



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 4th September 2023 in Nenthead Village Hall at 7pm.

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

Apologies: E. Edgar P. Best, A. Robertson

Absent: none.

Declarations of interest: none.

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 7th August 2023 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Robinson (10+ 1 abs)

2. Update from the Community Meeting to discuss the future of the Miner's Arms

A report was given about the community meeting held to discuss the future of the Miner's Arms in Nenthead. Over 50 people attended including the owner who is keen to work with a working group and who has withdrawn the planning application for change of use. There is to be a viewing of the building next week.

A working group met a couple of times to draw up a constitution and set up a bank account. They will need to decide how to move forward and explore grant funding.

A questionnaire and survey are ongoing, both on-line and in paper format, which close next Sunday. They are open to anyone, not just Nenthead residents, to fill in and have been circulated to cycling websites as the pub was a popular stopping off point for cyclists.

It was decided not to progress the application for a Community Asset at present.

The organisers were thanked for all their efforts and members suggested the group look at other communities that have managed to buy their local pub, although they are already exploring this avenue. Cllr Hanley offered to forward information from a fellow unitary councillor. **Action MH.** Cllr M. Robinson offered advice on funding.

3. Chair & District reports

Chair's report

The chair thanked the clerk for her service to the council and presented her with a bouquet of flowers. A party has been arranged for 23rd September with all invited.

WAFC

Cllrs Hanley & Robinson reported that no meetings were held in August.

Cllr Hanley

Grant applications – an application for £12.5k has been made to WAFC for the Town Hall lift and a further £10k applied for from another charity.

Cllr Robinson

School transport – there have been issues with school transport that are taking time to sort out.

4. Public participation

*Representatives from Alston Recreation Grounds reported that WAFC community warden had been up to the recreation grounds 4 times and the police have also looked in, so the problem of dog fouling has lessened. The trustees have set aside a dog run with plans to fence it so people will have no excuse to let dogs off the lead. They asked if the council would be willing to share the cost. **Agenda for next month.***

Members thanked the two representatives on behalf of the community.

A former AMBA committee member reminded the council about the town Christmas trees as decisions will need to be made about when they are to be put up and what to charge. He suggested that householders on Front Street might be offered Christmas trees, but any new properties interested would need brackets

ordered. He is willing to assist as is the former AMBA treasurer. The council will also need to consider whether they use a contractor or volunteers for putting up the trees.

Members gave thanks for offers of ongoing support. The clerk reminded them that if volunteers were involved a risk assessment is needed which includes ladder training. **Agenda for next month.**

A representative from Nenthead Community Projects enquired about the Nenthead Fountain project and was advised that it would be discussed later the agenda.

Members of the public are reminded that the public participation session is the only part of the agenda they may speak unless invited to by the chair.

5. Progress reports

5a/SEPT/23 Tyne Willows pavilion defibrillator

Re:8/AUG/23 A defibrillator and cabinet have been purchased and fitted on Tyne Willows pavilion besides the main door. Cllr Monk has checked over the defibrillator, and the clerk registered it with 'the circuit'. It will need regular checks and both this and the defibrillator at the Town Hall have the clerk as point of contact. It was agreed that subject to confirmation the council would accept the offer from R. Sheriff to check the pavilion defibrillator. The town hall defibrillator would continue to be monitored by the parish clerk.

5b/SEPT/23 Tyne Willows Environment Agency fence

Re: 6h/AUG/23 A temporary fence has been erected around the gauging station on Tyne Willows. The clerk requested access for the council as this may be needed to check on the condition of trees enclosed within the boundary and has been promised a key for the permanent fence. She noted that one of the Jubilee lime trees was within the fenced area and that there are signs of ash die back on a couple of trees.

The fire service may also require a key should they need to use this section of the river during practice sessions.

Noted that the council may need to follow up the offer of a key with the EA. **Action.**

5c/SEPT/23 Civility & Respect Pledge & suggestion for training

Re: 15/AUG/23 The council signed up to the pledge and have been sent a certificate for the chair to sign. A training company e-mailed with details of training, and the clerk asked CALC for their view on this. In response they suggested that the NALC e-learning course might be more suitable.

Members agreed that they would prefer the full council to take part and would ask CALC about the possibility of in-house training or with other councils that have signed up. **Action.**

5d/SEPT/23 Nenthead Fountain

Re: 11/AUG/23 It has been established to the best of our knowledge that there is no record of ownership of Nenthead Fountain, other than a belief that it was given to the Nenthead Community during the mining era. The parish council has it listed on their asset register and as such it should be included in their public liability cover. An online inspection of Middleton-in-Teesdale's accounts suggests that this is the cover they have. The clerk wrote to their clerk but has not yet received a reply.

The fountain is partially situated on the highway verge and if the parish council wants a more formal agreement to establish 'custodianship' they could enter into an Indemnity Agreement with Highways. Apologies from the clerk in misleading the council last month as she had misremembered the type of agreement, but checking back on records Highways were satisfied that the council's public liability cover was adequate.

The Nenthead Community Projects group put together a report in 2021 which summarises the position at that point in time. Before any decisions can be made it is strongly recommended that council representatives are appointed, or the full council meets with representatives from the group to discuss what progress with finding potential sources of grant funding has been made and the respective roles of each organisation. It will also be advisable to take the wishes of the Nenthead community into account.

New legislation on procurement rules is going through parliament and are something to be aware of should the council be involved.

It was agreed that the Nenthead Ward councillors would meet during their Saturday surgery at The Hive on Saturday with representatives from the group. A request was made for an update on progress, a copy of the constitution and latest bank statement and any other information that would assist the council. A reminder was issued that the council must carry out due diligence before any decisions can be made.

Cllr Hanley left the meeting to attend the parish council meeting at Culgaith.

6. Reports from representatives

6a/SEPT/23 NWAS working group.

The next meeting is to be held on 22nd September,

6b/SEPT/23 Alston Cottage Hospital Working Group

There is nothing further to report.

6c/SEPT/23 Alston Moor Area Planning (AMAP)

The August meeting was cancelled.

6d/SEPT/23 Alston Moor Emergency Response Group (AMERG)

Cllr Grew has sent out a written report. Cllr Ransom reported that two generators are in place in the village halls, and the Men's Shed are restoring a trailer for the Alston Town Hall generator so it can be wheeled out easily. The steps in the building make it more of a challenge. Should there be a prolonged power cut the generators will enable people to keep warm in village hubs.

The next meeting is on 9th October at 10am. Volunteers or new trustees are needed, especially younger people able to go out to check on vulnerable people during bad weather.

6e/SEPT23 Nenthead Ward

No further issues.

6f/SEPT23 Nenthead Mine Water Treatment works

Cllr Ransom reported that an action group has been formed, Nenthead Action Group, which is looking to gather information, challenge the planned proposals and organise a protest. They have walked around the site to identify questions that will need answers. For example, the bedrock is close to the surface so there is a question about how it will be removed for the pipework. It is an EA ruling that soil cannot be brought in from other sites.

Group members have also met with Nenthead Mines representatives to ask them to go back to their trustees to revisit the decision to accept a 100 year lease on their site.

6g/SEPT23 Alston Moor Partnership (AMP)

Cllr Bondi reported that she circulated information about the Heritage week with an exhibition in the church and guided walks over 2 weekends. The AGM is on the 28th September and an appeal was made for people to come forward as directors and as volunteers to work on projects.

7. Planning applications

7a/SEPT/23 23/0306 Full application. Conversion of former Alston Primary School to create 6 no residential apartments. Demolition of existing hall and erection of 2 no semi-detached dwellings and 5 no detached dwellings with associated parking area and gardens. Former Alston Primary Site, Garrigll Road, Alston.

Recommended that:

- There is a requirement for the proposals to include energy efficiency measures such as solar panels.
- A covenant is set up to require purchasers to live or work in the local area.
- That the proposal to offer building plots for self-build is not progressed due to concerns that the first purchasers could end up living on a building site for several of years. The council requests that the five houses are all constructed within a reasonable timeframe.

Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Bondi. (9+ 1 abs)

7b/SEPT/23 23/0215 Full application. Creation of new farm track. Hudgill Rigg, Alston for C. Greenhow.

Recommended for approval subject to the implementation of highways recommendations, and that drainage to avoid discharge of surface water onto the highway is a requirement. This is to avoid the risk of accidents especially during winter frosts. Proposed by Cllr Bondi and seconded by Cllr Grew. (9+ 1 abs)

7c/SEPT/23 23/0455 Full application. Replacement of front porch with conservatory porch. 5 Clitheroe, Alston CA9 3TJ for Mrs R. Boylen.

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

7d/SEPT/23 23/0561 Full application. Proposed rear two-storey extension, additional off-street parking, roof alterations and replacement of external render with timber cladding and stone slips. 3 Wardway Foot, Nenthead, Alston CA9 3PX For Mr & Mrs Wheatman.

Recommended for approval. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Ransom. (8+ 2 abs)

7e/SEPT/23 23/0563 Discharge of conditions 3 (package treatment plant) and 4 (surface water drainage scheme) attached to approval 19/0875. Barn at High Galligill, Nenthead, Alston CA9 3LW for Mr Corti.

Recommended that condition 4 is approved, but there are concerns about condition 3 as the soakaway appears to be too close to the building in the drawings. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr. Robinson (8+2 abs)

8. Dog Fouling & Litter

Last month during the public participation session the council were asked to spearhead a campaign to raise awareness of the problem with dog fouling and litter. The clerk reported that the council had, in the past, with the assistance of the primary schools organised a poster competition for young people, with a prize for the winning entries. The standard was high, and several posters laminated and used around the town and villages. Copies of the posters were circulated.

It was observed that dog dirt and litter are a problem across Alston Moor.

Resolved to invite the SKS lower school and Nenthead primary to encourage pupils to take part in a poster competition with a prize of £25 to the winning entry for each school. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Davies. (9+ 1 abs)

9. Management of WAFC litter contract during employee holidays

Cllr Miller reported that every time the Urbaser employee is on holiday the waste bins are not emptied. The contractor's employee empties the bins every day except Tuesdays when the council waggon comes around. He has noticed an issue with the bin at Tyne Willows as it is heavily used by dog owners especially and needs emptying more often than the once a week contract.

Resolved to write to WAFC to request that the issue of emptying the town waste bins during employee holidays is dealt with and to purchase a second bin for Tyne Willows. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

10. Henderson's Garage update

Cllr Miller reported that the owners stated they would like the property to stay on the open market but would be willing to work with the council if the site remains available for sale.

11. Consultations & Correspondence

11a/SEPT/23 Correspondence – Appendix 1

No action requested.

12. Attendance at National Rural Conference

It was decided that due to the cost no-one would attend.

13. Update to parish council website

There has been an offer from Cllr Bondi to re-write the information page of the council website, which was originally written by former Cllr Phillips. It has since been modified to reflect the change to a Unitary Authority but there is scope for improvement. It would also be useful to include photos of all the councillors and if willing a paragraph or two about themselves.

Resolved that Cllr Bondi could update the information on the council's website. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Martin. (nem con)

14. Co-option of a Nenthead Ward Councillor

The clerk reported that she had included this on the agenda as a Nenthead resident had written asking about the vacancy.

15. Proposal to accept the external audit report for 2022/2023

Resolved to accept the external audit report. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Davies. (nem con)

16. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

Summary of accounts for payment:	£540.06
Summary of income received since last meeting:	£3,724.73
Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:	£2,919.13

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 Robinson and seconded by Cllr Martin. (8+2 abs)

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

17. Agenda items for next meeting, Traffic Management meeting and urgent business

The clerk reported that she had been asked how many wreaths were needed this year. It was confirmed that the council would ask for 4, one for each community.

Requests for the Traffic Management meeting included access for emergency vehicles in The Butts, issues with overhanging branches obscuring the Front Street narrows priority sign and speeding motorbikes at Lowbyer.

The meeting closed to the public to consider quotes for Garrigill Village Green car park.

18. Quotes to re-tarmac Garrigill Village Green car park

It was confirmed that Highways do not want to take on the re-tarmacing of the car park on behalf of the parish council. There were now three quotes, all to the specifications recommended by highways.

Members were concerned that that the work was over-specified.

Resolved to ask for a re-quote to clean the surface back to solids and relay 60mm tarmac. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed:

Dated: