



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 1st August 2022 in Alston Town Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: R. Miller (Chair), B. Davies, A. Green, E. Grew, M. Hanley, C. Harrison, H. Ho, G. Ransom, R. Robinson.

Apologies: Cllrs: P. Best, B. Cooper, N. English, S. Hattersley, I. Lindley, A. Robertson.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 4th July 2022 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: 13c/JUL/22 – the branches left at Garrigill cemetery were left by the contractors and were not connected to Storm Arwen. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

2. Report from Laura Goad of CDEC on community consultation over a potential new project

Laura Goad was welcomed to the meeting. She explained that she is a director of a charity carrying out work across Cumbria on community engagement projects and working with the University of Cumbria. The aim is to explore potential projects for development with communities and to provide the expertise to help identify the key issues and try to find solutions. They submitted a funding bid which was not initially successful but have re-submitted it to enable them to bring time and financial resources to Alston Moor.

The initial focus was around health and equality, but they could look at other issues.

The task involves looking at what the positives are, what are the barriers and problems such as the closure of services, isolation and resources for young people. They worked in Barrow and the west coast where a project to welcome newcomers including refugees was set up. Project funding will vary depending on requirements.

Cllr Hanley said he would be interested in getting involved.

Members discussed some of the issues facing the area.

Youth work - activities for young people remains a concern, with no dedicated youth venue or youth workers. It was noted that it is difficult to find youth workers, and the Eden youth funding is undersubscribed, but conversations are happening.

Heritage projects – the restoration of High Mill waterwheel and Nenthead Fountain.

Cost of living crisis – concerns about the rising cost of energy are likely to impact on many, especially those who are at home during the day.

Community workshop – this is being set up in the Town Hall annex and alongside development of the Chat Room in Front Street could be assisted in achieving sustainable links.

Transport - especially post 16 transport issues. Our MP and SKS are working to resolve this.

3. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

The chair reported that it was disappointing that the plaque for the Jubilee tree at Nenthead had been damaged within a week of it being installed. It was reported to the police.

Cllr Robinson reported that he had spoken to several Nenthead residents who all said the wording on the plaque was fitting and the only objections had come from the Nenthead Community Projects group.

The chair reminded members again that he had asked everyone not to send e-mails to everyone on the mailing list, but to write to the chair, vice-chair and clerk. If there is anything important, he would be happy to meet with councillors to discuss further.

County Council

Cllr Driver reported on the following:

ACT – a new member of staff has been taken on 2 days a week to support Neighbourliness initiatives, with a focus on creating more capacity. It will be an opportunity to talk to the CVS who deliver volunteer fairs,

and to think about whether it would be useful to hold a volunteer day. Neighbourhood Services have been in touch with ACT and discussed the need to talk to local groups.

Health scrutiny – Cllr Driver is no longer Committee chair but reported on concerns around the provision of dentistry and the looming problem with a number of GPs reaching retirement age.

Flood Risk management consultation – this is due to start in September. The last consultation focused on the Mill Race and Bruntley Meadows, areas at high risk were highlighted. Although the work is around policies and is not a risk management plan, it is in the community's interest to help shape it.

Questions

Cllr Driver confirmed that there is a problem with the adjoining counties not informing Cumbria of road closures, so the County and residents would not know about road closures beyond the county boundary.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp.

Reports from Cllr Hanley were posted to the website. He reported on the following:

Alston Area Planning – the meeting discussed several projects including progress with the Men's shed, youth facilities and High Mill.

Westmorland & Furness Council – the second meeting of the council mainly discussed the appointment and pay for the new chief executive Samantha Plum, and financial planning. £425 m has been allocated to Cumbria with WFC allocated £226 m.

Eden Health & Wellbeing Forum – there was a talk from the founder of Anti-racist Cumbria, a discussion on the GP shortage and mention of Play Park which is hoped can be extended to Alston.

4. Public participation

A representative from AMBA reported that a grant of £3k has been secured for the Old Potato Market shelters, and a local builder taken on to carry out essential repairs to the glass panels and stonework which has water damage. It is hoped the work will be carried out in August/September.

AMBA received notice that an initial 'Expression of Interest' submission for the funding of a car park on the site of the redundant factory at High Mill was accepted and a more detailed application is required by 30th August. It is to be funded from Eden's share of the governments 'Levelling Up' pot of money, costing around £300k.

The proposed car park will provide 20+ parking spaces, motorbike parking and 3 electric vehicle charge points. (A working sketch of the site was circulated.)

The initial bid included letters of support from most of the businesses on Front Street and, uniquely for Alston, total support from responses on social media. It met the objectives for the funding to protect and grow the local economy and attract tourists and businesses. EDC will assist with pre-application advice and the Conservation Officer supports the scheme with one request - that tarmac isn't used to finish the car park surface. The main issue is access to the site past the Turks Head and into the Butts.

AMBA has set up a working group and would like to include a council member to assist with preparing the funding bid and establishing that there is still overwhelming support for the proposal. They also need to meet with the residents who will be directly affected to gauge their response, and to explain that the fall-back option for the site is housing which would also generate vehicle movements.

Another vital point is that the car park must be operational in the longer term, Eden District Council will not want to operate it, the intent is to give it to the town as an asset and the council will be invited to take it on. It is intended to write formally asking for detailed thoughts, and any councillor with concerns was invited to contact Ian Grey asap.

Members observed that superfast EV chargers should be considered and queried whether 3 would be enough.

Cllr Davies volunteered to join the working group.

5. Progress reports

5a/AUG/22 Tyne Willows picnic benches & new seats

Re: 4e/JUL/22 The new picnic benches have been installed besides the pavilion, and a site visit with cllrs agreed to decide the best location for the two seats.

5b/AUG/22 Update to the management of Alston Fitness Club CCTV

Re: 4b/JUL/22 Alston Fitness Club will take responsibility for the CCTV at the pavilion including outside cameras. Should any incidents of anti-social behaviour be recorded they can be reported to the police. A sign has been purchased for the outside of the building and can be put up when the contact details are forwarded.

5c/AUG/22 Tyne Rivers Trust

Re: 5e/JUL/22 The clerk contacted the Tyne Rivers Trust to enquire about improvements to the Dooker. They wanted to discuss the potential project with Cllr Harrison.

Cllr Harrison reported that he understood the funding for the current year has been allocated, but there may be opportunities next year.

5d/AUG/22 Cemetery branches

Re: 13c/JUL/22 The branches left at Garrigill cemetery were reported to Eden District Council who confirmed they had received the request and would deal with it. However, it was reported that the branches are still there.

6. Reports from representatives

6a/AUG/22 NWS Alston Moor Working Group

Cllr Grew reported that a letter is to be sent out to every household on the outcome from the NWS drop-in session had been agreed, to counter the issue that residents said they did not know about the sessions. It will be a summary of the responses, with the full document available to view in Local Links and with a copy for the council office.

A 4-wheel drive vehicle has been ordered for the EMTs, which should be here by October or, if not, before the end of March. It will be fully equipped, but without a stretcher so patients will not be able to be put into it or driven to hospital. It will not be called a RRV to avoid confusion, as these vehicles should be driven by a paramedic. The vehicle will enable one EMT to drive it and meet up with a CFR so two people can attend incidents. The ambulance will remain for 6 months and the EMTs can choose which to take. They will get 2 hours extra pay for having to move the vehicle around. When the new system is in place there will be consultation with patients and relatives, probably using a confidential form.

The first ECFR has completed her training, and hopefully more people will come forward as CFRs if it is seen that they are not a threat to the EMTs. Suggestions were made to advertise for CFRs at the bank holiday film show and the Alston Show.

Now that Cumbria is part of the North Integrated Care Services it may be possible to look at successful models that may work for Alston Moor, along with the use of the St John's Chapel ambulance. This is for discussion at later meetings.

6b/AUG/22 Alston Area Planning Group

Reported under the district council agenda item.

6c/AUG/22 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Robinson reported that the last ward meeting was cancelled as only 3 people attended and the Nenthead cllrs were unable to attend due to a clash with a Town Hall meeting.

6d/AUG/22 High Mill

The clerk reported that an e-mail had just been received from the chair of Alston Moor Partnership asking the council if they would be willing to directly fund the structural survey costing £660 inc. vat and the valuation at £900 incl. vat. There was also a report from AMPs bookkeeper stating that the council's share of the underspend from their contribution of £10,000 would be returned, this amounted to £2,615.85. Across the whole project £993167.62 was spent with the council contributing just under 0.75% of the overall project.

Resolved to pay the funds returned by AMP into reserves and to use funds from the Property maintenance budget to pay for the structural survey and valuation of High Mill wheelhouse. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Davies. (7+ 2 abs)

6e/AUG/22 Fire Service consultation update

Cllr Ransom reported that he had not responded to the Fire Service consultation as he had learnt that, in a separate procedure, the business case for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria has been made to the Home Secretary despite objections from the Fire Brigade Union. If confirmed, it may be to the detriment of the service in Cumbria.

6f/AUG/22 Path besides Cumberland

Members who had inspected the path onto the playing field beside the Cumberland reported that the concrete put onto the path made it more dangerous, especially if it freezes in winter.

It was agreed to ask the Cumberland to arrange for their builders to take out the concrete at the top end of the path and to ask NWEL to remove the concrete on the section of the path besides the sub-station. **Action CI.**

Cllr Harrison reported that there were branches from Henderson's Wood overhanging the footpath. Several councillors volunteered to cut them back. **Action.**

The clerk reported that a resident contacted her today about overhanging branches and nettles along the footpath from the Firs to the Old Primary School. She got in touch with Eden District Council who were happy for Cllr Ho to cut them back. **Action HH.**

7. Planning applications

7a/AUG/22 22/0523 Non-Material amendment. Non-material amendment to change extension roof from shallow pitched to flat roof, alterations to fenestration and internal layout and change in garage door to comply with condition 7 attached to approval 19/0604. High Mill, Northern Units, The Butts, Alston for Mr P. Olive.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Davies. (8+ 1 abs)

7b/AUG/22 21/0666 Appeal APP/H0928W/22/3299253 Replacement of front elevation timber windows to first and second floor with PVC double glazed sash windows. Turks Head Inn, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS.

It was observed that there were inconsistencies within the planning system as several applications for upvc double glazed sash windows within the Conservation Area had been approved in the past.

Resolved to support the appeal. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

7c/AUG/22 21/0835 Appeal APP/H0928/W/22/3300003 Change of use of the ground floor from Class E(a) and (b) to Class C3(a). Blueberry's, Market Place, Alston for E. & I. Robson.

It was observed that there is a need for more businesses in the town centre, as stated in the policy for Alston in the Eden Local Plan. The property was bought as a going concern. Alston does not have any cafes open early in the day so there nowhere to sit down for breakfast and hot drinks; visitors enquiring have to go to the Hive in Nenthead or the Nook. The alterations to change to a residential property were done before the application for change of use, which has been upsetting for other business owners.

Resolved to recommend refusal of the appeal. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Grew. (8+ 1 abs)

8. Request from SKS School Governors for sponsorship to assist with the purchase of an 'away' kit for pupils representing the school

A letter was received from a school governor to explain that pupils from SKS were representing the school at a sports event where several schools were taking part. The pupils commented on how 'smart' and well turned out the other schools were and asked if they could represent the school with a more tailored and fashionable kit. While the school supports the idea, they are not able to finance it. The governors accepted the challenge to find sponsorship from local organisations and businesses. Costs are £880 for games tops and £720 for hoodie tops.

Resolved to support school children with £250. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Miller. (8+ 1 abs)

9. Request from the Environment Agency's agents to renew the 20-year lease on Tyne Willows Gauging Station

A letter was received from Brown Rural Partnership enquiring about renewing the lease, which commenced on 1st April 1999 at an initial rent of £100 per year. It is proposed to renew the agreement on similar terms backdated to 1st April 2022 at a proposed rent of £203, with rent review every 5 years based on an index calculation. If the proposal is acceptable to the council, they will prepare a new lease.

Resolved to accept the proposal to renew the lease with the Environment Agency. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

10. Community Safety Charter

An e-mail was received from Neighbourhood Alert stating that they have launched a new Community Safety Charter to encourage everyone to take an active stance against crimes in public spaces such as harassment, hate crime and antisocial behaviour.

Organisations signing up pledge to four actions:

Promote – promote a culture that does not tolerate harmful language, antisocial behaviour and hostility towards others.

Enable – enable others to identify and take an active stance to prevent harassment, antisocial behaviour and intimidations within their community.

Report – actively encourage and support others to report harassment, antisocial behaviour and intimidation and share intelligence about these crimes with the relevant authorities.

Support – support those affected by harassment, antisocial behaviour and intimidation and refer victims to the appropriate support agency.

Resolved to sign up to the Community Safety Charter. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

11. Consultations & Correspondence

11a/AUG/22 NALC consultation on short term holiday lets

The Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport has recently launched a consultation into short term holiday lets which closes on 21st September 2022, although NALC would like responses by 30th August. NALC would like to see Airbnbs under the same regulation as other landlord systems with powers for local inspection and monitoring delegated to local planning systems which are properly resourced. They are interested in hearing from local councils but ask for evidence to support any responses.

It was noted that there are over 100 holiday lets on Alston Moor, but the issues are complex and there may be reasons other than availability as to why there may be difficulty in obtaining accommodation.

Resolved to take no action. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Davies. (5+ 1- 3 abs)

11b/AUG/22 Correspondence (Appendix 1)

An inconsistency in planning decisions over uPVC windows within Alston's Conservation area was noted.

12. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£1,782.00
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£48.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£2,186.51

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 Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies (7+ 2abs)

13. Report on quarterly banking checks

The clerk reported that Cllr English signed off the quarterly bank statements and assisted with a change to the presentation of the statement as advised by the internal auditor.

14. Financial statement

A cash flow report to the month end was accepted by the council.

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

15a/AUG/22 DGP Committee

The DGP Committee met last week, but as there was insufficient time to add to this month's agenda, recommendations will be submitted for the September meeting.

15b/AUG/22 Damage to wall besides Alston Town Hall

It was reported that the wall alongside the lonning besides the Town Hall has a tree growing into it that is pushing it over. As Sole Trustee the council are aware of this and will discuss at the next Town Hall meeting.

15c/AUG/22 Traffic Management meeting

It is hoped to set up a Traffic Management meeting later this month for new agenda items and action points. A new request was made for signage/traffic calming measures in The Firs.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed:

Dated: