



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held in the held **Garrigill Village Hall** on Monday 2nd September 2024 at 7.00pm.

Councillors Present:

Alice Bondi, Elaine Grew, Raymond Miller, , Alastair Robertson, Ron Robinson;

Holly Ho, Alan Green, Michael Hanley, Brian Davies, Alix Martin, Paul Best

In Attendance: Carrie Pillow, Mary Robinson (W&F UC)

Public Present: 4

Public Participation (Timed item 15 minutes)

This is at the Chair's discretion and no decisions can be made on items brought to the attention of Alston Moor Parish Council under this item.

GVH Village Hall seeking assistance to improve play area

APCM/2425/74. To receive **apologies & consider approval of the reasons** given for absence

Dee Monk, Elaine Edgar, Brian Davies

APCM/2425/75. To receive **declarations of interest** in items on the agenda.

None

APCM/2425/76. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on

5th August 2024 – **Resolved** to approve

APCM/2425/77. To note councillor vacancy & review any co-option candidates

1. To consider co-option candidate - **Noted**

APCM/2425/78. Chair's Report To receive for information a verbal report from the Chair

None

APCM/2425/79. Council To Receive Reports (If Any):-

Written reports received will be placed in the appendix of the minutes, verbal reports will not be minuted.

Westmorland & Furness District Councillors' Report – Attached to July Minutes

Police Report - Appendix 1

Nenthead ward meeting update - Appendix 4

APCM/2425/80. To receive reports from **Committees, working groups & consider** any actions required

i. Committee

Development, Governance & Personnel (DGP) – which includes staffing

None

ii. Group Representatives

The Alston & Fellside Place Action Group - Next Meeting 19/9/2024

APCM/2425/81. To **Consider** Matters arising, and actions required

1. Ongoing – Nenthead Fountain – **Ongoing** awaiting official confirmation from W&F
2. W&F - a list of historical "assets" – Gathering of evidence - **Ongoing**
3. Christmas Lights / Pat testing cost / Recharge Charge - **Resolved** to approve £50 for 22 / 23 / 24 (£150.00)
4. Benches for removal – **Ongoing** MH to review hedge that needs cutting near bench that needs removing.
5. Sites for New Benches – **Ongoing** – to place on FB for public input
6. Bollard's – **Ongoing** – The bollards outside the Co- Op are being taken to the TM but Mary Robinson Unitary Authority Councillor said she would take it to WAF.
- 7.
8. Election of two Directors for the CALC Board - Eden Area - **Noted**
9. Local Plan response, for approval - **Resolved** to approve Appendix 2
10. W&F, response to letter - **Resolved** to approve Appendix 3
11. EO public meeting for MP – **Ongoing** to check when MP surgeries are

APCM/2425/82. To **Discuss Planning Applications & Consider Response** as a **statutory consultee**.

None

APCM/2425/83. FINANCE REPORTS:

1. Current Balance of the Community Account as at 26/8/2024 – **145202.54**
2. To consider payments for Approval
LCC £1555.80
£3570 Annual Donations to VH split into 7donations of £510ea
ATH/NHVVH/GVH/TWPAV/FHRG/GPA/NHPA
3. To approve any payments required between meetings.
HRCE £431.47 – after clarification
4. Additional Bank Signatories
Cllrs details requested to add signatories.

APCM/2425/84. To **note** the status of **assets & consider** any **action** required.

Tyne Willows Playing Field

Village Seats

Notice Boards

Firs Woodland Walk

War Memorials

Defibrillators

Pavilion

Bus Shelters

Footway lighting

No issues **Noted**

APCM/2425/85. To **note** the status of **Open spaces / Trees & consider** any **action** required.

Path Sign – **Ongoing**, councillors to agree wording

APCM/2425/86. To **Note Correspondence** Received

None

APCM/2425/87. To consider items for the **Next Meeting Agenda**

Nenthead Fountain

Path sign

APCM/2425/88. To consider any Councillor or Officer **Training**.

None Noted

APCM/2425/89. Date and Time of Next Meeting

7/10/2024

APCM/2425/90. **Exclusion of Press & Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**

1. Resolve to close meeting
Resolved
2. Ongoing - Position of Clerk and or RFO
Role to be split
Town clerk at 15 Hours a week & RFO at 4 Hours a week
Locum clerk to complete contracts
3. To discuss Tyne willows pavilion lease
Internal works to go ahead as agreed.



ALSTON MOOR Police Update for SEPT 2024 Parish Council Meeting

CRIME FIGURES Crime figures can be obtained via the Cumbria Police

Website: <https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Your-Area/Your-area.aspx>

Alternatively use the following link: <https://www.police.uk/>

INCIDENTS OF NOTE during the month of AUGUST 2024

Burglary & Theft

ALSTON – Professional shoplifter incident at COOP – 5th

ALSTON – Late night ATM burglary again at The Spar garage causing much damage – 11th

ALSTON – Shoplifting incident at Hi Pennine shop – 29th

Damage

ALSTON – Angel Inn damaged during public order incident – male arrested – 18th

.

Sheep & Poaching issues / Wildlife / Suspicious

ALSTON – Dog bite incident at Tyne Willows – 24th

Safeguarding Issues

GARRIGILL – Domestic Incident – 6th

ALSTON – Sexual offence at Fairhill (suspect & victim both children) – 6th

ALSTON – Suicidal homeless male at Railway Station – 16th

ALSTON – Domestic Incident at The Angel Inn – 16th

ALSTON – Historical sexual offence reported – 17th

GARRIGILL – Domestic Incident involving visitors to the area – 21st

ASB & Neighbour issues.

None Reported

Road Traffic Issues.

GARRIGILL (Middleton Rd) – Vehicle reported spun and abandoned in the road – 3rd

ALSTON – RTC followed by couple involved having a reported domestic – 3rd

ALSTON – Male from reported domestic incident – vehicle seized uninsured driver – 7th

Assault / Violence

None Reported

LOCAL POLICE UPDATE METHODS:-

Cumbria Police website www.cumbria.police.uk

Appendix 2

Question 1: Thinking about our places / where you live...

A. What do you like about it?

We have a beautiful landscape, which is environmentally interesting. It is a quiet, peaceful, area with clean air. There is also a great community.

B. What do you think needs to change?

There must be an end to the ongoing loss of services and opportunities for employment. More affordable and social housing is essential, and we need more jobs of all sorts. We must have our full range of health services reinstated. Regular and appropriate buses are urgently needed.

C. What do you think needs to be protected?

The landscape and particularly the native local wild flowers (wonderful 'hay meadow' road verges and much more), local birds and wildlife, peatlands. There is concern that some shooting estates may be implicated in the deaths and disappearance of certain birds such as red kites and hen harriers, and more rigorous protection is essential. Our services of all sorts need to be protected. Our historical heritage needs fuller protection – we have already lost most of our cobbles/setts on Alston Front Street despite promises to restore them all, and there are many smaller aspects of heritage such as milestones that must be protected.

Question 2: How can the plan support high quality design in new development?

It must be ensured that housing and other building is congruent with what is already here, using traditional materials as far as possible. It is not necessary for building to be in the same style as in the past, but new styles which 'fit' with what is already here would be welcomed. Endless identikit houses are not what we need.

Question 3: How can the plan reduce our carbon emissions?

Decent, useable, public transport would massively reduce the amount of fossil-fuel-burning by cars. Solar (photovoltaic) panels (with appropriate battery storage and inverters) should be required on all new buildings. Support in a variety of ways for means of sustainable methods of heating and/or insulation in hard-to-heat old homes would be welcome, and for the installation of such panels on existing buildings. Grants for these things are clearly essential. More electric charging points for cars are clearly essential across Alston Moor.

Question 4: How can the plan conserve and enhance our wildlife and nature?

Proper environmental impact surveys must be required, and planning permission ONLY given to development that is designed to have a positive impact on nature. Such assessment should pay attention to wildlife corridors.

Question 5: How easy is it for you to regularly enjoy natural space?

It is not difficult per se on Alston Moor, but far more work is needed on the maintenance of footpath rights-of-ways, which in many places are becoming hard to walk. More benches in various places, including along Alston Front Street and other steep and well-used routes, would be very helpful for those with mobility issues.

Question 6: How can the plan address flood risk?

Obviously, sensible choices of sites for new building should be taken for granted, including not being permitted on flood plains. Taking action to prevent drainage of peatlands and the canalising of existing streams and rivers, and rewiggling streams that have been canalised in the past, would lessen potential problems resulting from major rain storms and sudden snow melt. More thorough and regular maintenance of drains etc would prevent street flooding in particular.

Question 7: Where should new housing be built?

Establishing the capacity of water supply and drainage is crucial before any site is approved for development. Generally, new building should be in or on the edges of existing settlements, and on brownfield/greyfield sites. The exception would be the rebuilding, on the same footprint, of derelict houses, when the owner wishes to do so.

Question 8: What types of homes do we need?

Alston Moor urgently needs social housing for rent, affordable housing to buy, and homes suitable for single people (with at least a minimal second bedroom to allow for visitors and/or carers) as well as for couples and families. It is essential that new development is for local people with covenants so houses cannot be sold as holiday homes or for airbnb. Some houses should be built with office/workshop accommodation so people can run small businesses from home and/or work remotely.

Question 9: What should be done to create and keep wealth here?

For our area to prosper, we need adequate housing, fast broadband, and good road and rail links. Good employment possibilities for local people must be created, and local businesses should be encouraged to employ local residents. Similarly, national businesses that function locally – like the Royal Mail, Spar and Cumbria Health for our GP practice – should be urged to ensure local people are given preference for employment. We believe that Westmorland and Furness Council should implement specific local 'arms' of their work on Alston Moor, employing local people.

Question 10: Where should new employment development be built?

We most definitely need new employment development on Alston Moor, alongside new housing. It is essential to grow the population to ensure service provision, thriving schools etc. The Skelgillside area is already zoned for businesses and more units could be built. It is essential that the Council supports the new development at the old High Mill site.

Question 11: What would make you visit our town centres more often?

Good cafés and restaurants, and craft workshops that can be visited, are among the key provision for Alston town centre to thrive. Better parking facilities are needed in the town centre. We hope for renewed support for a revived Alston town centre market.

Question 12: How easy is it for you to move around and get to where you want to go?

It is not easy for Alston Moor residents unless one has a vehicle. There is no bus service between Garrigill and Alston. It is an absurdity that the only bus service that links Alston Moor with the rest of Westmorland and Furness only functions for a few long weekends each summer; a bus to link to the rail stations at Langwathby and Penrith, and to more major shopping possibilities in Penrith, would make a great deal of difference. The bus to Haltwhistle, which does at least go daily Monday to Friday, arrives too late for anyone wanting to get the train from Haltwhistle to Carlisle or Newcastle for work or college and the last (of three) return journeys is far too early for such use. Buses to Brampton and Carlisle run a mere twice weekly.

There is a major problem concerning school transport. There is currently no guarantee that the school bus serving William Howard School, Brampton, will take all the children wishing to attend, as it may be filled with children from their catchment area, who get priority and Alston Moor children simply have to hope they will be allocated a seat on the 'Spare Seats' scheme. Quite apart from those in Years 7 to 11 choosing to go there from Alston Moor, it is our designated sixth form (Years 12 and 13) as Samuel King's School (our secondary school) only goes to Year 11. Some choose to go to Carlisle College, and transport to there is problematic. We are glad that the bus taking 16-19 years olds to Durham New College is secure for now, but the courses there do not suit everyone. Children attending from Garrigill, Nenthead and Weardale, and those going to William Howard School in Brampton, are unable to participate in after-school activities unless they have parents able to collect them. The same problem exists for local children during the school holidays, when to reach activities in Alston (for those not living within walking distance) or further afield requires a parent who has a vehicle and the free time to transport them.

Question 13: What infrastructure improvements do you think the area needs?

Public transport is one of the infrastructure elements that urgently needs improvement. The hospital-based services we were promised when the local cottage hospital beds were closed, including the video-conferencing facility for follow-up hospital appointments, really must be established. There are even endless bureaucratic problems about providing private medically-based services there. Reinstatement of the minor injuries unit at Alston hospital is essential.

Question 14: How can we make our places healthier?

If there were more services at the hospital, so people can get the help they need when they need it, many individuals could be healthier and would not become urgent cases.

Question 15: How well do facilities and services in your place meet your needs?

Most key health services have been lost or downgraded over the last decade. We had a local ambulance, now removed, and we are dependent for the most part on Community First Responders whose skill is not recognised through payment. Our hospital no longer has beds, and the range of services promised to be continued after bed closure are for the most part not available. The two hospital beds in our local care home are well-used but inadequate, and more beds are needed, with local nursing provision. There is no provision locally for older residents needing dementia care, nor do we have the step-down beds available for people coming out of acute hospital beds (hence contributing to the 'bed-blocking' problems in acute hospitals). We need proper provision for end of life care.

Question 16: How easy is it to meet and spend time with other people?

We are lucky to have people willing to volunteer to organise and staff a winter warm hub, the social day unit, film club, etc alongside a plethora of clubs and societies. However, this is the same people undertaking many different rôles and we urgently need a paid volunteer coordinator to support volunteer organisations by identifying needs and researching training and grants, and identifying ways to recruit and support more volunteers. We have to be self-sufficient, and we have Alston Town Hall and the village halls in Garrigill and Nenthead which play important rôles in the provision of events..

Question 17: Do you see yourself living and working in Westmorland and Furness in 20 years time? If not, what would encourage you to stay?

People leave, and decide not to move here, because of the lack of a wide range of health services and the considerable concerns about the speed with which emergency ambulances can arrive, which is not within the national standard. All the other services we have mentioned are crucial as well, of course.

Question 18: How can we help young people and families to stay here, and encourage those who want to live and work in the area to move here?

Among the many changes needed, the two key matters are housing provision and businesses providing employment. It is now virtually impossible to find homes and even business properties with affordable rents which are not arbitrarily increased by owners living elsewhere. We must have covenants on homes owned by local residents so they remain for local residents only and covenants are not lifted. Secure health services and a range of youth club and similar provision are also obviously essential.

Question 19: Would you like to be involved in planning the future of your local area and how can we make our consultation processes easier for you to get involved?

Please keep Alston Moor Parish Council involved in this and all other matters which affect Alston Moor.

Appendix 3

To Councillor Jonathan Brook

Dear Jonathan

Thank you for your response to our email and looking at our various concerns with the officers concerned.

We are both (Alston Moor Parish Council and Alston Moor Partnership) preparing responses to the initial Local Plan consultation, which will contribute further to the points we made at the Cabinet meeting in Alston. Several of us also came to the meeting held on the Local Plan at Alston Town Hall on 23 July. The issue of affordable and social housing is of major importance on Alston Moor and we are glad to see your intentions in this arena, and look forward to hearing more in the future.

We want to point out two things concerning the provision of buses. Firstly, you write that the failure of people to support bus services has led to their cancellation. What we feel is quite inadequately understood is that until people feel a service can be relied on – that it's not a three-month wonder – they will not plan to use it on a regular basis. There needs to be a longer-term commitment to the provision of the service in order to create a commitment among local people to using it. We do, of course, understand that the service must be economically viable, but without certainty it is hard for local people to regard it as a service they can rely on. Secondly, we feel Garrigill is overlooked in bus route provision. While we welcome the twice-weekly service from Nenthead to Carlisle, there is still no way for non-car-owners in Garrigill to get to Alston for any bus services.

Another issue mentioned (and by many who attended your drop-in session) is the problem of car-parking in Alston. Not only is this of concern to local people, most particularly those with mobility difficulties, but all too often visitors fail to find anywhere to park and simply drive through or go elsewhere. Hence, local businesses miss out on possible custom. We know this is not a simple matter to solve, but we really do hope that Westmorland and Furness will engage some expertise in finding ways to reduce the problem. Part of the cause of such congestion is that local residents, for lack of parking at their own homes, use the town centre, with vehicles sometimes immobile for many days. Could any creative solution be found?

Regarding post-16 transport, we are glad to hear that a joint meeting is planned for early in the forthcoming academic year, but we are really very concerned that the needs of all students must be considered. Not every 16 year old chooses to go to William Howard and for those attending Carlisle College, there must be a reasonable means of getting there in time. A travel bursary scheme is little use here – without other public transport – unless there are parents willing and able to give up their time to drive young people. The Durham New College bus is great (and long may it continue) but not all our 16-19 year olds choose courses available there.

We are concerned that Visit Eden's marketing on the basis of being 'on the fringe of the Lake District' makes absolutely no sense for Alston Moor. We are not on the fringe of the Lake District; we are in the heart of the North Pennines, a very different landscape and tourism experience. We appreciate that the website includes various very positive things about Alston Moor, but the constant reference to 'Alston' rather than 'Alston Moor' is odd – you would not refer to the Eden Valley as 'Penrith', surely?

We look forward to the Alston (Moor) and Fellside Place Action Group finally getting going. We do very much want to keep in dialogue with Westmorland and Furness on all the matters raised and look forward to future discussions.