

ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday, 2nd February 2015 at 7.15pm in Alston Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs: A. Martin (Chair), A. Bondi, B. Cooper, D. Athey, A. Green, E. Grew, T. Haldon, M. Herdman, R. Miller, D. Phillips, P. Thompson.

Apologies: Cllrs: I. Johnson, M. Bell, B. Aves, T. Pennell.

Absent: none.

Declarations of interest: none.

County Councillor's Report

Apologies from Cllr Robinson.

District Councillor's Report

Cllr Harrison reported on the following:

Scrutiny committee tasks – Cllr Harrison was asked to take part in a 'mystery shopping' task; last year he investigated street cleaning and this year it is cemeteries.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 5th January 2015 be adopted as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Athey. (9+ 2 abs)

Resolved that the minutes of the precept meeting held on Monday 12th January be adopted as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Athey. (nem con)

1a Eden Housing Association report

Carolyn Greenhaugh from Eden Housing Association explained that EHA was set up in 1977, when they took over the running of Eden District Council's housing stock. Since then they have grown and now have 1,700 properties including 6 sheltered housing schemes. Last year, following a merger, an additional 100 properties were taken on and they manage 300 homes on behalf of several smaller organisations.

Over the last 3 years they have put together a corporate plan, with the focus for the next 3 years on affordable housing in rural areas and services for older people.

Services for older people – an Independent Living scheme was launched in 2012 in response to the fact that Eden is a large district with a low, ageing population, and poor access to services. It is predicted that dementia and other age-related illnesses will rise. The One Stop shop aims to help people remain independent in their own home, and is available for anyone over 60 or with a disability or long term illness. They offer a range of services including care alarms for £2.94 per week, and a handyman scheme for £15 per hour for help around the home with small jobs such as gardening, or decorating. Over the last two years there have been around 400 customers, mostly home owners.

CG explained in response to a question that the handyman lives in Penrith and covers the whole of Eden District.

It was suggested that Alston Moor residents who found it difficult to pay for the care alarm or services could apply to the Fairhill Estates Charity for assistance.

Affordable housing – Kevan Guest, who is director of Eden Housing, said that although much of their work is about dealing with repairs, they have a modest development programme and are keen to build more new affordable housing. Alston Moor is short on accommodation for older people; there are 50 houses, 47 flats but only 2 bungalows. They are looking for smallish housing plots or fields to build a minimum of 10 units.

KG was asked if Eden Housing would consider re-developing existing properties, but the cost is an issue, as the government currently only give grants for new developments. Most land in the area is in private ownership, so purchase cost is also a practical consideration.

The Fairhill field near the primary school was mentioned as a possibility since it is included in the Local Plan for development. However, it has a tenant and is vested in the Charity Commission, and there are other issues including access and the gradient. Eden Housing are welcome to take a look to at the site, and the parish council can to put up posters, and leaflets.

CG and KG were thanked for attending and left a copy of The Rural Housing Alliance, which is a practical guide for parish councils on what can be done to help provide affordable housing.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

2a/FEB/15 Police report

Re: 2a/JAN/15 Richard Quinn confirmed in an e-mail that PC Paul Bowyer will carry on the work Paul Crabtree did. The police have asked Highways to grit the Nenthead Mines car park to prevent it being used as a skid pad, and are speaking with a number of individuals seen at the car park about anti-social behavior. RQ asked to be kept informed of any developments over Appleby Fair, mentioning that last year had passed off without any major incidents.

2b/FEB/15 Subsidised Bus services

Re: 2d/JAN/15 Nothing further to report as the Transport Group meeting was cancelled due to the weather. Cumbria County Council wants to hold over the meeting until March.

A recent newspaper article mentioned the funds available towards rural transport, and the clerk was asked to find out whether the County Council was following this up. **Action.** The fund is intended to be used to develop co-ordinated transport, with initial funding for feasibility studies, but there are doubts as to whether this would help Alston Moor because the low population makes viability a challenge.

2c/FEB/15 Streetlights report

Re: 2e/JAN/15 The clerk reported that Chris Slater from Eden District Council completed a site visit attended by Chris Harrison and herself and has forwarded a report on the Alston street lights. She has some concerns about lights 1-12 and 60 on the Raise, as the report stated that they were being considered by the parish council under a separate project. She pointed out that this was not correct, as no specific funding has been allocated, and the sums agreed at the precept meeting would not be sufficient to cover the cost of £1,500 per column. She requested a further site visit to fully assess these lights. During the site visit the light on the Whitehall road was reviewed and a decision made by Eden that it did not meet their criteria, being too far out of the village. The clerk was asked to request that Eden reconsider this decision. **Action.**

CALC forwarded a copy of the County Council's road lighting policy and replied that there are provisions in the Highways Act 1980 to cover the situation where the designation of a road changes and where responsibility passes from one body to another. They thought too much time had passed to argue that a mistake had been made, and suggested that there are two issues: first the possible transfer of responsibility and secondly, if a transfer takes place, which lights will continue to be maintained. It is for the two principle authorities to resolve.

A reply was also received from Rory Stewart, offering further help if needed, and forwarding a copy of the response from Jim Savege on behalf of the County Council. JS stated that prior to 1974 the responsibility for street lighting was spread across County, District and Parish; generally rural road lighting systems were the responsibility of the county, urban the responsibility of the district councils and footway lighting the parishes. Following local government reorganisation the responsibility for urban lighting passed to Cumbria County Council along with the rural road lighting maintained by the four former county councils, and some parish councils transferred their footway lighting to the new district councils. This resulted in some anomalies with footway lighting serving A class roads as in Alston.

The current County Council road lighting policy allows for the transfer of footway lighting under Section 270 of the Highways Act 1980 where the lighting authority upgrades the footway lighting to road lighting standard. The County Council entered into dialogue with Eden District Council regarding the potential transfer of footway lighting where it meets the requirements of S. 270. To date they have received no formal request to transfer footway lighting to Alston.

The clerk wrote back requesting the transfer of lights on the Brampton, Nenthead and possibly Hexham roads, and for a meeting to be held with officers from the county and district to look into whether the new light proposed for the Brampton and Nenthead roads could meet the County's criteria. To date no response has been received from Eden, but Jonathan Smith on behalf of the County has written to say that the county council's street lighting team are in discussion with colleagues at Eden, and he is sure the parish will be consulted in the event of any changes to the current situation.

Members observed that the definition of a built-up area with a 30mph speed limit only applies if the streetlights are at the specified distance. It was concluded that the parish council must continue to ask the district council to deal with the outstanding issues.

Cllr Harrison said the he was hopeful 60% of streetlights would be back on by May.

2d/FEB/15 Alston Ambulance

Re: 2f/JAN/15 Cllr Martin reported that the Ambulance Service have lost the details of the parish council representatives, but wanted to arrange a meeting to discuss some concerns that have arisen over the training.

2e/FEB/15 Community Warden meeting

Re: 7/JAN/15 The clerk reported that she held off setting up a meeting until Cllr Grew returned, but will organise one this month.

2f/FEB/15 Henderson's Wood

Re: 8/JAN/15 A meeting between Andrew Nicholson, the contractor and parish council representatives Cllrs Athey and Thompson has been set up provisionally for 11am next Saturday.

2g/FEB/15 Nenthall War Memorial wall

Re: 9b/JAN/15 An e-mail was received from Cumbria County Council stating that Highways do not maintain walls unless they retain the road, so maintenance liability lies with the adjacent landowner.

As it is a relatively small section Cllr Herdman volunteered to repair it, in consultation with John Glendinning. **Action.**

3. Planning

3a/FEB/15 14/1076 Full application. Proposed change of use of disused barn to residential accommodation. Low Park Farm, Alston CA9 3BD for Mr P. MacMillan.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Cooper. (9+ 1- 1 abs)

3b/FEB/15 14/1089 Full application. Change of use of disused milking parlour to a one-bedroom holiday cottage. Former milking parlour next to Yew Trees, Leadgate, Alston CA9 3EL for Mr & Mrs A. Thompson.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Athey. (10+1 abs)

3c/FEB/15 14/1103 Full application. Replace front door with wood look composite door. Rannoch House, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JU for Mrs G. Elliott.

A recommendation for approval was not carried.

Recommended for refusal on the grounds that the parish council objects to the policy of allowing non-traditional materials in buildings within a conservation area. Proposed by Cllr Herdman and seconded by Cllr Bondi. (4+ 4- 3 abs). Carried on the casting vote of the chair.

