

**DRAFT Minutes of the Craster Parish meeting held at 18:30pm on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 in Craster Village Hall.**

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

**Also in attendance:** 8 members of the public, Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Robin McCartney, Neil Snowdon and David Potter (NCC Highways).

**Agenda**

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

The Chair welcomed all those in attendance and thanked members of the public for attending tonight's annual parish meeting.

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

The Minutes of the annual parish meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

The Chair provided the following annual report to the parish meeting on the work of the Parish Council:

- I would like to begin by thanking all of my fellow Parish Councillors, our County Councillor Wendy, external stakeholders and local residents for their work and support in our community over the last number of years. I was delighted to be re-elected as Chair of the Parish Council once again this month and to represent a community who – despite the significant challenges of Covid, Storm Arwen and more – have really come together to create a better Craster and Dunstan for all.
- 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. Most especially, I would like to thank everyone involved in the enormous work of stopping a wholly inappropriate development at Dunstan House from taking place – this application had hung over the heads of residents for two years and would have had a hugely detrimental impact on this village. We sent an important message to developers that day and it was especially good to see the heritage of Dunstan shine through on this. I would particularly thank our Parish Clerk and Dunstan residents who worked tirelessly to prevent this.
- It is also wonderful to see that our contractor Steve Tenant has recently carried out improvements to both the Cinder Path and Charlie's path in Craster. Our open space is valued by all and I was so pleased to receive such positive feedback about Steve's work on these paths.
- I would also like to thank Steve for the work he does in maintaining a number of grass verges in our parish, along with Steve's work the flowers

we and organisations such as the WI planted along the verges make a welcome introduction into our village.

- The Parish Council has grasped the thorny nettle issue of parking in recent years and has done all it can alongside colleagues at NCC to address this issue. As we are about to hear this evening, the barrels are due to go and a new permanent scheme is being proposed by Highways which the Parish Council supports. I would however like to pay tribute to the work carried out by both Margaret and Allan Brooks on the barrels to the entrance of the village. Margaret and Allan have worked tirelessly to create a beautiful entrance into our village, in addition to the work they do in the church garden – where our community would be without them, I do not know.
- Last year the Parish Council launched an appeal to local holiday lets in the parish towards the solar panels and Tesla battery to the Hall. This yielded over £3,000 towards this project and part-funded the delivery of this scheme.
- The remaining funding came from Northern Powergrid Foundation and I would like to thank our Parish Clerk but most especially Jackie Reeves for all their work on this project; working together with the Community Trust has been a real delight which has brought enormous benefit to our community. I know our MP was delighted to see this at her recent visit to Craster.  
Thanks to Jackie's work, the running costs for this Hall are greatly reduced, the energy consumed is more sustainable and crucially the Hall now offers a place of sanctuary during power outages; something we saw earlier this year and I would like to thank everyone involved in ensuring that the Hall was opened to support our residents.
- This work with Northern Powergrid was supplemented by our Clerk's hard won campaign to ensure that every resident of our community received an automatic £70 payment in compensation from power outages caused by recent storms.
- Earlier this year, we launched our appeal once more and are now able to purchase a second defibrillator in our parish, at Dunstan outside the Cottage Inn. This is a life-saving piece of equipment and adds to the defibrillator we provide in Craster.
- I would also like to thank June and Michael Drage for their excellent work in helping to clear the tree debris to the entrance of the village and turning this into an eco-solution. We are exceptionally grateful for all of your efforts on this.
- The Parish Council has agreed to freeze the precept once again this financial year, recognising the ongoing impact of increasing costs of living on residents.

- It was also brilliant to see the community come together as part of national celebrations for the Jubilee and Coronation events – exceptionally important moments in our nation’s history with a bench overlooking the sea to act as a permanent reminder of Her Majesty’s final year as our Monarch for 70 years. A big thank you to everyone for your work on this.
- As you are all aware, the Parish Council has been leading on the campaign to achieve mobile phone signal to Craster and Dunstan and we will hopefully have a positive update on this later in the meeting.
- The Parish Council has had two collection boxes introduced in Craster and this has generated an income from visitors of over £900 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 we would like to see the funds spent – the funding has already gone to support extra bulbs and bloomage in the parish, a contribution to the Harbour as well as hot water bottles for residents in the winter during this energy crisis. A big thank you to everyone involved in 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 is a great asset to our community. Opened by Lord Howick last year, it is really wonderful to see this path being so well-used and I’d like to thank those volunteers at Coastal Care who helped to rebuild the stone wall adjoining this path for their excellent work and at next to no cost to the parish.
- 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.

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

The Clerk provided an update on the proposed mobile mast for Craster and Dunstan. The Clerk began by confirming that the company Atlas Group has now agreed to take on the project to deliver a new mobile phone mast for the parish area and that a planning application would be submitted in the near future and the mast is proposed to be sited in the quarry car park.

The Clerk advised that there had been extensive discussion on this topic at Parish Council meetings and the Parish Council fully supports this initiative and the parish area finally receiving a mobile phone signal. The Clerk also advised that he would be liaising with the AONB to seek their support for the new mast and hoped that they would also support this proposal at planning stage.

The Clerk advised that he had undertaken a site visit with Mark Shaw at the Atlas Group as well as the Highways Section Manager for the area in order to discuss the proposals for the mast in more detail. The Clerk confirmed that NCC representatives seemed content with the plans as they were proposed to them.

Members of the public present at the meeting thanked the Parish Council for their extensive work on this initiative and advised that they hoped that the villages could achieve mobile phone signal in the near future.

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

The Chair welcomed Robin McCartney, Neil Snowdon and David Potter to the parish meeting and thanked them for attending today to present the plans for the new traffic gateway scheme to Craster village. Neil began by advising that NCC were aware that there is significant public interest in achieving a more permanent entrance to the village which both encouraged use of the quarry car park and mitigated as many vehicles as possible from entering the village. NCC are aware that displaced and inconsiderate parking are major issues in Craster.

Robin and Neil presented the plans to the parish meeting and members of the public expressed their support generally for the scheme.

A member of the public expressed concerns about the additional lighting from the lighting columns proposed as part of the scheme and felt that this would be inappropriate in an AONB area with a Northumberland dark skies policy in place too. It was suggested that the lights be switched off post-midnight and NCC officers agreed to look into this.

A number of residents raised the concern of pedestrians walking in the middle of the road, particularly when walking to the car park from Craster village and felt that more needed to be done to either promote the use of the footpath on the left-hand side coming out of the village (presently grassed over) or else encourage the use of the permanent footpath on the other side of the road. NCC representatives expressed their surprise that members of the public were walking on the road in spite of the footpath being in place and advised that they would look into this. NCC representatives advised that the scheme would hopefully promote the use of the footpath over the road from the quarry car park and advised that they would monitor this once the scheme is introduced.

NCC representatives advised that they are aiming to have the works to the scheme commencing from February 2024.

The Chair thanked Robin, Neil and David for their presentations and the meeting **agreed** to support the scheme as presented.

## **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  
(15<sup>th</sup> May 2024)**