



# ALSTON MOOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of a meeting held on zoom on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm.

**Present:** Cllrs: Holt (Chair), Robson, Denoual, Grew, Harrison & Ho.  
County Cllr C. Driver, District Cllr L. Sharp & approx. 48 members of the public.

**Apologies:** M. Nash Williams

## 1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were approved as a correct record. Proposed by E. Grew and seconded by A. Holt.

## 2. Matters Arising out of the Minutes of the last AGM

There were no matters arising from the last meeting. Due to covid no meeting was held in 2020.

## 3. Report from Alston Moor Parish Council

The annual report for 2020/2021 was given by the Chair who explained council meetings had moved on-line during covid restrictions, but there was uncertainty as to what would happen when restrictions were lifted in May. Work undertaken by the parish council included a condition report on Nenthead Fountain, tree felling due to ash dieback, with some replanting, and work on the volunteer project. There was good news for the Nentsberry community as the Highways have finally agreed to a speed limit on this section of the A689.

Elections are to be held in May for the Alston ward to replace the councillors who stood down over the past year. There will be no election for Garrigill as only one candidate is standing and in Nenthead no one had come forward for election.

### **Public comments**

*It was noted that Fairhill Recreation Grounds Trust is now known as Alston Recreation Grounds Trust. Residents objected to the cost of employing an HR company, the urgency over this and the reason why the decision had been made at an extraordinary meeting that excluded the public. They questioned where the funding was to come from as no precept allocation had been made, and advice could have been sought from CALC or Eden District Council who have an HR team.*

The chair replied that the council did not have a redundancy policy, and as there were two members of staff employed for the Town Hall two thirds of the cost will be made by the Town Hall and one third from the parish council.

*The chair was questioned further on the need for urgency, and it was noted that having made the events manager post redundant it would not be possible to take on anyone in the future for this task.*

*A question was asked if there was a problem with the Town Hall website as it has been taken down.*

The chair replied that the council (as trustee) had decided to replace the website and volunteers are working on a new one.

## 4. Reports from County, District & Parish Councillors

### 4a County Council report

*Cllr Claire Driver reported on the following:*

**Area Planning** – Alston Moor Community Plan was produced 2 years ago, and volunteers have been working on the actions identified in it, but the County Council are now championing an Area Planning Structure with monthly meetings. The aim is to encourage organisations on Alston Moor to prioritise tasks and work together.

**Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee** – discussions have been held on the integration of public services, combined budgets, public health, and social care with the focus on moving forward. Alston Alliance has held similar conversations and work continues through that group.

**Old Primary School** – the Oaklea Trust are hoping to apply to the Eden Local Committee for an asset transfer which will unlock the site.

**Alston Front Street** - tenders for the contract were due in last week and when a contractor is appointed, they will work with officers and the Alston Steering Group. Although the planned commencement date is for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, it may be later before the work starts.

**Community Transport solutions** – there is not a lot of funding available for community transport, but Eden Local Committee have dedicated time to this. Covid has delayed the gathering of parish level data as it was planned to ask communities how they move around and to think about transport options.

**Local Government Re-organisation** – County Council elections have been postponed for a year with the intention that councillors will be appointed for the new Unitary authorities and will work alongside the County Councillors for a year.

#### **Questions**

*It was asked whether vehicle access would be maintained during work on the cobbles.*

It was confirmed that access for delivery vehicles to businesses etc would need to continue during the Front Street road closure.

#### **4b Eden District Council report**

*Cllr Sharp presented a detailed report which is included as an appendix.*

*Cllr Hanley reported on the following:*

**Meetings** – he has attended committees of the full council and presents regular reports to the parish council including those on planning, Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Forum, Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee which are posted to the parish council website. He is a member of the local medical committee and was involved with the effort to save the community hospital. Recently he has been a member of the Alston Moor Emergency Response Group (AMERG).

#### **5. Report from local organisations and charities**

##### **5a AMERG**

Cllr Driver reported that Alston Moor Emergency Response Group was established very quickly at the start of lockdown and has been active for just over a year in responding to the global pandemic. A call for volunteers saw people working tirelessly alongside other organisations with representatives from the county, district, and parish as well as other organisations including the church and foodbank. The group helped co-ordinate deliveries of food and prescriptions and are continuing to support people who find it difficult to get out and about. The helpline continues to be maintained, although after the first AGM in May a discussion will be held about standing down the emergency side by putting the phone line on standby. There will continue to be some level of support and people are encouraged to seek help. If people come forward it might be possible to set up a good neighbour scheme that is able to offer more structured support. The group would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in getting involved, as to set something up will need one or more people able to take a lead, although roles within the scheme will be up to the individual and the kind of volunteering they want to do.

##### **5b Alston Recreation Ground Trust**

*Cllr Sharp gave the report which is included in the appendix.*

##### **5c Alston Ambulance**

Hazel Hanley reported that the Alston EMTs have been operating since December 2016, following deep concerns from residents that an ambulance crew should continue to operate out of Alston due to the time taken to respond to call outs. The EMTs sign up to 12 hour shifts and can attend adults, children, pregnant women, and trauma – more categories than CFR are able to. They can also assess and stabilise patients, provide pain relief and carry out a wide range of treatments that would otherwise only begin when the Carlisle ambulance arrives. This saves paramedics a lot of time.

Alston EMTs work in pairs covering 28 shifts per week, they started out with 20 people and are now down to 6 so covering all the shifts is more difficult as some have jobs and other responsibilities, some have worked incredibly long hours. The work cannot be classed as a job as they are only paid a small retainer and when they attend callouts.

NWAS said the service is unsustainable, but although the CFR can complement the service provided by the EMTs it is no substitute. The EMTs have been invited to take part in developing a new model that is future proofed, but there is no clear way forward.

Cllr Grew thanked all who work on the ambulance, especially during these trying times when patients may be covid positive. Everyone is doing a marvellous job, working long hours, continuing with training. The CFR cannot replace the EMTs but can help preserve life for people on Alston Moor.

#### **5d CRF kits update**

Cllr Grew reported that 7 CFR volunteers trained last year and have been provided with 2 defibrillator kits by NWAS. The parish council decided this was not enough and have raised funds through the precept to purchase additional kits so everyone can have one.

The resident who looks after the Nenthead defibrillator reported difficulties in getting replacements pads and battery packs. Cllr Grew offered to follow up.

#### **5e Alston Moor Historical Society**

Alastair Robertson reported that AMHS's programme of monthly meetings and Saturday opening of the archives were cancelled due to covid, but activities have moved online, the next meeting is the first Thursday in May. Moving on-line has allowed the membership to increase to over 60 for the first time in 60 years, with members from as far afield as Toronto in Canada. The practical work of cataloguing documents and encasing fragile documents has continued.

The covid relief fund of £10k has been used to upgrade the website, improve the acoustics in the archive office to facilitate better quality voice recordings and conversations with visitors, and provide new shelving and carpets. The aim is to provide suitable facilities to store the heritage and information that should rightfully be held locally.

AMHS is working on a project to provide name plates for the three communities with support from AMBA. Volunteers are researching historical maps to make sure the place names are correct; they have been in contact with EDC and CCC and in touch with the owners of buildings. Example sites are the old potato market, Victoria Square, Kings Arms Lane, Fiddlers Street.

Thanks were given for the commitment of volunteers.

#### **5f Alston Town Hall**

Cllr Holt reported on work carried out on the Town Hall over the past year. The fire alarm system had reached the end of life and has been replaced. The electrics have been upgraded and the energy suppliers changed to reduce energy bills. Several smaller jobs have been completed by volunteers.

Grant funding will help with planned work on the roof and repairs to the stage, but there is a constant need to raise funds to maintain the building. Other projects in the pipeline are improvements to the lighting system, replacement locks, a bin store to tidy up outside and ground works to the annex building.

#### **5g Fairhill Estate Charity**

The clerk reported that the charity is for the people of Alston Moor, anyone who is experiencing financial hardship may apply on a short application form. This year Eden District Council provided grant funding to enable anyone who is struggling with covid related issues to apply. The charity works closely with Alston United Charities who have also been granted funding. Information on how to apply is on the council website.

#### **5h Alston Masonic Lodge**

N. English reported that work is progressing to make the building covid friendly, with the hope that they will finish in time for a planned coffee morning in June. Cumbria Freemasons have donated a lot of money to Alston Moor this year. The masons supplied funds to the food bank in addition to helping fund blood banks and cars.

#### **5i Alston United Charity**

A written report was sent and included as an appendix.

### **6. Community Awards**

Cllr Denoual reported that the council decided to consider a Community Award Scheme to celebrate the work of local people who have made a difference to the community. This year the nominations were decided by councillors, but they would hope to seek nominations from the wider community in future years.

3 awards are to be presented this year for each of the three communities with the nominees being: Christine Brown from Garrigill, Tanya Ryder from Alston and Tony Pennell from Nenthead. A glass vase and certificate will be presented later this week.

*It was suggested that there could be a category for young people in future years.*

The meeting closed at 9.38 pm

Signed: .....

Dated: .....