

Minutes of Allendale Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st February 2024 at 7pm at St Cuthbert's Church Hall

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

1) Apologies for absence and councillor news

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bron and White.

Cllr Philipson welcomed Cllr Brian Johnson to his first meeting.

2) Declarations of interest

See APC's website for a full list:

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

3) Planning Committee – planning applications

24/00136/FUL - Land East Of Spring Cottage Dovespool Allenheads

A neighbour of the development attended the meeting to raise concerns about the planning application for the construction of a holiday home including **a)** the inaccurate presentation of the boundaries as outlined in the application, **b)** the style of the build not being in keeping with local buildings in North Pennines National Landscape (formerly known as North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) with wrap around balconies and walls of glass, **c)** the lack of privacy with balconies overlooking his home, **d)** the proposed use of the public footpath for vehicular access and the detrimental effect on wildlife and the stream and sewers running beneath it, and **e)** the absence of plans for managing rainwater runoff. The Council discussed the application and acknowledged the west facing elevation shown on the plan actually facing northwards, with the south elevation facing more towards the west, and the plan clearly showing that the two properties were attached when in fact there was a gap. Whilst the Council acknowledged that in principle it supported tourism related development and accommodation, all development should be designed and located having regard to the advice set out in the North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide and Guidelines (2011) as outlined in **Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANDP) Policy 1: General Development Principles**, and not affect the amenity of nearby residents. The Council also had concerns about the proposed access road and its suitability for use heavy vehicles needed for construction, and their impact on old mine works. After a full discussion Cllr Simmonds proposed **to object** to the application with Cllr Graham seconding this as the development did not reflect and respect the scale, form, mass, and appearance of the original building and was therefore not in keeping with **ANDP Policy 8: Demolition and Reconstruction of Derelict Buildings** para (e), and the Council unanimously carried the motion. Cllr Beck abstained.

24/00177/FUL - Struthers Farm Catton

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

4) Public participation

There were **four** members of the public in attendance (see 3 above).

5) Minutes of the previous meetings held on 11th January 2024

Cllr Beck agreed, and Cllr Simmonds seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6) Matters Arising

Affordable housing (see Towns & Villages below)

7) County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Co Cllr Horncastle firstly apologised for his absence at the previous two meetings however the dates had clashed with other parish council meetings he was due to attend.

Ash die back

Co Cllr Horncastle to find out whether there is any help with funding for removing diseased ash trees on private land in view of the expected volume of trees likely to be affected by ash die back. Cllr Horncastle said that there was thought to be around six million ash trees affected across the country and that NCC had financed a study to find out the extent of diseased trees located alongside highways.

County Council budget

Co Cllr Horncastle said that the county council would be setting a budget of £830m in three weeks' time and making savings of £10m with no cuts to front line services and no compulsory redundancies although council tax was going up by 2.9% plus 2% (imposed by government) for adult social care. In answer to Cllr Villiers-Stuart's question about how savings are made, Cllr Horncastle said that they achieved this by finding different ways of doing things, for example, by reducing the number of grass cuts in the county's numerous open spaces and allowing the grass to grow long in places, reducing the number of managers employed by the council, and increasing some of its fees including planning fees.

Former Allendale First School

Co Cllr Horncastle said that now that the water services had been split off from the Higher Ground site, he understood that the sale of the former first school was complete. The Clerk to check with the NCC's Estates office before officially recording this in the minutes.

Gully work

Co Cllr Horncastle said that the blocked gully situation continued to present big problems for the county with many blockages and an insufficient number of gully wagons. He said the cleaning cycle was 32 months which was not adequate in spite of people working overtime including weekends. He said that the wagons were currently working in the parish and should be finished by Friday, 2nd February. Cllr Beck mentioned the build-up of water at five lane ends that was turning into a lake and Co Cllr Horncastle said that he was aware of the issue and that he was monitoring this since he did not wish to see it causing damage to the new tarmacked road down to Mill Cottages.

Highways

Co Cllr Horncastle said that the condition of the roads throughout the county were in very poor condition as a result of the constant rainfall and that NCC did not have in-house resources to manage them and that it was using contractors to conduct emergency repairs. He acknowledged that these repairs were not likely to last but nevertheless they were being repaired and re-repaired as quickly as possible. Co Cllr Horncastle said that more permanent repairs were hampered as the Environment Agency prevented the council from removing pollutants from roads until it has sampled and proven the run-off not to be carcinogenic, and that road closures and traffic management had to be put in place to conduct this monitoring work.

Cllr Horncastle emphasised that there was only one way to report potholes and that was through the

FixMyStreet link: <https://fix.northumberland.gov.uk/>

Household Waste Recovery Centre

Co Cllr Horncastle said that the Government had brought in new arrangements for the disposal of waste including removing its charges for disposing of DIY waste (including rubble) at its HWRCs and that people were required to get a permit 24 hours in advance of their visit: [Pay As You Throw](#)

Northumberland Schools

Co Cllr Horncastle said that 94% of the county's schools had achieved the status of good or outstanding.

8) Allotments Committee

The Council unanimously authorised for Mark Armstrong to clear rubbish, including a collapsed greenhouse from the far corner of the allotments at a cost of £980, plus the skip hire costs estimated to be

around £470. 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.

9) Cemetery Committee

Cemetery wall

Cllr Howard confirmed that Alan Murray had now re-built the stone wall at the entrance to the cemetery, and also used some of the left over stone to re-build another section of the boundary wall. Cllrs Howard and Philipson explained that they had agreed a higher rate per metre after deciding to raise the height of the wall by 25% and opting to widen it using middle and through stones rather than going for an inferior like for like re-build. Cllr Kirk noted the increase in cost which was higher than was originally agreed that had not been formally authorised by the full Council. Cllr Villiers-Stuart took on board Cllr Kirk's comments and said that whilst it was likely that the Council would have approved the increase in spend for a more substantial re-build, that in future the Council should provide an up to date quote for it to consider. Everyone agreed that Alan's craftsmanship was unquestionable and that he had achieved a professional and neat finish with the through stones seen on the inside of the wall rather than the car park side.

10) Rights of Way & Access Committee

Cllr Beck said that she would be contacting Duncan Lovatt concerning the poor condition of the steps and stiles at Oldman Bottom.

11) Towns & Villages Committee

Affordable housing

Cllr Swaile said that the ANDP Review Committee had a very positive online meeting with Vince Walsh, Community Action Northumberland's (CAN) newly appointed Rural Housing Enabler on 6th January. Vince was working in close partnership with Northumberland County Council through funds made available from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), and would act as a coordinator between NCC, parish councils and landowners. Vince was currently looking at Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that identifies sites across Northumberland that *may* be able to provide land for more affordable homes to be delivered in the parish and that he would also support delivery of any scheme approved. The Clerk to create a separate agenda item for Affordable Housing updates in future.

Allenfields

The Council authorised for Mark Armstrong to remove all the vegetation in the area of the field that shares a border with the old Midland Bank and replace it with topsoil at a cost of £780.

Bus shelter update

The Council had now received the technical specifications for the design of the bespoke timber frame bus shelter from Jonah Maurice with the formal quote for the work. Cllr Philipson said that he would shortly be meeting Jonah and Darren White on site to discuss the design for the foundations that he needed to complete the planning application. Co Cllr Horncastle agreed to contribute £4k towards the new shelter and help speed up the planning application process. The Council acknowledged the need to conduct a community consultation in Catton to find out what design for a new shelter would be best.

Catton road safety mirror

Cllr Graham had consulted Jenny Fairless and sourced a suitable replacement mirror for the Clerk to order as soon as he gave the go ahead.

Memorial Bench Restoration Programme

Now that the programme of refurbishment was complete, and all the benches were in optimum condition, the Council acknowledged that time spent maintaining the benches would be reduced, and that it could expect the annual maintenance costs to be reduced to around two thirds of the original budget.

Cllr Graham had talked to Hilton Graham who had agreed to continue to inspect and maintain the memorial benches annually on that basis.

Village and Cemetery tree inspection

The Council had now received Matty Robson's reports on the inspections of the trees in Allendale centre and the Cemetery with his recommendations for tree surgery. The Clerk said that he had also had a drive around following on from the storms, but he did not find anything giving cause for concern. The Clerk to ask Matty to provide, as soon as possible, two quotes for a) the tree surgery work needed in the Cemetery and b) tree surgery work needed in Allendale centre.

12) Correspondence

Julie Telford – The Council discussed the journey that the residents of Denefields made when taking their children to school in the absence of a direct footpath making the journey both stressful and hazardous. After discussion, the Council agreed with Cllr Philipson's suggestion to create a good cost effective solution by creating access through the wooden fence at the top of the Denefields estate that leads to the school. Cllr Swaile agreed to discuss the idea with the Head Teacher of Allendale Primary School.

Angela Sadler – The Council agreed for Cllr Beck to work with the Clerk and Chris Garner, Chair of Allendale Village Hall on an application to access S106 funds for outdoor sport and play.

Roger Morris – The Council agreed that the most suitable place to install the Norah Handcock memorial bench prior to the Isaacs's Well development would be against the wall after moving the salt bin further to the right. Once the design for area was known there would be an opportunity to review this. Cllr Philipson agreed to take delivery of the bench.

John Colley – The Council agreed for Cllr Coulson to obtain a quote from Mark Armstrong to replace the damaged allotment fence with chain link fencing that would match the rest of the fencing around the allotments.

Heather Bell – The Council agreed for the Clerk to flag up concerns about the safety of pedestrians with vehicles driving up along the pavement down Leadgate towards the school on the opposite side of the village hall with Highways.

13) Finance Committee

Accounts for payment/bank reconciliation

Cllr Howard proposed that the accounts for payment, seconded by Cllr Villiers-Stuart.

Treasurer's Account bank balance as of 31 st January 2024.	£ 8,837.29
Business 30-Day Notice Account bank balance as of 31 st January 2024	£11,078.39
Public sector Deposit Fund of CCL bank balance as of 31 st January 2024	£60,000.00

14) Matters for 7th March 2024 agenda.

Grant applications

15) Confidential agenda item (for Council only)

There were none.

16) Date of next Parish Council

The next monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on **7th March 2024** at 7pm at Allendale Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 21:15