

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CRASTER PARISH COUNCIL
Thursday 20th November 2025 – 6:30pm via Zoom

Councillors present:

Chair: Councillor Martin Smith

Parish Council members: Councillors Derek Moss, Iain Brown, Michael Robson, Marjory Taylor, Sophie Heslop, Ann Fettis, Robert Cornall and Allan Gregory.

Also present: Adam Shanley (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wendy Pattison and 4 members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

None received.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda. Councillor Iain Brown had previously declared an interest in planning application 24/04252/FUL and indicated that he would absent himself from the meeting for that item. No further declarations of interest were received.

3. Confirmation of the minutes for the meeting held on Thursday 16th October 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the reference to "bats" in the play park being amended to "moles".

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk provided a detailed update on matters arising from the previous meeting. He thanked Members for attending the recent short-notice site meeting with the National Landscape Team regarding village signage, noting that despite time pressures, the meeting had been productive. Agreement had been reached on the overall design approach for new signage, including improved fingerposts and revised information boards, with additional destinations such as Piper's Pitch included and updated naming for local businesses incorporated.

The Clerk reported that the information board at the Quarry Car Park would be recycled, with further discussion required on its future location. He also confirmed that a new sign had been installed at the bottom of Tower Bank, thanking Councillor Ann Fettis and the Chair for their prompt action in arranging this, following a resident suggestion.

With regard to grass cutting and bulb planting, the Clerk reported that the contractor had completed the final cut of the season and that the Parish Council had paid its agreed contribution towards play park maintenance. Bulb planting was progressing well, with the Chair having taken delivery of bulbs and undertaken significant planting work in partnership with others.

The Clerk provided an update on the website and email migration, confirming that arrangements had been made with HugoFox for a new .gov.uk email system, with transition expected in the coming month. Outstanding queries remained regarding data protection and long-term access to historic emails to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Finally, the Clerk reported on the casual vacancy on the Parish Council following the passing of a former councillor. He confirmed that no by-election had been triggered and that, subject to formal confirmation from Northumberland County Council Electoral Services, the vacancy would

be filled by co-option at the January 2026 meeting. Two expressions of interest had already been received, and Members were reminded of the co-option procedure. The Council noted the update and **agreed** the proposed approach.

5. Public participation

The Chair invited comments from members of the public. No formal representations were made at this stage, though residents were advised they would be recognised by the Chair if matters arose later in the agenda.

6. Correspondence received by the Parish Council

The Clerk reported on correspondence concerning efforts to reduce inappropriate traffic through the village. He expressed appreciation to English Heritage for amending the Dunstanburgh Castle postcode on their website to direct visitors to the Quarry Car Park. While this did not resolve all sat-nav routing issues, it represented a positive step, and further engagement with mapping providers was ongoing through English Heritage officers.

The Clerk also noted that a recently proposed tourist accommodation development in Dunstan had been withdrawn by the applicant. The Clerk advised that he had received some correspondence on this matter.

7. Update on signage coming into Craster Village

The Council considered a detailed update on progress with village-entry signage. The Clerk reported that formal requests, including photographic evidence, had been submitted to Northumberland County Council Highways seeking "No public parking beyond this point" signage at the village entrance. Despite repeated follow-up, no response had been received from the responsible officer.

Members expressed frustration at the lack of engagement and discussed escalation options. County Councillor Wendy Pattison advised that a formal Member Inquiry could be submitted to secure a response, or alternatively, officers could be invited to attend a future Parish Council meeting. Members also discussed the possibility of raising the matter at a County Council meeting through a formal petition or public question.

The Council resolved to escalate the matter through County Council channels and authorised the Chair to represent the Parish Council if required. The Council **agreed** to pursue this course of action.

8. Update following correspondence regarding Craster public toilets

The Clerk reported further correspondence with senior County Council officers regarding the condition of Craster public toilets. He advised that the issue had been acknowledged at a senior level, with assurances that the matter was being actively investigated. Members reiterated concerns regarding public safety, visitor experience and reputational damage to the village. The Council **agreed** to continue pressing for a timely and permanent resolution and to monitor progress closely.

9. Report by County Councillor Wendy Pattison

County Councillor Wendy Pattison provided a comprehensive update on County Council matters, including forthcoming changes to waste and recycling services. She explained the introduction of a third household bin for glass and mixed recycling, expected to be rolled out from autumn 2026, subject to infrastructure upgrades. Councillor Pattison outlined funding constraints, particularly affecting rural areas, and responded to Members' questions regarding holiday accommodation, bottle banks and service equity.

The Council thanked Councillor Pattison for her detailed report, which was noted.

10. Report from Embleton Joint Burial Committee representatives

The Council discussed matters relating to the Embleton Joint Burial Committee. Members were informed that no recent meeting had taken place but that a meeting was scheduled for early December. The Clerk raised concerns regarding a newly indicated request for precept funding from participating parish councils, explaining the historical context and expressing concern at the sudden emergence of a funding shortfall.

Members discussed the management of the burial house tenancy, rent levels, use of managing agents and reserve levels. It was agreed that Parish representatives would seek further detailed financial information before any commitment was considered. The Council **agreed** that further clarification was required before any decision could be made.

11. Report from Craster Community Trust representative

The Council received a brief update on Community Trust matters, including progress on acoustic improvements to the Memorial Hall, which had been delayed due to insurance issues. Members noted the update and thanked the Trust for its ongoing work.

12. Planning for Christmas light switch-on and event

The Chair reported that a working meeting for Christmas preparations had taken place and that arrangements were progressing well. The Christmas tree had been ordered, new lights procured and the switch-on event confirmed for Sunday 30 November. The Council **agreed** to proceed as planned.

13. Planning Matters

25/03196/COU | Change of use from former Tourist Information Office (Sui Generis) to a retail shop (Class E) selling food, gifts, alcohol etc during the day, and a bistro in the evening | Craster Quarry Car Park, Craster Tourist Information Centre West End Craster Northumberland NE66 3TW. Members **agreed** to support this application.

Update on 24/04252/FUL | Change of use of existing agricultural building from grain store to livestock building. (additional information received 13.03.2025) | Land North West of Dunstan Steads Farm Embleton Northumberland. Members **agreed** to maintain the Parish Council's objection to this application.

14. Items for next Agenda

Members were invited to submit items for inclusion on the January 2026 agenda.

15. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 15 January 2026 at 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
(15th January 2026)**