



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 7th December 2020 at 7pm, held remotely on Zoom.

Present: Cllrs: A. Holt (Chair), M. Denoual, A. Green, E. Grew, C. Harrison, M. Hanley, H. Ho, Z. Robson, L. Seaton.

Apologies: none

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: 7e/DEC/20 Cllr MD. 14/DEC/20 Nenthead Christmas lights Cllrs MD, LS, ZR

A minutes silence was held for Vince Peart, who worked well beyond the call of duty, as the parish council's Community Warden.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 2nd November 2020 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: 6d/NOV/20 costs are £2,000 for a life pack for CRF and £2,600 for eCFR's. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

2. Winter Wanderland project

The publicity officer reported that she has attended video meetings of the Winter Wanderland project taking place in towns across Eden. It is a national project started in 2015 and into its 6th year, with an objective to inspire communities to create magical walking trails, something that is ideal for this year as it is Covid friendly. It is not a competition but is open to anyone interested in taking part.

Penrith Chamber of Trade has initiated the project and put together a press release on the national website, which has details of what is involved. An artist from Alston has joined, but there is a need for more partners locally, as it is hoped Alston will take part. The idea is that the project will be launched in January, then run until February with the aim of cheering up community areas during the dark nights. The Chamber of Trade has a small pot of funding for materials to decorate windows, and is looking for grants, contributions from organisations or donations of artists' materials. Libraries and schools have been invited to get involved, and if Alston is to take part it will need to select a weekend to launch.

The parish council were asked if they would be willing to support the project and make a small financial contribution.

Resolved to endorse the Winter Wanderland project and to discuss a contribution in January. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

3. County & District reports

County Council

Apologies from Cllr Driver who has promised a video before Christmas.

District Council

Cllr Hanley reported on the following and had prepared briefing papers that were circulated before the meeting:

Licensing Committee – the meeting discussed amendments to the licensing policy as the Act has been updated.

EDC meeting 26 November– an Acting Chief Executive, Jason Gooding, has been appointed, and as he is the Chief Executive to Carlisle City Council the two councils will share the post, which is a cost saving to both councils. The council is now allowed to use Zoom for meetings provided the participants are using a paid-for version.

Extraordinary council meeting – a discussion was held on the proposals for a unitary authority, and a recommendation made for two authorities with Eden aligned with Carlisle and Allerdale, giving a north/south split.

Objection to cllr e-mails – Cllr Hanley read out a statement objecting to the e-mails made by Cllr Ho to the clerk which were ill informed, empty threats about the use of data; he was concerned that the chair had not offered any support. These e-mails do no-one any good, they are not nice and should stop. Other members agreed with the statement and asked for the excessive e-mails to stop.

Cllr Sharp reported on the following:

Bring sites - CCTV has been requested for the Alston and Nenthead sites. Residents are asked to continue to report fly-tipping as the more evidence that can be gathered the better. Cllr Sharp does not use Facebook so if anyone sees mention of anything relevant please ring her so it can be passed on to the relevant officer.

Business support – Eden has information on the latest grants and Tier 2 restrictions. Local support for residents is also available.

ACT survey – the results of the ACT survey on what is good rural service, undertaken in the summer, is now on the www.cumbriaaction.org.uk website.

NHS Governors elections – anyone can put themselves forward for election if they are interested, with elections taking place in January. There is more information on Facebook.

Green homes grant – this opened for applicants on the 1st October and will run until 31st March. Alston Moor has been prioritised and anyone with an annual income of under 30k is eligible for an energy efficiency report and can access trusted suppliers for energy efficiency measures.

Questions

Is it possible to find out what happens to the recycling after it has left Alston? Finding out could be an interesting project for young people. Cllr Sharp agreed to follow up.

Chair's Report

Cllr Holt reported that he had attended three training courses and was looking forward to resolving the issues affecting the council. He thanked Alston Moor Business Association and the volunteers who helped the contractor with the Christmas lights. There is a problem with the Market Cross lights, which is why they are not on yet. With regard to the alleged data breach, he stated that no public data had been shared or data breaches made.

4. Public participation

District Cllr Sharp gave an update on progress at Alston Recreation Grounds, whose trustees manage a five acre site; they have a full committee chaired by Cllr Sharp. They employ a local contractor to look after it and in normal years hold voluntary tidy up days; they were able to manage one in September this year. Other planned projects were cancelled, including the orchard planting, spring bike ride, spring clean and fund-raising events, leaving the lotto as the main fundraiser. Plans include improving the signage to signpost what is available, develop better links with the school and look to setting up a new website. The two main projects are the bike track and community orchard, which is on hold as the site has been assessed as having high lead levels. There is no concrete evidence of harm. They are working with Environmental Health at Eden and have returned the funding, and will be looking for an alternative site. In 2018 they worked with Active Cumbria to look at how to move the bike track forward. Cumbria County Council has looked at the site and there have been initial talks with Sport England. Options are for a dirt and gravel surface track or a BMX track, which is considerably dearer with high levels of insurance. There is a good example of a bike track in Keswick. Something to consider is that installing a bike track up to competition standard could be good for encouraging tourism in Alston, as it is well positioned between competition tracks. The first step is to carry out a feasibility study to look into all aspects including lighting, parking, drainage, planning permission etc.

Members stated that it was an excellent idea, and some could be interested in helping out. It was also suggested that the Recreation grounds apply for funding towards the feasibility study.

A former cllr then spoke to say that he had been asked to put his questions in writing at the last public participation session of the council. He had two questions and asked Cllr Grew to read out his letter:

Why had the council elected a Chair who had been in receipt of complaints from the public and former councillors? Why had the Chair dialled 999 during a council meeting? He then asked the remaining members to resign, and if this is not done voluntarily a petition will take place.

A second former cllr spoke to ask if the evidence could be provided to substantiate the serious allegations made against several former members and that if none could be found asked for an apology.

The chair queried whether the questions should be raised while Code of Conduct complaints are being investigated.

EDC's solicitor spoke to confirm that they are also dealing with several complaints against members in an ongoing process. Public participation should be allowed to go ahead irrespective of the complaints, and questions may be asked of councillors. She confirmed that Code of Conduct complaints may be published, although this has not been routinely done in Eden. They are reviewing their procedures to bring them into line with other Cumbrian authorities.

5. Progress reports

5a/DEC/20 Tree works

Re: 5b/NOV/20 The contractor has been working on trees in priority 1, as this has included some trees in Henderson's and Firs Wood that were not on the original list, but which could present a hazard to the public if left unattended. It will mean that some of the less urgent work may have to be budgeted for in 2021-2022. However, tree works should be carried out before re-growth restarts and as the works for the trees on Garrigill Village Green are within the Conservation Area, the contractor needs to know if the council would like him to progress these works. He has asked the clerk to meet for a site visit on Tyne Willows on Wednesday for an update and discussion on priorities.

Members who have spoken to the contractor confirmed that more trees need to be felled than originally anticipated as ash dieback has started to take hold. Realistically, tree work should be carried out during the winter months, so it would be sensible to get him to do the work during the current financial year. The contractor is willing to wait for payment in the next financial year.

Resolved to ask the contractor to go ahead with the Garrigill tree works for invoicing in the next financial year. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Seaton (nem con)

Noted that the works for Garrigill are to crown two trees and trim a third.

Cllr Harrison reported that ash dieback is becoming a serious issue and asked people to keep a look out for affected trees along the roadside verges. Early signs are the top branches starting to die back. Trees besides roads can be reported to Highways or discussed at Traffic Management meetings.

5b/DEC/20 Footbridge, The Hush, Nenthead

Re: 16/NOV/20 A representative from Nenthead Mines was contacted to ask what was happening about the footbridge to the Hush. The worst of the damaged timber has been repaired so the bridge can remain open, but in the longer term it will have to be replaced. A copy of the Community Grants application form has been forwarded.

5c/DEC/20 Incident during last month's report from NWAS

Re: 1a/NOV/20 The misuse of the chat facility during last month's report from NWAS was reported to the police and classed by them as a hate crime. It is to be noted that the council will have zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour and ask that everyone is treated with respect.

5d/DEC/20 Public participation

Re: PP/NOV/20 Noted that the two residents who were asked to put their requests in writing have done so.

5e/DEC/20 High Galligill Woodland Creation Scheme

Re: 13b/NOV/20 An acknowledgement of the council's comments on the proposals was received, and members invited to contact the agents if they had any questions.

5f/DEC/20 Alston Public toilets update

Eden District Council have advised that they will make a start on negotiations over Alston's public toilets in April next year.

A question was asked about community consultation. The clerk reported that the council had agreed in principle to take on the public toilets, and she would have expected a report on the public toilets to have been made to the Annual Parish Meeting, which was of course cancelled due to Covid. Community engagement to discuss further.

6. Council Representatives reports

6a/DEC/20 Alston Hospital Alliance

Cllr Grew reported that the Claire Edwards, Cumbria CVS Health and North Cumbria Integrated Health Care Partnership Officer, attended and is focusing on building relationships with the 3rd sector. She wanted to find out what was wanted in Alston and can offer support with training and governance. She

was told that Alston wants what Wigton and Maryport have, Alston has nothing, and all the plans are still sitting in an officer's in-tray.

An officer from Adult Social Care is to be asked to attend future meetings, as well as the ICC contact for Community Hospital. There is also an issue over the lack of supplies for minor injuries. While the hospital is closed the GP practice is looking after it, in addition to their own work, and should be supported. It was agreed to follow this up.

The GP surgery has experienced negative feedback. They are doing their utmost under difficult circumstances, which is all credit to them, and they should be thanked alongside other NHS staff. Residents were asked not to get aggressive with staff. On a positive note, there are two new nurses starting.

Cllr Denoual added that there is a shortage of public representatives and Governor's elections coming up, those elected could attend the Alliance meetings.

Ambulance meetings - Cllr Grew reported that there is now a designated CFR Facebook page to help put out the message, and the next meeting in January for the working group will look at how other areas are managing. Parts of Scotland and Ireland are remote, and it is intended to investigate what systems are working. Cllr Seaton is welcome to join the group.

The 6 new CFR's have started training, and all, including Cllr Seaton, are to be thanked for coming forward. They have another weekend of training.

6b/DEC/20 Alston Area Planning

Cllr Grew reported that 26 groups have been invited to join the group, which has discussed how to market Alston Moor during the first phase of the cobbles restoration on Front Street. The timing may be around Easter. Ideas include weekend markets, tours of the town and encouraging people to walk up and down the street. County Council officers may also contact Pooley Bridge to see how they managed the disruption while the bridge was down. Other thoughts include encouraging 'shop local' with a prize draw, buy a brick for a town model, theatrical events, street food. The Historical Society are hoping to adopt old street names and could develop a map with alternative pedestrian routes around the town.

Events for after Easter include the postponed VE day celebrations for the 1st weekend in May, a scarecrow competition, and a community kitchen. AMP are willing to facilitate grant applications, with social inclusion being a priority. Later in the year there is the August art exhibition in St Augustine's, hopes for a Men's Shed project and something around the Top School

6c/DEC/20 AMERG

Cllr Grew reported that the group do not envisage getting the number of phone calls for help with shopping and prescriptions received during the first lockdown, as most people have arrangements set up with family and friends. If anyone does have difficulty, there are volunteers willing to help.

6d /DEC/20 Winter Resilience/Good Neighbour scheme

Cllr Grew reported that volunteers with 4x4 vehicles have been asked if they could help with deliveries of food and prescriptions should there be severe bad weather. The RHSS leaflet is on hold and the stenciled feet only put in around the Co-op. The phone helpline will continue to operate during the winter. A Christmas card designed by a local artist, with emergency number contacts and details of church services, will be delivered to households by volunteers. Christmas activities will include carols in the churchyard and Santa's sleigh will roam the town with presents set out on tables for children under 11. Late night Christmas shopping on 11th December to encourage people to support local shops.

The food bank is still active, with plans to create food hampers for the elderly to be delivered on Christmas Eve.

6e/DEC/20 Traffic Management

Cllr Grew reported that many issues were discussed and will be actioned following the Traffic Management meeting including signage for Whitesykes, hardcore improvements at Snappergill and the blocked drains at Beldy will be dealt with. EDC will arrange street sweeping in Garrigill. Weed spraying is done once a year, but as the parish council had requested that no weed spraying it had not been done.

The drainage issues near Nenthead Primary school are not easily resolved due to the camber of the road, and the grit bin request might not have met the criteria, but if not, a grit heap could be left on the verge. The request for a 20mph speed limit for Overwater has been submitted to the CRASH team, and the badly positioned 30mph sign will be investigated.

Cllr Denoual offered to take photos of the sign to forward to Highways and Cllr Seaton confirmed that the drainage issue was an ongoing problem. It was suggested revisiting it at the Traffic Management meeting.

There will be a road closure along the Blagill road in January to repair a sink hole, followed by traffic lights for three weeks.

A representative from SKS governors reported that no residents had contacted the school to complain about the parking issue in Church Road. He said staff parking could be increased, but at the expense of green areas. The school bus has parked at the school in accordance with the school Covid policy on child safety. Cllr Robson confirmed that she had spoken with Cllr Driver, who will speak to the school. Residents are asked to pass letters of complaint to the school.

The council were asked if they would support a request for a horse riders warning sign along the B6277 near the Bleagate junction, as riders leaving the stables turn onto the main road and there have been some near misses with vehicles.

Resolved to request a for 'Horse Riders' warning sign for access road to Bleagate. (Low and High Nest) Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Harrison (7+ 1 abs) *MH lost connection*.

6f//DEC/20 Community Plan meeting

Cllr Hanley reported on a meeting held on 23rd November which discussed community housing, the Men's Shed project, and ideas on how to welcome new residents. Also car clubs which it was suggested should be ward-based and linked in with recharging points for electric vehicles. The neighbourhood plan group is no longer active, and current thinking is that it is not a priority.

6g//DEC/20 Nenthead Recycling report

Cllr Denoual reported on the Nenthead recycling centre. She has been in contact with Eden District Council about a number of matters including the signage which is obscured by the bins. She is waiting for feedback and is monitoring the site to report fly tipping. It is disappointing that it is now in quite a state, as the advice was that it would get a periodic deep clean. She has requested a further deep clean and has been told that the garden area, which has been on hold, will be followed up in spring. Dumping of textiles is a concern due to the Covid situation, and residents are asked to use the site responsibly.

6h//DEC/20 Additional defibrillators

Cllr Grew reported that she has asked for costings but has not heard back yet. In the meantime, the House of Commons has had a first reading of a bill about defibrillators stating that they should be on all public buildings, sporting facilities and schools. The second reading takes place on 5th February. If successful there may be grants to help with the cost of installing them.

7. Planning applications

7a/DEC/20 20/676 Listed Building. Listed building consent for the replacement of single glazed timber windows with double glazed timer windows. Ivy House Farm, Garrigill, Alston CA9 3DU for Mr K. Snowball.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con) *Connection lost by AG and MH*.

7b/DEC/20 20/0805 Tree Works (CA) T1 – Cherry. To remove due to structural damage. Daffenside, Church Road, Alston CA9 3QR for Mr R. Younger.

Decision notice received in advance of the meeting.

7c/DEC/20 20/0806 Tree Works (CA) T1 – Overgrown hedge, (reduce) ash, sycamore to height of rest of hedge. T2 – Cluster of ash saplings growing on boundary wall (remove). T3 – Remove ash. T4 – Cluster of ash and 1 beech on boundary wall (remove). T5 – Sycamore (remove). T6 – Ash to pollard. T7 – Ash (remove). T8 – Ash (remove). Old Cottage, Kates Lane, Alston CA9 3QJ for Mr S. Thompson.

Decision notice received in advance of the meeting.

7d/DEC/20 20/0811 Full application. New vehicular access. Kirkside, Park Lane, Alston CA9 3AB for Mr & Mrs W. Raine.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con) *AG re-connected*.

7e/DEC/20 20/812 Full application. Erection of agricultural building and associated operations. Land at High Galligill Farm, Nenthead CA9 3LW for Mr G. Cook.

Cllr Denoual declared an interest as a neighbour.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Ho. (6+ 2 abs)

7f//DEC/20 20/0813 Full application. Extensions and alterations to the dwellinghouse and barns to create additional living accommodation and the erection of a store in association with the estate. Priorsdale Farmhouse, Garrigill, Alston CA9 3HB for Weardale Estates.

Recommended for approval.. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)
7g/DEC/20 20/0819 Full application. Replacement of 31 timber windows and 2 doors with uPVC double glazed. Hollytree Lodge, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JE for Mr J. Wood.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Holt. (8+ 1 abs)
7h/DEC/20 20/0831 Full application. Change of use of agricultural land to site 2 no static caravans for use as guest accommodation. Skellgill House, Alston CA9 3LB for Mr M. Elliott.

It was reported that the intention is to run sheepdog training lessons and the caravans will be used for this project.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Holt 8+ 1 abs) *MH re-connected.*

7i/DEC/20 20/0839 Full application. Erection of a laundry room to service 4 no self catering holiday units. Harbut Law, Alston CA9 3BD for Mr & Mrs T. Younger.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con) *AG lost connection.*

7j/DEC/20 20/0855 Full application. Replacement windows and associated works. 10 Front Street, Alston CA9 3SE for Revd A. Cromarty.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

7k/DEC/20 20/874 Full application. Side extension to dwelling. 6 Lowbyer Park, Alston CA9 3JW for Mr & Mrs Elliott.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Harrison seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

It was suggested that if there are more than the usual number of applications, members could meet earlier to consider plans for their ward. Agenda item for a future meeting.

8. Parish seats

Garrigill village green seat – held over.

Memorial seat for Dick Phillips – held over.

Memorial seat for Margaret Bell – held over.

Request for memorial seat on Tyne Willows – a resident would like to erect a stone bench near to the tree with the rope swing in memory of Teapot.

Resolved that the council would support the request subject to consultation on the specifications. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (nem con)

Repairs to Mount Hooley seat - the clerk reported that the seat on the Blagill road has one damaged slat, which if repaired would make the seat useable. She suggested contacting the Repair Café to see if anyone might be willing to replace the timber for the cost of the materials. She was asked to make enquires. **Action Cl.**

9. Nenthead Fountain

Held over to the next meeting

10. Condition of Tyne Willows litter bin

Held over to the next meeting.

11. Query about path from the Wardway past Hill House to the A686 Hartside road

The clerk reported that she had been contacted by residents to ask if the above path was on the definitive map. It is not included, but the residents had used it in the past and are keen to see it included and remember it being used as a school cross country route in the 1960s. They have been in touch with the Rights of Way team, and a couple of people suggested by the clerk, but if anyone has any information on the use of the route in the past or knows of people who have used it could they let her know.

It was mentioned that a resident living on the route had a 1939 map that might show whether the track continued up to the Wardway. The clerk was asked to make enquiries. **Action Cl.**

12. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)

12a/DEC/20 EDC Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Consultation

The deadline for the consultation is 11th December, and EDC are considering whether they can review the timescales but have not yet confirmed this. Members should take particular note of s 12.22 which references Alston as having a weaker housing market that could impact on viability and development values, leading to the need to consider other approaches to deliver housing. s13.6 also refers to the comparable remoteness of Alston with lower than average house prices and fewer residential sales which is likely to continue to act as a constraint on development values and market interest. The document goes on to state that the implications of this needs to be considered to assess the deliverability of land set against evidence of need and the objective of creating sustainable places.

Members stated that they would appreciate more time to consider the document and comment. Agreed that the clerk would keep the council informed if there were any changes to the timetable. **Action Cl.**

12b/DEC/20 Access route to Alston primary school

A resident e-mailed to express concern about the access route used by primary school children, crossing the road from Spar and along Hospital lanning. She queried whether a traffic management plan had been done by the school and asked if Spar could be asked to install an access gate from the unmade part of the car park. In addition the steps on the lanning are slippery with leaves.

The clerk reported that these issues were not the direct responsibility of the parish council and that she had asked SKS if they could respond about the traffic management plan for the route and any agreements with Spar. Cllr Ho had offered to clear away the leaves on the lanning steps.

12c/DEC/20 Greener miles

An e-mail was received from Greener Miles Running Ltd who are interested in organising running events on the Pennine Journey trail. The organiser has been in touch with the North Pennines AONB and the Pennine Journey Supporters, who are keen to explore the possibilities.

The clerk reported that when the council are notified of events such as this, there is generally no need to do more than acknowledge them and if appropriate offer support as the parish council has no jurisdiction over use of the footpath network.

The clerk was asked to pass on the council's support for the event and a request to be kept informed.

Action Cl.

12d/DEC/20 AMP Public Realm Works consultation

Notice that Alston Moor Partnership intends to carry out consultations on the public realm element of the Townscape Heritage Initiative over the next few months. The project has been given an extension to complete the project to the end of 2021.

12e/DEC/20 Alston Recreation Grounds bike track

As a report had been made by Cllr Sharp there was no need to discuss this item.

13. Administration

13a/DEC/20 Recommendations from the ADP working group

Resolved to accept the recommendation to become an advisory committee. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

Resolved to accept the recommendation to amend the Financial Regulations. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Seaton (8+1 abs)

Resolved to accept the recommendation to update the Health and Safety policy. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con)

13b/DEC/20 Appointment of 2 representatives to the ADP committee

Resolved to appoint Cllrs Grew and Robson. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Seaton (nem con)

13c/DEC/20 Appointment of 2 representatives to Tyne Willows Management Group

Agreed to hold over as there is no immediate urgency to make the appointments.

13d/DEC/20 Amey contract for Community Warden bin

The clerk asked about suspending the contract for the winter until it is possible to appoint a new Community Warden.

Resolved to suspend the contract with Amey over the winter. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

13e/DEC/20 Purchase of 12th Edition of Charles Arnold Baker

The guide to local government law has been extensively updated and is a necessary resource for parish councils. There is currently a discount of 20% costing £119.99.

Resolved to purchase the 12th edition of the guide to local government law. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

13f/DEC/20 Precept reports & contracts list

Precept requests and reports have been received and will be collated for the precept meeting.

13g/DEC/20 Half yearly Internal auditors report

Resolved to accept the half yearly report. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Harrison (7+ 2 abs)

13h/DEC/20 Council meeting dates

Agreed to hold over to a later meeting.

14. Accounts for payment

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£1,929.79
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£0.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£1,081.00

Resolved that sufficient funds are held in balances for the clerk to be authorised to settle all the accounts listed in appendix 6. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Harrison (8+ 1 abs)

Resolved that the clerk be delegated to pay contractors invoices by direct debit. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (nem con)

15. Agenda items for next month and urgent business

Report from the ADP Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Signed:

Dated: