

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 21st November 2024 – 6:30pm via Zoom

Councillors present:

Chair: Martin Smith

Parish Council members: Margaret Brooks, Michael Craster, Ann Fettis, Allan Gregory and Derek Moss

Also present: Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wendy Pattison and 9 members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

None received

2. Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest in application 24/03615/FUL and left the room as and when this application was discussed.

3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 17th October 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2024 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters arising

The Clerk and the Chair took the opportunity to thank former Councillor Nick Ringrose for his service as a Parish Councillor in Craster. The Clerk particularly thanked former Councillor Ringrose for his expertise and support in his role as an EJBC representative of the Parish Council.

5. Public participation

Mrs Jackie Reeves advised that the grit bins near the Hall were in a poor condition, with rubble and no grit. She suggested the grit bins locally need an overhaul as many are compacted. The Clerk advised that he would contact the relevant officer at NCC to arrange for this to be reviewed.

Mrs Helen Chamberlain requested a dog poop bin near the hall, as there has been an issue with dog waste along that route. The council discussed options like a dedicated bin or signage directing people to use the existing green bin by the hall.

Mrs Marion Gallon suggested the council do an audit of all the bins in the parish, as many have broken locks or are being left open, leading to litter issues. Marion also requested an additional directional sign for the castle.

Members **agreed** to do a bin audit with the Clerk in the new year and decide then on the best solution for a dog waste bin.

Mrs Fiona Robson raised issues with the disabled toilet at the former TIC site; noting the emergency cable is too high and the toilet seat did not fit properly. She asked the Council to report these issues to the County Council and the Clerk confirmed that he would look into this.

6. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

County Councillor Wendy Pattison reported that she had recently travelled to Berwick and found the roads there to be completely clear of snow, while Craster and the surrounding area have been hit much harder. Wendy advised that she had reported the need for gritting in Craster, Embleton, and other areas to the relevant authorities.

Wendy advised that for issues with County Council-owned grit bins, the person to contact is Jonathan Park, who has taken over from Mitch Young. He can arrange for bins to be refilled or replaced if needed. In relation to the matters relating to the bins, the Parish Council purchased a few years ago, Wendy expressed disappointment that the County Council staff may not be properly maintaining and locking them. Wendy suggested speaking to Bob Hodgson about ensuring the bins are being cared for.

7. Proposals to NCC Assets relating to the procurement process for the former TIC building and associated matters following recent risk assessment meeting

The Chair reported that, following the recent risk assessment meeting, the Parish Council had decided not to pursue taking on a lease or head lease for the former TIC building. Instead, the Parish Council had agreed to propose to Northumberland County Council that they put the building on the open market, allowing any interested parties to submit expressions of interest.

The Chair also reported that the Parish Council had also agreed they would like to be involved in the procurement decision-making process, to ensure the outcome benefits the community.

Additionally, the Parish Council discussed supporting one of the existing local businesses that has to regularly re-tender for their lease, by advocating to the County Council to review and potentially extend the lease term.

Following the Chair's report, Members unanimously **agreed** not to take on the TIC building directly, but to work with the County Council to facilitate an open procurement process and support existing local businesses in the village.

8. Planning for events over the Christmas period

The Parish Council discussed plans for the Christmas lights switch-on and movie night event on December 7th. Mr Michael Robson volunteered to put up the Christmas tree, whilst the Chair agreed to handle the Christmas lights.

Councillor Derek Moss offered to provide the mince pies for the event. Members agreed to that the Christmas light switch on should take place at 6pm, followed by a Christmas movie screening in the hall at 7pm. The Parish Council agreed this would be a good opportunity to combine the lights switch-on with the regular monthly film night, creating a festive community event.

The Clerk offered to promote the event on Facebook to encourage attendance. Members coordinated the various volunteer roles and logistics to put on the Christmas lights and movie night event on December 7th.

9. Update on Spring planting project at South Acres

Members discussed potentially delaying the planned spring bulb planting at South Acres due to the poor weather forecast for the originally proposed weekend. There were concerns

that with the forecasted high winds and rain, it may not be feasible to plant the bulbs as intended.

Members considered alternative options, such as having a contractor like Steve Tenant handle the planting, rather than relying on volunteers. There was also discussion about potentially involving the local school children in the planting, but concerns were raised about the weather conditions being unsuitable.

Ultimately, the Parish Council **agreed** to get a quote from Steve Tenant to handle the planting, rather than trying to coordinate volunteers, given the weather challenges.

10. Publication of the AONB's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Clerk presented the key points from the recently published AONB character appraisal document, which provides a detailed assessment of Craster's built environment and heritage. The Clerk noted that the appraisal identifies a number of non-designated heritage assets within the parish that contribute to Craster's unique character.

Mrs Fiona Robson raised concerns that residents need to be made aware of the implications of living in a Conservation Area. Members agreed with Mrs Robson's points, stating that the AONB will be holding a drop-in session for residents to discuss the potential Conservation Area designation and its impacts.

The Parish Council agreed that providing this information to residents is important, so they can be informed and prepared to ask questions at the upcoming drop-in session.

The Chair clarified that they are not the decision-makers on whether a Conservation Area is designated and the Parish Council is simply facilitating the dialogue between the AONB and the community.

Overall, Members recognised the need to ensure residents are well-informed about the conservation area proposal and its potential effects.

11. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative

Councillor Margaret Brooks, the Parish Council's representative on the Embleton Joint Burial Committee, reported that the diocese had refused to consecrate the additional areas of the cemetery that the committee wanted. As a result, the committee is now going back to their solicitor to explore other options for moving forward with the cemetery expansion. Councillor Margaret Brooks noted that the Committee has not yet had a meeting to discuss this latest development, but she will continue to represent the parish council on the Committee.

The Clerk acknowledged that he has received communication from Terry Howells, the Chair of the Embleton Joint Burial Committee, indicating that they do not need to appoint a second Parish Council representative at this time, as there are only two meetings left before the upcoming elections. The Parish Council **agreed** to maintain Councillor Margaret Brooks as the sole representative on the Embleton Joint Burial Committee for the remainder of the current term of the Council.

12. Report from Craster Community Trust representative (including discussion on play park lease)

Mrs Jackie Reeves, representing the Craster Community Trust, provided an update on the work being done at the play area. Jackie advised that much of the play equipment is over 25 years old and in need of replacement, so the Trust is having to spend a significant amount of money on new equipment.

Specifically, the cradle swings and their framework are being replaced, at a cost of over £4,000, with the work planned for the coming weeks.

The Trust is also holding a meeting tomorrow with around 15 people attending, and they have decorations going up in the hall next Thursday.

The Chair thanked Jackie for her report and the Trust for their excellent work in the playpark.

13. Planning matters:

Update on 24/00121/FUL | Construction of two holiday lets (Sui Generis) with associated landscaping. | Land North And East Of Dunstan House Dunstan Northumberland.

The Clerk provided an update on the Dunstan House planning application, which has been called in for consideration by the County Council's planning committee.

The Clerk explained that the planning officer had initially been minded to refuse the application, but has now decided to take it to committee instead and could not commit to what his recommended decision would be as yet as he had requested further information from the applicant.

The Parish Council **agreed** to maintain its objection to this application and await further information from the applicant on this scheme.

24/03615/FUL | Replacement rear elevation conservatory | The Woodlands Dunstan Village Dunstan Northumberland NE66 3SZ.

The Chair left the room whilst this application was being discussed and therefore took no part in the discussion or vote on this proposal. It was **agreed** to note this application.

14. Items for next Agenda

The Chair reminded Members to contact the Parish Clerk should they wish to have an item included in the next Agenda.

15. Date and time of next meeting

16th January 2025 – 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
(Thursday 16th January 2025)**

