

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**Councillors Present**

**Chair:** Bryn Owen, Vice Chair: Martin Smith

**Parish Council members:** Elizabeth Pearson, Henry Cummins, Mark Green, Alan Punton, Ann Fettis, Rosie Robson and Margaret Brooks.

**In Attendance:** NCC Councillor Wendy Pattison; 2 members of the public and AONB Representative Adrian Hinchcliffe.

**Clerk:** Adam Shanley

**2361 Declaration of interests**

**Cllr Rosie Robson declared an interest in respect of planning application 17/03658/FUL**

**Cllr Mark Green declared an interest in respect of planning application 17/03789/NONMAT**

**2362 Apologies for absence**

None received

**2363 Confirmation of the Minutes for the Meeting of 19th October 2017**

The minutes were unanimously accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Proposer: Cllr Martin Smith

Seconder: Cllr Henry Cummins

Unanimous

**Matters Arising**

Christmas Tree purchase – Elizabeth Pearson provided an update to the Council, advising that a rough cost estimate had been received from the usual Christmas tree provider and assurances had been received that the cost would not exceed the cost of £150.00 spent the previous year. The Clerk reminded Councillors that a budget of £150.00 had been agreed at the previous Council meeting for this item. Cllr Ann Fettis, as the Council representative on the CCT, also advised that a contribution of £50.00 towards the cost of the tree would be provided by the Community Trust. The 8<sup>th</sup> December was proposed as the date for the lighting of the tree.

Letters from Fyona and Michael Robson – the Clerk reported that the letters had been passed to NCC as the authority responsible for parking by the previous Clerk.

Dangerous crossroads e-mail – the Clerk reported that the correspondence had been passed to NCC Highways by the previous Clerk.

**2364 AONB – Report from new Parish Representative**

The new AONB representative for the Parish Adrian Hinchcliffe gave a presentation about his role as our representative and advised that he was looking forward to working with the Council in this new capacity. Cllr Rosie Robson offered to liaise with Adrian on behalf of the Parish Council.

**2365 Financial matters**

a. **Bank Balance** – £21,092.87 on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017

b. **Received since 19/10/2017**

Nil

c. **Spent since 19/10/2017**

Clerk wages & expenses (Sept 2017) - £189.46

PAYE (Sept 2017) £52.00

**d. Cheques required**

Clerk wages & expenses (Geoff Newcombe) (Oct-Nov 2017) - £279.48

PAYE (Oct-Nov 2017) £63.80

The Royal British Legion (Wreath for Remembrance Day) - £16.00

Stableyard Landscapes for grass cutting (road leading to Craster) (Apr-Nov 2017) - £200.00

Stableyard Landscapes for grass cutting (bank and public footpath) (Jun-Nov 2017) - £140.00

The Clerk advised the Council that there had been an alteration to two items on this since circulating the Agenda. Firstly, the travel expenses of £24.00 had been added to the Clerk's wages and expenses. Secondly, the invoice for the Wreath had been received from the Royal British Legion since the circulation of the Agenda.

The Chair thanked Cllr Henry Cummins for his participation in the Remembrance Service and for representing the Parish Council and laying a wreath on its behalf.

The Chair also proposed sending a letter of thanks to the outgoing Clerk Geoff Newcombe for his service over the past 9 months. This was unanimously agreed.

**e. Discussion of precept for 2018/19**

Cllr Martin Smith put forward a recommendation that the Council keep the precept for the coming year at £3,000. The Clerk reminded Councillors that there was a deadline of January 29<sup>th</sup> to submit the precept request to Northumberland County Council as the Collecting Agent. A meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January to discuss the precept was proposed and the Clerk agreed to book the Hall for this meeting.

**2366 Leader Grant** – The Chair reminded Councillors that the Council had been successful in their bid for LEADER grant funding for the Craster Trail project. The Chair and the Clerk recently attended a meeting with NCC officers to discuss making our claim for funding.

The project is due to be completed at the end of January and the Clerk was asked to organise a volunteer day to help clear the path for works to begin. The Clerk agreed to circulate a proposed date for this.

**2367 County Councillor's update** – see report

**2368 EJBC (Embleton Joint Burial Committee)**

- Renovation of Cemetery House for affordable housing. – The Chair provided a verbal update on this.

**2369 Affordable Housing in Craster** – The Chair reported that at the public meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November, it was agreed to shelve this idea.

**2370 Planning Matters**

**17/03658/FUL | Change of use of buildings formerly used as garage/storage, office and small washroom to 2 new homes with external car parking and amenity space. | Land South East Of Lifeboat House Haven Hill Craster Northumberland.**

The Chair provided a report of the objection lodged and the present position on this application. There had been an amendment made to the original application and a revised response to this new application was circulated and agreed during the meeting. The Clerk advised this would be put on to the planning portal as a consultee response but reminded Councillors that they as individuals could also comment on the application.

**17/03789/NONMAT | Non Material Amendment (Garage roof to be amended from pitched roof to flat roof, up and over doors revised to be timber hinged doors and 5 bar timber gate and posts added to driveway) on approved planning application 17/00881/COU | The Chapel Row Craster Alnwick Northumberland NE66 3TU.**

The Clerk reported that this application had been accepted on 26th October.

**2371 Craster Community Trust (CCT)**

- CCT website and new e-mail system

Front page wording required

- Position on notice boards – see report.

It was agreed that the Council would support the Trust with the purchase of two noticeboards as requested in the report provided by Cllr Ann Fettis.

- PC representative

The Parish Council representative on the CCT provided an update on the works of the Trust and asked that the Council and the Trust work more collaboratively where they have a shared goal for the community. A proposal was put forward that the members of the Council and the Trust hold a joint meeting.

**2372 Correspondence received**

E-mail requesting a Memorial Bench along the coastal walk from Craster to Dunstanburgh castle – Clerk has advised resident that this is the responsibility of the National Trust

**2373 National Trust/English Heritage Parking**

The Chair advised that the position had not changed on this since the last meeting and that he would update the Council as and when there is an update.

**2374 Openness, transparency and confidentiality**

The Clerk provided a report on the issue of transparency and confidentiality. A full report on this is provided in the Minutes.

It was agreed that the Clerk would set up new Council specific e-mail accounts for each Councillor and would publish these on the Council website.

Cllr Mark Green also gave a verbal and written report on a meeting he had attended relating to the transparency fund, advising that the Council could purchase a new laptop and scanner with this fund at no cost to the Council's working budget and could also claim for staffing costs for work on the website. Written report provided with these Minutes.

**2375 Parish Council Administration**

PC Policy Checklist – accepted.

**2376 Information Share**

The issue of the length of the full Council meetings was raised and Councillors expressed a desire to keep the Council meetings within a specific duration. The Clerk advised that any items not on the Agenda must not be discussed at the meeting and if any Councillor wished to have an item added to the Agenda for discussion, they could add this up until 5 working days prior to the date of the Full meeting.

**2377 Items for Next Agenda**

Discussion to be held on the new Parish boundaries.

**2378 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Council is to be held at 7.15pm on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

# COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

COUNTY COUNCILLOR WENDY PATTISON

[wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk) – Tel. 07779 983072

## Craster Parish



Due to there being no Parish Council Meeting in December, I would like to wish Craster Parish Council and all residents a very early Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and all the very best for 2018. I do hope that you will all be able to take some time out from your busy lives to enjoy the festivities with your family and friends.



This has been a very busy and exciting six months since I was elected as the County Councillor for the Longhoughton Ward on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2017. I have initiated repairs be made to the pavements at Heugh Wynd, which will be part paid from my Members allowance scheme. I am hopeful car parking issues will be eased in 2018. I rely very much on your input and feedback to let me know when things in your area are not right and are not working as they should be and I want to ensure during 2018 that I continue to make improvements throughout Craster Parish.

**Mobile Phone Coverage in Craster** – Following an enquiry from a resident about the lack of Mobile coverage in Craster I received the following information. There are a number of areas in Northumberland and other parts of the UK that suffer from poor mobile connectivity. This is largely due to the way in which mobile operators and the regulator have previously measured coverage as a percentage of population which offered no incentive or obligation to the mobile operators to invest in infrastructure in sparsely populated areas. There has however now been a positive shift by the regulator and mobile operators who are starting to talk about geographic coverage rather than population coverage and as a result we are already starting to see additional investment in their infrastructure in more rural areas. As I'm sure you will appreciate this is not a quick process and it is likely to take a significant time before coverage reaches near ubiquitous levels nationally. NCC do continue to seek ways to work more proactively between the local and national government and the mobile operators to find ways to assist with this process such as providing assistance in finding candidate sites for mobile telecommunications equipment, etc, however there is currently no formally established mechanism for this to be achieved easily. Please be assured that NCC take every opportunity to continue to raise this issue of poor connectivity in our area, and will continue to explore ways to engage the mobile operators to encourage further investment in order to address connectivity black spots.

Any enquiries please contact - Steve Smith, Digital Design & Delivery Manager, Information Services, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF, Landline: 01670 622928, Mobile: 07904 114518

[Email:steve.smith@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:steve.smith@northumberland.gov.uk)

**LED Street Lighting** - Street lighting is designed by NCC to light the carriageway and footway and minimise any ingress into properties. The LED lantern that NCC now use allows this to be done more effectively than the previous high pressure and low pressure sodium lanterns formerly used.

Northumberland County Council's dimming policy is as follows:

100% of power from dusk until midnight. 50% of power from midnight until 0600 hrs

100% of power from 0600 hrs until dawn. The new lanterns which are being installed do have this dimming regime built into to them.

#### MYSTREET APP TO BE ROLLED OUT ACROSS REGION

A mobile phone app which makes it easier for residents to report issues affecting their local community is being rolled out across the region.

The mobile app, 'MyStreet Northumberland', was designed by the Safer Northumberland Partnership and Improving Croft and Cowpen Quay (ICQ) following a pilot in the "12 Streets" campaign which focused on identifying issues affecting twelve streets in Cowpen Quay and putting in long-term solutions.

Residents can download the new app and use it to access information on a number of problems such as anti-social behaviour, noise, litter, street lighting and roads all in one place.

From here, app users can access advice or report specific incidents to the council or if they have information or concerns about crime and disorder where they live they can access advice via the app or they can contact their local neighbourhood policing team direct.

Councillor John Riddle, chair of Safer Northumberland, said: "While Northumberland has low crime levels, we know there are issues that affect people's quality of life and it's important communities can easily access advice and report anything they're worried about. "The app has already been successful, being downloaded thousands of times in its first year, and we're delighted it's being rolled out by Northumbria Police to other local authorities in the area."

The app is free to download onto iPhone, Android, and Windows devices by searching 'MyStreet' in the app store.

#### CORE STRATEGY UPDATE - NEW LOCAL PLAN WILL SET POLICIES FOR NEXT 20 YEARS

A new timetable has been laid out for preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan - the key planning policies for the county up to 2036.

Northumberland County Council's cabinet will consider a report (November 23rd) which sets out the stages of a comprehensive review of previous proposals, and how a new plan will be submitted to Government by summer 2019.

This will be a Local Plan which will include far more detailed planning policies than would have been provided in the now withdrawn Core Strategy Local Plan, allowing for a consistent set of planning policies right across Northumberland. The council's local development framework member working group has considered the options available for preparation of the plan - and the cabinet will be recommended to agree that all elements of the plan should be developed together, rather than the previous process of a Core Strategy first, followed by a detailed policies document

afterwards. Plan preparation will follow a comprehensive review and update of the evidence contained within the previous Core Strategy, which was withdrawn by the new council in July this year, with the timescales set out in a revised Local Development Scheme. This approach is based on new and developing national policy and guidance, and will allow for consideration of the Government's proposed methodology for calculating local housing need, which was subject to consultation earlier this month. The plan will be submitted to Government for examination by Summer 2019 and, following examination, will be adopted by Summer 2020, with periods of public consultation throughout the process. A formal position statement by the council following withdrawal of the previous draft Core Strategy, and a Five-Year Housing Land Supply document, are also set to be agreed by the cabinet.

The Five-Year Housing Land Supply document demonstrates that the County has sufficient housing land to meet needs over the next five years, and will strengthen the existing planning policy framework that forms the basis for the determination of planning applications up to the point when a Local Plan is agreed. In addition to this, the development of further Neighbourhood Plans continues to add further local detailed planning policy coverage across the county. The most recent being the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan, which is being recommended to be formally 'made' at the cabinet meeting on 23rd. Councillor John Riddle, Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, said: "We are committed to providing a sustainable and prosperous future for our county as we work on the Local Plan. "This is an extremely detailed and comprehensive piece of work which will detail our planning policies for the next 20 years and it is imperative we get it right."

### **Housing white paper consultations/Neighbourhood Planning**



The county council are keen to promote Neighbourhood Planning and as such can offer assistance in the following areas:

- Procedural guidance
- Technical assistance
- Advice on policy content and drafting
- Provision of maps
- Attendance at meetings
- Dedicated link officer as consistent point of contact (me!)

Please see links below for both the initial and secondary consultation regarding housing supply, proposals for improving the situation and providing some guidance regarding calculation of housing requirements. The bulk of the content relevant to the production of the neighbourhood plan is in the secondary consultation, however, the initial consultation provides background and light evening reading!

**Primary**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fixing-our-broken-housing-market-consultation>

**Secondary**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

Any enquiries contact – [david.english@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:david.english@northumberland.gov.uk)

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## **Ann Fettis**

### **Notice boards update obo Craster Community Trust (CCT)**

#### **Background**

As request was made by CCT that Craster Parish Council (CPC) support the purchase of a bespoke notice board which would be erected outside Craster Memorial Hall. It was suggested this could be funded with the £500 previously allocated to CCT to buy a shed for the playground. This money was subsequently returned to CPC when plans changed and the shed was not required.

In my absence Elizabeth Pearson made this request to CPC October meeting. Following the meeting I received an email from Councillor Owen to say

- 3 quotes are needed to fund purchases exceeding £400
- Councillor Colleagues had not supported this request.

I updated CCT to this effect.

#### **New request**

CCT now wish to ask CPC to support the purchase of 2 standard noticeboards to replace Dunstan and main Craster noticeboards the cost of which will be less than £400.

The bespoke notice board will be facilitated by alternative means.

**Agenda item – 2374**  
**Report on Openness, transparency and confidentiality**  
**Report by Clerk**

Parish Councils (under £25K annual budget) must be open and transparent about the following:



**All of these items must be published and discussed in open session of a Parish Council meeting.**

**Closed sessions.**

A Parish Council can however resolve to exclude the public from its meetings where the publicity from having an item considered in public would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be considered.

Matters are appropriate to consider in confidence where there may otherwise be a disclosure of a person's personal information, commercially sensitive information and so on.

In the event that an item under discussion may need to be discussed in open session but with sensitive/ personal information included, a Parish Council should anonymise the issue to avoid any unnecessary inappropriate disclosure.

It is not lawful to exclude some of the press and public. It must apply to all. However, the Council may invite individuals to speak at the meeting i.e.(the Council's Solicitor or some other professional adviser or particular staff member) when it is in private session. The rules do not prevent the chairman from excluding any member of the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent genuine disruption at a meeting.

**NB: once it has been agreed that an item is to be discussed as part of the Parish Council's open session, it is much easier to be challenged should there be a request to move the item to closed session during the Full Parish Council meeting.**

### **Why is it important to be as transparent as possible?**

Transparent decision making in local government promotes a positive and productive relationship between councils and communities and allows residents we represent to have a greater sense of ownership of and connection with the activities of their local Parish Council. The primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard for the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. In seeking to achieve this primary objective, a Parish Council must have regard to ensure transparency and accountability in Council decision making

### **The Rights of the press and public.**

The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, which apply to England, give rights to members of the press and public to:

- use modern technology and communication methods such as filming, audiorecording, blogging and tweeting to report the proceedings of the meetings of their councils and other local government bodies
- see information relating to significant decisions made outside meetings by officers acting under a general or specific delegated power

### **Guidelines of best practice on confidentiality.**

- Where possible, naming an NCC officer or member of staff should be avoided.
- When discussing the awarding of new contracts, the Council should avoid identifying the companies by name to avoid any prejudicial interest.
- To be compliant with confidentiality, each Councillor ought to have their own individual 'Council specific' e-mail account, which only they themselves are able to access.
- Councillors and staff must avoid publishing any sensitive or confidential information via social media at all times.
- Always as a rule of thumb - when deciding on whether an item should be discussed in open or closed session – Councillors should ask themselves; "Could this be challenged at any stage?"

**For further information, please refer to the Good Councillor's Guide by NALC**

## Briefing note on the Transparency Fund

Dear all,

Under the Transparency Code, from April 2015 parish councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 are required to publish the following information online:

- All items of expenditure above £100
- End of year accounts
- Annual governance statement
- Internal audit report
- List of councillor or member responsibilities
- The details of public land and building assets
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

These requirements affect Craster PC as our turnover (based on annual precept plus other receipts) is well below the £25K level.

Arguably we do comply with the Code by virtue of our website as hosted by the northumberlandparishes.uk. However, this does not preclude us from applying for funding from the Transparency Fund being administered by NALC. The fund will be open for applications until February 2018 and the next round of applications will be decided on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

The items for which we can apply for funding are as follows:

	<u>Green</u>
<b>Internet</b>	
Set up cost	£0-£300
Monthly cost	£0-£25
<b>Computer</b>	
Cost	£0-£350
<b>Software</b>	
Cost	£0-£200
<b>Scanning</b>	
Cost	£0-£100
<b>Website</b>	
Website - Set up costs	£0-£500
Website - Monthly costs	£0-£25
<b>Training</b>	
Cost	£0-£400
<b>Staffing</b>	
<b>Set up costs</b>	
Hours	50
Hourly rate (Gross)	£0-£15
<b>Monthly costs - for months up to and including March 2018</b>	
Hours	3 Hours per month
Hourly rate (Gross)	£0-£15
<b>Additional costs</b>	£50 for peripherals

My comments upon these items are as follows:

**Internet** – This would enable us to pay for the village hall to have a phone line and an internet connection and router. However, monthly running costs in terms of line rental and internet costs would only be covered up until the end of February 2018 after which date we would be fully responsible for them. My proposal is that we contact all the other users of the village hall (e.g. the WI) and ask whether they would be interested in using internet in the hall.

**Computer, software and scanner** – The intention is that these items are to facilitate whoever is uploading information to our website. This would enable us to upgrade the current clerk's laptop and to buy a printer that also scans. In terms of calculating the costs I have been told that a price from a reputable retailer such as John Lewis would be fine.

**Website** – This is only applicable if we want to have our own independent website. In that event NALC have recommended we use web developer Vision ICT <https://visionict.com> who is a preferred provider and can offer a complete package within the funding on offer. In terms of ongoing maintenance costs, like internet costs, these would be limited until the end of February 2018.

**Training** – This is intended to cover training us so that we know how to upload information onto our own website. Again someone like Vision ICT could provide this.

**Staffing** – This is intended to cover the cost of us – the clerk or another person –

uploading information onto our website. This is a considerable item as 50 hours at £15 per hour amounts to £750.

**Additional costs** – limited to £50 this could be used to buy items such as printer ink or a laptop case.

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