



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 6th February 2023 in the Masonic Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: R. Miller (Chair), P. Best, B. Cooper, B. Davies, A. Green, E. Grew, M. Hanley, H. Ho, G. Ransom, A. Robertson, R. Robinson.

Apologies: Cllr: N. English, S. Hattersley, C. Harrison.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Cllr Grew 6c/d/f/FEB/23

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: 6b/JAN/23 delete sentence about EDC confirming they do not own Nenthead Fountain. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Ransom (8+ 3 abs)

Resolved that the minutes of the precept meeting held on Monday 16th January 2023 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: 3/PR/23 correction of a typo to read £20,000 for establishment costs. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Davies (9+ 2 abs)

2. Chair & District reports

Chair's report

The chair thanked members for keeping the number of non-essential e-mails to a minimum.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp.

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

(Reports are posted on the website.)

Finance Scrutiny Committee – there were 130 applications to the Inspiring Eden fund, 11 from Alston with 2 successful projects with £6k allocated for High Mill and £11k for the Golf Club Observatory.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – three Locality boards are to be set up by WFC to mirror the district council areas, with delegated decision making, including planning with the Eden Local Plan remaining operational. The Eden District Emergency Plan was discussed, and Cllr Hanley questioned why AMERG was only mentioned in the appendix. Should there be a local disaster, the command centre in Penrith needs to be able to communicate with AMERG.

Zero Carbon Working Group – 96% of Eden's carbon emissions are related to waste, with a requirement for greater understanding as to how it is being disposed of. Bonds took part in the Sustainability effort and have made savings by switching off machinery at night. Eden is behind the rest of the north in the installation of EV chargers, as they were unsuccessful in their bid for LEVI funding (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) which was mainly directed to city areas

WFC shadow authority – council tax will increase by 4.99%. It is a requirement of government that rates are harmonised across the districts. Eden had the lowest rates, but the aim is to bring everyone the same level of service. The CTRS (Council Tax Reduction Scheme) is one of the most generous in the country and has been maintained at the same rate since 2014.

There are proposals to raise the council tax on second homes by 100%, which should significantly increase income, as there are over 5,000 second homes in the area. Holiday lets come into a different category.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that main council meetings are open to the public. Members were reminded about the WFC teams meeting on Wednesday for parish councillors.

3. Public participation

Held over to later in the meeting.

4. Progress reports

4a/FEB/23 Meeting with the Coal Authority & Environment Agency

Re: 5c/JAN/23 Notes from the meeting will be circulated to councillors after the Coal Authority have accepted them. Cllrs Miller and Ransom along with B. Aves, Nenthead Ward chair, met with representatives from the Coal Authority and Environment Agency to discuss concerns raised by residents about the proposed mine treatment works at Nenthead. Issues covered included the potential impact on residents and businesses, concerns over wildlife, noise pollution, odour abatement and what benefits there might be for the village.

The CA were interested in finding out how best to arrange future meetings with the public and suggested that they focus on one issue at a time so that those interested in say wildlife or odour abatement issues could have in depth discussions.

The scheme is government funded so there are restrictions on funding, but it may be possible to assist with some environmental projects; work on the Hush was put forward.

4b/FEB/23 Financial report update

Re: 10/JAN/23 Eden District Council have acknowledged the request for a review of financial procedures and, when they have costings, propose a meeting with the chair, Cllr English and the clerk.

4c/FEB/23 Nenthead Community Toilets grant from EDC

Re: PR/JAN/23 As requested at the precept meeting the clerk suggested to the Nenthead Community Toilets group that they apply to Eden District Council for the £500 grant. A reply was received stating that they had been turned down for the funding due to their insurance status. The clerk then suggested they contact ACT for advice on what insurances should be held.

It was suggested by members that the group could contact the ward chair, who was involved when the toilets were initially handed over.

4d/FEB/23 Defibrillators for the community

Re: PR/JAN/23 Cllr Grew forwarded information on 'free' defibrillators for communities being advertised by the charity London Hearts and the clerk submitted an enquiry requesting 3 defibrillators for Tyne Willows Pavilion, Nenthead Village Hall and a location on the Tynehead Road, Garrigill. However, the charity expects a minimum donation and would invoice the council for £3,856 for 3 defibrillators, heated cabinets and carry cases. The defibrillators supplied normally retail at £1,127 with a minimum donation of £785 to the charity. The batteries need to be changed every 5 years, costing £240, the pads cost £47 to replace, and the cabinets would need to be installed by a local contractor.

Cllr Grew reported that she has sent information about defibrillators for schools to see if they would be willing to apply. Cllr Ransom reported that the British Heart Foundation are not giving out any until the summer.

It was agreed that a defibrillator for Tyne Willows should be a priority and the next step is to obtain confirmation from the fitness club that they are willing to supply the electricity. **Action C1.**

5. Reports from representatives

5a/FEB/23 Warm Hubs

Cllr Ransom reported that the Warm Hub is going well, despite a boiler breakdown today. Between 30 and 40 people are attending each session, which is the most popular in Eden. Next week will be the last session of the Oakley Trust funded project with SKS to make soup and scones for attendees.

5b/FEB/23 Traffic Management meeting

Cllr Grew reported on the main points from the Traffic Management meeting

School flashing lights – the post has been replaced and it just remains for the electrics to be connected this month.

Galligill loop – there are ongoing issues with drainage to be looked at in the new financial year.

Co-op paving slabs – repaired but the pavement above it is to be discussed with WFC.

Garrigill issues – the ford continues to be blocked regularly, requiring clearing out and the mystery of the cones around the bridge has not been solved. The speed limit has finally progressed.

Townfoot, Alston – potholes have been repaired, but the one near Salvin Cottage needs re-doing, and there is a problem with standing water on Brewery bridge. Parking will be revisited.

Traffic calming in the Firs – signage to be considered.

Missing cast iron sign, Leadgate – the post has been damaged now so will also need replacing

Horse warning signs – are in the 23/24 budget.

Fairhill Recreation Grounds zebra crossing request – has been added to the minor improvements list.

Nentsberry drainage – the Coal Authority are to carry out more work.

Leadgate drainage – the source of the blockage is on private land.

Coppice Wood – on the list for surface dressing and double white lines.

5c/FEB/23 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Ransom reported that the ward agreed that the sign could go on the wall behind the Hive. The clerk requested further details as permission will need to be obtained from the owner, and the parish would be responsible for installing it. **Action CI to contact the ward chair.** Cllr Best offered to put it up.

The Nenthead toilets have been refurbished but as there are no heaters in the building the pipework froze during the cold spell.

The Miners' Arms planning application has not been determined yet, but someone is interested in putting in an offer to run it as a public house.

5d/FEB/23 High Mill

Cllr Robertson reported that there is no news yet, but it is thought the sale will go through this month and if it does the new owner is keen on incorporating the wheelhouse with the rest of the building.

5e/FEB/23 AMERG Group

Cllr Ransom reported that the grant application for funding for three generators would be considered this week. The application included a generator for the town hall annex and would include upgrading electrics and wiring to ensure it meets with current standards.

5f/FEB/23 Alston Moor Area Planning

No update this month.

5g/FEB/23 AMRD Group

Written report from Cllr Hanley and discussed on the agenda.

6. Planning applications

6a/FEB/23 22/0993 Full application. Installation of a 6m flagpole. Alston Town Hall public space, Front Street, Alston CA9 3RF for Alston Moor Parish Council.

Resolved to make no comment. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson (nem con)

6b/FEB/23 23/0021 Erection of 5 bungalows and associated infrastructure. Land west of Bruntley Meadows, Alston for Sawyer Construction.

Recommended for refusal as there are concerns about the drainage matters identified by United Utilities which could cause an additional risk of flooding to The Firs. The number of parking spaces do not appear to be adequate for the properties and there are concerns that inadequate parking space may cause nuisance to the properties above the site if parking takes place on the road. There are also concerns about access to the site and adequate turning space for larger vehicles. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Green. (9+ 1- 1 abs)

Cllr Hanley explained that Alston Moor is the only part of Eden where the nutrient neutrality conditions relating to housing do not apply.

6c/FEB/23 23/0029 Full application. Proposed change of use of barn to dwelling, alterations to existing dwelling and rebuilding of detached domestic garage and garden store. Ivy House Farm, Garrigill CA9 3DU for Mr & Mrs Kenneth Snowball.

Cllr Grew declared an interest as a neighbour.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Ho (10+ 1 abs)

6d/FEB/23 23/0031 Listed building. Listed building consent to enable change of use of barn to dwelling, alterations to existing dwelling and rebuilding of detached domestic garage and garden store. Ivy House Farm, Garrigill CA9 3DU for Mr & Mrs Kenneth Snowball.

Cllr Grew declared an interest as a neighbour.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Ho and seconded by Cllr Robinson (10+ 1 abs)

6e/FEB/23 23/0033 Full application. Single storey lean-to-extension to rear. 5 The Firs, Alston CA9 3RW for Ramshaw Architecture.

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

6f/FEB/23 0034 Tree Works. Undertake crown reduction to 2 no. Cherry trees. Blacksmith's Cottage, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JQ for Mr N. Neary.

Cllr Grew declared an interest as a friend.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies (10+ 1 abs)

6g/FEB/23 0035 Tree Works. Undertake crown reduction to 1 no. Sycamore and 1 no. Ash. Beldy House, Garrigill CA9 3DH for Mr Nolen O'Dwer.

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

7. Request from Roger Morris, Isaac's Tea Trail for the parish council to assist with applying for grant funding from the AONB to restore a section of footpath 302115 at Roughside, Nenthead

The clerk was contacted by Roger Morris, Isaac's Tea Trail with a request that the parish council lead an application for funding to restore a section of footpath 302115 at Roughside. The path here is boggy and difficult to traverse for footpath users.

The funding is Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Defra funding managed by the North Pennines AONB with a minimum grant of £3,000. It cannot cover statutory works and if the parish council is to be involved it would need to be with the full consent of the landowner.

Cumbria County Council confirmed that the work would be surface and drainage improvements beyond what would be statutory provision and they would provide a specification for the work. Possible costs around £5 - £6k.

They stated that Roger Morris has liaised with the landowner's agent and understand that they would look favourably on improvements to the footpath. RM also mentioned the possibility of funding a new riverside path between Foreshield and Blagill bridges.

The AONB are willing to set up a remote meeting to discuss further.

It was agreed that nothing could progress without the landowner's consent. **Action CI** to get back to Roger Morris for an update on the landowner's position.

While discussing Isaac's Tea Trail with the county the clerk queried progress with the path from Ashgill Bridge. The dedication has not progressed following the sale of the land and the new agent has not responded to e-mails from the County Council. It was suggested the clerk contact one of their neighbours who was thought to have contact details for the owners. **Action CI**. Agenda for next month.

8. Report for Alston Moor Newsletter

Cllr Ransom reported that the resident who has taken over as editor of the newsletter for the next issue asked if a brief report could be made on what is happening on Alston Moor. Cllr Ransom asked for permission to write a short article which he would circulate to the clerk and chair before sending. The next deadline is 10th February and would focus on the forthcoming elections. The offer was accepted.

9. Tree Survey for 2023 for woodlands & Garrigill Village Green

Tree surveys need to be undertaken at reasonably regular intervals and, as there have been storms and tree disease since the last one, it should be updated. The clerk suggested that the next survey should be based on the County Council survey for Tyne Willows, and cover Firs and Henderson Woods and Garrigill village green.

Resolved to ask for quotes for a tree survey. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

10. Ownership of Nenthead Fountain

Cllr Robertson reported that he had contacted the Middleton-in-Teesdale parish council clerk who replied that they had acquired their fountain by default.

The Nenthead fountain is listed on the parish council's assets, but the issue is that there is no evidence to confirm that it was formally handed over to the parish council.

The meeting was closed for public participation.

A resident reported that a member of the Nenthead Community Group had done some research into the fountain's history and established that Alston with Garrigill Rural District Council had been a health authority and had taken responsibility for the water supply to other pumps. Most of their assets transferred to Eden District Council in 1974. When the fountain is renovated, the pipework could be replaced so it might be possible to connect it to the mains in future.

The meeting re-convened.

The clerk was asked to contact the researcher to ask him to forward the information he has and to add the Fountain to next month's agenda. **Action CI**.

11. Consideration about allocating funding from reserves for partial matched funding – grant application 'Art of Hosting' from the Research & Development group

A bid to the National Lottery is being prepared by the University of Cumbria for a project to improve health and wellbeing on Alston Moor, which if successful could bring in around £80k. With funding bids, it is generally helpful for the council to contribute as a gesture of support.

Cllr Hanley explained that the 'Art of Hosting' is a term used for a style of communication. Information about it can be found online, but the Alston project would aim to encourage people to come forward to get involved in projects that could benefit the community.

Agreed to put on the agenda for next meeting. **Action Cl.**

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/FEB/23 Correspondence – Appendix 1

No comments received.

13. Administration

13a/FEB/23 Annual risk assessment

Cllrs Miller, Robertson and Hanley offered to go through the risk assessment with the clerk, who was asked to set up a meeting. **Action Cl.**

13b/FEB/23 Policies & procedures review

The draft updated policies were circulated to members of the DGP working group. No comments were received.

Resolved to accept the Anti-fraud and corruption policy. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson (nem con)

Resolved to accept Appendix to Financial Regulations - Financial reserves policy Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Ransom (9+ 2 abs)

Resolved to accept the Data Protection policy Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Ransom (nem con)

14. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£4,680.00
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£114.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£1,127.28

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 Green and seconded by Cllr Davies (10+ 1 abs)

15. Quarterly finance check

Cllr Davies reported that all was in order and signed off.

16. Approval of quarterly financial statement

Resolved to accept the financial statement, correcting a typing error for the public toilets reserve of £10,500. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

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

17a/FEB/23 Dereliction of properties

Several properties continue to cause concern so a request for an update to be included on the agenda. Salvin Cottage is becoming dangerous for the public due to the condition of the roof and windows.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed:

Dated: