

## **A Parish Meeting has been called**

The meeting will take place in Craster Village Hall at 18:30pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023.

### **Agenda**

#### **1. Welcome from the Chair of the Parish Council**

#### **2. Confirmation of the minutes of the last parish meeting**

Residents are asked to confirm the Minutes of the Parish meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

#### **3. Chair's update on the work of the Parish Council**

The Chair of the Parish Council will provide an update on work carried out by the Parish Council since the last meeting of the parish.

#### **4. Update on the mobile mast for Craster and Dunstan**

#### **5. Proposed changes to the Craster traffic gateway scheme**

#### **6. AOB**

This is not a Parish Council meeting. It is an open meeting at which all electors in the Parish are welcome and are invited to take part.

Signed,



**Councillor Martin Smith  
Chair of Craster Parish Council**

Contact the Parish Clerk via e-mail at: [parishcouncil@crastercommunity.org.uk](mailto:parishcouncil@crastercommunity.org.uk) or alternatively via post at: Craster Parish Council c/o 10 Sommerville Road. Ponteland. Northumberland. NE20 0FY.

**DRAFT Minutes of the Craster Parish meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 18:00pm in Craster Village Hall.**

**In the chair:** Parish Council Chair Coun. Martin Smith

**Also in attendance:** 27 members of the public, Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Sylvia Pringle (iNorthumberland).

**1. A one minute silence for Cllr Michael Doherty**

All attendees observed a one-minute silence at the beginning of the meeting in memory of our much-loved colleague Cllr Michael Doherty

**2. Confirmation of Minutes of last Parish meeting**

The minutes of the Parish meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by the Chairman.

**3. Chair's update on the Parish Council**

The Chair of the Parish Council provided the following update on works carried out by the Parish Council since July 2021:

- Thanks to Parish Councillors, including Cllr Michael Doherty, for their work and to all external stakeholders for their support for the work in the parish.
- We were delighted to see the passing of the Neighbourhood Plan last year and we see this having an impact already in our parish; with 4 planning applications coming forward since its passing already where this key Policy is relevant.
- The Parish Council continues to represent the parish on planning matters. This in and of itself is a big undertaking and we are delighted to have had a number of successes recently.
- Last year, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Parish Council were delighted to support Embleton primary school with the purchase of three chromebooks to support pupils learning from home.
- The Parish Council was also pleased to support the planting up of the barrels to the entrance of Craster village and it was lovely to see such positive press for this. A big thank you to everyone who adopted a barrel and supported this.
- The Craster trail continues to have a positive impact on our parish; a well-used path which allows for a safer pedestrian access between Craster and Dunstan. We were delighted to host an official opening of the trail last year and a very big thank you to Lord Howick for doing this.
- The Parish Council is also having a number of footpaths improved from our contractor Steve Tenant – the Cinder Path and Charlie's path.

- A big thank you to our contractor Steve too for his work in ensuring that the grass verges which the Parish Council is responsible for are well-maintained.
- The Parish Council was also successful in its request to NCC that they cease using pesticides in the parish, with concerns having been raised about the environmental impact of these pesticides.
- Residents will know that the Parish Council was instrumental in getting the defibrillator in place. Last year, we funded the replacement battery so that this vital instrument can continue in our community.
- The Parish Council has had a collection box introduced in Craster and this has generated an income from visitors of £319.77 since being installed. The Parish Council has established a fundraising committee – made up of representatives from across the community to advise the Council on how you'd like to see the funds spent – we are hoping to use this funding towards adding greenery and blooms to the parish. A big thank you to everyone involved in this.
- The Parish Council has agreed to freeze the precept this financial year, recognising the ongoing impact of increasing costs of living on residents.
- Recent storms have had a really big impact on our parish – with Storm Arwen being particularly devastating. None of us in the parish have ever seen winds like them and I am aware it was a terrifying time for local residents. I'd like to thank our Parish Clerk for so swiftly ensuring that the bus shelter in Craster was fixed so quickly and the costs being covered by our insurance.

Craster Parish Council was the first Council to host an urgent public meeting with the senior leadership at Northern Powergrid and the Leader of Northumberland County Council Cllr Glen Sanderson. At this meeting, we made it clear that there is a need to upgrade the existing network servicing our area as well as a need to build our resilience to these occurrences as a community.

Northern Powergrid agrees with our expectation to adapt and upgrade the network and has informed us that they have plans to rebuild the overhead line into Craster early in their next business plan period (2023-28).

I was delighted that, in preparation for Storms Dudley and Eunice in February, the Parish Council – together with our colleagues at the Craster Community Trust – arranged for a temporary generator to the Community Hall in Craster in order to allow us to provide heating, light, a warm drink, etc. to residents who wish to come along to the Hall in the event of a power outage. Andy from Pipers Pitch was also wonderful and offered to provide a free hot meal to residents in the event of a power outage. Thankfully none of this was needed but I'd like to thank all involved in arranging this.

- I'd like to pay particular tribute to our Parish Clerk who I know had a number of exhausting meetings with Northern Powergrid in the wake of Storm Arwen and managed to secure an automatic compensation payment of £70 to all residents and holiday lets impacted by the power outage of this storm – this compensation amounted to a total payment of over £32,000 and we are all exceptionally grateful.
- One of the major projects we have taken on this year is the provision of a battery to the Hall to provide back-up power in the event of a power outage – which sadly happen all too often in our community – we are hoping to supplement this with solar panels and I am aware that Jackie Reeves and our Clerk have been working tirelessly to achieve this with grant applications as well as the Parish Council's annual appeal to holiday lets which this year has generated over £3,000 – we look forward to seeing this progress.
- The Parish Council has been leading on the campaign to achieve mobile phone signal to Craster and Dunstan and we'll hopefully have a positive update on this later in the meeting.
- The Parish Council continues to seek solutions to parking issues in our community. You'll recall we engaged a consultant to look at the scheme and his assessment is that the scheme is having the desired impact of driving more visitors into the quarry car park rather than into the village.
- The Parish Council has also taken on an active role in supporting a number of Jubilee events over the Platinum Jubilee weekend and I'd like to thank everyone for their amazing support for this. The Parish Council was successful in securing a £500 from NCC towards putting on events and we are delighted to honour Her Majesty as a community.
- The Parish Council has submitted its Local Transport Plan priorities for 2022-23. These include:
  1. Extending the double yellow lines on the Tower Bank up to the top of the tower in order to prevent cars parking and blocking the lifeboat station.
  2. Improvements to safety of access for pedestrian entering and exiting the quarry car park.
  3. Improvements to the public footpath on Smithy Bank.
- The Parish Council is an active member of the Embleton Joint Burial Committee and the cemetery is extremely well maintained and is a great place of peace and respect. The Parish Council, along with the two other Parish Councils, undertook to have the cemetery house renovated and we are pleased to see this house rented out and lived in now.

#### **4. Update on achieving mobile phone signal to the parish**

The Chair welcomed Sylvia Pringle to the meeting to discuss the issue of the mobile phone mast for Craster.

Sylvia thanked the Chair and the Parish Council for the opportunity to address the meeting today.

Sylvia advised that funding had come available for the introduction of a mobile phone mast to Craster in order to provide mobile phone signal for the entire parish, as part of the Borderlands Deal.

Sylvia highlighted that this was a key opportunity to progress this scheme which she was aware has been a long-running campaign by the Parish Council.

Sylvia advised that NCC were currently liaising with a company called Railsite, who would provide the mast and would then commence discussions with the main mobile phone network providers.

Sylvia advised that the site identified for this mast was the quarry car park (the section owned by NCC) and this would necessitate a planning application to gain the necessary approvals.

Sylvia advised that the mast is presently projected to take up 2-3 car parking spaces in the corner of the quarry car park and would be 20-22m in height, which would approximately 8m over the top of the quarry wall.

Sylvia advised that only Vodafone had come forward as one of the major operators with interest in supporting this project but she is hoping to liaise with other providers too.

Sylvia advised that it is likely that planning would take somewhere in the region of 12-20 weeks to get a decision.

Sylvia also advised that the mast would cover a 2.0-2.5km radius.

The Clerk highlighted that this has been a long-running campaign from the Parish Council and Cllr Wendy Pattison for the community and took the opportunity to thank Sylvia Pringle for all of the work she has done on Craster's behalf to make this happen.

The proposal was warmly welcomed by all present and the parish **agreed** to support this project.

#### **5. Update on traffic management scheme in Craster village**

The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council had recently engaged the services of a traffic consultant, as per the agreement of the previous parish meeting. The Chair advised that this consultant's report had highlighted that the scheme was working as per its intention and that, with a number of changes, there is no reason why the scheme could not become permanent.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had now submitted a letter to Robin McCartney at NCC on this matter. This letter had detailed the Parish Council's agreement to support the scheme, subject to the following amendments:

- NCC take over responsibility for enforcing the scheme instead of the Police.
- The barrels either be reduced in number or replaced with a more permanent solution (for which the Parish Council would expect to be consulted).
- The Quarry Car Park be renamed the "Village and Dunstanburgh Castle car park".
- All signage be removed to the entrance of the village and be replaced with two "No entry except for residents and services" signs and a sign for the car park.
- A sign be erected at the bottom of Tower Bank saying "All visitors please use the main car park".
- The Council fully supports the added charges on the car park but would like to request that the first 1-hour parking is free of charge at the front of the car park only.
- A residents permit parking scheme be trialled for a period of 12 months.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council is awaiting a response to this correspondence from Mr McCartney and hoped to have an update on this as soon as possible.

A member of the public asked why the overflow carpark could not be permanently opened. The Vice-Chair of the Parish Council advised that this was private land and is only ever opened subject to the agreement of the landowner and the weather being well (i.e. not wet and therefore causing damage to the field when driven over) and that the landowner had an arrangement with third parties in the parish to operate this over the summer.

A number of residents highlighted that they did not feel that the scheme was resolving the parking issues in the village and objected to the scheme.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Councillor Margaret Brooks and Allan Brooks for all of their exceptional work in keeping the barrels to the entrance of the village nicely stocked with nice plants and looked after.

## **6. AOB**

None received.

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

Signed,

**Chair of Craster Parish Council  
(23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023)**