

**Agreed Minutes: Allendale Parish Council Meeting
3 April 2025 at 7pm
at Allendale Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Gray, Armstrong, Coulson (Chair), Kirk, Beck, White, Philipson, Simmonds, Johnson, Co Cllr Horncastle, K Naylor (Clerk)

1 Welcome and councillor news

The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Swaile and Cllr Bron.

3 Declarations of interest

No new interests were declared. A full list of interests is at

[https://northumberlandparishes.uk/allendale/documents?search=interest&type=All&year\[value\]\[year\]=](https://northumberlandparishes.uk/allendale/documents?search=interest&type=All&year[value][year]=)

4 Planning – planning applications

25/00825/BT Proposal to remove phone and lock kiosk for phone box 01434683242 at Arnison Terrace Allendale Hexham NE47 9BW

BT had conducted a telephone survey on call numbers and on signal coverage. The box could be adopted by the parish council. If not adopted then the box would be locked and left as it is because it is listed.

Cllr Beck proposed the motion no objection to the service being stopped. Cllr Johnson seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

[Further NCC consultation until 16 April 2025, NCC Final decision 3 June 2025].

Agenda Item 14.12 was discussed here. In relation to the adoption of the box Cllr Johnson indicated that an initial application to adopt could be made in advance of a discussion of future use. Residents to be consulted on future use. Books and cakes are already being placed in the box. Cllr Beck proposed the motion to adopt the box. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried unanimously.

25/00826/BT Proposal to remove phone box 01434685251 at Allenheads Centre at Allenheads NE47 9HN

The box at Allenheads did not seem to be used. This box would be removed by BT as it is not listed. Cllr Kirk proposed the motion no objection, Cllr Coulson seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

[Further NCC consultation until 16 April 2025, NCC Final decision 3 June 2025].

25/00733/FUL Development of 3no. bungalows with associated landscaping and infrastructure at Land West Of Lea Hall Cottage Splitty Lane Catton

The bungalows were smaller, fewer and a lower height than in earlier versions of proposals for this land. Materials are stated as slate and stone cladding but no further specification as to the nature of the materials. Cllr Kirk proposed the motion no objection, Cllr Philipson seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

25/00815/VARYCO Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) on 24/00177/FUL (approved) to change the design to Agricultural Building at Struthers Farm Catton NE47 9LP

The applicant was present at the meeting and explained that this was a reversion to an earlier shape. There had been no change in materials.

Cllr Philipson proposed the motion no objection, Cllr Johnson seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

25/00616/LBC Listed building consent to install to the rear an external oil fired boiler at Corn Mill Farmhouse Spartylea Allendale NE47 9UG

This was out of sight at the back of the building and also obscured by greenery.

Cllr Johnson proposed the motion no objection, Cllr Beck seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

5 Public participation

There were four members of the public in attendance. An issue was raised about raising the profile of the council and identifying the councillors to the public. Co Cllr Horncastle clarified that no advertising can be undertaken now by the parish council as a body because we are in the pre-election period where this is not allowed. As to the general profile of the council, Cllr White proposed that the new council address this - this was seconded by Cllr Beck. Agreed.

6 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025

The minutes were approved.

7 Matters arising

Affordable Housing – the Clerk passed on an update from Cllr Swaile - the housing association and NCC had found a way to directly fund the housing needs survey without the need for the parish council as intermediary. The parish council had been asked to affirm its support and specifically that it would be able to host a community event and help with compiling a list for publicity etc. The council affirmed its wholehearted support and the Clerk is to let them know.

8 County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

Co Cllr Horncastle provided the following update.

Station Road – the scheme that had been agreed by had been due to go in in April. However, Station Road is due to be resurfaced and the scheme will go in after that.

Leadgate – the site visit has not yet gone ahead as it had been planned alongside the traffic calming visit. Co Cllr Horncastle to follow up.

Coop bollards – the scheme that had been proposed in the past was fairly expensive (£31K) because it was in a conservation area. It was agreed to discuss this again with the newly elected council.

St Peter's Churchyard – Mrs Brown (Churchwarden at St Cuthbert's) had now been put in contact with the relevant person at NCC [ref Minute Nov24 Item 7].

River path - Cllr Beck noted problems with landslip on the river path which have not been addressed. Cllr Horncastle said that he would follow up. Cllr Simmonds noted that this was part of a national trail.

Trees – Co Cllr Horncastle was advised that permissions for tree works were taking a very long time to come through – almost double the six week period.

Allenheads – it was noted that toilets would be looked at before the 6 September 2025 Summer Fair. It was noted that the costs of replacing public toilets is very high.

County - The restructuring of a county council loan which it had used to purchase shopping centres should now release money for affordable homes.

9 Council General

Election update – there will be a contested election on 1 May with 16 candidates. The PowerPoint from today's candidate briefing will be circulated by the Elections Office in due course. The official retirement date for the existing council is 6 May 2025.

10 Allotments

Policy and procedure document for website – this had been circulated for approval. It was approved and would be put on the website, but the tenancy agreement would wait till it had been altered to address the division of plots and measurements. Cllr Coulson to measure plots.

11 Cemetery

11.1 Burial of ashes in woodland burial area and pricing Cllr Philipson noted that it made sense to continue the current row of full-size woodland plot burials towards the path in the woodland burial area. This would create an area between the layby and the row which could accommodate two rows of half plots for ashes (two ashes each). This would be a better use of the land and no loss in income. It was proposed to charge £300 for a half plot (space for two ashes). Agreed. It was noted that one full size plot had been paid

for but the ashes not yet interred. It was agreed to offer a half plot and, if accepted, it was agreed to refund the difference. Clerk to action

11.2 **Green bin screening** Cllr Philipson had a quote for £124 materials plus £70 labour, total cost £194. It was agreed this was good value for money. Cllr Kirk proposed the quote be accepted; seconded Cllr Simmonds. Carried.

11.3 **Traditional area** - it was noted that, in the traditional area, the graves would need to go right up to the path in order to maximise space without losing a row (one row in that area is 24 plots, up to 48 burials if double).

11.4 **Headstones** – it was noted that one headstone in the traditional area is out of line and seems to be too close to the grave. Subsequent stones will need to be sited further back. Peg markers for the line at either end were suggested. The distance from one headstone to the next needs to be three metres.

11.5 **Wall** - the wall in the old cemetery that borders Mr Maurice's land near the new cemetery is starting to slip.

12 **Rights of Way & Access**

The river footpath issue had been raised with Co Cllr Horncastle. There were some issues around the chimneys that Cllr Beck would report on FixMyStreet.

13 **Environment & Climate Change**

A tree planting plan had been circulated. Four categories were discussed.

1. Wildflower area - red lined triangle – plan suggests wildflowers - possible future grave use
2. Arm at the side – blue/green lined – plan suggests wildflowers, bulbs and a few trees - could be a possible future ashes area
3. Trees within the woodland area – red dots inside the area (two proposed)
4. Tree avenues – traditional side and woodland side

In relation to item 1 it was noted that this could be used later for burials of some type if the land was suitable as the wildflower area does not need to be permanent. In relation to items 2 and 4, Cllr Philipson raised concerns about tree roots lifting the tarmac of the pathways and noted that there was an example of this elsewhere in the cemetery. In relation to item 4, for the traditional side of the proposed avenue, as well as the pathway, tree roots could also impact headstone stability. The potential loss of grave space and associated income were also noted (see also 11.3). It was noted that dogwood was suggested for the traditional side avenue and has smaller roots. Cllr Johnson suggested that this could be dug up in the future if grave space was needed. In relation to item 3, Cllr Philipson had no objection to the two red-marked trees being planted within the woodland area. Cllr Simmonds questioned whether the whole issue would be better discussed by the new cemetery sub-committee and put to the new parish council, given the long-term implications. It was agreed to defer the issue for now. Cllr Philipson also suggested that any trees planted by the council in future be part of the overall tree-management plan and not adopted out to individuals. With reference to the plan, the following motions were proposed by Cllr Beck, seconded by Cllr White and carried.

1. Wildflower area - red lined triangle - planting of wildflowers - agreed
2. Arm at the side - blue/green lined - bulbs and flowers agreed - but not trees at the present time
3. Trees within the woodland area – red dots inside the area (two) - not agreed at the present time
4. Tree avenues - traditional side and woodland side - not agreed at the present time.

It was agreed that although no trees would be planted at the present time, a new cemetery committee would look at 3 and 4 in order to determine a future tree planting scheme for the woodland area.

14 **Towns and Villages**

14.1 **Bus shelter re Planning Inspectorate** – there had been no update from the Planning Inspectorate nor re the funding applications. The beech sapling had been moved to the other side of the road.

14.2 **Mowing re servicing/purchasing** – mowing would be starting next week. One strimmer and one Honda mower will need to be scrapped. Cllr Gray to collect the useable equipment from SV Auto.

14.3 **Fuel account arrangements** – has been set up at Bishops Cleeve.

14.4 **Trailer storage** – the small trailer that transports strimmers fuel cans and small mowers needs moving from behind the church to another central village location.

14.5 **Bench purchase** – the bench has been ordered and should be delivered in April.

14.6 **Isaac's Well repair and AVLHG** – the villages sub-committee noted two areas where reassurance was sought from the ALVHG (i) re the Grade 2 listed status of the wall (Mrs Dunn is gaining clarification from the Conservation Officer) and (ii) a breakdown of costs to ensure enough funding is allocated for the wall work.

14.7 **Scotch Hall bin** - it was proposed that the council accepts NCC's offer to supply and install a dog waste bin at Scotch Hall NE47 9DG at the quoted price of £464.90 plus VAT with delivery/installation as soon as possible. Budget for this is 2025/26 Street Furniture/Waste Bins £1000. The location for the bin had been previously circulated [OS NY 84539 54620 Lat, long: 54.88609, 2.24252; W3W ///outgrown.skate.averages]. Proposed Cllr Kirk; seconded Cllr Johnson. Carried. Clerk to order.

14.8 **Planters** – Cllr Charlton to look at possibilities.

14.9 **Catton speed sign** – is now working but took a while to get it fixed. Contract to be reviewed when it comes up for renewal. The Clerk noted that at least one repair visit had been hampered by wind. It was noted by Cllr Beck that the company had visited multiple times over a few consecutive days.

14.10 **Catton/Splitty Lane dog bin** – has now been emptied. It will be relocated by NCC at their cost to be nearer to a collection route.

14.11 **Autumn tree survey works** – will be in hand when permission from NCC is granted.

14.12 **BT K6 LB2 telephone box adoption proposals** – was discussed in Item 4.

15 Correspondence

Correspondence received was noted.

Supporting Nature Survey – Cllr Coulson to look at the Supporting Nature survey from NCC and respond if needed

Bollards for Co-op – Co Cllr Horncastle had given a recap re the previously requested bollards (see Item 8). In response to the latest letter, it was noted that the parish council had not conducted a risk assessment and was not qualified to do so. Furthermore, it was Highways Land. Cllr White proposed this be brought to the new council in due course.

Wentworth verges – the issue of reduced mowing had been raised with Cllr Johnson. There was a need to determine who is responsible for the various areas at Wentworth and also to contact NCC as the parish council mows on their behalf in that location. The current focus on reduced mowing is the cemetery and the area near the war memorial. Cllr Gray noted that there would be a need to brief the mowing team and feed into their schedule, as and when any further areas such as Wentworth Park are considered for wild flower planting and reduced mowing. Clerk to respond to resident.

VCSE – The parish council did not have the resources to form a network to help Thriving Together support VCSE at the present time.

Allotment - Cllr Coulson to obtain a quote from Northumbria water re the water supply. Grant funding is a possibility.

B4RN – there was an issue with the map provided by B4RN in relation to the Village Green boundary. Cllr Kirk proposed that we sign the Wayleave agreement stating it as 'across Allendale Village Green as on the Village Green Registration Map'. Clerk to amend form and sign.

16 Finance

16.1 The listed payments were approved

Proposed Cllr Coulson. Seconded Cllr Johnson. Agreed.

Community account balance as of 31.3.25 = £7377.70

Commercial Instant Access Account as of 31.3.25 = £17,013.07

Public Sector Deposit Fund of CCLA balance as of 31.3.25 = £45,000.00

16.2 Small grant application from North Pennines Observatory ACA in Allenheads

It was agreed to consider this, though unusually and exceptionally, because of some remaining funding and to award a small grant of £100 from the 2024/25 S.137 budget.

Proposed Cllr Simmonds; seconded Cllr Philipson. Carried.

16.3 **Confirmation of Fixed Asset Register as of 31.3.25** – this had been circulated. Cllr Kirk proposed to accept the Fixed Asset Register to the year end as circulated. Seconded Cllr Gray. Approved.

16.4 **Banking arrangements going forward (Lloyds and CCLA)** – Cllr Kirk noted that a maximum of two signatories would remain after 6 May. New signatories to be decided at the May meeting. The existing signatories would remain in place until the new signatories were sorted and would continue to sign for payments that had gone through the council approval process. All agreed.

17 Matters for 8 May Agenda

It was agreed to keep the agenda for the 8 May meeting to a minimum in view of this being the first meeting of a newly elected council.

Items so far:

New banking signatories

Declarations

Committees

- 18 This would be the last parish council meeting for Cllrs Philipson and Simmonds and both were thanked wholeheartedly for their service and for the expertise, dedication and experience they had brought over many years. Co Cllr Horncastle remarked that he had never known two people who had so much influence on a local area, Cllr Philipson bringing deep, local knowledge and Cllr Simmonds bringing international flair. The amount of work they had put in and their commitment over the years was noted. There was a spontaneous round of applause.

It was noted that Cllr Bron would not be permitted to stand for re-election because of her Swiss nationality and a rule change. The parish council expressed sadness and disappointment and thanked Cllr Bron for her service and input.

- 19 **Confidential item(s)**

There were none

- 20 **Date of next Parish Council Meeting**

6.30pm on 8 May 2025 at Allendale Village Hall

The meeting ended at 9.10pm

Signed:

On: