



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor meeting Parish Council held on Monday 2nd August in Alston Town Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: N. English (Chair), P. Best, B. Davies, A. Green, E. Grew, M. Hanley, H. Ho, R. Miller, M. Denoual Z. Robson.

Apologies: C. Harrison, S. Hattersley, A. Holt.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Cllr Miller re: 9/AUG/21 & 11/AUG/21

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 28th June 2021 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (nem con).

2. Updates from NWAS and CCG on the future of Alston Ambulance

NWAS and CCG representatives attended the meeting to discuss what plans could be made for a sustainable emergency health services on Alston Moor. Gene Quinn reported that the issue is that there are now only 6 EMTs and if numbers drop any further the ambulance will no longer be viable. There is now a small team of 6 CFRs in place which it is hoped can be expanded, but there are no plans to take the ambulance away until a mature CFR team is in place. An Alston Moor working group has been looking at operational models from other areas including Dartmoor, Exmoor, the Scottish Highlands, and Mountain Rescue, but none are viable options. What is proposed is a lease car for the EMTs to use.

The Community Engagement officer, Mark Evans explained the work being carried out with the CFRs, which operate through a variety of models. ECFRs can attend trauma, be given equipment and administer drugs. NWAS would like to use Alston as a pilot for a regulated course with the aim of it becoming a national course. Modules could be added to meet clinical needs. He stressed the need to ensure that there is provision in place for when the ambulance becomes unviable.

Public Participation

A resident spoke about the determination of the local campaign group to find a way of retaining the ambulance and EMTs. They have been in conversation with Nantwich who have 2 4x4s, and are much closer to their local hospital than Alston. It is pleasing that the ambulance is not to be withdrawn immediately, but the community want to find a way of retaining it as it can take 2 hours, sometimes longer, for a blue light ambulance to reach the patient. The local EMTs know the area and have said that the paramedics are grateful to them for saving time by assessing the patient. She questioned why the EMTs cannot be kept on. The actual requirement is to reach the patient as quickly as possible; Alston's unique position should mean it needs a vehicle which is properly equipped. A single CFR could be outside attending to a patient for 2 or more hours waiting for an ambulance, which is a big demand of anyone. The university course is a recommendation, but it is not mandatory; the Open University distance learning model with practical face-to-face sessions could be a creative solution. Apparently anyone undertaking the existing 18-month university course would then be taken to work elsewhere.

Promises had been made at earlier meetings that had not been kept.

A second resident said he was concerned that the ambulance could be withdrawn without notice. He pointed out that he had attended meetings in SKS and been told that decisions taken had nothing to do with money. He had not believed what was said then and objected to being lied to.

A resident explained that she had been told that becoming a CFR would enhance the ambulance team, but 6 months after this had learnt that the EMTs were to go. It means a lot to see the ambulance pull up when dealing with a life-threatening situation, and if the ambulance goes, she will not be putting herself in that position.

The EMTs union representative requested that NWAS open discussion with them.

Public participation closed.

The CCG stated that they fund the Alston ambulance, and that there is no intention of removing the funding from NWS associated with the ambulance.

There is no ambulance shortage within the county and there are plans are to increase numbers over the winter period. NWS and CCG are not here to reduce the service but are looking to see if it can be provided differently. The defibrillator and drugs are rarely used, and there are some incidents that can't be covered; the aim is for a quicker response time and more sustainable system.

Cllr Hanley reported that the GP surgery had run a first response team until CHoC was introduced, the agency ambulance withdrawn, and a paramedic employed full time on Alston Moor. NWS has claimed they want to work with us but have not listened to what the EMTs have to say and do not appreciate the amount of work they do. The peaceful demonstration outside the Town Hall goes to show how people in the community were shocked about what was happening. There has been no discussion on how the EMTs and CFR might work together.

Cllr Grew, as a member of the Ambulance working group (but locked out of the last meeting) stated that the EMTs have made several suggestions which were all dismissed. Alston Moor is more similar to some places in Scotland than Nantwich or Dartmoor. There should be some means for EMTs to take courses on a part time basis, this is an option for nursing, and to stay on Alston Moor when they have completed their training. Some of the new CFRs have been let down as support has not been there when it was needed, it is unfair to let someone go out to an emergency on their own with no medical background.

NWS has a statutory obligation to provide an acceptable response time, there is what is known as a golden hour for stroke patients, who need prompt medical treatment. It can take up to an hour for an ambulance to arrive from Penrith, and Carlisle can take 2 – 3 hours. The CFR can give initial first aid and put the patient into the recovery position but cannot maintain CPR on their own for 2 hours. She questioned how long it may take for the CFR to upgrade to ECFR, and the two medically trained CFRs have full time jobs so will not be available for much of the time. Ravensworth has 26 CFR, we have 6, but this level of support will be needed here. The drugs are needed as they could save someone's life.

It was observed that the EMTs are only paid £7 per shift, which on a 12 hour shift is less than 75p per hour, unless they are called out. Some would be willing to work full time or for more hours but must hold another job to make a living.

Another identified problem is the lack of community engagement, local people do not know who is working on what and the culture of secrecy is not acceptable. The shock to the community could have been avoided if better use had been made of press releases and other forms of communication.

Cllr English asked if the EMTs and CFRs could work together.

NWS – Yes, they can and with some help this can be started. They can get the EMTs and CFRs to double up to complement each other and provide support and knowledge.

They will accept the criticism and are listening to the CFR clinical nurses. They are working on recruitment with the aim of doubling numbers, but the training will depend upon the individual. Training will be on-line with some classroom work.

The chair requested that when there is an agreed way forward NWS put it in writing.

Cllr Hanley reported that the Health Scrutiny Committee met to agree their work plan which is to include the Alston ambulance. NWS has been invited to the October meeting to report on plans.

NWS and CCG representatives were thanked for attending.

KEY POINTS

- **Look into EMTs and CFR working together – Community request to NWS**
- **Investigate options for EMT training through distance learning – Community request to NWS**
- **Improve community engagement – NWS**
- **Report to Health Scrutiny Committee – NWS**
- **Written agreement between Alston Moor and NWS**

3. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

Moved to the end of the meeting.

The chair reported that Cllr Seaton has resigned due to concerns about an increasing workload. Cllr Denoual is also resigning from 3rd August and Cllr Holt intends to resign next week. The chair thanked those who have left or are leaving the council and asked the clerk to notify the district council.

County Council

Cllr Driver reported on the following:

Local Government re-organisation – the government has decided to divide Cumbria into two unitary authorities with an East/West split that puts Eden with Barrow and South Lakeland. The next step is to pass the legislation in Parliament with the new authorities coming into being in May 2023. There will be elections in May 2022 for a new shadow council, which will give us 9 councils until the old ones are dissolved in 2023.

Tour of Britain – this is due to come through the town on 10th September, while Front Street remains closed, and plans are being put into place that the tour organisers are happy with. More information will be made available later.

Front Street works – Mike Robinson is the project manager on the ground. There have been a few teething issues with missing signage including some of the bespoke signs. Work should start on excavating on Wednesday. All are welcome to join the Facebook group set up for the duration.

Members raised a concern about motorbikes ignoring the road closed signs.

Funding opportunities – new funds have been made available for events to bring communities together after Covid and for organisations wanting to provide new services. The funds need to be spent during the current financial year.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp.

Cllr Hanley circulated 3 reports before the meeting.

Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee – a request has been made to NWAS that they attend the next meeting. Although Covid numbers have increased there are not the same number of people in hospital. The stroke service has improved significantly.

Eden Health & Wellbeing forum – priorities are tackling inequalities and improving lives with physical activity. Fit for All is restarting after covid, and a five-year plan set up to increase physical activity and reduce obesity.

Eden District Council meeting – the devolution of assets has been rescinded from March 2022 to allow more time for consideration. The contract with Urbaser is to continue for another 5 years.

4. Public participation

It was suggested that Alston Moor moves across to Northumberland. This would involve a considerable amount of work involving the Boundary Commission and is likely to be a long process of between 7 -15 years. Noted that the debate on this began in 1939.

5. Progress reports

5a/AUG/21 Public Realm update

Re: 2/JUN/2021 An e-mail has been received from Jennifer Campbell, Alston Townscape Heritage Manager, stating that there is to be a public consultation on the three options for Townfoot starting around the 7th August. There is no update on costings.

5b/AUG/21 Devolution of assets

Re: 5a/JUN/2021 A request has been sent to Eden District Council to ask for information on what progress the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have made over devolution of assets.

Cllr Hanley reported from the district council that councils who have taken on a lot of responsibility are unhappy that they may be left with more costs than those who have been slow to take on extra responsibilities.

5c/AUG/21 Memorandum of agreement for parish seats

Re: 5b/JUL/2021 The clerk has discussed a tidying up of memorandum of agreements with Highways to update the County Council on where all the seats on Highway's land are sited. She has begun work on mapping all the seats, with the assistance of a volunteer. This involves visiting each one that can be found to get the co-ordinates.

5d/AUG/21 Nenthead litter bins

Re: 6c/JUL/2021 The problem of blue waste bags left besides the public toilets has been discussed with Eden District Council, who were not aware of the local management of the litter bins but are willing to discuss what needs to be done if they are filling up quickly. Urbaser were unaware that there is a problem as they are not full when they come to empty them. It has been suggested that Nenthead councillors ask that the litter bins are not emptied for a couple of weeks, other than the playground one, so the amount collected can be assessed to allow for further discussions on whether more bins are needed.

The Nenthead members were concerned that the bins would overflow if not emptied before Urbaser collected once a week and pointed out that there is a rat problem in the village.

It was agreed to ask for more bins and to enquire about a commercial bin sited besides the toilets.

5e/AUG/21 Improving broadband to rural properties

Re:13a/JUL/2021 A representative will attend the September council meeting.

5f/AUG/21 Picnic benches & seating for Tyne Willows, potential grant application

Re: 13b/JUL/2021 The missing picnic bench on Tyne Willows has been reported to the police, but it is unlikely to be recovered. Cllrs Miller, Sharp and the clerk held a site visit to look at sites for two replacement picnic benches and two new seats in recycled plastic.

Resolved to obtain prices for recycled plastic picnic benches and seats for a grant application to Cumbria County Council's Community Grant scheme and possible other grant schemes. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

The clerk pointed out that the council would be expected to contribute some of the funds towards the project.

5g/AUG/21 Alston War Memorial

The misspelt letter A on Reginald Spark's name on the war memorial has been a long standing issue, and the correction is not satisfactory for the family or the War Memorials Trust. A site visit was held with Cllr Miller, family members and the clerk. Following the meeting, the clerk contacted the Trust who advised that they expect to be consulted before any work is commissioned. A former councillor has offered to help and is trying to contact suitably qualified contractors for their opinion.

5h/AUG/21 Firs Wood trees overhanging Alston Youth Hostel

The council were contacted by Alston Youth Hotel about the trees overhanging their property, as they are concerned that some branches might come down in bad weather. The clerk held a site visit with the owner and tree surgeon to assess what needed doing.

Resolved to seek to obtain quotes for the works.

5i/AUG/21 Valuation of garden land

A response has been received from the District Valuer's office to say that they will forward the request to value garden plots at Townfoot to the regional office. The regional office has confirmed they can carry out the valuation at a cost of around £475 or £750 if they need to visit, but the parish council has to be invoiced. They are agreeable to the clerk's suggestion that the plots are valued as one to avoid the cost of valuing each one separately. The council could then allocate a value to each plot with the addition of the valuation costs.

Resolved to instruct the clerk to proceed with the valuation of garden land at Townfoot by the District Valuer. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

5j/AUG/21 EDC report – draft action plan & member/officer protocol

A report from the external investigator appointed by Eden District Council was circulated to the council. Although the decision by Eden councillors was to continue the investigations, recommendations from the report could be followed up ahead of the final report. The clerk put together a draft Action Plan and protocol for members and officers.

It was agreed to include on the next DGP Committee meeting for discussion.

5k/AUG/21 Nenthead Ward By-election

Eden District Council contacted the council on 19th July to advise that the council could not co-opt a replacement councillor for the Nenthead Ward, as the legislation for by-elections differs to that for ordinary elections. If no-one stands the district council has to run the election process again. Regrettably this was not known, and an apology has been made to Peter Thompson.

6. Reports from representatives

6a/AUG/21 Alston Alliance

No meetings have taken place this month.

6b/AUG/21 Area Planning Group

A written report of the meeting was circulated before the meeting and was summarised by Cllr Grew. There are concerns about the minibus being taken away, but Cllr Hanley as the Transport representative confirmed that this is temporary, and it should be back within six months. It is being used for school transport, but if there are bookings transport can be arranged. There were no bookings during Covid lockdowns, but it will be difficult to keep the minibus if it is underused.

6cAUG/21 Traffic Management

Cllr Denoual reported that her written report on the meeting has been circulated. She summarised the report. Of note is the new CCC reporting system which replaces the Highways hotline. Highways have stressed that they would like members and the public to use this. The Traffic Management meeting will no longer take requests that have not already been raised through the system.

6d/AUG/21 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Denoual reported that the ward meeting was held on 26th July. An update on the Ambulance and Traffic Management meetings was given. It is proposed to set up a community working group to look at progress with the mines treatment works.

6e/AUG/21 Informal meeting update on DGP tasks

Cllr Denoual reported that the DGP Committee has not met since February, although an informal meeting was held to look at some of the tasks to progress including staff appraisals and a mentorship scheme. There is also the Community Warden role and discussion to be held on the Community Award scheme. Other tasks include the new arrangement for the staffing committee and amendments to the terms of reference.

6f/AUG/21 Safer Streets update

Cllr Davies reported that they are waiting for a reply from the Police and Crime Commissioner and would like a face-to-face meeting before feeding back to the council. Funding is currently available, and it seems there are options to put a funding package together that would include maintenance for a CCTV system.

7. Planning applications

7a/AUG/21 21/0604 Full application. Conservatory and side extension. Hill House Cottage, Jollybeard Lane, Alston CA9 3UA for Ms Mayes & Mr Clapp.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Davies. (9+ 1 abs)

7b/AUG/21 21/0615 Full application. Conversion of first floor garage and ground floor coach house into two storey annex. North Loaning House, Alston CA9 3JZ for Mr J. Wright.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Hanley and seconded by Cllr Miller. (8+ 2 abs)

8. Nenthead Fountain request for precept funding 2022-2023

To hold over pending an update on funding requirements from Cllr Robson.

9. Request for a memorial seat for Vince Peart at the entrance to The Firs

Cllr Miller declared an interest as a relative of Vince Peart.

The request is for a memorial seat provided by the parish council for Vince Peart to be sited at the entrance to The Firs.

It was observed that the parish had received a number of requests this year and had not yet set up a policy for memorial seats, which would provide clarification on responsibilities. (Unless sited on private land the parish council needs to set up an agreement with the County Council). Concerns were also raised that the council had already committed to two memorial seats for former councillors and that it might set up an expectation.

Cllr Miller asked for it to be minuted that he was unhappy with the comments made.

The clerk was asked to set up a policy for memorial seats. **Action C1.**

10 Resident's request for a litter bin, Nenthead Road

A request has been received for an additional litter bin on the Nenthead road beyond the last house on the raised footpath.

Resolved to request a litter bin for this site. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr English. (nem con) **Action C1.**

11. Community grant application from Alston Gala for a drive-in cinema event on Tyne Willows Playing Field

Cllr Miller declared an interest as a committee member.

A request for financial assistance of £300 was received from Alston Gala who are hoping to hold the event over the bank holiday weekend.

Additional information on the application was requested and for copies of all the supplementary documentation to be circulated. It was agreed that the application could be re-submitted for next month.

12. Internet security – scams

Cllr English reported that some members had received scam e-mails. This scam has been circulating amongst councils for several years, but as a general principle suspicious e-mails should be deleted, and attachments not opened. If an e-mail is not sent on the normal e-mail address it is likely to be a scam; this can be checked by holding the cursor to the right of the name.

13. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee query from Culgaith Parish Council

The clerk took a phone call from the clerk to Culgaith Parish Council who wanted to know if the parish council are thinking about lighting a beacon on Cross Fell. Although Cross Fell is not within Alston Moor’s boundaries, it is more accessible from this side, and Culgaith remembered that Alston had lit a beacon for the Diamond Jubilee. They would be willing to help.

Cllr Green stated that he would be willing to look after the beacon again, which had meant an overnight stay last time. The clerk reported that permission would be needed again.

Resolved to ask the clerk to let Culgaith know that Alston would be willing to provide the beacon and would be happy to have assistance from Culgaith Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

14. Withdrawn as duplicate agenda item

15. Consultations and Correspondence

15a/AUG/21 Proposal for East/West unitary authorities for Cumbria

Reported by Cllr Driver, who stated that there will be the opportunity to comment at some point in the process.

15b/AUG/21 Use of unregistered path besides South Tynedale Railway, damage to stile

A letter was received from a resident who is concerned about the obstruction to a path that although unregistered has had unrestricted access for many years. He would like the parish council to apply to add it to the definitive map. The clerk reported that to progress an application evidence of unrestricted use for at least 20 years has to be claimed by several users so it will be necessary for people to come forward to complete statements.

Members noted that the route had been used by many over the years and it would be a loss to the community to lose access to a popular bathing site along the Tyne.

Resolved to investigate whether a claim could be submitted. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Hanley. (nem con)

15c/AUG/21 Correspondence

(Appendix 1)

16. Accounts for payment

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£210.00
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting: -</i>	£445.05
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£1,346.67

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 Davies. (8+ 2 abs)

16a/AUG/21 Q1 Banking scrutiny

Cllr Davies carried out the quarterly checks and confirmed that the accounts are good order and has signed off the paperwork.

16b/AUG/21 Request to allow expenditure from the Ambulance Fund to assist volunteer efforts to keep the ambulance on Alston Moor

Funds to support the ambulance were raised by members from the community and passed to the parish council to hold until such time as they would be needed. The clerk had tried to find a more suitable organisation to take them on, but at the time the ambulance had been fully funded by NWAS. Community volunteers are now working to keep the ambulance on Alston Moor and have asked if some of the funds can be put towards their efforts. Expenditure on flyers and stickers has already been made.

Resolved to ask the Finance Committee to inspect the invoices and to distribute funds as required. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Davies. (7s+ 1- 2 abs)

17. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business

Cllr Denoual read out a letter of resignation and asked that future Nenthead councillors follow up the Nenthead recycling area she has worked to improve. She also requested that the council make arrangements for a Finance Committee meeting and post ADP working group minutes on the council website.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed:

Dated: