



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Apologies: Cllrs: P. Best, B. Davies, N. English.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Cllrs Hanley (Planning), Cllr Miller 7d/NOV/22, Cllr Robertson 7h/NOV/22.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 3rd October 2022 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (8+ 3 abs)

2. Report from Eden's Conservation Officer on the public consultation for the Alston Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

The chair introduced Eline Malleret, Eden's Conservation Officer who explained that the Alston Conservation Area was designated on 27 May 1976 as an area of special architectural interest, which provides for additional planning controls and protection for the designated area. The planning authority has a duty to prepare an appraisal and guidance, but until recently there has been no published management plan. The draft document which is out for consultation now has addressed this issue and covers in detail the background to the planning policy, a summary of historic development and identification of heritage assets. It looks at buildings of importance, key views and green spaces throughout the town.

There are some areas of weakness as over time planning decisions have been inconsistent with a lack of enforcement leading to the loss of some historic features and some modern buildings that are out of character. There are a number of vacant buildings and issues with parking and traffic.

The plan is an opportunity to provide better guidance, and it proposes an extension to the current Conservation Area boundary to include important local assets including the former primary school, Samuel King's School, the hospital and important open spaces. Alston was included on the Heritage at Risk register and there may be opportunities to develop strategies for key sites such as High Mill and for highway improvements. A Cumbria-wide project is ongoing to identify heritage assets through local lists.

Article 4 explains the planning process as it applies to conservation areas, as some permitted development rights are removed. It will affect rights for house elevations that face the street and remove the right to change windows.

<https://www.eden.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation/conservation-areas/article-4-2-direction-guide/>

A drop-in session will be held in Alston Town Hall on 10th November and the consultation period runs until 12th December. There is also an online feedback form.

Questions were asked about the planning process that permitted upvc windows following an appeal in 2010 which set a precedent for their approval but did not set out clear planning policies or guidance. This has been recognised and the draft consultation document is available for people to comment on. The aim is to provide design guidance for windows and doors, so replacement windows need to be looked at closely to ensure the character of the property is retained. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

There are energy efficient options for traditional buildings including secondary glazing, external cladding is not appropriate for all buildings.

The proposed boundary extension will impact on properties that are currently outside the Conservation Area, and Article 4 may require planning permission for some developments. Mention was made of the old primary school – the Conservation Officer stated that they would look to preserve the exterior of the building. It may also affect plans for Fairhill.

It is hoped to publish the final document before Local Government Re-organisation in April.

The chair thanked EM for attending the meeting.

3. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

The chair reported that Cllr I. Lindley had resigned as he was moving out of the area.

There was a good turnout for the fire show held last week on Tyne Willows.

County Council

Apologies from Cllr Driver.

District Council

Cllr Sharp reported on the following:

Funding deadlines – applications to the last tranche of the Community Fund for up to £10k must be in by 6th January 2023. Arts and COP26 funding by the 20th January 2023. 16-19 transport for young people travelling to study need to register an interest by 11th November.

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

Alston Moor Research & Development Meeting – the group met to discuss an application for lottery funding for support for young people and adult social care.

LGR Shadow authority – meetings discuss the preparations for setting up the new council. There is to be a new council for Barrow with £200k allocated for elections and an initial budget off £387k. They will also consider funding for parish elections.

4. Public participation

It was reported that Nenthead Community Works runs the Nenthead snowplough and although they receive capital grants there are other costs including insurance, fuel, consumables and maintenance making it difficult to remain solvent. 'Bertha' had become too expensive and has been replaced with a new truck. The council were thanked for their support, along with other organisations and individuals. They particularly wanted to express their gratitude to Cllr Ho who raised £855 over the last couple of years with sponsored walks. She was presented with a certificate and flowers and invited to become a honorary member of the snowplough team.

A representative from Alston Moor Business Association confirmed that it was decided at the AGM to wind up on 31st December 2022. The remaining members are tasked with disposing of the assets and cash. They have advertised the availability of grant funding and have someone interested in taking over the market. This leaves 3 items to be formally allocated:

20 flower tubs. No work is needed on these until next spring when they need planting up.

The astonmoor.com website which was set up to market Alston Moor. It could be closed or handed over to another organisation.

The 50+ Christmas trees will be put up this year. They are currently stored in one of the Skelgillside Workshops. Some are new, but the lights have to be replaced when they fail. Businesses are charged £20 per tree which generates an income of between £750 and £1k.

The council and Alston Moor Partnership are both being asked if they would be interested in taking any of these projects on.

The meeting re-convened.

It was agreed that it would be a shame to lose the town Christmas trees, but storage may be an issue if a new venue must be found. *Agenda for the next meeting.*

5. Progress reports

5a/NOV/22 Parish Seats Memorandum of Agreement

Re: 4a/OCT/22 Members were asked to confirm that they had checked and accepted the Memorandum of Agreement for parish seats on the highway's boundary for their ward.

Resolved to accept the Memorandum of Agreement for the listed seats. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Ransom. (10+ 1 abs)

The clerk reported that the request for a War Memorial seat to be donated by Cllr Ho has been agreed by Eden District Council, who advised that the seat could be installed now and that due to pressure of other work the Memorandum of Agreement would follow. Cllr Ho reported that provided the contractor was available the seat could be installed before Remembrance Sunday.

5b/NOV/22 Commonwealth War Graves Commission signs

Re: 11c/OCT/22 An e-mail was received from Eden District Council to confirm that they have applied for war grave signs at the two entrances to Alston cemetery.

5c/NOV/22 Proposed Flagpole besides Alston Town Hall

Re: 18/OCT/22 Eden District Council confirmed that they have no objection to siting a flagpole on the land in front of Alston Town Hall, but that it will require planning permission. A location avoiding interference with the Christmas decorations and details of the proposed flagpole will need to be agreed.

The clerk investigated prices for a 25ft wooden pole, but for a formal quote would need to know if installation is to be included. Installation and delivery for an informal query came to £4,800, and another company quoted £1,324 + vat without installation and delivery costs.

It was agreed to obtain prices for installing a 20 ft (6m) pole in wood and other materials.

5d/NOV/22 Clerk's training

Re: 11d/OCT/22 Cllr Robinson attended the CALC training session on GDPR. The clerk is booked onto a finance session on budget planning later this month.

6. Reports from representatives

6a/NOV/22 NWAS Alston Moor

Cllr Grew reported that the meeting discussed a proposal to contact years 5 and 6 at SKS to speak about the potential for young people to train as CFRs which could be a starting point for a career in the emergency services.

The response vehicle should arrive before March next year, it will enable the EMTs to go out alone although if 2 are on call they can use the ambulance. All meetings of the working group have been suspended until it arrives.

6b/NOV/22 Meeting with Neil Hudson MP to discuss the Alston Moor Ambulance

Cllr Grew reported that NWAS, ICS and local representatives met with Neil Hudson MP, plus two decision makers from NWAS, something that has long been requested to enable progress. NWAS admitted that Alston Moor is a special case, and they were looking at the Berwick and Scottish models to try to work out something that will fit. Further meetings are to take place with Neil Hudson and the NWAS team.

Cllr Ransom added that the ICS (Integrated Community Systems) covers both the north east and parts of Cumbria and includes the challenge of managing two ambulance trusts that have different ways of working.

It is of note that an ambulance from St John's in Weardale attended a call out in Alston, taking the patient to Carlisle hospital.

Cllr Hattersley reported that it is an immediate concern that we are down to 5 EMTs and 5CFRs.

6c/NOV/22 Proposal for future emergency services

A proposal for future emergency services has been produced for consideration by NWAS by the ECFR. This can be posted to the council website for wider dissemination. **Action CI.**

6d/NOV/22 Alston Moor Traffic Management meeting & request to consider re-use of Hillersdon Terrace sign

A report from Cllr Grew is posted on the council website.

Due to the removal of a sign for Hillersdon Terrace, Eden District Council are looking for an alternative site and suggested a privately owned wall to the front of the row might be suitable if the parish council agreed. Ownership can be established but there is an issue with siting the sign here as it points to the track, which is a registered footpath, and there are concerns that delivery vehicles would attempt to use it. It was agreed to ask the Nenthead members to discuss and report back. **Action GR,AR,RR.**

Cllr Grew reported on the following:

Traffic calming on The Firs – referred to Highways

Townfoot white lines – will be included in the next package of works.

Middle Park re-tarmacking – no funding is available as funds have been taken from the highways budget so there will be no new works before LGR.

Cross border communications – it was suggested a councillor signs up to one-network which list roadworks across the country and reports back if there is anything of relevance. *Agenda for the next meeting.*

Garrigill ford – the issue is that the outlets block every time there is heavy rain, with the only option being to report for attention. Garrigill ford outlets inlets blocked every time heavy rains.

Missing signage – the cast iron fingerpost at the Leadgate junction has not been found. There is also a missing horse warning sign near Middle Farm to be replaced.

Zebra crossing request on the A689 at Fairhill needs to be assessed.

Flooding at the Bridgend junction is a landowner issue.

Nentsberry flooding – the Coal Authority has done more than they were asked to but there are historic issues around this area.

Rusting signpost near Nenthead shop – to refer to WFC.

Abandoned Garrigill cones – a request to be made to United Utilities.

Nentsberry bridge has been hit again and is scheduled for repairs.

A686 near Randleholm junction – a short section of wall has been repaired and hedge removed and replaced with fencing. A complaint about the fencing was made and it has had remedial work.

SKS flashing lights at Townfoot.- a replacement unit has to be obtained as the originals were lost during covid.

Loose chippings signs – Cllr Harrison reported that he has found 3 and taken them down, and if there are others reported to him, he will remove them.

6e/NOV/22 Warm Hubs

Cllr Ransom reported that the Town Hall Warm Hub will start from 21st November between 10am and 3pm. Funding has been sought from various sources including the County Council, the Frieda Scott Trust and AMBA. The group are waiting on a decision from the Foodbank and have applied to the parish council. The aim is to provide a comfortable space with activities to get people out of cold homes. Feedback from the Wednesday coffee morning has been positive, and a new boiler for the building should be installed before opening day.

The event is free and open to all ages, but with a donation box for those who would prefer to contribute. Transport can be arranged. The first session will be a taster to find out what activities people want to do, possibly games, films etc. The historical society archives will be open. There has been a lot of interest and people have come forward to volunteer.

A question was asked about whether there would be anything for children, there are no resources yet so it will have to be seen how things progress, but the aim is to keep going for 6 months.

6f/NOV/22 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Robertson reported that he had found 9 seats around the village in various states of repair. The land where the stiles are in a bad state of repair are owned by the County Council with permissive access.

There is to be a Coal Authority drop-in session on 21st November.

A remembrance display has been put up opposite the playground.

6g/NOV/22 High Mill

Nothing new to report at present.

6h/NOV/22 Christmas lights

Cllrs Robinson and Hanley have offered to check the lights and the Men in Sheds will be asked about PAT testing.

6i/NOV/22 Remembrance Day display

All involved in the remembrance day memorial in Alston at Townfoot were congratulated on the excellent display.

7. Planning applications

Cllr Hanley abstained from all applications apart from 7f/g & h.

7a/NOV/22 22/0588 Tree Works (CA) Height reduction (maximum 1/3 of current height), canopy lift and 1/3 thin of (conifer) tree group to maintain overall shape/form, but with (i) upper canopy reduced to lower level (ii) crowns lifted and (iii) number of tree stems present reduced to allow access underneath the trees. Garage workshop opposite village hall, Bridge End, Garrigill CA9 3DS for Mr J. Hiscox.

Cllr Hanley abstained from voting.

It was pointed out that the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that it is an offence to intentionally kill or injure a red squirrel or intentionally damage or recklessly destroy any structure of place a red squirrel uses for shelter or protection or disturb a red squirrel while it occupies such a place.

A proposal to recommend acceptance was not carried. (4+ 3- 4 abs.)

Recommended that concern has been raised by a number of residents that removing the trees would jeopardise the existing red squirrel population particularly the presence of a drey (nest) in one of the trees

concerned. Alston Moor Parish Council therefore recommend that an independent survey be undertaken by a suitably qualified environmental expert that will assess the risk to the existing red squirrel population. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Hattersley. (4+ 3- 4 abs.)

7b/NOV/22 22/0688 Reserved by condition. Discharge of conditions 4 (landscaping scheme), 5 (access) and 6 (drainage scheme) attached to approval 22/0006. Land at South Hudgill, Alston CA9 3LG for Miss A. Beddows.

The application has already been granted permission.

7c/NOV/22 22/0698 Full application. Extension to previously approved campsite for 4no camping pods and 4no camping pitches, to 5no camping pods including 1no pod for toilet facilities, 4no static holiday caravans and 4no camping pods. Lambsgate Farm, Alston CA9 3LD for Mr & Mrs Tebbs.

It was reported that the AONB Management Plan policies support sensitive tourism development and there are local concerns that static caravans are visually intrusive, although there are no objections to camping pods. It was thought that the number of parking spaces would not be sufficient. Another concern is that the track is used by farm vehicles and there are no passing places, so vehicles might have to reverse back onto the main road. .

Recommended that the council support the proposal for 5 camping pods but not the static caravans.

Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Grew (9+ 2 abs)

7d/NOV/22 22/0705 Full application. Change of use of former estate agent's office to a holiday apartment. Market House, Market Place, Alston CA9 3HS for Mrs Sarah Higgs – Pennine Ways.

Cllr Miller declared an interest as a relative and Cllr Robinson took the chair.

Members observed that there were similarities to nearby premises that recently went to appeal and was turned down for residential use. Although the intention with this application would enable the property to function as a multipurpose space, the understanding is that it would be classed as residential.

Recommended for refusal as a holiday let. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Harrison. (9+2 abs)

7e/NOV/22 22/0719 Full application. Installation of a new 15m high wind turbine for sole use of energy for the property. Resubmission of 22/0002 Clarghyll Head House, Alston CA9 3NG for Mr Alan Murray.

Recommended for approval on the grounds that there is a need to look for alternative energy sources.

Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robertson, (8+ 3 abs)

7f/NOV/22 22/0721 Full application Roof alterations and repairs to include reinstatement of slates to Building 1, addition of insulated powder coated steel roofing panels to Building 3 and addition of louvered section of roof 600mm in height for ventilation of shaft and insulated powder coated steel roofing panels to Building 2. Brewery Shaft buildings, Nenthead Mines, Nenthead CA9 3PD for Nenthead Mines Conservation Society.

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

7g/NOV/22 22/0809 Tree Works (CA). Conservation area tree works – comprising T1 and T2 Conifer to reduce by 1/3 shape top to recreate crown and/or to fell. Alston House Hotel, Townfoot, Alston CA9 3RN for Michael Collins.

Recommended for approval Proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr Robertson. (8+ 2- 1 abs)

7h/NOV/22 22/0814 Tree Works (CA). Reduce or fell Ash in the light of Ash Dieback affecting health/condition of tree. Ashleigh House, Nenthead Road, Alston CA9 3SN for Mr A. Robertson.

Cllr Robertson declared an interest as landowner.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (9+ 1- 1 abs)

8. Dissolution of Alston Moor Business Association

Reported during the public participation session.

An e-mail was received from Alston Moor Business Association to confirm that a reluctant decision has been taken to dissolve from 31st December 2022, but to meet all obligations and to look to other organisations to take on the Producers Market and town Christmas trees. They will also look to distributing any remaining cash assets as grant payments to local organisations.

9. Future of Alston's Sorting Office

Cllr Cooper reported that Royal Mail are carrying out a table top revision with the likely result that they will close the sorting office and move the postmen to Brampton. The process started 2 and a half years ago, and although the Post Office has not been told, the postmen were told officially that the review is ongoing.

There are consequences if the sorting office is to close, and the postmen have to work out of Brampton as their start and finish centre. Losing the sorting office will affect the income of the Post Office.

It was suggested a Save our Post Office campaign might be needed and questioned whether there should be a cost benefit study done on the impact and cost of travel out of Brampton. The last time the sorting office was threatened a resident organised a petition up and encouraged people to comment.

As there has been no official statement yet no immediate action can be taken, but the implications for Alston's Post Office are serious so it is important to be ready to challenge any decision to close the sorting office. No immediate action required other than to keep a watching brief.

10. Cleaning of Alston War Memorial & overhanging branches

It was reported to the council that the base of the war memorial needs cleaning and that there are branches overhanging the site that could do with cutting back.

The War Memorials Trust advise that only the mildest cleaning should be carried out with water and bristle brush to avoid damage to the memorial. Overhanging branches are the responsibility of the adjoining landowner.

Cllr Harrison offered to contact the landowner and if he were willing to let the council cut back the branches Cllr Green said he would cut them back.

It was suggested that the war memorial should be allowed to age with dignity. The area around the memorial is presentable. Cllr Robinson offered to clean the area if needed before Remembrance Sunday.

11. Community Grant applications

Two applications were received asking for £300 each.

Alston Town Hall – the application is for financial assistance towards running a warm hub in Alston Town Hall on Mondays, offering refreshments and activities.

Alston Medical Practice Day Unit – the application is for financial assistance to help provide a day unit over 3 days, initially for the frail elderly but extending to other vulnerable groups.

Resolved to allocate £300 to both organisations, Alston Town Hall and Alston Medical Practice Day Unit. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/NOV/22 Correspondence – Appendix 1

No comments received.

12b/NOV/22 Formal consultation on the Eden Speed Limit Review

An extension to the deadline of 5th November was requested should the council want to amend their original comments. It was agreed to make no change to the original statement.

12c/NOV/22 EDC – Alston Moor Settlement Study

Information on a settlement study by Eden District Council was circulated with a request for parish councils to complete the feedback form by 18th November. The form asked 7 questions with the first asking if any settlements in the study have not been included. Listed for Alston Moor were Alston, Nenthead, Garrigill and Leadgate. The clerk asked if the hamlets of Nentsberry and Blagill should be included and whether a working group should be set up to respond to the questions.

Resolved that Cllrs Robinson, Robertson and Ransom would be delegated to meet and respond to the survey. (nem con)

12d/NOV/22 CALC – Survey on engagement, aspirations, possibilities with W&F council

A survey was received from CALC with the request that members complete it for the 18th November. It was agreed that the task could be delegated to the volunteers responding to the Settlement study.

The clerk was asked to set up a meeting. **Action CI.**

12. Old Primary School site visit

The architects acting on behalf of the purchaser for the Old Primary School contacted the council to invite representatives to a site visit to discuss options for the re-use of the site. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 16th November.

The clerk reported that a representative from the retained Fire service asked about the possibility of using the car park and building for training sessions. Agreed to make enquiries at the meeting.

13. Appointment of representatives to Alston United Charities from Nenthead and Garrigill

The four-year term for the representative from Nenthead and Garrigill will be up shortly, and the council were invited to make new appointments. The representative does not need to be a member of the council. **Resolved** to appoint Cllr Grew for Garrigill and Cllr Robinson for Nenthead. (nem con)

14. Report from Finance Working Group on opening a 30-day deposit account with Unity Trust

A copy of the minutes of the meeting was circulated with the decision taken to apply to open a 30-day deposit account with Unity Trust and to hold back on setting up a multi-pay card while it remains a necessity to maintain an account with HSBC.

15. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

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|---|-----------|
| <i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i> | £2,139.99 |
| <i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i> | £907.12 |
| <i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i> | £935.56 |

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 Robertson. (8+ 3 abs)

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

16a/NOV/22 requests to attend the next council meeting

A representative from Alston Recreation Grounds has been invited to give an update on progress with funding for the bike track. The agenda is to include a proposal for the council to contribute towards the outstanding amount (within reason) to enable the project to go ahead in the spring. By December it should be known what if any the shortfall will be. Noted that there will be a public meeting to present the plans on 16th November.

A representative from the Foodbank would like to attend a meeting to update the council.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Signed:

Dated: