



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 24th May 2021 held in Alston Town Hall at 7pm

Present: Cllrs: P. Best, B. Davies, M. Denoual, A. Green, N. English, E. Grew, M. Hanley, C. Harrison, S. Hattersley, H. Ho, A. Holt, R. Miller, L. Seaton, Z. Robson.

Apologies: none

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Planning 6c/MAY/21 & 6g/MAY/21 for Cllr Miller.

Appointment of Chairman

Nominations were received for Cllr English and Cllr Holt. Voting was by a show of hands.

Resolved to appoint Cllr English as Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Hanley and seconded by Cllr Harrison.

Appointment of Vice-chairman

Nominations were received for Cllr Holt and Cllr Miller. Voting was by a show of hands.

Resolved to appoint Cllr Miller as Vice-chairman. Proposed by Cllr Hanley and seconded by Cllr Harrison.

Election of Committees/working groups

DGP (Development, Governance & Personnel) – Cllrs Denoual, Robson, Holt, Seaton, Grew, Ho & English were appointed.

Finance – to include chair and vice-chair Cllrs English, Miller, Davies & Ho were appointed.

Staffing – Cllr Holt reported that he has been advised that staffing should be a separate committee with a maximum of half the parish council. Cllr Denoual reported that staffing was already the responsibility of the DGP Committee and queried the need for a separate committee. She questioned whether the six month ruling in Standing Orders stating that resolutions should not be reversed within six months would apply to the Terms of Reference. It was confirmed that s.7a in SO enabled amendments if required.

Resolved to appoint Cllrs English, Miller, Davies, Holt, Hattersley & Grew. Should there be any issues other members could stand in.

Church Road Working Group – Cllr Grew explained that this is a sub-group of the County Council Traffic Management Group. Cllr Grew & Cllr Miller as residents' liaison representative were appointed.

Election of representatives

Alston Health Alliance – Cllrs Grew & Hanley with Cllr Hattersley as stand in if required.

Alston Ambulance – Cllrs Grew & Seaton

Alston Area Planning Team – Cllr Grew

Alston Moor Traffic Management – Cllr Grew (Garrigill), Denoual (Nenthead) & Hattersley (Alston)

Alston Moor Community Transport – Cllr Hanley

Alston Moor Emergency Resilience Group – Cllr Grew (members attending in another capacity could stand in if required.)

Alston Moor Fitness Club – Cllr Davies

Alston Moor Partnership – Cllr Harrison

Dementia Action Alliance – on hold as meetings had not reconvened.

Tree Wardens – Cllrs Harrison, Holt & Green

Tyne Willows Management Board – Cllrs Holt, Ho & vacancy

Pending further information from Eden District Council the Public toilets working group would be put on hold.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 12th April 2021 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (6+ 3 abs)

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 23rd April 2021 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: *the clerk requested she be allowed to read out a statement and muted the council to enable it to be read.* Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Grew (5+ 3- 1 abs)

Note: amendments to the agenda from the chair were received too late for the emergency meeting.

2. County & District reports

County Council

Cllr Driver was unable to attend due to Covid space constraints.

District Council

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

Full council meeting – there was a motion to move the deadline for the devolution of assets from March 2022 due to concerns that some parishes had already closed their public toilets.

Health & Wellbeing Forum – there was a discussion on the impact of Covid on mental health due to social isolation. The vaccination program is doing well with 75% of the population having had at least one vaccination, however the local GP surgery will not be able to continue as future vaccinations will be carried out at the new centre in Penrith.

Full reports are on the alstonmoor.org website.

3. Public participation

A resident welcomed the new councillors. She expressed a hope that the Community Plan can be picked up again and that the community could work together and engage in productive dialogue.

She also mentioned concerns over the behaviour of some members towards the clerk, pointing out that councillors past and present valued the clerk.

A second resident questioned the allegations made against past and present members and suggested that four of the new councillors form a committee to investigate the allegations and as part of the investigation those involved be asked to hand over all the evidence that has been accumulated.

A third resident supported this request and stated that she had asked Cllrs Holt and Ho repeatedly for evidence of the allegations made but had never received a response. She reminded councillors of the Nolan principles and that holders of public office are accountable to the public and should be truthful. The danger is that a lack of accountability and unsubstantiated allegations serve to convince the wider public that there is some truth in the claims. The claims are leading people to believe that everyone in public office is engaged in fraudulent and criminal activities, when what is needed is confidence in those that hold public office. If the allegations are groundless it is time to draw a line under them and move on to allow the council to work for the good of the community.

The chair reported that the Monitoring Officer has confirmed that an investigation is underway. He asked for evidence of the alleged wrongdoing to be presented to him in confidence unless it affects the investigation. A committee could be set up as suggested but would have to be made up of councillors who are not involved.

4. Progress reports

4a/MAY/21 Tyne Willows replacement litter bin

Re: 4a/APR/21 The litter bin has been replaced. As the gate into the field has been re-located to the south-west side of the car park it should be possible to put down the matting stored in Cllr Harrison's barn. Cllrs Harrison, Green and Miller offered to organise a work team to get the matting in place. Noted that it should be laid onto sand. **Action CH, AG, RM.**

It was noted that the bin has been emptied twice a week, which may affect costs.

4b/MAY/21 BT Phonebox removal - Nentsberry

Re: 9/APR/21 A Nentsberry resident contacted the council to offer support over BT's decision to remove the phonebox besides the Horse and Wagon.

4c/MAY/21 Garden land - Townfoot

Re: 16/APR/21 A resident is interested in purchasing the garden plot behind their house at Townfoot, and has had difficulty obtaining a valuation. Following last month's meeting Cllr Grew suggested that it might be possible to get the land valued by the District Valuation Services. No response has been received yet.

5. Council Representatives reports

Full reports on the alstonmoor.org website.

5a/MAY/21 AMERG meetings

Cllr Grew reported that the next meeting will be in September unless there is a major incident or third wave of the virus. The treasurer stood down at the AGM, so a new treasurer is needed, and volunteers for this and other tasks are welcome to put their names forward. The group received a donation from a resident for £250 which has been passed to Alston United Charities.

The prescription delivery is continuing on Fridays as the volunteers are happy to continue, the phone line will not be staffed in future and has a message advising people where to go.

The Alston Moor Emergency Action Plan has identified centres in the event of an emergency. These are Alston – SKS, Garrigill – Village Hall, Nenthead – Village Hall.

There will be a stall at the Alston Gala in August for residents to find out more about AMERG's work.

5b/MAY/21 Alston Area Planning

Cllr Grew reported that the work on Front Street would not start on 24th May as there had been a delay in appointing the contractor. Also discussed was the Old Primary School as the Oaklea Trust has submitted a business case to the County Council with ideas for using the site. If accepted it will go to cabinet and if approved grants can be sought to carry out the work, which has been costed at around the half million pounds mark.

Under the THI scheme, three more properties have commenced work, which can only be good for the future of Front Street.

There are to be changes to the Reopening High Streets Safely (RHSS) scheme, Eden District Council are working on the criteria and it is expected that businesses will be able to apply for Welcome Back funding.

The Fellfoot Forward project is looking for 2 trainees; there is more information on their website.

Alston Moor Historical Society has seen an increase in membership during lockdown. Their project to install signs in Alston showing the old street names will be split into two or three phases and is going well.

5c/MAY/21 Volunteering Working Group update

Cllr Denoual reported for the benefit of new members that the council had set aside £4,875 for a volunteer co-ordinator, and appointed a working group to progress the project. Realising that it could not be managed by the council a request had gone out for someone to lead on the project. Nick Mason came forward with a proposal to set up a volunteering charity and had met recently with the working group, which had stood down but re-convened, to confirm that he is ready to move forward, the project having stalled due to Covid restrictions.

Nick Mason confirmed that he will let the council know when he is ready to proceed and offered to report back with an update.

5d/MAY/21 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Denoual reported that the AGM for the ward meeting was cancelled due to Covid restrictions. She had contacted Eden District Council once again about the recycling centre to discuss the improvement plans, which include a request for additional bins and planting a wild flower area. A local group are keen to help with this, and hopefully there should be an update soon.

A resident reported damage to a wall at Nenthead mines.

Cllr Seaton reported that the community toilets are waiting for the contractor to carry out work on the toilets, and that a resident has made a donation box to help with buying materials, which has raised £60 so far.

5e/MAY/21 Nenthead Fountain

Cllr Robson reported that Heritage Engineering came out earlier in the month to carry out the survey and will report back at the beginning of June. The report should indicate what work is required and enable the group to make a start on fundraising in August.

Problems with the noticeboard have been fixed.

5f/MAY/21 Front Street Steering Group

The County Council have advertised the North Lonning road as the diversion for Front Street, which is a mistake as it should be from the Ayle crossroads. Cllr English said he will ask for this to be corrected.

Action NE.

5g/MAY/21 CFR Kits/Ambulance report

Cllr Grew reported that the kits have now been delivered and are ready to be handed out to the CFRs. Seven people have come forward to work as CFRs and all will be equipped with kits, 2 from Nwas, 4 paid out of the precept and 1 bought by a family member. This is good news that should be celebrated. A meeting of the Ambulance Group had been held recently, but as it had only just been possible to circulate the notes it would be held over to a later meeting.

5h/MAY/21 Church Road Working Group

Cllr Grew reported that SKS sent out letters to parents about the walking bus but only got 3 replies, 2 thought it a good idea, another could use it on an ad hoc basis. It was decided to hold over for now and revisit it when the new head teacher is in position. Hopefully, recent incidents over parking have been sorted. The school is working on improving the parking space to the front of the building with new tarmac, removable lockable bollards and a designated loading bay. There were concerns that the Front Street road closure could add to the pressure on parking, and the County are looking to see what other areas could be used. Buses will park at the top of town for the children to walk down the back laning.

5i/MAY/21 Nenthead Snowplough

Thanks were given to Cllr Ho for fund raising towards repairing the damage to the Nenthead snowplough.

6. Planning applications

6a/MAY/21 21/0333 Full application. Replacement of single glazed timber bay windows with timber double glazed units of toughened safety glass. Lantern House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS for Mr C. Reed.

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

6b/MAY/21 21/0334 Listed building. Listed building consent for replacement of single glazed timber bay windows with timber double glazed units of toughened safety glass. Lantern House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS for Mr C. Reed.

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

6c/MAY/21 21/0339 Reserved matters. Discharge of condition 3 (surface water drainage system) attached to approval 20/0346. Nentforce Caravan Park, Station Road, Alston CA9 3JX

Cllr Miller declared an interest as an employee and abstained from voting.

Resolved to make no comment. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew (13+ 1 abs)

6d/MAY/21 21/0376 Full application. Variation of conditions 3 (occupation period), 5 (holiday letting) and 7 (second residence) to allow for a longer open season for up to 34 static caravans, attached to approval 08/0180. Horse and Wagon Caravan Park, Nentsberry CA9 3LH for Mr M. Southerton.

The Nentsberry Community Group wrote to object to the application on the grounds that it does not fit with the Eden Local Plan criteria for new tourism proposals. As an existing larger site, it does not improve the range or quality of tourism accommodation or facilities in the area or offer substantial economic benefits. The site has already led to negative environmental impact and loss of privacy for residents as caravans are sited very close to boundary walls. Extending the season will impact upon residents and impact upon the tranquillity and dark skies.

Noted that although some caravan parks have extended opening seasons they are not generally sited within a residential area.

Recommended for refusal on the grounds that an extension to the season would have a detrimental effect on neighbouring properties. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Seaton. (nem con)

6e/MAY/21 21/0379 Full application. Replacement roof to include rooflights and flue for wood burning stove. The Rise, Alston CA9 3DB for Ms J. Johnson.

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

6f/MAY/21 21/0385 Cert. of Lawful. Certificate of lawfulness for the continued use of the land for siting two caravans. Land adj. to Fell View Cottage, Nenthead CA9 3PS for Woodsman Arboricultural Consultancy – Mr J. Richardson.

The meeting was closed to allow for a resident to speak.

It was explained that the proposal is for a site next to the boundary of Fell View garden. There is a caravan used sporadically between Easter and September but not during the winter months. A second caravan used for storage was demolished last year. There are no services, drainage or sewerage on the site, only a home made toilet sited 2 m from the boundary with Fell View. It was alleged that the application misrepresented the situation.

The meeting re-convened.

Recommended for refusal. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller (11+ 3 abs)
6g/MAY/21 21/0390 Full application. Erection of two storage sheds. Nentforce Caravan Park, Station Road, Alston CA9 3JX for Ayle Colliery Ltd – Mr Shepherd.

Cllr Miller declared an interest and abstained from voting.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (2+ 1 – 11 abs)
6h/MAY/21 21/0400 Full application. Proposed dry stone walling and associated repair works, installation of leaky dams and localised watercourse improvements including rock ramp, log revetments, geocoin matting, gabion baskets, installation of piping and reinstatement of footpath, to reduce metal mine pollution of Garrigill Burn. Land at Garrigill Mine site, Garrigill for the Coal Authority – Mr George Weightman.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)
6i/MAY/21 21/0419 Listed building. Listed building consent to repaint the front door and windows in sage green, replacement of fireplace with wood burning stove. Salvin House, Townfoot, Alston CA9 3RN for Clarice Carr & Co. Ltd – Mr R. Lawson.

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

7. Planning for Appleby Fair

The clerk was contacted by Amanda McKirdy, the Community Sergeant responsible for the lead up to Appleby Fair about attending a meeting along with Emma Brass from Eden District Council to discuss plans for the event due to take place from 12th August. She is available on 7th June for either a zoom working group meeting with the council or could attend in person if a council meeting is to go ahead as suggested later in the agenda.

8. High Mill waterwheel

An offer was made by the owner of High Mill to transfer ownership of the waterwheel to the parish council, and to negotiate a cash fund towards insurance for the first year. It was agreed to hold over to a future meeting. Before serious consideration could be given to the offer, the council would have to carry out a risk assessment and the building would need a feasibility study as it could require substantial funding to be put into a safe condition.

9. Repairs to handrail on footpath to Brewery bridge, Alston

The clerk reported that the County Council Rights of Way team have included the handrail in their work programme for the Pennine Way and should be repairing it shortly.

10. Co-option of Nenthead Councillor

The clerk reported that as no-one stood for election to the Nenthead Ward the parish council were invited to co-opt. Two people have already expressed interest and have completed the co-option form, but as one was unable to attend in person and as more people may want to come forward the council might prefer to hold over to a later meeting.

Resolved to advertise the vacancy and to hold over to next meeting. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr Robson. (men con)

11. Consultations and Correspondence (Appendix 1)

11a/MAY/21 Letter of complaint

A letter was received from a resident objecting to the hasty appointment of an HR company before the elections took place. She described it as a vanity project that would cost council tax payers and called for those responsible to resign. A complaint was also made about the increase to the precept for this year.

Resolved to acknowledge the letter and to hold over awaiting more information. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Davies. (13+ 1 abs)

11b/MAY/21 Eden FM Radio and magazine delivery teams

The clerk reported that she had expected an e-mail following a telephone conversation with a representative from Eden FM Radio, but this has not arrived yet. The organisers produce a magazine which is delivered by local teams around Penrith, and they would like to extend the scheme to Alston Moor if people can be found to deliver the papers by hand. If a community group had the resources to do this, the work is paid so could benefit the organization. They would not be expected to deliver to hard-to-

reach properties. There is no rush to set anything up, so there is time for consideration and more detail on the project to arrive.

11c/MAY/21 Other correspondence (Appendix 1)

Noted.

Cllr Grew reported that the Brownies were upset that the council had booked the Town Hall for Monday evenings. It was confirmed that the council will look for alternative venues from September onwards when the Brownies start up again.

12. Administration

12a/MAY/21 Proposal to set up a separate Planning Committee

Cllr Grew reported that she had suggested holding separate planning meetings as she felt planning is not given enough time, due to the need to keep to the meeting agenda and momentum is lost after an hour and a half. Agreed to hold over for now and re-visit later.

12b/MAY/21 Proposal to investigate equipment required for hybrid meetings

Cllr Grew explained that she had requested this agenda item to ask if the council wanted to look into including some form of on-line viewing for their meetings now that meetings are in person. Although there is legislation allowing the public to record, this is independent of the council doing so itself.

It was noted that during lockdown the council acquired a following of at times over 30 people, but pre-pandemic just 3 or 4 people attended, and as a demonstration of democracy it is important to continue for people who want to watch at home.

The issue is about the equipment needed, how effectively it could be used and access to the internet at venues. The council would need to seek advice on what could be done. Cllr English reported that he had equipment that might work, but would need to test it.

Resolved to investigate equipment that could be used for hybrid meetings, noting that the clerk will need help with this. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Hattersley. (nem con)

12c/MAY/21 Retention of documents & Social Media policy

Cllr Seaton asked that recordings of meetings are deleted in accordance with the Retention of documents policy which states they can be deleted 20 days after the minutes have been approved.

Resolved that recordings of meetings are deleted in accordance with the Retention of Documents policy. Proposed by Cllr Seaton and seconded by Cllr English. (nem con)

Cllr English reported on the misuse of social media by some members, he has sent everyone a copy of the social media policy, which includes e-mails. He asked for a line to be drawn underneath this now and to make a new start, encouraging everyone to read and understand documents. When the Monitoring Officer's investigation is complete, he hoped we can get back to running the council. In the meantime members were asked that when commenting on Facebook, e-mails or other social media platforms they abide by decisions of the full council whether or not they personally agree. The parish council page (clerk as administrator and Cllr Seaton as editor) can only be used to post factual information and decisions of the council. Individual councillors with their own pages can also post factual council information and make comments that are not related to the parish council. He asked for consideration for fellow councillors and to remember how the public view us.

12d/MAY/21 Training opportunities for new and existing councillors

CALC run a number of training schemes for councillors and regularly circulate information about them. The council has agreed to pay for training for members, but ask that anyone interested goes through the parish clerk.

Although there isn't a requirement for members to undertake training it can be valuable. Agreed that the clerk would set up a training register. **Action Cl.**

In response to a query about in house financial training the clerk reported that she had asked CALC, but as an external trainer is used, they had not been able to progress this. It was reported that EDC had mentioned the possibility of training for councillors, but nothing further has been heard. To follow up.

Action Cl.

12e/MAY/21 Update to bank signatories

The clerk reported that it would be helpful to have more councillors from Alston as bank signatories and suggested updating the bank mandate noting that the last update is still being processed by HSBC.

Resolved to appoint Cllrs English, Miller, Green, Harrison and Hanley.

12f/MAY/21 Recommendation to move to annual payments for Zoom, Dropbox and payment by direct debit to Urbaser

Resolved to transfer to annual payments for Zoom and Dropbox and to use direct debit for Urbaser. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Holt. (nem con)

12g/MAY/21 Delegation of payment of contractors/suppliers invoices by bank transfer to parish clerk

Agreed to use cheque payments for now.

12h/MAY/21 Request to hold a council meeting Monday 7th June

It was agreed to hold a council meeting on Monday 7th June to discuss Appleby Fair, planning applications and the co-option of a Nenthead cllr. Apologies were received from Cllr Seaton and Cllr Harrison.

13. Accounts for payment

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£15,829.05
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£77.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£5,414.59

Resolved to pay the invoices and donations listed in Appendix 2 with the exception of the donation to Alston Fitness Club which would be held back until a copy of the insurance document is received. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Davies. (12+ 2 abs)

13a/MAY/21 Finance checks

The finance checks were carried out by Cllr Hanley who has signed off the bank reconciliation in accordance with the Financial Regulations. Cllr Hanley confirmed the finances were in order.

Resolved to accept the finance checks. Proposed by Cllr Denoual and seconded by Cllr Green (12+ 2 abs)

13b/MAY/21 Internal auditors report

The report was circulated to the council before the meeting.

Resolved to accept the report as a fair presentation of the council's finances. Proposed by Cllr Holt and seconded by Cllr Grew. (12+ 2 abs)

14. Agenda items for next month and urgent business

Public access to meetings – depending upon 21 June government decision
Vandalism/consideration of CCTV.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:

Dated: