

**Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting
held on
Thursday 6th April 2023 at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall**

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

1) Apologies for absence and councillor news

Cllrs Beck, Henderson, Philipson, Villiers-Stuart, and Co Cllr Horncastle all sent their apologies prior to the meeting.

Cllr Simmonds acknowledged the resignation of Dave Stevenson and confirmed that no parish residents' signatures had been received to call a by-election, and that the council was free to co-opt a new councillor at its earliest convenience.

Cllr Simmonds also gave recognition to the late Norah Handcock who was Chair of Allendale Parish Council for many years, and also a Councillor of the former Tynedale District Council. Cllr Simmonds said that Mrs Handcock had also been a local historian of note and had published a large collection of photos and memories of Allendale and acknowledged her great contribution to the Allen Valleys.

2) Declarations of interest

There were no changes; see APC's website for full list:

[Declarations of Interest \(new council 2022\) 0.pdf \(northumberlandparishes.uk\)](https://northumberlandparishes.uk/Declarations%20of%20Interest%20(new%20council%202022)%20%20.0.pdf)

3) Planning Committee – planning applications

23/00927/VARYCO – Field West Of Lea Hall Splitty Lane Catton

Clr Graham proposed **no objections** to the application, with Cllr White seconding this and the Council unanimously carried the motion.

4) Public participation

There was one member of the public in attendance.

5) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 2nd March 2023

Cllr Howard agreed, and Cllr Graham seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6) Matters Arising

Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANDP) Review

Cllr Simmonds said that she had participated in an online meeting with AECOM on 3rd March to initiate the Allendale Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment and that she expected to receive its report in early June. Cllr Simmonds said that she would convene the ANDP Review Committee towards the end of April and suggest a date for the meeting.

Damaged pavement outside Post Office cash point machine, loose flagstones outside Bunkhouse and loose cobbles outside the Golden Lion

Cllr Graham said that after investigation Northumbria Water (NWL) officer acknowledged that the sewer drain was blocked with wipes and was not fit for purpose, and he said that NWL had fitted a replacement utility access hole cover over the drain outside the Bunkhouse/Victoria House. He also confirmed that Dave Greenwood had now secured the cover with concrete and that he would submit his invoice for all his work for the parish on 11th April.

Memorial bench for the late Nigel Baynes

Cllrs Howard and Philipson and the Clerk had met Wendy Baynes and agreed a position for the stone memorial bench for her late husband that would be 18" – 24" away from the wall to provide sufficient space for wall maintenance.

7) County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Co Cllr Colin Horncastle had previously sent his apologies to the meeting, together with an update on:

Proposed bollards in front of the Co-op Shop

Cllr Horncastle had been astonished to hear that the estimated bollard scheme costs from NCC Highways was £21k and that he had arranged to meet a member of the team on site to discuss these. He said that it was his view that Highways should take responsibility for meeting the costs to improve customer safety outside the Co-op.

Ropehaugh traffic safety

Cllr Horncastle suggested that the parish council consider including improving road safety on the B2695 between Ropehaugh and Allenheads as a priority the next time it puts forward its Local Transport Plan Programme (LTPP), although he also said that it was unlikely to meet the criteria for reducing the speed limit to 20mph. The Council agreed to discuss the matter further at its September 2023 meeting when the next LTPP was due.

8) Allotments Committee

Cllr Coulson said that the Allotments Committee was working on the arrangements for a community consultation on developing new allotments.

9) Cemetery Committee

Cemetery wall repairs

Cllr Howard informed the Council of the poor condition of the stone wall at the entrance to the Cemetery extension and the Council agreed that Cllr Howard should obtain two estimates for repairing around 30 metres of wall.

Memorial inspection proposal

Cllr Howard reminded the Council of the costs associated with adopting NCC's memorial inspection service and the Council discussed how best to inform families when they were required to make safe the memorial stones of family members and the periods for this. The Council agreed to wait for the Memorial Compliance Officer's report to learn about the scale of work, and after discussion Cllr Howard proposed to adopt the service, with Cllr Kirk seconding this, and the Council unanimously agreed to go ahead.

Revised Cemetery fees proposal

Cllr Kirk presented information that showed that Allendale Cemetery had the lowest fees of any cemetery in the district and proposed a new fee structure that would still mean it would continue to be the cheapest. The Council acknowledged that its running costs would rise due to essential recurring costs for tree management and headstone management, and, after discussion, Cllr Swaile proposed to adopt the new fee structure, with Cllr Howard seconding this, and the Council unanimously agreed to raise the fees with immediate effect.

10) Rights of Way & Access Committee

Cllr Coulson said that the Rights of Way & Access Committee had met with Duncan Lovatt the Area Countryside Officer on 3rd March to discuss improving the condition of the footpaths in the parish but that the main obstacle faced was a lack of staff (only four officers for the whole of Northumberland) and resources to conduct repairs. Cllr Coulson said that they had also discussed how to raise awareness of landowners' responsibility to maintain the stiles and gates on public footpaths that cross their land and press upon them to do this, but Duncan said that when staff tried to enforce the rules in Derbyshire County

Council it had taken so much time and management and money that it had not been worth the effort. The Council discussed next steps and agreed to raise the matter with Co Cllr Horncastle at the May meeting.

11) Towns & Villages Committee

Replacement tree for Bullring

Cllr Graham to meet with Valeria Dunn to discuss what remedial work they needed to do on the Bullring prior to the schoolchildren planting a new tree there. The Council agreed that the school children should continue to plant up the pots on the island as well as the Peth.

Bus shelter for Allendale

Cllr Graham had met with NCC's **Chris Curtis** on 20th March to discuss a new location for the bus stop (and shelter) in Allendale and they had agreed that the roadside close to the public toilets was the most suitable place. Chris Curtis would be back in touch once he had discussed, with his colleagues, what arrangements he should put in place such as accessing the rural bus fund and dropping the kerb line. Cllr Graham said that the Go North East bus drivers were keen for the parish council to move the bus stop as soon as possible.

Interim arrangements to deal with waste in the event of bins failing

The Council considered whether it should put in any interim arrangement for collecting dog waste when a waste bin was damaged, vandalised, or removed and before it installs a replacement bin. After discussion, the Council agreed that it should encourage more responsibility from dog walkers to dispose of their dog's waste sensibly, and that it would put a sign up pointing dog walkers in the direction of the nearest bin.

Tree management in the parish

Cllr Howard said that he and Cllr Philipson had considered how best to manage the risk of failing trees in the parish and proposed to appoint a qualified arborist to carry out visual inspections of the trees in the parish twice a year (before the leaves grow and once the leaves were shed) and provide a report to the Council with recommendations for tree works. After discussion, the Council agreed to a bi-annual inspection of the town trees and an annual inspection of the Cemetery trees and invite local arborists to tender for the work.

12) Correspondence

Elizabeth Yewdall, Office of Guy Opperman MP – see Ropehaugh traffic safety at 7 above.

Gavin Hunt – After inspection, the Council agreed that since the branches of the trees at the bottom of Market Place were several feet away from the Old Gift Shop it did not propose to trim them.

Ashleigh Hogarth – see Interim arrangements to deal with waste in the event of bins failing at 11 above.

Brendon Jackson – Cllr Kirk proposed to agree to the sponsor Scott Mitchell Vets Care Ltd (SMCL) to pay for and install a public bike repair station as a permanent fixture in the Market Place in the area furthest away from Emma's Coffee and Sweet shop and adjacent to the cycle stands at the rear of the Post Office. Cllr Graham seconded this, and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council. Brendon said that the repair station was mainly for the use of local cyclists who may not have a full set of bike tools to conduct repairs, and he confirmed that the unit would be ultimately owned, maintained, and insured by Cycling Minds (Toby Price). The Council agreed to put forward the names of local tradespeople that could prepare the area for the installation.

Guy Opperman MP – The Council agreed to add the contact details of their member of parliament and county councillor to the existing list of parish councillors. The Council also agreed to ask Hilton Graham or Terry Page to repair the damaged Allendale Parish Council noticeboard on the Village Green.

Jenny Fairless – The Council agreed to Jenny's suggestion to install a waste bin halfway round the loop of Splitty Lane in Catton subject to Neighbourhood Services agreement.

Cllr Linda Beck – To fulfil the May Fair's insurance requirements the Council formally agreed permission for the May Fair Committee to use the Village Green to host the annual fair.

Paul Turnbull, NCC – The fly-tipping incident on the road leading to the Golf Club had been resolved prior to the meeting.

Kevin Murphy, The Derry Playhouse – The Clerk to put Kevin Murphy in touch with John Colley and John Lister who might be prepared to speak at a panel discussion on bonfire events in Northern Ireland.

13) Finance Committee

Accounts for payment

Cllr Kirk informed the Council that he had negotiated with Heritage Accountancy to reduce its annual charges for administering the Council's payroll to £250 plus VAT and that in future the Council would manage its own account with HMRC.

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

Treasurer's Account: bank balance as of **29 March 2023 - £53,391.71**

Business 30-Day Notice Account: bank balances as of **9 March 2023 - £16,469.89**

Savings and investment options

The Clerk confirmed that the Lloyds Bank would shortly be opening a **6-month fixed-term deposit** account and would backdate it to five working days from when she submitted the application, and that Lloyds would transfer £30,000 from the Treasurer's account as requested.

14) Matters for 4th May 2023 agenda.

The Annual Meeting of Allendale Parish Council

The future of the parish's pubs

15) Confidential agenda item (for Council only)

There was none.

16) Date of next Parish Council

The Annual Parish Council meeting and the monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on **4th May 2023** at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 21:30