

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 29th September 2020 at 17:30pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr D Freeman

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Cllr L Brown declared an interest in the item relating to the North End Allotment site.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26th AUGUST 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2020 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

I. Update on agreed alternative project for Durham in Bloom 2020

The Clerk advised that he had received a further update from the Clean and Green team on the proposals agreed by the Environment Committee as part of the alternative to Durham In Bloom project. The Clerk advised that the Clean and Green team had now put forward the following proposals:

- Area adjoining North Road church – the removal of the concrete sewer pipes / tubes and providing planters filled with trees and sustainable planting (not roses), similar to those on display in Millennium Place, close to the Gala Theatre.
- Southfield Way roundabout – the creation of new display in the central area, again using sustainable plants (incl perennial herbaceous plants and grasses, from the likes of Heucheras, Hardy Geraniums, Achillea, Stipa, Carex, etc. Flowering bulbs (Alliums, etc))
- A167 tree planting.

Members **agreed** to these proposals, expressing a preference for the A167 tree planting to take place near to the Mount Oswalds development in order to provide screening between housing and the road.

Members also asked the Clerk to see if the concrete sewer pipes could be retained as part of these proposals.

It was **agreed** that this would go forward to the next Full Council meeting.

II. Update on mosaic installation under Framwelgate Bridge

The Clerk advised that the mosaic artist for design 3 had indicated that she would be able to do the design as set out in design 1 (Councillor's preferred design) with some changes so as not to breach any copyright of the original artist. This could be done at the same cost as that quoted for design 3.

On the proposed location of the design, the Clerk noted that there were already some concerns about the use of the Framwelgate Bridge as the intended area where the mosaic would be fitted. Members **agreed** that the Riverwalk centre would be a better location for this and asked the Clerk to investigate this further as a possibility.

III. Update on Woodland Trust trees

The Clerk reminded Members that the Woodland Trust trees are due to arrive in November and at present there were two proposed locations for these to be planted: Flass Vale and a plot of land near to St Cuthbert's Hospice. The Clerk confirmed that the latter plot of land was indeed within the Parish boundary.

Members **agreed** that these locations should receive these trees on a 50/50 split basis.

IV. Report on North End Allotments site

The Clerk reminded Members that, in February 2019, the Parish Council agreed to take over ownership and management of the Allotments site on Larches Road.

The Clerk advised that Durham County Council is now in a position to formally hand over ownership of the Allotments site to the Parish Council, as required by the Local Government (Parish Councils & Parishes) Regulations 1990. This is the only allotments site currently under the ownership of DCC within the Parish and the County Council is unable by law to maintain ownership and management of the site with the existence of a Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that the site itself is based in the housing estate opposite the current County Hall HQ building, near to the Flass Vale Nature Reserve. It is currently run by an Allotment Association on a self-management basis and under this arrangement DCC receives no income from the site. All allotment tenants on the site must be members of the Association and as such currently hold a tenancy agreement between themselves individually and Durham County Council. They must also agree to the rules of the Association.

The Clerk advised that, since February 2019, he and the Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee have undertaken two separate visits to the site and the site is considered very well maintained.

The Clerk advised that the County Council has sent the official transfer documentation to the Parish Council; this includes a TP-1 form, the original conveyance of the land, a map of the land and HM Land Registry documentation.

There will be a need for the Parish Council to seek legal advice on the terms of the transfer of the allotment site before signing the Transfer deed. This is in order to ensure that the interests of the Parish Council are properly protected. It is imperative that the Parish Council fully understands the scope of its responsibilities and that there are no unforeseen issues with the legal title to the land. Once the transfer has been completed, we will then need to register the legal title to the land at the Land Registry.

In view of their position in handing over the land, it wouldn't be appropriate for DCC to provide this service to the Parish Council and therefore the Clerk advised that he had sought quotations from different legal representatives to support the work on this:

Company A - £600.00 (+VAT)

Company B - £850.00 (+VAT)

Members agreed to the proposal of contracting the services of a legal representative to act on behalf of the Parish Council on this transfer.

Members agreed to Company A to act on behalf of the Parish Council on this transfer.

V. Proposal for heritage project – seven hills of Durham trail

Members considered a proposal by local resident David Miller, who has carried out a lot of work mapping the seven hills of Durham trail, to fund the creation of a map for this trail, in order to promote the heritage of Durham City.

Members agreed that this would be a fantastic project to add to the Parish Council's existing Heritage app.

Members noted with thanks the work of David in producing this, however there were some concerns regarding the size of the map once folded out entirely and the feeling was that this would be too large for walkers and would need to be re-edited accordingly. Added to this, there were some concerns about the risks associated with a number of the crossing points on this map and it was felt that this would need to be risk assessed before the Parish Council could formally endorse this.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk should write to David Miller to express the Council's keenness to have this included in the Parish Council's Heritage app and to ask how flexible the editing could be to ensure that the map was as suitable as possible for users.

VI. Proposal for plastic only bins in Durham City

The Clerk advised that he had been investigating the proposal of having bins for plastic only waste installed in the parish. The cost of doing this would be beyond the means of the Parish Council and it was agreed that the Parish Council should instead focus on a project which tackled single-use plastics at its source.

It was **agreed** that the £5,000 towards a project with the youth should go towards a challenge with all of the local schools in the parish to come up with proposals which the Parish Council could then fund through its youth budget.

It was also **agreed** that the £3,000 towards plastic bins may be used to fund the installation of a free water dispenser in the city, in order to tackle the use of plastic water bottles; one of the biggest sources of plastic waste.

Members noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had increased the use of single-use plastics significantly.

VII. Update on noise abatement posters

The Clerk reminded Members that the design of the posters was now agreed and that he was awaiting confirmation from stakeholder groups that they would like to have their logos included in the poster.

6. AOB

The Chair advised that the temporary gates, promised by Kier, for the entrance of St. Nicolas Churchyard were still not installed.

The Chair also advised that the Churchyard was now being advertised for sale.

The Clerk advised that he would be inviting the new neighbourhood warden to the next meeting of the Parish Council's Environment Committee.

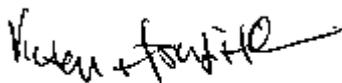
CLlr L Brown advised that she would be putting a report to Full Council on the issue of busking in Durham City.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was agreed as the 29th October 2020 at 14:30pm.

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

Signed,



Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council Environment Committee