

# **Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm at St Cuthbert's Church Hall**

Present: Cllr Philipson (Chair), Beck, Coulson, Graham, Halliday, Howard, Kirk, Simmonds, Swaile and White and H Newsome (Clerk).

## **1) Introductions (Councillors and Candidates)**

The councillors introduced themselves to the candidates and vice versa. The council responded to the candidates' questions and described the activities it engaged in, and the extent of its statutory powers. Councillors said that the new councillors could choose which sub-committees to join as well as taking on project-based activities. Cllr Philipson said that the council would follow its co-option policy in making appointments at the end of the meeting under the confidential item, and the candidates then accepted his invitation to stay for the remainder of the public meeting.

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

Apologies were received from Cllr Villiers-Stuart and Co Cllr Horncastle.

## **3) Declarations of interest**

See APC's website for a full list:

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

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

There were none.

## **5) Public participation**

There were **no** members of the public in attendance.

## **6) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

The Council agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **7) Matters Arising**

### **Affordable housing**

The Council agreed to meet (via Teams) Vince Walsh, Community Action Northumberland's (CAN) newly appointed Rural Housing Enabler on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm. Vince who has many years of firsthand practical experience supporting rural communities in need of more affordable housing.

Sarah Brannigan, who would set up the Teams meeting, said that he would be a useful link between the parish council and Castles and Coasts and other social housing providers.

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

Co Cllr Horncastle sent his apologies for his absence with the following update:

### **Traffic safety in Catton**

Co Cllr Horncastle:

- a) re-confirmed that Highways had no record of accidents in Catton and so there were no figures.
- b) confirmed that there was unlikely to be any action taken when drivers park on pavements as it was so widespread.
- c) agreed with George Doody that the cars parked on the west side of the main road obscured the view of the road when exiting Batey Terrace, however, he hoped that the situation had improved now that the visitors staying over at Christmas had passed.

d) confirmed that he had not given up on improving traffic safety in Catton.

#### **Possible pollution incident in Catton Burn**

Co Cllr Horncastle said that the possible pollution in Catton Burn was a matter for the Environment Agency.

#### **Potholes**

Co Cllr Horncastle reported that over the Christmas period there was constant rainfall resulting in many new potholes that were being repaired as quickly as possible. The horrendous pothole in the Holmes Wood was seen to extremely quickly but as the road was under a river of water it only lasted one day but was repaired the next day. The repairs were classed as emergency repairs and were not likely to last in those conditions but nevertheless were being repaired as quickly as possible.

Co Cllr Horncastle said that NCC had had an emergency meeting to deal with the blocked gully situation and that an overhaul of the procedure was likely to take place with hopefully more investment in gully wagons.

### **9) Allotments Committee**

The Council acknowledged the need to clear rubbish, including a collapsed greenhouse, from the far corner of the allotments, and discussed how best to tackle this. After discussion, the Council agreed for Cllr Coulson to obtain a quote for the work from Mark Armstrong. It was hoped that the clean-up could be conducted by the start of the season, which was early March, ready for the new tenant. The key from the previous tenant had now been retrieved.

### **10) Cemetery Committee**

#### **Cemetery wall**

Cllr Howard said that Alan Murray was making a lovely job of re-building the stone wall at the entrance to the cemetery, and that he was making steady progress to complete the job at weekends in between the wet periods. The Council agreed to ask Alan if he was free to use the leftover stone to re-build another section of the cemetery wall also in poor condition.

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

There were no actions.

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

#### **Allenfields**

The Council agreed for Cllr Graham to obtain a quote from Mark Armstrong to cut back and remove the vegetation in the area of the field that shares a border with the old Midland Bank.

#### **Bus stop seating and shelter**

Cllr Philipson said that at the community drop-in on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December everyone that came to look at the two shortlisted designs for the new Allendale bus shelter had favoured the bespoke timber frame design over the off-the-shelf aluminium one. That was forty-seven people voting for the oak frame design and no-one voting for the off-the shelf one. After a heated discussion and vote, the Council formally agreed to commit to the timber frame shelter designed by Jonah Maurice, and this was carried as a resolution by a majority of Councillors. Cllr Halliday said that he believed that it was the wrong decision based on information he had gleaned talking to local people, especially elderly people. Cllrs Kirk and White abstained. The Clerk to write to Jonah and get the full specifications for the design and a formal quote for the work. The Council acknowledged the need to pursue planning permission (needed for the conservation area) as swiftly as possible once it had received the technical details. Cllr Beck would arrange a site meeting with herself, Cllr Philipson, and Jonah.

#### **Denefields play area.**

The Council authorised for Mark Armstrong to make level the steps up to the play frame and cut back and remove the vegetation at Denefields after he had estimated the cost to be £220.

### **Catton road safety mirror**

Cllr Graham had consulted Jenny Fairless and sourced a suitable replacement mirror for the Clerk to order. She would arrange for the mirror to be delivered to Cllr Halliday who would arrange for it to be fitted.

### **Memorial Bench Restoration Programme**

Cllr Graham to discuss with Hilton Graham the likely requirements for maintaining the memorial benches of the next few years now that they were all in good condition following the initial three year programme of refurbishment.

### **Village tree inspection**

The Council were expecting Matty Robson's report on the two visual inspections of the trees in Allendale centre and the Cemetery.

## **13) Correspondence**

**Celia and Michael Carrington** – The Clerk to provide a letter that supports their application to Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) to fund repairs to their listed sixteenth century bastle and bastle derivative house, which confirms its importance to the local community in terms of its heritage and history, since they were unsuccessful the first time around.

**Neville Pringle** – The Council would await with interest to hear NCC's reply to his questions about the proposed bollards and drop kerb. The Clerk to suggest that it might be useful for the Co-op to get quotes from local trades people to conduct the work.

**Gavin Hunt** – The Council agreed to put Gavin Hunt in touch with Northumberland County Council as any works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or in a Conservation Area required prior consent from the local authority: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Trees-and-hedges.aspx>

**George Doody** – The Council noted George Doody's correspondence with Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency concerning the deterioration of the water quality of the Catton Burns and would await with interest to hear its replies.

**Sheila Adams** – The Council agreed to pass on information about the caravan parked on the pavement in Dale Park to NCC's Environmental Enforcement Officer, Paul Turnbull.

**Lesley Campbell** – The Council were happy for Lesley Campbell to present her research and feedback from her public consultation on her proposal to re-instate the footpath across the village green at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

## **14) Finance Committee**

### **Accounts for payment/bank reconciliation**

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

<b>Treasurer's Account</b> bank balance as of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023.	<b>£9,7919.16</b>
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<b>Business 30-Day Notice Account</b> bank balance as of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023.	<b>£11,066.96</b>
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<b>Public sector Deposit Fund of CCL</b> bank balance as of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023.	<b>£60,000.00</b>
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### **Precept 2022/2023**

The Finance (Precept) Committee had met on 28<sup>th</sup> November and produced a budget for financial year 2023/2024 and recommended the precept increase by 4.9%, an increase from 41K to 43K.

Cllr Kirk proposed that the Council accept the proposed precept and Cllr Swaile seconded this, and this was unanimously carried by the Council.

## **15) Matters for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 agenda.**

None as yet.

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

The Council appointed the following candidates in to the two new vacancies:

**Chantal Bron**

**Brian Johnson**

### **17) Date of next Parish Council**

The next monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on **1<sup>st</sup> February 2024** at 7pm at St Cuthbert's Church Hall.

The meeting ended at 21:30