

ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 13th February 2017 at 7pm in Garrigill Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: T. Haldon, (Chair), D. Athey, B. Aves, J. Glendinning, P Godwin, E. Grew, C. Harrison, A. Martin, R. Miller, D. Phillips, E. Stewart.

EDC: Cllr Adrian Todd, Neil Buck, Jane Langston, Emily Baldasera and Sonia Hutchinson (CALC)

Apologies: Cllr: S. Hill, A. Green.

Absent: G. Wright.

1. Report from Emily Baldasera on modifications to Eden District Council's Local Plan and how this will affect Alston Moor.

The Local Plan was submitted last year, but the inspector has asked for a number of changes before it goes for a major consultation later this year, so parish councils are being asked if they have any significant issues. Housing requirements initially were set at 200 per year throughout the district, but at the public enquiry house builders asked for 280, while the inspector is looking for 240 per year for the duration of the plan. Penrith will take the majority, but the recommendation is to reduce the number for Alston from 89 to 72 during the plan period, a reduction from 4% of the overall total to 3%. These are target figures, and if there were to be more demand, provision could be made.

There is an issue in Alston over the number of deliverable sites, and the recommendation is to remove all but the site at Clitheroe, which could accommodate 55 houses, and the brownfield site at Henderson's Garage.

Nenthead will retain its status as a key hub to help support the school and shop, but the inspector wants a more structured approach with allocated sites. These are the Moredun's and Wright Bros. garages.

Small sites of under four properties are classed as windfall sites and would not need to be included in the plan.

Questions were invited.

EB confirmed that the allocated sites had all received confirmation from the owners that they would become available within the plan period, but she agreed to check that Wright Bros. have been consulted. Members reported that the land at Clitheroe is prone to flooding. CCC are investigating the Mill Race to see if they can alleviate the flooding problem, but water and drainage issues, unless resolved, will hold back development in Alston.

Sites on contaminated land can be developed, but sites within flood zone 3, such as the Moredun building at Nenthead cannot be included in the Local Plan.

A question was asked as to why no industrial land has been allocated. While it would be better to have a larger population, since Alston is on the borders of sustainability, people need to have work, although conversely new populations could include potential employers.

It was observed that a 1% change in the housing allocation for Alston ought to be acceptable, and that the Neighbourhood Plan could potentially identify other sites for housing outside of the local plan.

2. Consideration of Services – a discussion with Neil Buck and Jane Langston from Eden District Council on how services can best be delivered to be equitable and sustainable.

EDC agreed last year to look into the possibility of devolving services to parishes following concerns that by 2020 less funding will be available for discretionary services. Those parishes expressing interest in taking ownership of some services have been contacted to open negotiations.

Assets for Alston Moor include a number of seats, litter bins, 55 footway lights, a number of small plots of land and the public toilets. Services such as recycling, grave digging and litter collection are statutory duties so not included.

It was questioned why the Station Yard units had not been included, as Ruth Atkinson had suggested at the initial meeting that they might be used to generate income to offset the cost of running the other services. However, there are flooding issues and the parish would not want to take on a liability. NB and JL did not have an answer as to why they were not included.

It was pointed out that the parish council could not take on services without funding, and there was no desire to take on services that would be a drain on ratepayers, especially as wages in the area are generally low.

Cllr Haldon reported that the four larger councils in Eden have agreed that they want the district to treat everyone equally, and will be meeting regularly to monitor progress.

Footway lights - JL said that if the parish took on the footway lights they would put in LED bulbs with a 10-year guarantee. A question was asked about the lights programmed for decommission; would the parish be asked to take them on or would Eden take them down? NB said that figures for running them would be provided as part of the discussion. He was asked to provide details of the requirements for a maintenance contract. **Action NB**

Public toilets – it was pointed out that when the community was asked to take on the public toilets at Nenthead and Garrigill, it proved impossible to find out the correct figure for running them as they were tied up in large contracts. JL confirmed that Amey currently has the contract, but that it would be possible to transfer it, although the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981(TUPE) will apply.

Grass cutting – the contract is due for renewal in 2022, but there are complications in that some work is sub-contracted from the County Council and would be difficult to re-negotiate.

While most would like to see services provided at the same level in the future, there is much to discuss and any services the parish takes on should be revenue neutral as the council does not want to put the precept up.

Resolved to arrange a further meeting when figures are available and to discuss forming a working group to continue discussions with Eden.

3. Items for future agendas

Agenda item for the next council meeting to set up a working group to discuss devolution of services.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:

Dated: