



# ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor meeting Parish Council held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September in Alston Town Hall at 7pm.

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

**Apologies:**, S. Hattersley

**Absent:** none

**Declarations of interest:** Cllr Miller re: 11/SEPT/21

## **1. Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 be approved as a correct record with the following amendments: 16b/AUG/21 Cllr Robson voted against the proposal and 17/AUG/21 Cllr Denoual requested that the council make arrangements for a Finance Committee meeting and post ADP working group minutes on the council website. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Green. ( 8+ 1- 1 abs)

## **2. Broadband for the rural north (B4RN)**

Stan Jenkins explained that B4RN was set up in the Lune valley in 2011 with the aim of bringing world class broadband to rural properties. Although Open Reach provide reasonably good broadband for urban areas properties at a distance from the cabinets do not get the same level of service. What B4RN can do is support communities that want high speed broadband which is affordable, the current charge is £30 per month. The request has to come from the community and is usually done by a few people who encourage others to sign up. B4RN get involved in the planning stage, producing maps, organising wayleaves from owners, dealing with the financial side including funding, managing contractors, training volunteers, liaising with government bodies and engaging with communities.

Project Gigabit may open up for Cumbria next year, and if the community signs up B4RN can apply on their behalf, Connecting Cumbria will provide up to double the funding, depending upon existing internet speeds. The government are now accepting regional and local tenders, so it is possible that an organisation like Open Reach would want to supply the area.

It generally takes around a year to get a project off the ground. The vouchers can pay for 70% - 100% of the project. B4RN is a not-for profit organisation which has a community shares scheme.

They are currently working on projects in Melmerby and Allenheads with a 100 Gbs pipeline. Alston is an attractive area as there is already a feed to Alston. The work is done by installing a cabinet with a 16m underground conduit that can carry 288 optical fibres, 2 for every property and feeding up to 144 properties. 4-6 routes are taken and after reaching a chamber a 7mm duct goes to each property. The fibre is continuous to the cabinet and will result in a 100 Gbs connection.

### *Questions*

What percentage of households need to show interest, previous efforts only attracted around 9 households? *B4RN are usually looking at around 50% of the parish. The advantage of the direct connection is that it can be cheaper and more reliable. Upload speeds and especially downloads can be much better than those currently achieved. Properties further away from the existing cabinets might be interested as they will be less able to get superfast broadband.*

Does the scheme have to cover all of Alston Moor as one area?

*No it could be just Alston, Garrigill or Nenthead.*

Mr Jenkins was thanked for attending and noted that that further discussion could be held.

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

### **Chair's report**

The chair reported that Facebook activity from former councillors was concerning, he had put out factual information and been lambasted for it. Members were asked to refrain from making comment.

## County Council

*Apologies from Cllr Driver who has put out a video report on u-tube.*

## District Council

*Apologies from Cllr Sharp.*

Cllr Hanley circulated a report before the meeting.

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee** – there is an ongoing pilot scheme in Penrith and Appleby for electric charge points and Cllr Hanley questioned when it will be rolled out elsewhere, including Alston which only has two charge points that are not very well used at Tyne Willows pavilion. Once the pilot is established other areas will be considered with on-street charge points for residential areas.

Also discussed was how to encourage wildflowers on grass verges and nest boxes for swallows, swifts and martins which are in decline.

No progress has been made on the devolution of assets, which is disappointing for Alston and the parishes that have already incurred costs for the services they have taken on.

Cllr Hanley was thanked for producing quality reports that have been taken up as a model by the district.

## **4. Public participation**

*None.*

## **5. Progress reports**

### **5a/SEPT/21 Nenthead – litter bins & noticeboard**

Re: 5d/AUG/2021 The chair and clerk met with an officer from Eden District Council to inspect the litter bins in Nenthead. The area around the village centre is well provided with bins, but some improvement can be made. EDC are to contact the Nenthead Mines Trust to discuss moving a litter bin from the far end of the car park to the entrance. They have also agreed to install an additional bin near the newly created access road onto the school playing field, but are not prepared to provide a commercial bin. The commercial bin in Alston is provided and serviced by the Street Cleaning contractor as part of the service undertaken on behalf of EDC.

A panel on the new noticeboard was damaged last month when the wind caught the doors while it was unlocked. After discussion between Cllrs English, Robson and Best it has been decided to take the noticeboard back to the manufacturer when the new noticeboard for Alston is ready for collection. The clerk can borrow a van from Total Postmailing to collect the Nenthead noticeboard, and asked if the council could make a contribution towards the cost of fuel.

Arrangements for taking the noticeboard down are to be discussed with Cllr Robson.

**Resolved** that a contribution towards fuel be made to Total Postmailing. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller.(nem con)

### **5b/SEPT/21 Tyne Willows funding application**

Re: 5f/AUG/2021 There are some concerns about the use of recycled plastic for the picnic benches as they can be inflammable if used inappropriately. The style with a concrete base and wooden slats, although more expensive initially could be a safer option. The clerk is contacting firms for a quote.

Cllr Miller reported that Blueberries had two wooden benches they have donated to the council which he has taken down to the playing field, but which will need moving out of the way of the grass cutting.

The clerk was asked to thank Blueberries for the benches. **Action Cl.**

### **5c/SEPT/21 Valuation of garden land, Tyne Willows**

Re: 5i/AUG/2021 The clerk submitted photos of the gardens and a copy of the land registry form to the District Valuer last month and is awaiting a response. She reminded the council that income from any sale would be classed as capital expenditure which can only be used to fund other capital projects.

### **5d/SEPT/21 Nenthead road litter bin request**

Re: 10/AUG/2021 Eden District Council inspected the site and have confirmed that they will install a litter bin at the end of the high wall along the Nenthead Road.

### **5e/SEPT/21 Unregistered path alongside South Tynedale Railway**

Re:15b/AUG/2021 The clerk has obtained several copies of the Public Right of Way User Evidence Statement form that anyone who has used the path over the last 20 years can fill in.

### **5f/SEPT/21 Cybersecurity course**

The clerk has completed around 75% of the course she was enrolled on, but due to other commitments has been unable to complete the final two sessions including the section on GDPR within the allotted timeframe. The charge to complete is £20.

**Resolved** to ask the clerk to complete the coursework. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Robson. (nem con)

#### **5g/SEPT/21 Updates on actions from DGP Committee meetings**

The Finance Committee will meet in November. Minutes from ADP working group meetings have been posted to the website.

### **6. Reports from representatives**

#### **6a/SEPT/21 Alston Alliance**

No meetings have taken place for some time.

#### **6b/SEPT/21 Alston Ambulance**

Cllr Grew reported that the scheduled meeting was cancelled with 2 hours notice due to lack of staff availability. It has now been re-scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> September.

A community group SAMS (Save Alston Moor Services) is being set up as a Limited Company and will look to instigating legal action if there is a failure to provide good emergency services for the area. They will be opening a bank account, but the first stage is to set up the not for profit company. Another good news item is that someone has moved into the area with the kind of knowledge that would be helpful for the group.

The chair noted that once the formalities have been dealt with SAMS would be a suitable organisation to hand over the funds raised to support the ambulance.

#### **6c/SEPT/21 Nenthead Ward**

Cllr Robson reported that the cover for the BT box on the corner near the school has been damaged and will be reported to BT.

Nenthead is preparing to welcome the Tour of Britain cycle race to be held next Friday.

A new committee, Nenthead Community Projects is being set up with the aim of finding funding to restore the Nenthead Fountain and a report for the parish council should be ready for circulation tomorrow. The new group has three questions to put to the council next month:

- Will Alston Moor Parish Council authorise Nenthead Community Projects group to apply for funding on their behalf or would they oversee all administration?
- Are Alston Moor Parish council happy for the Nenthead Community Projects group to hold all monies raised until such time that there are sufficient funds to proceed with the full restoration of the Water Pump and Canopy?
- Will Alston Moor Parish Council guarantee that all funds raised to restore the Water Pump and Canopy be ring fenced for that purpose?

#### **6d/SEPT/21 Safer Streets update**

Cllr Davies reported that he received a response to his request to set up a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner asking for details of the issues experienced in Alston. He will meet with Cllr Best to compile a report this week. Our Alston police officer is trying to get a set of CCTV cameras which were bought to monitor Appleby Fair, which could be put up as a temporary measure. He will keep the council informed.

### **7. Planning applications**

**7a/SEPT/21** 21/0666 Replacement of front elevation timber windows to first and second floor with PVC double glazed sash windows. Turks Head Inn, Market Place, Alston.

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

**7d/SEPT/21** 21/0726 Discharge of condition 4(surface drainage) attached to approval 20/0580. Land at High Galligill Farm, Nenthead CA9 3LW for Mr G. Cook.

**Recommended** for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (4+ 6 abs)

**7e/SEPT/21** 21/0745 Full application. Removal of existing 25m Airwave tower and replace with a 27.5m tower upon which will be attached antennae and dishes for Airwave, the ESN (EAS) and SRN networks.

At ground level, additional cabins/cabinets will be positioned on new bases, along with a standby generator. A VS dish will also be positioned on the new tower base in the North West of the compound. Airwave Tower at Ashgill Wood, Garrigill CA9 3HD for Galloway Estates Ltd - Mr P Hickson.

The council were reminded that they had agreed in principle to the application as the extension will allow it to be used for emergency services.

**Recommended** for approval as the extension will allow the tower to be used by the emergency services.

Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr. Miller (8+ 2 abs)

#### **8. Alston War Memorial misspelt name**

Mr J. Glendinning has followed up on a search for a contractor able to carry out work on the Alston War Memorial to improve the appearance of the letter A which replaced the misspelt O for Reginald Sparks. The contractor made the following comments:

1. That the existing repair should be allowed to weather in to make it less obvious.
2. Cutting out the Christian name and fitting in new stone could be done, but they would not recommend it as the repair could be damaged by the weather and fall out, and would always be visible.
3. The correct way is to take out an area that would involve the stone being sanded down and the letters re-cut and leaded. This involves taking out the letters in the names above and below and would leave a dent in the stone around the three names, it would need time to weather in, but leave a permanent dent.
4. The only other way is to take the monument away and re-do the whole face.

Further to this he has spoken to the family who would be happy to just have the letter replaced, but it is proving difficult to contact other contractors for an opinion on whether this is possible. He is continuing to search and has found someone willing to quote.

Note: Historic England were contacted about correcting the error when the War Memorial was listed and had no objections provided the council had given permission, but a large repair may require further advice/permissions from them. The War Memorials Trust also requested details of any proposed alterations.

#### **9. Request to EDC/CCC to claim ownership of the Old Potato Market in Front Street for the avoidance of future maintenance issues before the new unitary authority is set up**

Cllr English reported that the glass roof of the youth shelter had cracked and the space around it has been partially barricaded off. Eden own the lower section of car park, but the area from the shelter to the wall where there used to be a building has no-known owner so there is no-one to serve notice on for its repair. Cllr Robson pointed out a confusion over naming as the potato market was held lower down, this area was also known as the High Market Place.

The unclaimed area is bounded by the Age Concern shop wall, but the owner is not responsible for the youth shelter which the police obtained grant to install. The area was included in an earlier Alston Town Centre Enhancement scheme, and there is a metal hatch on the site with an electricity supply for the original plan to put up a Christmas tree on the site. Someone must have given permission for this. It was recalled that Rodney Snowden, a former Highways employee had done work in this area.

**Resolved** to ask the clerk to write to Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council to ask one of them to adopt the area. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (9+ 1 abs)

#### **10 Resident's request for a dropped kerb at the entrance to The Firs from Church Road**

A request was received from a resident who has a relative who uses a wheelchair and who was injured while trying to cross into Church Road. They also mentioned that access to the surgery from Church road.

**Resolved** to ask Cumbria County Council about installing a dropped kerb on the pavement at the junction between The Firs and Church Road, and to enquire about improving the access to Alston Surgery for wheelchair users. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

#### **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.*

This item was deferred at the last council meeting to allow time for consideration of supporting documents. Cllr Miller confirmed that the event, held over the bank holiday weekend had been a success and hoped that future shows could be held.

**Resolved** to support the application for £300 for the drive-in cinema event on Tyne Willows. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (7+ 2- 1abs). Cllr Robson asked for it to be recorded that she had voted against the resolution as she thought the grant application policy had not been followed.

#### **12. Future woodlands maintenance to complete outstanding tree works from last year.**

The clerk reported that as some of the tree works specified for last year had been held over, and SKS have updated their tree survey of Tyne Willows updated specifications to obtain new quotes are needed.

Agreed that Cllr Harrison and the clerk would look into the specifications for woodland work. **Action Cllr Harrison and Cl.**

It was suggested that the Woodlands Trust manage woodlands and that it might better secure the long term future of the woods if they were able to take on Firs Wood. The clerk reminded members that they are also responsible for Tyne Willows and have a 25 year lease on Henderson's Wood.

**Resolved** to explore the options for donating Firs Wood to the Woodlands Trust. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Ho. (nem con)

#### **13. Request from Nick Mason that the parish council considers setting up a Youth Council**

Cllr Grew reported that Nick Mason mentioned during a discussion with the Volunteer Co-ordinator working group that there were parish youth councils where he lived in London, which could be a good way of getting young people interested in what happens in their community.

It was suggested that it might be best for the school to lead through a school council and agreed to ask the clerk to contact Nick Mason to ask for clarity on how a youth council might work for Alston. The clerk was asked to re-send the e-mail from Nick Mason. **Action Cl.**

#### **14. Parish Council vacancies**

Eden District Council has confirmed that no requests for an election have been made following the resignations of Cllrs Denoual, Holt and Seaton so the council may go ahead and co-opt. They will be guided by the parish council over the re-running of the election process for the by-election of a Nenthead councillor.

**Resolved** to advertise the vacancies with the aim of interesting more people and to delay the co-option process until next month. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Robson. (nem con)

#### **15. Recommendations from the DGP Committee**

- a) That the council approves the draft Memorial Benches policy.

Cllr English reported that the section on insurance had been taken out due to the cost of insuring benches. Agreed to hold over until next month.

- b) That the council approves the review of the Recording of Meetings protocol with no amendments

**Resolved** to accept the review of the Recording of Meetings protocol. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

- c) That the council accepts the revised name of Development, Governance and Policy Committee.

**Resolved** to accept the revised name for the Development, Governance and Policy Committee. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr English. (nem con)

- d) That the council approves the recommendation for the same councillors to be on both the DGP and Staffing Committees.

Cllrs: English, Grew, Ho and Robson are the remaining members of the DGP Committee and Cllrs: English, Davis, Grew, Hattersley and Miller are on the Staffing Committee.

**Resolved** to accept the recommendation that the DGP and Staffing Committees have the same membership. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Robson. (9+ 1 abs)

Cllr English reported that he had taken the chair as a temporary measure and has asked Cllr Hanley if he might be willing to join the Committee.

- e) That the council approves the recommendation to retire the Community Warden post.

Cllr English reported that the DGP Committee suggested that some tasks such as litter picking could be carried out by volunteers, and other work by contractors.

**Resolved** to retire the Community Warden post. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

**16. Consultations and Correspondence**

**16a/SEPT/21 Correspondence**

(Appendix 1)

**16b/SEPT/21 HSBC new bank charges**

Cllr English confirmed that the Finance Committee will meet in November to discuss this and other matters.

**17. Accounts for payment**

Summary of accounts for payment: -	£1,800.62
Summary of income received since last meeting: -	£0.00
Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -	£1,391.20

**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 English and seconded by Cllr Davies. (9 + 1 abs)

**18. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business**

**18a/SEPT/21 Tour of Britain**

An e-mail was received today stating that Alston Moor Film are hoping to collect phone videos and still photos of the riders as they pass over Hartside, through Alston and Nenthead to be made into a film.

Cllr Grew reported that the ToB management have asked that people do not put out new posters or demonstrate with placards as they will not be filmed, but posters that are already up are fine.

**18b/SEPT/ Alston Xmas Lights**

Agenda for next month. The electrician who looked after Alston's Christmas lights at the Market Cross and Townfoot has retired, so the council needs to decide what it wants to do this year.

**18c/SEPT/ D. Phillips Memorial Bench**

Agenda for next month. The clerk received a phone call from Hodgson Bros. shortly before the meeting to confirm that the memorial bench for Dick Phillips is ready to be installed at the site at Hard Edge agreed by the council. Wording for the plaque is needed.

Cllr Robson added that someone has carried out repairs to the derelict seat on the site. It might be possible to relocate it as before this was known Hodgson's agreed to take the old seat to their workshop to see if it was salvageable.

*The meeting closed to the public to consider quotations for tree works in Firs Wood.*

**19. Quotations for Tree Works**

Two quotes were received

£375 from Collins Gardening and Tree Services

£450 Dragon Wood Forestry

**Resolved** to accept the quote of £375 from Collins Gardening Services. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

*The meeting closed at 9.10pm*

Signed: .....

Dated: .....