



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 1st February 2021 at 7pm, held remotely on Zoom.

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

Apologies: Cllr: A. Holt

Absent: Z. Robson

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 4th January 2021 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: the new name for the ADP working group is Development Governance and Personnel (DGP). Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (2 abs)

Resolved that the minutes of the precept meeting held on Monday 11th January 2021 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Grew. (3+4 abs)

2. County & District reports

County Council

Cllr Driver reported on the following:

Covid update – the number of new cases in north Cumbria has peaked and is dropping steadily, although numbers are still rising in the south of the county. The vaccination programme is going well and all able and willing people in the first 2 priority cohorts have had at least one injection. The vaccine is now being delivered locally, with availability the only thing that will slow down progress.

Support – businesses eligible for grants can make a claim, and individuals in difficulty can contact Carlisle and Eden CAB, who are being very supportive.

Health scrutiny – would like to hear about patients' experience. Anyone interested in attending the meetings can join in the virtual gallery with the next meeting 23rd February.

Budget – there is a consultation on the county council website. The council will be meeting to look at the budget for next year, and although reluctant to increase council tax the proposal is for a 1.99% increase. The pressure on services continues especially over adult social care and support for young people.

Front Street – the work on the setts is programmed for Easter. There will be more information after the Front Street steering group has met, but they are aware of the need for promotional and marketing work as people should still be able to come to Alston. They are led by the business community, who have come up with some great ideas, with the aim of putting projects in place to raise the profile of the town.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp who sent a written report. Cllr Hanley reported on the following circulated reports:

Eden Health and Wellbeing – Eden has had the largest drop in the number of cases, but overall there has been a 17% increase in hospital admissions and a high infection rate. Alston and Kirkby Stephen are the only surgeries able to vaccinate locally using the Oxford Astra Zeneca jab. The over 70s are being called up now and the hope is to vaccinate all the over 50s by 1st April. Most of the over 80s, care home and the house bound elderly have been vaccinated, and real praise must go to the surgery staff who have made heroic efforts to get the vaccine and arrange for people to get to the surgery.

Budget - 3.8 million has been received from central government to help cope with Covid. A proposal to increase council tax was not passed, as it was recommended that new ways of raising income be looked at. The report will go to full council.

3. Public participation

A representative from AMBA spoke about the lack of signage outside of Alston to encourage people to visit and suggested two sites.

Approach to Hartside summit as visitors get as far as Hartside and turn around.

A686 near Moredun Garage to encourage people into the town centre.

The guidance from the County Council on signing for rural communities states that it has to be driven by the parish council, who should agree the wording. Although an enquiry on costs has been requested there are no costings yet.

The council were asked if they wanted to take a lead on this project.

The chair closed the public participation session for members to comment.

It was agreed that the council should support AMBA in progressing the signage project as there is a need to encourage people to come into the town centre. As Cllr Holt is a committee member of AMBA he could be asked to report back.

Cllr Harrison reported that Traffic Management meetings had discussed signage on Junction 40 of the motorway along the lines of 'scenic route to the north Pennines'. There are signs stating scenic routes along the coast, but this has not been progressed with Highways England.

4. Progress reports

4a/FEB/21 Memorial seats update

Re: 4a/JAN/21 Hodgson Bros can provide a stone bench for Dick Phillips for around March, weather permitting, and can install it once the council decides where it is to go.

Margaret Bell's family are happy about the pew in the Town Hall and two joiners have looked at it. Quotes will be taken at the end of the meeting.

Plaques can be made by the local firm but will be made to order as they have to be the right size to avoid damage to clothing.

It was agreed to accept the proposal from Cllr Seaton on siting the bench for Dick Phillips near the turn off out of Nenthead to Hexham to replace a damaged seat. This site is on the Sustrans route and appropriate as Dick was a keen cyclist. A further suggestion for a site for the memorial bench for a local family next to the public toilets on the side nearest the Mines car park was accepted. The clerk was asked to check the family were happy with the site and find out whether permission is needed from the County Council.

Action CI.

4b/FEB/21 Tree works update

Re: 4b/JAN/21 The weather has stopped work on the trees, but they should be able to take out the priority trees over the next few weeks, followed by the works to the trees on Garrigill village green.

4c/FEB/21 Meeting with Flood team to discuss woodland planting to reduce flood risk

Re:4c/JAN/21 A zoom meeting was held last month with Emma Simmons and Stuart Taylor from the County Flood Team, with Cllr Harrison tasked with contacting the tenant farmer on the Fairhill parish allotments to discuss options for tree planting. Some planting here could provide maximum benefit against flooding from the Mill Race in the town.

Cllr Harrison reported that he has spoken with the farmer and needs to hear back from him. A minimum area of around 1 ha would be needed anywhere on the allotments, and as he only runs sheep here the site should not need to be fenced. It would have to be if cattle are brought it.

4d/FEB/21 Nenthead Fountain

Re:8/JAN/21 The clerk from Middleton-in-Teesdale was contacted and has sent details of the Darlington-based firm Stone Technical Services from whom her council obtained a quote to shot blast and re-paint the fountain in Middleton. The Nenthead fountain had a temporary repair to a broken leg so it might need additional work. Before the emergency work was carried out, a former councillor sent details of another firm who might have been able to survey it, the clerk will check to see if she still has this information.

Action CI.

Regarding insurance Middleton-in-Teesdale parish council lists their fountain and war memorial at £1 on their asset register, and do not insure them for replacement value.

It was agreed to consider setting up a working group for the Nenthead Fountain with Nenthead councillors and interested residents, but as Cllr Robson was not present she would be asked how she would like to proceed.

4e/FEB/21 Alston Noticeboard

Re: 14b/JAN/21 Ochiltrie Joinery can make the noticeboard but not until around June this year.

They asked that the Nenthead noticeboard be collected as it is taking up space in the workshop. Cllr Seaton confirmed that she would be able to collect it next week.

5. Council Representatives reports

5a/FEB/21 Alston Alliance

Cllr Grew reported that the meeting was cancelled due to the extra workload caused by Covid, and there is no date yet for this or Ambulance meetings.

5b/FEB/21 Traffic Management meeting

Cllr Grew reported that she had circulated notes from the meeting. Points to note were:

Front Street closure – Garrigill residents are concerned about the number of vehicles that will come through the village when Front Street is closed. Access only signs and temporary speed restrictions can be considered. Representatives at the meeting were also asked about the Blagill loop and overuse of North Lonning road whether any restrictions should be placed on North Lonning road and presented with several options.

Garrigill – a request to grit the roads before the school bus goes through has been made. The potholes along the Tynehead road are to be repaired – the road is to be resurfaced in the 21-22 programme. Trees along the grass verge in the village are programmed for trimming before the nesting season.

Nenthead – flooding of the road from a farm track at an accident blackspot on the A689 is to have temporary hazard signs and the verges dug to try to improve matters. Temporary repairs to the road at Nentsberry are not satisfactory and officers were asked to follow up. The informal speed restriction consultation for Nentsberry is complete and to go to formal consultation. If agreed the 40mph speed restriction could be in place for the summer. There is also a problem with drainage on the Galligill loop road at the entrance to an agricultural building.

Highways are to look at improving the drainage near the primary school in Nenthead, and problem of flooding near the toilets. The potholes on Tom Collier's road have been done, but some are already failing. Cllr Denoual will take photos and forward to highways. **Action MD**

Alston – damage to the kerbstone near the Co-op has been reported. Work on the North Lonning road is complete and the cones can finally be removed. Work on the Blagill road is complete with new drains and resurfacing carried out. The 30mph sign at Lowbyer can be moved as requested.

Flashing lights at Townfoot for the school should be installed as soon as the weather permits, and a working group proposed to look at other access issues.

5c/FEB/21 Nenthead Ward update

Cllr Denoual reported that the Nenthead members want to investigate holding ward meetings on zoom and has spoken to the vice-chair who is supportive. The clerk confirmed that the parish council zoom account could be used.

Issues with fly tipping at the recycling centre are ongoing and continue to be reported. A request has gone in again for additional bins. Despite encouraging progress with dog fouling, and bags put out at the King's Head site, the problem is returning. Grateful thanks to the Nenthead snowplough who have been doing a really good job during the bad weather.

5d/FEB/21 AMERG

Cllr Grew reported that the school has some laptops supplied for home schooling, and that the main issue is broadband access for some. Local charities are operating and Barnados are offering food vouchers. 178 hampers were delivered over Christmas to the elderly and thanks are due to all who helped. The help phone line is quiet and church services continue to be held on zoom, but the church is open for prayer.

6. Planning applications

6a/FEB/21 20/655 Listed Building. Replacement of timber with secondary glazing windows with double glazed UPVC. Alstonia, Townhead, Alston CA9 3SL for Mrs C. Dodd.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Ho. (nem con)

6b/FEB/21 21//0014 Tree Works (CA) T1,T2 & T3 Lime - crown lift and thin. The village green, Garrigill for Alston Moor Parish Council.

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

6c/FEB/21 21/0022 Tree Works (CA) T1- Cypress, reduce in height, T2 silver birch, reduce crown by 15%. Land nr Ashleigh House, Nenthead Road, Alston CA9 3SN for Mr A. Robertson.

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

6d/FEB/21 21/0023 Tree Works (CA) T1 Hybrid beech tree – crown thin of 25% and crown lift/shape. The Bungalow, School Terrace, Kings Arms Lane, Alston CA9 3JG for Mr E. Carr.

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

7. Alston Public toilets draft lease

A draft Agreement, draft TP1 and plan to transfer Alston's public toilets was received from Eden District Council. The transfer is not expected to take place until 1st April 2022, but the paperwork can be completed if the parish council are happy with the draft.

It was agreed to set up a working group to consider the lease and inspect the building to ensure it is in a good condition for the transfer. The clerk reported that she was advised that the condition schedule should not be done too soon. Agenda for next meeting. All members were asked to look at the draft lease.

Action All

8. Request to purchase CFR life kits using funds precepted for 2021-2022.

Cllr Grew reported that she has been in touch with the staff in charge of resuscitation for Cumbria with a list of questions but has not had the answers back yet. She asked the council to consider purchasing four life kits using reserves ahead of the precept funding which should come in in April.

Resolved to purchase four life kits for Alston Moor. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (nem con)

The Publicity Officer was asked to put together a press release about the purchase of the CFR kits. Cllr Hanley offered to find out who they should be delivered to and a discussion was held on the possibility of a photo opportunity. **Action PO/MH**

9 Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)

9a/FEB/21 Request to the community for a motorhome touring facility in or near Alston

Cllr Hanley reported that he was contacted by a CAMpRA member who is involved with organising a west Pennine motor caravan tour and found a shortage of touring sites in the Cumbrian towns of Kirkby Stephen, Appleby and Alston, ideally sites which are within walking distance to facilities. A lack of facilities was identified in the Community Plan, so it would be relevant to have a debate on how they might be provided.

The parish council does not have land, but the Old Primary School may be a possibility.

Cllr Driver was invited to speak and reported that the Oaklea Trust have spoken with CAMpRA and are excited about the potential for the Old Primary School. They are working on a business case, which could be strengthened by support from the parish council. Planning permission will be needed.

It was observed that a lot of people are considering staycations and motorhomes are very popular.

Agreed to support the development of facilities for touring motorhomes at the Old Primary School.

Cllr Hanley offered to speak to a Golf Club committee member to see if they might be interested in developing a longer-stay site for tourers.

9b/FEB/21 Other correspondence

CALC training – it was suggested that everyone should attend the finance training course and the clerk was asked to enquire if an in-house session could be arranged for the summer. **Action CI.**

10. Administration

10a/FEB/21 Update to parish council's Facebook presence

Cllr Seaton reported that an informal zoom meeting was held with the clerk, Cllr Robson and herself to discuss the council's Facebook presence after speaking with the Allendale parish clerk about their page. The old profile set up in 2013 has been deleted, as has the original page since in setting up a new page to migrate followers a second page was created. Once the deletion is activated members can send notices or reports they would like posted on Facebook to the clerk or publicity officer.

10b/FEB/21 Annual risk assessment

Cllrs Denoual, Hanley and Seaton offered to join the clerk to review the risk assessment. **Action CI.**

10c/FEB/21 Clerk's training

The Society of Local Council Clerks are running an e-learning course on cyber awareness which could be useful for the clerk to attend. It will take place over six months at a cost of £49 + vat.

Resolved that the clerk could take the e-learning course on cyber awareness. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Green.

10d/FEB/21 Draft Terms of Reference for Committees

The Monitoring Officer has not had time to look over the draft ToR for the ADP Committee or proposed Finance Committee, and the clerk advised that she could not recommend ratification for the Finance Committee section as the legislation does not allow for parish council committees to be held in private as proposed in the draft ToR.

Members were asked to approve the document in principle as the Finance Committee has not been set up by full council and members elected.

Resolved to accept the Terms of Reference for the Development, Governance and Personnel Committee and for the proposed Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (3+ Cllrs Green, Grew, Hanley and Harrison abstained.)

It was questioned whether an opinion on the ToR should have been sought before making a decision. Clerk to provide evidence of legislation on committees. **Action CI.**

11. Accounts for payment

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| Summary of accounts for payment: - | £0.00 |
| Summary of income received since last meeting: - | £100.00 |
| Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: - | £908.02 |

11a/FEB/21 Quarterly finance check

The clerk reported that Cllr Robson has passed the papers to Cllr Holt. Neither were present at the meeting.

11b/FEB/21 Finance statement

Noted.

11c/FEB/21 The Public Sector Deposit Fund

The clerk reported that as the council are building up funds to set aside for funding the public toilets and footway lights in future years, they could hold funds over the £85k guaranteed by the FSCS for the banks following next year's precept. The Public Sector Deposit Fund is used by local authorities, and the Fairhill Estates Charity has funds invested in its sister organisation. The fund requires an initial investment of £25k, which can be withdrawn on request with no requirement to maintain this balance. As bank mandates take time to set up, she advised making provision sooner rather than later as signatories need to be confirmed and minutes signed.

Agreed to discuss at the next Development, Governance and Personnel meeting. **Action CI.**

12. Agenda items for next month and urgent business

Request to support the Community Asset transfer of the Old Primary school to the Oaklea Trust. – Cllr Denoual.

Cllr Ho asked about tidying up the grass area near the Firs phone box.

The meeting closed to the public to consider quotations for the memorial seat.

13/FEB/21 Memorial pew

Two joiners have looked at the pew, but only one came back with a quote. It was agreed to contact the other joiner to find out if he is still interested in quoting, giving him seven days to respond.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed:

Dated: