



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 4th January 2021 at 7pm, held remotely on Zoom.

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

Apologies: L. Seaton

Absent: none

Declarations of interest:

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 7th December 2020 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: 6a/DEC/20 the CFR facebook group is a national organisation. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Holt (nem con)

2. County & District reports

County Council

Cllr Driver reported on the followings.

Covid vaccine – the advice to residents is to wait until contacted as priority will be given to specific groups.

The last health scrutiny group meeting was informed that there is a national conversation ongoing about how voluntary organisations can get involved.

Winter conditions – winter conditions on the roads can be treacherous, so everyone was asked to take care. Highways can be asked through the hotline to stock up when grit bins are empty. However, the highways team are stretched to capacity and have staff off with Covid and injury, so people were asked to bear with them as they will do their best.

Front Street project – before work starts on Front Street there is opportunity for local businesses and residents to think about how the town could be promoted to welcome people to the town. Good signage for car parking will be needed, while the town centre is pedestrian access only. A group meeting is planned for later in the week.

Adult care scrutiny meeting – it is a difficult time for officers and community care providers and NHS plans for normality have been suspended. The focus is on safe discharge into care homes, but the national lockdown will increase pressure.

District Council

Cllr Hanley reported that as he had not attended any EDC meetings he had nothing to report.

Cllr Sharp reported on the following:

Covid support fund – funds are available for Eden residents who can apply through charitable organisations, such as the Fairhill Estate Charity and Alston United Charity.

Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Consultation – the deadline for responses has been extended to the end of the month.

Business support – the situation is fast moving so businesses are advised to keep looking on-line for the latest information.

3. Public participation

None requested.

4. Progress reports

4a/JAN/21 Parish seat repairs

Re: 8/DEC/20 Contact has been made with the Repair Café, who may be interested in helping out with repairing some of the damaged seats for the cost of materials. Subject to Covid restrictions someone may be able to look at the seat near Mount Hooley.

Cllr Ho offered to pay for the Mount Hooley seat repairs in memory of her husband, who regularly ran along this road.

Resolved to accept the offer from Cllr Ho to fund the repairs and for the council to fund a plaque in memory of Simon Ho. Proposed by Cllr Hanley and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

4b/JAN/21 Priority 1 additional tree works

Re: 5a/DEC/20 The clerk and Cllr Harrison were contacted over the Christmas break by the contractor who wanted to get some of the priority work done in the Firs, Henderson's Wood and Tyne Willows while he had access to specialised equipment. The additional work classed as priority 1 took the total cost over the budgeted amount, but costs would be greater if the equipment needed to be brought back later, so it was agreed by the chair and Cllr Harrison that this work should be done.

The contractor is drawing up a list of outstanding works; not all of this is urgent and could possibly be carried out over the next couple of years, but there is a tree in Henderson's wood, overhanging the river in poor condition, ash trees on the Pennine Way that have severe dieback, plus another near the swing on Tyne Willows.

Cllr Harrison reported that the tree survey had missed several trees that were high priority, but the original quote had been based on the work identified in the survey, so the lower priority work has had to be held over. He added that the council should be concerned about the tree near the river because of the risk of damage to bridges further downstream.

Resolved to get the urgent tree works carried out by March and to seek a re-quote for future works and maintenance. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (nem con)

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

A meeting has been set up with the County Council Flood team, Cllr Harrison and the clerk for next Wednesday to discuss what might be done to improve the flood risk to Alston from the Mill Race. To report back.

4d/JAN/21 Suspension of Enterprise Contract

Re: 13d/DEC/20 The clerk confirmed that this has been arranged.

4e/JAN/21 Access route to Alston Primary School

Re: 12b/DEC/20 An e-mail was received from a resident asking about progress with the issues with the access route to Alston Primary School with a request that it be read out.

The concern was about safety for primary school children when they are being dropped off and collected at school. The steps to hospital lanning were designated as the primary school access, but are not suitable especially for pushchairs, so it is understandable that many prefer to use Church Road or the hospital car park. Parents parking at the far end of Spar have to cross the road at a point where visibility is poor.

Questions asked were:

Is it possible to find out if a traffic management plan was ever undertaken and , if not, why not?

Can the parish council help to ensure that these concerns are taken seriously?

Is it possible to install an access gate into the retaining wall of the parking area at the end of the Spar car park?

Are there works that could be done on the roadside corner of the Firs to widen the pavement and improve viability?

Is there any possibility of creating more car parking on the field in front of the hospital?

The clerk reported that she had checked the planning decision notice, which included a requirement for a travel plan and passed on this information to the resident, besides suggesting that she speak directly to the school. Cllr Driver has also invited a representative from the school to attend Traffic Management meetings.

Overgrown shrubbery may be contributing to the issue of visibility, Cllr Hanley offered to check if the hospital had any responsibility, but ownership needs to be investigated. **Action.**

It was reported that this issue has been on the Traffic Management agenda for some time, and there will, hopefully soon, be flashing school lights erected to improve safety at Townfoot. Other measures have been discussed such as safety railings at the bottom of the steps, but they could be a health and safety issue as children could run into them. There isn't any scope to widen the pavement, and unless it can be confirmed that Spar have given permission for school parking there is no right to request a gate.

There is also the fact that anyone living on a road with a school should expect more traffic at dropping off and collection times, so other than asking parents not to obstruct drives, residents could be asked to be tolerant at these times.

It was suggested that children living nearby could be taken in groups to school by a couple of parents, something that could possibly be promoted for the future. For the immediate future the school have a Covid risk assessment in place for travel with the aim of keeping everyone safe.

5. Council Representatives reports

5a/JAN/21 Planning training report

Cllr Grew reported that the main point she took away from the training is that a White Paper is about to be considered which will remove the requirement to give notification to neighbours about planning applications or to display notices. This is upsetting a lot of councils and needs to be watched. If it goes ahead, parish councils will continue to be informed of planning applications, but residents will only find out if they read the newspaper or look on the Eden District Council website.

5b/JAN/21 AGP (former ADP) committee meeting

Cllr Denoual reported that she has taken over from Cllr Holt as chair at the meeting on 14th December. Terms of reference were discussed and the offer by the Monitoring Officer to check them taken up. A provisional new title for the committee of Advisory, Governance and Personnel (AGP) has been suggested. The next meeting will be on 15th February. The clerk reported that committee meetings can be held before the ToR are finalised.

5c/JAN/21 Radio Cumbria

Cllr Grew reported that she was contacted by Radio Cumbria to ask if there were any problems caused by the snow on Alston Moor. She was not aware of any but would be interested to hear if there had been any need for the ambulance, to re-inforce the need for 24/7 cover. She asked if the call should be passed to the chair. The clerk reported that when she is contacted, she generally suggests the most appropriate person; often this is the chair.

Cllr Holt confirmed that he would be willing to speak to the radio and would like to thank the fire brigade who turned out for flooding in his basement at 2am recently.

5d/JAN/21 Nenthead Ward

It was requested that the Nenthead Ward become a standing item on the agenda.

Nenthead noticeboard – was ready for collection before Christmas, but the weather meant that Cllr Seaton was unable to get across, but the contractor will be contacted tomorrow to check he has re-opened. A volunteer has come forward to erect it.

Nenthead toilets – new weatherproof sockets have been fitted.

Christmas decorations – good feedback on the display was received.

Footway lighting – members surveyed the lights with the help of the site plan from Eden District Council but were unsure about one or two on the list, and there are some that are out to report. They are considering whether to set up a working group.

Recycling – a request has been made for more bins, but nothing has been heard back as yet.

5e/JAN/21 Chair's report

Cllr Holt reported that he had asked the public about taking on Alston's public toilets on social media and had feedback which he will collate.

6. Planning applications

6a/JAN/21 20/0897 Full application. Change of use of former retail showroom and storage to a two bedroom flat, conversion of cellar to workshop/retail space and replacement windows. Studio House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS for Mr & Mrs Macro.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (7+ 1 abs)

6b/JAN/21 20/0898 Listed Building. Listed building consent for change of use of former retail showroom and storage to a two bedroom flat, conversion of cellar to workshop/retail space and replacement windows. Studio House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS for Mr & Mrs Macro.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Grew. (7+ 1 abs)

6c/JAN/21 20/951 Listed Building. Listed building consent for the replacement of single glazed timber windows, door and shop window with double glazed timber windows and replacement of window lintels. Repair and replace where required chimney, rainwater goods, external stone steps and masonry and additional steel railings to the flight of steps to match existing. Kirsopp House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3QN.

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

7. Parish seats

Memorial seat for former Cllr Dick Phillips – a number of sites around Nenthead were considered, with the suggestion that the seat should be on the Sustrans cycle route, as Dick had been an enthusiastic cyclist in his day. It was agreed that it should be a new stone bench and that the Nenthead councillors would be asked to recommend a site. **Action Nenthead cllrs.**

The clerk was asked to get costings for a seat and plaque. **Action Cl.**

Memorial seat for former councillor Margaret Bell – the suggestion from former Cllr Miller of a bench inside the Town Hall was considered. It was agreed that the pew at the bottom of the stairs could be refurbished with a plaque.

The clerk was asked to invite local joiners to quote. **Action Cl.**

Request for memorial seat in Nenthead – a former resident contacted the clerk over Christmas to ask if they could erect a memorial seat. They are considering a site and will let us know.

8. Nenthead Fountain

Cllr Robson reported that she has carried out an internet search on the Nenthead Fountain, which is in poor condition, and was also concerned about the decision made by the council in the past not to insure street furniture.

The clerk reported that the first step in insuring the fountain, and war memorials is to obtain an accurate valuation, but the only estimate she had been given recently for the fountain was between £50K and £100k. Long standing members defended the decision not to insure as quotes obtained previously had seemed excessive for the risk. To consider further.

It was agreed to contact Middleton-in-Teesdale to find out how they were progressing with obtaining new quotes and whether they had found anyone accepting grant applications. **Action Cl.**

To consider a small allocation for pump priming at the precept meeting.

9 Condition of Tyne Willows litter bin

It was agreed to contact Enterprise to ask about costs to replace the litter bin on Tyne Willows. **Action Cl.**

10. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)

10a/JAN/21 CCC – informal consultation on Eden Speed Limits Traffic Regulation Order

The council are invited to submit comments on the draft proposals by 11th January 2021. The proposals for Nentsberry are for a 40mph speed limit on the A689 from around the Blagill turn off to just beyond the bridge at Nentsberry. The lack of a speed limit has been a long-standing issue, with a request to submitted and actioned at an Annual Parish Meeting.

Resolved that the parish council has no objection to a speed limit for the A689 as shown in the informal consultation site plan. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Robson. (nem con)

10b/JAN/21 EDC Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Consultation

The deadline for a response has been extended to 31st January.

The clerk was asked to comment on s13.26 on the statement about Alston to add the recommendation that future development should encourage the building of accommodation incorporating space for home working/small businesses. Having been identified as a relatively remote settlement it has good potential for people who can work from home, without the need for travel, but who may need more space than the average household.

S22 Key workers – there is a need to encourage key workers to move to Cumbria, and one of the constraints is housing, so the recommendation is to set a reduced rent for key workers, which could help the area compete with others. Having enough primary care workers is a particular concern.

10c/JAN/21 Telford Coaches Service 680 to Carlisle

An e-mail was received from the county council stating that they were notified by Telford Coaches that they will be making changes to the service from 19th January 2021. The service will start from Hallbankgate at 9.30am and will no longer serve Alston. This will enable shopping time in Carlisle to increase to 2 hours making it more attractive to potential passengers.

The clerk had queried whether the poor take up from Alston residents might be due to Covid restrictions and received the reply that it is thought Telford are introducing the changes to keep the service viable, as the short shopping time is a disincentive to users. A discussion has been held with the Voluntary

Transport Officer about the possibility of the Alston Moor Community Transport group expanding the current school holiday service to run in term time to either Carlisle or Hallbankgate to meet the 680. This will depend upon volunteer drivers. If the demand was there when things start to return to normal it would give a better chance of re-introducing the service, as would William Howard returning to normal hours to give a longer shopping time in Carlisle.

It was observed that Alston Moor is poorly served for transport, but that it is difficult to prove there are people wanting to use the service, and the reduction in the time allowed for shopping has impacted on the desire to use it. It is disappointing that there has been no consultation with users or the council. It was agreed to ask the county council to work with Telford to re-instate the service when life returns to normal.

Action CI.

10d/JAN/21 Other correspondence

There were no comments on routine correspondence.

11. Administration

11a/JAN/21 Recommendation from the Development Governance & Personnel Committee

Resolved to accept the recommendation to amend the Retention of Documents policy. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Holt. (5+ 3 abs)

Resolved to rotate the signing of quarterly accounts amongst members in line with the Financial Regulations. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Robson. (nem con)

Cllr Robson volunteered to sign off the December quarter and it was agreed that following on the task would be taken in alphabetical order.

12. Accounts for payment

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£6,099.80
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£0.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£888.38

Resolved that sufficient funds are held in balances for the clerk to be authorised to settle all the accounts listed in appendix 2. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Holt (7+ 1 abs)

Resolved that the clerk be delegated to pay all invoices that can be paid by bank transfer. while under additional Covid restrictions. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con)

13. Agenda items for next month and urgent business

Subject to feedback from the Monitoring Officer Terms of Reference for the AGP Committee.

The meeting closed to the public to consider quotations and staffing.

14. Quotations

14a/JAN/21 Garrigill Village Green seat

It was reported that 5 joiners were contacted but only one was prepared to quote as it is difficult to get the English oak to match the existing timber. The job is complicated as the seat has to be dismantled and extended by a foot to allow room for growth. The quote will use wood from the contractors own wood in Scotland.

The clerk reported that the memorial seat for Dick Phillips is unlikely to use all the legacy fund and that what was left over could be put towards the cost of the Garrigill seat, which is on the Sustrans route.

It was suggested that the work could include a plaque in his memory.

Resolved to accept the quotation from BIP Joinery for £1,581 (no vat) to repair Garrigill village green seat. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con).

14b/JAN/21 Alston Noticeboard

One quote from a local joiner was received. The clerk reported that she had checked with on-line companies, but it was difficult to find one off the peg for the exact size and most prices for the best match were over £1k.

Resolved to accept the quote from Ochiltree Bespoke Joinery for Alston's noticeboard at £952.12 (inc vat)

Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

Quick look at on-line companies, but difficult to find one the exact size and prices generally are over £1k.

15 Publicity Officer contract

Resolved to extend the contract until the end of March. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Green. (7+ 1 abs)

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

Signed:

Dated: