

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 18th February 2021 – 6.00pm via Zoom

Councillors present:

Chair: Martin Smith

Parish Council members: Marilyn Bagley, Stephen Bagley, Margaret Brooks, Michael Craster, Mark Green and Elizabeth Pearson.

In attendance: 19 members of the public and County Councillor Wendy Pattison

Clerk: Adam Shanley

2361 Apologies for absence

None received.

2362 Declarations of interest

None received.

2363 Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 25th January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the following amendments:

Under public participation, the following minute be added:

Mr and Mrs Reeves raised the concern about the U3014 road in Dunstan. Mr and Mrs Reeves advised that the road allows for water to gather and this is now freezing in the cold weather and proving extremely treacherous for local residents, not helped by the steep topography of the road. Mrs Reeves advised that this was reported last year and nothing was done about this. The Clerk agreed to write to NCC Highways to see what could be done as a matter of urgency.

Under Item 2368, the following minute be added:

Mr M Robson requested that the Parish Council reviews its policy on the number of bins and asks NCC how often they are emptied, to see if the bins warrant being in each location and to review the expenditure of £1500.

Under Item 2371, the minutes be corrected to state:

Mr M Robson offered to donate the strip of land to the east between the development and the neighbouring garden which to the Parish Council and advised that his solicitor will deal with this.

The Parish Clerk also agreed to look into the ownership of the land at the Bark Pots Development between the north of the burn and the road. Cllr Mark Green agreed to act on behalf of the Parish Council to carry out the searches and land registry.

2364 Matters Arising

None received.

2365 Public participation

The Chair asked members of the public to make all representations on any of the following agenda items as and when they come up for discussion as part of the Agenda.

2366 NCC Experimental Pedestrian Zone for Craster village

The Chair advised that the pedestrian zone is expected to come into force from April 2021. The Chair advised that he was aware of correspondence sent to the Parish Council and advised that a full response had been sent to all correspondents on matters raised. The Chair took the opportunity to remind the meeting that this is a trial scheme, it will be reviewed during the trial by both the County and Parish Councils and the scheme can be amended depending on how Highways feel that this is working. The Chair reminded all present that the Parish Council is a consultee only on Highways matters and NCC is the decision maker.

The Chair particularly highlighted the concerns raised by the RNLI on the new scheme and advised that he was aware that the RNLI is due to meet with NCC Highways next week.

Mrs Rosie Robson advised that whilst NCC are experts on Highways matters, they are not experts on village life, which is what members of the public expect the Parish Council to be.

Rosie advised that Craster Kippers had raised a concern with NCC Highways. Rosie advised that the impact on businesses in Craster ought to be considered and a short period of consultation on this new scheme would have been helpful.

Cllr Mark Green advised he felt that the impact on businesses in Craster ought to be a big consideration with this scheme.

Mr Kev Brown advised that he felt that the map detailing the scheme was very small and difficult to read. In particular, anyone with poor eyesight might struggle to read this. Kev advised that he felt an outdoor event ought to have been held (socially-distanced) in order to go through the scheme.

Mr Michael Robson advised that the current sign coming into the village reads "no public parking beyond this point" and he felt that this is not effective and would also question whether the new signage as part of the pedestrian scheme is going to be effective. Michael advised that not everyone living in Craster uses social media but a lot of people from other areas do and it is very easy to post online that public parking is available in Craster. Michael advised that this issue has not been addressed with this new scheme.

Mr Michael Doherty advised that he was very disappointed that the Parish Council had not foreseen the issues that will arise with this scheme. Michael advised that he felt that this scheme would bring chaos to Craster and he just hoped that this did not adversely impact on emergency service access to the village. Michael advised that he felt that the Parish Council ought to have insisted on having the permit parking scheme for Craster which the majority of residents voted for.

Cllr Elizabeth Pearson advised that she hoped that NCC would listen to the views of the Parish Council and residents when this scheme is reviewed.

Mrs Fiona Robson asked about the review process and how this would be carried out. Fiona advised that she felt that there needed to be more than simply anecdotal evidence as part of the review process. The Clerk advised that he would get more information on how the review process will work. Mrs Fiona Robson advised that she felt that there needed to be a plan in advance of the review.

Mrs Bev Blythe advised that her understanding from the January meeting was that NCC Officers, if minded to look again at the permit parking scheme, would be carrying out their own consultation on this and that they would apply a particular percentage at which they felt a consensus had been reached on this scheme in the village.

Mr Michael Robson advised that he had spoken with the Chair of Bamburgh Parish Council and that Parish Council had been in consultation with NCC on parking schemes for 4 years now. Michael advised that he felt that Craster could not wait this long. Michael advised that he felt that the Parish Councils ought to work collaboratively, speak as one voice and put pressure on NCC to introduce an effective scheme. Michael advised that he is concerned that tourists are put ahead of residents.

Mr Kev Brown asked that the Parish Council requests that NCC launches another consultation on the permit parking scheme.

Mr Michael Craster advised that he felt that a sub-committee should be established to monitor how this goes. The Chair agreed and also advised that he felt that this sub-committee should be made up of Parish Councillors and representatives of the community.

Mrs Rosie Robson advised that she was feeling positive about the pedestrianisation of Craster as this has been an answer to Cornwell's problems. Rosie advised that she is happy to monitor the situation and report on this matter.

Mrs Fiona Robson advised that she was concerned about the pedestrianisation of Craster as it may encourage visitors to walk into the road. Fiona advised that she felt that NCC should be asked to introduce a footpath on the South side entrance to the village, where many people already walk.

2367 Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

Cllr Wendy Pattison advised that Craster was magnificent last year dealing with all of the parking problems. Wendy advised that she requested a coastal summit with NCC to look into these sorts of issues and there is going to be a follow up summit later this week.

Wendy also advised that the chicane (as part of the pedestrian scheme) is actually a movable barrier.

2368 Recent power cuts and update to the electricity network

The Clerk advised that there have been a number of power cuts in the local area recently. The latest of which occurred on 6th February between 7am and 5pm.

The Clerk advised that a number of local residents have contacted the Parish Council about this to see what can be done to either avoid this from happening or mitigate the negative impacts of this occurring. A particular concern has been raised about vulnerable members of the community.

The Clerk advised that he has written to the Chief Executive of Northern Powergrid to highlight concerns from residents about the most recent power cuts and asked what action is being taken to address this. In doing so, the Clerk also advised that he had asked for an update on proposed upgrades to the network, as reported some months ago.

The Clerk advised that Northern Powergrid had responded to say that they look after the overhead cables that supply the Craster area and unfortunately, unforeseen faults can sometimes happen, causing residents to experience a power cut. There can be a number of reasons why the power cuts happen, including windborne debris and tree branches meeting the overhead lines. Sometimes, extreme weather and even wildlife can cause the power to go off. This may have been the cause of any particularly short power cuts. Although they are unable to prevent the power cuts, Northern Powergrid has advised that they remain pro-active in trying to minimise the disruption that they can cause residents. For this reason, they install specialist equipment on the overhead network. When a fault occurs that causes a power cut, the equipment automatically turns the power back on when the fault clears. This means that the power cuts for this type of fault are usually very short, meaning that residents do not have to wait a long time for the power to come back on.

The Clerk advised that the latest power cut that affected the area on 6 February 2021, was caused by a snapped overhead pole, that was supporting the overhead network; as a consequence a piece of equipment known as a wishbone, became detached on the high voltage that supplies the area, resulting in loss of power to customers.

The Clerk also advised that the power cut on 21 January 2021, was due to an overhead line conductor becoming detached from the network, Northern Powergrid's investigations indicate that this may have been caused by a bird coming into contact with our equipment.

The Clerk advised that Northern Powergrid had advised that they were able to deploy their customer service vehicle on the most recent power cut, the purpose of the vehicle is to support their most vulnerable customers. Northern Powergrid does this by making calls to those customers who are registered as Priority Service Members; they offer hot drinks and, in some cases, will carry out a personal welfare check. The Parish Council has been advised that the vehicle was very well received.

The Clerk reminded all present that anyone who is vulnerable and who has not already done so, can register as a priority service member.

Northern Powergrid has confirmed that a scheme of work has been raised and authorised, to replace approximately 45 – 50 spans of overhead line in the area, with various pole changes, as well as additional protective devices installed to improve reliability. Due to the size of the scheme of work, Northern Powergrid will need to approach a number of land owners to agree access to their land, in addition they have advised that they need to approach the local government planning department.

Northern Powergrid has advised that they are unable to provide a start date for the work at this time, however, would welcome the opportunity to attend a parish council meeting in the future, with the appropriate team to provide a progress report, once more information regarding potential time scales for the work to be carried out is available.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for this comprehensive report and it was agreed that a representative from Northern Powergrid ought to be invited to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

Cllr Margaret Brooks raised the fact that the electricity company had notified residents of the power cut and associated updates via mobile phone text. Cllr Brooks advised that this is problematic in Craster as there is no mobile phone signal in the village

2369 Increasing the provision of cycle parking in the parish

Cllr Steven Bagley advised that the lack of cycle parking has been raised with him by local residents and this has been discussed at a previous Parish Council meeting. Cllr Bagley also advised that he felt that there is a lack of signage for cycle parking in the village.

The Parish Council agreed that further cycle parking provision ought to be investigated. Cllr Michael Craster advised that the obvious space for this to be introduced was by the Tourist Information Centre and the toilets.

Mrs Fiona Robson agreed with the provision of cycle parking to stop cyclists parking on the pavement at the Shoreline café making pedestrians have to walk on the road.

The Chair advised that, given that the National Trust do not want cyclists using their land, the Trust ought to provide additional cycle parking.

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council ought to write directly to the National Trust to request this.

Mrs Rosie Robson also recommended that the Parish Council writes to Sustrans on this too. It was **agreed** that the Parish Council should also write directly to Sustrans on this.

2370 Progressing the letter to all holiday lets in the parish requesting a voluntary contribution to the Parish Council precept

The Clerk reminded Members that the letter had now been agreed. It was now necessary to wait until the Covid-19 restrictions permitted letters to be posted by hand through doors. The Clerk also advised that an electronic copy of the letter would also be sent out to all holiday let operators.

2371 Registering land outside Bark Potts development with the Parish Council

The Clerk reminded Members that it was agreed at the last meeting that the Parish Council should look to have the land registered with the Parish Council.

Mrs Diana Ridley advised that this particular plot of land is owned by the North Side Owners Committee and Diana advised that she could send through a copy of the deeds relating to this land.

Cllr Mark Green advised that the original intention of doing this was to protect the land from development. Cllr Mark Green advised that, if it is known that the land is already owned, then perhaps this would be sufficient to protect the land.

The Clerk advised that the land remains unregistered on land registry.

Mr Kev Brown advised that the RNLi looked into this some years ago and tried to get the North Side Owners together some time ago but to no avail. Kev advised that the North Side Owners Committee has now ceased as an organisation.

The Chair advised that he felt that the land being owned already would be sufficient to protect this land.

2372 Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative

Cllr Margaret Brooks read out the following statement to the Council meeting:

"The EJBC has received a complaint regarding certain actions it took during the renovation of what was Cemetery House. The complainant is an Embleton parishioner. The first communication asked a number of questions relating to why a garden had been provided with the house, why a 6ft fence had been erected around it and why wider consultation was not undertaken. It concluded with the message that the EJBC had spoiled the cemetery for all who visit the cemetery to see the graves of their loved ones.

Before a response could be formulated by the Committee a second communication was received which accused the EJBC of having acted in breach of trust and contrary

to the Open Spaces Act 1906. It also accused the Parish Councils of acting in breach of their Codes of Conduct in that they had not acted in the public interest by transferring part of the burial ground to make a private garden. It concluded by asking that the garden be returned to the cemetery.

The EJBC met as a task force and agreed the terms of a response to both communications which the Chairman of the EJBC was directed to prepare and send to the complainant. This was carried out on February 10th and to date nothing further has been heard."

Cllr Margaret Brooks also reminded Members that there is currently a tenant in place in the house.

2373 Craster Community Trust report

Cllr Michael Craster advised that there is nothing to report as the Hall is closed. Michael advised that the Trust continues to meet in preparation of lockdown being lifted.

2374 Planning Matters:

21/00013/FUL | Removal of front porch, construction of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, glass balcony to first floor front elevation and internal and external alterations | Seahaven 37 Dunstanburgh Road Craster NE66 3TT. It was **agreed** to object to this application.

21/00219/FUL | Remove existing first floor bedroom Juliet balcony to South elevation & replace with new balcony. | Aidan Cottage 3 Whin Hill Craster NE66 3TP. It was **agreed** to object to this application.

21/00316/FUL | Retrospective Change of Use of Garden Space to Holiday Let with Associated Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis) and Coffee Shed (Use Class E) | Land South West Of Cemetery House Embleton Northumberland. It was **agreed** to support this application. In agreeing to support the application, Members also **agreed** to request NCC to look further into funding a footpath from Dunstan to Embleton, whether through existing Section 106 funds or otherwise.

2375 Proposal to develop a retail area in the parish

Cllr Mark Green asked that this item be deferred to the March Full Council meeting, at which stage he hoped to have a report to Full Council for consideration.

2376 Update on the Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk advised that Northumberland County Council has now provided the Parish Council with an update on the programme for the referendum on the Craster Neighbourhood Plan.

The Clerk advised that the Government recently confirmed that elections will be held in May. This means that NCC will now be able to plan to hold referendums on neighbourhood plans after current restrictions are formally lifted. NCC's Planning team has been in discussions with the Council's Elections Manager and can now confirm that a referendum on the Craster Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 10 June 2021.

The Clerk advised that NCC Planning will work with colleagues in the Elections Team to arrange all necessary publicity about the referendum and will publish an information statement on their website in due course in accordance with the relevant Regulations. Craster Parish Council will be kept updated on the plans for the referendum.

The Clerk advised that Members need to be aware that there are certain restrictions concerning activities and publicity at elections and during election periods, including referendums. There is a Government code of practice, published in 2011, which addresses these issues and remains valid. The main principles require publicity by a local authority, which includes town and parish councils, to remain unbiased and factual.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council, and anyone involved in supporting plan preparation should remain neutral in any publicity about the Neighbourhood Plan. Publicity should be factual. The Parish Council should not encourage people to vote one way or another. Whilst this is often met with disappointment by people involved in preparing neighbourhood plans, it is important to follow this guidance to minimise the risk of subsequent challenge to any decision made by the County Council on bringing neighbourhood plans into force formally following a referendum. There are limits on expenditure for any publicity, similar to those that apply during

elections. Members should also be aware that the Covid-19 rules specifically ban any leaflets/flyers which aren't sent via Royal Mail at present.

The Clerk advised that he had asked whether an earlier date than 10th June 2021 for the Neighbourhood Plan referendum may be possible, for example timing this at the same time as the local elections, would not only cut costs but would also be easier logistically. However, this will not be possible. Unfortunately, due to the work involved in holding three ballots on the same day in May, NCC has advised that this will make it impossible to organise the referendum any earlier than 10th June 2021.

The Clerk advised that Members should be aware that, at this stage, the Plan now carries significant weight in the determination of new and pending planning applications in our Parish.

2377 Proposal to install donation post at Craster Harbour

The Clerk reminded Members that, at the January Full Parish Council meeting, Members requested that the Clerk investigate further a proposal to have donation posts installed in Craster. This followed the report in which Members agreed to draft a letter to all holiday let owners in the parish, requesting a voluntary contribution towards the Parish Council's precept. The Clerk advised that the aim of this donation post is to ensure that funding is captured from visitors of Craster towards the upkeep of the Parish, to ensure that holiday let owners are not the single source of external finance requested by the Parish Council. In addition, whilst tourism is very much welcome in Craster and helps to sustain our local economy and employment, it has often been raised that residents are subsidising a growing tourism market in Craster.

The Clerk advised that he had investigated this proposal further and has identified a supplier of these posts, which can be fitted securely into the ground.

The total cost associated with the installation of such a donation post is approximately £1,055.00.

The Clerk advised that two possible locations have been suggested for the installation of this donation post:

Option 1 - Craster Harbour

One option is at the harbour itself next to where the A boards used to be located – this would capture visitors to the village, whether they were visiting Dunstanburgh castle or not. This option has been discussed with the landowner and the harbour operator and they are happy to support this but have asked if the Parish Council may be able to make a percentage donation from all funds raised to support the harbour. If agreed, it is recommended that this agreement be formalised.

Option 2 – At the end of Dunstanburgh Road

Another option is at the end of Dunstanburgh Road in order to capture the visitors to the castle. This area is well overlooked and would therefore be a more secure location. However this option would not capture those visitors who come into Craster village only and do not walk to the castle.

If agreed, the Clerk advised that it is proposed that the sign includes a graphic and reads something like:

PLEASE DONATE

Suggested donation £X.

***Help us keep Craster clean, green and beautiful for all
Craster Parish Council***

The Clerk advised that this sort of initiative is done at other major tourist areas and helps to raise funds for the local area or the organisation involved with this.

The Clerk advised that, for the Parish Council to deliver on projects such as new footpaths, Northumbria in Bloom, cycle parking and more, it cannot rely solely on the precept and therefore external funding must be sought.

The Clerk advised that NALC has confirmed that they are happy for the Parish Council to raise funds in this way. If approved, this post would be included in the Parish Council's list of assets and would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance.

Mrs Rosie Robson advised that she felt that this needed to be a more community-led project with all stakeholders involved in this. Rosie also advised that she felt that any scheme such as this would need to be very specific about what the money would go towards funding. Rosie also asked if businesses could not also have a donation box at their premises towards such a scheme.

Cllr Mark Green asked who would empty the box. The Clerk advised that he had been contacted by two members of the public who had already volunteered to do this.

Mr Geoffrey Ridley advised that he agreed that this funding should go towards projects for the community.

Members **agreed** to set up a working party of all local stakeholders in the parish and to provide a report back to the next Full Parish Council meeting.

2378 Items for Next Agenda

The Chair reminded Members to request for any items to be added to the Agenda in writing to the Clerk.

2379 Date and time of next meeting

18th March 2021 – 18:00pm via Zoom.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Signed,



**Chair of Craster Parish Council
(18th March 2021)**