3d/FEB/15 14/1123 Listed building. Demolition of existing north-east single storey extension, construction of new WCs and café/waiting room, renovation to ticket hall and re-instatement of station canopy and new west platform. The Railway Station, Station Road, Alston CA9 3JB for South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society – Mr Craven.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Haldon and seconded by Cllr Bondi. (8+ 2- 1 abs)

3e/FEB/15 15/0011 Full application. Conversion of former church school hall to 3 bedroom dwelling. School Hall, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JQ for Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance.

Cllr Martin declared an interest as neighbour.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr Athey. (7+ 2- 1 abs)

Decision Notices

3i/FEB/15 14/0775 Full application. Installation of a stainless steel insulated flue and weather cap. Forge Cottage, Nenthall Road, Alston CA9 3SN for Mr C. McEwen. Permission granted with conditions.

3ii/FEB/15 14/0911 Full application. Alterations to front and rear, change porch and add rear dormer. Whitburn Cottage, Alston CA9 3DA for Ms J. Capewell. Permission granted with conditions.

3iii/FEB/15 14/0916 Full application. Change of use of Methodist Chapel into café and community facility. Demolition of existing lean-to boiler house. Extension to rear of property to create kitchen and plant room. Methodist Church, Nenthall, Alston CA9 3PF for Nenthall Chapel Steering Group. Permission granted with conditions.

3iv/FEB/15 14/0917 Listed building. Listed building consent for the demolition of existing lean-to boiler house, extension to rear of property to create kitchen and plant room and other internal and external alterations. Methodist Church, Nenthall, Alston CA9 3PF for Nenthall Chapel Steering Group. Permission granted with conditions.

3v/FEB/15 14/0985 Full application. Proposed conservatory to side of dwelling replacing bay window. Woodstock, Alston CA9 3UJ for Mr Hall. Permission granted with conditions.

4. Correspondence

4a/FEB/15 Eden District Council Scrutiny Work Plan Consultation

An e-mail was received from Eden District Council inviting the council to submit proposals for scrutiny priorities for the next 12 months by 26th March 2015. Members suggested streetlights and transport, but Cllr Godwin pointed out that there has already been a review on footway lights and post-16 transport, which is a difficult issue as transport is a county council function. Agenda item for next month.

4b/FEB/15 CALC Local Council Award Scheme

An e-mail was received from CALC about the new Local Council Award Scheme which has replaced the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme, and aims to celebrate the successes of the best parish councils and to provide a framework to support all parish councils improve and develop to meet their full potential. Its value is in working with the local community and other partners to give them confidence that the council is delivering to a national professional standard. The cost of registration is £50, but the clerk advised that, as the council did not have all the documentation in place, including formally-adopted standing orders and an action plan for the current year, it would be sensible to work towards meeting the criteria before signing up.

4c/FEB/15 Statutory Instrument 2015 No 5 The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015

A Statutory Instrument on the above order.

4d/FEB/15 Tynedale Visitor

The Hexham Courant is offering parish councils the opportunity to publicise their area in the 2015 Tynedale Visitor. Cllr Bondi offered to assist with updating the information for the 5th February deadline.

Action.

4e/FEB/15 Land Registry Notice of an application for alteration of a registered title, Firs Woodland Walk

A letter was received from the Land Registry stating that an application has been made for the registered title to be removed from a section of land in Firs Wood overlapping with land belonging to Bridge End. Land Registry investigations suggested the overlap occurred because the registered title was mapped incorrectly on first registration in 2010, and it does not appear there is documentary title to the land. An inspection of the land showed it to be a grassed riverside walk area, not clearly in the occupation of any particular person.

The grounds for the alteration are that the applicant believes there is a mistake in the register that should be corrected under paragraph 5(a) of Schedule 4, of the Land Registration Act 2002. Any objection must be made before 12 noon on 20th February 2015.

The clerk reported that the letter had been received only a few hours before the meeting. She suggested that as a site visit was to be held at Henderson's Wood at the weekend with the parish council's agent, who had previously carried out work in Firs Wood while working for East Cumbria Countryside Project, it might be helpful to discuss the issue with him.

It was agreed to elect a Rights of Way Working Group with Cllrs Bondi, Phillips, Athey and Thompson and co-opted member A. Nicholson to meet after the site visit to Henderson's Wood and to determine the response to the Land Registry. **Action.**

4f/FEB/15 Notice of meetings/events

Alston Moor Marketing Event – 10th February 2015

Defibrillator training – Alston Town Hall Monday 16th March 7.30

4g/FEB/15 Literature received

Police Newsletter

Clerks & Councils Direct – January 2015

5. Report from working group on Financial Regulations meeting and actions to update parish council practices

Cllr Haldon reported that he had met with the clerk to identify what actions should be taken to meet the requirements of the Financial Regulations and would bring a report to the next meeting. There are a number of actions requiring parish council approval.

6. Estimates for Firs Walk walling work/CCTV survey Tyne Willows

Tyne Willows Pavilion – CCTV study – the clerk reported that one quote had been received from a local contractor. Only two contractors are known to be able to do this work living locally and the other contractor declined to quote.

Resolved to accept the quote of £120 from Miles Mennie for a CCTV investigation of the sewerage drains at Tyne Willows Pavilion and to jet and clear if a blockage were found. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Martin. (nem con)

Firs Wood Walling – Cllr Green, as a relative of one contractor and Cllr Thompson as a potential contractor declared an interest.

Three quotes were received, but were very different from each other and could not be compared easily. The lowest quote of £400 met the specifications as agreed by the parish council, but the higher tender included additional work that would result in improvements over and above the original requirements.

Resolved to accept the quote of £640 from John Pearson to repair the stone wall, cut out the dead tree, dig out the foundations, replace with large rocks and rebuild 8-10 metres of wall. Proposed by Cllr Bondi and seconded by Cllr Grew. (9+ 1 abs)

7. Date for APM

The clerk confirmed that Thursday 23rd April has been set aside to meet with prospective parliamentary and district council candidates. The council needed to decide if there would be enough time to hold the AGM after or before the meeting.

It was agreed to hold the AGM on Tuesday 14th April 2015.

8. Risk assessment meeting

Agreed that Cllr Cooper and Grew would carry out the risk assessment.

9. Reports from Committees & Council Representatives

9a/FEB/15 Traffic Management

Draft minutes of the meeting were circulated at the start of the meeting. One issue noted was that the Crown car park had not been gritted during the bad weather. EDC had been asked to take this up with Highways. The parish council noted that an act of goodwill had occurred with some other areas gritted which would improve pedestrian and vehicle safety in Alston and Nenthead.

9b/FEB/15 Transport Group

The meeting was cancelled due to bad weather and a new date set for 10th March 2015.

9c/FEB/15 Nenthead Ward meeting

The meeting was held on 26th January and included a report from the Environment Agency and the North Pennines AONB on a mines waste-processing project. This is at an early stage, but aims to reduce the amount of heavy metals including zinc reaching the mouth of the Tyne. It will be looking at sites around Nenthead and Haggs mine entrance, with further information promised. There was also an update on the hydro scheme, a report on Nenthead Chapel from Kim Hobson, and Young Cumbria who are trying to resolve issues with bullying.

10. Items for information/next month's agenda/urgent business

10a/FEB/15 Offer of use of SKS meeting room

The clerk reported that an offer has been made by SKS for the council to use the meeting room at SKS at no cost, but that she needed to check accessibility and would report back.

11. Finance

11a/FEB/15 Balances

The balances as 2nd February 2015 were as follows:-

Alston Moor Parish Council tr/ac	£14,529.37
Alston Moor Parish Council bus/ac	£12,659.57
Eden Credit Union	£6,998.00

11b/FEB/15 Accounts for Payment

Cllr Martin reported that she had used the Community bus for the public meeting to bring people from Garrigill, and due to a misunderstanding with the County Council had thought it would be free, but had been charged between £25 and £30.

Resolved that to use the bus to bring Garrigill residents to a public meeting was a valid use of funds and that the parish council would pay. Proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Bondi. (nem con)

The following accounts were for payment:-

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:-</i>	£1,114.70
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:-</i>	£0.00
<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 Grew. (nem con)

11c/FEB/15 Internal Auditors report

A report from the Internal Auditor was received stating that he has carried out the Interim internal audit and can confirm the records are maintained in accordance with the required standards. He is required by the 2014 Practitioners’ Guide to draw up and submit an Audit Plan before conducting next year’s final internal audit and will submit this to the council. A small number of queries were raised for clarification and received satisfactory replies. He noted that the balance in the parish council’s account with Eden Save Credit Union is £6,998 following a one off membership fee of £2. This has now been corrected in the records.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed:

Dated: