

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 3rd June 2020 at 15:00 via Zoom.

Present: Councillors V Ashfield (in the Chair), E Ashby, L Brown, J Elmer, D Freeman and M Ross.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Ms Victoria Lloyd-Gent (Sustainable Transport Officer, DCC), Cllr Roger Cornwell, Mr John Lowe and Mr Matthew Philips.

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 3rd MARCH 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2020 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair welcomed Mr John Lowe, Mr Mathew Philips and Cllr R Cornwell to the meeting. All of whom advised that they were attending to hear the discussions on sustainable transport.

5. DISCUSSION WITH DAVE WAFER ON PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Chair welcomed Ms Victoria Lloyd-Gent to the meeting who advised that Dave Wafer was unable to attend and that she was attending on his behalf.

Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that the £2 billion recently announced by the Government on improvements to sustainable transport was not unfortunately new money. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that a new pot of £250 million however is new money and £2 million of this has been allocated to the North East Combined Authority (NECA) area, with applications for this fund being invited to NECA from all Local Authorities in the North East by Friday 5th June. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that all Local Authorities would be competing for part of this fund with NECA making the final decision about how much gets allocated where. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that DCC had had to work speedily in order to get the proposals drawn up for this funding. This had meant that the usual public consultations could not take place as a result of the short notice of this funding.

Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that the funding was primarily aimed at improvements to the physical public realm in light of Covid-19 and the need to maintain social

distancing as well as improvements on cycle lanes, cycle parking, etc. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that some of the measures would be temporary and some would be permanent.

Cllr J Elmer advised that he and Mathew Philips have been working on a number of proposals to put to DCC on sustainable transport and that he would circulate this to Councillors.

The Chair asked Ms Lloyd-Gent if she would be able to make the proposals submitted to NECA available to the Parish Council. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that she was unsure about this at this stage but would look into this.

Cllr E Ashby asked if there was an added filter stage within NECA for all applications, with all successful applications then going on to the Government to make a final decision on. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that NECA would be able to make the final decision on the funding allocation.

The Clerk asked if there is likely to be a change to the Traffic Regulations Orders legislation to enable Local Authorities to make the necessary amendments to their traffic infrastructure more speedily. Ms Lloyd-Gent confirmed that there had already been a temporary change to the legislation to allow for this in light of the Covid-19 situation.

Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that the County Council were in the very early stages of looking at ways to improve the park and rides in Durham. Also, Ms Lloyd-Gent asked the Committee how they would feel about additional cycle parking in the market place. The Committee felt this would be welcomed but that this should also include measures to ensure bicycle safety as bicycles were prone to theft and anti-social behaviour.

Ms Lloyd-Gent also advised that the County Council had launched a "Love to Ride" site where people could share their ideas of where they like to cycle in Durham. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had recently submitted a letter of support for the proposal to re-open the Belmont Viaduct.

Cllr R Cornwell asked if Ms Lloyd-Gent was working with the Public Rights of Way team at DCC on their Lost Ways project. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that she wasn't and nor was she aware of this project.

Mr John Lowe asked what alternative proposals were being considered for the A167 in view of the Inspector rejecting the proposal of the Western Relief Road during the County Durham Plan. Ms Lloyd-Gent advised that she had no new information to share publicly on this proposal.

Cllr J Elmer stressed the need for coordinated working and said he felt this was an invaluable opportunity on improving sustainable transport in Durham.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the Parish Council is intending to object to the main modification proposal of getting rid of cycle lanes along the A167.

Ms Lloyd-Gent made the Committee aware that the County Council has just launched a consultation on the creating safer streets and encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation.

The Chair thanked Ms Lloyd-Gent for her time. Ms Lloyd-Gent left the meeting at this point.

6. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES TAKEN WHILST IN LOCKDOWN

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had run a very successful planting project during the lockdown which had received very positive feedback from the public. The Chair advised that she and Cllr M Ross had recently worked with residents of the Sands to improve the look of the area with some additional bedding planting.

Cllr E Ashby asked if someone might be able to investigate what is happening at St Nicholas Church Burial ground as the area has become very overgrown and a number of the headstones appeared to have been removed. The Clerk advised that he would look into this.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

● Woodland Trust trees – proposal for planting along A167

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had been successful in obtaining 300 trees from the Woodland Trust and that these would be arriving in November. The Chair advised that a recent planning application involving a large number of trees being removed along the A167 had caused some concern and she proposed that some of these trees be used along this stretch of road. The Committee agreed this.

● Alternative project for Durham in Bloom 2020 fund

The Clerk reminded Members that the Durham in Bloom competition was now not happening this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and there was, as a result, a need to reallocate the agreed £10,000 towards this. The Clerk had sought Committee Members views on this ahead of the meeting and two proposals were being pursued. 1. The purchasing of bulbs for community planting and 2. Green roofing of bus shelters in the parish.

The Committee agreed to allocate £1,000 towards the purchasing of bulbs and £9,000 towards the green roofing of bus shelters. The Clerk advised that he would look more into the green roofing proposal with the relevant officer at Durham County Council.

Cllr R Cornwell advised that the ordinance survey provides a copy of all bus shelters in the parish and that he would share this with the Clerk. In particular, the Committee felt that bus shelters at Claypath, New Elvet and Neville's Cross Bank ought to be priority areas for this.

● Purchase of bins for plastic only recycling

The Chair advised that she felt that the bins for plastic only usage out to be located by the Riverbanks next to the existing bins. The Committee agreed this subject to DCC approval and agreement to empty the bins. The Clerk advised that he would contact the relevant officer at DCC about this and report back to Committee.

- **Supplementary planning document for tree management**

The Chair advised that the Planning Committee is intending on progressing the proposal of creating a supplementary planning document for tree management to be linked to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chair advised that the Clerk is investigating this proposal and ways of seeking public engagement on the idea.

- **Update on "Pinpoint" ASB tool**

The Clerk reported that the PinPoint tool was now live on the website. The Committee felt that the tool was very good and would be welcomed by local residents.

Cllr E Ashby asked that the PinPoint tool be launched immediately to the public so that a base line could be established of any ASB/ late night noise disturbance.

- **Section 106 project – Mosaic design under Framwellgate Bridge**

The Clerk advised that there were sufficient funds for this proposal to be funded by the Parish Council as opposed to a Section 106 application which would take much longer. The Committee agreed this should be funded by the Parish Council.

The Clerk also reminded Members that no design brief for this proposal had been agreed. Cllr E Ashby proposed a "tree of life" idea and the Committee agreed this would be welcome and particularly poignant at the moment. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask the Mosaic designers to submit a design brief of a tree of life along with a quote and the Committee should decide from the designs.

8. DRAFT ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Chair asked Members to consider the draft Strategic Plan as set out in the papers and feedback any new ideas to her by the next meeting.

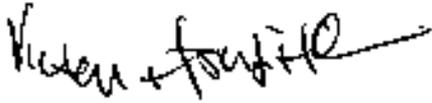
Cllr E Ashby asked if, in addition to noise abatement, that tackling light pollution also be added to the plan.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Environment Committee was agreed for 1st July 2020 at 15:00pm

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members and members of the public for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Fortfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council Environment Committee