

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 16th January 2025 – 6:30pm via Zoom

Councillors present:

Chair: Martin Smith

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

Also present: Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wendy Pattison and 8 members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors M Craster and M Green.

2. Declarations of interest

None received.

3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on 21st November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2024 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters arising

The Clerk advised that whilst the entrance works to the village have been significantly delayed, the Parish Council has now received confirmation that this work will be commencing on 17th February and that the barrels will be removed.

The Chair also took the opportunity to congratulate Dr Sarah Green – a Craster residents – on her OBE in this year's New Year's Honours List. The Chair remarked that this was a fantastic achievement.

5. Public participation

- A resident asked if Craster could invest in some new and better Christmas lights for this year's Christmas as she felt that the existing lights were not very good quality compared with other areas of the county. The Council confirmed that this would be done this year.
- A resident also raised a concern about the condition of a number of footpaths around the village and asked if this could be looked into by the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that he would ask Stephen Ternent to look into this for the resident.
- A resident also highlighted that a wall had failed next to the coastguard's hut and asked if the Parish Council could look into this urgently. The Clerk advised that he would look into this immediately.
- A resident also raised concerns about the condition of 3 of the public bins around Craster and asked if these could either be repaired or replaced. The Clerk highlighted that the proposed budget for 2025/26 included provision for at least 3 new bins and he would look to have these either repaired or replaced in the new financial year.
- A resident also asked why Tower Bank wasn't gritted during the recent poor weather. The Clerk advised that he had also raised this with the officer responsible for this at NCC and had been advised that this was due to access and the lack of turning circle once at the top of the Tower Bank as the lorry could not go beyond the arch at the top of the Bank. The Clerk advised that he would contact the officer again as it was agreed that there is sufficient space for the lorry to turn at the top of the bank.

6. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

Councillor W Pattison highlighted the new holiday home tax rules recently introduced by NCC and advised that the Parish Council could potentially generate more revenue to support community initiatives. The Parish Council acknowledged this point and the Clerk highlighted

that this had already resulted in an increase in this coming financial year's tax base for Craster parish.

7. To consider the results of the recent residents' consultation

The Chair took the opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the Parish Council's recent public consultation with residents and for setting out the priorities for our community over the next few years.

The Chair advised how wonderful it is to receive this positive feedback and to hear how highly residents appreciate the work of the Parish Council. The Chair also remarked that our community is a wonderful place to live, work and visit and the sense of community spirit and amazing civic pride simply would not be possible without the extraordinary voluntary work of so many.

The Chair advised that he was particularly heartened to hear of residents' appreciation for the Craster Trail and the new mobile phone mast in the quarry car park; both spearheaded by the Parish Council.

Members particularly noted that residents' priorities focused heavily on the physical well being and enhancement of the area and **agreed** that this should form the main part of the Council's work from May 2025 onwards.

The Chair advised that he would be drafting a response to each of the main points raised as part of the consultation process and this could be shared via the Parish Council website.

8. To agree the Parish Council's budget for 2025-26

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council is required to submit a precept request for the financial year 2025-26 to the County Council by the end of January 2025. 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.

The Clerk advised that it is expected that the Parish Council will finish the current financial year with approximately £6,000 remaining in the bank account and it was also recommended that £5,000 still be retained as a general reserve.

Members carefully considered the Parish Council's budget for 2025/26 and **agreed** the following expenditure for the forthcoming financial year:

Item of expenditure	Expected expenditure
Staffing costs (including on-costs following changes to employer NI contributions (previously exempt))	£9,600.00
Insurance	£250.00
Wifi and telephone to the Hall	£400.00
RBL Appeal	£20.00
Christmas tree	£180.00
Cutting of grass verges - incl. Tower Bank and Dunstan. Entrance to the village and (possibly playpark)	£1,800.00
NALC subscription and website	£170.00
Stationery and printing	£100.00
Hall hire	£288.00
Community events	£500.00
EJBC request for precept	£0.00
Replacement of bins	£1,200.00

Greening/ planting budget	£500.00
Total	£15,008.00

In agreeing the Council's budget, Members also **agreed** to share the costs of grass cutting at the playpark with the Community Trust on a 50/50 basis. In addition, Members **agreed** to request free hire of the Hall from the Community Trust. The Clerk advised that he would discuss these matters with the Trust.

9. To agree the Parish Council's precept request for 2025-26

The Clerk advised that the 2025/26 Tax Base is 196.09. The 2024/25 Craster Parish Council Tax Base was calculated at 151.48. Our Tax Base has therefore increased by 44.61.

The Clerk reminded Members that the precept request must be submitted to Northumberland County Council by the end of January 2025. The Parish Council's current precept charge for Band D currently sits at £67.12 and generated a total income of £10,168 for the Parish Council in 2024/25.

In view of the budget commitments agreed under item 8, Members **agreed** to increase the total precept to £15,000 and thus the Band D charge to £76.50.

10. To consider the nominations for a heritage blue plaque

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has received two nominations for blue plaques as part of its heritage project; these include a plaque for Leonard Evetts (famous designer and stain glass artist) whose last work was to the South window of St. Peter's Church as well as a plaque for Little Adam's House.

Members unanimously **agreed** to fund these two new plaques, entirely from funding received as part of the appeal to holiday let owners in the parish, and delegated the organisation of these plaques and their installation to the Clerk.

11. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representative

Councillor M Brooks advised that the EJBC had not met since the last Parish Council meeting and therefore there was no update.

12. Report from Craster Community Trust representative

In Councillor Craster's absence, Mrs Marion Gallon provided a report from the Craster Community Trust.

Marion advised that, in this current financial year alone, the Trust had spent £3,275 on the upkeep of the playpark and a further £750 on the grass cutting.

In addition, the Trust is looking to limit its Meet and Eat events to a specific themed event only moving forwards. For example, it was hoped that the Trust could host an afternoon tea for the upcoming VE day event. Marion advised that she was hoping to find out more about any grant funding available for this. The Clerk advised that he would help Marion with this endeavour.

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 advised that the case officer has now confirmed that the application will likely be going to the next meeting of the Local Area Planning Committee on 20th February. Members **agreed** to be represented at that meeting by the Clerk.

24/04441/FUL | First Floor Extension | Quarry House 3 Norwell Brow Craster NE66 3TX. It was **agreed** to note this application.

24/04252/FUL | Change of use of existing agricultural building from grain store to livestock building | Land North West Of Dunstan Steads Farm Embleton Northumberland. It was **agreed** to object to this application. The Clerk **agreed** to draft the response to 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

20th February 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 20th February 2025)**