

## ALLENDALE PARISH COUNCIL

**Draft Minutes of a meeting of Allendale Parish Council will be held at Allendale Village Hall on Thursday 3 July at 7pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Archer (Chair), Beck, Charlton S, Charlton M, Coulson, Dalton, Dunn, Foster, Kirk, White, Mrs Naylor (Clerk), Co Cllr Horncastle

**1 Welcome and councillor news**

There was no news.

**2 Public participation**

No one present.

**3 Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dobson, Jackson and Swaile.

**4 Declarations of interest**

There were no new declarations of interest, a list may be found here

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

**5 Planning applications**

**25/01742/LBC Listed Building Consent to replace two sliding sash single glazed windows on South elevation with like for like replacements at Friends Meeting House Bridge End Allendale NE47 9AA**

Cllr Beck proposed the motion no objection. This was seconded by Cllr Coulson and unanimously carried by the council.

**25/01990/FUL Rear garden room extension with solar PV panels on south west Elevation at Meadow View Splitty Lane Catton NE47 9AY**

Cllr Dunn noted that this complies with ANDP Policy 9 points 1 &2 (extensions to dwellings being visually and functionally subservient to the host dwelling and matching or complementary materials). Cllr Dunn proposed the motion no objection. This was seconded by Cllr Foster and unanimously carried by the council.

**25/02190/LBC Listed Building Consent: Remove existing kitchen fittings and appliances, remove certain 20 c walls and doors, remove fireplace and oil fired boiler and stove, remove existing timber 4 panel door, form new fitted kitchen, infill and vent former fireplace, construct new walls with door to form shower WC and utility, install new sanitary fittings in wc room, install fittings and appliances in utility, install new wood burning stove, form new connection from new kitchen and utility/wc at Corn Mill Farmhouse Allendale NE47 9UG**

Cllr Beck noted that this was an entirely internal development to a property which had undergone significant variation in the past. Cllr Dunn proposed the motion no objection. This was seconded by Cllr Beck and unanimously carried by the council.

**25/02155/VARYCO Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) on permitted application T/20070624 , in order to reduce footprint size, changing number of bedrooms from 3no. to 2no. and a change from Sash Windows to Bi-Fold Doors on South East Elevation at North Hayleazes Cottage Allendale NE47 9NP**

Cllr Dunn noted that the proposed bifold doors were not in keeping with the host dwelling, with reference to ANDP Policy 9 point 1 (extensions to dwellings being visually and functionally subservient to the host dwelling). Cllr Dunn proposed the motion to object to the bifold doors aspect only. This was seconded by Cllr Coulson and carried by the council (six in favour of the motion, four abstentions).

## **Other**

Cllr Dunn noted that the neighbourhood plan does not include policies relating to Listed Building Consent and could do with updating. Cllr Kirk noted that such an amendment would need a referendum and, because of funding cuts, the parish council would need to pay for that. Cllr Beck suggested keeping a running list of items which could be included in a future revision of the neighbourhood plan. Review of policy re Listed Buildings to be put on the agenda for October.

## **6 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025**

The minutes were approved. A post-meeting note was added to Minute Item 13 to reflect that Mr Rookes had contacted Cllr Coulson to note that it is the landowner's responsibility to fix stiles and gates.

## **7 Matters arising**

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

**Forstersteads signs** – Highways had indicated that 'slow down children playing' signs were only installed by them where there was a playpark. However, Co Cllr Horncastle had let Ms Archer know that if residents wanted to put up such signs, they could do that.

**Catton lines on bend and speed limit** – three different officers had been to out to Catton and a 20mph speed-limit was not an option as there was no one to enforce it. Double yellow lines on the right-hand side in the Hexham direction could be possible, though there would need to be a consultation with residents. Co Cllr Horncastle would pursue this and, if progressed, NCC would organize the consultation.

**Path from Denefields to school** – Co Cllr Horncastle had wanted a path when the houses were built. More recently, pedestrian numbers had been surveyed and the footfall had not been sufficient for a crossing. However, it was suggested that, if children are the main concern, it could be possible to run a path from Denefields to the school along the fence-line of the field. Cllr Dunn queried who would maintain the path. Cllr Archer asked about security. It was therefore agreed to arrange a site visit. Cllr Foster to arrange a site visit with the head.

**Public toilets** – Allendale and Allenheads toilets will be looked at by David Hunt of NCC on 16 July starting at 10am in Allendale. Cllr Foster would attend in Allendale and Cllr White in Allenheads. Cllr White noted that the Allenheads septic tank issue represents an environmental hazard. Furthermore, his calls to NCC had not been returned. The ombudsmen could be contacted. Cllr Horncastle would tell David Hunt to look at this on the visit. Cllr Horncastle would try to attend also.

**Sparty Lea speed-limit** – Highways thought there was little chance of a speed-limit being introduced but some road markings may be possible. Co Cllr Horncastle would look at this again with Neil Snowdon.

**County** – Co Cllr Horncastle noted that he is once again on the cabinet. Since the election there are thirty new councillors; there would be delays, as training is needed before at least some of their county council decision-making is permitted.

## **9 Council general**

**9.1 To identify representative(s) from the council for NALC county meetings** – Cllr Kirk had attended the last meeting. There were no volunteers to be a full-time representative. An attendee would be identified on a meeting-by-meeting basis.

**9.2 To discuss NorthumberlandALC's website offer and determine next steps towards website and email changeover** – Cllr Kirk had circulated a note re this and gave a summary of what was needed. The requirements were due to audit questions and the current website arrangements were coming to an end (March 2026). Cllr Kirk proposed that he continue his review of providers and take up some trial offers in conjunction with Cllr M Charlton and the clerk. All agreed. The issue of whether councillors would take up email addresses with the new domain would need to be addressed (this was not required at present). Cllr Kirk to progress and also contact Graeme Popay re NorthumberlandALC's offer of subsidy for year one.

**9.3 Newcastle University Research** – a research survey re the utility and viability of rural pubs was being conducted by Newcastle University. It was agreed that the parish council would help. Cllr Archer to get back to them.

**9.4 New financial regulations, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct, as applicable** – Cllr Kirk had reviewed the new model financial regulations. The only difference with the most recent set was to take into account the Local Government Procurement Act 2024 for tenders over £60,000. Since the current financial regulations (adopted in May) referred to the '2015 act or its successor' there seemed to be no need to change the wording of the regulations at this time. The 2024 act would be followed if applicable to parish council procurements.

**9.5 To discuss NALC advice re Martyn's Law** - the advice from NALC had been reviewed by several councillors and it was agreed that the organisers of the events were responsible, rather than the parish council (unless the parish council organises an event).

## **10 Allotments**

**10.1 Water supply quote update**-Cllr Coulson had been given an estimate of £4349 from Northumbrian Water to set up a standpipe connected to the mains and we would need to pay £543 upfront for a quote. It was questioned whether such a spend was justifiable for the benefit of seven allotments. It was noted that in any case the tenants would need to pay for the costs of water going forward and a way to finance any connection/ installation costs would need to be found. It was noted that many parish councils do not provide water to allotments and that often there is an Allotments Association to work out such matters. Alternatives were possible – perhaps another resident might take over the courtesy provision, or there could be water butts or other collection system, or a delivery system such as an IBC cube (whose tap would need to be locked). It was agreed that Cllr Coulson would speak to one of the allotment tenants to see if a discussion could be opened between the tenants to find a solution.

Separately, there would be a meeting of the allotments sub-committee at the allotments on Thursday 10 July 2025 7pm, primarily to look at the plots and tenancy agreements. Cllrs Archer, Coulson, Foster and the clerk indicated they would attend.

## **11 Affordable Housing**

**11.1 Update re housing needs survey and launch** – because the addresses for the survey had still not been provided by NCC to the survey company this had to be deferred to 23 September 2025 at time to be confirmed. Co Cllr Horncastle would chase up the addresses if he has a name or department at County Hall.

## **12 Cemetery**

**12.1 Memorial bench** - Mrs Darbyshire-Walker had asked whether the council would agree to a stone bench rather than the design (by Mr Maurice) that had previously been agreed. This would be in the same location in the cemetery. Cllr Dunn stated that the parish council's Memorial Bench Policy specified a uniform design. Cllr Beck recalled that as the design was requested by a widow the council had discussed the request and agreed to it. There was already one stone bench in the cemetery. There were no objections to a simple stone bench, which was agreed. Clerk to communicate this to Mrs Darbyshire-Walker.

A review of the parish council's Memorial Bench Policy would be on the agenda for September. Cllr Kirk noted that recycled plastic benches had been previously agreed by the parish council.

## **13 Rights of Way & Access**

**13.1** The minutes of a sub-committee meeting on 19 June 2025 had been circulated. The next meeting will be in two weeks. Two current problems related to (i) the gate where the chimney path meets the Carrshield Road, which needs to be lifted to open it - this was particularly difficult for riders using the bridleway; (ii) a tall stile in Catton has its bottom rung missing. It was noted that there are potential liability issues if the parish council fixes such items outside of its responsibility. The footpath along the River Allen still needs to be repaired/reinforced.

## **14 Environment & Climate Change**

Nothing to report

## Towns and Villages

**15.1 Bus shelter update** – Mr Maurice had come back to Cllr Kirk with a proposed schedule and a price variation. He could install the shelter in November. The timber had been milled and stored. There was a 10% uplift to the original quote, which was now 18 months old, bringing it to £8250. This was believed to reflect increased labour costs. On timeframe, Cllr Dalton noted that it was unlikely that an alternative would be able to be installed any quicker. Cllr Beck noted that the public consultation had been unanimously in favour of Mr Maurice's design despite it being more expensive (price information was available at the consultation, which had been attended by 60+ residents). She indicated that a new consultation would be needed to discuss any proposed new design. Cllr Beck proposed that the parish council proceed with the bus shelter from Mr Maurice, with the increased cost, and instruct Mr Maurice. This was seconded by Cllr Coulson. Although concerns were expressed about the overall cost of the project, a number of councillors said that they would support the idea because of the public consultation. As to maintenance costs, it was believed that this would involve oiling every two to three years.

In terms of the base, Cllr Kirk would contact Mr Dodd to check his quotation was still valid and to discuss time frame (the base was best installed above 4 degrees Celsius). He would make arrangements to co-ordinate Mr Dodd and Mr Maurice. As the quote for the base was more recent, no price increase was expected. It was agreed to proceed with the base without reverting to the meeting provided that any price increase was not unreasonable.

It was agreed that the council would look into providing further bus shelters – in Catton and in Allendale in the Allenheads direction. All agreed.

**15.2 Adoption of Telephone Kiosk (Allendale)** – it had been previously agreed to adopt the listed kiosk in Allendale. The contract from BT had been circulated for councillors to review. It was noted that downstream costs would include the inspection of the light by an electrician. Cllr S Charlton noted that specialist parts may be needed if repairs to the box are required over time. It was agreed that the clerk should sign and return the contract and request that BT continue the electricity supply to the light (which they had indicated would be for seven years).

On the agenda for September – discussion of use and electrician inspection.

### 15.3 Public toilets in Allendale & Allenheads update - see item 8.

#### 15.4 Update from working party re parking on village green (if any)

Cllrs Dunn, S Charlton and Dobson had met and proposed setting up a discussion with residents. Cllr Kirk queried what problem is seeking to be resolved. It was noted that vans may end up being moved onto road parking if parking in the marketplace is restricted. The main problem seemed to be permanently parked vehicles restricting parking for visitors and residents. Cllr S Charlton noted particular problems when funerals are taking place. The legalities would need to be looked at in detail. A bye-law may be needed and Cllr Kirk noted that prescriptive rights may need to be addressed as some areas had been used as a carpark before they were registered as Village Green. It was decided to see what the residential consensus was first.

The proposal to hold a public consultation was agreed unanimously. This would need to be advertised widely, including on the website and Facebook. The earliest such a public meeting could happen was the beginning of September. The working group would bring a proposal to the next meeting.

**15.5 Dropped kerbs in the market place** - Cllr Dunn had reviewed these. Most of the locations mentioned are maintained by NCC's Highways department, who has a detailed map. In those cases, Highways can maintain inadequate ones. The installation of new ones may be more complicated. Cllr Dunn to contact Co Cllr Horncastle.

**15.6 Hearse house repointing** – Mr Thompson will do the work once the yard is cleared. Cllr Kirk had spoken to the owners who had said they would clear the yard, however this had not happened yet. Though the yard is private property they are happy for us to access it to do the repointing work to the hearse house. Cllr Kirk would ask the owners for their agreement for us to clear the yard and let Cllrs Foster and S Charlton know. They would clear the yard, Mr Thompson would be told and the work could then be done.

**15.7 Spring Tree Survey** – the tree survey was noted. No additional work was needed over the autumn work. The autumn work in the village was still waiting for Northern Powergrid to sort out the pole and shroud the cable near Arnison. Mr Robson had been given a date at the end of July from them.

**15.8 Village keeper** – a description of the work had been circulated. Mr Graham was agreeable to doing the work as a one-off job. It was agreed to ask what he could do for the £500 ceiling. Cllrs Dunn and Foster to get back to him. It was noted that the shrub-trimming at Arnison Terrace was already being covered with the other tree work.

**15.9 Allenheads trust monies** – an email had been received from the Allenheads Trust re these monies and requesting a review. There was around 100 hours work being done in mowing and maintenance of the village. Cllr Kirk proposed an increase in the parish council's contribution for next year, with the budget figure (2026/2027 budget) being increased to £1000. This was seconded by Cllr M Charlton and unanimously agreed.

**15.10 Playgrounds** – RoSPA inspection reports (if available) – the reports had not yet been received so this item would be carried over.

**16 Correspondence** - correspondence received was noted. Most had been discussed within the agenda.

**Item 7.19 – work to wall near the ladies toilets (impacting tar barl shed)** – since the parish council had established that it had neither done nor authorised the work it was agreed that this matter was between the tar barl group and NCC and should not be pursued by the clerk. NCC had indicated that they would look at the wall on 16 July. Clerk to let Mr Colley know that he should contact NCC directly if this has not been done already, if he wants to pursue this further.

**Item 7.21 – Catton oil leak** – as a body corporate the parish council did not know the source of the oil leak and could not provide this information to the enquirer. Clerk to reply.

**17 Finance**

**16.1 Accounts for payment/Bank reconciliation**

**Community account balance** as of 30.6.25 = £16,766.24

**Commercial Instant Access Account** as of 30.6.25 = £17,050.05

**Public Sector Deposit Fund of CCLA balance** as of 30.4.25 = £45,000.00

Cllr Kirk proposed the listed payments be approved for payment. This included payments to Bishop's Garage and Rickerby's from whom the bills had not yet been received. Cllr Coulson seconded this. Agreed.

There was a discussion re the mower servicing that had been carried out and what was covered. Cllr Foster noted that Mr Gilbertson had told him that one of the tractor motor tyres would need to be replaced.

**16.2 Banking mandate update and confirmation of next variation details** – the next changes would be to add Cllr M Charlton and remove Mr Gray. As the mandate changes needed to be done by a full signatory (it had lengthened the process because the current clerk was not a full signatory) it was agreed to increase the clerk's authority to full signatory and then look at what needed to done to ensure that the BACS payments are still set up to be signed by two councillors. All agreed.

[Note: at the same time Cllr Kirk would be added as a view-only user of online banking, not a signatory]

**16.3 To confirm arrangements for small grant applications** – it was confirmed that this would go ahead at the September meeting. The clerk would circulate to councillors the list of past previous successful applicants. She would revise the application form to ask a question about reserves and

about work/benefit within the parish boundary. The revised form would be circulated to councillors for comment. Thereafter, the grants would be advertised the website and Facebook.

- 18 **Matters for 7 August 2025 Agenda** – This would be a finance-only meeting (also any planning applications and any other pre-notified urgent business). It was agreed to discuss in October a revamp of the Parish Meeting (between 1 March and 1 May) to include inviting community groups. Other items would be discussed in September and October as noted in the minuted items.
- 19 **Private session/Confidential item(s) [Council only]** - there were none.
- 20 **Next Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 7 August 7 pm, Allendale Village Hall [Finance and urgent business only]**

The meeting ended at 9.30pm