



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 7th February 2022 in the Masonic Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: R. Miller (Chair), B. Davies, E. Grew, S. Hattersley, H. Ho, A. Robertson, R. Robinson.

Apologies: Cllrs: N. English, P. Best, B. Cooper, M. Hanley, C. Harrison, I. Lindley.

Absent: Cllr: A. Green

Declarations of interest: Cllr Miller 8/FEB/22

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 10th January 2022 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Robertson and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (6+ 1 abs)

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 17th January 2022 to set the precept for 2022/2023 be approved as a correct record with the addition of S137 to the General Purposes budget heading. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (4+ 3 abs)

2. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

Held over to the end of the meeting.

County Council

Cllr Driver reported on the following:

Budget meeting – this will be held on Thursday. Cabinet agreed that there should be no increase in council tax as they are aware of the concerns facing the country. Councils have the power to raise up to 6% on adult social care, but as no extra funding for this comes from central government Cumbria will look to allocating 2%. As a national issue there is cross party lobbying of government. If the draft budget is not agreed the council will hold a second meeting.

Leadgate corner missing finger post – the 'Penrith' cast iron finger post was reported to the Traffic Management meeting but had vanished before Highways were able to pick it up. It might have been picked up for safe keeping, but if anyone knows of its whereabouts, please could they let Highways know.

District Council

Apologies from Cllrs Hanley and Sharp who both circulated reports before the meeting which are posted to the council website.

3. Public participation

None requested.

4. Progress reports

4a/FEB/22 Tyne Willows completion of walling work

Re: 5c/JAN/22 The wall alongside the access road into Tyne Willows and a section alongside the gardens has been repaired satisfactorily.

4b/FEB/22 Tyne Willows Pavilion extension

Re: Precept/JAN/22 Alston Community Gym have been in touch about the proposed extension to the pavilion for changing rooms and public toilets as they are concerned to make sure that there is no conflict between these and the planned extension for the gym. There is also a need to discuss the proposed CCTV equipment and monitoring.

The directors have said that they are willing to meet with parish council representatives to develop ideas. It was noted that as the internal layout of the building has been altered it is likely that the original design for the extension may need to be changed. There is also an issue with extending the CCTV which is an older model.

It was agreed that Cllr Davies, as the parish representative, Cllr Best for his links with the football team and Cllr Miller would attend the meeting. Cllr Robinson also expressed an interest if more representative would be helpful.

4c/FEB/22 Tyne Willows – grant funding for picnic benches & seats

Cumbria County Council has awarded the parish council £1,133 from their Community Grant Fund towards 2 picnic benches and 2 seats for Tyne Willows. Costings for the full project at the time the application was submitted came in around £2,500, although prices may have changed. The benches as specified were to be like those at the railway with concrete bases and wooden slats; due to the risk of fire plastic benches were not thought appropriate for the site.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that requests had been made by residents for picnic benches and seating when invited to suggest improvements. The two picnic benches that used to be besides the pavilion were popular with users.

Resolved to purchase 2 picnic benches and 2 recycled plastic seats for Tyne Willows. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

EG RR. (nem con)

4d/FEB/22 Update on Cumbria County Council Victorian footway lights

Re: Precept/JAN/22 Cumbria County Council reported that they are now able to obtain quotes to update up to 12 Victorian style lights from the list below:

- 16 Light on 1 Townfoot
- 18 Norwood, Station Road
- 25 Masonic House, King's Arms Lane
- 26 Parkside, King's Arms Lane
- 27 Top of Lonning to Station Road, King's Arms Lane
- 28 School Terrace, The Butts
- 29 Rasper House, The Butts
- 30 Cross View, The Butts
- 42 Chapel House, Overburn
- 81 High Mill, The Butts
- 82 Lonning to Station Road near Roselyn
- 47 2 Overburn Cottages – on EDC approved list, may be included.

The clerk reported that she asked about the Market Cross light, but it is different to the other lights so cannot be included. Noted that it was gifted to the community and that the Market Cross, a listed structure, is in the ownership of the County Council.

4e/FEB/22 Youth shelters

Re: 17/JAN/22 The former chair of AMBA met with an Economic Development officer from the district council to discuss amongst other matters the condition of the youth shelter in the old Potato Market. It was suggested that the repairs could be eligible for funding under the Welcome Back scheme, and AMBA has offered to take on the project if the council has no objection.

Resolved to accept the offer from AMBA to apply for funding for the repairs to the youth shelter. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

5. Reports from representatives

5a/FEB/22 Alston Alliance

No meetings have been held.

5b/FEB/22 Alston Ambulance

Cllr Grew reported that monthly meetings are now taking place, and a new chair, the manager of Cumbria Health Watch, has been appointed. Discussions on EMT contracts were held, with the conclusion that the current contract may be the best option. The 'Agenda for Change' was cited by NWS as the reason why requests cannot be agreed too. However, the fact remains that they are barely remunerated for the hours they are on-call.

In response to questions about the Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) a letter from NWS was sent to Cllr Grew and has been circulated to members. The vehicle could arrive by July.

Concerns were raised about the letter which gave no assurance that there would be a long-term commitment to the RRV. The parish council had resolved to support SAMS who state that an ambulance is needed for the community. Another issue is that EMTs are expected to work alone when using the RRV,

and are concerned about safety issues, to the extent that some may drop out. NWS are not making it easy for the EMT's who are expected to do extra training but have not been provided with the equipment (iPads) needed to access the course. They are in a catch 22 situation over their status within the service.

The meeting closed to allow the public to speak.

A resident reported that he understood that the ECFR course has not been approved yet as NWS are trying to tweak the existing ECFR course with extra modules. He was concerned that an on-line 14 week course would be a lot for volunteers to take on.

Cllr Driver stated that she was horrified that this level of service change is being decided without consultation with the community, which she considered unacceptable.

The meeting re-convened.

Cllr Grew reported that the Alston Ambulance Group have asked for a decision maker to attend the next meeting on 24th February and to explain why the ambulance is to be taken away. She agreed to circulate the letter from NWS to SAMS. **Action EG.**

Cllr Hattersley reported that the purchase of a RRV was being rushed through to fit with NWS budgets and although the intent is to ensure sustainability of the service, since with only 6 EMTs the community could be left with nothing if anyone drops out.

The clerk was asked to invite NWS to a council meeting. **Action CI.**

Resolved to support SAMS over their request for an ambulance with fully trained staff. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

5c/FEB/22 Nenthead Ward

Cllrs Robinson and Robertson reported on the latest ward meeting, with the main issue being the proposals for the water treatment plant. Last October's presentation left more questions than answers and residents have requested a formal minuted meeting. This has been agreed to and dates will be announced nearer the time.

There is no further progress to report on the Nenthead Fountain; the survey is in place, a history put together and a start made on applying for funding.

Both councillors will aim to attend ward meetings and are considering individual surgeries. They are also travelling up to Nenthead on a weekly basis.

The noticeboard has not been repaired yet, and it is thought Cllr Lindley now has the key.

5d/FEB/22 Safer Streets update

Cllr Davies report that he has been informed that the current round of funding has finished, and no more applications can be accepted. There may be an announcement in April as to the future of the scheme. In the meantime, he has been sent a 140 page booklet on guidance and case studies. This includes details of private household CCTV systems, lighting improvements and funding for more community policing at night. To take off the agenda for now. Cllr Davies will put together a summary of practical ways forward.

5e/FEB/22 Traffic Management meeting

Cllr Grew reported that with the Front Street cobbles finished and shop fronts improved Alston town centre is looking good. There are still some blocked drains to attend to.

A further reminder was issued that all highways' issues must be reported through HIAMS.

The drainage issues at North Loaning have been picked up by EDC and this should in future resolve some of the flooding issues lower down.

The grass verges at Blagill, damaged during the diversion, have been looked at.

Cllr Driver has offered to meet with a highways representative to look at concerns over trees planted too close to the Mill Race in the Butts.

Vehicles parked on the pavement causing an obstruction can be reported to the police.

The issue of access from The Firs onto Church Road for wheelchair users is not easy to resolve due to the lack of off-road parking for residents and the dip in the pavement near the surgery. A decision is to be made on whether to add it to the footway improvement list or the minor improvements list, with highways asked to put together a short report for the council to report back to the resident.

5f/FEB/22 Area Planning

Cllr Grew reported that the last meeting was brief and mainly discussed emergency plans for future storms. Noted that the timing for rebates for households seems to be random, some have received the funding, others not yet.

6. Planning applications

6a/FEB/22 22/0006 Full application. Use of land for the siting of 1 no mobile Shepherds Hut for tourism accommodation on the site of a former Nissen hut with associated services, an access track and parking area. Land at South Hudgill, Alston CA9 3LG for Mrs A. Beddows.

Recommended for approval Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Grew. (6+ 1 abs)

6b/FEB/22 22/0054 Tree Works (CA) T1 Sycamore – small crown reduction 20% and few branches, crown lift. T2 Sycamore – small crown reduction 20% and few branches, crown lift. Albert Cottage, Townhead, Alston CA9 3SL for Mr P. Lambert.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson (6+ 1 -)

7. Discussion following site visit on the future of High Mill waterwheel

Alston Moor Parish Council members were given the opportunity to view the waterwheel at High Mill following an invitation from the owner of the building to take ownership of the wheelhouse and Smeaton's waterwheel as a heritage asset. It was stated that the wheelhouse is a stand-alone unit and in good condition with works having recently been undertaken to make good the flashing and pointing and a replacement door fitted. Subject to agreement the owner is prepared to sign the building over to a suitable group on the basis that it remains in 'community ownership'. He is also prepared to cover reasonable legal costs involved in the transaction. The offer has also been made to Alston Moor Partnership.

An e-mail was received from the chair of Alston Moor Partnership who have also had informal discussions with the owner about the future of the building. She would like to propose that if the council are minded to give a positive response, they consider setting up a joint working group with two representatives from the parish council. If agreed AMP will nominate two directors at their next meeting on 21st February, which will allow for time to give an indicative answer before the end of February.

