

ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 7th March 2016 at 7pm in Alston Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs: A. Martin (Chair), D. Athey, B. Aves, J. Glendinning, A. Green. E. Grew, P. Godwin, T. Haldon, M. Herdman, S. Hill, R. Miller, D. Phillips, A. Robertson, R. Thomson, G. Wright.

Apologies: none

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: listed under specific agenda items.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Walter Gundrey who was a parish councillor between 1983 and 1987.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1st February 2016 be adopted as a correct record with the following amendment: 1a/FEB/16 Neighbourhood planning, should read 50% of voters be in favour.... Proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Herdman (2 abs).

1a Appleby Fair and use of Tyne Willows Playing Field Car Park – discussion with representatives from Alston Community Gym

The new manager from the gym reported that they took over a failing business on the 4th January, but have started to turn it around over the past few months. The gym is being used more and they now have 131 paying customers. Last month the gym succeeded in covering its costs, but they noticed that the takings from previous years drops by 80% over Appleby Fair. Users are not comfortable coming past the travellers and many stay away and have signed a petition to stop use of the car park. The management would like the parish council to support their business, and to close off Tyne Willows during the fair weeks. They suggested alternative sites such as the Spar car park and Fairhill Recreation Grounds.

Members congratulated the gym staff on the improving situation, and a number spoke in support of closing off the car park at Tyne Willows. It was agreed that some residents are discouraged from attending the gym, but it was stated that the travellers have rights as do the rest of the population. If the weather is bad, as happened last year, there may be a problem with Makepeace's field flooding, which resulted in the travellers blocking the Leadgate road.

Other sites may not be willing or able to take the travellers; Fairhill is now a children's play area with no facilities, so the trustees may not agree that the site is suitable for camping. The other point to consider is that a number of businesses benefit from the travellers, although it is a fair point that the out of town site is close to the town and should not stop them from patronising local businesses.

It was agreed that the only way to discourage use of the site would be a substantial physical barrier, and the gym manager suggested placing a skip across the road entrance.

Resolved to put a physical barrier across the road entrance to Tyne Willows during the Appleby Fair weeks and to inform Eden District Council that the recycling centre could not be accessed during this time. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Thomson. (2- 2 abs) **Action.**

1b Proposal to support Alston Moor Fitness Club in its ambition to improve the pavilion building and its surroundings

Cllr Haldon reported that as the parish council are the owners of the building, and the gym has taken off over the last few months, it is time for Alston Moor Fitness Club to plan for the future, improving the building and making it more fit for purpose. Their AGM is tomorrow and he intends to suggest that members form a working partnership to consider how to improve and develop the building.

The manager said that they need the parish council's support in principle to revamp the building, which may need the inside reconfigured to make it more fit for purpose. There are plans which should be ready to present to the meeting tomorrow.

Resolved to support Alston Moor Fitness Club in principle, and to ask them come back when the plans are ready. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

2. Progress Reports

2a/MAR/16 Nenthead Fountain

Re: 10/FEB/16 Cllr Herdman and M. Fearn met to discuss the fountain and agreed that the cracked rear leg has to take priority. They are looking to stabilise the damage by a clamp or band, but until work is started it is impossible to say whether it will be possible to weld the clamps and remove the provisional bolt fittings, which would then be visible. The repair is dependent upon locating suitable pieces of pipe for adaption, and it should be possible to carry out this work within the precepted budget of £500. This is a temporary repair as the fountain may have to be removed for a full restoration.

The clerk reported that she contacted Eden planners who accepted the need for a temporary repair, but would like to see the fountain fully restored in time. She also contacted Historic England to see if any grants were available, unfortunately not although they were able to provide a list of specialist firms.

Resolved to appoint M. Fearn & Son to carry out the temporary repairs. Proposed by Cllr Athey and seconded by Cllr Aves. (nem con) **Action.**

2b/MAR/16 Issues with British Telecom

Re: 2a/FEB/16 The clerk reported that BT have agreed a refund, although they are unable to re-instate the original contract. It was agreed to re-instate the direct debit payments.

2c/MAR/16 Condition of Tyne Willows Car Park

The clerk reported that the condition of the car park has worsened with many new and deep potholes appearing over the winter. She asked Highways for advice, and was told that the potholes should be scraped level by machine, then filled and compacted. If deep filled by hand it is probable that the filling will be squeezed out again.

Cllr Athey reported that he discussed obtaining a suitable sub-base, and has found someone willing to lend the machinery required to tamp it down. It was agreed that a donation could be made to the person lending the equipment.

2d/MAR/16 Nenthead Litter Bins

The clerk reported that following a meeting with Cllr Hill, a Nenthead resident and Eden District Council officer, Eden have agreed to replace the two defective litter bins (one near the memorial and the other near the toilets). They will remove the dog waste bin near the play area and replace it with a litter bin, and install a new bin mid-way along the fence outside the play area. They are unable to install a bin in the ball park, as this land belongs to the County Council, but if the parish council or play area committee could cover the cost, they would be willing to supply and deliver the bin to site. The cost of the bin is £125.37 + vat.

Resolved to purchase a litter bin from Eden District Council for the Nenthead Play area ball park. Proposed by Cllr Athey and seconded by Cllr Herdman. (nem con). **Action.**

2e/MAR/16 Tynehead School

Re: 2d/FEB/16 The clerk reported that Cumbria County Council confirmed that they do not own the site of the former school. It might be possible by talking to older residents to find out, but as the parish council do not consider a plaque appropriate in this little visited location, no further action was suggested. Agreed.

2e/MAR/16 Social Media training

Re: 2d/FEB/16 The clerk reported that she had attended the training session and found it useful, although it will take some practice to get the website up and running.

3. Progress reports from working groups and council representatives

3a/ MAR/16 CAFs Planning Workshop on Sustainability issues Neighbourhood Planning

It was reported that although the presenters were enthusiastic, the material was not specific to Alston Moor and hence the presentation was less useful than it might have been.

3b/ MAR/16 Alston Cottage Hospital

Resolved to adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes to allow members from the League of Friends to speak.

The League of Friends reported that there was a report in the press over the weekend on a Public Progress Report from the West, North and East Success Regime on their view of healthcare in Cumbria. They are a team sent in from London to review all healthcare in Cumbria, because of the dire financial straits the county is in, and the difficulty in recruiting staff. They are looking at how healthcare is delivered and have proposed changes. Consultation is being carried out in two stages, informally, then to be followed by a formal public consultation due to begin at the end of May/June for three months.

The proposals involve concentrating in-patient beds on fewer sites, and putting in a range of outpatient services in the community hospitals. One option proposes closing the beds in Alston and several other community hospitals across Cumbria and increase the number of beds in Penrith, Workington and Cockermouth, plus a new 32 bed unit in Carlisle. An alternative option is to close all in-patient beds at the community hospitals.

There is to be an initial consultation by Heathwatch in the Spar car park on Thursday 10th March between 11 and 3pm. The team have a long questionnaire to be filled in, but many people will be unable to get to the van, so the League of Friends aim to put the questionnaire out to all households with a covering letter. They hoped to do this last week, but have heard nothing from Healthwatch, so are hoping to get the questionnaire out this week. It runs to 16 pages and everyone was urged to fill it in to demonstrate that the community cares about the beds and the 24/7 minor injuries unit. The questionnaires are important and a means of getting comments directly to the Success Regine. There are people willing to help others fill out the form.

The meeting re-convened and were told that Alston Cottage Hospital currently runs at full capacity of 98%, but is short of a staff nurse. Concerns were raised about the lack of capacity of community and social care services to support patients at home as put forward to accompany the option where all beds were closed at the community hospitals. It is important that end-of-life care is available at the local community hospital and for relatives to be able to visit, without the difficulties imposed by long journeys. At the end of life most people want to die with dignity, stress free and with their relatives and friends besides them.

It was agreed to let as many people know about the consultation as possible including the use of Facebook and other social media. **Action.**

3c/ MAR/16 Traffic Management meeting

Notes from the meeting were circulated earlier. Agreed to forward the action points. Residents from The Firs have not been consulted yet about their views on whether the speed humps should be replaced or removed.

3d/ MAR/16 Transport meeting

It was reported that the meeting discussed running the Garrigill Community bus whether or not any passengers have booked. In general it seems that people are not keen on booking in advance, so this is something of an issue. Running the Carlisle bus in the summer has been suggested, but no exact dates were mentioned. The Transport team plan to get in touch with Local Links to see if they are willing to take bookings as well as payments, since it is confusing for people to have to ring Carlisle to book. It was confirmed that Local Links have agreed to the suggestion and are waiting for the spreadsheets to be sorted out. Thanks were given to Cllr Athey who has volunteered for much of the driving.

4 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Robinson reported on the following:

Highways – have given priority to repairing flood damage.

Leadgate speed signs – highways have apologised for the delay, as there is a backlog of orders, but the signs should be in before Easter.

Garrill speed limit proposals – have been circulated and comments sent to the parish council.

Funding for Alston Fitness Club – signposted to funding. Cllr Haldon confirmed that an application has been submitted.

District Councillor's Report

Cllr Hymers sent a written report and was available for questions. :

Hags Bank water treatment scheme – attended as a "stakeholder" from EDC as did the County Councillor of 11th Feb before the meeting opened to general interested members of the public for the afternoon. The Environment Agency have committed £1.2m on the scheme. A planner present felt that all matters raised to date could be adequately answered.

Nenthead Chapel scheme - invited to attend their "stakeholders" meeting on 23rd Feb since EDC has given considerable support to date in terms of pump-priming of cash for the feasibility report and also officer time to assist.

Leader Programme meeting at SKS also on 23rd February. There are opportunities for funding.

High Mill project – joint working with EDC and AMP. Initially matched funding approved in conjunction with Heritage England (HE) to a total of £40k to provide two surveys, one being a complete structural survey of the buildings and ground works necessary, the other being a complete feasibility study of likely uses and estimates of costs to give back to AMP. Future plans will depend upon the outcome.

Met with Eden Arts in Penrith who arrange the exceptionally successful Winter Droving. They are seeking ways to reach the "alternative Eden" in support of worthy and interesting projects. Ideas of any kind would be welcomed.

Garrigill Ward meeting – this is needed. Cllrs Grew and Haldon have discussed timing, possibly before a village hall meeting. They were advised by the Nenthead ward that finding a willing secretary prepared to do the work was the key to success.

Cllr Godwin submitted a written report and was available for questions:-

There was a meeting of full Council on 18th September and there were two things that are pertinent to Alston

Report from the Community Advisory Group about the devolution of services. The group met with Alston Moor PC representatives and the comments from that have been noted. There is the potential for exploring further the opportunities for communities to take over some of the services. This is a very useful document, which it is recommended that all members of the PC read. The work of the group is done, but she is always happy to discuss this with individuals. Various issues were raised, but at this stage no one is going to force devolution on communities. Agenda item for next month. **Action.**

The calendar of meetings was agreed for the coming year. There will only be 6 full meetings per year. There was debate in the chamber around the acceptability of this and the potential issues around democracy. The Leader assured all councillors that extraordinary meetings would be convened when issues arose that needed to be resolved in between the scheduled dates

5. Planning

5a/MAR/16 16/0015 Listed building Replacement of emergency exit doors to rear. Alston Town Hall, Front Street, Alston CA9 3RF for Alston Town Hall Trustees.

The parish council is the corporate trustee, but members agreed a dispensation as there is a non-pecuniary interest.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Thomson and seconded by Cllr Athey. (2 abs)

5b/MAR/16 16/0098 Full application. Proposed rear extension to house, extension to outbuilding and new garage. Bunkershill, Garrigill CA9 3EW for Mr C. Jennings.

Cllr Robertson declared an interest.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Haldon and seconded by Cllr Grew. (1 abs)

5c/MAR/16 16/0157 Cert. of Lawful. Lawful development of use of two containers for domestic ancillary storage in the applicant's garden. 7 Bevan Terrace, Nenthead CA9 3PA for Mr P. Thompson.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Athey. (8+ 7 abs)

Decision Notices

5i/MAR/16 15/1104 Full application. Alterations to front and rear, change porch and add rear dormer (re-submission of 14/0911) Whitburn Cottage, Alston CA9 3DA for Ms Julie Capewell. Permission granted with conditions.

5ii/MAR/16 15/1118 Full application. Replacement of antenna, 1 x 300mm dish. 1 x 600mm (new) addition of 2 no RRU's and 1 no Fita Box within existing cabin. Land off A689, Nenthead, CA9 3PB for Vodafone Ltd. Permission granted with conditions.

6 Proposed Nent Haggs Mine Water Treatment scheme and public participation session with Nentsberry residents

A report from local residents was circulated before the meeting.

Resolved to adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes for residents to speak.

A spokesperson reported that the Coal Authority will be submitting a planning application to Cumbria County Council for a large water treatment works covering 9 acres in a field opposite the former Nentsberry Chapel. Residents attended a consultation event at Nenthall last month, but have concerns which they feel have not been fully addressed. They would like the parish council to support their objections to the scheme.

One of the biggest issues is the question of odour, arising from the chemical breakdown of products resulting in a 'rotten egg' type smell. No one can yet say with any certainty how far this will travel, as the technology to alleviate the smell is unproven, and it is only the second scheme in the country and the first close to dwellings.

The plans on display omitted showing properties close to the scheme, which will be visible from a number of dwellings. The proposals for planting will take a decade to mature, and in the meantime the lagoons with their orange lifebuoys will be visible, and a breeding ground for midges. The quality of life for residents and holidaymakers will be affected. Another potential issue is that this area floods, and much of the water is soaked up in the fields adjoining the river.

The scheme will only deal with contamination from Hags mine, which is described as 24% of the total contamination load, with the remainder coming from the old mines at Nenthead, and from the Nent Force level in Alston. Residents maintained that the actual figure for pollution is variable, but no-one has been able to provide any information on the amalgamated figures for an accurate picture. The figure for pollution of the Nent varies from 2nd to 22nd most polluted river. Another unanswered question is what would happen to the scheme if there was a mine collapse with water diverted elsewhere. These points are relevant as the scheme has a huge budget so has to be value for money.

Members suggested that the residents need to put together a cohesive professional report to state their opposition to the scheme. It was suggested they consider appointing an expert to work for them, but there is not a lot of time as the planning application may be submitted in April. They were advised to concentrate on the most important issues. Cllr Robinson offered to pass on the contact details for the County Council planning officer who was present at the stakeholder's event. **Action.**

The agencies at the consultation event had offered to attend a meeting, and the clerk was asked to check when the planning application is to be submitted and to invite them to a meeting with the parish council and residents. **Action.**

7. Garrigill – proposals for a 30mph speed restriction in the village, proposal for a bus stop sign and new noticeboard

The clerk reported that a number of responses were received, which she has compiled into a table to indicate those in favour of the proposals and those against. Cllr Grew had also received a number of comments.

Bus stop – last winter it got knocked down and a request for a new one was made at a Traffic Management meeting. The overwhelming vote was that it should not be replaced as there are no buses.

Noticeboard – 20 people support the noticeboard, 7 are against it, with the main objections being the size, cost and colour.

Resolved to defer a decision to the ward meeting. Proposed by Cllr Robertson and seconded by Cllr Thomson. (nem con)

30 mph speed limit – Garrigill is the only village in Eden without a speed limit, and the informal consultation has received mixed responses. If there is strong resistance to the proposals it won't happen as it is up to the residents to say what they want. One benefit of a speed restriction is that it would be possible to enforce dog fouling offences.

8. Nenthead – request from Eden District Council that the parish council adopt land outside Dene Cottage to enable light no 4 to be retained

An e-mail was received from Eden District Council inviting the parish council to adopt land outside Dene Cottage, where the home owner is willing to give up a piece of land so that a light can be retained. If this is to happen Electricity North West have to draw up an agreement for the parish to sign to take on the liability and the maintenance of the pole. Eden District Council will have to sign a similar agreement for the lights that the parish take ownership of. Eden District Council would maintain the light, but the maintenance of the pole would be the responsibility of the parish.

It was observed that there could be costs involved if the parish took on the maintenance of the pole and lights. The clerk to ask for more information and a site plan. **Action.**

9. Request from Nenthead Church Wardens for financial assistance

A letter was received from Nenthead church wardens for financial assistance to support their work. St John's Church provides church services throughout the year, whilst maintaining the church internally and

externally, always keeping it available for the community when needed, which is usually for baptisms, weddings and funerals. They are an elected working group and congregation, numbering only 4 and all the tasks of worship, maintenance, repair and fundraising, with the support of the vicar, falls to them.

There was a concern that the other churches on Alston Moor might find themselves in a similar financial situation, and that the parish council has limited funds.

It was agreed that it would be useful to have a presentation from the vicar to explain something about the churches on Alston Moor. **Action.**

10. Request to purchase a plot of land behind Lyndhurst, Townfoot

A letter was received from the owner of Lyndhurst to purchase the plot of land behind the property. The clerk reported that an agreement had been made with the previous owner that he could buy the land, but he had not followed through. The new owner has rented the garden for two years, and made efforts to improve it, but it is incredibly steep and inaccessible from both the top and bottom. She estimates it will cost around £9,000 if she were to employ someone to clear all the rubble and buried rubbish accumulated over the years, but as a keen gardener would like to create a productive and attractive garden that would enhance the view from Tyne Willows. She is willing to offer £500, the sum which was offered and accepted previously.

Resolved to agree to the sale in principle, but to request a valuation and that the applicant agrees to pay all legal fees. Proposed by Cllr Thomson and seconded by Cllr Grew (3 abs)

11. Request from Alston Primary School to consider how to get the lollipop person back

The primary school asked to withdraw this item.

12. Ratification of the draft policies - dignity at work, grievance policy, disciplinary policy

The papers were circulated with the minutes.

Resolved to adopt the dignity at work, grievance and disciplinary policies. Proposed by Cllr Haldon and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

13. Report from risk assessment meeting

The report was circulated following a review by Cllrs Phillips and Robertson. Members were asked to note that public liability insurance only is held for the war memorials, Nenthead fountain, benches and the bus shelters due to the high cost of insuring these items. No objections were raised.

Resolved to accept the parish council risk assessment. Proposed by Cllr Haldon and seconded by Cllr Herdman. (nem con)

14. Eden District Council Scrutiny review

Information on the scrutiny review has been previously circulated. The suggested list to consider includes housing, street cleaning and collecting rubbish and recycling, leisure, foot *[food?]* safety, addressing fuel poverty, grants to people with disabilities, growing the economy of Eden, assisting with flooding, working with communities and public toilets.

The Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17 will be finalised in May 2016 and reviews undertaken during the year.

It was agreed to recommend the categories: assisting with flooding, community hospitals and ambulance provision. **Action.**

15 Consultations & Correspondence for information

15a/MAR/16 War Memorial Online

An e-mail was received from War Memorials Online seeking permission to add details of the Nenthall War Memorial to their website. Agreed. **Action.**

15c/MAR/16 CCC – Notices of temporary road closures

Raise Bank Road, Alston – 9th May 2016 for 5 weeks for an UVA overhead to underground scheme.

U3104 Loaning head, Alston - 25th April for 2 weeks for a UVA overhead to underground scheme.

15c/MAR/16 Notices of events/meetings

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey, Historic England has awarded a contract for a survey to be carried out over 3 days on land around the town centre car park, which will need to be closed while the work is in progress. Dates between 16th and 18th March have been suggested to avoid any conflict with Easter.

It was agreed that the timing seemed sensible. **Action.**

Alston Market – 4 applications have been received for stalls over the bank holiday.

15d/MAR/16 Information received during the last month

Queen's 90th Birthday Beacons – invitation to take part with a beacon

CALC training

CALC circular – March 2016 – the clerk was asked to obtain a new edition of the Good Councillors Guide.

Action.

Nenthead Play area annual accounts 2015

Local Delivery of Service Pilot – Findings and next steps

16. Items for next month's agenda and urgent business

16b/MAR/16 Annual Parish Meeting – invite to Police and Crime Commissioners

As the Police and Crime Commissioners elections are to take place on 5th May it was suggested the candidates be invited to the parish meeting on 18th April.

16c/MAR/16

The litter bin besides the bus shelter at Alston House has been damaged, and the clerk was asked to report it to Eden District Council. **Action.**

17. Finance

17a/MAR/16 Bank statements

The statements as of 7th March 2016 were as follows:-

Alston Moor Parish Council tr/ac	£8,309.52
Alston Moor Parish Council bus/ac	£12,668.41
Eden Credit Union	£7,008.58

17b/MAR/16 Accounts for Payment

The following accounts were for payment:-

<i>Summary of accounts for payment :-</i>	£1,383.83
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting :-</i>	£12.50
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:-</i>	£108.40

Resolved that sufficient funds are held in balances for the clerk to be authorised to settle all the accounts listed during the coming month (appendix I). Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Herdman. (nem con)

18. Appointment of representatives to review clerk's contract and sickness policy

It was agreed that Cllr Haldon, Phillips, Martin and Robertson would review the updated contract and sickness policy. **Action.**

19. Update on insurance claim

This part of the meeting was held in confidence.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed:

Dated:

