



## ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 7pm, held remotely on Zoom.

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

**Apologies:** None

**Absent:** none

**Declarations of interest:** 7a/MAR/21 Cllrs Hanley and Harrison, 8/MAR/21 Cllr Denoual.

### **1. Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: it was suggested by Cllr Denoual that the temporary arrangement for Cllr Seaton to stay on as a Facebook editor continue. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Denoual (7+ 2 abs)

*Note: this will need to be ratified at a future meeting.*

**Resolved** that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Holt. (4+ 5 abs)

### **2. Update on planned Front Street Closure**

Norman English, on behalf of the Front Street Traders, spoke about making a positive impact out of the disruption that will be caused by the closure of Front Street while the cobbles are re-laid at the end of April, with work expected to take around three months. The closure is around 30 meters with the parking areas on either side to be repaired at the same time. The works will include a duct laid underneath the road that should hopefully reduce the need to lift the cobbles, and there will be a 5 year restriction on utilities for lifting them except in emergencies.

The group have divided their resources into three main areas:

The first group are working on deliveries and easing the pressure on business within the closed area. There is to be a site visit next month with the contractors to discuss staged closures to minimise access difficulties. They are also considering shared deliveries, and are looking at diversions, parking and signage.

The second group are in charge of events and promotion. Initially this will be a farmers' market, probably at the end of May for the first one and continued if successful. They hope to link in with STRPS weekend openings, with ideas for a temporary mining museum, information boards from Cumbria County Council on the process of lifting and relaying the setts, historical walks with traders dressed in historical costume, and an end of cobbles games with a sponsored ball race down Front Street. Also planned is an end of project street party for residents. Some of the final events may be able to tie in to Alston Gala which, all being well, will take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> August.

The third group is craft-orientated. They have permission from the County Council to use the old setts and are seeking craft workers who can turn them into Alston items such as coasters, bookends etc for marketing under the 'Made in Alston' name. One of the traders is looking to make cobbled fudge, so the items do not necessarily have to be made out of stone.

Everyone is concerned about the closure, but it is an opportunity to establish the town as a place to come to.

#### *Questions*

A question was asked about the site meeting with the contractors and whether the THI properties still being worked on within the area of the new setts will be involved as their contractors will also need access.

*Contractors for the Front Street works have not been appointed yet, but the group will try and facilitate as much access as possible.*

A question was asked about who could get involved.

Anyone with an interest, especially those involved in craft work or produce is welcome.  
Thanks were given for the update.

### **3. County & District reports**

#### **County Council**

*Apologies from Cllr Driver.*

#### **District Council**

*Cllr Sharp reported on the following circulated reports:*

**Eden residents Covid support scheme and business grants** – both are still available.

**Fit 4 All** – there is an on-line link for anyone who wants to join the over 50's exercise plan, which will be going back to face-to face-lessons when lockdown eases.

**Highlighting Eden** – are working with Highlights Rural Touring on a series of arts and culture projects, including an invitation for residents to make a lantern to display on the doorstep for the spring solstice on 20/21<sup>st</sup> March

**Eden tourism** – there is a meeting next week to develop a roadmap for coming out of lockdown. Anyone interested can sign up to join.

**Psychological first aid training** – Public Health England have launched an online training course to help support children and young people affected by emergencies.

**Local Government re-organisation** – there is an 8 week public consultation for the public to comment.

**Lateral flow testing sites** – for people who cannot work from home with no symptoms. The nearest sites are Penrith and Kendal.

*Cllr Hanley reported on the following circulated reports:*

**Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee** – the covid pandemic has seen a 5 fold increase in patients, which has put a massive strain on healthcare. At the peak there were 305 patients in hospital, with another 40 transferred to the north-east, but it was not necessary to send anyone to the Nightingale hospital in Manchester.

**One Eden project** - this meeting discussed the transfer to Voreda House and restructuring of staff. The move will save an estimated £590k and help the council meet zero carbon targets.

**Eden Council meeting** – the council voted to increase the council tax by 2.5%.

### **4. Public participation**

*It was confirmed that the Nenthead Ward meeting will take place remotely on 15<sup>th</sup> March. The AGM will take place in May when it should be possible to return to physical meetings. All parish councillors are welcome to attend.*

The clerk was asked to send contact details for obtaining new pads for the defibrillator. **Action Cl.**

### **5. Progress reports**

#### **5a/MAR/21 Nenthead noticeboard**

Re: 4e/FEB/21 The noticeboard was collected by an employee of Total Postweigh, who were thanked for the loan of their van. Cllr Seaton confirmed it will be put up this week.

#### **5b/MAR/21 Horse warning sign - Bleagate**

Re: 5b/FEB/21 A reply has been received from Cumbria County Council stating that the request will be assessed and if the criteria is met it will be added to the works order for the first quarter of the new financial year.

#### **5c/MAR/21 Purchase of Community First Responder (CFR) kits**

Re: 8/FEB/21 The kits have been ordered and NWS are awaiting delivery. Cllr Grew reported that an update was received today to confirm they will be delivered to her.

#### **5d/MAR/21 Motorhome touring facility – support for Oaklea Trust**

Re: 9a/FEB/21 A representative from the Oaklea Trust attended the last Alston Area Planning meeting and reported on the plans to develop a motorhome touring facility as part of their wider business plan. Since it has already been agreed to support such a proposal, the clerk wrote a letter of support.

#### **5e/MAR/21 Finance training**

Re: 9b/FEB/21 A request has been made to CALC, who have to check with their trainer and report back.

#### **5f/MAR/21 Memorial pew & Nenthead bench**

Re: 13/FEB/21 One quote for the memorial pew was received and, after a seven day interval, confirmation from a second contractor that he was too busy at present to quote. The quote of £248 from BIP Joinery was accepted.

Cumbria County Council confirmed that a memorandum of agreement needs to be signed for the memorial bench besides the public toilets at Nenthead.

#### **5g/MAR/21 Application to add a footpath to the Definitive Map Wardway to A686**

An e-mail was received today from the applicant to confirm the application has been submitted. She was told it may take a couple of years to process.

### **6. Council Representatives reports**

#### **6a/MAR/21 Alston Alliance & ambulance meeting**

Cllr Grew reported that the meeting was cancelled again due to Covid, and that there would be nothing to report to the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Denoual confirmed the ambulance meeting was cancelled.

#### **6b/MAR/21 AMERG meetings**

Cllr Grew reported that there had been two meetings this month. For the first time since lockdown there has been no surge in demand for the food bank. The phone lines are quiet but are still operating, and funding for those in need is still available through Alston United Charities and the Fairhill Estate Charity in addition to support at County and District level.

Anti-vax posters have appeared in parts of the county, none have been seen on Alston Moor, but anyone spotting one is asked to report it to the police as the information on them is not correct.

The County Council elections have been postponed for a year, but the Police and Crime Commissioner and parish council elections will go ahead on the 6<sup>th</sup> May. There is time for anyone not wanting to go to the polling station to apply for a postal or proxy vote; the deadline is 20<sup>th</sup> April. The polling stations will be made Covid safe with staff behind screens, a one-way system for voters, who can take their own pen, and a limit on numbers.

There is an expectation that more people will be holidaying in England, which could lead to a demand for campsites. ACT and EDC can provide advice for farmers interested in opening up fields for camping.

Churches should open around the middle of March. The on-line quiz has been going for almost a year. Events will hopefully take place again and Cllr Hanley stated that the music festival may become a mini festival in the town rather than the big event on Tyne Willows.

#### **6c/MAR/21 Alston Area Planning**

Cllr Grew reported that this meeting has also been cancelled until April.

#### **6d/MAR/21 Alston Schools working group**

Cllr Grew reported that the meeting report is to go to the Traffic Management group initially. The group met to discuss access issues in Church road and Townfoot. Some actions have already been implemented and the school flashing lights should, weather permitting, be installed for when the schools go back on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **6e/MAR/21 Nenthead Ward**

A letter of resignation was received from Matthew Herdman, chair of the Nenthead Ward meeting. It was agreed to thank him for his service to the community.

Cllr Denoual reported that the Nenthead toilets AGM will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> March and will be facilitated by Cllr Seaton, who stated that the ladies' toilets are now working, following a problem with burst pipes.

Riverside erosion near Nenthall bridge has been reported to Highways, who are aware of the situation but do not think it has reached the critical stage.

Agreed to pass on the concerns to the Traffic Management meeting that a significant amount of the bankside has been lost and could lead to the road having to be diverted. Photos have been sent to Highways.

Fly-tipping continues to be an issue, with the advice being to report to Eden District Council.

Cumbria County Council have not taken any action over the damaged fencing on the recreation ground. Clerk to follow up. **Action Cl.**

Motorists are ignoring the road closed signs during snowy weather. A request has been made to discuss at the next Traffic Management meeting.

Cllr Robson has contacted heritage restoration companies to enquire about carrying out an assessment of the work needed to restore Nenthead Fountain. There will be a charge for this, which varies from company to company. Quotes to be discussed at next month's meeting. The condition of the fountain has

continued to deteriorate, a resident has photographed it and Cllr Robson has taken a loose finial into storage.

#### **6f/MAR/21 Background report Alston Moor Partnership**

Cllr Harrison briefed members on the history of Alston Moor Partnership for the benefit of new councilors. Alston Front Street was included in the Heritage at Risk category by Historic England, and the community advised of this by Eden District Council, who did not have the capacity to apply for grant funding. As the parish council also lacked the capacity and expertise, they supported Alston Moor Partnership in a successful bid for funding to carry out improvements to the town centre. AMP is the only community organisation in the country to have achieved this. Parish council support was expected by the funders and was given.

A letter from AMP's accountant was read out confirming that the parish council's £10k of funding over 5 years was part of a funding package amounting to £1.3million. Should there be an underspend the council will have a proportion of the underspend returned, but this will not be known until the end of the project in December 2021, with final accounts prepared for March 2022.

Cllr Harrison was concerned that the chair had raised issues about the funding without making an effort to understand the background and had failed to respond to a request made by himself and the clerk for correspondence to be passed to the clerk. As a matter of propriety concerns should also be referred to AMP. A further point is that the parish council has in the past been allocated grant funding to directly employ staff working for AMP and had allocated some working hours for the clerk to undertake secretarial duties for them.

In an e-mail to the council the chair had listed the concerns he stated had been e-mailed by numerous people, but as no evidence had been provided it was impossible to establish whether they were genuine, from someone outside of the area, or someone airing a personal vendetta. The hard-working volunteers from Alston Moor Partnership who have brought many benefits to the town should not be treated like this. The clerk reported that an e-mail had been received from the chair of Alston Moor Business Association stating their support for AMP and that they were misrepresented as being opposed to the 'gateway' project. The AMBA committee requested that it be reported that they are in favour of any activity that assists local businesses and makes Alston Moor a great place to live and work. AMP's activities have greatly benefitted the area over many years and AMBA supports their continued efforts.

Cllr Grew reported that the £10k had been agreed well before most members joined the council, and when the request for funding was made in 2015 it was agreed that it could be paid in 5 installments of £2k per year for matched funding to avoid a significant increase in the precept. The council's contribution has gone a long way for Alston, where it can be seen how many buildings have been improved. The council may get some money back pro-rata, but this is a separate matter to the proposed bike track. Organisations can and do approach the council each year to ask for funding.

#### **6g/MAR/21 Footpath beyond the Dukker**

Cllr Holt reported erosion of the footpath beyond the dukker, with photos forwarded to the ROW team.

### **7. Planning applications**

**7a/MAR/21** 21/0004 Outline application. Outline application for extension to garage with cellar to form 1No residential dwelling with approval sought for appearance, layout and scale. North Loaning House, Alston CA9 3JZ for Mr J. Wright.

*Cllrs Hanley and Harrison declared an interest as neighbours.*

Noted that as the property already has a cellar, the plans should not be detrimental to neighbouring properties.

**Recommended** for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Holt. (6+ 3 abs)

**7b/MAR/21** 21/0038 Listed Building. Listed Building Consent for the replacement of double glazed timber windows to rear with double glazed uPVC windows in the same colour and style. Hi-Pennine Outdoor Shop, Market Place, Alston CA9 3QN for Mrs M. Blackstock.

**Recommended** for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Grew. (8+ 1 abs)

**7c/MAR/21** 21/0079 Full application. New vehicular access. Pemberley, Park Lane, Alston CA9 3AB for Mr & Mrs A. Dodd.

**Recommended** for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew seconded by Cllr Seaton. (8+ 1 abs)

**8. Request to write in support of the Old Primary School proposed plan from the Oaklea Trust to create a community centre promoting the health and wellbeing of Alston Moor**

*Cllr Denoual declared an interest as a director.*

The Oaklea Trust are keen to develop the Old Primary School and have held community open days to show residents what could be done with the building.

Cllr Grew reported that the project had been discussed at the Alston Area Committee, where she had raised some concerns and questioned whether it might be possible to see a copy of the business case. It was not known if this would be possible.

**Resolved** to support the Oaklea Trust business plan in principle. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Holt. (8+ 1 abs) **Action CI.**

**9. Return to meeting venues – request to write to our MP to ask government to extend the legislation allowing council meetings to be held on-line beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May in support of NALC and SLCC.**

It was reported that many people are still waiting to receive their first vaccination, and with the slow re-opening of venues face-to-face meetings cannot be envisaged before June. Residents are also receiving letters asking them to shield, so will not be able to attend in person. As a council we may have to consider holding hybrid meetings for some time, and organisations such as NWAS are planning to continue on-line meetings.

A proposal to write to the MP to ask for an extension was not carried. (4+ 5-)

**10. Tyne Willows – request to EDC for a monthly amenity skip**

Cllr Sharp responded by e-mail to a query about the provision of an amenity skip. She explained that the County are responsible for waste transfer stations and tips. Eden uses the area at Alston as a Recycling Bring site, which was set up before the kerbside collections and would not want to set a precedent by providing a container for general rubbish. However, it could be discussed with the county to see if they would be prepared to pay for the service, and EDC organise regular visits of the container on their behalf.

**Resolved** to request that stakeholders be asked if Alston can be provided with a monthly visit of an amenity skip. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (8+ 1 abs)

The clerk reported that Enterprise Managed Services have transferred to Urbaser Ltd, which may account for the slow response to an enquiry about the council purchasing a new litter bin.

She also reported that she had asked SKS about the moles on the playing field, who said there should be no need to do anything unless there is a problem with the pitch area as once the contractors start mowing the grass the mole hills will be flattened. Should there be a need to employ a molecatcher it would have to be someone who is registered as the land is accessible to the public.

**11. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)**

**11a/MAR/21 Order to extinguish footpath 302151 at Haggs Bank**

An e-mail inviting the council to comment on this order in July had not been received, but the County have confirmed that comments on the Order can be made within 28 days of the 16<sup>th</sup> February. The route ran through Haggs Bunkhouse to join up with footpath 302089, which can also be accessed from the main Haggs track.

No comments were received.

**11b/MAR/21 Consultation on Local Government Re-organisation**

An e-mail was received from CALC stating that the consultation on local government re-organisation is open and will close on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The principal authorities were invited to submit their proposals last autumn and parishes are asked to respond as the re-organisation will have a significant impact on the whole of Cumbria. Several different options have been put forward which are listed on the website.

Members and residents can respond as individuals. Agenda item for next month.

- The two councils - Allerdale and Copeland – jointly submitted a proposal for two unitary councils: West Cumbria comprising the area covered by Allerdale Borough, Carlisle City and Copeland Borough Councils and East Cumbria comprising the area covered by Barrow Borough, Eden District and South Lakeland District Councils.
- The two councils - Barrow and South Lakeland – jointly submitted a proposal for two unitary

councils: 'The Bay' comprising the area covered by Barrow Borough, South Lakeland District and Lancaster City Councils and North Cumbria comprising the area covered by Allerdale Borough, Carlisle City, Copeland Borough and Eden District Councils.

- The two councils - Carlisle and Eden – jointly submitted a proposal for two unitary councils: North Cumbria comprising the area covered by Allerdale Borough, Carlisle City and Eden District Councils and South Cumbria comprising the area covered by Barrow Borough, Copeland Borough and South Lakeland District Councils.
- Cumbria County Council submitted a proposal for a single unitary council for the area of Cumbria County.

### **11c/MAR/21 Highlights – Light up Eden Festival**

Highlights are encouraging communities to make lanterns to put on their doorsteps over the spring equinox on 20<sup>th</sup> March and have produced lantern kits which can be made available on request.

### **11d/MAR/21 Other correspondence**

Noted.

## **12. Administration**

### **12a/MAR/21 Report of annual risk assessment**

**Resolved** to accept the administrative risk assessment. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Grew. (7+ 2abs)

**Resolved** to accept the assets risk assessment. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

Cllrs Denoual and Hanley were thanked for carrying out the risk assessment.

### **12b/MAR/21 Appointment of Alston Public toilets working group**

Cllrs Holt, Grew, Ho and Hanley offered to take part in the Alston public toilets working group.

### **12c/MAR/21 DGP Committee recommendations**

**Resolved** to accept the revisions to the Advisory Committees ToR. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (7+ 2 abs)

**Resolved** to appoint a Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (8 + 1 abs)

The chair and vice-chair are to be members. Cllr Ho was nominated to join but as no-one else was willing to stand it was agreed to hold the vacant place/s until new members are elected.

**Resolved** to publish ADP Working Group minutes online. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (8+ 1 abs)

**Resolved** to accept the AMPC website. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (8+ 1 abs)

**Resolved** to set up a second bank account. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con)

**Resolved** to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April and present Community Awards at the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con). ZR lost connection.

**Resolved** to prepare a fixed term contract for a Community Warden to March 2022. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

## **13. Accounts for payment**

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£400.00
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£525.69
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£6,966.62

**Resolved** to pay the invoices listed in Appendix 2. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Green. (nem con)

### **13/MAR/21 Quarterly finance check**

Cllr Green has signed off the quarterly finance check. The clerk offered to put together a help sheet for

anyone new to carrying out the check.

**14. Agenda items for next month and urgent business**

None received.

*The meeting closed to the public to consider the Community Award and Publicity Officer contract 2021/2022.*

A proposal to extend the publicity contract for 6 months from April 2021 was not carried. (3+ 4-) LS and AG lost connection.

The clerk was asked to thank Claire Worboys for her contribution to the council's work.

*The meeting closed at 9.55pm*

Signed: .....

Dated: .....