

Nenthead Ward Meeting

Monday 30th January 2023

Nenthead Village Hall

Meeting started 7 pm

Minutes recorded by Alex Sawyer

Present:– Christine Habberjam, Brian Aves, Rod Smith, Peter Thompson, Alastair Roberston. Graeme Ransom, Milly Rudd, Fenella Potter, Dave Raeside

Speaking:– see above

Apologies:– Erica Morgan, Adrian Clark, Maxine Denoual, Laura Seaton, Elaine Grew, Jackie Carnell, Alison Clark, Ron Robinson, Adam Herdman

Minutes from previous meeting:– approved

Matters arising:–

Alison Clark made a written response to last time's discussion of the Miner's Arms, which was read out. She expressed regret that she had been forced into selling up, and maintained that the current application for change of use was a reluctant one, in response to a lack of serious offers to take the pub on as a going concern. Dave Raeside responded that his enquiries had been very serious, and that the only stumbling block had been the business accounts, which appeared not to have offset any capital expenditure (on the bunkhouse, etc.) against business losses. Following the last meeting, on December 5th, Alston Moor Parish Council also discussed the issue, and came out strongly against the proposed change of use, and in support of the Community Asset application, which they agreed to submit on Nenthead's behalf.

Updates:–

Graeme Ransom reported on a round table discussion with the Parish Council, the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority, which Brian Aves also attended. The Coal Authority gave their usual presentation. Councillors had many questions, including a new one: what's in it for Nenthead? The Coal Authority replied that they didn't have funds for community improvements, unless they revolved around ecology.

Dowgang Hush would be an option here, and Nenthead Mines Conservation Society has already been exploring ways to fund improvements/remedial work. Although unable to make firm commitments about anything at this stage, the Coal Authority expected the project to take two years to build, and assured the meeting that there would be no working at weekends, nor would heavy transport vehicles be on the roads during school times. They expected the construction workers to provide a boost to the economy. They could avoid disturbances to nesting birds by preventing them from nesting. Other public meetings are planned (20th May in the Village Hall and 23rd March, 21st April, 20th May, 22nd June at The Hive).

Brian Aves reported that the Traffic Management Group want the ward to decide what to do with the old Hillersdon Terrace road sign (that had been put up on the wrong side of the road). The road in front of Hillersdon Terrace isn't used or usable by many cars, but the sign could go behind the Miner's Arms or on the railings around The Hive.

Brian Aves invited everyone to shop more at the Community Shop. The current electricity contract expires in September, and the Village Hall's experience suggests the shop's tariff could end up at around £1,300 per month. Suggestions to get a wind turbine (Milly Rudd) or solar panels (Graeme Ransom). At least the staff are all very happy.

Christine Habberjam: A power company affiliated with ACT(-ion with communities in Cumbria) is helping the Village Hall find a new supplier, as there is little scope for further efficiency savings. Indoor preparation for redecorating and work on the guttering is still in the pipeline. An electrical survey will also be needed for the insurers.

Peter Thompson was unhappy with the standard of works completed on the Community Toilets (and about the number of spending decisions being made without a formal meeting). Pipes froze in the winter because the heating had been removed (leaving exposed, taped-up wiring, which should be checked and fixed). Also risks from gas building up in unvented pipes. As vice-chair, and in the absence of a chair, PT to call a meeting to clarify matters. Adrian Clark suggested putting the toilets on ToiletFinder.net. PT suggested that a disabled toilet was needed.

Alastair Roberston has been trying to involve Middleton, whose fountain is a twin to Nenthead's fountain, in Nenthead Community Project's plans to repair it, but without success. Peter Thompson felt it was unnecessary,

and probably risky, to spend £30k on removing it for repair elsewhere, as it could be fixed up, sandblasted and repainted in place. AR reminded the meeting that Alston managed to fix up its stand pipes, etc. 20 years ago. The problem is that the (unknown) owner needs to ask for it to be repaired. Insurance is also an issue, as the Council disclaims ownership of, and responsibility for the fountain.

Brian Aves reported that there are now two fewer bins for tin cans in the **Recycling Centre** (down to 4 from 6), which is not enough. The Village Hall still benefits financially from the centre via Eden District Council. No one had observed any fly-tipping.

Milly Rudd was unhappy with Nenthead Community Project's maintenance of the **Play Area**. She found the fence intimidating, and possibly dangerous, the grass-cutting messy and inadequate, and the whole area generally looked unfriendly, and a bit of a mess.

Graeme Ransom had little to report on the ongoing discussions with **North West Ambulance Service**. The arrival of a second EMT vehicle mentioned at the last meeting has been delayed due to an issue with blue lights. A trainer from NAWAS will be holding a public access day in Alston Town Hall on Feb. 6th. Some defibrillators have been made available by London Hearts, and the Village Hall might be a good place to install one.

Maxine Denoual (per email) had nothing to report on the **Snowplough**.

Any other business:–

Peter Thompson felt that the Parish Council highways representative (Elaine Grew?) should be contacted about the state of the **roads and drains around Nenthead**. Continual flooding caused by blocked drains, damaged manhole covers, and the state of smaller roads are causes for concern. There is a hotline reporting system, but Alston Moor seems to be uniquely poorly served vis-à-vis highway maintenance.

Graeme Ransom reminded us that **Council elections** are coming up in April, and there is still an open seat in Nenthead. Future voting at the Village Hall will require Photo ID, or a dispensation from Eden District Council.

The next Ward meeting:– will be on ~~27th~~ 20th March at 7 pm.

Meeting ended 8:30 pm