

MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 15th February 2024 – 6:30pm in the Hall

Agenda

Dear Councillor,

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, I hereby give you notice that the annual meeting of **Craster Parish Council** will be held **in Craster Memorial Hall on Thursday 15th February 2024 at 6:30pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. Welcome and apologies for absence**
- 2. Declarations of interest**
- 3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 18th January 2024**
- 4. Matters arising**
- 5. Public participation**
- 6. Discussion relating to the BT digital switch over with iNorthumberland**
- 7. Update on the proposal on the future of the Craster Tourist Information Centre**
- 8. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison**
- 9. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative**
- 10. Report from Craster Community Trust representative**
- 11. Report on coastal erosion in Craster**
- 12. Update on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal report for the parish**
- 13. Update on the mobile phone mast for the parish**
- 14. Items for next Agenda**
- 15. Date and time of next meeting**

21st March 2024 – 6:30pm in Craster Memorial Hall.

And pursuant to the provisions of the above-named acts, I hereby summon you to attend the said meeting.

Adam Shanley
Clerk of Craster Parish Council

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 18th January 2024 – 6:30pm via Zoom

Councillors present:

Chair: Martin Smith

Parish Council members: Mark Green, Ann Fettis, Rosie Robson, Michael Craster and Margaret Brooks.

Also present: Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wendy Pattison and 11 members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors E Pearson and A Gregory.

2. Declarations of interest

None received.

3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 30th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2023 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the following additional sentence being added under Item 5: "*Ms Metcalfe highlighted a specific case on consecrated ground but confirmed that this was not a decision specifically in respect of Spitalford*"

4. Matters arising

None received.

5. Statement by the Chair of the Council on conduct during and outside of Parish Council meetings.

The Chair of the Council made the following statement to the Parish Council meeting:

I wanted to take this opportunity to firstly thank Members of the Parish Council and the many volunteers in our community who work so hard with us to deliver so much for our community – without our collective work, tireless volunteering hours away from family and loved ones and the enormous sense of public duty, our parish would not be the special and unique area it is known the country over as being.

Equally, it has been a delight for me as Chair of the Parish Council to see this collective work deliver projects and events in our community – too many to count – and always the model of cordiality, respect and harmony.

It is therefore with something of a heavy heart that I must express my disappointment at the discussion and subsequent ramifications of that discussion at our October Full Council meeting pertaining to the project involving the collection boxes around Craster.

During the course of this meeting, what I must take as an innocent misunderstanding about the arrangements for this project regrettably lead to a rather heated discussion involving Members and a number of members of the public about this project.

To be clear, there are no governance issues at all with this project and nor is there any insinuation from any Member of this Council that anyone involved in this project has done anything untoward. Far from it, this project has managed to obtain nearly £1,400 from visitor contributions since it began and this has funded a financial contribution to the

harbour, hot water bottles during the recent energy crisis, plants and bulbs – all of which could not be achieved without the fantastic support of those involved in this project.

However, no matter what the topic and content of discussion on our Agenda at any given time – regardless of how controversial it may be to an individual member of the public – I simply cannot allow a situation to arise where a Member feels shouted down by members of the public during our meetings. There is a public participation section on each of our Agendas and this is the only opportunity during our meetings in which a member of the public should raise an issue. Without mentioning any names at all, I was equally disappointed to hear of a situation outside of our meeting, in which a Member of this Council was made to feel upset and intimidated following on from that discussion. Being on a Parish Council is highly rewarding but can also be difficult, Members have a right to a peaceful, private life and I would strongly urge anyone with any concerns about a discussion to please contact either the Councillor concerned and/or the Clerk in writing or seek a meeting with the relevant Councillors, in order that an issue can be resolved amicably and in a private context.

I sincerely hope that this statement clarifies the position on this project, this Council's great appreciation for those involved and also draws a line under this matter and that we can move forward harmoniously.

6. Public participation

Mrs Jackie Reeves raised a concern about digital connection in the community. Jackie advised that she was concerned about the BT switch over from copper wiring to digital in the village in the absence of a mobile phone network. Jackie advised that she felt that local residents should be made aware of this. Councillors agreed to contact iNorthumberland and ask that they come and speak at the next Full Council meeting.

7. Update following a recent meeting with NCC regarding the future of Tourist Information Centre

Councillor M Green provided the following report to the Council. Its proposed actions were **agreed** by all Members unanimously and Councillor M Green **agreed** to take the lead on this project:

Proposal for the Purchase and Conversion of Craster Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

I am writing this initial proposal regarding the future of the Craster Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in my role as Parish Councillor on behalf of Craster Parish Council.

Our proposal outlines the acquisition of the TIC from Northumberland County Council by a new community interest company (CIC), the conversion of the TIC into a versatile retail/food unit, and the operation of the facility under a licence as a shop and cafe.

1. Formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC)

We propose the creation of a new Community Interest Company (CIC) for the purpose of acquiring the Craster TIC from Northumberland County Council. The CIC structure ensures that the community has a stake in the management and decision-making process, fostering local involvement and addressing the unique needs of the community. The CIC will be responsible for overseeing the development, management, and operation of the TIC.

The CIC will seek to purchase the TIC building and surrounding access land from NCC for a nominal amount in return for an agreement as to the TIC's future use. This use will include an agreement on who will be responsible for providing and maintaining the existing public toilets.

2. Capital Works for Conversion

The TIC is a building constructed in 1991 split roughly 50/50 between information centre and public toilets. The building's appearance is rather anonymous, dominated by the timber and stone clad East gable end. In its current form it is difficult for passers-by to see inside of the building and the location of the entrance doors, on either side, are not obvious.

Upon acquisition of the TIC, we propose capital works to convert the facility into a versatile retail/food unit. The conversion will include:

- Structural alterations to create a welcoming 'shop front' and entrance in the East gable end.
- Interior renovations to create space for retail activities.
- Installation of kitchen facilities to support a cafe setup.
- Compliance with all local building codes, accessibility standards, and safety regulations.
- Use of external and internal space to share both tourist and local heritage information.
- Remedial works to any defective items identified by the building survey.

At this stage we estimate that the capital works will cost in the region of £50,000. This estimate is of course subject to the findings of a building survey, design advice and tendering. This estimate does not include the upgrade of the toilets planned by NCC.

The conversion aims to transform the TIC into a vibrant and multifunctional space that caters to the diverse needs and interests of both residents and tourists.

3. Operation under License as a Shop and Cafe

We propose that the Craster TIC, once converted, operates under a licence as a shop and cafe. This would mean that rather than running the business itself, the CIC would advertise the business opportunity and then licence the premises to a suitable operator. The operator would pay the CIC a rent and would also be responsible for paying utility bills, business rates and insurance. The rent will need to be sufficient for the CIC to maintain the structure of the building and keep any excess to use for future development of the site.

This will allow the facility to offer a range of services to the community and visitors, contributing to the local economy and creating a welcoming hub for social interaction. The licence will ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and licensing requirements.

We recognise that the proposed changes may impact on local businesses in the vicinity of Craster TIC. These include:

- Piper's Pitch, sandwich van (Craster)
- Jolly Fisherman, public house (Craster)
- Robson & Sons, fish shop and deli (Craster)
- Mick Oxley, art gallery (Craster)
- Stable Yard, cafe (Dunstan)
- Cottage, public house (Dunstan)

However, these impacts are likely to be mitigated by the following factors:

- There is no longer a cafe offering in Craster following the recent closure of the Shoreline Cafe.
- There are an estimated 250K visitors to Craster each year, suggesting that there is a big enough market to support more businesses.

We will conduct a preliminary impact assessment as part of our feasibility study. To mitigate any potential negative impacts, we propose engaging in open communication with local businesses, seeking their input, and exploring collaborative opportunities. This may include joint promotional activities, partnerships, or shared events to enhance the overall economic ecosystem.

We will also provide a detailed financial plan as part of our feasibility study.

4. Action required to progress this proposal

In order to move this proposal forwards we require the following from NCC:

- Funding and a recommended provider for a feasibility plan.
- Access to the interior of the property in order to get a better understanding of the space available.
- Scale drawings of the property.
- Maintenance records and plans.
- Costings for the planned renovation works to the toilets.

We believe that this proposal not only preserves the historical significance of the Craster TIC but also transforms it into a dynamic and sustainable community asset. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and address any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

End of proposal

8. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

Wendy advised that she was working hard to ensure that the large number of potholes around the community are being resolved. Wendy advised that she has asked for potholes in Craster to be a top priority for NCC Highways team,

9. Review of the Parish Council's Standing Orders

Members unanimously agreed a new set of Standing Orders to support the Council in its day-to-day functions. The Council thanked the Clerk for drafting these.

10. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative

Councillor M Brooks advised that there had been no meeting of the EJBC and therefore there was no update for this evening's meeting since the last update.

11. Report from Craster Community Trust representative

Councillor M Craster advised that the lighting of the Christmas tree had been a great success and thanked all those involved in this great event.

Councillor M Craster also advised that the Trust is meeting on a regular basis and the Trust is looking specifically at the refurbishment of the Hall, including lighting and painting, etc.

12. Update on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal report for the parish

The Clerk advised that the AONB had now agreed to fully fund this appraisal and that they would be looking to contract an appropriate consultant for these works in the very near future and that he hoped to have a draft report to Members in due course.

13. Update on the mobile phone mast for the parish

The Clerk advised that there had been a number of positive discussions with at least two mobile network operators for the new mast and that they were awaiting these MNOs to sign an agreement prior to the commencement of works.

The Clerk advised that he had discussed the works programme with the Atlas Group and they have confirmed that work will only take a matter of days and will not result in any great disruption to local residents.

The Clerk advised that he would keep Members updated on how this progresses.

14. To agree the Parish Council's budget for the financial year 2024/25

Members unanimously **agreed** the following budget for 2024/25, with at least £3,000 agreed to be maintained in the general reserve budget:

Item of expenditure	Expected expenditure
Staffing costs (including on costs)	£7,200.00
Insurance	£200.00
Wifi and telephone to the Hall	£400.00
RBL Appeal	£20.00
Christmas tree	£150.00
Cutting of grass verges – incl. Tower Bank and Dunstan	£1,000.00
NALC subscription and website	£170.00
Stationery and printing	£300.00
Hall hire	£288.00
Community events	£500.
EJBC request for precept	£215.00
Total	£10,443.00

15. To agree the Parish Council's precept request for financial year 2024/25

Members noted that the 2024/25 Craster Parish Council Tax Base was calculated at 151.48. In 2023/24, the Tax Base was 153.59. Therefore, the Tax Base has reduced slightly. Members considered the budget for 2024/25 and noted that the current Band D charge for the Parish Council is £67.13.

Members noted that, should they wish to maintain the current Band D precept charge, this would generate a precept of £10,168.85. Members **agreed** to freeze the precept at its current Band D charge for 2024/25.

16. Planning matters:

23/04606/FUL | Removal of existing oil tank and installation of bunded oil tank in new location | 19 Heugh Road Craster Northumberland NE66 3TJ. It was **agreed** to note this application.

17. Items for next Agenda

The Chair reminded Members to contact the Clerk should they wish to request an item on the next Agenda.

18. Date and time of next meeting

18th January 2024 – 6:30pm in Craster Memorial Hall.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Chair of Craster Parish Council
(15th February 2024)**

CRASTER PARISH - COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT



County Councillor Wendy Pattison

wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk –

Tel. 07779 983072 and on Facebook – Cllr Wendy Pattison

CRASTER PARISH

Residents are being urged to prepare for the digital switchover in Northumberland



Northumberland County Council are reaching out to residents to ensure they are prepared for the national digital switchover. Concerns have been reported that when residents are renewing their contracts with their telecoms provider, the provider is not asking whether they are vulnerable and explaining how this system works if there is no electricity or a mobile signal.

Led by the UK telecommunications industry, the transition will see a shift from the old analogue landline system to upgraded digital services.

By December 2025, services relying on the outdated analogue landline systems, including amplified phones for those with hearing loss, personal telecare products, fall and motion detectors, and portable healthcare devices like ECG or oxygen monitors, will undergo this digital upgrade.

For those with telecare services, the digital switchover has significant implications and anyone using these services are being urged to assess how the switchover will impact them and take necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition, minimising any potential disruptions to their care.

Many residents are already adapting to the change, and, for some the process is as straightforward as plugging their home phone into the broadband router rather than the traditional wall socket.

In the event of a power outage digital landlines will not function and while mobile phones can still be used, individuals without an alternative means of contacting emergency services should contact their telecoms provider and request a solution to enable emergency calls.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader at Northumberland County Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said: “The safety of our residents is our top priority and whilst this is being led by our UK telecoms providers the Council has a duty of care to our residents to ensure they have all the information they need to upgrade to digital services.

“This is an ongoing process, and this new network will provide a more reliable and dependable service, but we need to make sure no one is left behind and that our services remain fully operational.

“I would urge anyone using, or if anyone knows of someone using, telecare services to ensure they have the right systems in place.”

Telecommunications providers, including major companies such as Virgin Media O2 and BT, are expected to proactively engage with customers ahead of the switchover to ensure their services remain unaffected.

The Council is also urging people to be aware of scams, such as third parties claiming to be acting on behalf of their suppliers. Please only use known routes to contact your providers. For example, telephone numbers and contact details on your bills.

The Council remains committed to keeping residents informed and supported throughout the digital switchover process.

For further information and assistance, residents are encouraged to contact their telecoms provider for guidance on how to navigate the transition seamlessly.

Help with daily living tasks

Our adult social care occupational therapists support adult residents of Northumberland who are experiencing a reduced ability to engage in everyday tasks due to a change in functional ability.

This includes people who have physical disability, mental health difficulties, learning disability and/or social and emotional difficulties, either from birth or because of accident, illness or ageing. The aim of the occupational therapy service is to assess each person referred to identify their individual needs and to then provide intervention to meet those identified needs.

The range of interventions is as diverse as the people who are referred to the service, some of the most common areas of intervention are –

- Supplying of equipment.
- Carrying out minor works adaptations.
- Carrying out major adaptations.
- Assessment of the manual handling needs for those people who need carer support.

The occupational therapy service is available from 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, and from 8:30 to 4:30 on Fridays. If you have an occupational therapist involved with you and need to contact them, please call them via Onecall on 01670 536400.

The adult social care occupational therapy service accepts referrals from anyone, including

individuals themselves, or with their consent, their family members, GPs, district nurses, or any other professional involved with them. A referral can be made to the occupational therapy service by contacting OneCall on 01670 536400.

The range of equipment available to make life easier for people who have difficulty with daily tasks is increasing all the time.

A growing range of items are available from high street shops; others can be found in specialist shops or catalogues, or on the internet.

Health and care professionals can give you advice about equipment which might help you. They can also arrange the loan of any equipment which is necessary for your care and support plan, or which will reduce the need for you to rely on support from other people.

For larger and more expensive equipment, it is usually best to ask for advice from an occupational therapist (OT), who will know all the problems that can arise, and understand how your health condition may develop.

If you think you need more help, you can request an assessment of your needs. You can find out more about what an assessment will involve.

For advice and assistance you can contact Northumberland Communities Together 01670 620015 open 9am to 6pm – 7 days a week or email them at NCT@northumberland.gov.uk
Out of hours assistance – call OneCall 01670 536400

Adaptations to your home

If you have a disability or illness which makes daily life more difficult, you may benefit from having your home adapted to help you carry on with your life independently.

Examples of adaptations include:

- Installing a stair-lift so that you can continue to use upstairs rooms.
- Constructing a shower area which you can get into without a step.
- Making a wheelchair ramp at the main entrance to your home.
- Fixing grab rails, hand rails or stair rails to help you to move around safely.

Small adaptations

Many different health and social care professionals can arrange small adaptations such as fixing a grab rail or adapting steps at your property. There is no charge for this service, but we will fund small adaptations only when a professional recommends them to promote independence and avoid, reduce or delay a need for care and support, and we normally apply a cost limit of £1,000.

We aim to complete work within three weeks of a professional recommendation. Small adaptations are usually completed by our Home Improvement Service Adaptation and Repair Technicians.

Equipment to help you at home

If you, or someone you know, struggles with everyday tasks, there could be equipment that can help.

Equipment can protect people from accidents, assist them with the everyday tasks of life and/or make it easier to provide care for them. It can also help people to move back home from hospital. The range of equipment available to make life easier for people who have difficulty with daily tasks is increasing all the time. A growing range of items are available from high street shops; others can be found in specialist shops, catalogues, or on the internet.

Health and care professionals can give you advice about equipment, which might help you. You can also get impartial advice about what equipment you might find useful from: Disability North East,

The Dene Centre,
Castle Farm Road,
Gosforth,
Newcastle
NE3 1PH

Phone (0191) 284 0480 for an appointment
Text Direct 18001 0191 284 0480

Email reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Web address www.disabilitynorth.com

Northumberland Community Safety

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

You should never have to endure behaviour which causes alarm, harassment or distress. We know ASB can have a big impact on your quality of life and we are committed in delivering the firm message that this behaviour will be tackled and not tolerated. ASB covers a lot of different types of behaviour and can affect people in many ways. ASB means behaviour causing or likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm, or distress to any member of the public or which may have a detrimental effect on someone's quality of life.

Your community safety officer is Judith Davis

Judith has been a community safety officer for 15 years following a 10 year career as a police officer. She has an extensive knowledge of the Alnwick and Amble areas and the community safety issues that affect them. She works closely with police and other agencies and has strong links with schools as part of her education and engagement role. Alongside colleagues from Public Protection she helps coordinate the local multi agency meetings where community safety issues are discussed and tackled using a problem solving approach. Judith deals with anti social behaviour and nuisance from all residents, irrespective of whether or not they are council tenants.

Education work

Judith regularly delivers inputs in schools, delivering education around the safe and legal use of social media and other topics that affect young people. COVID-19 saw the use of social media increase as young people were unable to socialise face to face and this has had an impact on young people in a variety of ways.

If you have concerns around your child's use of social media, you can contact Judith for advice and resources that can help you.

If you would like to know more or would like a visit to your school or organisation, please

get in touch via judith.davis@northumberland.gov.uk

Latest News

- Judith is working with police to tackle issues of anti social behaviour in and around the Alnwick area. The bus station has been an area of particular concern and as a result CCTV is now in place and being monitored by police. Any incidents should be reported to police or NCC giving the nature of the incident along with a date and time, which will allow scrutiny of the CCTV footage to take place.
In Amble, she is working with police and Housing agencies to tackle incidents of youth disorder around the town. Home visits and school sessions have been done as part of an approach to tackle issues as they arise
- How to Activate an Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review

In Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, ASB Case Review activations across all of the 6 Local Authorities are coordinated by the [Northumbria Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner](#) who will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your ASB Case Review request.
- Contact you to discuss your case and obtain further information.
- Liaise with the relevant Community Safety Partnerships.
- Share information with agencies who are responsible for managing anti-social behaviour.

Rural crime

Work with rural communities to promote confidence and reduce the fear of crime

How we do this

Northumberland has a significant rural landscape, and the Safer Northumberland Community Safety Partnership recognises that communities and those, living, visiting and working in these areas should feel safe from crime and the fear of crime. Accordingly, the partnership recognises as a priority the need to address rural crime and support those communities.

The Northumberland Partnership Against Rural Crime (NPARC) is an initiative that involves and engages a wide range of stakeholders to achieve this, and which works with the Safer Northumberland Partnership to deliver initiatives and protect rural communities. Both partnerships will look to develop and grow this capability. [NPCC Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy](#)

Contact us with your concerns

Email: safern.partnership@northumberland.gov.uk

Phone: 0345 600 6400