

**MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 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 18<sup>th</sup> January 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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**
- 4. Matters arising**
- 5. Statement by the Chair of the Council on conduct during and outside of Parish Council meetings.**
- 6. Public participation**
- 7. Update following a recent meeting with NCC regarding the future of Tourist Information Centre**
- 8. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison**
- 9. Review of the Parish Council's Standing Orders – report attached.**
- 10. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative**
- 11. Report from Craster Community Trust representative**
- 12. Update on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal report for the parish**
- 13. Update on the mobile phone mast for the parish**
- 14. To agree the Parish Council's budget for the financial year 2024/25 – report included.**
- 15. To agree the Parish Council's precept request for financial year 2024/25 – report included.**
- 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**
- 17. Items for next Agenda**
- 18. Date and time of next meeting**  
18<sup>th</sup> January 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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 6:30pm via Zoom**

**Councillors present:**

**Chair:** Martin Smith

**Parish Council members:** Mark Green, Michael Craster and Margaret Brooks.

**Also present:** Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), Maria Antoniou (Northumberland County Council) and Mrs Jackie Reeves, Ms Denise Metcalfe, Mr Colin Duncan, Mrs Diana Ridley, Mr Colin Duncan, Mrs Carrie Ringrose, Mrs Marion Gallon, Ms Linda Bain and Mrs Fyona Robson (members of the public).

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors A Fettis, R Robson, E Pearson and A Gregory as well as County Councillor W Pattison.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None received.

**3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**4. Matters arising**

None received.

**5. Public participation**

Ms Denise Metcalfe asked the Parish Council what they felt ought to be done about the EJBC using consecrated land illegally. Ms Metcalfe also highlighted that the decision to use the land is not included in any of the EJBC's minutes, in contravention with the Local Government Act 1972.

Ms Metcalfe advised that, because the land in question is consecrated, it is subject to faculty jurisdiction and therefore permission for its use is required from the Consistory Court. Councillor M Brooks advised that advice had been sought on that matter and it was confirmed that this is not the case.

Ms Metcalfe also highlighted her frustration that the EJBC have advised her that they are seeking advice on this from bodies such as NALC but that this had not yet been shared with her.

The Chair advised that he felt that this was an issue for the EJBC to respond directly to Ms Metcalfe. Councillor M Brooks advised that the EJBC would like respond to Ms Metcalfe's queries in the new year.

At this point, Ms Metcalfe left the meeting.

Mrs Jackie Reeves expressed her concern at the issue of potholes in the parish and advised that she had reported a pothole in Dunstan 5-6 weeks ago and nothing on this had been done. The Chair advised that he is following up with NCC on this matter.

Mrs Marion Gallon expressed her disappointment at the discussion at the last Full Council meeting regarding the collection boxes and the fact that certain accusations were made against the character of certain volunteers, in spite of the fact that this project is being carried out in accordance with the protocols agreed with NALC, the police, etc and is bringing in additional funding for community projects such as extra plants, bulbs, etc. The Chair thanked those volunteers involved in this project and advised that he was aware that this was being done in accordance with the agreed requirements.

## **6. Discussion regarding the future of Tourist Information Centres across the county.**

The Chair welcomed Maria Antoniou to the meeting and thanked her for joining the meeting this evening.

Maria began by thanking the Parish Council and also advised that she was aware of recent correspondence to the County Council regarding the future of the Tourist Information Centre. Maria stressed that no decision had been taken on the future of the County's Tourist Information Centres, however highlighted that recent grant funding had become available should communities wish to develop grass-roots, community-led projects to repurpose these assets across the county and advised that NCC may be able to support this.

Maria highlighted that the way in which tourists gain access to information about tourism attractions etc. had changed as technology has developed and the County Council's investment in online tourism information.

Members expressed a strong desire to see what could be done with the Tourist Information Centre in Craster and it was proposed that a Working Group of interested parties be established in order to look into this matter further alongside NCC. Councillors M Green and M Brooks agreed to be part of this Working Group and the Chair invited any other interested parties to contact the Clerk if they wished to be part of this.

At this point, the Chair thanked Maria for her attendance and Maria left the meeting.

## **7. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison**

In Councillor Pattison's absence, the Chair referred those present to Councillor Pattison's latest County Council report and invited all those with any queries to please direct these to Councillor Pattison.

## **8. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative**

Councillor M Brooks advised that the EJBC is looking to respond formally to Ms Metcalfe in the new year. Members expressed their full support for EJBC in this matter.

Councillor M Brooks also advised that the tenant continues to live in the house and is very happy there.

## **9. Report from Craster Community Trust representative**

Councillor M Craster advised that the CCT had hosted the first of its lunches, as discussed at previous meetings, and that this had gone extremely well with 14 attendees to the first event. Councillor M Craster advised that the Trust had agreed that the lunches should not be hosted every month but that these lunches would be hosted at various intervals during the year. Councillor M Craster advised that the next date for the lunch will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Councillor M Craster thanked Jackie Reeves and others for their excellent work with this initiative.

Mrs Marion Gallon highlighted that this initiative is aimed at all residents of all ages and this is intended to be a great social evening.

The Council **agreed** that the date of the Christmas light switch on would be Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 5:45pm.

## **10. Update from the latest meeting of the Parish Council's Community Fundraising Committee**

The Clerk took the opportunity to thank the representatives of this Committee for their ongoing voluntary work. The Clerk advised that additional collections had secured further funding and, as per usual, the Committee had met to discuss future projects.

The Clerk advised that the Committee had recommended that the collection box at the playpark be moved to the harbour and that an additional collection box and sign be purchased

for installation at the car park. Members **agreed** to this and asked the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements for this to happen.

#### **11. Update following the joint letter to Councillor Glen Sanderson on planning enforcement issues in the AONB.**

The Clerk highlighted that the three Chairs of each Parish Council – namely Craster, Newton-by-the-Sea and Embleton had taken the unprecedented action of writing jointly to the Leader of Northumberland County Council, in order to express their serious concerns over the lack of action on planning enforcement issues.

The Chair highlighted that he was aware that there were a number of outstanding cases in each area and that NCC seemed to be taking little to no action on these cases. The Chair stressed how important this was to local residents and advised that the AONB must have the highest possible protection against inappropriate development. The Chair advised that he would keep the Council updated on any response the Councils receive from NCC on this matter but that he was aware that recruitment and retention of staff in this area was a significant problem and not just one which exists in Northumberland.

#### **12. Report following the public information session with AONB and NCC on the Conservation Area.**

The Clerk reminded Members that recent planning proposals had highlighted the exceptional heritage of the Dunstan part of our parish. The Clerk advised that, since the decision on a most recent application, the idea of making Dunstan a Conservation Area has been discussed at a number of public meetings.

The Clerk highlighted that, in order to ensure that discussions around such a proposal are fully informed and considered, he had arranged an information session with relevant officers at the AONB and NCC as well as members of the public.

The Clerk thanked Sarah Winlow (AONB Officer - Historic and Built Environment) and Eleanor Scott (NCC Conservation and Heritage Officer) for providing this session on 9th November.

The Clerk advised that, whilst the meeting was specifically about a Dunstan designation, the AONB and NCC's Conservation Officers made clear during the meeting that previous reports have highlighted the fantastic heritage of Craster and they felt that Craster should be included. The Clerk reminded Members that this was rejected at a meeting of the parish pre-Covid – something he also stressed at the public meeting.

The Clerk advised that there was the offer of a free-of-charge (the AONB paying directly) Conservation Area Character Appraisal of the parish which could be done relatively speedily. The Clerk advised that this would not commit the Council to any course of action but would merely ensure that any decision on potential future designation was fully informed.

Members unanimously **agreed** to progress this proposal further and ask the AONB to commission a Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

#### **13. To address the issue of coastal erosion on the North side of Craster**

Councillor M Green highlighted the issue of coastal erosion taking place on the North side of Craster and stressed his concerns that climate change and coastal erosion could have a significant impact on Craster. It was **agreed** that the AONB should be contacted in the first instance about this to see what they could do to deter this issue.

#### **14. Items for next Agenda**

The Chair reminded Members to contact the Clerk with any Agenda items for the next Council meeting.

#### **15. Date and time of next meeting**

18<sup>th</sup> 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  
(18<sup>th</sup> January 2024)**

# CRASTER PARISH COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT



County Councillor Wendy Pattison

[wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk) - Tel. 07779 983072 and on Facebook  
– Cllr Wendy Pattison  
CRASTER PARISH



## **New bus routes unwrapped for 2024**

A local bus company is adding a new route to its network, as well as making improvements to current services.

From January 3rd Borders Buses will take over service 418; Wooler to Alnwick via Belford, Bamburgh and Craster. The service is currently operated by bus operator Travelsure; on behalf of Northumberland County Council. The route will be re-launched in the new year with some minor changes.



The amends, which are being introduced following customer feedback and consultation with the County Council, include a slight variation to the bus timings and extended journeys between Wooler and Belford.

From this date a simplified timetable will also be launched on service 464; Berwick-Upon-Tweed to Wooler, via Lowick and Scremerston. The updated service will see the removal of the Railway St to Ramparts section of route, customers looking to travel this section of the route can do so on service B1, Berwick Town.

Claire Lark, operations manager at Borders Buses, said: "We are pleased to be working in partnership with Northumberland County Council and delighted to be introducing more journeys for the town, as well as increasing frequency and adding new locations to our bus network. We hope local people make full use and benefit from the new route and extra journeys.

The new route and service improvements are operated on behalf of the County Council.

## Help with transport costs

Discounts are available for different types of transport.

**Cutting fuel duty** - In the Spring Budget 2023 the government extended the fuel duty cut on petrol and diesel of 5 pence per litre for a further 12 months, as well as cancelling the planned inflation increase for 2023-24. Over 2 years this means a saving for drivers worth around £10 billion overall, and for the average car driver around £200, £400 for the average van driver and £3,000 for the average haulier.

### Bus travel savings

Single journey ticket (excluding return) discounts include:

- £2 maximum fare cap until December 2024
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/2-bus-fare-cap#north-east>
- £1 bus travel if you are 21 or under
- All day ticket discounts include:
  - **£5 adult bus travel in Northumberland.**
  - **£6.80 adult travel across Northumberland, Tyne & Wear & County Durham** - includes bus, metro or Shields Ferry.
  - **£3 travel if you are 21 or under across Northumberland, Tyne & Wear & County Durham** - includes bus, metro or Shields Ferry.

There are options to claim a bus pass if you are of pension age or have a disability:

- **Apply for an older person's bus pass if you have reached State Pension age.**  
<https://northumberland.concessionarytravelpass.co.uk/BusPass/login-or-register?ReturnUrl=%2FBusPas>

- **[Check if you can apply for a disabled person's bus pass.](https://beta.northumberland.gov.uk/transport/concessionary-travel)**

<https://beta.northumberland.gov.uk/transport/concessionary-travel>

## Train travel savings

You can save 1/3rd on rail journeys with a rail card:

**[Find out more about Railcards on the National Rail website.](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/tickets-railcards-and-offers/railcards/)**

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/tickets-railcards-and-offers/railcards/>

- **[Check if you can get a Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card on the National Rail website.](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/tickets-railcards-and-offers/railcards/)**

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## Cabinet approve additional support for people with a terminal illness

People with rapidly progressing terminal conditions, can now access non means tested funding up to £6,500 to pay for urgently needed home adaptations.

The scheme approved in Cabinet today, will enable people in the above situations to access a level of Disabled Facilities Grant without the normal requirement to undertake a means test of their ability to contribute to the adaptations.

Northumberland County Councillor Wendy Pattison, Portfolio Holder for Caring for Adults, said: "People who are already dealing with severely disabling degenerative conditions should not have the adaptations they urgently need delayed by red tape.

"This grant would be enough to cover the cost of an adaptation such as a level access shower, a stairlift, or a disabled access ramp, which could make a significant difference to someone's quality of life and independence.

"People in that situation are already given the highest priority for an assessment by an occupational therapist, but the means test can be an unwelcome source of delay.

"I would encourage anyone in this situation who needs an urgent adaptation to speak to their occupational therapist now."

The Council already has a policy to provide additional support in special circumstances where the means test for a DFG would otherwise make it difficult or impossible for someone to afford adaptations which they need.

The scheme approved this week extends the circumstances where a discretionary grant can be made.

## Community events



Meet and chat with experts about the issues that really matter to you, in your area.

This winter, our Northumberland Communities Together team will be out and about across the county taking part in a range of community events organised by some of our [amazing partners](#).

Please note, not all partners will be in attendance at every event. However, if you have something specific you would like us to discuss and attend in your areas please email [NCT@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:NCT@northumberland.gov.uk) or call [01670 620015](tel:01670620015) between 9am to 6pm, seven days a week.

### ITEM 13: PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25

Members are reminded that the Parish Council is required to submit a precept request for the financial year 2024-25 to the County Council by the end of January 2023.

In order to assist Members in deciding an appropriate precept level, it is also necessary for the Council to agree a budget for the forthcoming financial year.

It is expected that the Parish Council will finish the current financial year with approximately £8,500 remaining in the bank account.

The below offers a guide on the proposed expenditure for the forthcoming financial year:

<b>Item of expenditure</b>	<b>Expected expenditure</b>
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	£500.00
NALC subscription and website	£170.00
Stationery and printing	£300.00
Hall hire	£288.00
Planting and blooming up the parish	£1,000.00
EJBC request for precept	£215.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,443.00</b>

Of the remaining £8,500 from this current financial year, £3,000 needs to be retained for general reserves.

<b>DECISION REQUIRED</b>	For Members to formally agree a budget for the financial year 2024-25
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## **ITEM 14: PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT REQUEST 2024/25**

### **Budget**

Please refer to Item 13 for consideration of budget priorities for 2024/2025.

### **Information on Council Tax base**

Council Tax base is calculated by taking the number of houses in the parish area, allocating a weight to them based on their council tax banding and adding up the total of the weighted households. For example, higher council tax band properties carry a higher weighting and lower council tax base properties carry a lower council tax weighting. The Council Tax Base can therefore fluctuate from year to year based on the number of properties in each area. For example, council tax base will increase if any new houses have been built and the occupants have started to pay council tax but may decrease if for example any houses have been demolished in an area or have moved into another parish following a community governance review.

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.

The current Band D charge for the Parish Council is £67.13. If the Parish Council agrees to maintain the current Band D precept charge, this would generate a precept of £10,168.85. The precept for the current financial year is also £10,311.00.

### **External funding**

In addition to the precept request, the Parish Council has successfully acquired external funding over and above the amount precepted for each year for at least the last 4 years; for instance, the LEADER grant, the Transparency Fund, the Locality grant, funding from the Local County Councillor Wendy Pattison, voluntary contributions towards the precept, Northern Powergrid, Platinum Jubilee, etc.

### **Precept request**

The precept request must be submitted to Northumberland County Council by the end of January 2024.

<b>DECISION REQUIRED</b>	Councillors are asked to consider the above information and decide on a precept level for the financial year 2024-25.
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