

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on 12th July 2022 at 13:00pm via Zoom

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

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley and Cllr G Holland.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors L Brown and R Hanson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th JUNE 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr G Holland advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in the Agenda but also wished to draw to the Committee's attention the feedback he had received on the benches in Crossgate following a meeting of the Community Partnership in the area.

The Chair advised that she was aware of the matter of the benches and believed that the issue would be resolved as per the Partnership's request.

5. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

5a. To decide:

- I) Update on the work to improve the River Wear

The Chair reminded Members that the Environment Committee has previously discussed actions to improve the River Wear.

The Chair advised that improving the River Wear has been identified as a key priority for the Environment Committee and in January 2022, Members approved the allocation of £6,000 towards project(s) to achieve this.

A River Wear climate adaptation report has previously been discussed by the Committee. In addition, it was noted that Members have had sight of a substantial report commissioned by Durham Cathedral on the River Wear. The Cathedral has asked that this report not be shared any further than within the Parish Council.

Meanwhile, the Chair advised that a new organisation – the Durham City Riverscape Community – has been established which includes key stakeholders for the river and a meeting of representatives of this group took place on Monday 4th July to discuss proposals for the river.

At this meeting, the Chair advised that the Wear Rivers Trust highlighted that a Balsam Bash event was organised for the 10th July 2022 and there was a good turnout of volunteers.

At the meeting of 4th July 2022, the Chair advised that the following proposals were put forward by the Wear Rivers Trust for funding:

Item	Rate*	Frequency	Total
PA1 & PA6AW/INJ training	£600.00	3	£1,800.00
Replacement/additional equipment, PPE, and consumables (including litter picking)	£1,200.00	N/A	£1,200.00
(Staff time for training arrangements, include market place promotion, INNS management coordination and direct action) - Develop WRT educational sessions with schools	£300.00* Consequential costs	5 (include staff time for training and outputs for education in schools)	£1,500.00 - propose £1,000
River information and recruitment of volunteers' leaflet - draft, consultation, printing and distribution	£2,000	1	£2,000
TOTAL			£6,000.00

Annual plan – with year timetable (Beginning of March for leaflet distribution).
Leaflet to include:

- 4th Saturday of the month (litter picking events)
- Balsam Bash events (usually dealt with in June and July)
- Volunteer training event – August
- For trained volunteers only - Japanese Knotweed usually dealt with in August/ September and Giant Hogweed usually dealt with in March – June

Members **agreed** to recommend to Full Council the acceptance of this proposal by the Wear Rivers Trust and to work in partnership with the representatives of the Durham City Riverscape Community on this work.

II) Progressing the proposal for a green wall at Allergate/ East Atherton Street

Councillor Victoria Ashfield advised Members that she and the Clerk had re-visited the property at Allergate to talk through plans for the green wall with the owner but to date had received no response. Councillor Ashfield advised that she would continue to pursue this matter with the owner and report back to Committee as soon as there is an update.

III) Proposal to introduce heritage signage to the City

The Clerk advised that he and the Business Committee Chair had met with Durham Pointers recently and they have highlighted the need for better heritage signage around the City. The Clerk advised that he was pursuing this issue with the Highways and Regeneration team at DCC. The Committee thanked the Clerk for pursuing this and he advised that he would report back to a future meeting on this issue.

IV) To consider the purchase of an electric vehicle charging point in the City

The Clerk advised that he had recently received correspondence regarding electric vehicle charging points in the City and how far and wide this is covered across the parish area. The Clerk reminded Members that there is still over £1,000 in the budget for Clean Air and Active Travel and he has asked the officer responsible for the rollout of EVCPs across the county about the unit cost of these.

The capital cost for these EVCPs is £3,000 and thereafter an organisation would need to fund the electricity and ongoing maintenance of these. The Clerk asked the Committee if they might consider funding the installation of such an EVCP as a way of demonstrating the Parish Council's commitment to clean air and travel.

The Committee asked for further information on this matter and it was **agreed** that the officer should be invited to the September meeting of the Environment Committee in order to discuss this further.

V) Renewing the planting in the planters at the Viaduct Area

The Committee noted that a number of the plants in the planters at the Viaduct Area were in need of replacement and it was agreed that Councillors Ashfield and Lattin should work together with Councillor S Walker on this project.

5b. To complete:

I) Planning a City-wide litter picking event

Members **agreed** that the City-wide litter picking event should take place on Saturday 15th October 2022, starting at 11am, and that Councillors should each lead a separate area as part of this day of activity.

II) Progressing the blue plaques scheme – including proposed unveiling of existing plaques

The Clerk advised that the new blue plaques were being produced, as per Full Council's decision in July.

The Clerk also reported that he expected the blue plaques for Harrison House, the first female graduates of Durham University and Railway Cottages to be installed in the coming weeks. He advised that he would keep Members updated on this. Once installed, the Clerk advised that he hoped that a number of unveiling events could take place to mark their significance.

III) New DCC stickers for bins around the parish

The Committee noted that the County Council is rolling out new stickers for bins as part of a wide-reaching “bin it right” campaign. The Committee agreed that this is an important campaign; for which the City should be a primary target, given the issues of waste contamination and overflowing litter.

IV) Renewing the Service Level Agreement with DCC for an enhanced Neighbourhood Warden Service for the parish

Members welcomed the decision by Full Council in June to renew the service level agreement for an enhanced Neighbourhood Warden service with DCC. In doing so, Members also agreed that a monthly report must be a requirement written into any new SLA prior to payment of funds for the service.

The Clerk advised that he had sought a meeting with the Neighbourhood Warden Manager to discuss this in more detail and would report back to Committee on this.

Councillor V Ashfield also reported that Move Out day in Durham had been the worst on record and thanked the Wardens and DCC staff for their incredible work in dealing with these issues. That being the case, the Committee felt that landlords needed to take more responsibility for this sort of issue and Councillor V Ashfield proposed that the landlords be asked to make a voluntary contribution to the Parish Council precept in order to fund additional warden and staff hours in tackling some of these environmental issues. The Committee **agreed** to support this proposal and to put this to Full Council.

5c. To note:

I) Installation of the Mosaic art work at the UHND

The Committee noted that the Mosaic art work had now been installed to the entrance of the hospital and that an unveiling event was being planned for later in the year.

II) Changes to the Environment Committee budget 2022/23 – report included

The Clerk reminded Members that, at the June Full Council meeting, Members approved the following amendments to the Environment Committee’s budget in order to accommodate grant applications for this financial year.

The budget for an OASES/ school project was reduced from £3,000 to £1,000. The budgets for both celebrating plastic free businesses and community composting project were reduced from £1,000 to £0.

The amended budget for the Environment Committee for 2022/23 is therefore:

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Being a voice for the City	

OASES/ schools project	1,000.00
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	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	0.00
Community composting project	0.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	39,500.00

6. TO CONSIDER THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair reminded Members that the Chair of the Parish Council advised at the last Full Council meeting that he would accept proposals from any Committee on the makeup of its membership.

At the same time, the Chair advised that the work on the Environment Committee is significant and there was a need to have as many Members engaged in the work of the Committee as possible.

The Chair advised that she supported the proposal of having a substitute Member for Committees though this would not resolve the issue of the workload on this Committee.

The Committee **agreed** that there was no issue of forming a quorum on this Committee however there was an issue in terms of the current membership of the Committee and the workload of this Committee. The Clerk confirmed that this would be put to Full Council at the next meeting.

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

None received.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

13th September 2022

11th October 2022

8th November 2022

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 'Cathy Lath'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Chair of the Parish Council's Environment Committee
(13th September 2022)**