

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 11th January 2022 at 13:00pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors C Lattin (Chair), V Ashfield, D Freeman, R Friederichsen and R Hanson.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley, Laura Dobson (DCC), Bill Stephenson (Environment Agency) and Cllr E Ashby.

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 7th DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2021 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr E Ashby advised that she was attending the Committee as a Member of the Parish Council's Business Committee with an interest in the 2022/23 projects proposed as joint initiatives by the Environment Committee in collaboration with the Business Committee.

5. DISCUSSION WITH LAURA DOBSON, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES UNIT AT DCC ON COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Chair welcomed Laura Dobson (DCC) and Bill Stephenson (Environment Agency) to the meeting and thanked them for attending. The Chair advised that Laura and Bill were attending the meeting in order to give the Committee an overview of how they can support communities to be prepared for emergencies.

Laura thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak to the Committee. Laura advised that she has been working with a number of Parish Councils since Storm Arwen in order to help communities across County Durham to build their resilience against such incidents, as well as other emergencies such as floods, power outages, etc.

Laura advised that this work has been exceptionally important following the outbreak of Covid-19 and Storm Arwen.

Laura advised that she would be able to support local Parish and Town Councils to build a plan as well as recruit volunteers to support the most vulnerable

residents. The Clerk asked who would be responsible for checking and vetting volunteers. Laura advised that there is an expectation that the Parish Councils assume responsibility for this and Bill advised that he would be able to offer advice on how best to do this.

Bill advised that he had worked with a number of community volunteers as part of his work in supporting local Flood Wardens.

Both Laura and Bill stressed that there is not an expectation that volunteers should be responsible for tackling emergencies, e.g. dealing with floods, fires, etc (as an emergency service function) but rather ensuring that vulnerable residents are supported.

Laura advised that usually Parish and Town Councils are able to identify vulnerable residents more easily with a lot of their work happening locally in collaboration with residents.

The Chair thanked Laura and Bill for their excellent work in supporting vulnerable residents in emergencies.

At this point, Laura and Bill left the meeting. Following which, the Committee **agreed** to progress the proposal of establishing an emergency plan for the parish. The Chair **agreed** to work on this on behalf of the Committee.

6. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2022/23

Members agreed the following programme of work (Priorities and goals only) for 2022/23:

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES	GOALS 2022
1 <u>Being a voice for the City.</u> Respond to residents of all ages and background in environment-related work	Mobilise Volunteer groups
	Work with young people and respond to their concerns
2 <u>Noise Abatement and clean air, clean and green city.</u> Promote cleaner air, a cleaner river, green spaces, and streets for living across the city	A cleaner and greener city. Reduction in light pollution Reduction in night time noise. Sustainable travel
3 <u>Climate Change</u> Work with all relevant committees to ensure the climate and	Sustainable Housing

ecological emergencies are considered in all planning matters	
	Development of CODP Community Emergency Plan
	Develop strategies to combat climate change
4 <u>Heritage and appearance of the City.</u> Improve and protect the appearance of the city and its heritage	Improved appearance of the city throughout the year Tidy, clean, attractive streets and businesses
5 <u>Climate Emergency.</u> Be proactive and collaborate with all partners (including Parish Council committees, Durham County Council, residents, developers, landlords, and other businesses) to coordinate our impact on the climate and ecological emergencies	Encourage sustainable Travel Increased awareness and action on climate change
	Tackle the ecological emergency

The Chair also updated Members that the Finance Committee meeting earlier today (11th January 2022) had agreed the following expenditure for the Environment Committee for 2022/23:

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Being a voice for the City	
OASES/ schools project	3,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the Shhh campaign	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Planting up and greening the parish (incl. Durham in Bloom)	10,000.00
Event for clean air and active travel	1,500.00
PRIORITY 4: Heritage	
Information Boards on heritage and nature	3,000.00
Creation of new blue plaques in the parish	1,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	10,000.00
Christmas Frontages Awards (possible collaborative project with Business Committee)	2,000.00
Improving the river	6,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Climate Emergency	
Continuation of Terracycle scheme	3,000.00

Celebrating plastic free businesses	1,000.00
Community composting project	1,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	42,500.00

Cllr R Friederichsen expressed disappointment that the proposed £4,000 had been removed from the budget.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

I) History and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk

The Chair advised that she and the Clerk had been liaising with the Riverwalk Centre Manager on installing the history and wildlife information boards at Riverwalk. However this had proven unsuccessful following much discussion. The Clerk advised that the planning department has also advised that they would not support these boards being installed at Framwellgate Bridge as a protected Grade I Listed Scheduled Ancient Monument.

It was **agreed** that a site visit should take place on w/c 24th January 2022 in order to explore possible locations for these boards.

7b. To complete:

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

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she and Cllr S Walker would be coordinating the planting up of the wooden planters in the Viaduct area on Sunday 16th January. In addition, the Clerk offered to plant the remaining bulbs into the plot of land at John Street.

II) Update on the work to improve the River Wear

The Chair advised that she and the Clerk had attended a meeting prior to the Christmas holidays with a number of different agencies with an interest in improving the River Wear. The Chair advised that she was extremely inspired by much of the work which had already taken place at the River Wear and thanked all the volunteers involved with this. The Chair advised that she particularly welcomed the budget for 2022/23 from the Parish Council towards improving the river.

The Chair also advised that Cllr R Ormerod has established a closed Facebook page for this group – Riverscape – as well as drafting a vision statement for this group.

The Chair advised that she looked forward to working with groups like the Wear Rivers Trust in taking action against non-native invasive species and litter in the River.

III) Proposal to tackle single use plastics in Durham

Members **agreed** that the project proposed for 2022/23 under the budget heading "Celebrating Plastic Free Businesses" would be the project for tackling single use plastics in Durham, subject to the £1,000 being approved by Full Council for this initiative.

IV) Update on carbon literacy training

The Clerk advised that the carbon literacy training will hopefully be taking place in February 2022 and he would be circulating possible dates for this to happen.

V) Section 106 project – sedum roofed bus shelters

The Clerk thanked Members for their agreement to support this project at the Full Council meeting in November. The Clerk advised that he is currently working with the Public Transport team at DCC on the bid for funding and he hoped to have this submitted by the end of January.

7c. To note:

Members noted that the following projects were being progressed and would hopefully be delivered this side of the financial year:

- I) Durham in Bloom priorities for 2021-22 – tree planting at the Sands
- II) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND
- III) Progressing the blue plaques scheme
- IV) Young People's Challenge update
- V) 7 Hills of Durham project update
- VI) Progressing the recycling stickers project

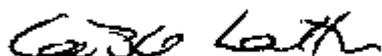
8. AOB (please note for information only and not for formal decisions).

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 8th February 2022

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
(8th February 2022)**