Members agreed that the project should be looked at and there was value in working with Alston Moor Partnership. It was reported that Eden District Council produced a report in 2017 with costings for 5 options for restoring or conserving the wheel. Figures ranged from £50k to £4-500k for rebuilding to Smeaton's original design. However, the proposal now is to look at possibilities through a joint working group. AMP has a track record of successful funding bids, and some research has been done by the historical society into technical aspects with the Mills Association.

Resolved to form a working group with Alston Moor Partnership to investigate all aspects of the High Mill Waterwheel. Cllrs Miller and Robertson to represent the council. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (6+ 1-)

8. Request for a Memorial bench

Cllr Miller declared an interest as the applicant and handed the chair to Cllr Robinson for this agenda item.

A request for a memorial bench in memory of Vince Peart was made by Cllr Miller. If granted the bench will be recycled plastic and sited near the entrance to The Firs.

Resolved to accept the application subject to confirmation from Cumbria County Council, who are responsible for the grass verge. Proposed by Cllr Hattersley and seconded by Cllr Grew. (6+ 1 abs)

9. Plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Crossfell beacon & any other projects for consideration

The clerk reported that Culgaith Parish Council wrote to say they are still discussing permissions and will discuss the matter at the February meeting of the Crossfell Grazing Association. They wanted to confirm that Cllr Green was still willing to build and light the beacon, and to confirm how it will be managed.

For discussion between Cllr Green and Culgaith. **Action AG.**

Other ideas were discussed including presentation coins for young people. Cllr Robinson offered to research options. **Action RR.**

It was suggested that a few specimen trees could be planted in Alston and the villages. Tyne Willows is losing ash trees to dieback, so there is scope for replanting. Another possible option might be to purchase 70 trees to distribute within the community.

A residents' tea party is being organised for the Firs, and a 50's night has been proposed for Garrigill. Cllr Ho was interested in arranging something in the Town Hall.

Agreed to discuss further next month.

10. Notice of co-option for the Nenthead Ward

Confirmation has been received that there was no request for an election so the parish council may go ahead and co-opt a new councillor for the Nenthead Ward.

An expression of interest was submitted by resident from Nenthead.

Resolved that the council would go ahead at the meeting tonight to co-opt a new councillor. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

Resolved to appoint Graeme Ransom to the Nenthead Ward. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Robertson, (nem con)

Following this decision Mr Ransom signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took a seat on the council.

11. Consultations & Correspondence

11a/FEB/22 Correspondence (Appendix 1)

Circulated with the minutes. No comments were received.

11b/FEB/22 Community Electric Car Club survey

The clerk reported that Cllr Hanley has responded to the survey on behalf of the council.

11c Eden Open Spaces in your parish

Eden Open Spaces Group was formed in response to concerns regarding the loss of protection of Open Spaces within settlements in the Eden Valley. The designation of Amenity Open Space was completely removed in the current Local Plan (only publicly accessible Open Spaces are now protected.) They are concerned that current policies in the Local Plan are not sufficiently robust to offer protection to any Open Space that has lost its designation and is now at risk from speculative development. Eden District Council intends to carry out a Settlement Study in which Parishes will be invited to identify Open Spaces which are demonstrably special to their communities.

The concerns were noted but no action taken as it is thought the parish is not under threat from overdevelopment.

11d OFCOM Postal regulation consultation

The Office of Communication (OFCOM) has launched a consultation into its review of postal service regulation from 2022-2027 with the aim of supporting the financial sustainability and efficiency of the universal postal service, promote competition and improve protection for consumers. The consultation is open until 3rd March 2022.

Noted.

12. Date for Annual Parish Meeting

A provisional date of Wednesday 27th April 2022 was agreed to fit around bank holidays and to allow time to invite unitary authority candidates to speak at the meeting.

13. Appointment of council representatives to review risk assessments

Cllrs Miller and Robertson offered to review the 2021-2022 risk assessment.

14. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

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| <i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i> | £511.00 |
| <i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i> | £1,233.00 |
| <i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i> | £891.23 |

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 Davies and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

15. Report on banking check for Q3

Cllr Robertson reported all was in order, and the clerk has answered any queries he had.

The clerk reported that the quarterly finance statement had been included with the papers for the precept meeting.

16. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business to report

Two letters were received too late for inclusion this month and will be added to the next agenda.
A letter of complaint about potholes on Tyne Willows car park
A request for support for an observatory at Alston Golf Club

The meeting closed to public to discuss quotes for tree works.

17. Tree works quotes

Two quotes were received of £4,975 and £1,960.

Resolved to accept the quote of £4,975 from Michael Collins Gardening Service on the grounds that the quality of work of this contractor is known and the council are confident of his skills. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (6+ 2 abs)

Cllr Miller read out a letter from Cllr English who reminded members that there would inevitably be differences of opinion, and once decisions were made, they should be accepted, and the past left behind.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed:

Dated: