

ALLENDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Agreed Minutes meeting of Allendale Parish Council on Thursday 6 November 2025 at 7pm

Present: Present: Cllrs Coulson (Vice-Chair & Meeting Chair), Beck, Charlton M, Dalton, Dunn, Foster, Jackson, Kirk, Swaile, White, Mrs Naylor (Clerk).

1 Welcome and councillor news

2 Public participation

There were four members of the public in attendance.

3 Apologies for absence

Cllrs Archer, Charlton S and Dobson. Co Cllr Horncastle had also indicated he would not be attending.

4 Declarations of interest

No new declarations, a list may be found here

<https://northumberlandparishes.uk/allendale/documents?search=declaration&type>All&year%5Bvalue%5D%5Byear%5D=>

5 Planning applications

25/03451/FUL Redevelopment of land and buildings at Sipton Mine to create 3no dwelling houses at Land At Sipton Mine South West Of Sipton Terrace Sparty Lea

A member of the public who was present expressed various concerns. Then there followed a general discussion in which objections that had already been made on the planning portal were discussed by the parish council. Several concerns emerged from that discussion: water supply would not stretch to another three dwellings; single track road with difficult passing and difficult visibility exit; query as to how the building work could progress without use of heavy machinery as stated; mud on the road; barn owl and two species of bats had been noted but there was also a colony of mining bees and there may be impact on them from the building work; high lead pollution; there is a mine-shaft very close to the semi-detached dwelling; no notification had been given to the houses at Tedham Green and there did not appear to be a notice on the site itself; inadequate parking provision.

Cllr Kirk proposed the motion to object in accordance with Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy 1 - impact on AONB, not in-keeping, adverse effects, amenities, also construction disturbances and Policy 8 - impact on species and habitat (Policy 8 is also cross-referenced in Policy 1). This motion to object was seconded by Cllr Swaile and unanimously carried by the council.

25/03288/LBC Listed Building Consent to replace frames and roof to existing rear Conservatory at Peth House The Peth Allendale Northumberland NE47 9ND

Cllr Dunn noted that in 2002 permission had been granted to add a conservatory which was timber-framed in a Victorian greenhouse style, stating that the current application proposes an aluminium frame and has large panes of glass, contravening ADNP Policy 9 – Extension to Dwellings, bullet points (i) and (ii). Cllr Kirk noted that, on the other hand, the wood of the existing conservatory is rotting and it is also single glazed.

Cllr Beck proposed the motion no objection to the application (subject to the above comments being noted). This was seconded by Cllr White and seven councillors voted in favour of the motion of no objection. Cllr Dunn against. Cllrs Swaile and Foster abstained.

6 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2025

Miss Fairless had been in touch with the Clerk to note that two crashes had been mentioned at the meeting. All agreed to add a note to that effect. The minutes were then unanimously approved.

7 Matters arising

None.

8 County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Not in attendance.

9 Council general

To seek approval to go with Hugo Fox for the new website using the domain name allendaleparish.gov.uk in accordance with current government regulations

Cllr Kirk gave an update on the trial of the website which offered more flexibility, was currently the most cost effective offering and was easy to use. Cllr Kirk proposed that the parish council proceed with Hugo Fox for the new website. This was seconded by Cllr Swaile. Unanimously agreed. Cllr Kirk proposed that the parish council apply for the domain name allendaleparish.gov.uk. Seconded by Cllr Beck. Unanimously agreed.

10 Allotments

Update re boundary hedge cutting following Cllr Archer's conversation with resident – Cllr

Foster reported that the owners of the neighbouring property are happy with a height of seven foot. It was agreed to keep the internal hedge cutting at the quoted six foot. Clerk to let Matty Robson know.

11 Affordable Housing

Cllr Kirk noted that survey report has not been issued to CCHA yet and it was hoped to be ready for the December meeting.

12 Cemetery

No issues.

13 Rights of Way & Access

Committee-led discussion of current issues (20 minutes)

Cllr Beck began the discussion and introduced Mr John Rookes of Hexham Ramblers pathway maintenance group.

1. **Publicity** – it was the landowner's legal responsibility to maintain rights of way and pathway furniture such as stiles (but not bridges or broadwalks). However, it seemed that some landowners may not be aware of this. There was also a need to raise awareness that FixMyStreet is to be used by users of the paths for reporting problems. Cllr Beck proposed that the ROW sub-committee create content for a longer article (or open letter), an associated Facebook post and a poster for notice boards. Cllr Kirk suggested that this could focus on the FixMyStreet reporting aspect, explaining, at the same time, that the NCC Footpaths Officer would then notify the landowner whose responsibility it is to effect the repair. It was agreed that the sub-committee should work on draft publicity and bring a proposal to the December meeting.
2. Cllr Beck outlined a footpath improvement plan based on an experience in another small parish Acklington (500 people, 20 footpaths). In Acklington, a small group of volunteers had cut back vegetation with landowners' permission, their insurance had come through NCC. It was also noted that Hexham Ramblers do maintenance for various pathways in the area and have their own insurance. John Rookes, explained that there were two types of act activity (1) light vegetation cutting back, generally using small equipment such as secateurs - Ramblers do this once per month in the parishes they cover, NCC are happy for this to be done without landowners permission including for overhanging vegetation – although Duncan Lovatt of NCC would need to be made aware if this was going to happen in the area; (2) larger projects e.g. heavy vegetation clearance which use larger equipment such as strimmers – for these activities they obtain NCC's specific permission and NCC liaise with the landowner if needed. In some circumstances the Ramblers go to the landowner directly. Cllr Kirk had checked APC's public liability and employer's liability insurance and noted that this does cover volunteers for the council – however, names, dates and activities would need to be recorded. Cllr Swaile noted that a risk assessment would be needed, especially if working with volunteers. It was generally felt that such a group, based along the Acklington lines (public volunteers, supported or coordinated by the parish council) was a good idea. Cllr Beck was not

able to take the lead owing to other commitments at the weekends, so it was agreed to think about who could do that. December agenda.

3. It was noted that the river path has been repaired.
4. It was noted that a track near Station Road is being blocked, between Station Road and The Hope— residents to be encouraged to speak to Duncan Lovatt.

Cllr Dunn thanked John Rookes for all his work, particularly the footpaths at Housty, and asked him to thank the rest of the Ramblers on the parish council's behalf.

14 Environment & Climate Change

Cllr Swaile reported that the primary school were in need of some tree stakes and guards. It was agreed to donate stakes and guards that had been donated by a member of the public in relation to the free trees the council had obtained last year. All agreed. Cllr Swaile to liaise with the school.

15 Towns and Villages

15.1 Allenheads septic tank— Cllr White reported that the replacement is now out for tender and someone would be on site before the end of the current financial year.

15.2 Dropped kerbs and other transport matters following visit from Neil Snowdon – Cllr Dunn had circulated an update and a map. She expressed thanks to Co Cllr Horncastle for organising the visit and Mr Snowdon for coming out. The repainting for existing kerb linage is to be reported on FixMyStreet by the clerk.

15.3 School path – Cllr Foster noted that the school are happy with the concept but there had been no movement. Clerk to email Co Cllr Horncastle and keep on agenda for when he is at the meeting [cf. September minutes Item 8].

15.4 Update on bus shelter funding arrangements and provision of further bus shelters (end of November deadline for further funding) - funding towards three bus shelters had been granted in principle by NCC but with a request for further information. The initial deadline had been 7 November but this was now end of November following a request for an extension from the clerk. The further information for the wooden bus shelter in the Catton direction (in Allendale) had already been submitted by Cllr Kirk. Cllr Jackson had prepared an application for the Allenheads direction (in Allendale) using updated quotes from each of the companies on which the original application was based, and had met with former councillor Mr Gray as he had submitted the original funding applications. These were for cantilever shelters on the path, avoiding the Village Green. Cllr Jackson was waiting to hear the view of Catton residents via Cllr Archer. It was agreed that Cllr Jackson could go ahead with the two supplementary submissions before the end of November, copying in the clerk. Beforehand, Cllr Jackson to circulate two or three of the possible designs to the full council and the design on which to base the funding information would be agreed by email. It was noted that there did not seem to be any deadline for spending the resultant funding. If problems arose after funding had been granted then the money could be returned.

15.5 Review of policy re Listed Buildings and Conservation Area - Cllr Dunn had noted that the ANDP does not refer to Listed Building or the Conservation Area. She had reviewed the Northumberland Local Plan which could be used as a basis for guidance. It was agreed that a working group could prepare a draft supplementary guidance document to sit alongside the ADNP to refer to in parish council meetings. The working group would be Cllrs Dunn and Cllr Swaile – others welcome to join. Agenda for January. Cllr Dunn also mentioned the document 'Allendale Conservation Area – Character Appraisal (2008)' which the AVLHG had updated and submitted to the NCC Conservation Officer who will be visiting Allendale in January to view the Conservation Area alongside the document. It will then be presented to the parish council.

5.6 Update re Isaac's Well – Cllr Dunn gave a brief update on progress so far on the Isaac's Well project. She also noted that the NCC Conservation Officer had been out to look at the wall behind Isaac's Well which needs to be repointed. It was noted that existing cobbles had been exposed on

part of the site and that locally sourced "Allendale" cobbles were used to complete the work. A display board at the site gives an explanation of the ongoing work.

15.7 To confirm arrangements for electrician to visit the BT Kiosk (Allendale) – it was noted that APC now own the box. It was a requirement to place a notice to this effect with a contact number in the box. A temporary notice had been placed there by the clerk - the telephone number would need changing in due course. Clerk to contact Glen Nattrass and instruct him to inspect the kiosk and to ask for a price for any work needed. The insurers had asked for a reinstatement price for the kiosk. Cllr Kirk to price up the reinstatement based on documentation provided by BT and send to clerk to pass on to Zurich. Discussion of use in December (correspondence had been received suggesting a book exchange).

16 Correspondence

11.8 Ms Thoburn - had suggested a stay from a Northern Grid power pole be moved to provide two parking spaces, on land belonging to her grandfather. It was queried whether this land was also Village Green. If it was Village Green then parking would not be permitted and if not Village Green then this was not a matter for the parish council. Clerk to reply to thank her for her suggestion and note that this seems to be a private matter to be dealt with by the landowner.

11.7 Thriving Together – Cllr Kirk had reviewed the survey which was related to providing local contacts to run volunteer networks. It was agreed not to reply.

11.13 St Cuthbert's Church – Cllr Jackson volunteered to give the reading at the Carol Service. Clerk to reply and pass on her email address.

11.14 Mr Doody - had written following the meeting in Catton Village Hall with various suggestions re the traffic problems there. The letter had been passed on to Co Cllr Horncastle by the clerk and Cllr Foster noted that Co Cllr Horncastle had said he would respond to the clerk. It was noted that all three of the traffic priorities put forward to NCC by the parish council related to Catton.

11.16 Cinder Track – dog mess on the Cinder Track had been raised. It was noted that any bin would need to be at one end or the other to be near wagon access so it might not be used. There were also concerns about the extent of bins that might be requested if the council were to start putting them in remote areas. Signs were not considered desirable in the countryside. Clerk to speak to resident in reply.

17 Finance

16.1 Accounts for payment/Bank reconciliation

Cllr Kirk proposed to accept the accounts for payments, including the payment to Bishop's garage later in the month. This was seconded by Cllr Coulson. All agreed.

Community account balance as of 31.10.25 = £ 8,863.58

Commercial Instant Access Account as of 31.10.25 = £10,584.60

Public Sector Deposit Fund of CCLA balance as of 31.10.25 = £55,000.00

16.2 To decide on continuation of finance or introduction of third-party purchaser for Iseki 2017 Tractor Mower

Cllr Kirk outlined position of the Iseki mower purchased in 2017 under a finance agreement. There had been an option to pay £90 pa to carry on the arrangement which had been done for the last six years. Or a third-party purchaser could buy the mower at market rate and we would get the money for it, but we cannot buy it directly. A decision is needed by April.

Cllr Kirk had discussed this with the Finance sub-committee and proposed to get both mowers serviced this winter, to get a comment on condition and lifespan, and a value estimate. After which an informed decision could be made. All agreed. Cllr Kirk to arrange collection and servicing of the mowers. The clerk noted that the mowing contract states that the mowers will be inspected and serviced prior to each cutting season.

16.3 To note the quote received for continuation of the SWARO speed sign maintenance contract and decide on same

Cllr Kirk proposed to continue the maintenance contract with SWARCO. All agreed. Clerk to contact SWARCO to get the contract and arrange for signature. It was noted that the first payment was due in May.

16.4 Budget update for 2025/26 budget and sub-committee input – Cllr Kirk had circulated a draft budget that had been compiled by the Finance Committee. This would be used for the basis for discussion at the December meeting. It was noted that something needs to be added for the bus shelters. Cllr Dunn to raise some queries with Cllr Kirk by email.

Re the mowing rebate calculation for NCC, Cllr Kirk has formulated a proposed new calculation to be discussed with NCC. The number of cuts at Wentworth and the churchyard had been underestimated since 2017. A written contract was needed with NCC. Clerk to raise the issue with NCC and Cllr Kirk to discuss it with them, with a view to a formal agreement.

18 Matters for 4 December 2025 Agenda

Parking survey results

Affordable housing survey results

ROW publicity proposal and working party (maintenance) suggestions

Bus shelter update

Councillor Code of Conduct

Discussion of use of Allendale BT Kiosk

School Path

Arrangements for transfer from outgoing Clerk

To discuss water supply arrangements at allotments

Agree draft budget for publication to the parish.

January

Conservation and Listed Building supplementary guidance document – review draft

Weed killing arrangements and qualifications

19 Private session/Confidential item(s) [Council only]

In the closed session the recruitment process for the new clerk was agreed, including timeframe and composition of the recruitment committee. A full council decision would be needed in respect of the appointment. It was agreed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the full council on Thursday 20 November at 7pm (Village Hall) which would be closed to the public as the single agenda item would be confidential – i.e. to decide on the recruitment committee's recommendation for the new clerk appointment.

20 Next Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 4 December 7 pm, Allendale Village Hall

The meeting ended at 9.15pm