

ALLENDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Agreed Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting and a meeting of Allendale Parish Council held at High Forest Community Centre, Sinderhope on Thursday 5 June at 7pm

Present: Cllrs Archer (Chair), Beck, Charlton S, Charlton M, Coulson, Dalton, Dobson, Dunn, Foster, Jackson, Kirk, Swaile, White, Mrs Naylor (Clerk)

Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk had uploaded the annual reports to the website prior to the meeting:

<https://northumberlandparishes.uk/allendale/document/annual-parish-reports-2025>

1 Welcome and councillor news

Mandy Charlton's declaration of acceptance of office was signed in the presence of the clerk and delivered to the meeting

2 Public participation

None

3 Apologies for absence

Co County Horncastle had indicated that he would not be able to attend.

4 Declarations of Interest – councillors to hand in Declarations of Interest

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

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

5 Planning applications

25/01560/FUL Construction of triple garage to replace raised beds, static caravan and garden buildings, create new hard standing to access garage and retrospective permission for garden shed at Stob Green Sinderhope NE47 9SL.

Cllr Dunn noted that this fits in with policy 1 of the Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan (General Development Principles) and it was noted that the garage is out of the way.

Cllr Kirk proposed the motion no objection. This was seconded by Cllr White and unanimously carried by the council.

25/01244/FELTPO Tree Preservation Order Application - Sycamore - fell to ground level due to honey fungus affecting the butt and main stem at 3 Denelands Allendale NE47 9PW

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

6 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2025

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

7 Matters arising

20/Correspondence item 5.12 – drainage near the tar barl shed following inspection by Towns and Villages

This has been inspected by Cllrs Foster and Charlton, S. This work had not been done or authorised by the Parish Council. An enquiry has been lodged with NCC as to who authorised or did the work and their reply would be awaited. It was noted that the Co-op receive only a minimal rent for the building and are therefore not in a position to repair it.

8 County Councillor and Northumberland County Council update

None.

9 Council general

9.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/2025

9.1.1 To receive and note the report of the Internal Auditor (page 3) and consider and agree any actions arising from it.

Alan Blair had completed the internal audit and agreed that the objectives of internal control were being met by the council. There were no actions arising. Cllr Kirk proposed to accept the motion to receive and note the internal auditor's report. This was seconded by Cllr Archer. Carried.

9.1.2 To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement (page 4)

The Annual Governance Statement was considered and approved. Cllr Kirk proposed to approve the Annual Governance Statement. This was seconded by Cllr Dunn. Carried.

9.1.3 To consider and approve the draft annual accounts for 2024/2025. The draft annual accounts were considered and approved. Cllr Kirk proposed to approve the annual accounts. This was seconded by Cllr Beck. Carried.

9.1.4 To consider and approve the Accounting Statement, including Explanation of Variances and Reserves statement. The Accounting Statement was considered and approved. Cllr Kirk proposed to accept the Accounting Statement (including Explanation of Variances and Reserves). This was seconded by Cllr Dalton. Carried.

Cllr Kirk noted that there was an error in one of the formulas in Mazar's reserves spreadsheet. Although this had already been reported by the Clerk to Mazars no replacement spreadsheet, nor instruction to amend had been forthcoming. The result was only that the Parish Council had reported on the designation of reserves, which it would not have needed to do had the formula been correct.

9.2 To allocate councillor(s) to look at the implications of Martyn's Law on activities on the village greens

Cllr Kirk noted that there are some community events on the village greens such as the Tar Barls, Folk Festival, Mayfair etc where the parish council has no control over their activities. It was felt that most groups using the greens were aware of Martyn's Law (representatives of several of the groups being present). The possibility of writing to user groups was suggested. It was agreed to await further guidance.

9.3 To identify a council representative for NALC meetings.

No representative was identified. Cllr Kirk to attend the next meeting. Item to be carried over.

10 Allotments

A meeting at the allotments had been held and the notes circulated. Cllr Coulson has applied for a quote for the water supply and would report back. The tenants list is out of date would be updated by the sub-committee and sent to the Clerk.

11 Affordable Housing

The list of recipients for the housing needs survey was awaited by the housing association from NCC. The date of the launch has been moved to 10 July 2025 (12.30pm to 6.30pm in the Village Hall). However, this was subject to the survey dates being confirmed once the recipient list has been received by the housing association. Publicity for the event would be provided by the housing association and was awaited.

12 Cemetery

12.1 To consider and approve a system of grave marking in the cemetery (Cllr Foster).

Cllr Foster proposed to mark the ends of rows with metal pegs and put string out when a grave was needed to be dug. Agreed.

13 Rights of Way & Access

The proposed meeting of the sub-committee had been rescheduled with a new date is to be arranged. Cllr Beck noted that two stiles and a gate had been reported on Fix-My-Street and that it is the responsibility of NCC to fix them*. Cllr Swaile mentioned the 'adopt a pathway' scheme by which volunteers can adopt sections of a pathway. Cllr Swaile also noted that significant mapping work of the stiles etc had been conducted over the past few years. To be discussed by the sub-committee and at the next council meeting. [Post-meeting note: Mr Rookes had noted by email that it is the landowner's responsibility]

14 Environment & Climate Change

Cllr Swaile would like to arrange a meeting this month to discuss a green places plan.

15 Towns and Villages

Cllr Dunn reported that she had met with Mr Gray for a hand-over meeting. The sub-committee had had a walk around Allendale Village and the notes had been circulated. Visits had also been made to Allenheads and Catton, where all seemed well.

15.1 Bus shelter update - Cllr Kirk reported that the Planning Inspectorate had now given permission for proposed bus shelter to be built on the edge of the Village Green. Cllr Kirk had spoken to Mr Maurice, who needs to schedule the work and may need to requote. Cllr Kirk said he would wait to hear from Mr Maurice and would then contact Peter Dodd re the base and confirm his quote is still current. This would be discussed further once the revised quotes were received. It was noted that £500 has been spent so far on the various permissions. The quote for the shelter was £7,500 and the base was £2730. In relation to the base, it was noted that seven contractors had been contacted and two quotes had been obtained, both of whom had inspected the land. Concerns were expressed regarding a potential increase in the quotes and the possibility of seeking an alternative raised. It was noted that the permission from the Planning Inspectorate related to specific design specification that had been submitted, which had been chosen at a public meeting. The permission process would need to be restarted if there was a new design.

15.2 Parking on Allendale Village Green - The sub-committee thinks this needs looking at. Cllr Dunn suggested a working party and Cllrs Dunn, Dobson and Charlton S volunteered for this.

15.3 Bollards outside the Co-op – it was noted that the Co-op had requested the bollards initially. The land outside the Co-op was Highways' responsibility. NCC had previously provided a quote (mentioned by Co Councillor Horncastle at the April 2025 meeting as £31,000 [April 2025, Item 8]). Neither the parish council nor NCC had been able to afford it. It was noted that the Co-op had also suggested a dropped pavement for better access to the shop. Cllr Jackson noted the lack of dropped pavements generally around the Market Place businesses. The Towns and Villages sub-committee would look at this.

15.4 Public toilets – it was noted that both the Allendale and Allenheads toilets had been reported to NCC, by the Clerk and Cllr White, respectively. It was agreed to formally report the state of both sets of toilets to NCC. Clerk to action.

15.5 Spring Tree Survey (if available) – this had not yet been received and was carried over.

15.6 Arnison works and Isaacs's well works – Cllrs Dunn and Kirk had met with NCC to work out a way for both sets of works to be carried out side-by-side. The parish council agreed to give permission to NCC and its contractors to use the southern 9m wide stretch in front of Arnison House from the Arnison House end, for three months from end of June [post-meeting note – Karen Enright has indicated by email that the end of June start date could not be guaranteed].

15.7 Damaged dog bin on Denefields – the dog bin lid had been recovered by Cllr Kirk from the hedge. The bin seems to be a Glasdon "Fido 25". A replacement bin would cost £115.68 + 12.50 delivery +VAT. A fixing kit would not be needed as this and the post are intact. Cllr Foster would attempt a repair and if this was not possible, it was agreed to purchase a replacement bin (Clerk to order if needed).

15.8 Hearse house wall – it was noted that the repointing work on the Hearse House wall could not take place until the adjacent the yard is cleared. Cllr Dunn was looking into ownership issues with the Land Registry and Cllr Kirk offered to pass on some Land Registry documents.

Cllrs Foster and Charlton S to clear the yard. It was agreed to seek advice from the local Fire Service as to relevant legislation regarding the gas bottles which are accessible to the public while the yard remains open. Cllr Dunn suggested that the owners of the yard should installed a padlocked gate. However, as this is private property, the parish council has no powers in this regard. It was agreed to await the advice from the Fire Service.

15.9 Bins in the lane between Holmedene and Lloyds Bank Green - Numerous bins were blocking access and also causing problems with rodents. Cllr Dobson had been identifying the owners of the bins and would label the owned bins. Then NCC would be contacted to investigate how to dispose of the unused bins. Cllr Kirk noted that one garden waste bin is owned by the parish council but is not being used. Cllr Kirk proposed to cancel the parish council's garden waste bin contract. Cllr Dunn seconded this. Carried. Clerk to action.

15.10 Library railings - the railings were listed and it was NCC's responsibility to refurbish them – they are rusted and need repair. Clerk to contact NCC.

15.11 Trailer - the trailer that had been previously stored in the churchyard has been moved to the burial ground chapel

15.12 Village keeper – Cllr Kirk noted that there is no village keeper budget line – there is a £500 budget line for village tidying which had, in past years, been used for on-and-off tidying jobs such as removing ivy from the Hearse House. Cllr Dunn suggested advertising for a Village Keeper to attend to jobs such as edging of the greens, looking after the lane onto Store Bank etc. This would be for a set number of hours on a contract/self-employed (not employment/employee) basis. Towns and Villages sub-committee would draw up a specification of works. Cllr Charlton, S noted that it could cost more than £500.

15.13 Allenheads Trust monies - Cllr White noted that Allenheads had been receiving £500 and £50 for some time from the parish council for an individual who does the gardening work at Allenheads. Cllr White indicated that this should be increased. However, it was difficult to determine how to do this, without an indication of the number of hours spent. As the Allenheads Trust is meeting soon, Cllr White would confirm that all of the money goes to the individual concerned and would suggest a new amount to the parish council.

15.14 Catton oil leak – this was being resolved, however it could take some months to sort out.

16 Correspondence

6.1 NCC Climate Change – Cllr Swaile would attend the next meeting.

6.2 Miss Fairless - Catton 20mph speed limit - Cllr Horncastle had indicated that this is only possible where there is a school and/or where it is not a through road. The parish council would continue to pursue this. Clerk to reply to Co Cllr Horncastle and ask him to continue to pursue this and to keep us updated. Cllr White noted that it would be safer if there was only parking on one side of the Catton bend. Cllr Kirk noted that this had been referred to NCC in the past. Clerk to ask Co Cllr Horncastle to pursue the lines also. It was noted that there will be the possibility of listing these items as traffic priorities when we make the annual submission of three priorities.

6.3 Mrs Carrington – Cllrs Dunn and Swaile to view the bastle .

6.9 Isaac's well works – it was noted that, at the request of the parish council, the Allen Valleys Local History Group had submitted an application for listed building consent re the repointing of the wall behind the well [see also Item 15.6].

6.17 Batey Terrace bus stop - this had been reported on Fix My Street and is NCC's responsibility. Clerk to advise correspondent to report on Fix My Street – more reports seem to help.

6.18 Joe Morris's posters - Clerk to put notice on the APC notice board

6.20 AVLHG – Allen Valleys Local History Group had sent a note of thanks for the parish council's support for the Isaac's well project and had provided bank details for the transfer of £2000. Cllr Kirk noted that the scope of the grant application had changed. Cllr Dunn explained that because of the need for listed building consent, the wall repairs had been separated out of the specification. She noted that the money received from the grant and the parish council would be used for the work in front of the wall and that AVLHG would undertake future fundraising to pay for the wall repointing work. Cllr Kirk noted that part of the reason that the parish council was keen to support this application was that the wall would be repaired. He was concerned that the parish council would be left with a further cost for repairing the wall. Cllr Dunn stated that at the parish council meeting in the autumn of 2023 the parish council had agreed to fund the Isaac's Well project as a whole – there was no reference to it being conditional on the repointing of the wall. It was agreed to transfer the £2000 in next month's payments.

6.21 Slow down signs for Forstersteads- this had been requested of Co Cllr Horncastle. It was not within the powers of the parish council to set speed limits but a reminder would be sent to Co Cllr Horncastle.

17 Finance

16.1 Accounts for payment/Bank reconciliation

Cllr Swaile proposed to accept the accounts for payment. Cllr Coulson seconded. Agreed

Community account balance as of 30.4.25 = £19,026.21

Commercial Instant Access Account as of 30.4.25 = £17,038.71

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

18 Matters for 3 July 2025 Agenda

18.1 New financial regulations, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct

19 Private session/Confidential item(s) [Council only]

There were none.

20 Next Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 3 July 7 pm, Allendale Village Hall

The meeting ended at: 20.39