

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 12th October 2021 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

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 14th SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

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 as well as a report from Cllr R Friederichsen on water quality included.**

Cllr C Lattin advised that she has now had a number of meetings with Mr Martin Hiles, a local resident with a keen interest in improving the river in terms of litter, invasive species, safety and water quality and she is progressing proposals with Mr Hiles, to be reported on in a future meeting.

Cllr R Friederichsen presented a report on the water quality of the river wear. Members expressed their shock at the poor quality of the river and **agreed** that Cllr R Friederichsen should draft a letter to both Cllr Mark Wilkes, DCC Portfolio Holder and to the Environment Agency in order to ascertain what further actions could be taken to improve the water quality.

Members also expressed a desire to draft a letter to Northumbrian Water once responses had been received from Cllr Wilkes and the Environment Agency.

II) Proposal from DCC to declare an ecological emergency

The Clerk reminded Members that the County Council's Cabinet is proposing to declare an ecological emergency. This follows the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency some years ago.

Members considered the report to Cabinet on this matter and felt that this was missing a lot of detail in terms of practical steps to resolve the ecological emergency.

Members expressed a desire to write again to the County Council to request that the Parish area be used as a test case for non-usage of pesticides, in order to take action on the ecological emergency. The Clerk **agreed** to write to DCC on this.

5b. To complete:

I) Durham in Bloom priorities for 2021-22

The Clerk advised that the remaining priorities to sort out for the Durham in Bloom priorities for this year include the planting of trees and bulbs as well as the wildflower meadow.

Members agreed to order the bulbs, as per the agreement of an earlier Environment Committee, as well as the bulb planting equipment.

It was agreed that the wildflower meadow may be a good idea for the sands area where the existing belt of trees from the Parish Council in February 2019 are located. The Clerk **agreed** to order all of the necessary materials for this to happen.

II) Progressing the "Hallow Green/Greening the Viaduct 2021" project – including John Street and Bridge Street proposals

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the planters were now on order from the agreed supplier and once they have arrived, she would be coordinating volunteers to put these in place and have them planted up.

It was also **agreed** that the fruit trees for Bridge Street should be ordered and that John Street could be a key area for bulb planting.

III) History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk

Cllr C Lattin advised that she is liaising with the manager at Riverwalk on these proposals and hoped to have an update on this project soon.

IV) Shhh...campaign update

The Clerk advised that he had ordered 30 more Shhh signs for lampposts across the selected target areas around the parish. The Clerk also advised that he is chasing an update on the road stencils saying "Quiet Residential Area" with the Neighbourhood Warden Manager at DCC, who had originally offered these.

V) Plans for the COP26 event in Durham City

Cllrs V Ashfield and R Friederichsen advised that they were continuing to liaise with the Climate Action Durham group on the organisation of the COP26 event in Durham City. Cllrs V Ashfield and R Friederichsen advised that plans were progressing well and the additional budget of £2,000 provisionally agreed at Full Council (in addition to the agreed £1,500) would probably not be needed. Cllrs V

Ashfield and R Friederichsen advised that, as per the agreement at Full Council in September, a report would be coming to Full Council in October to update the Council on the plans for the event.

VI) Progressing the cigarette butt campaign

The Clerk advised that the cigarette butt campaign is ready to be launched and asked for support in distributing the pocket ashtrays to businesses across the parish. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should coordinate a day of action to help box up and distribute the pocket ashtrays. The date for this was agreed for 27th October at 12:30pm.

5c. To note:

I) Results of Northumbria in Bloom and Durham in Bloom

The Committee congratulated all those involved in the Northumbria in Bloom and Durham in Bloom competitions this year. Durham City had again won gold in these competitions and Members felt this was another excellent result.

II) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND

The Clerk advised that he is still chasing the agreement of the hospital on the installation of the mosaic art work at the UHND. He agreed to continue to chase this up.

III) Progressing the blue plaques scheme

The Clerk advised that the wording and location of 5 blue plaques had now been agreed and he was seeking the relevant permissions for these to be installed. The Clerk advised that this would likely include the submission of a planning application.

IV) Young People's Challenge update

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she is continuing to liaise with local schools to get the Young People's Challenge up and running.

V) 7 Hills of Durham project update

The Clerk advised that David Miller, Cllr C Lattin and a number of local residents have now carried out a test walk using the map and a number of amendments were going to be put forward to the contractor for this. The Chair advised that she is continuing to chase the University on the permissions to have the gates installed at the land at Whinney Hill, as per the original agreement.

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

The Clerk advised the Committee that the Battle of Neville's Cross funding had now been agreed and the Neville's Cross is currently being restored. The Committee expressed its thanks to the Clerk for his coordination of this project and looked forward to the Battle of Neville's Cross anniversary events on Monday 18th October.

The Clerk also advised that the Ruth First Mural is nearing completion and he is liaising with the County Council and the artist on its installation. The Clerk also advised that he was hoping to arrange an official unveiling of the mural once installed.

VII) Progressing the recycling stickers project, as agreed at September Full Council.

The Clerk advised that he is liaising with the County Council on this proposal and hoped to have a report back to the Environment Committee on this matter in due course.

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

None received.

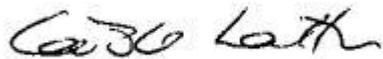
7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 9th November 2021

Tuesday 7th December 2021

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

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(9th November 2021)**