Chair of the Environment Committee.

Cllr S Cahill advised that the big task to be undertaken would be identifying where this work would be needed. Cllr E Ashby advised that there was a need to work with the local residents' groups on this. It was agreed that Cllr S Cahill would ask for his colleague to confirm in writing to the Clerk that the DSU is covered by its own insurance and they would manage the project. It was also agreed that Cllr E Ashby would provide the Clerk with contact details of the local residents' groups to help identify those residents in need of assistance whenever it snows.

ii) Update on clean and green tasks

It was felt that this matter had been sufficiently dealt with in the discussion with Andrew Jackson.

iii) Involving young people

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she and Cllr M Ross were looking to hold further meetings with the local schools and are keen to discuss their ideas about a skatepark further. Cllr V Ashfield also advised that she would be looking to get the children involved in a community litter pick at some point.

Cllr J Atkinson asked the Clerk whether she may be provided with an ID badge. The Clerk advised that this would happen once the new office for the Council is set up as Councillors will need to be provided with a security pass to gain access to the proposed new office, which could also be used as ID.

iv) Business frontages

Cllr J Atkinson advised that there were no further updates on this priority but that she had had a very positive meeting with Cllr E Ashby on this. Cllr E Ashby

advised that she and the Clerk had arranged a meeting with Adam De-athe from Durham BID in April to discuss this issue further. Cllr J Atkinson advised that she would like to attend this meeting also.

9. UPDATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE RESOLUTION

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she had been in contact with Cllr J Elmer on this matter and together they had agreed the draft of the report included at the meeting.

Cllr J Elmer felt that the important aspect of this was the inclusion of Environmental implications in all officer reports; getting the Parish Council to consider this important issue in everything they do.

It was agreed that this would be put forward as a recommendation to Full Council.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Environment Committee would take place on the following meeting on 16th April at 17:30pm.

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.