



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 5th June 2023 in Nenthead Village Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: R. Miller (Chair), A. Bondi, B. Davies, E. Edgar, A. Green, E. Grew, M. Hanley, H. Ho, A. Martin, D. Monk, G. Ransom, A. Robertson, R. Robinson.

Apologies: P. Best

Absent: none.

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the annual parish council meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (11+ 1- 1 abs)

2. Chair & District reports

Chair's report

New councillors were welcomed onto the council. The bike track at Fairhill was officially opened with a good turnout.

WFC

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

Eden Planning Committee – noted that there will be strict checks on the drainage before any work can commence at Bruntley Meadows. The footpath cannot be blocked.

Health and Adult Scrutiny Committee – adult social care has been added to the scrutiny committee. Eden is in the north ICS (Integrated Care System) with the rest of the unitary in the south ICS; no-one was present to report on our area. This is potentially an issue.

Cllr M. Robinson reported on the following:

Levelling up fund – WFC has been allocated 9.4m under the scheme for a variety of projects including the Golf Club observatory. Following Expressions of Interest, a lot of work has been carried out over the past few months with workshops to put detailed applications together to meet the 30 June deadline.

Child Scrutiny Committee – the newly appointed assistant director has a good grasp on what is needed and has suggestions for a big work programme.

Old Primary School planning application – currently this is down for a decision under delegated powers.

Query from resident – a resident asked if planning consent would be needed for use of a field for dirt bikes and mini motorbikes. Cllr Robinson will check whether planning permission is needed as it is thought it is just for private use.

Questions

Place standard toolkit – *can the survey assist with access to employment and support for bus services?*

The aim is to get more services for the Eden area and amongst other tasks change the legislation about sharing school transport.

Closure of Langwathby Station toilets – *will they come back into use?*

The toilets were tied in with the café, which has been sold to new owners, so the facility has gone.

Written reports are posted to the parish council website.

3. Election of Committees/working groups

It was recommended at the last meeting of the DGP (Development, Governance & Personnel) that it should return to being a working group that meet as required. However, the Staffing Committee should remain as a standing committee. Membership of each to remain the same.

Staffing Committee and working group for Development & Governance - Cllrs Bondi, Davies, Martin, Miller, Monk, Robinson & Robertson.

Election of Council representatives

Alston Area Planning Team – Cllr Hanley

Alston Moor Community Transport – Cllr Hanley

Alston Moor Emergency Resilience Group – Cllrs Grew, Edgar & Ransom

Alston Moor Fitness Club – Cllrs Best & Davies

Alston Moor Partnership – Cllr Bondi

Alston Moor Traffic Management Group – Cllr Grew for Garrigill, Cllr Ransom for Nenthead and Cllr Miller for Alston.

NWAS Alston Moor Working Group – Cllrs Grew & Ransom

Tree Wardens – Cllrs Robinson & Davies

Tyne Willows Management Board – Cllrs Best, Robinson & Robertson.

4. Public participation

A question was asked about the agenda item to discuss not renewing the HR agreement at the end of the 3 year contract.

It was explained that a decision had not been made yet, but that members had concerns about the cost for a small council with part-time staff. If the council were larger and employed more staff employing an HR company might be more relevant. The company was contacted only once last year for a minor task.

5. Progress reports

5a/JUN/23 Meeting with architect to discuss housing proposals for Alston Primary School

Re: 5f/MAY/23 Cllrs Bondi, Martin and the clerk met with the architect last week and were shown the proposals for housing on the site. A planning application has since been submitted. The meeting was positive, and the proposals respect the original façade of the building. The architect mentioned that his client might be willing to consider some social housing as it was explained that there is a shortage of housing suitable for the elderly and young people.

Cllr Bondi reported that the architect was willing to listen to thoughts about the project and was interested in the community and what might work in it. She suggested an Alms House Trust model and has explored options without finding anything suitable. Also discussed was the use of environmentally sustainable items such as photovoltaic panels.

The clerk added that a brief discussion had been held about affordable housing. Several years ago, the field beyond the old primary site owned by the Fairhill Estate Charity and currently leased, was identified as suitable for affordable housing if the access could be improved. The architect mentioned that the proposed track and turning circle could possibly be extended to provide access to the field.

As several cllrs were unable to attend the site meeting and a full planning application has been submitted based on the plans shown during the site visit it was:

Resolved to request an extension to enable the council to comment and to invite the architect to the next council meeting with the plans. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Martin. (nem con)

5b/JUN/23 Financial Review draft management plan meeting

Cllrs Monk, Robinson and the clerk met to work through the recommended action plan, which was circulated before the meeting along with an updated draft Financial Regulations. If acceptable to full council, it will be returned to TIAA and the Financial Regulations put for approval to the July meeting. The only other action is to approve a Scheme of Delegation. TIAA recommended that the charities are dealt with separately and have forwarded a couple of drafts for consideration.

Resolved to accept the action plan and forward to TIAA. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

5c/JUN/23 Tree survey update

Re: 23b/MAY/23 Cllr Davies and the clerk met with the contractor to ask that two trees in Henderson's Wood be included in the survey. This was agreed but we are still waiting for the update.

Alston Moor Federation (AMF) have also completed the survey for Tyne Willows, which was circulated earlier.

Once both surveys are complete the council will need to discuss what, if any, work is required as a priority. Noted.

5d/JUN/23 Nenthead Ward Vacancy

Re: 2/MAY/23 A reminder that there is a vacancy for a Nenthead councillor who can be appointed by co-option. It was agreed to hold over the vacancy for one month to see if anyone living within the Nenthead ward might be interested.

5e/JUN/23 Appointment of parish clerk/RFO

Re: MAY/23 Three applications were received for the position of parish clerk and Cllrs Hanley, Robinson Monk and the clerk met to determine the interview process. Interviews will be held on 13th June by the three Cllrs and the clerk, who was asked to join the interview panel. As the Staffing Committee TOR do not give delegated powers for decision making, it is requested that the interview panel are delegated to make the appointment.

Resolved to allocate delegated powers to the interview panel to appoint a replacement parish clerk. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Davies. (9+ 4 abs).

6. Reports from representatives

6a/JUN/23 NWAS working group.

Cllr Grew reported that no meetings were held.

Members were concerned about the lack of information as they were aware that the EMTs had not received training, or the patients/relatives asked to fill in a short questionnaire which was to be collated and the results considered after 6 months. The ambulance has been taken away, possibly for repairs but there was no information about this other than the repairs needed were substantial.

Cllr Ransom reported that he had contacted NWAS about holding another meeting, and asked Cllrs Grew and Monk (who attends meetings as a CFR) if they would also e-mail the request to NWAS and Neil Hudson MP.

Resolved to ask the working group members to progress, stating that sustainability, maintaining training and promotion of CRF are needed.

6b/JUN/23 AMRDG

Cllr Martin reported that along with other members of the group she had worked with the University of Cumbria on a lottery bid which has now been submitted. There were no recent meetings.

6c/JUN/23 Nenthead Ward

Cllr Ransom reported on the meeting:

Miners Arms – a number of people would like to see the public house taken on as a community asset and are concerned about the planning application to change from commercial to residential. They challenged the assertion made that there is another public house in Nenthead, which is inaccurate as The Crown only operates as a restaurant. The question is whether it is viable for the community to run The Miners Arms and raise the funding to buy it. These issues are being looked at, and there are sources of grant funding for community assets.

The clerk asked if anyone had sent in the application to apply to add the Miners Arms to the Community Asset list held by WFC. The parish council could make an application if it resolved to, but as the community has already collected signatures it would be faster if this application could be sent.

Cllr Hanley reported that there are various models for running a community pub, and one of the WFC cllrs is involved in his area so might be worth talking to. He offered to discuss this with the WFC cllr.

It was suggested that it would be a useful exercise to put together a leaflet drop to find out if Nenthead residents would support a community pub.

Resolved that Alston Moor Parish Council would be willing to support a leaflet drop. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

Litter bin – an officer from WFC is willing to meet with Cllr Ransom to look at a possible site for the litter bin, but this will have to wait until after Appleby Fair. **Action** Cllr Ransom to advise on availability.

6d/JUN/23 Traffic Management meeting

Cllr Grew gave a detailed report from the Traffic Management meeting. (*Written report included as an appendix to the minutes and posted to the website.*)

To action – agenda item 10.

6e/JUN/23 Tyne Willows Pavilion Defibrillator

Cllr Monk reported that anyone using a defibrillator on a child should have had specialist training, as different energy is required depending on age. Generally, over 14s would use an adult pad. Children under 14 would not normally suffer a cardiac arrest therefore it is not deemed necessary to have a defib for children

and adults. A couple of suggestions for models have been put forward and a decision can be made at the next meeting. **Action** – agenda for next meeting. **CI**

7. Planning applications

7a/JUN/23 23/0313 Variation of conditions 4 (to update the current location of the warden's caravan), 9 (provision of a schedule of caravan finish and colour scheme for future replacement caravans) and 10 (landscaping), attached to appeal APP/H0928W/223297896 LPA ref 22/0090. Horse and Waggon Caravan Park, Nentsberry, Alston CA9 3LH for Mr Mark Southerton.

An e-mail was received from the Nentsberry Residents Group with concerns that there was no new planting planned at the site boundaries to re-instate the screening lost over the years.

Recommended for approval while acknowledging the concerns from residents that not enough planting has been done by the site owners. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Bondi. (10+ 3 abs)

7b/JUN/23 23/0350 Full application Insertion of a conservation roof window into north-facing roof slope and reduction in height of a redundant chimney stack. Arch House, Front Street, Alston CA9 3QW for Mr James Condon.

Recommended that permission for the reduction of height for the chimney stack should be granted, but as the proposed window faces the street, and other properties were refused permission for similar applications within the Conservation Area, this should be taken into consideration. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (9+ 4 abs)

Concerns were raised about the planners not taking parish councils' comments seriously.

It was noted by the WFC cllrs that about 200 applications are received per month, with 4 – 5 referred to committee mainly due to objections from parish councils. It is important that someone from the council attends the meeting to speak on behalf of the parish.

A couple of issues were flagged up – the possibility of being accused of bias when supporting residents and whether transport costs should be re-imbursed. Agreed to add to the August agenda. **Action CI**.

8. Water & Abandoned Minerals Mines (WAMM) project update

Cllr Ransom reported that over the past months there have been several meetings and consultations with the Coal Authority and Environment Agency. Defra is financing the process, but many in the community remain concerned about the disturbance to the village and to wildlife. The proposed works are an industrial process involving the use of hydrogen peroxide to prevent the smell of sewer gas. The Nenthead Mines trustees have signed a 100 year lease for the use of their site. It is understood that the Priorsdale Estate has not signed up yet, and a meeting has been arranged to try to persuade them to refuse permission.

Resolved to set up a working group with Cllr Ransom, Robinson and Robertson with the authority to co-opt people from Nenthead with specific knowledge, but to refer to full council for any decisions. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Grew. (nem con)

9. Ownership of Nenthead Fountain – decision on whether to progress a request for a Memorandum of Agreement with WFC

The clerk reported that a decision on this matter was held over until the new council was in place. To date no information on the ownership has come to light, and an inspection of old council minutes from the 1980's indicated that there was no clarity at this time, but the council went ahead with renovating the fountain using a grant from Eden District Council. As the fountain is within the highway verge it is not possible to apply to the Land Registry for adverse possession, so the way forward, if the council wishes, is to ask WFC to progress a Memorandum of Agreement.

Members expressed concern about the potential liability should the council formally take on responsibility for the fountain and suggested that an independent group might find it easier to obtain grants if they were to take on ownership. A question was asked about the fountain in Middleton-in-Teesdale and the background to how the parish council obtained ownership.

Resolved to nominate Cllrs Robertson and Robinson to visit the parish clerk in Middleton-in-Teesdale to enquire about the ownership history of their fountain. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Robertson. (nem con)

10. Request from Traffic Management meeting to discuss improvements to car parking on the east of Garrigill Village Green

Cllr Grew reported that she asked highways to re-tarmac and white line the parking area besides the village green, which is leased by the parish council. Highways said no as they do not own the site. She also asked the Catholic Trust, who were also unwilling and suggested grassing it over.

A request was made at the Traffic Management meeting for rough costings to redo the tarmac and white lines.

Members suggested that a cheaper option might be to put loose gravel on top of the tarmac.

To discuss at a future meeting when an indication of the potential cost is received.

11. Dog fouling issues in Garrigill and Garrigill memorial

Cllr Grew reported that, now Garrigill has a 30mph speed limit, the village is included in the law requiring dogs to be kept on a lead and dog poo picked up. This has led to altercations between residents and involving WFC officers and police. WFC have put up signs, but it is difficult to get some people, including visitors, to comply. The dog warden has offered leaflets which will be dropped off at the Town Hall. Clerk to notify Cllr Grew when they arrive. **Action CI**

12. Consultations & Correspondence

12a/JUN/23 Correspondence – Appendix 1

No comments received.

12b/JUN/23 Place Standard toolkits

Cllr Martin reported that a survey is on-line for parish councils and residents to comment on all aspects of life and asking what we have on Alston Moor at present that is satisfactory or otherwise. It can be found on the website www.alstonmoorcommunity.com. The Area Planning Group are collating responses and hope to get as many questionnaires returned as possible. A paper version is available from AMF for pupils, the Town Hall, Nenthead shop and local post offices.

Cllr Hanley reported that along with Cllr Robinson and the clerk he met with an officer from WFC to discuss the survey questions, with the responses to be fed back to WFC.

13. Annual update to Investment Strategy

Resolved to approve the update to the Investment Strategy. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (12+ 1 abs)

14. Request to cancel HR contract at end of 3 year agreement

Resolved that the HR contract with Neathouse will not be renewed at the end of the 3 years. Proposed by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Davies. (11+ 1- 1 abs.)

15. AMPC Action Plan

The clerk reported that due to the Covid pandemic and other difficulties the council did not manage to put together an action plan during the last council term. With a new council and new clerk coming into post, it might be a good time to put something in place.

It was agreed that it would be useful to make a start on preparing an action plan for the council.

16. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£4,980.00
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£54.00
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£3,954.61

Resolved that sufficient funds are held in balances for the clerk to be authorised to pay the invoices listed in appendix 2. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Davies. (12+ 1 abs)

Note: the full list of payments is attached to the signed minutes.

17. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023

The chair led members through the list of questions on the AGAR.

Resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (12+ 1 abs)

18. Approval of the Accounting Statement for 2022/2023

Resolved to approve the Accounting Statement for 2022/2023. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (12+1 abs)

19. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business

19a/JUN/23 Invitation to Lovelady Shield Hotel opening

An invitation has been sent to all councillors to attend the opening of Lovelady Shield hotel on Wednesday 14th June at 11am.

19b/JUN/23 Alston Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan

An e-mail was received from the Conservation Officer which arrived after the agenda was circulated. The officer is willing to attend a future council meeting. It was agreed to invite her to a future meeting.

19c/JUN/23 Additions to cllrs reports

A request was made to add AMAP and AMERG as standing agenda items.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed:

Dated: