

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 19th September 2024 – 6:30pm in the Craster village Hall

Councillors present:

Chair: Martin Smith

Parish Council members: Margaret Brooks, Michael Craster, Ann Fettis, Allan Gregory and Nick Ringrose.

Also present: Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wendy Pattison and 10 members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor M Green.

2. Co-option of a new Parish Councillor – Mr Derek Moss

The Chair welcomed Mr Derek Moss to the meeting. Derek advised that he wished to be considered for co-option on to the Parish Council.

Derek set out his experience, highlighting his work in running multiple businesses over several years, with his latest venture being Proctors Stead Caravan Park near Craster. Derek advised that he and his family had a love of motorhomes and had fallen in love with the area some years ago. Derek advised that it was through his love of this type of holiday which had encouraged him to purchase the Caravan Park.

Derek advised that he is also Chair of St. Benedict's Hospice and also volunteered as a Senior Magistrate. Derek advised that he was keen to work and make a difference for the local community in Craster and Dunstan.

The Chair proposed Derek's co-option and this was seconded by Councillor A Fettis and unanimously **agreed** by all Members.

3. Declarations of interest

None received.

4. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 23rd July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2024 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

5. Matters arising

The Clerk highlighted that he and Councillor M Brooks had awarded Councillors E Pearson and M Craster with the Freedom of the Parish Award earlier today and showed the photographs of this to the meeting. Members warmly welcomed this news and congratulated Councillors E Pearson and M Craster on over 80 years of service to the community.

The Clerk also advised that the Parish Council's new fingerpost had now been received and would be installed at the top of Whin Hill. The Parish Council warmly welcomed this news as the fingerpost would act as a useful sign to the car park, village, harbour, church and hall.

The Clerk also advised that he had been approached by NCC Highways officers to explain that the Parish Council had not been formally consulted on its Local Transport Plan (LTP) submission for 2025/26 and that there is an option to respond to this by the beginning of October. Members considered their priorities for 2025/26 and unanimously agreed to submit the following to the LTP for Craster/ Dunstan next year:

1. Extension of the double yellow lines up Tower Bank all the way up to the Tower itself.

2. Full re-surfacing of Heugh Wynd (Craster) as well as the short stretch of road at Windyside Hill outside the Stableyard and including around the entry into Cottage Inn.
3. Introduction of a public footpath down the North side of Smithy Bank from Hemmel House.

6. Public participation

The Clerk advised that he had been approached by a local resident in relation to a request for a road closure in Craster on Remembrance Day in order to avoid vehicles entering the area during the wreath-laying part of the day.

The Clerk highlighted that the Remembrance Day event was not under the remit of the Parish Council but advised that the cost of a formal road closure would be expensive. Councillor M Craster advised that he would look into this aspect of the day and perhaps have a member of his family stationed at the entrance to the village as an advisory that the event was taking place.

Mrs Marion Gallon asked if a fingerpost could be installed on the trail to Howick. Councillor M Brooks advised that she would be discussing this with the Wildlife Trust as this would be on their land.

Mrs Marjorie Taylor expressed concerns about the overall appearance of the village, in particular the entrance to the village where the barrels are located and highlighted that a number of barrels are in a terrible state of repair. The Clerk advised that he has asked for these broken barrels to be removed.

Mr Kev Brown advised that he and the Clerk had recently met with Highways Officers and the RNLI is presently looking to install a new flashing sign to the entrance of the village indicating to vehicles that the lifeboat is launching. Members expressed their wholehearted support for this and asked to be kept

7. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

Councillor W Pattison provided a report to the Council on recent matters since the last Full Council meeting.

Councillor W Pattison advised that she was aware that the County Council has received an Expression of Interest from Mr Andy Grant for the Tourist Information Centre building. However, Councillor Pattison advised that she had recently received a written update on this matter and read this out as follows from NCC Officers:

"The Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the former Craster TIC was received and is being considered by the team in accordance with the process highlighted on the NCC website. (Note this has recently been update and improved to ensure clarity and transparency). A response is overdue by 10 days – awaiting a final consultee response.

If the EOI is supported, the applicant would be invited to make a full application, but at this time as Iain has highlighted there are (significant) concerns about the proposal with respect to CAT criteria. Key is that the former TIC would need to be operated to provide local services / benefit, not commercially.

If the EOI is supported, the full application process would be supported by the team, and if all the info is immediately available this would be processed as quickly as possible – Iain's 12–18-month timescale reflects the time normally taken by community groups in developing the necessary business case information and agreeing Heads of Terms.

There is a potential alternative (which I believe has been discussed) for the PC to take a lease at an agreed rate – reflecting either a community use or a more commercial position - with / without the associated Pipers pitch – but the value of that would need to be reflected

in the rent and supported by an independent valuation. This would make the PC responsible for the building – which they would be able to sub-let in accordance with the agreed terms – community use / commercial.

Ultimately the key point is whether this is to be Community Asset in accordance with the NCC policy or whether the PC want to take a lease and manage the property”

Members thanked Councillor Pattison for this update and advised that they would seek a follow-up meeting with Iain Hedley on this matter.

Councillor W Pattison also took the opportunity to highlight that her 9 Parishes meeting would be taking place on Thursday 26th September and that special guest Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of Northumberland County Council, would be in attendance and Members and the public could put any questions they like to the Leader.

The Chair thanked Councillor Pattison for this update.

8. Update on the new traffic arrangement to the entrance of Craster village

The Clerk advised that he and Councillor W Pattison had met with Highways Officers earlier today to confirm that the new entrance scheme would be delivered by October and this had been confirmed on-site.

The Officers advised that this is fully funded through the Council’s capital programme and the hope was that this would be a further deterrent for displaced and inconsiderate parking and promote use of the quarry car park.

The Clerk also indicated that the Council has approached the Parish Council to seek approval for grass cutting of the new verges to the entrance of the quarry car park as well as planting flowers, etc. here to improve the look of the village. Members unanimously **agreed** to fund this aspect of the new entrance and to seek agreement from Stephen Tennant the Council’s contractor for carrying out these works.

9. Report on a proposed heritage blue plaques scheme

The Clerk presented a proposal for the Parish Council to launch a heritage blue plaque scheme.

The Clerk reminded Members that each year the Parish Council launches an appeal to all holiday let owners for a capital project and he proposed this as this year’s project as a way of highlighting significant heritage and engendering further the civic pride in the community.

The Clerk advised that he had delivered this scheme in City of Durham and this was a highly welcome community project where members of the public could nominate a person, place or event of significance and agreement to approve a blue plaque, subject to the landowner’s or building owner’s consent, could be made at a future Parish Council meeting.

Members expressed their approval of this scheme and felt that this should go out for a public nomination process. Members unanimously **agreed** to launch this project and also to seek funding from holiday let owners.

10. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative

Councillor M Brooks advised that the Committee intended to seek legal advice. Councillor M Brooks confirmed that the EJBC has sufficient funds in its reserves in order to fund this advice without drawing funds from the 3 Parish Councils involved with the EJBC. Members thanked Councillor M Brooks for this update and unanimously **approved** the EJBC to use its funds for this purpose.

11. Report from Craster Community Trust representative

Councillor M Craster provided a report to the Parish Council as the official CCT representative. Councillor M Craster advised that he was delighted to introduce the vicar to the CCT at its most recent meeting and thanked Trustees for offering such a warm welcome.

Councillor M Craster also highlighted that the Trust had arranged for a new projector to be installed in the Hall after the previous projector broke. Ms Jackie Reeves particularly welcomed this new piece of equipment and expressed the hope that this would be much appreciated by the various Hall users who can benefit from this.

Councillor M Craster also advised that the Trust is hoping to host its new Meet & Eat event on 18th October and encouraged everyone to get involved and attend this excellent event.

12. Update on the future of the Craster TIC

Members advised that they would be seeking a follow-up meeting with Iain Hedley following Councillor Pattison's report to Council.

13. Update on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal report by the AONB

The Clerk advised that the AONB is now hoping to host a public drop-in session in December this year and that he would be circulating more details of this in due course.

14. Update on the mobile phone mast project for the community

Members expressed their delight at the installation of the new mobile phone mast and the Clerk advised that they were still hoping to have the mobile network operators on board for November 2024. Members thanked the Clerk for his ongoing work on this project.

15. 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. Members **agreed** to maintain the Parish Council objection to this proposal.

Update on 24/02728/FUL | Proposed side (South) facing single storey extension| 2 Orchard Cottages Dunstan Village Dunstan Northumberland NE66 3TE. Members **unanimously approved** the response to the initial application and welcomed the amendments to the red line boundary of the plans.

24/02846/FUL | First floor extension including new window opening and dormer window| Quarry House 3 Norwell Brow Craster Alnwick Northumberland NE66 3TX. It was **agreed** to note this application.

16. Items for next Agenda

The Chair reminded Members to contact the Clerk should they wish to have any item added and discussed on the Agenda.

17. Date and time of next meeting

17th October 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,

Handwritten signature

**Chair of Craster Parish Council
(Thursday 17th October 2024)**