



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 6th June 2022 in Nenthead Village Hall at 7pm.

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

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

Absent:

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 9th May 2022 be approved as a correct record with the amendment of 9/MAY/22 to include a full stop to the amended resolution to read ... A request to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss whether Cllr Ho had the confidence of the meeting. To consider whether make a formal apology to those people who resigned due to malicious intent. Both requests were amended, and it was: **Resolved** to discuss as an agenda item at the next council meeting.

2. Chair, County & District reports

Chair's report

Thanks were given to the retiring chair, with appreciation for his work with the council. It was an honour to be given the first task of presenting medallions to the children. The younger ones thanked the council with a card with all their names on. This was circulated at the meeting. A second task was attending the jubilee tree planting ceremony at Nenthead.

A request was made to members to contact the clerk, chair, or vice-chair before sending group e-mails to put an end to unnecessary e-mails.

County Council

Apologies from Cllr Driver.

District Council

Apologies from Cllr Sharp

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

Licensing Committee – there was no change to the number of licences issued. The committee meets 2–3 times per year.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Eden has been added to the government edict to reduce excess nitrogen and phosphorus which pollutes rivers. The effect is a ban on all new houses and campsites, as although the main source is fertiliser, building new homes contributes to an increase in the amount of sewerage. Alston [*should this be Alston Moor or is it explicitly the town?*] is the only part of Eden not affected by the new ruling. The pollution can be offset by changing agricultural land usage but there will be a cost to farmers and developers. Cllr Hanley will report back on developments.

Cllr Hanley questioned whether Voreda House will be used by the unitary authority, but the reply was that it is not known, but thought that if it were ready for occupation, it would be more likely they would use it. The old council building is not suitable being old and inefficient to heat.

There has been a big push over electric vehicle chargers and an awareness that the council needs to own super-fast chargers and charge a fair rate for them. There is an issue of different companies setting up with slow and expensive chargers that are not what is needed.

The re-introduction of the pine marten in Scotland has increased red squirrel populations, and there was discussion on encouraging farmers to increase biodiversity.

Westmorland & Furness Council - elections to posts took place. Cllr Hanley was appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Liberal Democrats have an outright majority on the council.

Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee – NWAS have confirmed they have no funding to pay ECFRs, and it is unlikely many people will come forward if there is no pay. Alston Moor cannot be made a special case.

Planning – large industrial units are required to have solar panels in the Local Plan and an application that omitted this requirement was refused.

Health and Wellbeing Forum – Brough, a branch surgery at Kirby Stephen has closed due to GP shortages. The forum is also aware of an increase in poverty.

EDC AGM – Cllr Hanley was re-elected to the Health and Wellbeing Forum, and representative on Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Sharp continues as Children and Young People's champion and council representative to Alston Moor Partnership.

Questions

There is no answer as to why some residents have not yet received their £150 council tax rebate.

The rurality bus transport scheme cannot be extended to Alston. Cllrs Hanley and Sharp argued for it, but there is a 10-mile radius limit from Penrith. This ruling was questioned as Alston is 20 miles from Penrith and has greater need. Cllr Hanley offered to find out more as transport especially for 16-19 year old young people is very important.

3. Public participation

No requests were made.

4. Progress reports

4a/JUN/22 NWAS drop-in session

Re: 4a/MAY/22 The clerk reported that she attended the drop-in session on Friday morning, but not all slots were taken, and some bookings had not shown up, so there may be a concern that the format of one-to-one interviews had discouraged residents from attending.

It was pointed out that there was no signage to direct people to the meeting room, and that it would have been more productive to have been held as a public meeting instead of booked appointments for drop-in sessions,

4b/JUN/22 Queen Elizabeth II Platinum – medallions and tree planting

Re: 4b/MAY/22 Cllr Miller presented medallions to the schools and pre-schools, with additional medallions left in Local Links for collection.

The tree planting took place in Nenthead. The Alston trees need further discussion as planting had to wait until the schools returned from half term and for Appleby fair travellers to finish camping. The Garrigill Japanese flowering cherry has been ordered and confirmation received from the Catholic Trust that the tree can be planted on the village green.

It was agreed that the trees for Tyne Willows can be planted on Gala Day and the event publicised on Facebook. The clerk will notify the school. Cllrs Harrison and Robinson will meet on Thursday to decide upon the site. Action RR,CH, CI.

4c/JUN/22 Alston Conservation Area workshop

Re: 4d/MAY/22 The workshop was attended by Cllr Robertson, representatives from Alston Moor Partnership, Countryside Consultants, and the clerk. Detailed minutes have been produced, and the attendees discussed amongst other points a Conservation Area boundary review, a strategy to further regeneration of vacant buildings and repairs to heritage at risk, highways improvements and guidance for owners and developers on maintenance of buildings. Setting up a conservation area focus group was discussed but suggested that occasional meetings with the AMP planning group could suffice.

4d/JUN/22 Road safety on Fiddlers during work on the A689

Re: 10b/MAY/22 Cllr Driver received a reply to the query about road safety on Fiddlers from Highways, who stated that they identified the diversion route as the most suitable and safe to carry traffic during the closure. Motorists may choose to ignore the signed route at their own risk, but it is not possible to sign other routes to warn of the potential hazards. It is possible to introduce restrictions on routes where rat-running is perceived to be a concern, but this is heavily reliant on enforcement from the police. Highways are to carry out an assessment and will provide an update on findings and proposals.

4e/JUN/22 VAT update

Re: 12/MAY/22 This relates to the advice given on the ability to reclaim vat on non-business expenditure with no limit on the amount that can be re-claimed. There is a limit of £7,500 for exempt items. The trainer confirmed this in writing and verbal confirmation was received from the VAT office. However, the written statement implied that other payments such as insurance and utilities may have to be made by the council,

so it would be advisable to hold further conversations with the VAT office before claiming above the threshold.

5. Reports from representatives

5a/JUN/22 NWAS Alston Moor Working Group

Cllr Grew reported on the notes she circulated to members, read out for the benefit of the public. The proposal put forward was to be voted on by members at meeting, not the parish council. The EMT1's proposed trialling a rapid recovery vehicle (RRV) alongside the ambulance, so if only one person were available that person could work alone and cover more shifts. Two people are needed to staff the ambulance, which would be used when they were available for shifts. During the trial period the EMTs would need to keep a log of each shift, so it could be assessed at the end. At the same time, they would be eligible for a slightly enhanced rate of pay for a 12-hour shift. Despite asking many times for Alston to be made a special case there is no movement on pay for ECFRs. This makes it extremely unlikely that people will come forward for lengthy training and hours to be spent on the ambulance all at their own time, especially if they also must work. The current situation is that Alston Moor has no ECFRs.

Cllr Ransom who is also a member of the working group stated that the proposal did not address the issue of getting the patient off Alston Moor or dealing with patients with advanced clinical heart conditions or stroke. He confirmed that he had opposed the proposal and was concerned that the figures for a RRV would be embellished, and the ambulance taken away. It will not improve the outcome for patients; what is wanted is a better level of cover and he recommended turning down the proposal even as a pilot scheme as it may undermine the SAMS campaign.

Discussion

NWAS were unable to confirm how many people had applied for CFR training.

There is funding support for rural areas, but it is not allocated to specific rural areas.

NWAS has acknowledged that CFR should not be sent out on their own but should be working in pairs.

4 EMTs are happy to work alone, 2 are not. The request from the EMTs for the RRV was made because at times it is not possible to cover all the shifts, and 3 of the team must work. When one person, who does most of the shifts, was away last week only one shift was covered. A RRV would enable more shifts to be covered, it could do everything the ambulance does and would have to have blue lights. The underlying issue is that with any fewer EMTs the ambulance would be taken away, so it may be better to have some cover when only one person is available than none. Shifts in Carlisle are an option for those EMTs who are interested, at regular pay rates, but only when Alston Moor is covered.

At present NWAS do not have a spare RRV, there are also issues to be resolved over the need to pay for the cost of electricity for an electric vehicle. In addition, the proposal for the two vehicles must be taken to the national executive to decide so there is nothing concrete happening yet.

It was questioned whether NWAS had considered holidaymakers, figures suggest there can be around 7,000 additional people over the holiday season, and numerous motorbikes pass through with accidents an unfortunate regular feature at the weekends. This could be a reason not to accept the proposal.

SAMS are campaigning to allow the ambulance to take people to hospital, but the objections from NWAS are that the EMT1's are not allowed to do interventions and if the ambulance is taken off Alston Moor it could be away for 4 or more hours. If there happened to be an incident while it was out the team would be sent to assist, leaving Alston Moor without cover.

It is up to NWAS to come up with a model that fits Alston Moor, but it seems they are not prepared to look. Suggestions have been made along the lines of Scottish models, in particular the North Berwick model which has paramedics on a shift system that has been proved to save a number of lives. All we have is an insufficient number of defibrillators.

NWAS have also been unhelpful over suggestions to assist with training, as anyone who has undertaken the degree course will be sent to Carlisle and not allowed to work in Alston.

Cllrs Grew and Ransom confirmed that they stated at the meeting that Alston Moor residents should have a right to the same level of cover as residents in a town or city.

5b/JUN/22 Alston Area Planning

Cllr Hanley reported that he was unable to attend the meeting due to an emergency. Others noted from the minutes that there were comments about the shortage of volunteers and the failure of the Volunteer project to get underway. The clerk reminded the meeting that the funding would be discussed at the precept meeting and if no progress had been made would be either reallocated or returned to reserves.

5c/JUN/22 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Ransom reported that the main issue of discussion was a burglary with £500 of alcohol stolen from the village hall cellar. Donations enabled some to be replaced.

The Miners Arms is up for sale but is not being advertised as a going concern.

The issue of the bin that has been re-located by Eden District Council onto the verge near the community toilets from Nenthead Mines was followed up. It was moved as the site is now classed as privately owned and the council does not provide bins for anywhere other than on public land.

5d/JUN/22 High Mill

Cllr Robertson reported that he continues to obtain prices for work on the wheelhouse. It is not yet possible to confirm what if any funds will be left over from the THI, which must be signed off. If any funds are returned Alston Moor Partnership hope that the funds can be allocated to employ a consultant to assess the wheelhouse project.

It was agreed to make no comment on how any funds returned to the council would be allocated until the amount, if any, is known.

5e/JUN/22 Nenthead Fountain

No further updates were received.

5e/JUN/22 CALC Training

Cllr Grew reported that the Neighbourhood Plan training from CALC had been cancelled again and would only go ahead if there were sufficient numbers. She hoped to encourage others to take part.

Cllr Robertson reported that the Code of Conduct training was well attended and could be recommended to anyone who has not yet taken part.

6. Planning applications

6a/JUN/22 22/0326 Full application. Erection of a detached single-story outbuilding, to replace existing metal/wooden storm damaged sheds. Valley View, Nenthead CA9 3NA for Mr Andrew Elliott.

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

6b/JUN/22 22/0328 Hedge removal notice. Removal of hedgerow. North of the Old Manor, Alston CA9 3JY for Mr John Banks - Cumbria County Council.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Grew (12+ 1-)

6c/JUN/22 22/0340 Tree Works (CA). Fell trees in conservation area. Bridge End House, Garrigill CA9 3DS for Mr S. Young.

It was reported that the neighbours were not aware of the application and advised one of the Garrigill members that there are nesting birds and a red squirrel dray in the trees behind the garage opposite the village hall. The application covers two separate sites. T2 grows out of a boundary wall and there are concerns that the wall could collapse and the roots cause damage to the culvert running alongside the lanning.

A recommendation for approval was amended to read:

Recommended that T 2,3,4,5,6 are removed and that professional advice is sought on the remaining trees the applicant seeks to fell. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (6+ 4- 3abs)

6d/JUN/22 22/0366 Full application. Replacement of timber windows and external doors with wood grain uPVC windows and composite doors. 2 Burnleigh House, Front Street, Alston CA9 3SQ for Mr Tim McGrane.

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

6e/JUN/22 22/0339 Full application. Discharge of condition 3 (level 2 survey) attached to approval 19/0604. High Mill, Northern Units, The Butts, Alston for Mr Peter Olive.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson (12+ 1 abs)

6f/JUN/22 22/0410 Tree works. T1 Ash – Remove. T2 – Sycamore – Crown lift. Redwing Chapel, Garrigill, Alston CA9 3DP for Mr T. Brand.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson (2- 2 abs)

7. Nenthead petition against the Water and Abandoned Metal Mines (WAMM) programme proposed by the Coal Authority and Environment Agency to build a mine water treatment scheme to treat the water from Capelcleugh and Rampgill adits.

A copy of a petition was forwarded by the Nenthead Ward, who are requesting support against the proposed treatment works.

Resolved to support the Nenthead community's opposition to the mine treatment water scheme to treat the water from Capelcleugh and Rampgill adits. Proposed by Cllr Robertson and seconded by Cllr Robinson (nem con)

It was observed that the Nentsberry scheme has been held up by a nesting bird for a week, which may allay one of the concerns about wildlife.

8. Tyne Willows car park improvements and request for a handrail on the steepest section of the path down from the Cumberland

The clerk reported that she had enquired about the Levelling up fund for improvements to travellers' sites and was advised that the scheme was only open to the higher tiers of government. She suggested that the short timescale for submitting applications was a drawback, and that it might be useful to set up a working group to identify what improvements are needed to the car park, look at how this would fit in with the plans for the pavilion, and obtain rough costings against the possibility that a suitable funding stream might be found.

A separate issue is the condition of the footpath from the Cumberland which was 'improved' by contractors working on the sub-station, but which has left it harder to negotiate. She asked members if it could be looked at to see if a handrail would be beneficial. It was confirmed that the path is hard to negotiate, and the access could be improved. There was also some dumping from building waste, which the clerk was asked to check and report any issues to the property owner. **Action CI.**

Cllr Robinson offered to inspect the path and report back to the next meeting. **Action RR.**

9. Internal Audit report

Resolved to accept the findings of the Internal Audit for 2021-22. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies (12+ 1 abs)

10. Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 21/22

The chair confirmed questions 1 -9 of Section 1 with members.

Resolved to approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 21/22. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Robins. (12+ 1 abs)

11. Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement 21/22

Resolved to approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement 21/22. BD RR (1 abs)

Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Robinson (12+ 1 abs)

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/JUN/22 Correspondence (Appendix 1)

Circulated with the minutes. No comments were received.

13. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£4,168.94
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£1,896.72
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£1,358.77

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 Robinson. (12+ 1 abs)

14. Code of Conduct investigation

It was stated that discussion on the investigation was ongoing because a group of residents were not happy with the outcome of the Code of Conduct investigation. Some people were affected mentally and physically by malicious comments. An apology is unlikely to be forthcoming from the district council, so it would be considerate for the council to apologise, as an institution and not on an individual basis.

New members stated that they did not know what had transpired so did not feel it appropriate to apologise, although they were aware that something had gone wrong at the time.

Resolved that Alston Moor Parish Council will express regret to former and present serving councillors, the clerk and the public for the malicious comments made by individuals reported to the monitoring officer from February 2019 to May 2021. The resolution to be posted to the council website. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Ransom. (4+ 4- 5 abs) The resolution was passed on the casting vote of the chair. Cllr Grew requested that it be minuted that she would have preferred an apology from the council.

15. Standard of behaviour expected of serving councillors

The chair stated that as a parish council there is little that can be done about members' behaviour other than report alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct to the monitoring officer or the police if appropriate. The cllr who was accused by a fellow cllr has the full confidence of the council, and it is hoped that a line can be drawn under the matter. Members were reminded that they should keep e-mails civil.

16. Reports posted to AMPC website and re-posted in part

Cllr Grew reported that she had attended a SAMS meeting a few months ago and was informed that her ambulance reports posted to the website were being re-posted in part on other sites, altered and viewers invited to discuss. Her reports are not written lightly, they are a record of what happens during a meeting. The reports have been taken down from the website. She has no qualms with reports re-posted in their entirety.

17. Parish council computers

Members were reminded that the council's computer was purchased in 2013 and is due for replacement and that it should not be left to the clerk to have to use her personal computer. It was agreed that a laptop computer could be used both in the office and out and about.

Resolved to buy a replacement Apple laptop to the standard required by the clerk. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

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

18a/JUN/22 tree waste from Garrigill cemetery

It was reported that branches from trees in Garrigill cemetery had been left on the grass verge opposite the cemetery. Residents had removed the larger trunk sections but left the smaller branches.

18b/JUN/22 Consultation document on re-organisation of the Fire Service

The government have put out a consultation document on re-organisation of the Fire Service, which they want to be transferred to the Police and Crime Commissioner, which would take away strategic planning from the service. Comments and objections can be made until 26th July. Cllr Ransom agreed to put a report together for the next council meeting. **Action GR.**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed:

Dated: