

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 12th January 2021 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 V Ashfield declared an interest in discussions relating to the St Nicholas' Church Burial Ground on Providence Row and took no part in the discussions on this item.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24th NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2020 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

5a. To update and note:

i) Installation of Mosaic art work;

The Clerk advised that work on the mosaic, as agreed at the Full Council meeting in December, was nearing completion. The Clerk advised that the Hospital had offered a wall in the Chapel for this to be located. Members felt that this wouldn't be an appropriate location and it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate an alternative location within the hospital for this mosaic to be located. A location which ensured that the greatest number of people were able to view the mosaic. A suggestion was made that the Parish Council investigates this going into the restaurant at the hospital.

ii) Neighbourhood Warden report

Members noted the report from the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Warden. It was **agreed** that the Neighbourhood Warden Manager and the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Warden should be invited to the February meeting of the Parish Council's Environment Committee, in order to discuss the SLA between DCC and the Parish Council going forward.

iii) Young People's Challenge.

It was noted that the schools will not have had the opportunity to meet in order to discuss proposals for the Single-Use plastics challenge. It was **agreed** therefore that the Committee should recommend a number of projects to the schools, if not already considered and progressed by the schools directly, and see which projects the schools may wish to deliver. The Clerk stated that he would need confirmation from each school on the project they'd like to deliver prior to any funding being made available. The Chair reported that, to date, 6 of the local schools had agreed to participate in the single-use plastics challenge.

iv) St Nicholas' Church Burial Ground on Providence Row

The Clerk advised that he had received correspondence from the Church Warden to state that the church had applied to the Ministry of Justice to have the burial ground "closed". The Clerk explained that "closed" in this context means that no further burials would be carried out at the burial ground as opposed to the grounds being physically shut off from members of the public. The Clerk advised that, as per Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972, it would be for either the Parish Council or the County Council to take over responsibility for the maintenance of the burial ground. The Clerk advised that, as soon as the Parish Council is notified of the intent to close the grounds, it would have a total of 3 months only in which to decide whether or not to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the grounds. If decided against, the responsibility would fall on the County Council to maintain the grounds. It was **agreed** to await a further update on this matter.

v) Durham in Bloom: Update on Clean and Green proposals and Wear Rivers Trust project.

The Chair reported that these projects are due to be delivered in Spring 2021. The Clerk advised that the funding for these projects had been ringfenced in the Parish Council's budget for this.

vi) Update on proposed Environment Committee budget for 2021-22 following meeting of Parish Council's Finance Committee on 11th January 2021

It was noted that the Committee's budget request for the financial year 2021-22 had been agreed at the Parish Council's Finance Committee meeting on 11th January 2021.

5b. To complete:

i). Proposal to fund a water dispenser in Durham City.

The Clerk advised that he was still pushing for a meeting with Northumbrian Water in order to discuss this proposal in further detail.

5c. To decide:

i) Further actions to reduce anti-social behaviour;

The Clerk advised that he was still awaiting a response on this matter from the Community Protection Manager at DCC and he would be requesting a further meeting of the ASB sub-group in order to discuss ongoing ASB matters. The Committee agreed that Covid-19 would probably take priority over ASB in the present climate.

ii) Heritage project – Seven Hills Trail and Battle of Neville’s Cross

The Clerk advised that there is currently one outstanding matter on the Seven Hills Trail project; namely permission from Durham University to promote the use of their land as part of the Trail. Specifically the areas of land in question were the land at Old Elvet, Whinney Hill and the Racecourse and the land on the west side of South Road. The Clerk advised that he was awaiting a response to his enquiry from the Director of Estates at Durham University as to whether this land can be used as part of the Trail.

The Clerk also advised that there had been a meeting of DCC Officers and representatives of the Parish Council on a proposed use of Section 106 funding in order to carry out a project to improve the heritage information and the Cross as part of the Battle of Neville’s Cross. It was noted that October 2021 would mark the 675th Anniversary of the Battle and it was **agreed** that the Parish Council should work in collaboration with the County Council in order to progress this. It was also suggested that the Parish Council should organise a commemorative walk as part of the 675th Anniversary. The Clerk advised that a report would be going to Full Council on this matter.

iii) Blue plaques scheme

The Clerk reminded Members that the proposal of the Parish Council launching its own blue plaque scheme was considered at a recent Full Parish Council meeting and the Environment Committee had agreed to take this forward as a heritage project.

This scheme is based loosely on the English Heritage scheme for blue plaques in London and has been delivered in other local areas outside London by various Parish and Town Councils. The Clerk advised that launching such a scheme would be an encouragement for residents to celebrate their heritage and an opportunity to engender Civic Pride. If the scheme is successful, it could form part of a heritage trail in the City which could attract more visitors. There are a number of plaques already in existence in the City; delivered by the former City Council, the City of Durham Trust and the Durham Rotary group.

The Clerk advised that he had investigated this through other Parish and Town Councils who have delivered such a scheme and presented a proposal including costs and criteria for the scheme to the Committee. It was **agreed** that this should go forward as a Parish Council project for consideration at the January Full Council meeting.

6. AOB

Cllr L Brown advised that she had been contacted by a local resident about the issue of grit during icy weather. Cllr L Brown agreed to discuss this with the

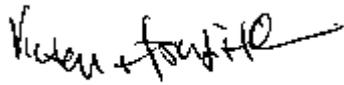
relevant officer at DCC to see what could be done to assist the lady with this issue.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

16th February - 2.30pm

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria + [unclear]".

Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee

