

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 10th May 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, Mr Matthew Phillips and Mr Peter Carey (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 12th APRIL 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Matthew Phillips and Mr Peter Carey advised that they were attending the meeting in order to contribute to item 5 on the Agenda.

5. DISCUSSION WITH SPACE FOR DURHAM ON CLEAN AIR AND TRAVEL IN THE CITY

Mr Matthew Phillips began his presentation by thanking the Committee for this opportunity to discuss this important issue with them today.

Matthew advised that SPACE for Durham is a group which is campaigning for a safer pedestrian and cycling environment for Durham. Matthew advised that the group has been looking into the Hallgarth Street, Church Street, Stockton Road triangle for some time now, alongside Elvet Residents Association.

Matthew highlighted that there is a serious air quality to the North of Church Street. Matthew advised that Durham County Council identified dangerously high levels of pollution in Church Street (annual mean over 40 µg/m³ Nitrogen dioxide) over 10 years ago. Matthew advised that the WHO currently recommends a Nitrogen dioxide level of less than 10 µg/m³.

Matthew advised that reducing the number of vehicles on the road is a major challenge for the Council and there is a need to facilitate greater uptake of walking and cycling in the city.

Matthew highlighted that a number of collisions had taken place in the area between 1999-2019. Matthew highlighted that the collisions clustered at the junctions of this area and also that Church Street has a high number of collisions with pedestrian casualties along its length.

Matthew advised that proposals were consulted on in 2018 for the area, with the University's Estates Strategy proposing a "super route" taking pedestrians from South Road to Church Street and then on to New Elvet. DCC also consulted on proposals to widen the footpaths and reduce the amount of parking on Church Street.

Matthew expressed his regret that this consultation was done in tandem with the University's consultation on new buildings. Many people concluded that the consultations had been driven by the University's needs alone. The opportunity to deliver benefits for local residents was potentially lost there.

Matthew advised that a major concern expressed from residents at the time was the removal of car parking spaces; this was highlighted at a public meeting hosted by the former MP Roberta Blackman-Woods.

Matthew advised that the Council have not pursued the plans any further. However, since then, the County Council has consulted on its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Matthew highlighted that this was consulted on in January 2020 and the plans were subsequently adopted by Cabinet in October 2021. Matthew highlighted that the LCWIPs helps the Council provide a framework for seeking funding from central Government and developers on local schemes.

Matthew advised that the Hallgarth Street, Church Street, Stockton Road triangle is key to the LCWIP, however the plans are rather fragmented and there is still much work to be done on this plan.

Matthew advised that there is a potential to link up the walking routes from Neville's Cross and Mount Oswald into the City and from Newton Hall, Gilesgate and Belmont to the University.

Matthew advised that walking and cycling is the best way to de-carbonise transport emissions.

Matthew also highlighted that a consultant had submitted proposals (as part of Gilesgate to Durham University Mountjoy campuses plans) to have the speed limit to Church Street reduced to 20mph and to remove parking where possible to build out the footway. In addition, the consultant had proposed side road crossings for pedestrians be raised.

In the same report but as part of plans from the Cock of the North to the City Centre, the consultant had proposed that the speed limit to Church Street reduced to 20mph, a Southbound stepped cycle track on New Elvet be introduced and that there also be some changes to the signalised junctions with Hallgarth and Old Elvet to incorporate early-release for cyclists.

Matthew also advised that making Church Street a one-way street would allow for more space for pedestrians and cyclists as well as making the Street safer itself too.

Matthew advised that there has been over 10 years of inaction on this issue and expressed his hope that the Parish Council seeks to bring the community together on a community-led initiative to improve the situation in this area.

Cllr V Ashfield advised that Elvet Residents Association is expecting to feed further into this consultation.

Cllr V Ashfield also advised that parking on Church Street cannot be planned out of any proposals for a variety of reasons.

Cllr D Freeman highlighted that residents at Hallgarth Street need to be consulted on any plans as any amendments to Church Street could potentially have an adverse impact on Hallgarth Street.

Members acknowledged this report and **agreed** to commit to contribute funding of up to £500 towards organising and hosting a public meeting at the St Oswald Institute between October 2022 and February 2023 to discuss and progress further the ideas presented at this meeting with all key stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, St Oswald's school and Church, Durham University and County Councillors.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair thanked Matthew and Peter for their contributions and both left the meeting.

6. REPORT BY PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN ON ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY

The Clerk advised that he was expecting Dale Clement, the Parish Council's funded Neighbourhood Warden, to attend this meeting today to give an overview of his work over the last month. However, the Clerk advised that Dale is presently dealing with an issue involving the Police at North Road and is therefore unable to attend this meeting.

7. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

7a. To decide:

- I) **Progressing the proposal on Providence Row by local students and green wall at Allergate/ East Atherton Street**

Cllr V Ashfield advised that she has now received the agreement of Durham County Council to introduce wildflower to the grassed area of Providence Row and was now awaiting a response from resident students who were keen to support this project.

Cllr V Ashfield also highlighted that she and the Clerk have now gained the agreement of the resident at 18A Allergate to introduce some hanging plants to cover the industrial-like wall to East Atherton Street. Cllr V Ashfield agreed to

have another site visit with the resident to discuss this proposal in more detail with him, but he had been very amenable to the initial approach.

II) Emergency Community Plan for Durham City

The Chair advised that she has received very little feedback to the plans for an emergency community plan for Durham City from Members of the Committee. The Chair highlighted that this is not a project which can be delivered by one individual.

The Committee agreed to engage with the organisation *Durham Churches Together* to see if Churches across the parish might be used as hubs for the community to provide power, heat and light in the event of an emergency.

The Chair asked for 6 months to progress such a plan alongside Cllr V Ashfield and the Committee **agreed** this as a way forward.

7b. To complete:

I) Planning the Clean for the Queen litter picking event – Sunday 29th May 2022

The Clerk highlighted that the Committee is hoping to arrange a City-wide litter picking event as part of the Clean for the Queen campaign on 29th May 2022. The Clerk advised that he had made residents associations aware of the intention to host such an event and the Committee agreed that each Parish Councillor should be allocated a specific area to run the litter picking event. The Clerk agreed to circulate details of this.

II) Update on carbon literacy training

The Clerk reminded Members that, earlier this year, it was agreed that the Parish Council should undertake some carbon literacy training.

The Clerk advised that there will be 3 separate training sessions (all of which cover different topics so attendance at all of these sessions is encouraged) and the training will be delivered by the Centre for Alternative Technology. The training will be virtually delivered and the Clerk advised that he had circulated joining instructions for this training. The Clerk reminded Members that the dates and times for each training session are as follows:

24th May (beginning at 1pm and lasting 2 hours)

25th May (beginning at 1pm and lasting 2 hours)

26th May (beginning at 2pm and lasting 2 hours)

III) Update on the ecological emergency resolution and the use of glyphosates in the City of Durham parish area

The Clerk advised that he was awaiting a response to the letter to the Leader of Durham County Council on this issue and would update the Committee as soon as a response has been received.

IV) Update on the work to improve the River Wear – including report by Durham Cathedral on improving the Wear

The Clerk advised that he was still awaiting a response to his request for this report by Durham Cathedral and would update the Committee as soon as a response and the report have been received.

7c. To note:

Members noted that the following projects were being progressed and nearing completions:

- I) Installation of Mosaic art work at the UHND
- II) Progressing the blue plaques scheme
- III) 7 Hills of Durham project update

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

None received.

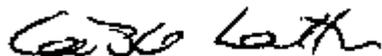
9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 14th June 2022 – 1pm

Tuesday 12th July 2022 – 1pm

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
(14th June 2022)**