



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 4th April 2022 in Nenthead Village Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: N. English (Chair), B. Cooper, A. Green, E. Grew, C. Harrison, H. Ho, R. Miller, G. Ransom, A. Robertson.

Apologies: Cllrs: P. Best, B. Davies, M. Hanley, S. Hattersley, I. Lindley, R. Robinson.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Cllr English 6i/APR/22 Cllr Robertson 6f/APR/22 Cllrs Miller, Grew & Ransom 9/APR/22

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 7th March 2022 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Grew (8+ 1 abs)

2. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

The chair reported that he intends to stand down as chair at the Annual Parish Council Meeting. He pointed out that the number of e-mails is excessive, and one of the reasons he feels he must stand down. He was thanked for stepping in during difficult times.

County Council

Apologies from Cllr Driver.

District Council

Cllr Sharp reported on the following:

Westmorland and Furness Unitary preparations – three representatives from the district councils will work with the shadow authority tasked with recruiting officers and adopting implementation plans. Minutes and agendas will be posted on the website.

Arts and Culture project – there was a successful funding bid for an arts project to produce a mural for the new extension to the bowling club at Alston Recreation grounds to involve young people,

High Mill – Cllr Sharp is the Eden District Council representative to Alston Moor Partnership.

Rural issues for young people – a rural panel looking at the impact isolation has on young people.

School transport – for 16-18 years is an ongoing issue. The head of SKS is working with Durham college to see if something can be worked up, and Cllr Sharp has taken it up with the leader at Eden.

Questions

Ukraine - Some local families have offered to put up Ukrainian families and some applications were accepted.

Unitary elections – nominations close tomorrow, and the results will be announced on the EDC website.

3. Public participation

A resident wanted to know if there had been any response from the County about repairing the fence on Nenthead school playing field.

The County had not responded to the last query. To follow up again.

Ownership of seats on Nenthead playing field and re-allocation of redundant seats.

An inscription stated they were provided by Nenthead agricultural society. Nenthead Community Project might like to look at potential sites for relocating seats.

Nenthead Fountain – has any progress been made in establishing ownership?

Cumbria County Council confirmed they have no interest in the fountain, Eden District Council did not respond, but it is considered unlikely they have any claim on it. Cllr Robertson was asked to investigate whether ownership might revert to the Catholic Trust as Lord of the Manor.

Proposed mine water treatment works in Nenthead – a resident spoke on behalf of many in the village who wanted the parish council to recognise their concerns. They are worried about the health risk from

gases, an increase in heavy machinery and traffic during the works that will impact on local businesses. Popular walking areas will be lost, and tourists may not want to visit. It will impact upon wildlife and the site-specific heavy metal tolerant eco-systems. Nenthead's extreme weather could restrict access to the site.

A second resident pointed out that correspondence with a chief geologist threw doubt in whether the scheme would address the pollution issues, the return of brown trout to the Nent is a good indication of the health of the river.

It was stated that there has already been a lot of public consultation and that the parish council does not have the necessary influence to be able to put a halt to the Coal Authorities plans. It was suggested the residents get a working group together and contact the Nentsberry Community Group who had succeeded in persuading the Coal Authority to re-site the Nentsberry scheme. The parish council can take forward the concerns from the community if there is a mandate for them to do so.

4. Progress reports

4a/APR/22 Response from NWAS and Neil Hudson MP to a request to delay the lease of the RRV and for a meeting with the council

Re: 5a/MAR/22 A letter was received from Neil Hudson MP stating that he understood that the proposal from NWAS for a RRV and tent solution would not be appropriate for Alston Moor, but that he is supportive of retaining the Alston Ambulance or a suitable substitution. He received a reply from NWAS to confirm that the trust has not placed an order for a RRV car lease and is not expecting this to happen before the end of this financial year. They do however consider it to be the most sustainable option.

NWAS stated in a separate e-mail that they do not consider a further meeting with the parish council would be useful at this stage. They confirmed in the letter to Neil Hudson MP that they will organise 2 drop-in sessions at the end of April to be attended by Gene Quinn, Head of Service for Cumbria & Lancashire and Ged Blezard, Director of Operations.

4b/APR/22 Queen's Platinum Jubilee planning – request from Culgaith for detailed plans for beacon, grant application for Jubilee coins and tree planting

Re: 8/MAR/22 An e-mail was received from the clerk to Culgaith Parish Council stating that he has finally succeeded in tracking down the contact for Natural England, and as Crossfell is an SSSI he needs assurances before he can grant permission. He can only give permission to the landowners or to the Crossfell Common Grazier Association. The Grazier Association need assurances that there will be no breach of the SSSI regulations and Natural England needs to be assured that vehicle traffic to the summit is kept to a minimum and that the Beacon does not damage the SSSI ground surface. They suggest lighting the beacon on top of galvanised sheets set above the ground.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration document refers to a butane gas beacon which might be an option and can be hired for £250 + VAT. The other issue to resolve is what insurance cover is needed and who would take it out. As to the overall cost Culgaith Parish Council would consider covering half the cost with Alston.

Resolved to inform Culgaith Parish Council that Alston Moor Parish Council would not go ahead with the beacon. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (8+ 1 abs)

The clerk confirmed she has submitted an application to Eden District Council's Jubilee Grant fund. As Cllr Robinson was not able to be present, she reported that he had circulated examples of suitable trees and had suggested that with the assistance of Cllr Green he could make tree guards for the specimen trees.

It was confirmed that one tree guard had been made.

Cllr Grew reported on behalf of Garrigill that the village hall welcomed the idea and would like a flowering cherry.

It was suggested a tree for Nenthead might go in the play park, but permission would be needed. Possibly a rowan.

Cllr Harrison suggested getting two old English lime trees for Tyne Willows as they are believed to help deter insects.

4c/APR/22 Tyne Willows car park improvements

Re: 12a/MAR/22 Cllr Robinson organised a delivery of hardcore and assisted by Cllr Hattersley has filled in the potholes on the car park. It is not a permanent fix but should remove the risk of vehicular damage for the immediate future.

4d/APR/22 Sale of garden land adjoining Tyne Willows

Re: 18/MAR/22 Residents have been informed of the valuation carried out by the district valuer and the opportunity to purchase their plot. The owners of Lyndhurst re-measured their plot and the costing adjusted. The owners of 6 Station Road and Sun House are interested in purchasing, but No 6 would like their plot re-measured first. The clerk will contact the owner to arrange a site visit when Cllr Robinson returns. The council were asked about ownership of the wall between the plots and playing field.

It was agreed there should be joint responsibility for the boundary wall, and that potential owners should inspect and confirm they were happy with its condition before purchase.

4e/APR/22 Alston Conservation Area workshop

The clerk reported that the Conservation Officer from Eden District Council hoped to hold a workshop with the suggested date of 25th April. Only Cllrs Robertson and English had indicated they would be interested, but it was hoped more people would attend.

5. Reports from representatives

5a/APR/22 Alston Alliance

No meetings have been held.

5b/APR/22 Alston Ambulance & SAMS meetings

Cllr Grew reported that a meeting was held on 18th March. NWAS declined to comment as Gene Quinn was not at the meeting. There was a long discussion about the Berwick model in the north-east, which operates a RRV with three paramedics. The scheme was set up by the CCG and NEAS with involvement from GP practices and the minor injuries unit. It was decided that our CCG will speak to the north-east CCG to find out if the model could be adapted to suit the needs of Alston Moor.

The RRV cannot go ahead until there are enough trained ECFRs, and it was felt by those present that we were getting nowhere. No-one at the meeting from NWAS was a decision maker and the group were told they were a working group without decision making powers.

Cllr Ransom reported that it was important that whatever solution NWAS come up with it should not be a cheap partial solution. They receive extra funding to provide a service in rural areas, so we need to establish what is happening to this fund.

Cllrs English, Grew and Ransom met with Neil Hudson MP who is aware of the situation, and understands the aim is to retain the ambulance. He asked about the RRV, but the aim is to keep the ambulance to transport patients, have use of the blue light and enable fully qualified EMT1s to work on Alston Moor. The MP has offered to keep in touch and meet up again with representatives and SAMS.

5c/APR/22 Nenthead Ward AGM

It was reported that Brian Aves was re-elected as chair, Milly Rudd as secretary and the vice-chair is vacant as Laura Seaton has stood down. The main item of discussion was the Coal Authority plans. The noticeboard still needs repairing. It was agreed that if Cllr Best is too busy to look at it someone else will have to be found.

5d/APR/22 High Mill Waterwheel working group

Cllr Robertson reported on the results of his research. The electrics are mostly in good condition although the lights are to replace, and the supply will need to be re-connected. An Acro prop is needed for a beam, but as a capital cost it could be grant aided. The structural engineers fee for advice and a design to support the beam would be £575 + vat. In the past the consumer unit was once torn from the wall, and to prevent this happening again it needs a secure metal cover. Ian Grey, the site owner will advise on insurance costs and provide an estimate for re-building costs, and Sonia Kempsey has agreed to ask the consultants who drew up plans for the wheel if the working group could have a copy.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that as a Grade 2 listed building work would have to be done by tradesmen.

Cllr Robertson suggested that it might be possible to open the building to the public after carrying out minimal work, to see how such an arrangement might work.

Cllr English reported that Eden District Council are looking at a pre-planning application to provide a car park over part of the site.

An e-mail was received from the chair of Alston Moor Partnership with two requests.

The first request was to agree to cover the basic ongoing costs of maintaining the wheelhouse if AMP agrees to take on the ownership.

The second request asked the parish council to consider if they wish to participate in a working group to help AMP investigate whether a viable scheme can be found to develop the main High Mill buildings.

Resolved to reply that the council cannot make any decisions until all the facts and figures are known and there is a final plan. At present the council is just concerned with the wheel. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

5e/APR/22 Queens Platinum Jubilee

Reported under progress reports due to Cllr Robinson's absence.

6. Planning applications

6a/APR/22 22/0001 Full application. Installation of a new 12m high wind turbine for sole use of energy for the property. Clarghyll Head House, Alston CA9 3NG for Mr Alan Murray.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (nem con)

6b/APR/22 22/0142 Full application. Use of land for the siting of camping pods. The Hundy, Alston CA9 3SG for Mr Aidan Brack.

Recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

- The site for the proposed tourist facility is situated within a residential area in a field bounded by properties above and below the location for the camping pods. Noise from the site could be detrimental to the amenity of residents.
- We note that United Utilities state that a more sustainable option to the discharge of surface water to the public sewer should be investigated.
- The application states opening hours of 9-5, which does not seem realistic for a tourist facility, neither is there any mention of how many months of the year it would be open.
- The proposal has not made any parking provision for visitors arriving by car, so additional pressure would be put on Front Street. It is not realistic to assume that all visitors would arrive by other means.

Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller. (4+ 5abs)

6c/APR/22 22/0143 Tree works (TPO). T1 – Ash, remove. T2 Ash – remove. Mark Close, Alston CA9 3BD for Mrs Emily Jones.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Green (nem con)

6d/APR/22 22/0165 Reserved by Cond. Discharge of conditions 3 (construction environmental management plan), 4 (sample materials) and 5 (geocair matting details), attached to approval 21/0400. Land at Garrigill Mine Site, Garrigill, Alston for Mrs Mandie Kirk – Coal Authority.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller (7+ 1- 1abs)

6e/APR/22 22/0177 Full application. Addition of stacked dipole on existing monopole with increase in height from 12m to 14.5m. Replacement of 4 antennas with 4 new hub antennas, and additional equipment cabinet on concrete base. New drystone wall with pedestrian access gates into site, and new farm gate with adjacent pedestrian gate with new stone pillars. High Plains Lodge, Alston CA9 3DD for ENWL

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

6f/APR/22 22/02181 Full application. Replacement of single glazed softwood windows with double glazed upvc two-over-two pane windows. Church View Cottage, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JU for Mr Alastair Robertson.

Cllr Robertson declared an interest as the applicant and left the room.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Miller. (8+ 1 abs)

6g/APR/22 22/0202 Full application. Erection of a summerhouse within the garden. Yew Trees, Alston CA9 3EL for Mr Anthony Milburn – Morton Garden Buildings Ltd.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

6h/APR/22 22/0008 George and Dragon Garrigill - response to request from EDC to re-consider the recommendations in view of comments from the applicant's agent.

Recommended that the parish council withdraws their objection to parking on condition that customers are made aware that there should be no parking on the village green, in response to concerns from residents that it may be damaged if there is pressure on parking. The requirement for silencers for the air source heat pump should remain.

6i/APR/22 22/0234 Full application. Replacement of existing timber windows with upVC with wood grain effect in pale green to match existing external doors. 1 Burnleigh House, Front Street, Alston CA9 3SQ.
Cllr English declares an interest as a relative.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Miller. (8+ 1 abs)

7. Request from NWS for the council to recommend a realistic timeframe to commit to a RRV and when a review of the service should be carried out

It was agreed that this agenda item could not be discussed due to ongoing concerns about replacing the ambulance with a smaller leased RRV.

8. Community Grant application from Play Park to run activities at Fairhill Recreation Grounds

An application was received for £300 towards the cost of running games for the community at Fairhill on Saturday mornings. The grant would be used for playleader training. Overall project costs are £15,000.

The clerk reported that she confirmed with the trustees that they support the venture wholeheartedly, and that it will take place around the football pitch and basketball court. It will allow for the start-up of walking football and netball for older residents as well as activities for youngsters.

Resolved to accept the request from Play Park for Alston Recreation Grounds and contribute £300. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr English. (nem con)

9. Community Grant application from SAMS to purchase banners in support of Alston Moor Ambulance

A request was received from SAMS for £300 towards the purchase of banners supporting Alston Ambulance to be installed in locations around Alston Moor. The aim is to encourage awareness of the campaign.

Noted that SAMS need to be aware that there must be no mention of unions on the banner.

Cllrs Grew, Miller and Ransom declared an interest.

Resolved to accept the request from SAMS and contribute £300 towards banners supporting Alston ambulance. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr English. (6+ 3 abs)

An e-mail from Alston Moor Partnership was received to confirm that they are sponsoring the financial activities of SAMS until they can open their own bank account.

Resolved to release the funds for the ambulance to Alston Moor Partnership for use by SAMS. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (6+ 3 abs)

10. Consideration of issues relating to footway lighting on Alston Moor that arise when lights are decommissioned by Eden District Council

The clerk reported that she was contacted by a Nenthead resident who had been in touch with Eden District Council after the footway light near his property was disconnected. The light was not one of those handed over to the parish council, but EDC advised the resident to contact the parish. At present the council has no plans or funding allocation for replacing lights removed by the district council.

She suggested that the council needed to consider setting up a policy on the future management of these lights as a significant number within the parish may be decommissioned and as, yet we do not know what plans the Unitary Authority may have for them. There are a number of issues to consider – should a proposal be put to the future Unitary that they take on the management of suitable footway lights i.e., lights on separate columns, as lights attached to housing or electricity poles are to be removed when they fail.

Resolved to discuss a policy for footway lighting for the lights that have not been handed over to the parish council at a future DGP meeting. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

11. Housing – request to consider second homes and holiday accommodation and property that has been allowed to fall into disrepair

Cllr Harrison reported that concerns had been raised by residents about the issue of owners allowing their properties to fall into disrepair. Steel House, the Bluebell and Salvin Cottage are examples of buildings in Alston that are becoming an eyesore. There is also a property in Garrigill that has had scaffolding up for years.

It was suggested contacting Eden District Council to ask if anything could be done to encourage the owners to maintain their property.

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/APR/22 Correspondence (Appendix 1)

Circulated with the minutes. No comments were received.

12b/APR/22 Request from Eden Housing to consider the Local Lettings Policy for Alston Moor

A request was received from Eden Housing to review the Local Lettings Policy.

Resolved to write to Eden Housing to confirm there are no objections to the review of the Local Lettings policy. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Cooper. (8+ 1 abs)

13. Proposal to update Councillors Code of Conduct

An updated version of the Councillors' Code of Conduct has been produced and as it has now been adopted by the district council it is recommended that parish councils adopt it.

Resolved to accept the new code of conduct. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Ho. (nem con)

14. Annual Parish Meeting planning

A reminder was issued about the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th April. It was agreed to hold hustings for the Westmorland and Furness unitary elections, and the clerk asked if there was anything else to prioritise.

Resolved to move the meeting from Alston to Nenthead Village Hall to allow for social distancing due to the prevalence of Covid in the community.

15. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£6,461.96
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£694.24
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£1,046.53

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 Green. (nem con)

16/APR/22 Proposal to add additional councillors to the signatory list for Unity Bank

Resolved to add Cllrs Davies and Cooper to the signatory list. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

The clerk reported that she had been able to speak with Cllr Davies but not with Cllr Cooper, who would have to be added after the Unity Trust account is set up.

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

High Mill update

Nenthead Community Projects to be asked to provide a report to update the council on their current position.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed:

Dated: