

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 8th February 2022 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley and Richard Hornby (member of the public)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr R Hanson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11th JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Richard Hornby advised that he was attending the meeting to contribute to item 5i) of the Agenda.

5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

5a. To decide:

I) Progressing the proposal for community emergency planning

The Chair reminded Members that the Environment Committee had agreed in January to progress the proposal of establishing a community emergency plan. The Chair thanked Richard Hornby for attending the meeting. The Chair advised that Gilesgate is currently progressing its own emergency plan.

Richard presented the miro system to the Committee and thanked the Clerk for meeting with him prior to the meeting to familiarise himself with the functionality of the system.

The Clerk made the link to the miro system available to all Members and the Chair asked Committee members to feed into the plan by 22nd February in order that the next Committee meeting may consider this.

The Clerk asked how the emergency plan will be initiated if an emergency took place during anti-social hours. The Chair advised that she would be happy to be

the initial point of contact for the plan (other than emergency services) should an incident happen.

II) Addressing light pollution in the City

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been receiving complaints about the light pollution caused by the lights to the Police HQ car park. The Clerk advised that he had been corresponding between the complainant and the estates team at the Police in order to resolve this issue and it now appears that this has been resolved. The Clerk advised that he would continue to monitor this matter.

Members expressed concerns that the lights to the new multi-storey car park, the new Council HQ and Freeman's Quay leisure centre seemed to be endlessly switched on, causing a huge light pollution issue to the Sands. Members also expressed concern at the public cost of having lights switched on throughout the night.

The Clerk advised that he had been corresponding with relevant officers on this matter in order to seek a solution to the issues. Unfortunately the issue continues. Members **agreed** that a corporate complaint should be submitted to DCC requesting that they address this issue as a matter of urgency.

5b. To complete:

- I) Durham in Bloom priorities for 2021-22 – trees and bulbs planting and wildflower meadow and**
- II) Progressing the "Hallow Green/Greening the Viaduct 2021" project – including John Street and Bridge Street proposals**

The Chair thanked all those involved in the planting activities at John Street on Sunday. The Clerk reported that this had gone very well and thanked Cllrs Ashfield and Ormerod for their support with this.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that the wildflower seed had now been planted underneath the trees at the Sands (planted by the Parish Council in February 2019).

The Clerk advised that there were a number of trees still awaiting planting from Val Standen and further trees were coming from the Woodland Trust. In total, over 150 trees need planting.

It was **agreed** that a proportion of these trees should be given at an event in the Market Place to encourage tree planting in private gardens.

The Clerk reported that he has been chasing permissions from DCC to plant the additional trees at the Sands for a number of months. He has now been advised that a response to this request will come towards the end of February/ beginning of March. The Committee agreed that, given that the trees were all native species and were presently all whips (and not fully grown trees) that the Parish Council should proceed with the planting. The Clerk advised that he would chase the relevant permissions as much as possible.

The Committee advised that they had received reports of a number of planters installed through the Hallow Green project being vandalised with plants being posted through letterboxes. Cllrs V Ashfield and S Walker advised that they had carried out a review of the planters and advised that most were still doing extremely well. It was **agreed** to replace the plants removed and the Committee expressed its disappointment that this had happened.

In preparation for next year's Durham in Bloom events, the Committee also **agreed** to order 6 flower towers for the parish as follows:

- 1 over the road from St. Johns Church (Neville's Cross)
- 2 at Freeman's Quay near to the passport office.
- 2 at North Road (outside Sainsbury's and another by the CEX shop).
- 1 at Clayport library (against the wall facing Claypath).

III) Proposal to tackle single use plastics in Durham

The Clerk reminded Members that the funding for the project to champion businesses going plastic free becomes available in April 2022. It was **agreed** that this project should be placed on the April Committee agenda to progress.

IV) Update on carbon literacy training

The Clerk advised that the Chair of the Parish Council has now approved the training provider for the carbon literacy training and the Clerk advised that he would be circulating dates for a March training day to Councillors.

5c. To note:

The Committee noted that the following projects are being progressed.

- I) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND. In noting the difficulties experienced to date in gaining the relevant installation permissions from the PFI manager at the hospital, the Committee **agreed** that, if this was still not resolved by April, an alternative location for the mosaic should be investigated.
- II) Progressing the blue plaques scheme. The Clerk advised that the planning applications for the two plaques at the Market Hall and 142 Gilesgate are now live and it is hoped that a decision could be made on these soon.
- III) 7 Hills of Durham project update
- IV) Section 106 project – sedum roofed bus shelters.

6. AOB

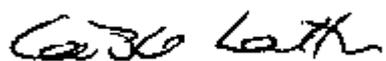
Cllr R Friederichsen highlighted that the Environment Agency has now responded to the Parish Council's letter on the quality of the River Wear. Cllr R Friederichsen advised that, as per the previous agreement by the Committee, he would be drafting a letter to Northumbrian Water on what actions they are taking to help improve the quality of the River.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 8th March 2022 – 1pm

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. J. Lath'.

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(8th February 2022)**