



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the **MONTHLY MEETING** of Alston Moor Parish Council held on **Monday 2ND March 2026** at 19:00hrs in Alston Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Hanley, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davis, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Green, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson.

Clerk/RFO:

Claire Thomson

Members of the Public: 1 + Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC)

2526/243 To receive apologies & consider approval of the reasons given for absence

2526/244 To record all votes on every agenda item by name to make it clear what you vote whether it's for, against or abstain. It will be recorded in the minutes by your name next to what you voted for, this is in our Standing Orders, Section 3 Paragraph 5

2526/245 Declarations of interest & requests for Dispensation

1. To receive declarations of interest for agenda items – None

2. To receive dispensation – All Cllrs. have dispensation from May 2025 to April 2027, for any business relating to Alston Town Hall.

Resolved: Recorded in minutes 2526/12.3 that the Council delegates the power to grant dispensations to the Clerk. The power rests with the relevant authority under section 33(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and the basis is set out under section 33(2).

2526/246 Minutes of the Last Meetings of Alston Moor Parish Council

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2026 were considered, after some slight alterations (typographical) were done.

Motion: To authorise the chairman to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd February 2026. Proposer: Cllr. Davies, Seconder: Cllr. Edgar, Vote: Favour - Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Hanley, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Martin. Against – Cllr. Ho Abstain – Cllr. Green, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson.

Resolved: to accept the minutes of the previous meeting on 2nd February 2026.

2526/254 This agenda item was brought forward as Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) & Cllr. Hanley were to attend another parish council meetings

Westmorland & Furness Councillor's Report – Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) spoke about the proposed £60 charge for the garden waste bin which is in the pipeline. Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) advised that it was not yet known when this will happen or how it will work. Alston Moor Parish Council were advised to get comments on the proposal for reduced parish councillor numbers back as soon as possible. The Clerk said that Alston Moor Parish Council had been told to await guidance from CALC but this has not been received yet. Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) asked the Clerk to forward this to her so she could chase this up with CALC.

Cllr. Grew thanked Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) for help in dealing with reporting a serious dog attack on another dog in Garrigill.

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Cllr. Hanley reported how disappointing the settlement from central government, with a shortfall of £15 million this year and this would be £40 million in three year's time. Also, with the loss of the rural services grant of £6.5 million per year. This means the shortfall in Westmorland & Furness Councils budget will amount to £400 per household. Cllr. Hanley will be contacting our MP to contact Alison McGovern, Minister of State for Local Government regarding this.

Double council tax on second homes concerns was discussed with Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) inputted as a thought, that perhaps legislation may come in to make it possible to also raise double parish precept on such households.

Cllr. Mary Robinson (UC) & Cllr. Hanley left the meeting at 19.27hrs.

Nenthead Ward Meeting will be reported in the slot as allocated on the agenda.

2526/247

To consider matters arising and actions required

2526/247 .1 Pick a date for the Annual Parish meeting – a date of 20th April at 7pm in the main hall at Alston Town Hall was agreed.

Cllr. Grew wanted to mention that after speaking with Garrigill Village Hall representatives that the purchase of a manual grit bin was to be put on hold and be revisited in October 2026. Cllr. Green was raised concerns of responsibilities with gritting/salting areas, Cllr. Grew said the law had changed and this was no longer the case. The Clerk noted that approval for general use had been sought from Westmorland & Furness Council for the gritter purchased for Alston. Cllr. Crossley also commented that Brian Aves did not want the grit machine for Nenthead as there was not a suitable place for it to be stored and people did not want to be responsible for using it.

2526/248

Public Participation (Timed item 15 minutes) – no participation

2526/249

To note councillor vacancies & review any co-option candidates

One vacancy at Nenthead - no candidates received

2526/250

Chair's Report – no report

2526/251

Winning tender for removal of spot lights on Tyne Willows – The Clerk advised that Barry Hopper had won the tender to complete the work required on Tyne Willows. The winning tender was for £600.00. This cost included the hire of a cherry picker and was approved in the closed section of the February meeting. This will be paid from the funds set aside for Tyne Willows. The work has been completed and the final invoice has been received for £600.

Motion: to approve the payment of the invoice

Proposed: Cllr. Robertson, Seconded: Cllr. Davies Vote: Favour - Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davis, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson. Against - Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Green. Abstain – None

Resolved: to approve payment of the invoice.

2526/252

Internal Audit approval for Checkmate at a cost of £175 – a letter of engagement has been received which requires to be signed in a meeting for approval to appoint Checkmate as the internal auditor for this year's audit.

Motion: to authorise Checkmate to carry out internal audit & the Chair & Clerk to sign the letter of acceptance.

Proposed: Cllr. Bondi Seconded: Cllr. Best Vote: Favour - Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Green, Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davis, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson. Against – None Abstain – None.

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Resolved: to authorise Checkmate to carry out internal audit and letter of engagement signed by Chair & Clerk.

2526/253

Livestream for public attendance at meetings – information/guidance received from NALC/CALC – Clarification was sought from NALC & CALC and the Clerk read out the findings, which were that there was no issue with providing a livestream for members of the public to view but not participate in parish council meetings. Cllr. Ho again raised an issue that a policy would need to be created to cover this, Alston Moor Parish Council already have a substantial IT policy which covers this and it was felt that nothing more was required.

2526/254

Nenthead Ward Report – Cllr. Crossley thanked Cllr. Hanley for his Westmorland & Furness councillor fund donation to the Nenthead Warm Hub, they are planning on continuing throughout the summer as a social event as it is a perfect venue for local people to meet up with Nenthead not having any other place to meet up in like cafes or public houses. The defibrillator once again was mentioned that it needs replaced at a cost. Cllr. Monk explained that Brian Aves had refused Alston Moor Parish Council taking over the custodianship and registering it on The Circuit, which meant that Nenthead would need to apply for funding. It was suggested to Cllr. Crossley by Cllr. Monk, as the defibrillator in use at Nenthead at present is now being phased out and replacements are not available, to ask again if Alston Moor Parish Council could take this over, Brian Aves could still maintain the defibrillator, but it would be Alston Moor Parish Council that would pay for it. Cllr. Crossley will contact Brian Aves and explain this again.

2526/255

Westmorland & Furness Council draft recommendation regarding a reduction in parish councillor numbers for Alston Moor. How to respond. Mentioned in **2526/254 – Westmorland & Furness Reports** – Alston Moor Parish Council have been expecting instructions from CALC on the best approach but have not yet received anything. The suggestion of a reduction in numbers was annoying especially given our population in relation to other parishes that have fewer residents having more councillors. The geographical size of Alston Moor has not even been thought about and it was the general consensus that Alston Moor needs to retain its 15 councillors to ensure the council can work effectively.

2526/256

Samuel Kings request for sponsorship/donation – advice/guidance from CALC – Advice has been sought from CALC regarding the request from Samuel Kings School regarding sending a group of performing arts students to Disneyland Paris to perform. CALC advised that as Alston Moor Parish Council do not hold the General Power of Competence any donation must be made under a specific statutory power. In this instance the most appropriate power would be Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. To qualify for this, the expenditure must fit one of the following, in the Councils opinion; in the interests of the area or its inhabitants (or part of them), bring direct benefit to the area or its inhabitants, benefit is commensurate with the expenditure. The parish council may lawfully award a donation to a school-related initiative, providing it is not funding core educational provision, and the expenditure can be properly justified

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under Section 137. A concern was also raised at the previous meeting regarding "double taxation", CALC have advised this is understandable but is not a legal barrier. Although the parish council and school receive public funding, they are separate legal bodies with distinct responsibilities. The Clerk must get a formal written grant application, confirming how many students are within the parish, to specify what the award will be towards.

Motion: to use S137 for a donation towards the financial assistance to the school. Specified to costumes. An amount of £500 suggested.

Proposed: Cllr. Grew Seconded: Cllr. Bondi Vote : Favour - Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Crossley. Against – Cllr. Green, Cllr. Robinson Abstain – Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Davies.

Resolved: to use S137 to provide a donation once formal written grant application received.

2526/257

Email request regarding giving permission as holding the lease of Garrigill Green – The Clerk advised that she had been contacted by telephone by a couple in the process of purchasing a house off the green in Garrigill. They had come across an issue raised by their mortgage company and were seeking assistance from the parish council as they lease the green in Garrigill from the Catholic Trust. The clerk also had received an email from the couple's solicitors outlining the issue. The clerk had liaised with Cllr. Grew regarding this and responded appropriately, advising that the area in question was not leased by the parish council but had been maintained by the previous home owner and suggested them contacting the Catholic Trust for clarification that the small area of land was under the maintenance of the home owner.

2526/258

Request to support holiday club – an email had been received by the Clerk and circulated to the councillors for discussion. The free holiday club is being run by Church in the Barn together with Christians on the Moor. They are using the school and its facilities. They have asked for some financial help towards providing food, activities and rent of the school. They also understand that financial help may not be suitable. This was discussed and an agreement that they should apply for a small community grant from the parish council and suggest to them that they apply to Alston United Charities along with Westmorland & Furness for financial assistance. The clerk is to reply to them by email.

2526/259

DYL proposed on Station Road – letters of consultation have been sent to all residents from Westmorland & Furness and some feedback received is not promising, there has been a lot of objections to this despite the understanding why it is needed. It was suggested that asking Highways department at Westmorland & Furness to consider double yellow lines at the entrance up Station Road would be put on hold until the outcome of the current proposal is known.

2526/260

Committees, working groups & consider any actions required
2526/260.1 Committee – Development, Governance & Personnel (DGP) – which includes staffing –
2526/260.2 Group Representatives
Alston Moor Fitness (Gym) - None.
Alston Moor Partnership – Alston Moor Partnership Directory has been published, Cllr. Martin showed this. It was prepared by Sarah Stamford as the

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Community Development Co-ordinator. The hardcopy is in the process of being distributed to all households in Alston Moor and there is also a online version. There are plans in the pipeline for a business directory and a possible visitors directory too.

Alston Moor Traffic Management Group – None.

NWAS Alston Moor Working Group – None.

PAG (Place Action Group) – None.

Tyne Willows Management – Mole hills are becoming a problem again on Tyne Willows. Issues have been raised as to the number of them and the size of them. Need to look at getting a professional in to eradicate them.

AMERG – None.

Hospital Group – None.

Tree Wardens – None.

2526/261

Planning Applications & Decisions

2526/261.1 Applications received –

Low Park (2026/0266) approval of details reserved by condition 4 – roofing covering sample – attached to LBC 2025/0314. There is insufficient information provided in the application therefore no decisions could be made. Cllr. Ho suggested a decision of no comment can only be provided at this present time.

Motion: to provide a “no comment” response until more information is provided.

Proposed: Cllr. Grew Seconded: Cllr. Bondi Vote: Favour - Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Green, Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davis, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson. Against – None

Abstain – None.

Resolved: to give a no comment response to the consultation, asking for more information to be provided.

Park Lane View (2026/0364) self-build bungalow. Concerns were raised as to the drainage provision for this application as again there was insufficient information provided in the application documents. Again a no comment is to be submitted until more information is provided.

Motion: to provide a “no comment” response until more information is provided.

Proposed: Cllr. Monk Seconded: Cllr. Grew Vote: Favour - Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Green, Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davis, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Robinson. Against – None

Abstain – None.

Resolved: to give a no comment response to the consultation, asking for more information regarding the drainage provision.

The only member of the public left the meeting.

2526/231.2 Decisions –

The Cottage, Loaning Head – Renovation – approved

Steel House, Front Street – Retrospective – approved. Tree – no objections.

2526/262

Finance Reports & Accounts

2526/262 1. Current Balance of the Community Account as at 28/02/2026

The Clerk reported the balance of the account was £71952.04.

2526/262 2. Consider payments for approval –

Date	Total	Description	Supplier	Inv No
24.02.2026	£104.38	Maintenance	Mad Hatters Hardware	3005
24.02.2026	£734.40	Accounts renew	Scribe	INV-16149
24.02.2026	£549.00	Room Hire	Alston Town Hall	ATH2672

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24.02.2026	£60.00	Parish Seats	Alston Comm Workshop	0019
24.02.2026	£7.25	Bins	FCC Waste	P65287
24.02.2026	£18.12	Bins	FCC Waste	P66125
27.02.2026	£179.98	.Gov renewal	Cloudnext	264393

Motion: to approve the invoices for payment.

Proposed Cllr. Green Seconded Cllr. Robinson Vote – Favour Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Ho, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Robinson, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Green . Against – None Abstain – None

Resolved: Clerk to pay invoices.

2526/262 3. Approve any payments required between meetings – The Clerk advised that only invoice expected was the handyperson's.

Motion: to approve invoice from parish handyperson.

Proposed Cllr. Bondi Seconded Cllr. Davies Vote – Favour Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Robinson, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Green . Against – None Abstain – Cllr. Ho.

Resolved: Clerk to pay invoice.

Clerk requested approval to invoice Alston Town Hall Charity for work carried out by the parish handyperson. This work has been paid by Alston Moor Parish Council since June 2025 to February 2026. The work has only been carried out by the handyperson when other parish work could not be completed due to bad weather. Cllr. Ho protested saying this was not allowed but could not provide the evidence to back this up. The Clerk will check this out before invoicing.

Motion: to approve to invoice Alston Town Hall for the work(if there is no legal reason to stop this)

Proposed: Cllr. Miller Seconded: Cllr. Robinson Vote: Favour -Cllr. Miller, Cllr. Monk, Cllr. Edgar, Cllr. Best, Cllr. Robertson, Cllr. Bondi, Cllr. Martin, Cllr. Robinson, Cllr. Grew, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Crossley, Cllr. Green . Against – None Abstain – Cllr. Ho

2526/263

Note the status of assets & consider any action required

1. Meeting to be arranged for working group –Nenthead Fountain & Tyne Willows – 3.30pm 4th March Annex for Nenthead Fountain. Tyne Willows meeting to be organised.

Cllr. Green left the meeting 21.01hrs

2526/264

Note status of Open Spaces/ Trees & consider any action –

The Clerk advised that 6 companies had been asked to tender for the tree survey, but 3 had declined to tender due to being too busy, 1 hadn't provided a tender by the date requested. Leaving the 2 tenders received.

As there were no members of the public or press present in the meeting, it was decided to open the tenders for voting by recording that the **Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960** was compliant with "Exclusion of Press & Public" at this part of the meeting.

Tenders were opened and discussed. **Recorded in 2526/269**

2526/265

Correspondence – Received

1. Email received about the condition of the area of the "old ash tip" sent out to all councillors prior to the meeting. Forward on to Westmorland & Furness with the concerns raised.

2526/266

Items for the Next Meeting of the Parish Council

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- Any agenda items to be sent to the Clerk.
- 2526/267 To consider any councillor or officer training**
Cllr. Martin & the Clerk attending course on Assertion 10 on 11th March.
- 2526/268 Date and Time of Next Meeting – 7th April 2026 at 7.00pm.** Meeting to be held at Annex, Alston Town Hall.
- 2526/269 Exclusion of public & press (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**
Resolve to close the meeting to the public.
- 2526/270 Close Parish Council Meeting (& Exclusion of public & press)**
Meeting closed 21.12hrs
- 2526/271 Open Fairhill Estate Charity Meeting**
- 2526/242 Close Fairhill Estate Charity – 21.24hrs**

Please note: all Parish Council meetings are open to members of the Public.

Chair Signature: R Miller Date: 7 4/2026

Clerk Signature: Clare Harrison Date: 7/4/2026