

ALSTON MOOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2019 at 7.30pm in Alston Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs: A. Martin (Chair), M. Denoual, T. Haldon, C. Harrison, R. Miller, E. Grew, J. Glendinning, H. Ho, P. Godwin.

County Cllr C. Driver, District Cllrs P. Godwin & L. Sharp & approx. 25 members of the public.

Apologies: A. Robertson

Hustings

Hustings between the four district council candidates: Dr M. Hanley, Mr A. Holt, Mr P. Lincoln and Ms L. Sharp were held.

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18th April 2018 were approved as a correct record. Proposed by M. Bell and seconded by P. Godwin.

2. Matters Arising out of the Minutes of the last AGM

There were no matters arising.

3. Report from Alston Moor Parish Council

The annual report for 2018/2019 was circulated. No questions were received.

4. Reports from County, District & Parish Councillors

4b County Council report

Cllr Claire Driver reported on the following:

Alston Moor Community Plan – the newly published Community Plan is a key reference document for all agencies and will assist in making sure that the community gets the right services delivered according to the community needs. The next step will be for the relevant organisations to engage with each other to make the actions identified in the plan happen.

Positive news is that there is a lot of community activity on Alston Moor, but this makes it difficult to keep track of what is happening. The Community Plan is an inspirational document, but the key to success will be in the implementation.

Local resources – Eden Area Committee voted to vire funds to the local development team, with officers deployed to work on projects such as the Good Neighbour scheme, and Alston Moor Alliance who meet with officers from the health service. There is also a dedicated community development worker tasked with assisting each county councillor. Over the past two and a half years significant resources have been put into Alston Moor, demonstrating what can be achieved with a strong community.

As Chair of the Cumbria Health Scrutiny board Cllr Driver attended a London conference where the deputy chief executive of the council gave a presentation which mentioned the Alston Moor health model.

Footway lights/maintenance – Cumbria County Council have taken over and upgraded the Victorian style footway lights in the town centre and are looking to work with the district and parish to upgrade the remaining Victorian lights outside of Front Street.

The Market Cross steps have been re-pointed, but the budget was insufficient to complete the work.

County Council budget - Unfortunately budgets are extremely constrained. There is a constant tension with central government asking the council to do more with less. They are required to save another 40 million by 2022, making a total 300 million reduction in the budget over the recent past.

Health scrutiny work – there is now a Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, but as yet we do not have combined budgets. Local government is required to put forward a balanced budget, although the health system regularly spends over budget.

Adult Scrutiny committee – a health and social care advisory board was initially set up for 12 months and is now working at the community level to identify how social care is going to look in the next few years. It needs a good range of solutions, including dedicated dementia care. Cllr Driver is working with the Alston Alliance group to begin creating models for the future.

Top school – there is now an active core community group, who have been involved in a scoping exercise over the last few months. The County Council are supporting them, but there is a lot more work to do to ensure the building is sustainable. Potentially it could house social and health services, the youth group, community gym, men in sheds etc.

Front Street renovations – the steering group are awaiting results of tests using Alston stone. They are working with an independent advisor, who is chair of the National Standards board for paving and who sits on the European board, so if he is confident that the local stone is suitable it could be used to re-cobble Front Street. Test panels are to be trialled in the car park. The County Council has ring fenced a significant amount of money for an initial phase of works for next year. This year is about consulting with the community to decide what is wanted and when, with an information board to go up on the side of the Co-op shortly. There is also a dedicated website – Alston Front Street.

4a Eden District Council report

Cllr P. Godwin reported on the following:

Accounts and Governance Scrutiny Committee – the auditors have worked with the committee and have expressed concern about the state of local government finance and future income, as the central government grant to local government will cease next year. Income is expected to come from the retention of business rates, but no-one knows how it will work out. The district is looking to be more creative in obtaining funding, but it is difficult to generate income from the services they provide such as libraries and swimming pools.

Affordable Housing – the Heart of Eden aims to provide affordable housing at 20% below the market rate. This means that housing associations operating affordable rents do not have to offer the tenant the opportunity to buy the house, allowing it to be retained to benefit future tenants.

Devolution of services – the rationale behind moving services to parishes and local organisations is that should there be insufficient funding in future, the district would only be able to provide statutory services. Facilities such as public toilets, footway lights, parks and swimming pools could not be funded. They are looking to hand over these services in a sustainable way, funding them on a sliding scale, to allow for parishes to gradually increase the precept. The hope is that public toilets, for example could be run more cheaply.

HR and Appeals Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Godwin has been involved in appointing a new Chief Executive.

Public toilets – businesses such as pubs or cafes can apply for a grant to assist with the cost of allowing the public to use their toilets.

Eden Local Plan – this is now planning law having been finally accepted following delays by the planning inspectors. Alston Moor is unique in having the 'pile of stones' policy, which allows rebuilding of former homes, on the original footprint, outside the town or village boundary. Building is required to fit the AONB design standards.

Cllr Goodwin was thanked for serving Alston Moor for 8 years as a district councillor.

Cllr Lissie Sharp reported on the following:

Enforcement actions – it has taken over a year to go through the legal process to get the Old Methodist Chapel boarded up and made safe, there is just one window at the back that has been left. However, there has been new evidence that someone managed to get in, so Cllr Sharp has been back in touch with the enforcement officer about making the building more secure.

Unauthorised work has been carried out on the former HSBC building, which the legal team at Eden are aware of and following up.

Lighting – the removal of the footway light at the Jollybeard road end is a potential road safety issue and has been mentioned to police and County Council.

Dog fouling – new leaflets and posters have been produced by the district council, and a lot of thought has gone into what can be done to alert the community to the risks. Primary school pupils have produced new posters which were taken to the railway and were initially successful. Another idea is 'the poo bag poet' with poems put on card and left in places with a lot of dog fouling. The Community Warden has sprayed a logo on some of the problem areas. Reporting of offences need to be specific and include information on the time, as the wardens cover the whole of Eden and need to know what time to come.

Alston Moor housing survey – this is a bespoke piece of work about Alston Moor, which needs to be filled in by everyone to help establish what the needs are for future housing.

Dementia group – this is going well with helpful activities such as singing and making use of photos.

Publicity - it would be helpful to have a noticeboard in the town hall with photos of councillors. Alston Moor has been identified by the local press as one of the areas that is not getting enough coverage, so a press reporter will be in Alston Local Links every fortnight between 10.30am and 12 noon. Residents are welcome to call in to speak to him.

5. Alston Moor Community Plan

Alice Bondi reported that she had put together the Community Plan as a volunteer, with a remit to look at what we as a community want to do, with the aim that Alston Moor remains a good place to live and work. Consultation took place with local groups and individuals at open meetings, and it is pleasing that the district and county understand the value of gathering together this information.

The Community Plan contains the wishes and thoughts of local people, with some suggested actions. It now needs a steering group, of local representatives to develop an action plan to identify projects to carry forward, and to research funding opportunities as there is at present no funding to make anything happen. The document can be viewed on the Alston Moor Partnership website.

Plans are to hold an open meeting on 8th May. She thanked parish, district and county councillors as the work could not have been done without their support.

6. Report from local organisations and charities

6a Alston Ambulance

A report was circulated (appendix I) and questions were invited.

There are now 18 fully trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT1), with mandatory ongoing training, and everyone asked to sign up to at least 4 shifts per month. The ambulance is not able to transport patients onwards to Carlisle but will attend most call outs when there is someone on call. They are not allowed to attend certain call outs including road traffic accidents, paediatrics and maternity cases. One of the concerns NWAS has is that if the ambulance leaves the moor there will be no-one present for other call outs. This is where it would be helpful to have Community First Responders (CFR's) trained up, and NWAS are trying to move forward with this to encourage volunteers to come forward.

No progress has been made yet with the garage, although there is an agreement that it could be built by local people.

6b Alston Moor Community Energy

The group are in the process of raising funds for solar panels. They have £17,500 in grants and are now crowd funding and have raised another £1,500 locally, just leaving another £3,000 to reach the target of £22k for Samuel King's School. They have four weeks to reach the target with the aim of installing the panels during half term.

6c Alston PTA & Youth Club

The PTA's annual duck race went ahead, and plans are underway to make the bonfire on Tyne Willows bigger and better, to include a lantern procession for children. Fundraising included a rock and roll evening, bingo, baking sale with the proceeds given to all three schools. Nenthead chose to improve the school garden and develop growing areas, and the funds paid for signage at the primary school site at SKS.

The youth club starts at year 7 for ages 11 – 16 and has involved around 25 young people. Some of the funding from AMPC was used to hold a popular two day residential.

6d Alston Recreation Grounds

The play area was tidied up recently and equipment sanded and painted, with thanks to the gamekeepers who paid for the paint. The committee are also working towards developing a pump track which could be used for competitive sports that would bring in tourists and visitors. For now parents have to take their children off Alston Moor to use these tracks. They are at an early stage but have help from Cumbria County Council officers and Active Cumbria. First steps will be a

community consultation and a feasibility study. Anyone interested can get involved and new people are welcome to join the committee.

6e Written reports

Reports were received from Alston United Charities, Fairhill Estates Charity ,and Alston Moor Historical Society. (Appendix)

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Alston United Charities annual report 2018

The United Charities exist to make small financial grants to residents of Alston Moor in cases of illness, disability, hardship, distress or other needs. We may also make grants to non-profit organisations on Alston Moor, if they will directly benefit residents in genuine need.

The Trustees meet in January, May and September, but the committee can respond rapidly to urgent applications between meetings.

Austerity means that we are receiving an increasing number of applications. In the past year we made grants totalling £1,147 – significantly more than our annual income. Unfortunately we cannot continue to give more than our income indefinitely, so we may need to give smaller grants in future. We are always happy to receive financial contributions, which can enable us to help more local people in need.

Grants in the past twelve months have included contributions to dance club and gym memberships, repairs of a faulty stairlift and electronic equipment, laptops and travel expenses for students, financial hardship over Christmas and heating oil.

Mark Nash-Williams (Revd), Chair of Trustees
14th April, 2019

Fairhill Estates Charity

The Fairhill Estates Charity is open to residents from Alston Moor and is listed by the Charity Commission as a charity for the relief of poverty. Today, this means that any resident experiencing financial hardship is welcome to apply. Assistance can be given with costs such as funeral expenses, fuel bills, playgroup or under 11 school trip fees, telephone monitoring fees, one-off transport costs to cover exceptional circumstances, or other financial problems not covered here. It can also assist with educational requirements for people over 25. (Individuals of secondary school age and up to 25 should contact the Alston with Garrigill Educational Endowment at Samuel Kings School for further advice.) Grants are generally between £25 and £250. The charity cannot assist with ongoing payments, or any circumstance where another agency has a duty to provide.

Applicants are required to complete an application form which can be downloaded from alstonmoor.org and is also available from the parish clerk's office and Alston Local Links. The form must be countersigned by someone in a responsible position such as a healthcare professional, head teacher, representative from the CAB or similar.

The Fairhill Estates Trustees generally meet on the first Monday of the month, (second if the first is a bank holiday), and meetings are held in confidence following council meetings. Applicants should receive confirmation of the decision within two weeks of the meeting.

CHARITY LAND AND INCOME

The Fairhill Estates Charity receives its income from shares held with COIF Charities Investment Fund and rental income from three parcels of land around Alston. Two of these plots are let on long-term tenancies, but the Parish Pastures are let on a six month tenancy by competitive tender. The term runs from May to October and tenders are invited in March for consideration at the April meeting.

ALLOCATION OF INCOME

At the financial year end the income from rents and shares has to be allocated between the Fairhill Estates Charity, the Alston with Garrigill Educational Endowment and the Garrigill Educational Endowment.

This year donations amounted to £1,934.

ALSTON MOOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MAY 2019

During the last year, thanks to the Parish Precept voted by Alston Moor Parish Councillors, the Archives in the Town Hall have been open to the public every Saturday with the exception of the Christmas and New Year period, and one Saturday in April to allow the rooms to be used as a changing room for the pantomime.

There were approximately 330 visitors, including day-trippers to the town, holiday-makers, newcomers to the area, long term residents, and local people who were born and bred here.

Outside visitors to the Archives came from all over the UK, from York, Glasgow, Port Talbot, Leeds, Newcastle, Bristol, Nottingham, Sheffield, Newark and Birmingham. Overseas visitors were from New Zealand, the Netherlands and Germany.

Enquiries have ranged from family historians to 'house detectives', and from detailed one-to-one oral history discussions to those with a casual interest that was satisfied by looking through our photograph and postcard albums.

Thanks to the existence of the Archives, links have been established with local history societies in the Allen Valley and the Featherstone/Coanwood area in the South Tyne Valley, and a good working relationship has been established with the County Records Office at Carlisle.

The cataloguing and retrieval system is almost finished undergoing an overhaul, with a view to putting a fully cross-referenced catalogue on-line, and in time, with financial help awarded in 2018 by the Sheepdog Trials Committee and the Alston Lodge of Freemasons towards the purchase of a computer, scanned original documents and photo's.

Finally, thanks to grant aid from Eden District Council Community Fund with matching funding from Alston Moor Parish Council and the Historical Society's own funds, the conservation of rare and fragile documents and photo's is being assured by the replacement of harmful plastic and paper envelopes with conservation grade stationery materials.

Publicity for the Archives at Alston Town Hall is being broadcast via the Historical Society's facebook page and website (alstonmoorhistoricalsociety.org.uk), which has its own newsletter. It makes interesting reading, please take the time to have a look.

Alastair Robertson
Chairman

Ambulance Report.

It's been over 6 years since the Council had its first talks with North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) about an improved service for Alston Moor. And now, after such a long wait AM has finally got its 18 Emergency Medical Technicians level 1 (EMT).

However, there will no longer be any future EMTs trained as this particular level no longer exists and all future candidates will go through a much more intensive training for 18 months, leading to a degree. But, there are discussions being held with NWAS Education decision to come up with another level of training that's equivalent to the former leading to a qualification, title yet to be decided.

Discussions :- Shifts commence either 6am - 6pm or 6pm - 6am. Minimum to be covered is 4 per month excluding training days.

Training:- 1 day per month. Requests for handouts for those not in attendance.

Talks have been held with the hospital re possibility of moving the training room there from the school.

Crew members are being encouraged to discuss any problems they may have with Rick, Mark, and interviews are planned individually to air any grievances.

Ambulance Housing. - Long discussions on this topic. Care Commissioning Group (CCG) now in talks with NWAS.

Wearing of uniform around the Moor :- EMTs are not allowed to wear their uniforms off duty according to NWAS Infection Control Policy. Only when a call goes out then individuals change into their uniform.

Blue Light :- lots and lots on this topic. However, the only occasion when blue light may be used is when securing a scene and preventing any further problems.

Community First Responder :- This training was suggested in view of the news regarding EMTs and the fact that present Crew want to take patients into hospital from the Moor, (Ambulance Control to make the final decision) leaving the Moor without any medical help. CFRs will NOT be used to replace EMTs but to compliment the group. The fact finding event was held on 16 th March, and proved successful with 12 people signing up on the day with other people having expressed an interest. Training will begin once References, health check and Interviews have been undertaken. The training will be delivered on the Moor over a period of 4 days to suit the trainees.

New radios are being tried out, hopefully these will work in Garrigill and Nenthead --more on this to follow.

Any Questions ?

Elaine Grew.