

# CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH PARISH COUNCIL

## DRAFT MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Argles Memorial Hall, Crosthwaite on Monday 20 April 2026 at 7.0 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. Edward Sharp (Chair of the Meeting), Jordan Perry, Westmorland and Furness Cllr. Steve Bavin; Martin Curry (Clerk to the Council), and 5 members of the public.

### 1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Angela Dobson, D. Atkinson, G. Harnby and H. Young; also from Malcolm Richardson (Responsible Finance Officer), Martin Casson, Matthew Jessop, Helen Todd, Geraldine Wilson, Jean Sherrat, Pat Howarth and Fay Gorst.

### 2. Welcome by the Chair of the Parish Council:

In the absence of Cllr. Dobson who was unwell and had sent her apologies, Cllr. Edward Sharp welcomed fellow Councillors and parishioners to the Annual Parish Meeting of Crosthwaite and Lyth, the Agenda for which made provision for reports, updates from village organisations and contributions from members of the public.

### 3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28 April 2025:

Approval of the Minutes which had been published on the website was proposed by John Holmes and seconded by Steven Brierley. Approval was unanimous and they were approved and signed by the Chair of the meeting as a correct record.

### 4. Report from the Chair of the Parish Council:

On behalf of Cllr Angela Dobson (Chair of the Parish Council), the Clerk read a report on the Parish Council year which is attached to these Minutes.

The Chairman then introduced the following reports:

**4(a): Crosthwaite and Lyth Strategic Plan:** A report by the Clerk is attached to these Minutes

**4(b): Crosthwaite and Lyth Speed Reduction Initiative:** A report by Cllr. Perry is attached to these Minutes. In response to Cllr. Perry's report, a parishioner questioned the effectiveness of speed restrictions if there was no monitoring or enforcement of speed restrictions. The idea of a Speed Indicator Device was mentioned as a possibility.

**4(c): Crosthwaite and Lyth Community Orchard:** A report by the Clerk is attached to these Minutes

### 5. Update from Westmorland and Furness Council (W&FC)

Cllr. Steve Bavin gave a report on recent activity within W&FC and highlighted the following:

a) He attends Parish Council meetings on a regular basis and through that keeps parishioners in touch with many initiatives managed by W&FC.

b) He confirmed that the W&FC was addressing a serious cut in real terms to the Government funding settlement and that a subscription charge on the emptying of green bins to be introduced by the end of June was just one measure designed to tackle this.

c) The Council is giving attention to potholes around the area. It has had to wait for better weather to make repairs sustainable, but road maintenance is proceeding. A parishioner spoke from the floor to welcome road repairs; he said that roads were in a worse state than ever before with poor surfaces, potholes and falling verges make it difficult for walking, cycling and for those with mobility scooters. Cllr Bavin acknowledged this and said that W&FC was doing its best resolve issues.

d) Cllr. Bavin is lobbying for improvements in local public transport including the possibility of a limited bus service for the area.

e) A new authority (The Cumbria Combined Authority) is now in place which will focus on strategic matters including business and innovation development, transport, employment and skills. The new authority will not assume responsibility for services currently delivered by the unitary authorities in Cumbria and will be led by a mayor to be elected in May 2027.

### 6. Updates from other Organisations within the Parish

a) **St Mary's Church and CLEAN** – On behalf of Pat Howarth, Steven Brierley reported on both activities at the Church and on CLEAN. He was pleased to report that a new Vicar had been appointed and expressed thanks to the volunteers who had kept things going in the interim. A Confirmation Service was held in March attended by over 160 adults and children in the presence of

the Bishop of Carlisle. The Church and CLEAN are working closely together on environmental initiatives including improvements to the Church garden to enhance biodiversity and continuing with the local composting initiative. Sessions on the benefits of solar panels and the use of thermal imaging to identify where insulation might be added have also been held.

- b) **The Recreation Field** - David Stott reported that activities on the field had included general improvements, particularly on the path to the pavilion. The Children's Playground will soon need renovation without which it might have to close. Work could cost over £100,000 and whilst grants will be available, match funding will be required. Local fundraising events will help but wider local support will be necessary. The Tennis Club and the Bowling Club both continue to be well supported.
- c) **The Snooker Club** - David Stott, confirmed that the Club continued to thrive with membership maintained at around 12 regulars. The Club plays in the Milnthorpe District League. The Club meets regularly on Wednesday evenings between 7 and 9.00p.m and new members are always welcome.
- d) **The Landowners of Crosthwaite and Lyth** - David Stott reported that activities had continued as usual over the last 12 months. Work progresses on the 625-acre estate including the successful establishment of wood pasture on Whitbarrow. The most significant event in 2025 had been the acquisition of 'The Field' adjacent to the Recreation Ground to be maintained for the benefit of the Parish. Matthew Dobson has retired as a Trustee, and he was thanked for his years of contribution. The group is now a CIO which is a more effective means of managing the charity.
- e) **Lyth Valley First Responder Group** – John Holmes reported that there are operational First Responders as follows: Crosthwaite 1, Underbarrow 1, Crook 2, Witherslack 1. New applicants are now dealt with directly by NWS and upon completing their training are then allocated to an appropriate Group. There is currently one application going through the process who lives in the Lyth Valley. Sadly, the “fall off” in members reflects what is happening through the Region and several Groups have closed including the one at Staveley. New members are welcomed and should contact John Holmes initially: Email: [johnmholmes@live.co.uk](mailto:johnmholmes@live.co.uk) (015395 68599 / 07766 774326). The Group trains monthly with the Windermere Group at the Marchesi Center in Windemere. All Responders are re-assessed on an annual basis at Crosthwaite Village Hall. The Group has provided several CPR training sessions to other Groups in the Area and has been instrumental in setting up 2 publicly accessible defibrillators in Crosthwaite – one at the Hall and the other at the Church. This has been made possible with donations from Crosthwaite PC, Crosthwaite Landowners, The Recreational Field Trust, The Punch Bowl and the First Responder Group. There are routine checks to ensure these are fully operational as they are now registered on a National List. The public can assess them via a telephone number displayed on the Boxes which provides the access code to open the boxes. By contacting 999 they can assess where nearby defibrillators are.
- f) **Argles Memorial Hall** - Angela Dobson was unable to be present but it was confirmed that the Hall is now designated as a Warm Hub in the case of emergencies - such as prolonged power cuts.
- g) **Crosthwaite Pantomime Report - 2025:** Helen Todd sent the following report: As many of you will know, the Crosthwaite Pantomime Group has evolved over the last 20 years, beginning with the original Talent Show before developing into the much-loved annual pantomime we have today. The group was first established by members of the Village Hall Committee with the aim of raising funds for the Hall. Although some of the people involved have changed over the years, that original purpose remains the same. We are delighted to report that this year we were able to gift over £1,770 to the Village Hall funds, along with a further £540 raised from the raffle, which was shared between Crosthwaite Primary School and CancerCare. This year's production, *Jack Up the Beanstalk*, was performed to an audience of approximately 220 people over two nights, and once again brought the community together. Our wonderful team of actors and backstage crew were all from the Two Valleys, ranging in age from just 7 to 87 years. Next year's pantomime is currently being written, with rehearsals starting at in September and the performances booked in for 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2027!
- h) **Crosthwaite Exchange:** Lorraine Brierley gave the following report on behalf of Geraldine Wilson who was unable to be present. The Exchange continues to open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 2-4pm. On average we have an attendance ranging from 15 to mid-20s. There are still 2-3 lunches throughout the year, with the Christmas lunch remaining very popular with around 70 people including helpers. We rely very much on our volunteers who are mostly in their 70s and 80s. In February this year we celebrated 20 years with a special lunch with approximately 60 people and there was a lovely party atmosphere. We continue to run a Country Market selling homemade cakes, preserves and seasonal produce. We provide colourful window boxes for the Village Hall from May onwards and have booked a professional oven cleaner for the hall oven in the kitchen. We have supported MacMillan and dementia charities over the year. We very much welcome visitors and new

people to the village. It's a great way to meet people and form new friendships. If anyone is interested in volunteering for The Exchange, baking or providing produce for sale, please let us know. Anyone who bakes or provides produce is paid for their contributions. Do look out for any updates or further lunches in the Parish Magazine.

- i) **Playgroup** – Fay Gorst submitted the following Report: Playgroup has had a busy year with many new faces and plenty of returning parents and children. We waved goodbye to our older children as they went off to school in July. We made personalised Christmas cards and met Father Christmas in December and with every week we have watched our children grow together and create friendships. With the introduction of government funded childcare from 9 months old we have sadly seen an overall decrease in numbers. This has meant more of a strain on playgroup finances and the hire of the bouncy castle has been more important than ever! A review of the charges may be required as we enter a new school year in September 2026 to ensure the finances remain healthy and playgroup can continue. However, for now the bouncy castle diary is filling up and should continue to fund the group. As ever the group has provided a great space for children to play, meet friends and build relationships that some will carry through into life at Crosthwaite school. Equally as important the twice weekly sessions have given parents a support network as well as a hot brew and slice of cake.
- j) **Crosthwaite C of E School** - Matthew Jessop had sent his apologies but will submit a written report which will be attached to these minutes. It was noted that the school was soon to celebrate its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- k) **W.I.** – Lorraine Brierley presented the following report from Jean Sherratt, President of Crosthwaite and Lyth WI: It's 98 years since the first meeting of Crosthwaite and Lyth WI, and we continue to meet in this lovely hall on the 3rd Wednesday evening of the month. We also hold social events and trips out during the first week of each month, usually in the afternoon. We're a friendly group and would love to welcome more new members, with no obligation to join until you've tried us out a couple of times! Our contact details are included on the WI page of the Crosthwaite and Lyth Website. During the year we have continued to support village activities and have provided teas at the village show and a cake and produce stall at both the Strawberry Tea and Christmas Fair. Very recently some of our members donated cakes for the Easter Egg Hunt. We do value the opportunities of contributing to the community in these ways. We are about to participate again in the Great UK Waterblitz, testing the water quality of the rivers Gilpin and Winster and sending in our results to this national survey organised by Earthwatch, and are grateful to Ann and Roger Smith for taking the samples for us. As well as stewarding at CountryFest last May, we had considerable success with produce and craft entries at the Westmorland County Show in September and it's good to support these events and be part of the wider community as well as the local one. We are holding 2 open meetings this year, with the first one being on Wednesday 20th May, when visitors will be welcome at 8pm to hear Hartley Trotter and Desmond Holmes talking about "Life in the 2 Valleys Then and Now." On Wednesday 16th September Bob Bewley is giving a talk called "Aerial Archaeology & Cultural Heritage" and again, visitors will be very welcome.

## 7. Public Forum

The following observations were made:

- Concern was expressed about the poor condition of the building site in the centre of the village which was now both an eyesore and a danger. Here there was planning permission for eight houses which were not being built, and the land continues to deteriorate. Nationally it is a problem with planning permission granted but no building work done other than a material start which renders the situation untouchable under current law. It was noted that the Building Act could be used to address unsightly land. It was Agreed that the Parish Council will look at what it might do to address this issue.
  - A parishioner thanked Councillors for their efforts on behalf of the community but regretted the lack of people present at the meeting and asked representatives of the Parish Council to consider how a greater number of parishioners might be encouraged to attend.
8. **Closing Remarks from the Chairman:** Cllr. Sharp thanked everyone present for attending the meeting, and particularly those who had made contributions and hoped that it had provided all with an indication of the breadth and depth of local activity.

The meeting was closed at 9.20 p.m.

Signed:

Date:

# **Crosthwaite and Lyth Annual Parish Meeting 20 April 2026**

## **Agenda Item 4**

### **Parish Council Chair's Report – 2025-2026**

I'd like to personally thank you all for coming to the Crosthwaite and Lyth Annual Parish Meeting this evening. Just to be clear, this is not a Parish Council Meeting, though the PC usually organises it on behalf of Parishioners and gives a report on its activities.

I would like to start by thanking all the Councillors for their continued hard work and support and of course to thank Martin Curry, our Parish Clerk and Malcolm Richardson, our Responsible Finance Officer, for keeping us correct and in line with our statutory duties and responsibilities. I would also like to thank Westmorland and Furness Councillor Steve Bavin for his monthly reports and support, while also apologising to his wife for making Steve late for his evening meal once a month - we are sorry.

As you will be aware we do have a vacancy on the Parish Council following Elizabeth Cartmel's resignation and I would just like to say a huge thank you to Elizabeth for her commitment and contribution - it will be missed.

With that said, we would like to fill that vacancy as soon as possible so if anyone is interested, please come and speak to Martin or any Parish Councillor.

With that in mind I would like to assure prospective and existing Council members you are entitled to be treated with respect both in PC meetings and personally; and that anyone exhibiting unacceptable behaviour at parish council meetings will be asked to leave the meetings.

We have kept ourselves very busy in the last 12 months working on regular matters and a number of one-off Projects.

We have continued to look at planning applications that come through from the Lake District National Park Authority and submit comments on behalf of parishioners in line with our role as statutory consultees.

We also monitor unplanned building work that is occasionally undertaken within the parish to make sure development is managed in a fair and equitable way and advise the Planning Board if appropriate. This may often be done on behalf of parishioners who do not feel willing or able to talk to the planning board themselves to ensure that development is undertaken in a fair and equitable way.

We continue to work closely with Westmorland and Furness Council and thank Councillor Steve Bavin for his regular feedback on matters relevant to the Parish Council.

This feedback includes many matters relevant to local communities and often relates to Highways matters such as road closures. The past year seems to have been the year of the pothole and as Councillors we have reported numerous of these to W&FC and will continue to do so. It's worth mentioning that any parishioner can report Highways issues direct via the W&FC website and your Parish Council would encourage all to do this.

Councillor Perry has led a speed reduction project within the Crosthwaite and Lyth area and that has been accepted by highways, looking like we will get this implemented within the next 18 months. This should make the village a safer place to live in as we have very narrow pinch points within the village and surrounding area.

We have also noticed the amount of litter in the village and surrounding area seems to have increased and with that in mind your Council has decided to increase the yearly litter pick to two events per year. Councillor Perry has been pivotal in organising this, taking over the great work that Mary Harkness has undertaken for years.

There has been a lot of administration to deal with including updating Parish Council policies and implementing a new requirement for an accessible website, a new web address and new bespoke email addresses for Councillors and staff.

Malcolm Richardson has managed the finances very successfully and will soon be submitting the 2025-26 accounts for annual audit.

Work on updating our records of Parish land is nearly complete and these records have now been put onto a special website meaning that they can be updated easily and the records available for future Councillors and members of staff. This has helped with managing the letting of Parish land to local tenants.

We have also had high speed, full-fibre broadband installed in the parish room under the B4RN (BARN) initiative which will improve connectivity and help us to be more environmentally friendly. This summer we will be undertaking some maintenance on the parish room getting the windows repainted; Councillor Young has been

instrumental in getting a window cleaner and this summer we are going to have a day of cleaning the parish room.

We had continued to develop the Neighbourhood Plan to almost the final public consultation when the government decided that they would no longer fund it. We have looked into further funding options with very little success and with that in mind we are now preparing a 5-year Strategic Plan for the Parish which Martin will speak about further.

Our Clerk has secured a grant to create a community orchard, and we are currently looking at establishing this in Jubilee Wood. This will be a considerable piece of work and Cllrs. Guy Harnby is going to lead on this project with support from Cllr. David Atkinson, other Councillors and parishioners. Any member of the public that would like to get involved would be very welcome to join the Working Group.

I will just finish this report by saying it has been a pleasure and an honour to chair this vibrant group of parish Councillors this year.

Thank you

Cllr Angela Dobson

## **CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: 20 APRIL 2026**

### **AGENDA ITEM 4 (a)**

#### **Launch of the Crosthwaite and Lyth Strategic Plan**

The Clerk explained that the Strategic Plan for Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish Council ('the Council') has been prepared to guide its vision, objectives, and actions over a 5-year period and as a response to challenges in completing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NP).

Though well advanced, the external financial support essential to complete the NP had been withdrawn during 2025. Although efforts continue to secure the additional funding required (totalling some £6,000) the development of the NP has had to be paused unless or until such funding is obtained.

In the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan, the Council has concluded that it is appropriate to provide the residents of Crosthwaite and Lyth with clear insight of what the Parish Council is trying to achieve and how it expects to deliver this. The Strategic Plan, based on priorities identified in the work-up of the Neighbourhood Plan, will identify on what the Parish Council plans to focus for the next 5 years and will be used as a guide each year to set the budget for the following financial year.

The Plan is to be found on the Parish Council website ([www.crosthwaiteandlyth-pc.gov.uk](http://www.crosthwaiteandlyth-pc.gov.uk)) and includes the following sections:

#### **Part 1:**

- A description of the Parish and its environmental qualities
- Governance of the Parish
- The Purpose of the Plan
- A Mission Statement, Vision and Values

#### **Part 2:**

- Objectives and Actions

## **CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: 20 APRIL 2026**

### **AGENDA ITEM 4 (b)**

#### **Crosthwaite and Lyth Speed Reduction Project**

Cllr. Perry spoke to the Crosthwaite & Lyth Speed Reduction Project which has been prepared with the aim of lowering vehicle speeds throughout the parish to improve safety and quality of life for residents, pedestrians, cyclists, and all road users. He explained that the Parish Council was promoting this Project which he was leading and had supported the submission of proposals to Westmorland and Furness Council as the Highways Authority.

He explained that Crosthwaite has experienced increased residential development and higher traffic volumes in recent years. The village's narrow lanes, limited or absent footpaths, and shared road space between pedestrians, cyclists, agricultural traffic, and local vehicles pose ongoing safety risks at current speed limits.

The proposal introduces 20 mph, 30 mph, and 40 mph limits across key stretches currently designated as 30 mph or the national speed limit (60 mph). These reductions will create a safer, more consistent speed environment from the entrances of the village through to Crosthwaite Primary School and along key connecting rural routes, while aligning with Department for Transport (DfT) national policy on rural and village speed management.

Lowering speed limits will:

- Protect pedestrians, school children, and vulnerable road users.
- Reduce braking distances and the severity of potential collisions.
- Encourage walking and cycling by making routes safer and more appealing.
- Support a calmer, more sustainable and environmentally sensitive rural environment.
- Prepare for further housing and population growth, ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with change.

The Parish Council is now awaiting further liaison with the Highways Authority. The full submission is to be found on the Parish Council website ([www.crosthwaiteandlyth-pc.gov.uk](http://www.crosthwaiteandlyth-pc.gov.uk)).

## **CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: 20 APRIL 2026**

### **AGENDA ITEM 4 (c)**

#### **Crosthwaite and Lyth Community Orchard**

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had been successful in securing a grant of £2,000 from Westmorland and Furness Council under its the Community Tree and Hedgerow Scheme. Jubilee Wood had been identified as a potential location for the establishment of this scheme although significant management work will be necessary to prepare the site for new tree planting.

A community working group is to be established to lead this Project, and reports will be recorded at Parish Council meetings.