

# Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan

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## **Foreword**

This document provides an outline of the policies and strategies that the parish council will rely on to protect and nurture the unique and special environment of Cresswell Village and the rural and coastal setting in which it sits.

Members of the parish were canvassed for views via a questionnaire within our regular newsletter and the results of this were published on line and presented at a council meeting in autumn 2021.

Earlier drafts of this document have been made available on the parish council website for comment.

## 1. Introduction

### Background to Neighbourhood Planning

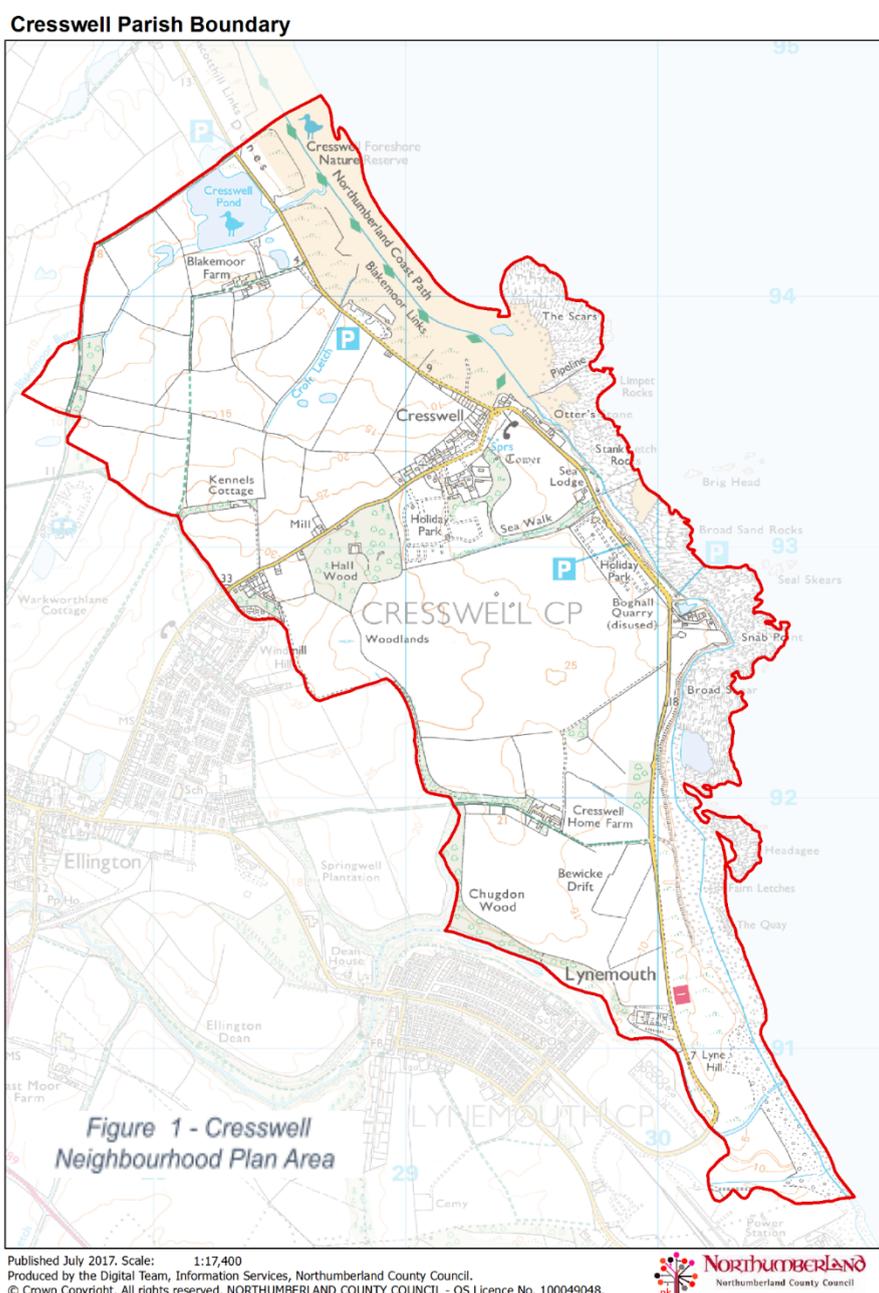
- 1.1 Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans are community-led, prepared by parish councils and in areas without parish councils they are prepared by neighbourhood forums. Cresswell Parish Council is preparing this neighbourhood plan. The purpose of neighbourhood plans is to create locally distinctive planning policies to manage and guide development within a defined neighbourhood area. They are important documents in the planning system because decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with planning policies, contained within the development plan, including those in a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood plans can also cover issues which are not related to the use and development of land. They can provide a useful document in which a parish council can establish priorities for action to improve their area. These are often referred to as 'community actions'. The main purpose of a neighbourhood plan, however, is to set policies for the use and development of land.
- 1.3 Once a neighbourhood plan has been examined by an independent examiner, agreed at referendum by the local community and adopted by Northumberland County Council, it will stand alongside the Northumberland Local Plan which was adopted in March 2022.
- 1.4 As they are part of the development plan, neighbourhood plans must be prepared in accordance with legal requirements. The way in which plans are prepared and the policies they contain are tested by an independent examiner who assesses whether the plan meets the 'basic conditions'. To ensure they are legally compliant, neighbourhood plans must:
  - Have regard to national planning policy and guidance – set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – 2020) and National Planning Practice Guidance;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan – which are contained within the Northumberland Local Plan;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development – that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; and
  - Be compatible with legal obligations – specifically strategic environmental assessment regulations, habitat regulations, human rights and other EU obligations (retained in law).

### Background to the Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.5 Cresswell Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning on 9 June 2022 (see figure 1). In advance of the designation of the area Cresswell Parish Council undertook a household survey during September and October 2021 to help inform the scope of the Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan (CNP). An initial draft CNP was prepared which was

informed by the issues identified by the local community and was available on the parish council website between June and November 2022 for comment, as well as being raised at parish council meetings. This CNP is designed to enable us to shape the development of our community over the next two decades giving special regard to its special and distinctive character, protecting the natural beauty and wildlife. The draft CNP covers the period to 2036, this aligns with the Northumberland Local Plan. During this period, the CNP will be reviewed and updated where required.

- 1.6 We understand that the plan cannot deal with excluded development which includes nationally significant infrastructure, minerals or waste development. We also recognise that issues such as unauthorised parking, litter and antisocial behaviour are not matters that can be influenced through planning policies and these issues are proposed to be addressed via community actions (see annex 1)



## **Next steps**

- 1.7 Following the end of the consultation period the responses will be reviewed to identify whether any modifications need to be made to the plan and its evidence base. The current timetable for the next stages are:
- Submission of the plan to Northumberland County Council for examination: spring 2023;
  - Consultation on the submission plan as per Regulation 14 will be undertaken with key bodies for a minimum of 6 weeks.: spring 2023;
  - Examination of the plan by an independent examiner: summer 2023;
  - Referendum: summer/ autumn 2023; and
  - Neighbourhood plan 'made' by Northumberland County Council: autumn 2023.

## 2. Background to Cresswell Parish

- 2.1 Cresswell Parish consists to a large extent of a small seaside village which lies at the southern end of the beautiful 7-mile sweep of Druridge Bay. It is predominantly residential but has two large caravan parks which welcome thousands of visitors each year. Residential development is essentially in an L shape with the village sloping down to the sea. It is surrounded by farmland and to the east the dunes of Druridge Bay.
- 2.2 The C110 is part of the Coast and Castles Cycle Route (National Cycle Route 1) which attracts cyclists year-round and the coastal path is a well signed walking route for visitors and residents alike. In addition, Cresswell is a popular bird watching area with Cresswell pond and bird hide nearby and the Druridge Bay Country Park less than 3 miles (5 km) away.
- 2.3 The Parish boundary stretches south beyond the mouth of the Lyne River and includes Cresswell Pond Nature reserve in the north and includes, somewhat anomalously, 6 dwellings in the eastern part of the Windmill Heights Estate, Ellington. Local farms are tenanted from the Crown Estates.
- 2.4 The placename 'Cresswell' is first attested in the Close Roll for 1234, where it appears as *Kereswell*. It appears as *Cressewell* in 1242 in the Book of Fees. The name means 'stream where water cress grew'.
- 2.5 There is a recently restored 15<sup>th</sup> century Pele Tower and St Bartholomew's Church, dating back to 1836, which welcomes worshippers from the surrounding villages.



The Pele Tower



St Bartholomew's Church

2.6 Within the Parish, there are: 13 listed buildings and 2 scheduled monuments:

- Listed buildings:
  - Grade II\* - Cresswell Tower (Pele Tower);
  - Grade II:
    - Home farmhouse, Cresswell Home Farm
    - Farm buildings and yard walls to north of Home Farm
    - Church of St Bartholomew
    - Fenham House
    - Old School House
    - Screen wall attached to south east corner of stable block at Cresswell Hall
    - Roadside wall from parish church to Old School House
    - Boundary wall to east of Cresswell Tower
    - Stable block of former Cresswell Hall
    - Gallery, 90m east of stables, Cresswell Hall
    - Stable and paddock walls to east of farm buildings, Cresswell Home Farm
    - Church Cottages, 1 and 2 Cresswell Village •
- Scheduled monuments – Cresswell Tower House and the Dovecote at Cresswell Home Farm

2.7 There are currently 74 entries on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER) for Cresswell Parish relating to non designated heritage assets these range from mineral deposits, remains of mediaeval settlements to world war 2 relics.

2.8 The population at the 2001 census was 237, by the 2011 census had dropped to 206 (2021 results awaited) but there are 181 on the electoral role and just over 100 dwellings. The 2011 census illustrated that there were 20 children (0-15 years), with 16 people aged 16-24, 117 people aged 25-64, 28 aged 65-74 and 25 over 75. The population has fallen slightly in recent years with a shift to an older population. There are only 4 households with dependent children ( Census 2021 (1).

2.9 The 2011 census (2) identified that within the parish there are 101 dwellings. There are

- 60 detached dwellings
- 18 Semi detached dwellings
- 21 terraced properties
- 2 flats

2.10 11 homes have no usual residents, which suggests they could be second or holiday homes. The number of private rented properties has doubled in the last 10 years

2.11 16 new homes have been added since 2016 (N.C.C data) and whilst interest has been expressed in developing new housing sites this has not been supported locally or there are constraints to development. There are several garden plots beside Blakemoor Links which are owned but currently have no permanent residential status.

2.12 The village has an ice cream shop, which is closed out of season, and a café just to the north of the village, open all year-round. There are two large caravan parks. There is no major commerce or industry and the working population commutes to work. Schools, shops and medical services are all in nearby villages and the local bus service provides a vital link to these. There is a village hall run by a charitable trust which offers small meeting and group facilities. Nearest major leisure facilities are in Morpeth, Ashington and Newbiggin.



The Village Hall

2.13 Cresswell Parish includes many international and national natural environment designations (see figure 2):

- Part of the Northumbria Coast Ramsar Conservation Wetlands and parts of the Northumbria Coast and Northumberland Marine Special Protection Areas
- Parts of the Northumberland Shore, Cresswell Ponds and the Cresswell and Newbiggin Shores Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Parts of the Coquet to St Mary's and Berwick to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zones;

Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan:

- Part of the Lyne Dene and Chugdon Woods Local Wildlife Site;
- Cresswell Dunes Local Nature Reserve;
- Cresswell Shore and Cresswell Pond Non Statutory Nature Reserves; and
- An area of ancient woodland to the south of the parish (at the boundary with Lynemouth Parish).



Figure 2-extract from the Local Plan policies map illustrating natural environment designations

### 3. Vision and Objectives

- 3.1 The vision sets out what Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve over the plan period to 2036. It informs all the plan objectives, draft planning policies and community actions.

<b>Vision for Cresswell in 2036</b>
<p>In 2036 Cresswell Parish will remain a tranquil and attractive place to live, while still being able to cater for visitors to our beautiful Northumberland Coastline.</p> <p>New developments will meet identified local need as well as respecting and valuing the historic, rural and seaside character of the village and the Parish as a whole.</p>

- 3.2 To deliver the vision, three objectives have been developed. These clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement with the local community and other stakeholders, as well as the evidence base supporting the plan. The draft planning policies and community actions should deliver the objectives.

<b>Objectives</b>
<p><b>Objective 1: Rich natural environment</b> Conserving and enhancing the tranquil and valued seaside/rural character of the parish.</p> <p><b>Objective 2: Distinctive built and historic environment</b> Ensuring that new development maintains and enhances local distinctiveness and contributes positively to the built and historic character of the parish.</p> <p><b>Objective 3: Sustainable Community</b> Ensuring the location, quantity and type of new development meets locally identified needs</p>

## **4. The Natural Environment**

- 4.1 The village is surrounded by fields and dunes and is developed in an L shape straddling Cresswell Road and the C110. The coastline is formed by rocky headlands, sandy bays. The local plan recognises that moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains is central to sustainable development and that contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment is a core planning principle. Biodiversity net gain can be provided through, for example, additional tree and hedgerow planting, incorporation of wildlife areas, links to wildlife areas, native planting, provision of nesting boxes for birds and bats, incorporating spaces in boundaries to allow hedgehog access between gardens and creating pond habitats.
- 4.2 The local plan contains several detailed policies to seek to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, particularly policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4 and ENV5.
- 4.3 Local plan policy ENV1 requires the character and significance of the distinctive and valued natural environment to be conserved, protected, and enhanced. Policy ENV2 defines criteria against which planning applications will be considered to ensure they minimise their impact and secure a net gain for biodiversity. It also requires developer contributions to the coastal mitigation service relating to potential impacts on internationally designated sites from new housing and tourism development. Policy ENV3 requires the conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the county. Policy ENV4 seeks to protect tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality.
- 4.4 Given the level of protection for the natural environment within the local plan, it is not considered necessary to include further policies within the CNP.

## 5. Local green space

5.1 Green spaces are a vital part of a vibrant and healthy community and are of great importance to the character and identity of a place. The local plan allocates five areas as local space within the parish (figure 3). Local plan policy INF 5 resists the loss of protected open space unless one of the following criteria can be met:

- a. an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.



Figure 3 - protected open space allocated within the Northumberland Local Plan

5.2 National planning policy enables neighbourhood plans to designate areas of local green space for special protection, thereby preventing development on these sites other than in very special circumstances. This protection is stronger than that offered by protected open space designation. Local green spaces do not need to be publicly accessible but must be in reasonably close proximity to the community they serve as well as being demonstrably special to them, holding a particular local significance. The designation cannot be applied to an extensive tract of land. They can be valued for a wide range of reasons including visual amenity, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity and richness of wildlife. Uncontrolled changes to green spaces can irrevocably alter their special character or intrinsic value.

5.3 As a result of the strong protection that is given to land through designation as local green space, it is essential that the proposed allocations meet the requirements of national planning policy and guidance. The parish council considers that there are a number of sites within the parish which meet the requirements of national planning policy (Figure 4 )

- The Village Green (1)
- The Dunes which fall within our parish boundary.(2)
- The woodlands to the south and west of Cresswell Pele Tower ,to include the walled garden and also the land immediately to the north of the tower(3)
- Fisheries Field to the east of the Pele Tower (4)
- The field to the north of St Bartholomew's Church.(5)

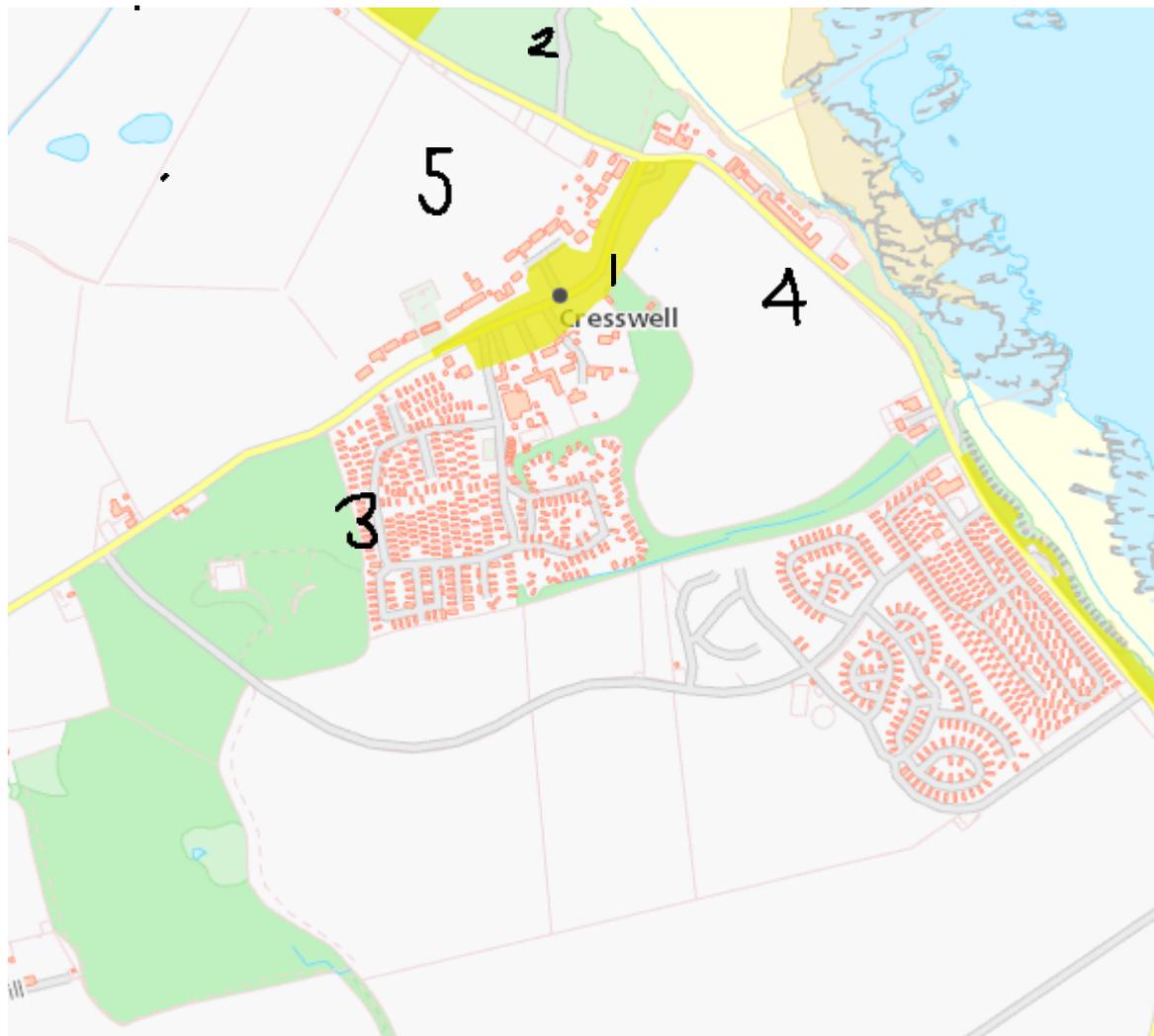


Figure 4 - Proposed Local Green Spaces

5.4 The village green( Lat 55° 14' 1" Long 1° 32' 5" ) is not subject of a planning permission for development, nor is it allocated or proposed for development within the local plan – it is allocated as a protected open space. The site is not an extensive tract of land, it is local in character – it extends to 2.78 hectare and lies within the centre of the village. The site is demonstrably special to the local community. It is an important space which is important to the character of the village and the setting of the grade II\* listed Cresswell Tower, which is also a scheduled monument as well as the grade II listed buildings to the north (Old School House, Fenham House, Church Cottages, Church of St Bartholomew and the roadside wall from parish church to Old School House). The site is also valued by the local community as an informal recreation space. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site is protected as a village green, given its importance to the local community it is proposed for allocation as a local green space.



The Village Green

5.5 The Dunes (Lat 55° 14' – 14' 4" Long 1° 32-33' )are already designated as areas of conservation and part of the Northumbria Coast and Northumberland Marine Special Protection Area as well as sites of specific scientific interest. They are a valued recreational area for residents and visitors to the area .They provide a breath taking backdrop to the village of Cresswell. They are a favoured haunt of our local population of barn owls. It is proposed that they are allocated as a local green space. The land is not subject to planning permission for development.



The Dunes looking north East

5.6 The woodlands to the south and west of the Pele Tower ( Lat 55°13'6"-8' Long 1°32'-33") fall within the land areas of the static caravan parks. They are not subject to planning permission for development. Apart from the historic 15<sup>th</sup> Century Pele Tower they also contain the Grade 2 listed remnants of structures related to Cresswell Hall within Hall Wood. They offer the village areas of tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality as well as a recreation(walking) and abundant wildlife . It is proposed that they are allocated as a local green space. The walled garden of the Pele tower is a kitchen garden of historic significance, has significant recreational value, offers tranquillity and a richness of wildlife. The land to the north of the tower, recently replanted with shrubs and trees, is of similar value to the village.



Woods by the Pele Tower



Hall Wood with remains of Cresswell Hall



Walled Garden of The Pele Tower

5.7 The field areas to the north of St Bartholomew's (Lat 55° 14' 1" Long 1° 32' 8") and east of the Pele Tower (Fisheries Field ) (Lat 55° 14' Long 1° 32' 2") are not subject to planning permission for development, nor are they allocated or proposed for development within the local plan. They are not currently allocated as protected open spaces. They are used agriculturally by tenant farmers. They provide an important and valued rural backdrop to the village, with a rich variety of wild life, including the overwintering pink footed geese, pheasants, hares, and deer as well as contributing to dark skies. In addition the field north of St Bartholomew's has been planted with an area of wildflowers. It is proposed that they are allocated as local green spaces.



Field to the north of St Bartholomew's Church

### **Policy 1 – Local Green Space**

In line with our objective 1 to preserve the rich natural environment, the Village Green, Dunes, woodlands and identified field areas following areas, as defined in figure 4 on the policies map, are designated as local green space. They which will be protected from development in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt.

Management of any development within these local green spaces should be consistent with national policy on Green Belts. Inappropriate development will not be permitted other than where very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the local green space by reason of inappropriateness and other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.



## Historic Environment

- 5.8 The built and historic environment of the parish are part of what makes it distinctive. Plan objective two seeks to ensure that new development maintains and enhances local distinctiveness and contributes positively to the built and historic environment of the area. Heritage assets can either be designated or non-designated. Designated assets have statutory status and include listed buildings and conservation areas. A non-designated asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. The parish includes 13 listed buildings, one of which is grade II\*, as well as two scheduled monuments. There are also currently 74 entries on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record which are not designated.
- 5.9 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and national planning policy requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Also, that planning decisions affecting a heritage asset are required to be based on a sound understanding of the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposal on that significance. Local plan policies ENV7 and ENV9 provide protection to designated and non-designated assets across Northumberland, the significance of which could be affected by new development. It is not necessary to repeat this protection within the neighbourhood plan.

## 6. Housing

6.1 National planning policy identifies that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the open countryside, unless specific criteria are met, which is also reflected within local plan policy STP1(Spatial Strategy). The local plan seeks to focus new development within sustainable locations. It includes a settlement hierarchy (policy STP1), which identifies that most development across the county will take place within main towns and service centres. The policy goes on to say '*Sustainable development will be supported... within settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map.*' Cresswell has a settlement boundary, which is shown in figure 5 .

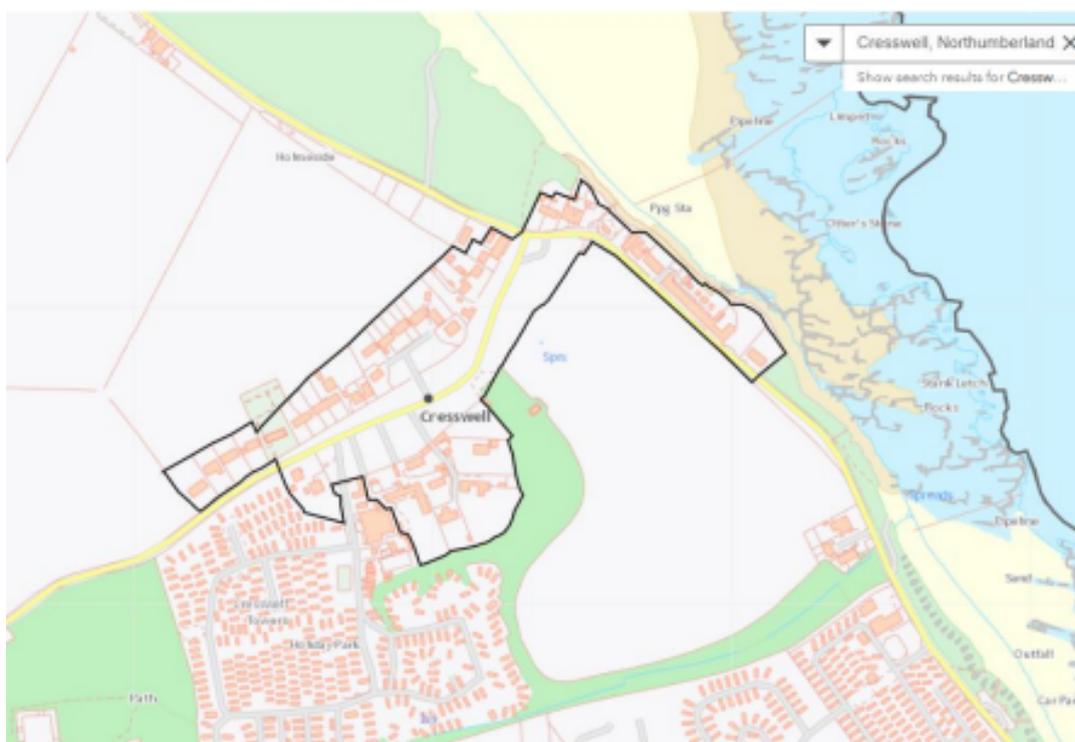


Figure 5 - Cresswell Village settlement boundary

6.2 The local plan identifies Cresswell Village as a small village where a proportionate level of development will be supported within the defined settlement boundary. The settlement boundary is tightly drawn around the existing built development (figure 5). As a result of the detail contained within the local plan, it is not considered necessary for further policies within the neighbourhood plan regarding new housing development.

## 8. Tourism

The local plan states that Northumberland will be promoted and developed as a destination for tourists and visitors, while recognising the need to sustain and conserve the environment and local communities ECN 15.

It also states that in the open countryside, visitor accommodation should, wherever possible, be limited to the reuse of buildings that are structurally sound, or to chalets and caravans and new or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets which will be supported in accessible locations outside the two AONBs and the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone, provided the development is adequately screened, taking into account short and long range views, by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape.

### **Policy 2 – Tourism**

Cresswell Village has two large static caravan parks within its boundary and a touring caravan site has been recently approved ( 2022).

The Drift Café is a local commercial venture with a range of structures attached.

To fulfil our objectives 2 and 3 and to protect our distinctive built and historic environment and the local community any future development should be consistent with national and local policy and will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts on our unique historic coastal and rural heritage, and other plan policies.

Inappropriate development will not be permitted other than where very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

## Annex 1: Community Actions

As part of the process of developing the neighbourhood plan, the parish council identified issues which cannot be addressed through the planning system. These have been identified as community actions which the parish council are committed to addressing.

1. Proposals to create new wildlife habitats and improve existing habitats, identified locally, have been and will be supported. Indeed the development of willdflower areas was welcomed by over 90% of respondees to our parish survey.



### Wildflower area on Village Green

2. We have been allocated 12 trees through the Local Authority Treescapes Fund to be sited within the village green area.
3. Cresswell Dunes (an SSSI) belong to the Northumberland County Council, with the exception of land opposite the garden plots, and as such is protected. We will work with NCC to protect the habitat, in particular, from wild camping and littering, both harmful to the environment and wildlife.
4. Cresswell Parish Council will continue to support Cresswell Pele Tower Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CPTCIO) (regd charity 1176137) with the restoration and maintenance of the former kitchen garden for Cresswell Hall.
5. We welcome the development of the Town and Parish Council Climate tool kit by NCC and will establish a steering group to identify initiatives relevant to our parish and encourage their implementation.
6. To work with Northumberland County Council to assess options to introduce measures to tackle speeding traffic.
7. To work with Northumberland County Council to further explore opportunities to increase/ enhance parking provision.
8. To work with Northumberland County Council, public transport providers and other stakeholders to improve accessibility to services and facilities in nearby areas.
9. To work with local police to better address issues of antisocial behaviour

### References :

- (1) ONS data
- (2) ONS data

Submission prepared by Christine Tyrie

Chair of Cresswell Parish Council