

**Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 4th April 2024 at 7pm
at Allendale Village Hall**

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

1) Apologies for absence and councillor news

Apologies were received from Cllrs Beck, Graham, Howard, and Villiers-Stewart
Cllr Philipson welcomed Cllr Simon Gray to his first meeting.

2) Declarations of interest

See APC's website for a full list: <https://bit.ly/3JevZZb>

3) Planning Committee – planning applications

24/00870/FUL - The Throstle Sinderhope

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

24/00812/FUL - Land East Of Glen Cottage Shilburn Road Allendale

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

4) Public participation

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

Cllr Philipson confirmed that there was no requirement for Co Cllr Horncastle to declare an interest.

Felling of old mixed woodland at the rear of Station Road

Residents of Station Road raised their concerns about the destruction of a section of woodland at the rear of Station Road including hazel, holly, a bat box, and an owl box. The residents said that their peace had been destroyed by the sound of chainsaws running morning to night for seven days including the Easter weekend, however, when they contacted the police, they were advised that it was a civil matter. The residents were concerned that the new landowner, who does not yet appear on the Land Registry, may not be operating within the law, and they questioned what protection the woods and its wildlife had, as they understood that the area was classed as 'open access land' as depicted on the AONB map in Allendale Village. Cllr Kirk said that having looked at land designation records he could confirm that the area was private woodland and not classified as open access land, and that the landowner was free to fell the trees if he/she had permission from the Forestry Commission or was exempt from requiring a licence. He said that if residents considered the activity a public nuisance, then they should raise this with the local authority. Cllr Swaile said that if residents believed protected species had been disturbed or destroyed then they could report it to the Police who could investigate, and they could also report it to Natural England as the authority who can issue licenses to allow such activities to take place.

Reduction of speed limit along Station Road

Residents of Station Road asked for an update on plans to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph along Station Road and asked the parish council to consider installing additional measures to help improve pedestrian safety including speed activation signs, speed humps or chicanes, as well as requesting a police presence with speed cameras. The residents said that they thought that it was a matter of time before there was a serious incident and that the authorities would be complicit because of their complacency.

Cllr Horncastle said that Highways had confirmed that the scheme to reduce the speed limit would now be carried out in April/May this year (the delay was due to Highways working on a lot of drainage issues due to the last nine months of rainfall and storms) and that local people in Allendale had pressed for speed humps on the stretch of road into Allendale after the Deneholme corner but some of them were removed after

complaints of noise disturbance, and that speed activation signs and their maintenance would have to be paid for from the parish council's precept and/or from the limited funds (£15k/year) he gets for projects within the South of Tynedale ward. After further discussion, the following actions were agreed to:

a) Cllr Horncastle to ask that Highways to meet with parish council representatives on site to discuss the safety concerns raised, **b)** Station Road residents to present a petition for improved traffic safety from members of the public to the Petitions Committee at County Hall, **c)** Station Road residents to submit individual letters requesting improved traffic safety from members of the public, **d)** Allendale Parish Council to formally request an investigation by Highways specialists to review traffic safety along Station Road.

5) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 7th March 2024

Cllr Coulson agreed, and Cllr Johnson seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6) Matters Arising

Allenfields play area update

The Council acknowledged the great job that Mark Armstrong had done removing the vegetation from the field. Cllr Coulson to pass on contact details for a suitable place that Cllr Howard can take the vegetation to. Cllr Swaile to consider a suitable planting scheme for the cleared area.

Caravan parked in Dale Park

Sheila Adams had confirmed that the caravan had now been removed.

Forestry Commission

The Clerk had written to the Forestry Commission with questions concerning the felling licence it had issued to Allendale Estates but so far had only received a partial response. The Forestry Commission had confirmed that it had consulted the statutory consultees including Northumberland County Council (NCC) and that it was down to NCC to notify relevant parish councils but in this case it had not.

Proposed new bin for Splitty Lane

NCC's Neighbourhood Services had agreed to install a new wheelie bin (for both dog waste and regular waste) and locking post up Splitty Lane, and the Council agreed to meet the vehicle, staff, and materials costs of this which were £464 plus VAT.

7) County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Co Cllr Horncastle updated the parish council on the following:

Allenheads toilets

There has been a delay in opening the toilets at Allenheads due to a water leak problem that was being looked into. Cllr Horncastle was in touch with the café staff.

Thornley Gate road works

The road was expected to be closed for plain out patching and carriageway overlay, drainage, signage, and verge repair between 22 to 26 April 2024 between the hours of 07:00 - 18:00. Access to remain for residents, businesses, pedestrians, and cyclists. The road closure order was valid from 22 April to 20 May 2024.

Catton traffic safety

Cllr Horncastle would shortly be meeting Highways representatives to discuss traffic safety issues in Catton.

Northumberland new schools

NCC are on track for building three new high schools in Amble, Berwick, and Seaton Valley.

Northumberland County Council recycling

Defra had worked out a formula for allocating funds for the new **food waste** weekly collection that works well for urban areas but not for rural areas leaving a shortfall of £1.7 million.

Plans were being worked out for breaking up **electrical waste** in the next two years.

Defra had confirmed that every household must be offered a **green waste** bin (brown bin).

NCC had made a promise to repair most of the **potholes** by October 2024, however, work, that was meant to have started on 1st March, had been delayed due to the last five weeks of wet weather.

There had been lots of damage to the Northumberland Coast because of **shifted sand** and the erosion of land.

A community led approach to **re-develop the Hirst estate**, originally home to miners and their families working at Woodhorn Colliery, and one of the most deprived areas in the UK, had started, to transform that area of Ashington that includes affordable housing, shops, and parks.

People First has taken over the running of the **county's leisure centres** with all staff transferring and with no redundancies.

Proposals for the former Hexham Middle School were out for consultation. You can have your say online here: <https://nland.cc/yourhexham>

8) New Committee to look into environment and climate change issues.

Cllr Swaile to re-send the email inviting councillors to a subcommittee meeting on this topic.

9) Affordable housing

Cllr Swaile to contact Vince Walsh and share local information about potential sites.

10) Allotments Committee

Allotments clear up and fence update.

The Council praised Mark Armstrong for the excellent job he had done clearing the rubbish from the allotments. The Council agreed for Mark to go ahead with replacing eleven metres of 4' high fencing including a new gate at a cost of £720, and to replacing a further two new 9' posts at a cost of £100.

The Clerk to issue the tenancy agreements to all the tenants once Cllr Coulson had checked the dimensions of each allotment.

11) Cemetery Committee

Concrete Strips for Allendale Cemetery

Cllrs Howard and Philipson to meet on site with Daniel Topping from JB Colman's in the second half of May for a more detailed discussion about installing concrete strips.

Re-location of stone

The Council to consider further a suitable (hardstanding) place to store the leftover stone.

Tree work in old Cemetery

The Council agreed for Matty Robson to take down the two Ash tree with Ash die back in the old cemetery at a cost of £150.

12) Rights of Way & Access Committee

There were no actions.

13) Towns & Villages Committee

Bus shelter update

Cllr Philipson said that comments on the planning portal suggest that the application was likely to be approved and that the conservation officer had said that the oak frame design would not detract from its setting next to the Library. Built Heritage & Design staff had recommended a pre-commencement condition relating to external materials to ensure the development assimilates with the natural and built environment including the specification details and photographs that Jonah Maurice was happy to provide. Jonah also confirmed that he could begin work at the start of May.

Marketplace resurfacing

The Council considered the quotes that Cllr Kirk had collected to complete the re-surfacing of the Market Place in the Spring and agreed to accept Coulson Contracting's quote of £16,498 plus VAT.

Tree work in Allendale Village

The Council agreed to accept Matty Robson's quote for tree works in Allendale Village at a cost of £300.

14) Correspondence

George Doody – The Council considered the issues raised by George Doody concerning the legitimacy of allowing the reinstatement of the footpath across Catton Village Green. After consulting the relevant legislation and the agreement that handed responsibility for managing the Green from Northumberland County Council (NCC) to Allendale Parish Council in May 2012, it decided to stand by its original decision to allow the path across the Green to be reinstated subject to agreement about the materials to be used. Cllr Kirk provided some brief notes on the legislation and guidance that the parish council referred to in reaching its decision:

Village Green Management

Catton Village Green was registered as a Village Green by NCC in accordance with the Commons Registration Act 1965 and the Commons Act 2006 (The 1965 act was repealed when the 2006 act came into force).

Management of the Green was handed over to the parish in 2012 and is to be exercised without reference to the NCC (see management plan 2012).

The 2006 act has a list of works that cannot be carried out without the agreement of the Secretary of State. These are:

- fencing
- construction of buildings
- digging ditches and trenches (except for electronic communications)
- laying concrete, tarmac or coated roadstone unless it's a repair to an existing surface of that type.

The management plan lists ways that the parish council can manage and improve the green including “otherwise improve the Common for exercise and recreation”.

The management plan specifies that conversion of any part of the green into car parking requires the agreement of the Secretary of State.

The management plan allows the parish council to make byelaws to regulate lots of activities and behaviour.

The public has a right of access to the green, subject to byelaws. This is not a right of way as rights of way are apparently extinguished by registration as a common.

Planning permission is needed for buildings etc and is probably needed for paths surfaced with impermeable materials (like front gardens). Government guidance says no consent is needed for loosely surfaced paths (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/carrying-out-works-on-common-land>).

Mike Carter – See 4) Public participation above.

Jim Brown – The Council agreed that it could not organise a litter pick on the road sides as the health and safety issues made it unviable as the Council would be legally responsible for those taking part.

Cllr Mike Kirk – The Council advised that Olive Graham contact her house insurer and ask if they would send out an assessor who could investigate their water logged land.

Mike Carter – See 4) Public participation above.

Jennifer Hall – The Council agreed to support Jennifer's petition concerning how the additional income from increasing council tax on second homes should be spent.

Jane Pryde – The Council gave its permission for the May Fair to use the Market Square and Green for its event from 3rd to 5th May 2024.

Stuart Walker – The Council discussed Stuart Walker's request for a bus shelter on the east side of the road and the points he raised concerning the safety of those travelling south (towards Allenheads) but sheltering on the west side until the south bound bus arrived. The Council accepted that Stuart had raised some pertinent questions relating to the safety of passengers including wheelchair users and those travelling with young children. The Council agreed to review the case for installing an additional bus shelter on the east side, and also invite NCC and Go North East for their thoughts on how the Council could address Stuart's concerns including the suggestion to install drop kerbs and provide assurances as to the suitability of the arrangements for all passengers.

Janice Walker – See item 15) Grant applications below.

15) Finance Committee

Accounts for payment/bank reconciliation

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

Treasurer's Account bank balance as of 31 st March 2024.	£ 2,327.48
Business 30-Day Notice Account bank balance as of 31 st March 2024	£10,882.87
Public sector Deposit Fund of CCL bank balance as of 31 st March 2024	£60,000.00

Grant applications

Cllr White declared an interest. The Council considered a late application from **Allenheads Community Benefits Society** and Cllr Kirk proposed that an award of £250 be granted, seconded by Cllr Swaile, and agreed unanimously by the Council.

Finance policy

The Finance Committee to review the parish council's finance policy before the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May.

Insurance 2024/2025

The Finance Committee agreed to shop around for an alternative insurance provider in good time for financial year 2025/26.

Payroll administration

Cllr Kirk confirmed that the Finance Committee had considered three quotes for payroll administration and agreed to appoint local Paul Glaholm to carry out the work in place of Heritage Accountancy at a cost of £200 plus VAT that represented a saving of around £300. The Council thanked Cllr Kirk for his good work.

Bank signatories

The Council agreed to set about replacing two of the current signatories following on from next month's Annual Meeting of the Parish Council when the makeup of the sub committees would be decided.

16) Matters for 2nd May 2024 agenda.

Annual Meeting of the Council

Review of the allotment's fees

17) Confidential agenda item (for Council only)

There was one item.

18) Date of next Parish Council

The next monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on **2nd May 2024** at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 22:00