

Alston Community Plan Steering Group

Present: Roe Baker, Chris Johnson, Ian Grey, Sonia Kempsey, Gordon Monk, Michael Hanley.

RB: Discussed neighbourhood plan group. This does not exist anymore. There was a project for community housing and EDC was involved. A survey was conducted. Allerdale PC was also involved as they were doing something similar. Part of the plan was to look at the Wright Brothers bus site in Nenthead for housing. A community hub and growing scheme were also part of the plan. There was also a trip to Wooler to see what they were doing. The Eden Community Housing team have some money to support projects like this: new build affordable housing. The need was for single storey homes for elderly and starter houses for first time buyers with low maintenance and low running costs.

IG: Mairead Kerr is looking for such a site to develop.

RB: There would need to be more than Mairead, there would have to be a group of them. Ian can contact Mairead to see if she is interested.

We discussed derelict buildings. The obvious one is the old Methodist chapel. We need EDC to lead on this. There is a problem of public safety associated with this building.

SK: It got planning permission to be converted into flats.

CJ: One of the issues is the lack of car parking. EDC must know who the owner is and they have written to them. They had to take them to court to get it boarded up. There has been a lack of government funds for maintenance. There has been a proposition for volunteers to do small maintenance jobs.

GM: The maintenance could be under the "Men in Sheds" group, when it comes about. This may take a few years to be established.

SK discussed ways of welcoming new residents to Alston Moor. Welcome packs were suggested.

GP: There is a plan to do an online business directory.

IG: The main aim is to introduce new residents to all services and businesses on Alston Moor including the doctors' surgery.

SK: Somebody needs to collate the information. There is some information on the AMBA site. When Local Links is open they could keep the welcome packs.

IG: This is a perfect project for one person to take in.

GP: The Alston Newsletter has a lot of contacts on the inside of the front cover.

SK: Maybe it's not that necessary.

GM: The biggest thing for us, a month after we came, was the Beast from the East. We could have helped more if we knew who to contact. The first thing we did was to register with the GP surgery.

RB: The Historical Society may need to recruit more members and get more funding.

CJ: It's doing it's job, when it's open they seem to get enough people calling in.

We discussed local exhibitions. Cooperation between the Historical Society, local churches and other organisations that might help this.

GM: The only public car park is at Fairhill and it's quite small.

Discussed parking in Front Street by local residents. It was concluded that parking at Fairhill for the residents would be too far.

IG: Parking in Alston is a major problem and we need have a new car park somewhere.

RB: This should sit with the authorities.

SK: The county council is responsible for street parking.

GP: Two hour parking limits would be very unpopular.

Discussed Alston Community Transport. Hazel Hanley (secretary of ACT) talked to the meeting at this point. Lift sharing was discussed. Hazel said that various Facebook groups were involved. If anything more than an ad hoc arrangement was in place then there would be issues with car insurance.

Social Car Service: This is run by the County Council and the local lead is Susan Bramwell. Hazel said that ACT would not have capacity to take a lead on an Alston Community Car Club. She thought this should be ward based and linked in with recharging points for electric vehicles.

RB: Hazel's idea of ward based charging points would be a good idea.

GM: Alix Martin took on a task to work at increasing broadband speed. We had about 39 people interested. This is 940 households short of the target which indicated that Alston Moor wasn't interested in faster broadband.

Discussed free Alston centre broadband and improving the phone signal.