



# ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Alston Moor Parish Council held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 in Garrigill Village Hall at 7pm.

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

**Apologies:** B. Davies, P. Best

**Absent:** none.

**Declarations of interest:** none.

## 1. Minutes

**Resolved** that the minutes of the parish council meeting held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Grew (nem con)

## 2. Discussion with Dhiran Vagdia about planning application 23/0306 former Alston Primary School

Mr Vagdia, who is the architect appointed by the site owner, explained that they have submitted a planning application with the aim of bringing the school site back into use. There will be apartments in the old school building, the school hall is to be demolished and replaced with a semi-detached building and the other end of the site will have detached dwellings providing a range of different types of accommodation. He noted that the school hall is a later extension with a roof that is not long lasting.

Last year the council suggested several possible uses for the site, including a community kitchen, garden space, a swimming pool, and almshouses but it would need someone willing to take these ideas forward. The housing development will bring value to the town, and the grass area to the front could be utilised by the community; the owner is open to suggestions.

DH is in discussion with the planners who are asking for more car parking space. This is an issue he would like the parish council to support as he does not want the entire site to look like a car park.

### **Questions**

*Is the accommodation family orientated?*

The detached houses have 3 bedrooms downstairs with the living space upstairs to take advantage of the views.

*Will the properties be affordable?*

Contact has been made with the affordable housing officer for discussions on what Alston's current need is and whether it suits the profile.

*What about energy efficiency measures such as alternative heating systems to gas, solar panels, electric charge points in the car park?*

This level of detail is to be discussed with the planners.

*Who will take responsibility for the garden?*

Possibly a Management Committee will need to be set up by the residents.

The meeting closed for public participation.

*Residents asked what was to be done about the overgrown trees alongside the road and asked if they could be crown reduced to avoid risk to property. It was explained that one has already been taken down and the tree surgeon is aware of the others affected by ash dieback. He has also been appointed to cut the grass. A question was asked about whether a covenant could be included as residents are concerned about the number of properties sold as holiday homes.*

*Drainage is another concern as flash floods can cause problems further down in The Firs. DV was asked to look at outline drainage and is interested in what has been done in the past for Alston.*

*A question was asked about timescales, and it was explained that no decision has been made as to whether the owner will develop the site himself. There is no intention to complete in a piecemeal fashion as the value for a developer is to get the scheme built. The immediate task is to get the planning application agreed.*

The council were asked about further development. It was explained that several years ago options were explored for affordable housing on land beyond the school belonging to the Fairhill Estate Charity. At the time the lower section of the field was deemed unsuitable unless the access could be improved. It might be possible through negotiation with the owner, but there are no immediate plans to progress this project. There is children's play equipment on the site which could be given back to the community, and some furniture in the school building. Any organisation that could make use of it is welcome to make contact. The meeting re-convened.

### **3. Chair & District reports**

#### **Chair's report**

The chair reported that Gala Day was a success. Appleby Fair travellers had come and gone without trouble.

#### **WAFC**

*Cllr Hanley reported on the following:*

**Eden Locality Planning Committee** – 5 items were discussed with 4 due to objections from parish councils. A new veterinary practice on Carlton Hill road although contrary to the Eden Local Plan (housing growth area) was granted on practical grounds.

**Lake Administrative Committee** – income from Lake Windermere brings in around £1.45 m per annum although around 50% goes on administration, dealing with debtors and planning matters.

**WAFC** – the Armed Forces Covenant was signed with the intent to increase support for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. 20mph zones and traffic calming have been requested outside schools, which can be discussed at the locality boards.

WAFC manage the Holehird Trust to provide grants to community organisations (former Westmorland area).

*Apologies from Cllr M. Robinson. Cllr Hanley left to attend another meeting.*

*Written reports are posted to the parish council website.*

### **4. Public participation**

*A resident reported that he heard the youth club is to be held in the Angel, which he didn't think appropriate.* Members confirmed that they had not been informed of this and would take the matter up with our Unitary councillors. There are countrywide problems with underage drinking, and possible legal implications: parish councils may not hold meetings in public houses, but it was not known if the same held for council youth clubs. Agenda for next meeting. **Action C1**

### **5. Progress reports**

#### **5a/JUL/23 Appointment of Parish Clerk**

Re: 5e/JUN/23 Interviews were held last month with Lindsay Nicholson appointed to the post. Her starting date is to be confirmed formally, but it is hoped she will be able to start on 1<sup>st</sup> September. She has agreed to an informal meeting with members to get to know everyone. Contracts and other details including the handover period with the current clerk will be discussed by the Staffing Committee.

The chair reported that he had discussed arranging an informal meeting with the new clerk to introduce her to members.

#### **5b/JUL/23 Update on Ashgill footpaths/car parking issues**

Re: MAY/23 Cllr Robertson and the clerk met with a representative from the Priorsdale Estate, a local resident and the footpath officer for a site visit to discuss options to improve access to Ashgill Waterfall. Previous discussions with the former landowner's agent to add the missing section of the access from the bridge to the definitive map in exchange for a diversion around the farm yard had not been completed. The ROW officer indicated that this may not be an option now due to the cost implications of improving access which has deteriorated since East Cumbria Countryside Project carried out work on the site. It was left that the ROW officer and Priorsdale Estate representative would continue discussions, and unless further issues arise the parish council would not need to be involved.

It was noted that informal signage indicating an alternative route to the waterfall had been erected, and that a bridge on the footpath leading to the farmhouse is in poor condition and will need to be replaced.

The issue with car parking follows concerns that the site is overused with the potential for accidents. It is suggested that it is referred to the Traffic Management meeting.

**Resolved** to refer the concerns about car parking to the traffic management meeting. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

#### **5c/JUL/23 Mill Race contract**

Re: MAY//23 The contract with Mr K. Liverick for cleaning the Mill Race has been accepted and returned for signing.

#### **5d/JUL/23 Appleby Fair/Tyne Willows report**

There were no serious issues reported over the Appleby Fair weeks other than damage to the padlock which will need to be replaced. If a suitable combination lock can be found this will avoid the cost of providing multiple keys.

One caravan remained on the field, but left when asked to by the chair, who reported that the owner had been helpful in keeping an eye on the marquees for Gala Day.

There were complaints from Alston Moor Federation about dog dirt on the field, which the chair investigated and found that the problem was mainly around the edges of the field in the long grass. It is suggested that the school contractors be asked to cut further into the field edges as this has gradually been extended over the years. There is a sign stating dogs should be kept on a lead, but this is widely disregarded.

**Resolved** to purchase a combination padlock and to ask Alston Moor Federation to instruct their contractors to cut further into the field edges. Proposed by Cllr Miller and seconded by Cllr Robinson. (nem con)

#### **5e/JUL/23 Tree survey**

Re: 5c/JUN/23 No update has been received yet. The clerk sent a request for the updated report and an electronic version last month and will re-send the request.

### **6. Reports from representatives**

#### **6a/JUL/23 NWAS working group.**

A date of 17<sup>th</sup> August has been set for the next meeting.

#### **6b/JUL/23 Alston Moor Area Planning (AMAP)**

No meetings were held this month.

#### **6c/JUL/23 Alston Moor Emergency Response Group (AMERG)**

Cllr Ransom reported that following the grant funding all the halls have had electrical work done to connect to a generator. The treasurer is ordering the generators. Both were thanked.

#### **6d/JUL/23 Alston Moor Research & Development Group (AMRDG)**

Cllr Martin reported that the lottery application for £430k was turned down on the grounds that the community was not big enough, but they are prepared to look at an application for £150k. The application was for 2 project officers to support community groups with project development.

#### **6e/JUL/23 Nenthead Ward**

No ward meetings have been held.

A WAFC officer attended a site meeting to look at the litter bin request, but the proposed site is not on the public highway, so he is considering whether anything can be done.

### **7. Planning applications**

**7a/JUL/23** 23/0306 Full application Conversion of former Alston Primary school to create 6no residential apartments. Demolition of existing hall and erection of 2 no semi-detached dwellings and 5no detached dwellings with associated parking and gardens. Former Alston Primary School site, Garrigill Road, Alston CA9 3UD for Birchtree Developments Ltd

Noted that members were pleased that the applicant is willing to consider what the community wants from the site.

**Recommended** for approval with the following points.

The application has the support of the parish council.

- The council requests that careful consideration is given to the proposals for drainage before the scheme goes ahead to reduce the risk of future flooding.
- The parish council supports the proposed allocation for car parking and do not consider additional space should be allocated. There is a concern that if the hard standing is extended it could lead to an increased risk of flooding. Historically the Mill Race has been subject to flash floods with properties below the school site damaged.
- The council also wish to request that a covenant is included restricting ownership to permanent

residents to avoid the housing stock being used as holiday accommodation.

- The council asks that the applicant is encouraged to ensure that the properties meet the highest standards of energy efficiency.

Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Martin (nem con)

**7b/JUL/23** 23/0089 Full application. Conversion of redundant barn to form additional residential accommodation to existing dwelling and addition of extensions and terrace. Loatburn Farm, Nenthall, Alston CA9 3LQ for Mr David Logan **Recommended** for acceptance. Proposed by Cllr Robertson and seconded by Cllr Robinson (10+ 1 abs)

#### **8. Purchase of Tyne Willows Defibrillator**

Cllrs Monk and Grew reported that they are undecided as to which defibrillator to get. It was agreed they would make a decision for the council to consider next month, and that the clerk would advise on the funding available. **Action DM/EG/CI**

#### **9. Proposal to set up a working group to investigate the feasibility of re-opening Alston Cottage Hospital**

Cllr Martin reported that the promises made about health services at the Cottage Hospital have not been kept. Cllr Monk confirmed that the physio service is to be taken away this week with patients having to travel to Penrith or Carlisle in future.

**Resolved** to set up a working group with Cllrs Bondi, Grew, Hanley, Martin and Monk. Proposed by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Robertson. (nem con)

#### **10. Garrigill Village Green car park – proposal to obtain quotes to repair the tarmac and white lines**

WAFC have forwarded rough costs for repairing the tarmac and white lines for the village green.

**Resolved** to obtain quotes for repairing the tarmac and white lines for Garrigill Village Green. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

#### **11. Ownership of Nenthead Fountain**

Cllr Robertson reported that a meeting has been arranged with the parish clerk from Middleton-in-Teesdale to see if they have any information that could assist the Nenthead Fountain project. Agenda for next month.

#### **12. Proposal that councillors attend a training session on planning matters**

The request was for a planning officer to carry out an in-house training session with the aim of improving members' knowledge of the planning system and to improve the response to planning applications.

**Resolved** to invite a planning officer, and the conservation officer, to a training session. Proposed by Cllr Grew and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

#### **13. Co-option of Nenthead Councillor**

As no-one has come forward from Nenthead who is interested in joining the council the vacancy can be advertised more widely.

#### **14. Community Grant application from Alston Football Club**

The application has not been submitted yet.

#### **15. Consultations & Correspondence**

##### **15a/JUL/23 Correspondence – Appendix 1**

No comments received.

##### **15b/JUL/23 WFC Community Grant Fund**

Information on the grant fund was forwarded.

#### **16. DGP meeting date to review council policies including Community Grants policy & Staffing Committee meeting**

The clerk was asked to suggest a date for meeting. **Action CI.**

*Cllr Ho left the meeting.*

#### **17. Approval of update to Financial Regulations**

**Resolved** to accept the update to the Financial Regulations. Proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Miller. (nem con)

**18. Proposal for the new parish clerk to open a Unity Trust Bank multi-pay card account**

The clerk reported that it was decided last year not to proceed with setting up a multi-pay card for her as she would be retiring. The intention is to replace the debit card with HSBC to enable payments to be made through Unity Trust that currently cannot be paid by direct debit. This will enable the council to close the HSBC account to reduce bank charges and consider the best alternative to maximise income.

**Resolved** to go ahead with setting up a multi-pay card with Unity Trust when the new clerk is in post. Proposed by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Miller. (10+ 1 abs)

**19. Accounts for payment (Appendix 2)**

<i>Summary of accounts for payment:</i>	£626.21
<i>Summary of income received since last meeting:</i>	£184.01
<i>Summary of accounts paid since last meeting:</i>	£1,136.63

**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 Miller. (nem con)

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

**20. Agenda items for next meeting and urgent business**

To include an update on the Nenthead Mines Water Treatment works and to add the Hospital Working Group to reports.

*The meeting closed at 9 pm.*

Signed: .....

Dated: .....