

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 15th April 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:** 13 members of the public

**Clerk:** Adam Shanley

The meeting began with a two-minute silence in memory of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

**2361 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from County Councillor Wendy Pattison.

**2362 Declarations of interest**

Cllrs Marilyn and Stephen Bagley declared an interest in planning application 21/00319/FUL and took no part in the discussion on this item.

**2363 Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the following amendments:

The sentence "Cllr Michael Doherty asked for the installation of a camera to help monitor the level of cars coming into the village" amended to "Cllr Michael Craster asked for the installation of a camera to help monitor the level of cars coming into the village".

Under Item 2370, the following sentence be added: "Cllr Martin Smith advised that any applications would be accepted from businesses wishing to take a unit in the retail area, except from those who would be in direct competition with existing businesses".

**2364 Matters Arising**

None received.

**2365 Public participation**

Mrs Marion Gallon raised the concern of the caravan currently parked at Chapel Row. Mrs Gallon advised that she had been made aware that the planning enforcement officer had visited the site and attached a notice to the door. The Clerk advised that he is in ongoing correspondence with the officer about this.

Mrs Gallon also raised the concern of parking in the village. Mrs Gallon made a plea that members of the public be encouraged to report all issues of parking to the highways team so that a record is being kept.

Mrs Rosie Robson advised that she is also keeping a log of parking concerns in the village. Mrs Robson advised that she felt the general feedback from the village is that the system in place at present is not working.

Mrs Marion Gallon asked if it were possible for Craster to have a large illuminating sign to tell visitors what the new scheme is. Mrs Gallon reported that she had even witnessed a visitor trying to drive up Charlie's footpath. Members were troubled at this and it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate a solution to this with the footpath's officer.

Mrs Fiona Robson asked if a sign could also be erected to show how many car parking spaces there are in the car park as she was aware that some visitors don't realise the full extent of the car park.

**2366 Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison**

In Councillor Pattison's absence, the Chair referred Members of the Parish Council and all present to the report from Cllr Pattison, included in the Agenda papers.

### **2367 Update on the appeal letter to all holiday let owners to contribute towards the Parish Council's precept**

The Clerk reported that to date £3,187 had been received from the holiday let owners as a contribution towards the Parish Council precept. The Clerk advised that a note of thanks would be submitted to the noticeboards and to the Hall to thank those who had contributed.

### **2368 Update on proposal to introduce additional cycle parking to Craster**

Members agreed to fund additional cycle parking at the Tourist Information Centre, using the funds acquired through the appeal letter to all holiday lets. The Clerk advised that he would investigate this further.

### **2369 Report from fundraising/community project scoping committee**

The Chair advised that the fundraising/ community project scoping committee had met and agreed to install the fundraising boxes which the Parish Council had agreed to fund.

The Clerk advised that he had written out to NALC about this and had received confirmation that this is a permissible for the Parish Council to do this.

The Clerk advised that the following steps would be put in place for this:

This group is a working group of the Parish Council, albeit with outside representatives sitting on it.

This group has a clear Terms of Reference, as decided (and reviewed) by the Parish Council.

The funds will still come into the Parish Council's bank account and the figures in and out will be published and audited as per normal process.

Mrs Rosie Robson advised that she did not support this as a proposal and felt that more planning was needed for this before it went ahead and funds were collected.

The Chair advised that there would be a follow up meeting of the community project scoping committee. The Chair reminded everyone again that this group included representatives of groups across the Parish.

Cllr M Green asked that all groups in the village – including sporting groups – be invited to this group.

### **2370 Update on "Adopt a Craster Barrel" scheme, organising the competition and matters relating to the pedestrian zone scheme**

Cllr M Brooks advised that 8 volunteers have come forward to take a barrel as part of the "Adopt a Craster Barrel" scheme. For those barrels which had not yet been taken from a local resident, the Parish Council **agreed** a fund of £10 per barrel towards plants and asked the Clerk to arrange this.

Cllrs Stephen and Marilyn Bagley advised that they would like to adopt a barrel.

Mrs Fiona Robson asked about the insurance arrangements for this. The Clerk advised that, if the Parish Council were to arrange a volunteer planting day, each volunteer would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance.

Mr Stephen Bagley highlighted that a CCTV camera had been installed to the entrance to the village and asked if this is to monitor traffic movement. Cllr M Brooks advised that cabling had been installed to the road to the entrance of the village and this is perhaps also to monitor the traffic movements in and out of the village.

### **2371 Update on proposal to develop a retail area in the parish**

Cllr M Green apologised if the proposal, as originally discussed, appeared to suggest that businesses which would compete with existing businesses in the village would be part of the retail area proposal. Cllr M Green advised that he ought to have consulted more widely on this before proposing this at the Parish Council meeting.

Cllr M Green advised that he had contacted Paul Jones at NCC, highlighting the briefing note agreed by the Parish Council and also advising that there may be insufficient space for this retail area by the side of the Tourist Information Centre.

However, Cllr M Green advised that NCC had promised to speak with the Parish Council about how to promote new and existing businesses in the parish. Cllr M Green advised that he has a phone call scheduled with Paul Jones on 26<sup>th</sup> April to discuss this in more detail and would report back to the next Parish Council meeting.

### **2372 Update on correspondence with Anne-Marie Trevelyan on a proposal to tackle the growing number of holiday lets in the parish**

The Clerk advised that he had now received a response from the MP's office to advise that Anne-Marie Trevelyan would be raising the matter of Use Classes with the relevant Planning Minister, with the aim of getting the Use Class for holiday lets amended from a C3 Use Class, so that any changes of use from existing dwellings to holiday lets could be considered via a planning application.

### **2373 Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative**

Cllr M Brooks advised that the tenant in the cemetery house is happily settled and the rent is coming in for this house.

Cllr E Pearson also advised that she had visited the cemetery and it is in an excellent condition and all credit for this goes to the caretaker.

### **2374 Craster Community Trust report**

Cllr M Craster advised that the management committee of the Trust meets next week and he hoped that the Hall can now re-open on 17th May 2021. Cllr M Craster advised that the Hall would also be used for the elections on May 6th 2021.

### **2375 Proposal to purchase additional bins for the parish**

Members **agreed** to fund new bins for the Parish.

Members **agreed** that the new bins would replace the following existing bins:

- The bin at the gate to the castle. i.e. end of Dunstanburgh Road
- The one by the slipway by the North Pier of the harbour.
- The first bin at the Car park entrance (opposite the Tourist Information Centre)

Members **agreed** to fund new bins in the following locations:

- To be placed beside the seat below Marion's house on the north side of the harbour.
- A position around the concrete slabs/seats in the area of the memorial on the harbour side.

It was also **agreed** that the bin on the South Acres square needs to return to the coastal path where it was initially.

### **2376 Consideration of the Government's decision not to extend powers of local Councils to hold meetings in a virtual setting beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

The Clerk reminded Members that the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 have permitted Local Councils to meet in a virtual setting since 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020) - a month following the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and during the first national lockdown.

The Clerk advised that these powers have been essential in allowing the Parish Council to continue with its programme of work and to do so safely.

At present, the Clerk advised that the powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020, for Local Councils to meet virtually last up until May 2021. In spite of lobbying from NALC, local Members of Parliament and other bodies for the continuation of these powers, on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Minister advised that the powers would cease on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. In his letter, the Minister advised:

*Extending the regulations to meetings beyond May 7 would require primary legislation. The Government has considered the case for legislation very carefully, including the significant impact it would have on the Government's legislative programme which is already under severe pressure in these unprecedented times. We are also mindful of the excellent progress that has been made on our vaccination programme and the announcement of the Government's roadmap for lifting Covid-19 restrictions. Given this context, the Government has concluded that it is not possible to bring forward emergency legislation on this issue at this time.*

*As outlined in the Government's Spring 2021 Covid-19 Response, our aim is for everyone aged 50 and over and people with underlying health conditions to have been offered a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by 15 April, and a second dose by mid-July. While local authorities have been able to hold meetings in person at any time during the pandemic with appropriate measures in place, the successful rollout of the vaccine and the reduction in cases of Covid-19 should result in a significant reduction in risk for local authority members meeting in person from May 7, as reflected in the Government's plan to ease Covid-19 restrictions over the coming months.*

The letter goes on to state:

*Finally, while you do have a legal obligation to ensure that the members of the public can access most of your meetings, I would encourage you to continue to provide remote access to minimise the need for the public to attend meetings physically until at least 21 June, at which point it is anticipated that all restrictions on indoor gatherings will have been lifted in line with the Roadmap. However, it is for individual local authorities to satisfy themselves that they have met the requirements for public access.*

This decision is presently the subject of a High Court challenge. Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Hertfordshire County Council have asked the High Court to make a declaration on whether they can continue to hold meetings remotely past 6 May.

It has since been confirmed that the hearing will take place on 21 April.

The Clerk also advised that the Government has now launched a call for evidence in order to understand the experience of local Councils across the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings.

The Clerk advised that it has been suggested that the Parish Council may wish to respond positively to this consultation, encouraging the Government to extend these powers to allow for virtual meetings to become legal in perpetuity.

Members **agreed** to note the report provided by the Clerk and to await the outcome of the High Court ruling on virtual meetings.

Members also **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Clerk to arrange for a safe return to physical meetings after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Members also **agreed** to respond to the Government's call for evidence, lobbying for the powers to meet virtually to be extended in perpetuity.

### **2377 Consideration of ongoing footpaths issues**

The Clerk advised that there were a number of ongoing footpaths issues in Craster and that the footpaths officer at NCC would be meeting both the Clerk and Cllr M Brooks in Craster to go over these matters in order to seek a solution.

### **2378 Consideration of correspondence from the AONB on the merits of conservation area designation for the historic core of Craster**

Members noted that correspondence had been received from the AONB regarding an investigation they would be undertaking on the merits of designating the historic core of Craster as a Conservation Area. The Clerk advised that he had responded to this to say that this had been investigated previously by the Parish Council and had proved unpopular with local residents.

### **2379 Planning Matters:**

**21/01008/FUL** | Proposed single storey extension, replacement of garden shed and associated works. | 9 Whin Hill Craster NE66 3TP. It was **agreed** to object to this application.

**21/00727/VARYCO** | Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 17/03658/FUL for amendment to details on window, flues and shutters on

drawings | Land South East Of Lifeboat House Haven Hill Craster Northumberland. It was **agreed** to note this application.

**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.

**Update on 21/00319/FUL** | Erection of a log cabin | Orchard Cottages Dunstan Village Dunstan Northumberland NE66 3TE. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council had expressed concerns at the lack of detail included as part of this application. The Clerk advised that he had now heard back from the planning enforcement officer to say that further details would be provided with this application. In the meantime, Members **agreed** to maintain their objection to this application.

### **2380 Consideration of ongoing planning enforcement matters in the parish**

The Clerk highlighted a number of ongoing planning enforcement matters taking place within the Parish. Members expressed their frustration at this and the responses received to date from NCC enforcement. A suggestion was made that the Parish Council may wish to issue a press release expressing unhappiness at this. It was agreed that the Parish Council should discuss these matters with the local County Councillor and seek a meeting with the Director of Planning at NCC.

### **2381 Items for Next Agenda**

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

### **2382 Date and time of next meeting**

20<sup>th</sup> May 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  
(20<sup>th</sup> May 2021)**