

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present: Councillors C Lattin, V Ashfield, S Walker, R Freiderichsen and D Freeman

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Cllr E Ashby and Mr David Miller (members of the public)

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 9th JUNE 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 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 5b IV) on the Agenda.

Mr David Miller advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on the 7 Hill of Durham project.

5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

5a. To note:

i) Installation of Mosaic art work

The Clerk advised that there had been no response from the point of contact at the NHS on the exact location within the hospital for this mosaic. The Clerk advised that the mosaic is finished and ready to be collected. The Committee agreed that if there is still no response from the point of contact within the Trust by early next week, an alternative contact within the hospital should be located, in order to complete this project.

ii) 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

iii) Progressing the cigarette butt campaign

The Clerk advised that the Assistant Parish Clerk is currently requesting contact details from the BID manager and the Parish Council's retail consultant of licensed premises holders, betting shops, etc. to get the pocket ashtrays out to the general public in hotspot areas. It was agreed that this campaign should be launched at the end of September.

iv) Young People's Challenge update

Cllr Victoria Ashfield advised that she is to contact local schools again to get a commitment from them to have the first Youth Environment Working Group meeting at the beginning of the school term.

5b. To complete:

- I) Durham In Bloom priorities for 2021-22

The Clerk provided the following update on the agreed Durham in Bloom priorities for 2021-22:

Plants for Saturday (£1,500) – St. Cuthbert's Hospice cannot give the Parish Council the use of their car park but have offered the car park by Neville's Cross Bowls Club instead. Pity Me Nursery have confirmed that they can provide 800-1000 perennial plants for £1,500. It was **agreed** that Cllr V Ashfield should take a lead on the delivery of this project with plants being delivered to her home for distribution to local residents' groups.

Plants by railway station (£1,000) – Network Rail initial response very positive and happy to support. Need confirmed and also to acquire plants necessary to create PC logo.

Hanging baskets (£480) – not going ahead and alternative project for tower by Clayport building not possible.

Bulbs for community planting (£1,000) - confirmed and going ahead in October/ November.

Flower Towers by A167 and on North Road (£3,000) – confirmed and on order.

Bishops Mitre in Durham Market Place (£2,500) – confirmed and on order.

Planting on roundabouts (£2,000) – responses from DCC as follows:

“Potters Bank Roundabout (£500) – If the Parish wanted, we could increase the sizes of the exiting beds on the roundabout to create more impact in this area. It was **agreed** that this should be requested.

Hallgarth Street Roundabout (£500) – given the very close proximity to the adjacent roadway of the area that you would be looking to plant up I would advise against this idea. Traffic Management will be required for the preparation / planting up of the beds and for any maintenance visits. This is very costly. Also when we planted the roundabout up ourselves in the past, we found that there is a regular build-up of road salt every year on the area (due to the close proximity to the roadway) and this was detrimental to plant growth. It was **agreed** that the funding from this priority should instead be allocated to fund bulb planters in time for October/ November.

Gilesgate Roundabout (£1,000) – I have previously corresponded with Cllr Victoria Ashfield advising against any sort of formal bedding / carpet bedding in this location. I don't think there is a lot more we can do there with the pampas grass / bulb planting at the base and groups of newly planted trees at the top”. It was **agreed** that the £1,000 funding from this priority should instead be allocated to purchasing bulbs for October/ November.

Greening Up project from 2020:

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 (not roses).

Update on this requested from DCC.

II) History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk.

The Clerk advised that the Riverwalk appear to be amenable to the idea of a history board at the centre overlooking the view of WHS. They would like more details on exact location, wording and maintenance. It was **agreed** that the Riverwalk should also be asked to accommodate the wildlife information boards.

III) Shhh... campaign update

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has agreed to fund some Shhh signage on lampposts as well as the Shhh posters for key entry points into the City and the beer mats for licensed premises. The Committee **agreed** that this should be launched prior to Freshers Week on 27th September 2021.

IV) Update on improving “unloved” areas of the City – Bridge Street, John Street and Freeman’s Quay.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Committee had provisionally agreed to focus on the following areas for improvement: the land adjoining the church at

John Street, St. Nic's churchyard off Providence Row, Freeman's Quay and Bridge Street.

Members **agreed** that the churchyard at Providence Row should form its own large project potentially in 2022-23, given the likely cost implications.

The Clerk advised that the Assistant Parish Clerk is currently seeking quotes from garden contractors regarding the clearing of the land at John Street.

The Clerk advised that he had received the following response from DCC regarding the proposal for the land at Freeman's Quay: "I'm not against installing new planting on Freeman's Quay along by the Leisure Centre as it is quite a bland area, however my worry is its very shaded because of the canopy of the existing avenue of trees when they are in leaf, is high footfall and we can't even get grass to grow in places on the area highlighted. Potential insect sap and bird droppings from the Sycamore trees falling onto any planting below will also be to the detriment of plant growth. If the Parish wish to progress the project than yes, we can supply and construct raised sleeper beds filling with compost/soil and planting. However I very much doubt that the Leisure Centre staff would be able to water the bed and this would best be undertaken by ourselves (Clean & Green).

Just a thought are we not better off using the seasonal tubs/3 Tier flower towers which we can add onto our existing summer maintenance regimes, if we spread out say half a dozen along the front of the Passport Office to the Leisure Centre on both sides of the road?"

It was **agreed** that Freeman's Quay should be a priority for next year as per the offer by DCC.

The Clerk reminded Members that there is still a substantial amount of funding available to improve unloved areas of the parish. Cllr Victoria Ashfield present a proposal for "love your street" whereby streets would compete to improve their street scene and be awarded with a picnic, funded by the Parish Council, at a particular point in the year. It was felt that "love your street" was already a branding used in the City and this may cause confusion. Cllr E Ashby presented a proposal under the name of "Hallo Green" with the intention that some of the back lanes and areas around the Neville's Cross side of the Viaduct Area could be improved. Members also expressed a desire that the whole of the Viaduct Area (including the Elvet and Gilesgate side of the area) be considered as part of this scheme. The Clerk advised that up to £4,500 could be made available for this scheme. It was **agreed** that a report on this proposal should come to Full Council in July in order to get work started on this.

5c. To decide:

I) **7 Hills of Durham project**

Members considered the proposals submitted by each of the competing companies for the production of the map for this project. The Clerk reminded Members that Full Council has delegated authority to the Environment Committee to make a decision on the contractor for this service.

The Environment Committee **agreed** to select Company A to carry out this work and also to have 5,000 copies of the map produced at a cost of £3,750 (ex VAT).

The Clerk also advised that DCC has now confirmed that they could produce and install the gate at Whinney Hill, as requested by Durham University for use of this land and the Clerk is now waiting on the go-ahead from Durham University to carry out this work.

II) Invitation to Stagecoach to discuss electric buses to Environment Committee meeting in September.

The Clerk advised that he had now heard back from all of the major bus operators in the North East on the Parish Council's request for them to switch to electric buses as soon as possible. The Clerk advised that the Managing Director of Stagecoach had confirmed that his company is looking into switching to new technologies and he would be delighted to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council's Environment Committee to discuss this with the Council. The Committee **agreed** to invite the Stagecoach Managing Director to the next meeting in September.

III) Progressing the following projects from the Environment Committee's work programme for 2021-22:

Climate lobbying - £1,500

Encourage Walking, Cycling & Sustainable Travel (active streets) - £1,000

Encourage a green infrastructure - £2,000

Encourage electric vehicles - £1,000

Reduction in Plastic Use - £1,000

Explore and encourage sustainable food - £1,000

The Clerk reminded Councillors that there is a budget allocation for each of these priorities, however no specific project has been identified as part of each priority. The Committee **agreed** to consider each item and propose some projects allocated under these heading projects.

6. PROPOSED MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY CLLR R FRIEDERICHSEN

Cllr R Friederichsen advised that he wished to propose the following motion to Full Council in July and asked Members for their views on this:

This Council resolves to –

- ***in this year of COP26 add our voice to calls by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport & others for a joint local & national government Task Force to plan action to reach 'net zero' emissions. Such a partnership can set appropriate regulations, benchmarks and targets and create the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable.***

- ***write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26, the Prime Minister and the Leadership Board of the LGA informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established as soon as possible.***

Mr David Miller, as a member of the public, asked if the motion could be amended such that it sought a requirement that all reports which go to public bodies included an environmental impact assessment. It was **agreed** that Cllr R Friedrichsen should consider some appropriate wording for this and circulate this around the Environment Committee to agree ahead of this going to Full Council.

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

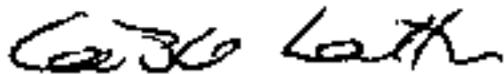
None received.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14th September 2021 at 2pm

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
14th September 2021**