

## **Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Philipson (Chair), Beck, Bron, Coulson, Howard, Johnson, Kirk, Simmonds, Swaile and H Newsome (Clerk).

### **1) Apologies for absence and councillor news**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Graham, Villiers-Stewart and White and Co Cllr Horncastle. Cllr Philipson welcomed Cllr Chantal Bron to her first meeting.

### **2) Declarations of interest**

See APC's website for a full list:

[Declarations of Interest \(new council 2022\) 0.pdf \(northumberlandparishes.uk\)](#)

### **3) Planning Committee – planning applications**

#### **24/00400/FUL - Wentworth Farm Shield Street Allendale**

Cllr Howard proposed **to support** the application with Cllr Johnson seconding this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

#### **24/00429/FUL - Land West Of Lea Hall Cottage Splitty Lane Catton**

Cllr Kirk said that the application failed to meet **Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANDP) Policies 1: General Development Principles** and **2: Scale of Housing Development para (a)** as the development was not on a scale suitable to its surroundings and it would overshadow other dwellings nearby. Cllr Kirk said that the tall and imposing elevations of the houses could not be visually accommodated within the landscape, and he pointed out that the materials to be used such as the stone and wood cladding were not in keeping with other dwellings, and he also noted that there appeared to be no access to the refuse bins. Cllr Simmonds said that it was clear from the Housing Needs Survey and the ANDP that it was affordable two and three bedroom houses that were needed not four bedroom houses. The Council also noted the removal from the plans of a footpath to the main road on the grounds that there was only going to be three dwellings as it was deemed unnecessary, whereas now there would be six dwellings with no pedestrian access into the complex. A Catton resident said that she had questioned the Planning Officer (who had recommended approval for the first three houses built) about why she had not consulted building conservation in view of development overshadowing Lea Hall Cottage. The resident had been surprised that the planning officer had said that this was only required if the cottage was a listed building, and the planning officer said she was going to come back to the resident after checking with her colleagues. Cllr Kirk proposed **to strongly object** to the application with Cllr Howard seconding this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

#### **24/00552/FUL 3 - Plane Trees Allendale**

Cllr Simmonds proposed **no objections** to the application with Cllr Howard seconding this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

#### **24/00570/FUL - Village Green South East Of Allendale Library Dawson Place**

Cllr Beck proposed **to support** the application with Cllr Howard seconding this as it was in keeping with **Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANDP) Objective 6: Delivering local infrastructure** and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

### **4) Public participation**

There were **ten** members of the public in attendance.

#### **24/00429/FUL - Land West Of Lea Hall Cottage Splitty Lane Catton**

Catton resident Jennifer Dockray commented on planning application **24/00429/FUL - Land West Of Lea Hall Cottage Splitty Lane Catton (see 3 above)**.

### **Feedback on the public consultation about the proposed reinstatement of a path across Catton Green**

Following on from the public consultation held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in Catton Village Hall where Lesley Campbell presented her research on the historic footpath from the front door of Doric House to the main road (B6295), Lesley presented information on the feedback she had received. Cllr Philipson read out Lesley's summary that sought permission to both reinstate the footpath and create a shorter, narrower path to the parking area. Her proposal was to follow the line of the original access across the green, narrowed to a one metre wide self-maintaining compacted hardcore footpath. Lesley said that there were other paths from houses that came immediately on to the Green, and she presented comments that she had received from her consultation that were generally positive, and a member of the public at the meeting said that he remembered playing on the old cinder path as a child. Catton resident George Doody said that he objected to the proposed path dissecting the village green which would degrade the green as an amenity for the village for use for events and as a children's play area and questioned the legitimacy of allowing the path to be reinstated. Cllr Kirk said that responsibility for managing Catton Village Green had been handed over to Allendale Parish Council (APC) from Northumberland County Council in a contractual agreement dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2012, that allowed APC some rights for allowing the repair of existing surfaces such as a pathway including the removal of turf, but excluded digging and putting down tarmac, concrete and coated materials or similar. The Council also discussed Lesley's proposal to create a shorter, narrower path to the turning circle that George said would keep the path to the extremities of the Green and that was preferable to a new path that had never been there.

After a full discussion Cllr Swaile proposed, and Cllr Coulson seconded to a) grant Lesley permission to reinstate the path across the Green subject to agreement about the materials to be used, and b) authorise the creation of a new path from Doric House to the turning circle subject to agreeing the specific route at a site meeting (date to be agreed).

### **Forestry Commission consultation on Allenheads Woodlands Management Plan**

Allenheads resident Helen Ratcliffe raised her concerns about a felling license that the Forestry Commission had issued to Allendale Estates to fell approximately 175 (146?) hectares of trees that she had only found out about through casually talking to one of estate managers. On investigation she discovered that Allendale Parish Council was listed as one of the stakeholders consulted in October 2022, but the Forestry Commission's Woodland Management Plan stated that it had not responded within the 30 day period allotted to do so. Cllr Philipson said that he and the Clerk could not recall receiving correspondence on the consultation and could find no reference to the matter in its records.

Ms Ratcliffe and her neighbour were concerned about the impact the felling of the trees would have on flora (fungi and lichens) and fauna (red squirrels and bats) especially as valuable time had been lost through the community not being made aware of the consultation. The Council listened to the concerns described and agreed for the Clerk to contact the Forestry Commission to **a)** get clarification on why it had not been notified of the consultation and query why its Woodland Management Plan stated that APC had not responded within the 30-day period of consultation, and **b)** ask how it proposed to correct the record and if it intended to now consult with APC, and **c)** ask for detailed information on how it proposed to safeguard the flora and fauna in carrying out the felling work.

### **5) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

Cllr Howard agreed, and Cllr Coulson seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **6) Matters Arising**

#### **Caravan parked in Dale Park**

The Council agreed to pass on information about the owner of the caravan that was parked partially on the pavement in Dale Park and blocking the footpath to NCC's Environmental Enforcement Officer, Paul Turnbull.

### **Former First School update**

The Council acknowledged confirmation from Northumberland County Council's Estates Department that the sale had not completed, and that the exchange of contracts had been held up because the purchaser wanted to secure planning consent before actually completing. The Council agreed for the Clerk to ask Estates if it might consider working with Allendale Parish Council to re-purpose the premises for an affordable housing scheme if the purchaser was not committed to the sale.

### **Section 106 funding for outdoor sport**

Cllr Beck said that she and the Clerk had worked with the Chair of Allendale Village Hall, Chris Garner, who had now secured funding to buy and install a basketball hoop in the Recreation Ground.

### **7) County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update**

Co Cllr Horncastle had sent his apologies prior to the meeting with the following update (in his own words): Please accept my apologies for tonight's meeting. A few things to note since the last meeting:

I have managed to get most of the **gullies** from above Catton up to Denholme cleaned out, obviously more to do but this is a long stretch and should make a big difference.

A historical **water problem up the Dene** which was causing damage to residents' walls and gardens has finally been cured. Contrary to press reports the **Budget efficiencies** have not resulted in any cuts to services or redundancies. **Highways Budget** increased to £35m. Wasn't that many years ago it was only £17.5m. This includes £4m specifically for U and C roads which is most of the network in this Parish.

Perhaps worth thinking about which stretch you think is the worst so I can put it forward. This includes drainage and pavements. Good news from Northumbria Water **£4.4m investment in Catton sewage plant**. This should stop the raw sewage escaping into the river in times of heavy rain and increase the capacity for any future housing numbers. I see your Bus Shelter planning is in. I'll hurry up the conservation officer to look at plans and look forward to giving you the money. **Pot hole repairs** is top priority but massive task with 3000 miles of road in County but been assured by autumn situation will be a lot better. Can't help the emergency pot hole repairs not being permanent. Without traffic regulation orders and traffic lights this quick fix is all that's possible but yes before anyone says it the emergency repairs could be better in many cases. **Youth club** which does an amazing job, thanks Julie, just received a huge grant and they are putting together a smaller scheme which I will be funding. Still waiting for updates on **possible school crossing** and **affordable housing scheme**. Usual business goes on dealing with members of the public complaints, enquiries, and advice. Enjoy your meeting, unfortunately I can't make it, see you next time.

### **8) Affordable housing**

Cllr Philipson said that Vince Walsh, Community Action Northumberland's (CAN) Rural Housing Enabler was still researching suitable sites for an affordable housing scheme in the parish and staying connected with Castle and Coasts. Cllr Swaile and the Clerk to contact Vince and share local information about potential sites.

### **9) Allotments Committee**

#### **Allotments clear up and fence update.**

Cllr Graham had arranged the hire an **8-yard skip** from GS Skip Hire for delivery on **11<sup>th</sup> March** ready for Mark Armstrong to begin to clear the rubbish from the far corner of the allotments.

Cllr Coulson to ask Mark Armstrong to repair two fence posts next to the path on Rachel's allotment and the loose posts on John and Alison's allotment, in addition to work to replace the damaged allotment fence with chain link fencing.

### **10) Cemetery Committee**

#### **Cemetery wall**

The Council asked the Clerk to send a letter to Alan Murray on its behalf thanking him for the extra effort that he had put in achieving a professional well-built and aesthetically pleasing wall that was all the more impressive because of the shocking weather conditions that he had worked in weekend after weekend.

#### **Concrete Strips for Allendale Cemetery**

The Council discussed a quote received from JB Colman's to install a concrete strip for sixty headstones that would make stable the headstones for considerably longer than if they were not installed. The cost at £3,600 included hardcore base, concrete, rebar reinforcement and shuttering (£2k) and labour and plant (£1.5k) plus VAT that worked out at £60 per headstone. After discussion, the Council agreed to arrange a more detailed discussion on site with Colman's.

#### **Memorial safety update**

The Clerk said that she had heard from around six families wishing to make a more permanent repair to their family headstones and she had written to them with information about how to go about doing this safely, that is, by not attempting to do this themselves but by using an approved memorial mason that was registered with NAMM (National Association of Monumental Masons).

### **11) Rights of Way & Access Committee**

Cllr Beck gave an update on current work on footpaths in the parish that included:

#### **Footpath 113 - Near Allendale Sports Club House**

Sending a reminder to Duncan Lovatt informing him that the fallen Hawthorn tree blocking the footpath still remained in situ, blocking the path.

#### **Footpath 141 – River Path**

The installation of a stone surface on the new stretch of path close to the Blakett Level was now complete (Allendale Footpath River Path).

#### **Footpath 13 and 19**

The reinstatement of two bridges at Burntongues Burn (Allendale Footpath 19) and west of High Oustley as soon as the weather improved (Allendale Footpath 13).

#### **Footpath 11**

The repair of three or four stiles to be replaced with gates on Allendale Footpath 11 between Hawksteel and Hollingreen.

#### **Footpath 23 - Kittygreen**

Work to repair the footpath and bankside of the Kittygreen section of the Tea Trail was imminent.

#### **Oldman Bottom Project**

Francis Barrigan from the GSC Grays office is going to send person to establish what part of the "Sipton Plantation" below Rye Close Farm was under the control the Estate as there were complex parcels of ownerships and apparently ad hoc boundaries. Cllr Kirk said that he had visited the site the previous day and the stiles had been repaired.

#### **The Holms Lynn footpath**

(Riverbank had collapsed along a significant stretch)

- Initial funding application to reinstate the path had been refused.
- GSC Grays confirmed that they had now applied for a FIPL grant and were hoping to divert the footpath a good distance away from the river to ensure that it did not become an annual reoccurrence. Awaiting updated as work progresses.

Cllr Beck and the Clerk to share good news stories and photos on footpath works on social media.

### **12) Towns & Villages Committee**

#### **Bus shelter update**

Cllr Philipson had submitted the planning application for the bus shelter and that had now been put out for consultation. He and Cllr Coulson to meet on site to agree the process for uprooting the Beech sapling and replant near the Library now that Valeria Dunn had agreed the move was necessary.

### 13) Correspondence

**Dr Lesley Campbell** – see 3) Public participation above.

George Doody - see 3) Public participation above.

Helen Ratcliffe - see 3) Public participation above.

**Dr Lesley Campbell** – The Council agreed for the Clerk to contact Northern Powergrid to ask it to prune two trees on Catton Green that have low hanging branches and upward growth that is touching the overhead cables.

**Anjali Donaldson** – The Council agreed that a flat memorial stone (that could be engraved) like those used for the cemetery's woodland burials might be a better option as a plaque may not be durable and quite likely to get weather beaten.

**Jenny Fairless** – Cllr Philipson said there were two possibilities for siting a new waste bin, the first would be where the seat is at the corner but would require permission from NCC to install a pipe across a ditch, and the second would be opposite the Stone Hall T junction. Cllr Philipson and the Clerk to check with Neighbourhood Services what is best.

### 14) Finance Committee

#### Accounts for payment/bank reconciliation

Cllr Kirk proposed that the accounts for payment, seconded by Cllr Swaile.

<b>Treasurer's Account</b> bank balance as of 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024.	<b>£ 5,234.76</b>
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<b>Business 30-Day Notice Account</b> bank balance as of 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>£11,090.62</b>
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<b>Public sector Deposit Fund of CCL</b> bank balance as of 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>£60,000.00</b>
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#### Grant applications

Cllrs Beck, Coulson, Howard, Kirk, Simmonds and Swaile declared interests. The Council considered applications from **seven** organisations and Cllr Howard proposed that the following awards were granted, seconded by Cllr Swaile, and agreed unanimously by the Council:

<b>Allen Valley Bowling Club</b>	<b>£300</b>
<b>Allen Valleys Folk Festival</b>	<b>£400</b>
<b>Allendale May Fair</b>	<b>£400</b>
<b>Allendale Youth Ambition</b>	<b>£400</b>
<b>Higher Ground</b>	<b>£400</b>
<b>St Cuthbert's Church</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Tynedale Hospice at Home</b>	<b>£100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,500</b>

#### Payroll administration

Cllr Kirk proposed not to accept the 2024/2025 quote from Heritage Accountancy and Cllr Beck seconded this. Cllr Kirk agreed to collect quotes for a realistically priced service and the decision on which service provider to use would be delegated to the finance committee.

### 15) Matters for 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024 agenda.

#### Bus shelter update

**A new committee to look into environment and climate change issues.**

### 16) Confidential agenda item *(for Council only)*

There were three. The Council appointed the following candidate to the new vacancy:

**Simon Gray.**

### 17) Date of next Parish Council

The next monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on **4<sup>th</sup> April 2024** at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 22:00