



# ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7pm, held remotely on Zoom.

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

**Apologies:** A. Green

**Absent:** none

**Declarations of interest:** 7b/APR/21 Cllr Seaton, 14/APR/21 Cllr Robson.

A minutes silence was held in memory of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh.

## **1. Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

## **2. County & District reports**

### **County Council**

*Cllr Driver reported on the following:*

**AGM** – this was brought forward, and appointments made to the same committees as before. The Health Scrutiny Committee will be looking at the work programme for the coming year as members now have an additional year to serve. Focus will be on the recovery from Covid.

**Local Government Review** – a decision is expected from the government in July.

**Front Street road closure** – the Steering Group are to meet this week, ahead of a proposed start date in late May. The TRO has been issued for 6 months but is normal practice in case the weather or other hazards delay the work which is not expected to take this long. The Alston traders group are taking the opportunity to celebrate Alston and have planned a number of activities to take advantage of the road closure. Check the Co-op noticeboard and council website for updates.

*A question was asked about whether it could be delayed.* A future council will have a different structure, and while the funding of half a million has been ring fenced for 3 years, there is no guarantee a new council will share the same priorities.

**Nentsberry speed limit** -Eden Local Committee have agreed the proposal for a speed limit at Nentsberry, first requested several years ago at an Annual Parish Meeting, will finally be implemented next summer.

**School crossing lights** – no update on connection dates. Cllr Driver will check.

### **District Council**

*(detailed reports posted to [www.alstonmoor.org](http://www.alstonmoor.org))*

*Cllr Sharp reported on the following:*

**Covid test centres**- lateral flow tests can be obtained at the test centres in Carlisle and Penrith and Kendal.

**Property link** – private landlords are urged to register with Property Links, a free matching service for letting properties.

**Local Links** - have re-opened with reduced hours on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. To remain Covid safe there will be a click and collect library service.

*Cllr Hanley reported on the following:*

**Full Council** – some members of the Independent group have left the coalition in power.

**Overview & Scrutiny** – are to discuss the devolution of assets to the parishes as Covid has delayed the process, possibly deferring the end date by another year. One parish which has taken on public toilets has given them up,

**Covid vaccinations** – are going well with good take-up.

## **3. Public participation**

None.

#### **4. Progress reports**

##### **4a/APR/21 Tyne Willows replacement litter bin**

Re: 10/MAR/21 The litter bin was vandalised over the Easter weekend, so a replacement is needed as soon as can be arranged. Urbase (formerly Amey and suggested by EDC) have come up with a price. The original bin was purchased from Glasdon and fitted by Walker and Wright.

**Resolved** to accept the Urbase quote of £400 to replace and fit the litter bin on Tyne Willows. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Grew. (7+ 1 abs)

##### **4b/APR/21 Requests to CCC – footpath riverbank erosion & Nenthead school field**

Re: 6e&g/MAR/21 The Rights of Way team will inspect fp 302063 where the river has eroded the bankside, and also a second site further upstream reported by a resident. The damaged fencing at Nenthead has been reported again and an officer has been asked by Property Services to look into it.

In addition the netting on the Market Cross has been damaged, with someone coming out to repair it shortly.

*Note: Cllr Driver confirmed that Property Services are coming out to repair it this week.*

##### **4c/APR/21 Statement on THI funding**

Re: 6f/MAR/21 It was agreed to hold over to a later meeting.

##### **4d/APR/21 Alston Public Toilets update**

The clerk reported that Neil Buck from Eden District Council has suggested that the parish council opens discussion after the May elections but given the update from Cllr Hanley the situation might be evolving.

It was pointed out that the public toilets have been vandalised a couple of times over the last month, and if taken on by the parish the full cost would fall to our taxpayers. Residents were urged to report suspicious activity around the site to the police.

##### **4e/APR/21 Elections**

The clerk reported that 6 people are standing for the Alston Ward, Paul Best is the only candidate for Garrigill so will be joining the council, and no-one has stood for Nenthead, so the council will be expected to co-opt a replacement councillor.

#### **5. Chair's report**

A reminder that fly-tipping can be reported to Eden District Council and the police on 101.

Thanks were given to the local resident who has been out and about in the parish cleaning up the streets, and to all the other local residents who have been quietly getting on with voluntary work around the town and villages.

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

*Full reports on the [alstonmoor.org](http://alstonmoor.org) website.*

##### **6a/APR/21 AMERG meetings**

Cllr Grew reported on the 26<sup>th</sup> March meeting. The emergency response side is winding down, as the vaccination programme is helping keep Covid numbers down. The volunteers are to continue with prescription deliveries as there is still a need. Infection rates in Eden are below the national average.

There are concerns about council meetings moving back to physical meetings, and there is a court case in progress to challenge this. Online Friday quiz nights will end this week.

There are hopes that the volunteer scheme might be able to play a role in Good Neighbour scheme, but in the meantime a volunteer is looking at a template from Kirkby Stephen to see if it can be adapted for Alston Moor. If there is anyone interested please could they contact Claire Driver, who is hoping to develop a small group with someone taking the lead.

The Reopening the High Street project has distributed leaflets outside of Alston to encourage people to visit the town.

The AGM will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

##### **6b/APR/21 Alston Area Planning**

Cllr Grew reported that the Fellfoot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme has been awarded £3.5m over 4 years, with matched funds from various partners. The nearest hub is Halton-le-Gate and the aim is to support resilient land management working alongside landowners and farmers. There are further details on their website.

During the Front Street road closure the street will be pedestrianised apart from deliveries, and the message put out that the road may be closed but not the town. Parking will be available at STRPS and Fairhill, with traffic directed to the station car park.

AMP has taken on the Men's Sheds as a community project, with space at the top school if the Oaklea Trust community asset bid is successful. Architects have been appointed for the Townfoot public realm project, the initial consultation report has been published and ratified by an outside agency.

Alston Recreation Ground Trust has carried out a safety and maintenance programme, with new signage and litter bins. Tenders for the bike track study have gone out.

#### **6c/APR/21 Traffic Management meeting**

Cllr Grew reported on action points from the meeting.

**Nenthall riverbank erosion** – a geology report by the Coal Authority has been produced. Both they and highways are keeping the site under review.

**Severe weather road closures** – a winter review in consultation with the police and other authorities will consider improved signage and snow gates.

**Hags bank verges** - will be looked at the same time as the potholes. Problems with the traffic lights will be investigated.

**Fingerposts** – the post at Carrshield could be included in the Fellfoot project. Cllrs Denoual and Seaton have offered to update the survey on all the finger posts to identify what needs to be restored, and to look at which milestones need repainting.

**Front street diversion** – the Blagill loop will be the main route, but Garrigill will have a temporary local speed limit and the Leadgate road pinch points checked by an engineer.

**Townhead road markings** – are promised to be in place soon.

**Nenthead drainage scheme** – near the primary school is to be instigated this year, as is works at the entrance to Middle Farm.

**Church Road working group report** – residents with a blue badge can apply for a parking space to be put as close to their house as possible, Cllr Robson has liaised with residents. Unless a property has a dropped kerb they have no greater parking rights than the general public. There is an issue with parking in the turning circle.

A walking bus was discussed as a low cost intervention to be explored, and letters sent out to parents at the end of term.

The pressure on parking during drop-off and pick-up times for the schools is for a short time only, and the wider community are asked to be mindful of parking when they visit the surgery.

#### **6d/APR/21 Nenthead Ward**

Cllr Denoual reported that the meeting was well-attended. She has not heard back from Eden District Council about the recycling centre, but the Pathways and Conservation network group would like to be involved. The Hive has re-opened with outdoor seating, and are looking for new trustees, if anyone is interested. The bike shop owner hopes to set up more events and employ an apprentice. There is interest in restoring the Nenthead Fountain.

Cllr Seaton reported that the Community toilets group held their AGM. They have plans to update the inside of the toilets, improve access to the cleaning cupboard and provide planters outside.

The new noticeboard has had a few teething problems.

It is hoped to restart outdoor ward surgeries.

#### **6e/APR/21 CRF update**

Cllr Grew reported that the defibrillators have arrived. There is a delay on the rest of the kit, but NWAS hope to get them in within the next couple of weeks. She then plans to let the press know and get a news story together on how the Community First Responders will be working together with the ambulance team.

#### **6f/APR/21 Community Awards**

Cllr Denoual reported that a local artist has been approached to design the awards, which will be announced at the Annual Parish Meeting. As the meeting is to be held on-line the recipients will be presented with the award later in the week by councillors from the three wards.

### **7. Planning applications**

**7a/APR/21** 21/0197 Full application. Addition of first floor gable windows in conjunction with loft conversion. Ash Brae 8 Lowbyer Park, Alston CA9 3JW for Mr Clive Worboys.

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

**7b/APR/21** 21/0272 Full application. Erection of single-storey rear extension to dwelling. Bromley Mount, Townhead, Alston CA9 3SL for Mr & Mrs Dryden.

Cllr Seaton declared a business interest.

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

**7c/APR/21** 21/0299 Full application. Replacement of timber windows with uPVC. Masonic Hall, King's Arms Lane, Alston CA9 3JF for Mr N. English.

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

**7d/APR/21** 21/0319 Tree works (CA). Removal of T1 Willow, T2 Willow and T3 Willow. St John's House, Garrigill, CA93DS for Mr T. Collins.

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

**7e/APR/21** 21/0318 Tree Works. Removal of T1 Sycamore x2, T2 Ash, T3 Ash. 8 Station Road, Alston CA9 3HZ for Mrs B. Sharp.

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

## **8. Response to consultation on Local Government Re-organisation**

Cllrs Driver, Sharp and Hanley were thanked for attending the discussion held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April on the proposals for local government re-organisation. There was also an opportunity taken up by some members to attend a presentation and question and answer session hosted by CALC. The options are:

- 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.

The concerns that Eden District Council has is that Eden is the Cinderella area, lacking the industrial power base of other parts of the county. It would also be hard to support the proposal for an East West division as there are no historic links with the south of the county. Other concerns are that Alston would be overlooked in a single unitary authority.

**Resolved** to support the proposal for two unitary councils with Alston included in the North Cumbria area for Allerdale Borough, Carlisle City and Eden District. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (6+ 2abs) ZR lost connection.

## **9. BT proposal to remove the Nentsberry phone box**

Eden District Council have written to ask the parish council's views on the proposed removal of the phone box by BT at the Horse and Waggon, Nentsberry by 7<sup>th</sup> June. When last invited to comment the council had agreed that with the box could be removed as there is a mobile phone signal in this area, and almost no usage of the phone box.

**Resolved** to accept removal of the BT phone box at Nentsberry. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con)

## **10. Townfoot bus shelters**

The clerk reported that a complaint had been made about the condition of the bus shelters at Townfoot, which on inspection are in need of repainting. This may be a specialist job, but the county council said that grant funding might be available to assist with costs.

*It was suggested later in the meeting that the successful contractor for the Nenthead Fountain structural survey might be able to advise.*

## **11. Application from AMBA to the Community Fund**

An application was received from AMBA for a contribution of £300 towards the production of 6 wooden planters to be installed in Alston town centre. AMBA has volunteers who can build them, and businesses will be approached for sponsorship.

**Resolved** accept the request from AMBA to the Community Fund for £300 to be put towards planters for Front Street. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

## **12. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)**

### **12a/APR/21 Local authority Treescape Fund**

Information has been received from CALC on a number of funding streams including one from Defra – the Local Authority Treescape Fund which aims to increase tree planting in local communities. The fund is available to the County Council from April 2021.

A question was asked about tree planting in Front Street. It was reported that Highways do not allow trees to be planted within 2m of the highway without a licence, to avoid inhibiting motorists' views. Further considerations are that planting trees would remove car parking spaces, trees have been vandalised in the past, and their growth can damage the surrounding hard landscape. A quick win is shrubbery in planters and hanging baskets.

### **12b/APR/21 Other correspondence (Appendix 1)**

Noted.

## **13. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)**

### **13a/APR/21 Annual Parish Council meeting**

Local councils that are holding elections have been placed in an impossible situation by the government's failure to extend the legislation on remote meetings beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May. There is a requirement to hold the annual parish council meeting in May, but with the Covid safety restrictions still in place and venues not planning to re-open until 21<sup>st</sup> June, the only means of holding the meeting will be on-line. The legislation is being challenged through the courts, based on the original meetings legislation from the 1960s and 1970s, but there is no definitive resolution as yet.

**Resolved** that the meeting for the 10<sup>th</sup> May will go ahead as planned, with decisions ratified at the next full council if this proves necessary. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Seaton (nem con) ZR connection re-established.

### **13b/APR/21 Proposal to defer the June meeting to the 28<sup>th</sup> June and cancel the 5<sup>th</sup> July meeting**

The clerk explained that until more is known as to what is happening with remote meetings it may be possible to meet in person after the 21<sup>st</sup> June and suggested the 28<sup>th</sup> as this will meet the audit requirement to approve the AGAR (*Annual Return*) by 30<sup>th</sup> June. It would then be sensible to cancel the 5<sup>th</sup> July meeting to reduce the number of meetings held before the majority of the population has received their second vaccination.

It was thought that the legislation allowing the continuation of remote meetings might be brought in, but in the meantime emergency meetings could be held if necessary.

**Resolved** to cancel the 5<sup>th</sup> July meeting and to hold the June meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

### **13c/APR/21 Request to add Cllr Seaton as editor to the Facebook page**

**Resolved** to add Cllr Seaton as editor to the Parish Council Facebook page subject to ratification of the draft protocol for management of the page. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Denoual. (nem con)

## **14. Accounts for payment**

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£2,029.90
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£0.32
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£3,414.67

Cllr Robson declared an interest as a relative to one of the contractors.

**Resolved** to pay the invoices listed in Appendix 2 with exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> invoice for £720 from

G.Glendinging. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Holt. (5+ 3 abs)

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

None.

*The meeting closed to the public to consider the offers for garden land at Townfoot and quotes for Nenthead Fountain.*

**Garden land**

Following information received after the meeting further advice is to be sought.

**Nenthead Fountain structural report**

Quotes were received from:

Shepley Engineers - £590

Acorn Restoration - £980 + vat

Slinden Services - £2,550 + vat

Heritage Engineering - £788 + vat.

**Resolved** to accept the quote from Heritage Engineering for £788. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Harrison.(nem con)

Cllr Robson reported that a working group has been established for the Fountain and questioned whether it might be feasible to provide a trough for water.

*The meeting closed at 9.30pm*

Signed: .....

Dated: .....