

City of Durham Parish Council

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Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81614843137>
Meeting ID: 816 1484 3137

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 **via Zoom** on **Tuesday 12th October at 1.00pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th SEPTEMBER 2021**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:**

5a. To decide:

- I) Update on plans to improve the riverbanks and weirs in Durham City – litter, invasive species, safety and water quality
- report by Cllr R Friederichsen on water quality included.
- II) Proposal from DCC to declare an ecological emergency – propose that the Parish Council makes a response.

5b. To complete:

- I) Durham in Bloom priorities for 2021-22
- II) Progressing the “Hallow Green/Greening the Viaduct 2021” project – including John Street and Bridge Street proposals
- III) History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk
- IV) *Shhh...* campaign update
- V) Plans for the COP26 event in Durham City
- VI) Progressing the cigarette butt campaign

5c. To note:

- I) Results of Northumbria in Bloom and Durham in Bloom
- II) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND

- III) Progressing the blue plaques scheme
- IV) Young People's Challenge update
- V) 7 Hills of Durham project update
- VI) Update on ongoing Section 106 projects – Battle of Neville's Cross and Ruth First Mural
- VII) Progressing the recycling stickers project, as agreed at September Full Council.

6. AOB (please note for information only and not for formal decisions).

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 9th November 2021

Tuesday 7th December 2021

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

Adam Shanley
Clerk City of Durham Parish Council

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 14th September 2021 at 13:00pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C Lattin (Chair), V Ashfield, S Walker, R Freiderichsen, D Freeman and R Hanson.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Cllrs E Ashby and L Brown (members of the public) and Mr Steve Walker (Stagecoach Managing Director)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13th JULY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr E Ashby advised that she was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 6 of the Agenda.

Cllr L Brown advised that she was attending the meeting to hear discussions on item 6 of the Agenda.

5. DISCUSSION WITH MR STEVE WALKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF STAGECOACH ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR STAGECOACH BUSES

The Chair welcomed Mr Steve Walker, Managing Director of Stagecoach to the meeting. Steve attended the meeting to discuss the efforts of Stagecoach to move to a more sustainable fleet of buses.

Steve advised that the biggest question facing the industry is how the bus operators switch from using diesel buses from both a cost and performance point of view. Steve advised that diesel is currently the cheapest way to operate buses however there is Government funding being provided at present to get operators to look at new technologies.

Steve advised that Stagecoach has tried electric, hydrogen and bio fuel buses. Steve advised that Stagecoach is at the forefront of trialling this from a bus operator perspective.

Steve advised that there are pros and cons with both electric and hydrogen technologies.

Steve advised that electric buses are reliable but have a limited range whereas hydrogen has the range but the technology is very unreliable.

Steve advised that hydrogen buses have been trialled and had not proven to be very successful, with Stagecoach pulling out of the project after 4 years.

Steve advised that Tees Valley has been trialling hydrogen hubs. As part of this, Stagecoach and Arriva are bidding for 20 new hydrogen buses.

Steve advised that electric buses need to be taken off for re-charging after 3-4 hours. Steve also advised that the cost of running an electric bus is similar to the costs of running a diesel bus over its lifetime, however the initial capital outlay is greater. Most electric buses at present will last 10-12 years.

Steve advised that DCC is currently looking to replace its park and ride buses with electric buses.

CLlr R Friederichsen asked if exchangeable batteries for electrical buses could be an option. Steve advised that this is not something that he is aware of but it is easier to rapid charge the buses for an hour during the day.

CLlr R Friederichsen also asked when a zero emissions fleet could be achievable. Steve advised that Stagecoach is currently looking at a 15-20 year plan for this but the pandemic has possibly delayed this.

The Clerk asked if there is a requirement for bus operators to be Euro 6 Standard. Steve advised that this is only the case within Air Quality Management Zones. Steve advised that, in Newcastle, only 33 of the 200+ fleet of buses are not Euro 6, which Steve advised is the highest you can go to in terms of emissions standard.

CLlr V Ashfield asked about the cost of retro-fitting diesel buses to make them Euro 6. Steve advised that the cost of this is approximately £16,000.

CLlr R Friederichsen advised that public transport is a huge issue in terms of the climate emergency. Steve agreed with CLlr Friederichsen and advised that the big issue is around how Local Authorities manage road space. Steve argued that more road space needs to be made available for public transport as a priority over cars, however this is proving difficult against the needs of car users.

Steve advised that more work is being undertaken to make using buses more attractive to the public – simpler fare systems, better timetables, bus operator infrastructure, etc.

Steve encouraged the Parish Council to get involved as a key stakeholder in all consultations in relation to this issue.

The Clerk asked what impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on passenger numbers. Steve advised that Stagecoach is seeing 77% of pre-pandemic levels of passengers but the biggest issue for Stagecoach as an operator is the shortage of drivers.

6. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

6a. To decide:

III) Climate lobbying report from Cllr R Friederichsen

Cllr R Friederichsen presented a report on climate activities by the Parish Council.

Cllr R Friederichsen advised that his report is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 proposes introducing a dedicated Climate Lead role to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the City of Durham Parish Council in tackling the climate emergency. Chapter 2 is dedicated to short term actions surrounding the COP26 climate talks. Chapter 3 proposes a tool and process to monitor CoDPC's path to net zero.

Cllr R Friederichsen reminded Members that the Parish Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and this acknowledges "that "business as usual" is not an option in the face of the climate emergency"

Cllr R Frierichsen advised that, to date, there is no clear and sufficient structure in the way that the Parish Council is organised to deliver the transformational change required to tackle the climate emergency with the urgent, sustained and strategic action which the Parish Council has committed to.

Under Chapter 1 of the report, Members **agreed** to recommend to Full Council to nominate and delegate authority to lead and coordinate any COP26 and Carbon accounting-related activities to a temporary Environmental Committee Climate Lead. Committee Members agreed that Cllr R Friederichsen should be proposed for this position.

Members also **agreed** to support the temporary Climate Lead in developing a Terms of Reference document for a Council-wide Climate Lead role.

Under Chapter 2 of the report, Cllr R Friederichsen proposed that three Durham young adult representatives be selected and supported to travel to COP26 in Glasgow and to empower these young adult representatives in their climate activism. The Clerk raised a number of risk and liability issues with this and Members **agreed** that local residents attending Glasgow already should be identified and asked to report back after the event. Members agreed that the Parish Council's involvement with these representatives should be after the event.

Cllr R Friederichsen also proposed that the Parish Council engages with residents and key local stakeholder groups to a) inform residents about proceedings in Glasgow and their local relevance; b) showcase progress made by the Parish council and other local stakeholders and c) continue climate-related consultations

Cllr R Friederichsen proposed that the Parish Council partners with Climate Action Durham (led by Kirsty Thomas) and others to offer a programme of

public engagement opportunities on 6 November. Various groups will organise activities on that day on Durham city market square. The CoDPC could erect a marquee which would provide a reasonably Covid safe outdoor gathering space where a to be finalised programme of talks, discussions, and information panels would take place involving residents, Councillors, climate activists, experts and politicians. The main anticipated cost would be the marquee rental. Members **agreed** this proposal with the agreed budget of £1,500 being allocated to this.

Under Chapter 3 of the report, Members **agreed** to propose to Full Council the use of the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool developed by Local Partnerships, as set out in the report. In doing so, Members also **agreed** to task the Clerk and Climate Lead to produce a 2020 baseline of the greenhouse gas emissions and a draft road map towards net zero by the end of October.

Members also **agreed** to task the Climate Lead to follow up and prepare a report and recommendations considering pros and cons of joining the Race to Zero challenge before the end of October 2021

Members also **agreed** to propose that Full Council accepts climate literacy training for all Councillors and staff at the Full Council meeting on 23 September 2021; with the aim of having started the training process by the end of October 2021.

IV) Reduction in Plastic Use (Young People's Challenge) - £1,000 allocated

6b. To complete:

VII) Durham In Bloom priorities for 2021-22

The Committee **agreed** to progress the remaining priorities for Durham in Bloom project for 2021-22. These being: the introduction of a wildflower meadow at Aykley Heads, £2000 towards bulbs and tree planting and the purchase of bulb planting equipment.

VIII) Progressing the "Hallow Green/Greening the Viaduct 2021" project

The Clerk advised that Committee Members had met in the Viaduct Area on Wednesday 8th September in order to discuss the various proposals and Members **agreed** the following proposals to progress as part of this project.

Proposal area 1 – corner of Laburnum Avenue (11 Juniper Way).

Size of planter: 35cm x 1.2m

Notes: private land and would require the removal of the small bush.



Proposal area 2 – Lawson Terrace (against wall to the rear of 36 Hawthorn Terrace)

Size of planter: 30cm x 2m

Notes: footpath needs to be 1500mm



Proposal area 3 – Mistletoe Street (alongside the back wall of 42 Hawthorn Terrace)

Size of planter: 30cm x 2m

Notes: footpath needs to be 1500mm. Planter to stretch out as far as utilities box.



Proposal area 4 – bottom of May Street (along the wall to 28 Hawthorn Terrace).

Size of planter: 30cm x 1.5m

Notes: need to consider highways safety implications as on a turn and road indicates “keep clear”.



Proposal area 5 – back alley between Laburnum Avenue and Lawson Terrace

Size of planter: walls stretch over 2m.

Notes: no vehicular access needed. Area frequent source of complaints and clear evidence of fly tipping.



Proposal area 6 – top of the back alley between Laburnum Avenue and Lawson Terrace – highly overgrown area.

Proposal: area to be cleared and some nice planting provided

Notes: check access to railway line, area heavily overgrown and on a gradient. No picture taken.

Proposal area 7 – corner of Hawthorn Terrace outside *En Beauté* store

Proposal: flower tower

Notes: need DCC approval as may block visibility splays going on highway.



Other proposals:

OP 1: Side alley to 21 Atherton Street

Proposal: planters inserted to the alley

Notes: no vehicular access



OP2: On concrete in front of Hanover Court main block in Allergate

Proposal: planters inserted to the cobbled section

Notes: There is a gradient however which may be a problem.



OP3: Paved area where Neville Street/Allergate and Crossgate meet.



Proposal: flower tower/planters inserted at pavement

Notes: check with DCC on visibility splays etc. Again a slight gradient but enough space that is not in the way of anyone.

IX) History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk

Cllr Carole Lattin advised that she would be approaching all relevant stakeholders to progress the history and wildlife information boards proposal.

X) Shhh...campaign update

The Clerk advised that the Shhh campaign would be delivered prior to Freshers' Week and this would include activities such as:

- Shhh posters going on lamp posts around the parish – the Parish Council's and the University's Neighbourhood Wardens are going to be installing these for us.
- Shhh A-boards going into the railway station (I'm dropping these off on Tuesday and these will go on each platform).
- Shhh virtual posters going into the BID's totems as well as across the whole of the University campus.
- Thousands of Shhh beer mats are going into every college bar and any and all applicable business premises who will take them.
- Social media promotion etc by us and other partners involved in the ASB group.

6c. To note:

VIII) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND

The Clerk advised that he was expecting to be able to collect and deliver the mosaic for the hospital earlier this week, however the representative at UHND had advised that further documentation was required before the hospital is able to accept this.

IX) Progressing the blue plaques scheme

The Clerk confirmed that the present position on the blue plaques was as follows:

Permission and wording agreed:

Daisy Edis
Market Hall
Station Cottages
Mary Gibson, Dora Heslop and Winifred Hindmarch

Permission only agreed:

Harrison House

Still to hear back/ be confirmed:

John Bright
Icy Smith
Kepier Hospital
Charley's Cross
William and John Henderson

X) Progressing the cigarette butt campaign

Members **agreed** to launch this campaign at the end of October with the boxes and cigarette pouches now having arrived.

XI) Young People's Challenge update

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she is continuing to engage with local schools on the Young People's Challenge projects.

XII) Update on improving "unloved" areas of the City – Bridge Street and John Street

The Clerk reported that the land at John Street is now clear and is ready for planting, as is the land at Bridge Street. It was agreed that plants should be sought for these areas as soon as possible from a local provider.

XIII) 7 Hills of Durham project update

The Clerk advised that the production of the map for the 7 Hills project is nearing completion and he hoped to have a final copy to Members in due course.

XIV) Update on ongoing Section 106 projects – Battle of Neville's Cross and Ruth First Mural

The Clerk advised that work is ongoing on preparations for the Battle of Neville's Cross commemorative activities and that the Ruth First mural is currently being restored by the original artist.

XV) Update on water dispenser proposal to reduce single-use plastics

The Clerk advised that he had received no response from Northumbrian Water on the water dispenser project and he would chase this up with them.

7. AOB

Members **agreed** the following leads on the various projects for the Environment Committee:

	Programmes	Lead / Support for Adam
1	Climate lobbying	RF RH
2	Reduction in Plastic Use (Young People's Challenge) - £1,000 allocated.	VA RH
3	Durham In Bloom priorities for 2021-22	VA CL SW
4	Progressing the "Hallow Green/Greening the Viaduct"	SW VA
5	History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk	CL
6	Shhh...campaign update	AFS
7	Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND	AFS
8	Progressing the blue plaques scheme	AFS
9	Progressing the cigarette butt campaign	AFS
10	Young People's Challenge update	VA & RF
11	Improving "unloved" areas of the City – Bridge Street and John Street	SW VA
12	7 Hills of Durham project	AFS
13	Section 106 projects – Battle of	AFS

	Neville's Cross and Ruth First Mural	
14	Planting trees at the Sands	VA CL
15	water dispenser proposal to reduce single-use plastics	AFS
16	NNIS project	CL
17	Registration of Landlords	Task and Finish group
18.	Integrated / electric transport	RF

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 12th October 2021
 Tuesday 9th November 2021
 Tuesday 7th December 2021

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

Signed,

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
 12th October 2021**

ITEM 6A: Report for the Environment Committee meeting on 12 October 2021

Submitted by Cllr Rupert Friederichsen

Background: Any action to improve water quality of the river Wear by the Parish Council should be based on a clear understanding of how good or bad the water quality of the river Wear in Durham is. This report is based on current Environment Agency (2021) data and informal conversations with experts.

Findings: The water quality of the river Wear as it flows through Durham has got "Moderate ecological status". All ten listed "Specific pollutants" are classified as high; phosphate as "Moderate". Some improvements to water quality are noted in the period 2013-2016. Residents also note improvements over the past few decades as is evident in the return of salmon and otters.

But there are no recent positive and some negative trends towards 2019, the last year in which water quality was assessed:

- Temperature moved from "good" to "high";
- Chemical classification has deteriorated from "Good" to "Fail" as has the sub-category of Priority hazardous substances between 2016 and 2019.

In sum, the water quality of the river Wear in Durham is not good and has recently deteriorated.

Out of the seven listed "Reasons for not achieving good", five relate to Phosphate pollution, two of which are caused by agriculture and three by Water industry (intermittent and continuous sewage discharge and misconnections). The remaining two reasons are "Physical modification".

Discussion: The physical modifications of the Wear, especially around the peninsula, are the result of centuries of engineering. Their impact on water quality is through weirs reducing the speed of water flow and modifying the physical habitat greatly, as they trap sediments, woody debris, waste, and seeds of invasive non-native species.

Under certain conditions, physical and chemical properties combine to result in high pressure on local ecosystems: The main causes are high levels of nutrients in the water, low levels of water flow (dry spells or dry years), and high environmental temperatures which result in high water temperatures; the main effects are phytoplankton blooms and nocturnal lows of dissolved oxygen which puts stress on fish and can lead to fish kills. Climate change will increase these pressures (Environment Agency, 2019).

There is limited agricultural land within the boundaries of the City of Durham Parish Council, but as a city, Durham produces significant amounts of waste water and thereby, through Northumbrian Water, is part of the pollution problem. In addition, the city produces urban runoff from, e.g. surface water drains, worn tyres, blue windscreen washer fluid and leaky sumps. The city of Durham is connected to myriad other upstream and downstream actors, which makes achieving a river Wear with good water quality a highly complex issue.

Nevertheless, **phosphate pollution originating from the water industry and agriculture are clearly identifiable as key pollution sources.**

Urban runoff and catchment-wide factors which influence water quality, especially agricultural practices, are further identified sources of pollution which can only be resolved through a strategic and integrated approach.

Recommendations for the Parish Council Environment Committee:

1. In the short term, the Committee should focus primarily on the goal to reduce the pollution activity by Northumbrian Water. To that end, the Committee should request information from Northumbrian Water regarding the exact scale of their polluting impact, a report on their mitigation of it in the past, and what plans are in place to reduce their pollution immediately. Durham County Councillor Mark Wilks, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the County Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be copied into the letter.
2. The Committee should use professional expertise, possibly as part of its expanding collaboration with Wear Rivers Trust, to assess the quality of Northumbrian Water's improvement action based on a sound understanding of all relevant facts.
3. The Committee should request a report and assessment from Councillor Mark Wilkes regarding what is being done and what will be done to help monitor and improve water quality of the Wear river catchment across County Durham.
4. The Committee should commission developing a long term strategy for water quality improvement in 2022.

References

Environment Agency (2021): Catchment Data Explorer: Wear from Croxdale Beck to Lumley Park Burn Water Body. Available online at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB103024077621> (last accessed 4 October 2021).

Environment Agency (2019): Climate change and eutrophication risk thresholds in English rivers. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822910/Climate_change_and_eutrophication_risk_in_English_rivers_-_report.pdf (last accessed 4 October 2021).