

# Report



**PUBLIC MEETING, WED 22 MAY 2002**

Alston Town Hall

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*Report compiled for Alston 2002 by Jules Cadie, Facilitator,  
Ashgill Creatives, [www.ashgill.info](http://www.ashgill.info)*

The logo for 'Ashgill Creatives' is written in a stylized, cursive font. The word 'Ashgill' is on the top line and 'CREATIVES' is on the bottom line, both in a similar script.



## PUBLIC MEETING, WED 22 MAY 2002

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The meeting was conducted as a working session, with the aim of identifying the issues that are important to people living on Alston Moor, and recruiting members to a number of working groups. It was emphasised that all contributions by all participants would be valued, and that all their comments on the substantive issues would be recorded but not attributed. Participants were led through a series of exercises to reflect upon aspects of life on Alston Moor, and to indicate the most important issues that they felt should be addressed.

The first exercise was a brainstormer; participants were urged not to think too deeply, but to call out the pros and cons of life on Alston Moor.

Pros ✓	Cons X
Beautiful scenery	Expensive homes
Small community	Lack of public transport
Geographic location	Geographic location
Community spirit	Wind & rain
Hedgehogs	Lack of decent jobs
Red squirrels	Lack of things to do (especially for young people but also for adults)
Safe environment	Lack of resident police
Good schools	Motorbikes
Good hospital and healthcare	Expensive groceries
Artistic people	Lack of a traffic warden
Walking	
Tourists	
Range of services for a small population	
Shops	
Everyone talks to one another	

The second part of the brainstorming exercise was to generate a Wish List. Participants were urged to think freely, and not to constrain their wishes by only considering what was possible to achieve. The results follow:

- Cinema
- Swimming pool
- No vandalism
- Gym

- Vandal-proof seating
- Less litter
- Recycling centre
- Craft centre
- Skate park
- Night club
- Wind farm
- Decent jobs, especially for young people
- Full industrial units
- More public transport
- Restaurant
- Indian takeaway
- Cable TV
- Staying dry and warm when looking over the fells
- Solicitor's office
- Locally-grown food
- Youth club(s)
- An occupied Police house
- More garages
- Better parking

In the next exercise, participants worked in groups to look at the pros and cons in more depth, and to chart their own SWOT analyses. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) encouraged participants to think more closely and to focus on aspects and issues that they feel are important. Strengths and weaknesses are **internal** aspects to life on Alston Moor (e.g. diverse range of tourist attractions; lack of parking space in Alston). Opportunities and threats are **external** (e.g. European funding; withdrawal of subsidy for traditional agricultural practice).

Once completed, the results were reported back and combined on to the following master sheet.

*Points to consider:*

- The topics are not arranged in any rank order
- Those topics that were raised by more than one group are marked with a 'plus' sign followed by the number of times that the topic was raised
- Some topics appear in both columns, signifying that they have a mixture of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with them
- Other topics appear contradictory, signifying the different perspectives of the groups.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Brings in money</li> <li>➤ Creates jobs</li> <li>➤ Decreases rural poverty</li> </ul> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fire and ambulance services</li> <li>➤ Well-equipped hospital</li> <li>➤ Good selection of garages &amp; shops</li> <li>➤ Good local bus company</li> <li>➤ 2 banks</li> <li>➤ 3 Post Offices</li> <li>➤ 10+ pubs</li> <li>➤ good old people's home</li> <li>➤ first-class schools (+1)</li> <li>➤ reasonably-sized Co-op</li> </ul> <p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Many creative people</li> <li>➤ Many self-motivated people who help to increase the confidence of others</li> <li>➤ farming community creates countryside events that enrich the social calendar</li> <li>➤ Strong sense of community</li> <li>➤ Friendly town &amp; villages</li> </ul> <p>Sparsely populated area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ individuals can make a positive contribution</li> </ul> <p>A wired-up community (Alston Cybermoor) (+1)</p> <p>Landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distinctive character of the built &amp; natural landscape</li> </ul> <p>Creativity</p>	<p>Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tourism jobs are low-wage and low-status (+1)</li> <li>➤ Increases litter &amp; pollution</li> <li>➤ Pressure on parking</li> <li>➤ Increases house prices (holiday homes)</li> <li>➤ Increases traffic &amp; makes roads more hazardous</li> <li>➤ Some walkers &amp; cyclists are inconsiderate</li> <li>➤ Some visitors are nosy &amp; invade personal privacy</li> </ul> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Insufficient bus services (+2)</li> <li>➤ Insufficient local shops in the villages</li> <li>➤ Insufficient policing</li> <li>➤ Expensive goods in shops</li> <li>➤ No post-16 school education</li> <li>➤ Lack of care facilities for old people</li> <li>➤ Not much for young people to do (+2), or for old people (+1)</li> <li>➤ Limited range of cultural opportunities</li> </ul> <p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Insularity of thinking and isolation</li> <li>➤ Gossip (+2)</li> </ul> <p>Sparsely populated area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor roads in and out of Alston</li> <li>➤ Travelling distance to get a full range of shops</li> <li>➤ Limited employment opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Use of computers for communication keeps people at home (+1)</p> <p>Landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inappropriate development can have a detrimental effect</li> </ul> <p>High price of fuel</p>



These issues were then grouped under five headings of Economy, Transport & Communications, Culture, Community Safety and Young People, recognising that there was some considerable overlap.

A separate notice-board was provided for people to add extra points. The following notices were posted:

"The Moody Baker Co-operative is ready to pursue new exciting projects which will create training opportunities and employment. To become part of this forward-thinking venture - talk to us."

"Fairhill Recreation Park"

"Allotments" "-Good idea"

"Rural Women's Network is holding a personal development day in Alston -June 12<sup>th</sup>. Liz has details."

The meeting was drawn to a close with the request that people volunteer to join groups that will explore the five headings in detail. There was a good response to this, but there is still plenty of room for the contribution from other volunteers.



#### *Points to consider*

- Although a range of views and opinions were expressed, they only represent those at the meeting. The process intends to include the perspectives of everyone, not just the ones who are able and willing to participate in meetings and working groups
- These are first thoughts, and represent a starting point for the working groups to explore and develop
- The longer-term aim of the Appraisal is to come up with a vision for the future of Alston, and accompanying Action Plans to which most people feel they can subscribe.

After the meeting, the issues were allocated to the working groups as follows:

GROUP	CORE ISSUES	OTHER ISSUES
<b>Community Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community spirit</li> <li>• Policing</li> <li>• Community disorder</li> <li>• Services for the elderly</li> <li>• Services for young people</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Wages</li> <li>• Sustainable Development</li> <li>• Community venues</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts &amp; cultural activity</li> <li>• Sports &amp; recreation</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Community spirit</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Sustainable Development</li> <li>• Community venues</li> <li>• Ethnic diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services for the elderly</li> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Wages</li> <li>• Youth services</li> <li>• Shops</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Shops</li> <li>• Cybermoor</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Wages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services for young people</li> </ul>
<b>Transport &amp; Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Cybermoor</li> <li>• Services for the elderly</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Community venues</li> </ul>
<b>Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth services</li> <li>• Arts &amp; cultural activity</li> <li>• Sports &amp; recreation</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Wages</li> <li>• Ethnic diversity</li> <li>• Community venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cybermoor</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> </ul>