

Minutes
For The Craster Parish Meeting
Wednesday 24th May 2017
Memorial Hall 7.00pm

Present

Acting Chairman

Michael Craster

Acting Clerk

Karen Oxley

Parish Council Members

Margaret Brooks, Elizabeth Pearson, Henry Cummins,
Ann Ferris, Mark Green, Alan Punton, Martin Smith
(Vice- Chair)

In Attendance

County Councillor Wendy Pattison.

Members of the public

27 members of the public

Apologies for absence.

Bryn Owen (Chair), Geoff Newcombe.(acting Parish Clerk)

In the absence of both Chair and Vice-Chair (Martin Smith was unavoidably detained and arrived late) Michael Craster was elected from the floor to chair the meeting. Karen Oxley very kindly agreed to take the minutes in the absence of the Acting Parish Clerk.

No formal agenda being available the Chair proposed the following:

1. Introduction of newly elected Parish Councillors and new County Councillor
2. Parish Council Chair's annual report
3. Matters of interest to the community/questions from the floor

This was agreed.

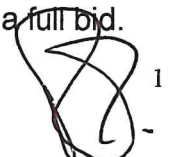
1. **Councillors** The newly elected Parish Councillors (Cllrs) - Margaret Brooks, Henry Cummins, Anna Ferris, Mark Green, Alan Punton, Elizabeth Pearson, and Martin Smith – were invited to come to the front and identify themselves. The Chair then introduced Wendy Pattison, the newly elected ward Councillor. There was a vote of thanks to former councillor and vice-chair, John Gallon, for all that he had done for the community during his tenure of office.

2. **Annual Report** The Chair then read out a copy of the annual report from Bryn Owen.


3 **Open Forum** The Chair then called for questions from the floor about matters of interest or concern to the community. The following were raised:

- a. **Footpath.** The Chair explained that the Parish Council had agreed to ask for a Leader grant for the plan to put a footpath – to be known as the Craster Trail – to link with the cinder path through to Dunstan, rather than wait for a decision from the County Council. The Trail would provide a circular walk from the Quarry car park (or Dunstan) up the Tower Bank, through Dunstan and Dunstan Square and round to Castle. The landowners had given their consent, and a bid had been put to Leader for some £9,000 – the balance of some £3,000 would be met from the remainder of the NWL money. Signage was included in the bid, and a map would be prepared to include an exhortation to use the pavement!i. The presentation to the initial board had been successful, and the Parish Council had been invited to submit a full bid.

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- b. The Bogue Road The Chair explained that a team from NCC Highways had been found, investigating the possibility of a putting a footpath along the Bogue road, from the bottom of Tower Bank to the bottom of Smithy Bank. They had been given every assistance, and asked to include the possibility of continuing the speed limit of 30 mph from Dunstan to Craster. The County Cllr intervened to indicate that she had spoken to Highways who said that there could not be a 30 mph limit without urbanisation. John Gallon said that guidance nationally would support such a limit. The team's report is awaited.
- c. Second homes/Holiday homes. The question was raised of whether second homes and holiday homes contribute to the precept. Second homes, which pay a reduced council tax, do, holiday homes, which pay business rates, do not. However holiday homes which are paying business rates do pay for their bin collections – the Chair was able to confirm this from personal experience. The Chair then asked what people felt about putting a restriction on planning applications for new homes that would require them to be permanently occupied and not used for holiday letting. This would not preclude them from being rented out, but only for full-time residence, and of course would mean they would increase the resident population as well as attracting council tax. There was a measure of agreement, although many had reservations about restricting people's right to do what they wanted with their own property. Cllr Pattison explained that such a restriction would be best achieved through a Neighbourhood Plan, which could take up to 4 years to develop and require a great deal of work from the community. It was agreed that community is important, but the meeting made it clear that, in common with the last village meeting, there was no appetite for undertaking such a task.
- d. Public Rights of Way. Questions were raised about the signing of the footpaths running north from Harbour Lights down across to the back of the Lifeboat house, and running west down to the car park. It was agreed that the Parish Council should contact the County Council footpaths officer to call his attention to the lack of signage and the need to keep the paths clear.
- e. Tourist Information Centre (TIC). Cllr Cummins confirmed the imminent closure of the TIC, stating that although it had had a stay of execution until September it seemed clear that it would be shut. A question was asked about the public toilets, to which no satisfactory answer was found – it was possible that responsibility would be shifted to the Parish Council. The Skiff could possibly take the building over as a boathouse. Cllr Pattison advised the meeting that she had an appointment with the appropriate County department to discuss the future of the Craster TIC. It was suggested that a vote be taken on whether the meeting felt that the TIC should be retained, and the response was unanimously in favour – although there were some questions as to exactly what visitors used it for, there was no doubt that it provided a focal point.
- f. Joint Burial Committee (EJBC). A question was raised as to the destination of money raised as a result of the sale of the cemetery house. Cllr Pearson explained that it was anticipated that the house would be sold at the end of July, and the proceeds of sale would be put into a Trust for the maintenance of the cemetery, on behalf of all 3 civil parishes. A new appointment had been made of a contractor, experienced in the running of cemeteries, who would be responsible for all aspects of the administration including grave-digging. A vote of thanks was extended to Cllr Pearson for her tireless work on the Burial Committee over many years.



- g. Traffic Planning. A request for a "No Left Turn" sign on to Dunstanburgh Road elicited the response that there was still the intention to put in place a full traffic plan for Craster – of which the problem of traffic using Dunstanburgh Road would be part. The first stage had seen the work carried out on the Quarry car park, and a response is still awaited from the County Council on further developments.

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution to the work of the Parish Council in the next year.


1/1/17

