



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 3rd April 2023 in Garrigill Village Hall at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs: R. Miller (Chair), P. Best, B. Cooper, N. English, E. Grew, M. Hanley, C. Harrison, S. Hattersley, H. Ho, G. Ransom, R. Robinson.

Apologies: Cllrs: B. Davies, A. Robertson, A. Green.

Absent: none

Declarations of interest: Cllr Best 6c/APR/23

1. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 6th March 2023 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment: re: public participation delete 'councillor's behaviour'. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (8+ 2 abs 1 -)

2. Chair & District reports

Chair's report

The chair thanked everyone for working with the council during their term of office and wished everyone who is planning to retire well for the future.

WFC

The clerk was asked to thank retiring councillor Lissie Sharp, and Cllr Hanley for their work as district councillors over the past four years.

Cllr Hanley reported on the following:

Council meeting – there was a discussion on doubling the council tax for empty and second homes, and a decision to agree the draft revenue budget to avoid cutting services.

Overview & Scrutiny – questions were asked about the use of external consultants and a proposal to develop more in-house skills. Cumberland County Council will take on children's services, all core services and waste disposal. Cllr Hanley asked about recycled plastics disposal, but this will need to be investigated. Cumbria County Council were not successful in their application to a pilot fund for electric chargers, but recently there has been top up funding of 1.9m for chargers. Of the 900 charge points across the county only 120 are in Eden.

The reports are posted to the parish council website.

Questions

Cllr Hanley hopes that new charging points will be council owned to generate income, that the same app can be used and that they are fast chargers. There is also the question of people overstaying at the charge point and whether there will be fines.

There is no update on the S106 funds missing from the development in Penrith. Until 1st April WFC met as a shadow authority so it will take time, but work is in hand.

Cllr Robinson reported on the following:

Locality Boards – are to be set up for each area and all elected Cllrs will have delegated funds to administer, with the income coming from the government. The funding for Community Grants is to be agreed, as is how they will interact with parish councils.

Planning – there is to be a strategic planning board and local planning board with 8 seats that will replace EDC's planning board.

3. Public participation

The Nenthead Ward chair requested the minutes of the ward meeting are published on the council website.

A resident asked if the council plan to do anything for the King's coronation.

It was confirmed that the council has no plans as there are several other organisations or groups and the school organising activities.

Another resident expressed concern about the use of (external) social media and the opinions expressed on postings which could for those without a broad overview discourage residents from standing as councillors.

4. Progress reports

4a/APR/23 Tyne Willows – water supply from the pavilion & defibrillator

Re: 8/MAR/23

Water supply – Alston Live have booked the playing field in July and need to know what the situation is with the water supply.

The clerk was asked to write back to explain that when the pavilion is renovated the external water supply will be re-instated, but in the meantime, hirers will need to arrange their own water supply if it is needed.

Action CI.

Pavilion defibrillator – a decision needs to be taken on which company to purchase the defibrillator and cabinet from.

Cllr Grew reported that she will ask the CFR's if a spare defibrillator could be held by the football team as a temporary measure and will consider a suitable defibrillator. **Action EG.**

4b/APR/23 Appleby Fair update

Re: 8/MAR/23 EDC (now WFC) will ensure that a message is put out stating there is no tap water available this year, as they do not generally provide water at stopping point locations. They will monitor whether any issues arise and look at options for moving forward.

The same arrangements for the recycling area can be put in place as in previous years, the bins will be emptied, locked and a couple left for general use if the council confirm they want this arrangement set up.

They do not think a meeting is necessary and will provide information on police patrols, toilet dates etc but if there are any specific issues they could be done by e-mail unless the council specifically requests a meeting.

It was agreed that WFC should be asked to provide water for travellers and horses, especially as there may be around 35 horses on the field at peak arrival time. There was no water last year, which caused upset and extra work for the police and councillors.

The council are satisfied with arrangements for the recycling area but would like a skip provided.

They do not think it necessary to meet and are happy with the suggestion to communicate by e-mail.

The clerk was asked to reply stating the points made with a copy to the WFC councillors. **Action CI.**

4c/APR/23 Dereliction of buildings update

Re: 10/MAR/23 The Enforcement Officer from Eden District Council has been in contact with property owners. The owner of the Blue Bell has stated that work on replacing the windows was postponed due to bad weather but is to be re-scheduled. The officer is due to visit and if no improvement will enable a review of the property to see if it would enable action under Section 215.

The owner of Salvin Cottage was contacted; the property is for sale and is to be re-listed. The Enforcement Officer will review it during their visit to Alston and assess any concerns about damaged glass and roof slates.

It was reported that work has started on Steel House and that work is planned for the Blue Bell.

5. Reports from representatives

5a/APR/23 Warm Hubs

Cllr Miller reported that the Warm Hub is still well attended, and residents would like it to continue. It will carry on until the end of April, with a party planned the week after Easter with Easter bonnets, music and a buffet. It is open to all.

5b/APR/23 Nenthead Ward AGM

Cllr Ransom reported that Maxine Denoual has taken over as chair, Brian Aves as vice-chair and Alex Sawyer as secretary. The meeting discussed the proposed water treatment works; it is thought the Coal Authority and Environment Agency are working better with the community. It was requested that another round-table meeting is arranged after the consultations.

There were updates from local organisations including a report on the fountain. The Hive is planning to open 7 days a week [*presumably*] in the summer; they still need to appoint a cook and have been impacted by rising costs. A building contractor has been appointed for works to the village hall.

The grit bin on John Collier's road is being misused by people putting dog waste into it. The clerk was asked to request a litter bin to discourage this activity. **Action CI.**

The next meeting will be held on 22nd May.

The clerk was asked to thank Brian Aves for his many years of chairing the ward meeting. **Action CI.**

5c/APR/23 NWAS

Cllr Grew reported that a NWAS working group was held in the morning. The response vehicle has not been rolled out yet due to equipment delays, but it is hoped to go live in the next 2 weeks. The EMTs must familiarise themselves with the vehicle and phone app, which is expected to work in the areas of Nenthead and Garrigill with no mobile phone signal. (Sat nav comes through the phone app.) It will operate with 1 EMT and a CFR who can meet them at the premises. After 6 months NWAS will evaluate the effectiveness of the car versus the ambulance and decide on which vehicle to continue with. Training for EMTs will be held on 26th April.

5d/APR/23 Proposed academy for SKS.

Cllrs Miller and Grew attended a meeting at the school held to discuss a proposal for SKS to become an academy school. Questions were asked about finance and how the school might operate in future. The academy is called Changing Lives, Learning Trust and only takes on Cumbrian schools, so was selected by the governors as one that would help and support schools in rural areas. The aim is to develop the child and support teachers, with the bonus that teachers could spend time in other schools and specialist skills could be shared across the group.

Academies are run as businesses with a board of governors overseen by directors. They lose a level of scrutiny by councils and although they can shut schools, attendees were told both schools, Nenthead and SKS, will not shut. Consultation runs until 2nd May.

6. Planning applications

6a/APR/23 23/0065 Full application. Change of use of agricultural land to equestrian and the siting of exercising area. Stonebarn Cottage, Low Galligill, Nenthead CA9 3LW for S.L. Oliver.

Recommended for approval on the condition that there is no obstruction to the public footpath. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Robinson (nem con).

6b/APR/23 23/0139 Full application. Construction of timber outbuilding. The Stables, Greenends, Nenthead CA9 3NA for Mr Benjamin Ormshaw.

Recommended for approval with the request that any trees to be felled are replaced elsewhere on the land. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr English. (10 + 1-)

6c/APR/23 23/0216 Full application. Replacement of timber framed single-glazed windows with timber frame double-glazed windows and replacement of part-glazed timber door and frame with composite door. Church View Cottage, The Butts, Alston CA9 3JU for Mr A. Robertson.

Cllr Best declared a financial interest and left the room.

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

6d/APR/23 23/0228. Tree Works (CA) Fell T1 in conservation area. Roselands, Townfoot, Alston CA9 3RL for Mr B. Davies.

As this application has only just been received the clerk was asked to request an extension.

7. Community Grant application for Nenthead Village Hall

A request was received from Nenthead Village Hall for £300 towards the cost of holding a Coronation Day party for residents from Nenthead and the surrounding area. The total cost is £600.

Resolved to approve the grant application for £300 from Nenthead Village Hall for a Coronation Day party. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

8. Request for meeting with ROW team to discuss improvement works to Isaac's Tea Trail

The clerk was contacted by the organiser for Isaac's Tea Trail who asked for the parish council's assistance in arranging a meeting to discuss improvement works that are needed for the trail. This includes work on a stile that was previously brought to the council's attention. This might be something to follow up after the new council are in post.

It was agreed to hold over to the next council meeting.

9. Firs Wood

As Cllr Green was not present it was agreed to hold this agenda item over to a later meeting.

10. Consultations & Correspondence

10a/APR/23 Correspondence – Appendix 1

No comments received.

10b/APR/23 Financial Review

The financial review by TIAA is not yet complete as the review of the Fairhill and Town Hall charity accounts and scheme of delegation is still in progress so there is no formal update. However, the clerk was advised verbally that the parish council accounts are in order, there are no missing funds, and the bank reconciliations and financial statements are satisfactory. There are some minor procedural matters that could be improved including a recommendation for members to initial the bank statements during the quarterly checks. This can be implemented straight away. The council's procedures for the sale of garden plots were also in order.

The chair and former chair confirmed that they had asked for a review to be carried out following reports on social media of inaccuracies and procedural errors and agreed that the council would implement any recommendations. The review is being carried out by an independent company paid for by Eden District Council. It was noted that some of the issues discussed on social media were from the past when many of the current councillors were not in post.

Resolved that regardless of the outcome of the review the council should let the past rest and let the new parish council get on with the tasks they are supposed to be doing without resorting to social media. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (10+ 1 abs)

11. Actions arising from the annual risk assessment

11a/APR/23 Renewal of Mill Race Contract

The contract is due for renewal this year. The contractor is required to ensure that debris from the Mill Race is removed from the silt trap on Tyne Willows and at the exit point from the enclosed section on land belonging to Moredun Garage. The contract was held by the site owner, but the council will need to consider what is to be done in future. There are health and safety issues with accessing the silt trap and it may be advisable to discuss with the Environment Agency or WFC flood team.

Cllr Hanley offered to carry out a site visit with the clerk. **Action CI.**

11b/APR/23 Condition of Tyne Willows Access Road

The ongoing issue with potholes and general deterioration of the access road was included in the risk assessment.

It was observed that potholes are always going to be an issue. The access road needs to be re-tarmacked and could be included in the plans for the pavilion extension, with WFC asked to contribute. In the meantime, the potholes need to be filled in.

Cllr Robinson offered to get prices and to report back.

Resolved that Cllr Robinson would get prices for 2 bags of gravel to be taken to the site. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Miller. (10+ 1 abs)

11c/APR/23 Timetable for clerk's retirement

The Staffing Committee met last week to review the interview pack for appointing a new parish clerk. As the clerk intends to retire at the end of August 2023 it was recommended that the post is advertised soon after Easter with the aim of taking on someone from July 2023 to allow for a handover period. The clerk has forwarded the interview pack to Neathouse for comment and once agreed it is recommended that it is advertised locally, through CALC and in the Herald.

Resolved to place a job advert in the Herald. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr English (10+1 abs)

12. Retirement of payroll administrator and replacement contractor

The clerk was advised that a discussion on a replacement contractor was held during the Town Hall meeting as it had been suggested the Town Hall treasurer might take on the work. However, as she does not have a suitable payroll programme the Town Hall's accountant is able to take over from the end of this month and will charge £5 per person, £240 + vat annually. This will be split 50/50 between the council and Town Hall.

Resolved to ask Giles Storey to take over the payroll from April 2023. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Best. (nem con)

13. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)

Summary of accounts for payment:	£700.62
Summary of income received since last meeting:	£694.43
Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:	£972.49

Resolved that sufficient funds are held in balances for the clerk to be authorised to pay the invoices listed in appendix 2 provided funds are vired from the reserves. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Ransom. (10+ 1 abs)

14. Agenda items for next meeting, Traffic Management meeting and urgent business to report

14a/APR/23 Insurance quotes

The 5-year insurance agreement with Zurich comes to an end on 31st May this year and the clerk has received 2 quotes and is waiting for a third. She asked if anyone would be willing to look through the quotes received to check that they are satisfied they cover all that is necessary, especially for the Town Hall. Cllrs English and Ransom offered to look at the quotes. **Action NE/GR**

14b/APR/23 Highways issues

The Traffic Management meeting will only follow up issues that have been reported via the Highways Hotline, so anyone noticing a problem is asked to contact them in the first instance.

14c/APR/23 Bankside erosion – Tyne Willows

A resident has expressed concern about the bankside erosion opposite Tyne Willows where trees are at risk of falling across the river. As a private landowner issue, this is not the council’s responsibility, but the clerk was asked to put up a sign advising people to beware of falling trees. **Action CI.**

14dAPR/23 Agenda item

Memorial plaque for Garrigill village green.

The meeting closed to the public to consider quotes for installing the Town Hall flagpole.

15. Quotes for installing the Town Hall flagpole

Three enquiries were received, one contractor did not follow up, the second is too busy and the third contractor would be able to do the work within the timescale for the flagpole to be ready for the King’s coronation, as two weeks need to be allowed for the concrete to set.

A further issue is that the company holding the flagpole want it out of their warehouse. It was held back as they were concerned the pole might be damaged if we had to store it in the Town Hall.

Resolved to accept the quote for £690 from J. Wright. Proposed by Cllr English and seconded by Cllr Robinson.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed:

Dated: