

Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting
held on
Thursday 7th April 2022 at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall

Present: Cllr Simmonds (Chair), Councillors Beck, Coulson, Graham, Halliday, Henderson (by Zoom), Howard, Kirk, Philipson, Stevenson, Swaile, Villiers-Stuart, White and Co Cllr Horncastle H Newsome (Clerk) and Shirley Brown

Cllr Simmonds welcomed the new councillors to their first meeting. She also paid tribute to the late David Crellin, the previous Chair who had given 20 years' service to Allendale Parish Council. Cllr Simmonds said that David had taken on a range of difficult responsibilities over the years as councillor, including protecting restricted byways in the parishes of Allendale and Slaley from becoming Byways Open To All Traffic (BOATs), that would have allowed for vehicular access causing a lot of damage. She said he had made a real contribution to the lives of people in the parish giving a generous amount of his time to those struggling with challenging planning issues and supporting them in the best way he could. Cllr Philipson said that Maggie Keyte wished also to pay tribute to David's valued input into the BOAT inquiry and said that his proactive support, together with his knowledge, had made a great impression with the RSPB and English Nature that was a key factor in the success in preventing routes being made into BOATs. Cllr Villiers-Stuart said that David had been proactive in establishing the Allen Valleys Folk Festival and a lovely person to work with bringing lots of ideas to the programme. Cllr Howard said that David, when working for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was behind the introduction of the British Cattle Movement Service and that he was always prepared to listen to farmers and make improvements to the service. Cllr Swaile said that she had appreciated David's enthusiasm for the environment and support for the Plugging the Gaps project. The Clerk to share the Council's thanks and appreciation for David's work in a letter to his wife, Kerry Crellin.

1) Apologies for absence

There were none.

2) Planning Committee – planning applications

22/00554/FUL - Dryside Farm Allendale

Cllr Howard proposed **no objections** to the application with Cllr Graham seconding this, and the Council unanimously carried the motion. Cllr Henderson, attending by Zoom, was required to abstain.

22/00582/FUL - Holms House Sinderhope

Cllr Philipson proposed **no objections** to the application with Cllr Howard seconding this, and the Council unanimously carried the motion. Cllr Henderson, attending by Zoom, was required to abstain.

22/00705/FUL - Lanehead Allendale

Cllr Philipson proposed **no objections** to the application with Cllr White seconding this, and the Council unanimously carried the motion. Cllr Henderson, attending by Zoom, was required to abstain.

22/00800/VARYCO - Parlour Close Sinderhope

Cllr Howard proposed **no objections** to the application with Cllr Kirk seconding this, and the Council unanimously carried the motion. Cllr Philipson declared an interest and abstained. Cllr Henderson, attending by Zoom, was required to abstain.

3) Declarations of Interest

There were no changes to the existing declarations; see APC's website for full list:

[Links | Allendale Parish Council \(northumberlandparishes.uk\)](http://northumberlandparishes.uk)

The Clerk would shortly be submitting to Northumberland County Council the declarations of interest of the new seven councillors.

4) Public participation

There were two members of the public in attendance. Jenny Firth-Cozens said that she was shocked by the paucity of allotments in the parish and asked if the Council would consider ways of creating more. She said that in other parts of the country, for example, Frome, Somerset, the council had tackled its shortage by putting up the precept and buying a large field so that all the five hundred people on the waiting list were able to grow their own food. The Council discussed what it could do to increase the number of allotments in the parish that could include borrowing money at a low interest rate to buy suitable land, and it agreed for Cllrs Coulson (convener), Beck and Villiers-Stuart to meet, discuss and investigate possibilities, and what the Council's next steps should be.

5) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 3rd March 2022

Cllr Philipson proposed, and Cllr Graham seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

6) Matters Arising

Cobble setts in the Market Place

Cllrs Philipson and Graham said that remedial work to fix the cobbles appeared to have worked and the cobbles were firmly cemented in place and were no longer moving about.

7) County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Co Cllr Colin Horncastle welcomed the new councillors to the meeting and outlined his responsibilities as:

- a)** county councillor representative for South Tynedale, with Allendale being one of eight parishes in that area. He said that sometimes meeting days clashed which meant he could not attend every meeting.
- b)** one of eight Cabinet members holding the portfolio for Community Services with responsibility for fire & rescue, emergency planning, public protection, environmental health, environmental enforcement, trading standards, public health, licensing and housing and coroner's service.
- c)** Member of Tynedale Area Committee

Planning matters

Co Cllr Horncastle said that Northumberland County Council's new Local Plan had now replaced all the previous district plans with all its planning policies in one unified plan. He made the following points:

- a)** that Allendale Parish Council (APC) was one of around thirty councils in the county to have a neighbourhood development plan, and as a statutory consultee the Planning Officers must seriously consider its recommendations.
- b)** that APC should always refer to the relevant Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANDP) policies when making comments, even though it was slightly out of date. He said that the vast majority (97%) of planning applications were determined by planning officers, and the rest were either controversial or strategic.
- c)** that APC should look at the planning applications in front of it and avoid local politics, referring to the ANDP, and making its recommendations clear.
- c)** that planning applications during lockdown had tripled with NCC receiving 5,000/year. He said that the last two years had been extremely difficult for staff, however, officers were now returning to County Hall en masse and that the New Plan had helped speed up the processing of planning applications.

Affordable housing in the parish

Co Cllr Horncastle said that there was some overlap between his work with the county council and that of the parish council, for example, the provision of affordable housing that was of great local concern and where he had a strategic role. He said that he wanted to work with the parish council to get another affordable scheme off the ground but that finding suitable places that landowners were willing to sell for affordable housing schemes, that also must be close to public transport and within walking distance of local shops and services, would always be a challenge. He said that as private housing schemes had to

provide only 20% of affordable units in the Allendale area, and this did not kick in until 10 or more houses were being built, the county council would need to look at different ways of increasing the number of affordable homes. The Council would include affordable housing as a standing item on its agenda each month.

County Councillor grants

Co Cllr Horncastle said that as a county councillor he was assigned a small pot of money to award grants to projects in his patch although he was careful not to favour Allendale as it was his place of residence. Finally, he encouraged councillors to contact him if there were matters they would like to discuss with him, but if they needed to be raised formally then to go through the Clerk.

8) Cemetery Committee

Cllr Howard gave an update on cemetery matters including:

- a) repairs to the damaged stone walls were now complete
- b) work to renovate the Chapel of Rest by Allen Valleys Local History Group was ongoing
- c) ongoing talks with the gravediggers to improve grave shoring and the accessories needed for health and safety purposes
- d) the ongoing need to conduct remedial work to re-align headstones and level graves
- e) introducing a minimum specification for the installation of headstones and the foundations for these
- f) planning for more tree planting
- g) inviting volunteers to help gather loose wood and branches in the old cemetery

Cllr Beck said that if she had enough notice then she would be happy to organise the services of young people to help with both tree planting and clearance work.

Cllr Philipson said that the council regularly defends its position on why graves are backfilled with a certain amount of mounding up in anticipation of ground shrinkage. He said that if the gravediggers put insufficient soil back then over time the natural settling of soil into place can cause grave subsidence. The Clerk suggested publishing information about grave settling so that the family members of the bereaved understand the process and to help prevent their distress.

9) Rights of Way & Access Committee

The Council discussed the state of the footpath from the sewage works towards Catton (footpath 502/026) that NCC had closed in August 2021 and thought that it might be beyond repair. The Clerk to check the status of the footpath with Duncan Lovatt. The Clerk to find out if NCC/Allendale Estates would put down hoggin/hardcore on the intended footpath line near the Blakett Level footbridge and the Wolf to make it more secure under foot.

10) Towns & Villages Committee

Cllr Simmonds suggested that the Council decide on the membership of the sub-committees at the Annual Meeting in May. She said that in the past sub committees had met as and when, rather than at fixed times, and reported back to the full council with information and any recommendations it had. She suggested new sub committees to cover Affordable housing, Allotments, Review of the ANDP, Electrical Vehicle Charging and Village Greens & Parking.

The Council agreed for the Primary School to take on the maintenance of the flower tubs on the store bank and next to the Glendinning War Memorial, with Cllrs Graham and Henderson providing the plants from Down to Earth.

Cllr Philipson suggested that the Council consider resurfacing the parking area adjacent to the post office as it was in a poor condition.

11) Correspondence

The Big Northumberland Gear Change

Whilst the Council agreed that the cycling and walking infrastructure plans presented had no relevance to Allendale, and that improving cycle routes in the parish was too big an issue to be covered in the ANDP, Cllr Beck said that because of the obvious environmental and health benefits she would like to see more funding for making local roads more cycle friendly, and improved facilities for cyclists.

Jim Brown, Allenheads

The Council agreed to send a letter to Natural England supporting the proposal to replace the pole that marks the summit of Killhope and that acts as a popular local landmark.

Paul Barber – Electrical Vehicle Charging

The Council would decide on the membership of the sub-committees at its Annual Meeting in May (see 10 above).

Geoff Lee, Allendale

See Rights of Way & Access at 9 above.

George Doody, Catton

NB Post meeting note - Michael Armer, NCC's trees and woodland officer had inspected the Ash tree and reported that it did not show any obvious signs of potential failure although there were some dead branches in the canopy which Ash trees tend to have. He would reinspect it in the summer to determine if it had any signs of Ash die back.

12) Finance Committee

Accounts for payment

Cllr Howard proposed the accounts for payment, seconded by Cllr Stevenson.

The Council agreed to an increase to the Clerk's hours from ten hours a week to thirteen, as well as a 4% increase to her rate of pay since this had remained the same since her appointment in October 2017.

Treasurer's Account: bank balance as of **29 March 2022 - £ 39,081.41**

Business 30-Day Notice Account: bank balances as of **9 March 2022 - £ 16,438.69**

13) Matters for 5th May 2022 agenda

Annual Parish meeting (June 2022)

Establish a publication scheme of parish council policies

14) Confidential agenda item (for Council only)

There were three items.

15) Date of next Parish Council

The next Parish Council meeting would take place on **5th May 2022** at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 21:30