

Alston Area Planning Group 11.1.21.

Chair: Amy Frith (EDC, Community Development Officer)), Present: Peter Jackson, Ian Grey, Chris Harrison, Greg McDonald, Sally Helmsley (EDC), Mark Nash-Williams, Kathy Reeds, Holly Ho, Hazel Hanley, Michael Hanley, Raymond Miller, Fiona Knox (North Pennine Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), Elaine Grew.

Report by Michael Hanley.

Amy Frith (AF): Discussed cobbles. Also other projects such as Men in Sheds, Good Neighbour Scheme and Repair Workshop. The annex at the Town Hall will be used and money was awarded before Christmas. Rent will be paid. Tim Holden will be leading Men in Sheds and Gordon Monk the Repair Cafe. Also discussed the emergency plan for Alston Moor.

Elaine Grew (EG): The plan has not been updated yet.

Raymond Miller (RM): There are different teams for Alston, Garrigill and Nenthead.

EG: Talked about getting a generator. One farm near Garrigill was out of water during the power cut as it is pumped from the village. Alston was looking at having a generator at the town hall. There might be funding for this.

Sally: We have a small funding pot to help you put a plan together. We also have a preparedness grant for things like high visibility jackets.

EG: We have talked about having emergency packs at Garrigill

AF: Next is the public realm project.

EG: My husband was steering group lead on this for the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The target was nine shop fronts and they managed to do 13. The land at the foot of the town (below the town hall) was discussed. Views of the residents were sought and « do nothing » got the most votes, so that is what will be done. We need to advertise that we are open now.

AF: Next, create space for youth work and a space for hook-up for camper-vans.

EG: Oaklea Trust pulled out of the top school and its been sold by auction. None of these can be taken forward at the moment.

AF: Next we have updates from groups.

Mark Nash-Williams (MNW): We were talking about how to support Men in Sheds and young men with mental health problems.

Greg Macdonald (GM): I met with Trevor Cook (land-owner near Ashgill). We were talking about having a car park at Ashgill (for people visiting the waterfall).

Ian Grey (IG): We tried to get a scheme at High Mill. It looks like it will be residential now. I hope the wheel-house will be taken on.

GM: It is an important scheme for the town.

AF: I could get information about the Ashgill car park and circulate it.

EG: Where is the site for the car park?

IG: Trevor Cook is my next door neighbour. It will be on the other side of the road from the waterfall.

Kathy Reeds (KR): We are looking for premises in the town for the ALATI group (Alston Landscape Art Town Initiative).

GM: Trevor Cook is thinking of doing something similar.

KR: Have you got his contact details.

Sally Helmsley (SH): The government has allocated funding for business grants impacted by the Omicron variant. There will be another round of restriction grants. We are planning to have events around the queens jubilee in June.

MNW: Is there any consideration to open up these grants to charities? Churches have lost a lot of funds. In Northumberland they are eligible.

GM: There has been some help. Most has been focused on the hospitality industry. The focus is on investment into recovery.

IG: I would like to add two projects: Alston Moor Producers Market which is on the last Saturday of the month restarting in April. Also the plans for an observatory at the golf club. I will send you the contact details. Graham Ransom has taken over the chair of AMERG. Can you forward our thanks to Tracy Moran (previous comm devel officer), she will be a hard act to follow.

Raymond Miller(RM): Alston Gala is ready to go on the fifth of June. I would like to thank Eden for the grants. We might repeat the drive-in movie, it was a great success.

Chris Harrison: What's the situation with Hartside Cafe?

RM: You need to ask Dawn, the owner.

Fiona Knox : We are encouraging local artists. Also there is a project for young people, to get to grips with the local landscape (through art). We have talked to Lissie about this.

AF: The next meeting is on the 8th of March.

Hazel Hanley: How do you apply for the funding for the emergency plan.

SH: Explained how. Will contact EG, Holly Ho and Hazel Hanley re applying for funding for the emergency plan.