

Minutes: Allendale Parish Council Meeting
7 November 2024 at 7pm
at Allendale Village Hall

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

1 Welcome and councillor news

The Chair welcomed David Armstrong to the Parish Council.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Johnson.

3 Declarations of interest

No new interests were declared.

4 Planning Committee – planning applications

24/03223/FUL Development of 4no. bungalows with associated landscaping and infrastructure at Land West Of Lea Hall Cottage Splitty Lane Catton Northumberland.

Cllr Swaile noted that this was a revised version of an earlier application which had previously been objected to by the Council on e.g. grounds of size and scale, and failure to meet the policies of the Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan. Although revised, most of the earlier objections had not been met. Cllr Kirk noted that there were serious concerns about amenities. It does not meet the housing needs assessment. There are issues with both the size and scale of the proposed dwellings, which are close together and bulky on the hillside; the proposed dwellings are not accommodated visually into the landscape. It was proposed to object on the grounds that the proposal does not comply with the following policies of the Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan: Policy 1 (General Development Principles including: amenities of nearby residents; character and appearance of the building; landscape and character of the AONB); and Policy 2 (Scale of Housing Development, including visual accommodation into the landscape). Cllr Swaile proposed the motion to object on these grounds, Cllr Gray seconded this and the motion was unanimously carried by the Council.

24/03592/FUL Erection of a domestic garage at Land West Of Sparty Lea Methodist Church Sparty Lea Northumberland

Cllr Philipson noted that there was a history of a building in this location. Cllr Kirk proposed to support the application; Cllr Coulson seconded. Carried unanimously.

24/03687/FUL Refurbishment, extension of cottage and conversion of garage at Hillside Cottage Sinderhope Northumberland NE47 9SH

Philipson noted that this was an ex-holiday cottage in need of improvement.

Cllr Philipson proposed to support the application; Cllr Swaile seconded. Carried unanimously.

24/03696/FUL Repurposing of the buildings and land which currently have commercial status including removal of a condition to permission for the currently permitted holiday house (application no T/20000350) at Thorn Green Allenheads Hexham Northumberland NE47 9JQ. This related to the repair, repurpose and regeneration of an existing business.

Cllr Kirk proposed to support the application; Cllr White seconded. Carried unanimously.

5 Public participation

There were four members of the public in attendance.

6 **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2024**

The minutes were approved

Proposed Cllr Swaile; Seconded Cllr Gray. Agreed.

7 **Matters arising**

The Old Churchyard at St Peter's Sparty Lea. Co Cllr Horncastle confirmed that, if closed, NCC would take responsibility for maintenance, with Paul Jones being the contact person at NCC. The Clerk outlined that, at present, we need to complete Section B4 the MoJ form to say whether the Parish Council has any objections to the proposed closure on the grounds indicated in Section B1.

In relation to section B4 of the form received from St Cuthbert's Cllr Kirk proposed no objection; Cllr Swaile seconded. Agreed.

Clerk to complete and return form.

If, once closed, St Cuthbert's wish to transfer maintenance away from themselves they need, at that stage, to request such a transfer. There is a three-month deadline from such a request, within which the Parish Council can refuse to accept responsibility for maintenance, at which point responsibility would be transferred to NCC [see Item 8].

Future of recreation ground update

Cllr Coulson passed on Chris Garner's thanks for the increase in funding for the Recreation Ground from the Parish Council

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

Co Cllr Horncastle provided the following update.

Traffic safety

Approval had been obtained for rubber cushion traffic calming on Station Road and possibly red traffic markings. There could be a speed survey in the future, when funding permits. Cllr White noted that traffic speeds along Station Road and in Catton were frequently far too high. As to the parking issues (on the road) in Catton, Co Cllr Horncastle noted that it is not permitted to park on Catton Village Green. NCC Highways had previously refused a double yellow line on the right-hand side going uphill. However, a new officer had indicated that this may be possible but that a consultation would be needed. A hidden entrance sign had been previously agreed for Batey Terrace and Co Cllr would follow up why this had not been implemented.

The Chair thanked Co Cllr Horncastle for his tenacity in pursuing these issues.

Playground equipment

Regarding the earlier request to fund play equipment at the Recreation Ground, this would need to be put to the Co Cllr in place in May.

County

The Teeside incinerator for non-recyclable waste produces electricity, which has generated £5million on the open market.

Food recycling would now be for only 60000 households in the SE of county.

There was financial uncertainty in respect of the annual settlement from the government which would not be known until Christmas.

9 **Data Protection**

Cllr Kirk proposed that the Parish Council register with the Information Commissioner's Office, at a cost of £40, collectable by Direct Debit.

Cllr Kirk proposed; Cllr Swaile seconded. Agreed. Clerk to arrange.

10 **Allotments Committee**

Forward costs

Cllr Coulson indicated that most repairs had been done and a small budget for ongoing costs would be needed

Half allotment Cllr Coulson to contact the tenant about dividing the allotment as well as the person next on the waiting list to take it over.

11 Cemetery Committee

New ashes burial area

Cllr Philipson noted that, in response to an interest in an ashes burial, the new ashes area was proposed to run upwards toward the gate from just inside the pathway bend. Agreed.

Memorial plaque replacement and costs

Cllr Philipson noted that a memorial plaque in the woodland burial area which was not to specification had been broken. The Clerk noted that the broken pieces were no longer present on the plot. Clerk to contact the undertaker to see if the family had removed it, noting: that the Council had noted that the plaque had been broken and subsequently removed; if it is to be replaced then it would need to be one of the specified plaques in order to resist the mower. The wording of the policy for the woodland plaques to be amended to state that only Allendale Parish Council plaques may be used [the existing wording permits plaques of the same specification]. Wording of the policy to be agreed by email. Clerk to progress.

Consultation on burial law

The upcoming consultation on Burial Laws was discussed. It was agreed not to reply to the NALC survey.

Repointing

Cllr Bron noted that the repointing of the stone shed and the chapel were needed. Received quotes included the shed base, and shared skip use for both jobs. Two quotes for the repointing work without the shed base to be obtained. Repointing work to be included in the budget for next year, possibly the new shed.

12 Rights of Way & Access Committee

Cllr Coulson noted that the reply to the ROWIP had been submitted.

13 Environment & Climate Change Committee

Cllr Bron had attended a meeting of the Climate Change Champions Group and noted that now may be the time to look at Community energy proposals.

The committee had been looking at green spaces in relation to grass mowing and there would be a further update in due course. It was proposed to leave the farthest end of the Cemetery (beyond the path bend) un-mowed and to develop a wildflower area. This area was not stable enough for graves. In addition, the woodland burial area could be improved by some tree planting. It was thought that the village pots could contain more insect-friendly plants (pollinators), such as herbs. The overall approach would be consultative and to start small scale. Cllr White to investigate possibilities at Allenheads.

14 Towns and Villages Committee

Catton mirror and traffic safety

Cllr Gray explained that the replacement mirror sourced earlier in the year was too convex (manufacturers do not provide information on convexity). He had reinstalled the old mirror which, having been rotated 180 degrees, put the damaged part out of the line of sight. The manufacturer of this mirror is a Swedish company who seem to be the only company producing shallow mirrors, cost around £300.

Cllr White noted the comments on Facebook about traffic safety and that he found it challenging to believe that the corner meets highways specification. Cllr Gray thought that yellow lines on the opposite side to the green would help, and that the explanations from Highways as to why these had not been provided were various. Cllr White proposed that the Parish Council write to NCC Highways Planning. It was agreed that photographs are to be taken and that the Towns and Villages Committee would write to NCC. It was also noted that the 2025/26 transport plan includes a request for yellow lines.

Bus shelter update

Cllr Kirk reported that there was need for a deeper base than had been anticipated and that therefore an improved base specification was needed. This could be provided by one contractor who has too much work to handle the job himself. Such a specification could be put out to several contractors. It was noted that wheelchair access might require a slope. The provision of the specification for the base was around £450 and the base itself, according to one quote could be £1500. It was agreed not to seek a separate professional specification for the base but to ask whoever contracts for the base to provide it. Cllr Gray noted that the previously proposed cantilever units included bases in their quotes. Cllr Beck thought that site visits would be likely needed to confirm those quotes and that a deeper base would be needed whatever the design. Cllr Kirk to ask the potential base contractor for information and ask him to remeasure himself. All agreed.

Bus shelter funding update

Cllr Gray noted that, for the wooden shelter, he had applied for £4.5k of funding toward £9k costs. He had not heard further. Since then there had been a short extension to the funding deadline, and so he had applied at short (24 hour) notice for funding for shelters for Catton and Allenheads based on the cantilever design; he had asked for £3.5k for each against £5.5k costs. If not needed, then the requests could be withdrawn.

White line on newly surfaced area update

This has been done.

Repointing hearse house western wall.

Cllr Gray had circulated a £850 quote.

Cllr Kirk proposed to accept the quote. Seconded Cllr Gray. Agreed.

15 Correspondence

Correspondence received was noted.

Correspondence regarding the Catton traffic mirror is addressed in item 14.

Correspondence regarding allotment division is addressed in item 10.

Correspondence regarding **24/03223/FUL** is addressed in item 4.

Sheila Kirkpatrick Cllr Kirk noted that issues of pavement parking were beyond the powers of the Parish Council. Highways could act by making a traffic restriction order, but that would need to be adhered to be all parties including the chapel stewards.

Jo Ellis Clerk to arrange a meeting for early January, from 5pm. Not Tuesday, Friday or the Council Meeting date.

Resident re damage to the river bank and disposal in the river. Clerk to write to the landowner.

Alex Bell re Definitive Map Statement Rights of Way Committee to look at and reply if needed (deadline 30 November 2024).

Fenwick Ridley re popup sauna None of the land that is under the Parish Council's control seemed to be suitable. Clerk to let him know.

Valeria Dunn – Cllr Bron to speak to Mrs Dunn re the idea for a sign for the bullring, and re the choice of plants for the containers. It was noted that the account name at Down to Earth needs amending. It had been previously agreed to replace the broken planters but the type of replacement needed to be looked at. In relation to the parked caravans, it was noted that the Parish Council had no powers to act in this matter.

Resident – re the Health Centre

This was beyond the Parish Council's powers, communication to be forwarded to the Council's representative on the Patient Forum.

16 Finance Committee

With the exception of the Pekuma pre-approval, the payments were approved
Proposed Cllr Kirk; Seconded Cllr Gray. Agreed.

Clerk to transfer a sum of money from the Business Account to the Treasurer's Account to cover this month's payments.

Proposed Cllr Kirk; Seconded Cllr Beck. Agreed.

Treasurer's account balance as of 31 October 2024: £2655.09

Business 30-Day Notice account balance as of 31 October 2024: £5957.86

Public Sector Deposit Fund of CCL balance as of 31 October 2024: £60,000.00

Proposed New Financial Regulations

The new NALC regulations had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and tailored where necessary. A draft had been circulated. It was noted that these can be revised if needed. Cllr Simmonds noted that a new council would need to adopt them in May.

Subject to the comments made by the Clerk by email being addressed, it was proposed to accept the new regulations

Proposed Cllr Swaile; Seconded Cllr Gray. Agreed.

CCLA account signatories

The account signatories need to be changed. The paperwork would be submitted by the Clerk.

Debit card

It was proposed to have a debit card in the Clerk's name with, depending on Lloyds, a £500 transaction limit.

Proposed Cllr Kirk; seconded Cllr Swaile. Agreed.

Financial Regulations to be revised to match the transaction amount, if needed.

Budget process

Committee bids to be sent to the Finance Committee by Monday 11 November.

Although grass cutting arrangements were likely to change, the budget could be based on this year's spend (as a maximum).

Clerk to submit VAT reclaim.

17 Matters for 5 December 2024 Agenda

Replacement planters

Cemetery repointing quotes

Banking update (CCLA, Lloyds Debit Card)

18 **Confidential item(s)**

There were none.

19 **Date of January 2025 meeting**

To move to 9 January 2025.

Proposed Cllr Kirk; seconded Cllr Beck. Agreed.

20 **Date of next Parish Council Meeting**

7pm on 5 December 2025 at Allendale Village Hall

The meeting ended at 22.10

Signed:

On: