



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor meeting Parish Council held on Monday 1st November in the Masonic Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: N. English (Chair), B. Cooper, B. Davies, A. Green, E. Grew, M. Hanley, C. Harrison, S. Hattersley, H. Ho, Z. Robson.

Apologies: Cllrs: R. Miller, R. Robinson, A. Robertson, P. Best.

Absent: none.

Declarations of interest: Cllr Ho 7a/NOV/21, Cllr Robson 7d/NOV/21

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 4th October 2021 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Harrison (9+ 1 abs)

Note: 5c/OCT/21 The traffic speed survey for Overwater has not taken place yet.

2. Update report from NWS representatives on the Alston Ambulance

The chair invited three representatives from NWS to give an update on progress since their last meeting with the council. Apologies were given for the late cancellation of Ambulance Group meetings due to the need to establish what the national position is on the provision of 4x4 vehicles, and the stance taken by the County Council Health and Scrutiny Committee.

A fully equipped 4x4 vehicle was proposed as a better model for Alston Moor, as it would allow the EMTs to take the vehicle home, which would avoid time lost on collecting the ambulance. However, a decision on this has not been made and there are no plans to remove the ambulance.

It has been agreed that the CFRs can accompany an EMT on call outs as requested at the last council meeting, which will mean that only one EMT needs to go out and the CFR could benefit from the EMTs experience. With only 6 EMTs left this blended approach could be more sustainable in the longer term.

Comments to the team were invited.

As there can be a long delay before the out-of-area ambulance arrives, some patients can be brought into the ambulance to keep warm, but this might not be possible with the new vehicle.

Thermal blankets can be provided as part of the kit, and there is a new tent available that can be used to keep the patient and responders warm. Details on what equipment should be provided can be discussed by the working group.

A question was asked about training for new EMT1s and encouraging young people to come forward as CFRs. The staff at Robinwood might be interested. It is a concern that several of the people now working as EMTs, or CFR are older or retired.

NWS are to attend a presentation on the extended training for CFR, which will be nationally recognised and could be used as a stepping stone towards eventual qualification as a paramedic. The CFRs need to gain experience before progressing to the higher level; early spring is a possible date for the Alston responders. In the meantime, they will be offered regular online training modules, emergency shifts on the ambulance and group training days, but continuous exposure to call-outs help build confidence.

It was stated that CFRs are not paid, whereas the EMTs get a small sum for call outs, some would love to work full time but cannot afford to do so, and there is a concern that if they were made redundant, they may not want to volunteer as CFRs to work unpaid so their experience could be lost.

NWS were asked about the use of blue lights.

Hazard lights could be used, and there might be a possibility of fitting something inside the car. There are no answers yet.

Could a paramedic from Carlisle be based in Alston instead of Carlisle and travel from here to call outs?

It was stated that this might not be achievable.

The chair summarised by stating he was pleased with the constructive feedback, that progress was being made and a commitment given to the community that a vehicle would remain on Alston Moor, and that EMTs would continue to take an active role in the provision of emergency care. Nwas will be invited back when there is more to discuss.

The Nwas representatives stated that they have taken on board the criticism over the lack of communication and have set up an e-mail address for anyone with questions about the ambulance service.

This is: Alston.moor@nwas.nhs.uk

Grateful thanks were given for all the help provided during the pandemic and to all NHS workers.

3. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

Cllr English reported that Cllr Miller is still in ICU and that everyone is wishing him well.

Resolved to use the Chairman's Allowance to purchase flowers for his wife. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (nem con)

County Council

Apologies from Cllr Driver.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp.

Cllr Hanley circulated reports before the meeting.

Devolution of assets meeting – a further meeting was held on the 27th October, but all parishes are to be contacted at the same time with an update. The focus of discussion was on footway lights, public toilets and play areas. The vote to postpone the deadline to March 2023 may not be supported by the Task and Finish group, a majority of whom would prefer the original deadline of March 2022. The next meeting will be held in a couple of weeks.

Planning committee – the council were asked if they were interested in receiving reports. Agreed.

4. Public participation

It was reported that the County Council has not done anything about the damaged fencing around Nenthead play area.

Public participation closed and the clerk was asked to remind Cumbria County Council that they have not repaired the damage. **Action Cl.**

5. Progress reports

5a/NOV/21 Noticeboards

Re: 4a/OCT/2021 The Nenthead noticeboard sustained further wind damage last month. Cllr Robson reported that she has taken the door into safe storage, but it needs repairing and possibly moving to a more sheltered site. It was suggested that a stronger bolt, such as a butterfly catch might stop the door flying open. It was agreed to try this first and to ask Cllr Best if he could assist. **Action NE.**

5b/NOV/21, Tyne Willows Request to Highways for a dropped kerb – pavement between The Firs and Church Road

Re:10d/OCT/2021 This was discussed at the Traffic Management meeting and the council told it is not acceptable highways practice to provide a dropped kerb that would bring users into the middle of the road as it would put them at risk from traffic movements. There is a possibility the footpath can be improved to make it more suitable for wheelchair users. The resident has been asked to provide information on what the issues are stopping wheelchair users from using the footpath to feed back to highways. She responded by pointing out that there are parked cars on one side and an uneven pavement on the other. The clerk has agreed to take photos to forward to highways. **Action Cl.**

5c/NOV/21 Update on the Old Potato Market & damage to youth shelter

Re:4f /OCT/2021 The council were informed at the Traffic Management meeting that the legal departments of Cumbria County Council and Eden District Council are not prepared to accept ownership of the Old Potato Market and suggested that this might be a matter that could be taken up with the new unitary authority. They were also unwilling to carry out any work on the youth shelter to repair the roof despite a request from Cllr Grew, as it was thought the work would involve more than just replacing one glass panel.

Members discussed what might be done as there were concerns that the site could be left unusable, and it is close to where the market is sited. The parish council might consider taking on the repairs but would not assume ownership of the site.

Resolved to get quotes for repairing the glass panel as a first step. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

5d/NOV/21 Valuation of garden land, Townfoot

Re: 5c/OCT/2021 Cllrs Robertson and Robinson observed by Cllr Ho carried out a site visit to the gardens and measured the individual plots. Cllr Robertson forwarded a spreadsheet with the details but as one plot was accidentally missed off the list it is not yet possible to arrive at individual plot values that agree with the District Valuation Agency's figures. Agreed to hold over to next month.

5e/NOV/21 Alston's Christmas Lights

Re: 9/OCT/2021 Cllrs Hanley and Robinson checked the Christmas lights they were able to find in the Town Hall, but although these appeared to be working, the former councillor who had assisted in the past pointed out that half of the Town Hall lights were very old and starting to perish, and some of the Market Cross lights had failed last year. The clerk has ordered replacements.

The contractor currently working on the Town Hall is willing to assist with putting up the lights if he is told when it is to happen. Cllr Hanley asked the clerk to request that Mr Glendinning contacts him by phone as he does not always pick up e-mails. **Action Cl.**

5f/NOV/21 Nenthead By-election

A Nenthead resident has come forward willing to stand for the Nenthead Ward, so Eden District Council has set the election process in motion. If there is more than one candidate an election will take place on 2nd December 2021.

6. Reports from representatives

6a/NOV/21 Alston Alliance

No meetings have taken place.

6b/NOV/21 Alston Ambulance

No meetings have taken place.

6cNOVav/21 Alston Area Planning meeting

Cllr Grew reported on the last Alston Area Planning meeting. A full report was circulated earlier and is posted on the website. Thanks were given to Cllr Ho who has put together an excellent display of poppies at Townfoot.

6d/NOV/21 Traffic Management meeting

Cllr Grew reported on the Traffic Management meeting. The full report is posted on the website.

White lines request – Highways were uncertain if the road is wide enough but following the meeting the clerk reported back to them that faint lines can be seen where the white lines had once been.

Request for crash barriers on Fiddlers – there was uncertainty over where the crash barriers were wanted so Maxine Denoual was asked to confer with Cllr Robson to identify the site.

6e/NOV/21 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Robson reported that the Coal Authority meeting was well attended, and a public meeting promised. Two damaged manhole covers at Kings Head have been reported as has a dropped manhole cover near Hagggs, thought to be damaged by the Mines Treatment Works contractors. This should be put right when restoration work on the road is carried out next year.

6f/NOV/21 Safer Streets update

Cllr Davies reported that he is waiting for two pieces of information from the local police before he can send the report to the Police and Crime Commissioner, with a copy to the parish council. He was concerned about comments made by the public during last month's meeting and explained that no proposals are set in stone, the project is about looking at possibilities. Lighting the back lanes has been mentioned, but it would have to be done

in an appropriate and sensitive way. It was observed that the Nenthead road has been left inadequately lit. Cllr Davies confirmed that the report is looking at key areas with the safety of women in mind. A subtle amount of lighting will improve safety.

7. Planning applications

7a/NOV/21 21/0811 Rear extension. 65 The Firs, Alston CA9 3RW for Mr P. Dyke.

Cllr Ho declared an interest as neighbour.

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

7b/NOV/21 21/0835 Change of use of the ground floor from Class E(a) and (b) to Class C3(a). Blueberry's, Market Place, Alston CA9 3QN for E. & I. Robson.

Cllr English reported that he would abstain as a fellow business owner.

It was reported that two residents had contacted the council to express concern and one asked for the following statement to be read out.

"Once shops are converted into residential dwellings, they are unlikely to be ever returned into business use, and I feel this will be detrimental to Alston town.

With all the money by the Heritage Lottery, CCC and heavy investment from local shopkeepers to enhance the shopping area, this goes against the point of reinstating the high street"

A letter was also received from Alston Moor Business Association, who carried out a survey of their members with all, but one opposed to the application with the concerns summarised as follows:

- 1). *The business ran successfully for over 30 years and traded through recessions, the Foot & Mouth epidemic as well as a previous lengthy closure of Front Street for road works.*
- 2). *The applicant purchased a going concern and, in the short time that they have been there, has operated three different business models, each for a short period.*
- 3). *The site is a prominent part of the townscape's retail offering and a high traffic area. It cannot be directly compared to the other cafes in the town having operated successfully as a tea room and bistro.*
- 4). *The applicants mention the precedent of the closure / conversion of the butcher's premises and its subsequent change of use to residential. This was not allowed at first as the then owner had to first market the unit as a shop with accommodation to prove that there was no demand.*

In reaching a recommendation members observed that similar applications in the past had been asked to try to market their property as a going concern. The business had been operating successfully under the previous owners, it is in the best part of the town, and the price it was purchased for reflected its status as a business. Other businesses are upset as they are trying to keep their premises open during difficult times. Although there are still businesses operating as cafes on Alston Moor, these are not all in the town and it is a sad fact that there is at times nowhere in Alston to get a cup of coffee, so visitors may have to be directed out of town. The parish council should aim to improve the town and supporting the closure of amenities will not help.

A recommendation for approval proposed by Cllr Ho and seconded by Cllr Robson was amended and it was:

Recommended for refusal. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Green. (8+ 2 -)

7c/NOV/21 21/0873 Erection of horticultural polytunnel. Low Galligill, Nenthead CA9 3LW for Mr S. Walker.

It was observed that the proposal is close to the A689 so will be visible from the road.

Recommended that screening with trees or bushes is included as a condition in granting approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Green. (9+ 1 abs).

7d/NOV/21 It was reported that three residents queried whether a property in Alston had complied with a planning decision. It was noted that it would be for the district council to determine.

Cllr Robson declared a non-pecuniary interest.

Resolved to make enquiries with Eden District Council as to whether the building had complied with the planning decision. (8+ 2 abs).

8. Request that Alston Moor Parish Council gives their full support to Nenthead Community Projects Group in raising funds towards the restoration of Nenthead Memorial Pump and canopy or that the council forms their own working group to oversee the restoration and raise funding for that purpose – Cllr Robson

Note: although it was thought the parish council were responsible for the Nenthead Fountain as grant funding had been obtained before she took office, the clerk was unable to find any paperwork to confirm this, which could put the council in a similar position to the district and county about the Old Potato Market. The clerk has made enquiries with EDC and CCC to establish whether either authority considers they have ownership of the fountain.

Cllr Robson reported that the intention is for the Nenthead Fountain to be the first project for the newly formed group, who aim to follow up by looking at other projects within the Nenthead ward.

A discussion was held on the two options, with a consensus that the parish council should show confidence in the Nenthead community taking responsibility for the project. There was some concern about which organisation would apply for grant funding, as it might be better done in the name of the parish council. The Nenthead Community Group will need their own bank account if they are to hold grant funds, but any funding given to the parish council would have to be ring fenced and procurement protocols followed for the restoration. The ownership issue could be resolved in time.

Resolved to support the option for the Nenthead Community Group to carry out their own fundraising, which could be transferred to the parish council once sufficient is raised to cover the restoration costs. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

A question was asked about insurance when the fountain is restored. It was confirmed that there is not enough room between the monument and the highway to erect a railing. Cllr Ho, who recently attended an insurance training course reported that she was advised that parish councils generally do not insure historic monuments as the cost is too high.

9. Appointment of representatives to lay Remembrance Day wreaths for Alston, Nenthall and Garrigill

Cllr Robinson or if still unwell Cllr Hattersley will lay the wreath for Alston. Maxine Denoual for Nenthall, Cllr Grew for Garrigill and Cllr Robson for Nenthead ,if it is possible to obtain an additional wreath.

Resolved to include a wreath for Nenthead for future years. Proposed by Cllr Robson and seconded by Cllr Hattersley. (nem con)

Noted that there is a tree growing in the fence around the Nenthall war memorial.

10. Appointment of Alston representative to Alston United Charities

Resolved to appoint Cllr Cooper as Alston representative to Alston United Charities. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Hattersley. (nem con)

11. Damage to wall along access road to Tyne Willows Playing Fields

A section of the wall alongside 8 Station Road and the access road has been knocked down. It was agreed to invite quotes for its repair. Anyone with contact details for wallers was asked to let the clerk know.

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/NOV/21 Questionnaire for EALC on the new East Cumbria Unitary Authority – proposal for a working group to draft response. Survey on LGR from the chair of Barton & Pooley Bridge Parish Council

No progress was made about setting up a working group to discuss the response to the EALC questionnaire.

There were two main questions from Pooley Bridge and a petition member were invited to sign.

- Did your Council participate in the statutory review and if so, what was its response?
- Has your Council considered the matter further following the publication of the proposals and if so, what is its view now?

The clerk was asked to confirm the parish's response to the consultation which was for support for a North/South unitary authority. The Government's proposals for an East/West unitary is inappropriate and the worst possible outcome for Alston Moor.

12b/NOV/21 Plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee that might conflict with Appleby Fair

Cumbria Police wrote to ask if the council were aware of any planned activities. The only plans so far are for a beacon on Cross Fell. The clerk reported that Culgaith Parish Council are having difficulty over establishing what if any permissions are needed, so she forwarded the information she had from Natural England, who had stipulated

some conditions for the Diamond Jubilee beacon. It was suggested that the Garrigill Estate might be the landowner.

12c/NOV/21 Other Correspondence (Appendix 1)

Circulated with the minutes.

13. Ratification of 25th October 2021 working group meeting recommendations

Recommendation that the council waits (before making any commitment) and requests that EDC or the new unitary authority continues to maintain the public toilets.

Recommendation that Alston Moor Parish Council requests that ownership of footway lights is returned to EDC, CCC or the new unitary authority.

Resolved to accept the working group recommendations. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Cooper. (nem con)

The meeting was closed to allow a member of the public to speak.

A question was asked about what would happen to the funding set aside for future management of the footway lights and public toilets if they could be returned or not taken on.

The meeting re-convened.

Resolved that the funds allocated towards devolved services must be held in reserve until a final decision is made by Eden District Council. Depending upon the outcome, further discussions will take place. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

Cllr Hanley reported that the maintenance contract with Urbaser is to run until 2027 (?). It is becoming difficult to source bulbs for some of the old-style footway lights so it may be necessary for the district council to phase out some of the lights not included in the parish council contract.

Noted that if it is not possible to hand back the footway lights it may be possible to continue with a maintenance contract, alleviating some of the concerns over how they are to be managed in the future.

14. Accounts for payment a

<i>Summary of accounts for payment: -</i>	£2,413.88
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£823.17
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting: -</i>	£1,278.62

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 English (nem con)

15. Quarter 2 Finance Check

Cllr Cooper reported that he had examined the bank statements , cheque book stubs and invoices and confirmed that all is in order, although some stubs have only been initialled by one councillor.

16. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business

None requested.

The meeting closed to the public to consider quotations for Alston War Memorial.

17. Alston War Memorial

The clerk reported that she had heard back from the Conservation Officer at the War Memorials Trust who advised that cutting out a section of stone and replacing it was unnecessarily invasive, they recommended an approach that would remove the existing lead lettering, redrill holes and affix a new lead letter. They also requested that a lime-based filler be used.

Two quotes were received, but only one was acceptable to the War Memorials Trust.

Resolved to accept the quote from Phil Atkinson for £525 subject to the use of a lime-based filler. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed:

Dated: