

# CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Argles Memorial Hall, Crosthwaite on Monday 28 April 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. Angela Dobson (Chair of the Meeting), E. Cartmell, Edward Sharp, Heather Young; W&F Cllr. Steve Bavin; Martin Curry (Clerk to the Council), M. Richardson (Responsible Finance Officer) and 8 members of the public.

### 1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllrs. D. Atkinson, G. Harnby, J. Perry, Martin Casson, Matthew Jessop, H. Todd, Geraline Wilson.

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

Cllr. Dobson 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 in 2024:

the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 April 2024, having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a correct record.

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

Cllr Angela Dobson gave a report on the Parish Council year with is attached to these Minutes.

The Chair then asked the Clerk to give an update report on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan which 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 commenced by acknowledging the inconvenience that had been created by the closure of the bridges over the Kendal bypass between June 2024 and February 2025. Both bridges are now open (with a weight limit). Closure had been an unfortunate, but necessary, precaution and work will now continue to secure a long-term solution to the structures. New signage and safety work are planned for the A5074 and increased efforts are being made to repair potholes, but it remains a constant battle. Steve is encouraging people to use the Rural Wheels service and is also looking for evidence to show that a local bus service is financially sustainable. He asked attendees to let him know if they would use public transport. He thanked the participants for the recent annual litter pick which he had been pleased to support. He also has access to grants for projects and invited those interested to talk direct to him. He had accessed a contribution of £500 towards the new noticeboard. W&FC have allocated £0.5m towards improving reliability of bin collections. There was a request for a dog bin in the village and in the vicinity of the Damson Dene Hotel and discussion followed on this issue. It was agreed that polite notices might be tried in the first instance.

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

- a) St Mary's Church - Pat Howarth reported that Revd. Woodcock had left at the end of September and efforts were underway to appoint a successor. 2 weekly services were being held at 4 local churches and close links were in place between Crosthwaite and Winster. House groups meet regularly in the village whilst the Two Valleys Choir and local bellringing are prospering. The Church was much involved with eco-friendly activities including improving the biodiversity of the Church yard where 30 saplings from the Woodland Trust had been planted and swift boxes erected, offering peat free compost and encouraging a reduction in car use.
- b) The Recreation Field - David Stott reported that activities on the field including the bowling and tennis clubs remain well subscribed. Maintenance work is an ongoing part of management and there have been occasional instances of vandalism.
- c) The Snooker Club - David Stott, confirmed that the Club continued to thrive with membership slightly up to around 12 regulars. The Club plays in the local league which it is close to winning. New members are always welcome.
- d) First Responders - John Holmes spoke to his written report, which is attached to these Minutes.
- e) Argles Memorial Hall - Angela Dobson reported that a few new bookings had been received. The Pantomime and Christmas Fair continue to be popular events which contribute significantly to the

funds required to run the Hall. Internal maintenance was ongoing and there will be re-plastering of a damp patch. Congratulations were expressed on the installation of a new projector.

- f) The Art Club - Pat Howarth confirmed that the Club has 10 to 12 regular members and meets for two terms between October and Christmas and from New Year to Easter. It provides a relaxing and enjoyable activity and new members always welcome regardless of perceived skill!
- g) Playgroup - Katie Smith reported that whilst numbers had dropped after September because of the bridge being closed, resulting in a big hit to funds, the Group had remained resilient and received a good response once the bridge had reopened. The group is participating in fund-raising events and activities. Katie is standing down this summer and a small committee will manage in the meantime.
- h) Crosthwaite Exchange - Caroline Holmes reported that the exchange had been operating for 29 years and now meets twice per month. Its events and activities are very well supported including the regular Country Fair. The social value of the group is very important within the local community.
- i) Crosthwaite C of E School - Matthew Jessop had sent his apologies but had submitted a written report which was read to the meeting and is attached to these minutes.
- j) The Landowners of Crosthwaite and Lyth - David Stott reported that business had continued as usual over the last 12 months. Work progresses on the 625-acre estate with management work last year including limiting the spread of cotoneaster. Management plans are being finalised. Last year had been very poor for butterflies but surveys will continue. Conservation grazing by heritage cattle is ongoing and grants have been secured to develop wood pasture via tree planting and Fen the group is moving to become a CIO which is a more effective means of managing the charity and this is expected to be completed in 2025. The charity continues to support local causes with the grants made to the Argles Memorial Hall and to support the provision of a quiet space at the school.
- k) W.I. - Mary Choiseul reported that the WI has a full programme and membership numbers have increased recently. It meets on the third Wednesday of every month and new members are always welcome. It has supported and attended a number of local events, worked with the annual litter pick and performed local water quality testing. It has welcomed guest speakers and engaged with local events such as the County Show.
- l) CLEAN - For the Crosthwaite and Lyth Environmental Action Network Pat Howarth explained that its objective was to inform, in a low-key and non-judgmental way, how the community can support the environment including by being energy conscious and encouraging recycling. They had facilitated sessions on powering homes and energy saving as well as advice on the maintenance of septic tanks. It was involved in activities such as a gardening group and seed swapping as well as a nearly-new sale which had generated funds to support the school.

## 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. Here there was planning permission for eight houses which were not being built, and the land continues to deteriorate and is an eyesore. 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 suggested that there should be an inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan regarding a time limit on developments.
- There was discussion about the recently published draft Neighbourhood Plan and the informal consultation that had been reported by the Clerk earlier in the meeting. A speaker from the floor hoped that this current phase of activity will not attract the sort of controversy that had occurred in the past. Cllr. Dobson confirmed that everything would be done in an open and transparent way and residents must have their say on what they thought. There was useful discussion on ways of improving the profile of the plan locally and it was suggested that a convention of younger residents might be helpful to understand some of the negative observations about the plan. Cllr. Dobson thanked participants for a healthy debate on this matter.

8. **Closing Remarks from the Chairman:** Cllr. Dobson thanked everyone present for attending the meeting and hoped that it had provided all with an indication of the breadth and depth of local activity.

The meeting was closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed:

Date:

**CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: APRIL 28, 2025**  
**AGENDA ITEM 4**  
**CHAIR'S REPORT - 2025**

I'd like to say welcome to everyone for attending the Annual Parish Meeting - it has been a privilege to serve as Chair for the last 12 months and work alongside Martin Curry, Malcolm Richardson and my fellow Councillors.

This year we have been embedding work from the previous year along with keeping vigilant regarding any building work that has been undertaken without planning permission. Some of these breaches had been reported to us anonymously. The National Park Planning Office has thanked us for the reports, and have let us know that we have been a big help.

The state of the roads in the parish has kept us busy, reporting everything and, with the help of our local Westmorland and Furness Councillor Steve Bavin, we have pushed to get potholes repaired; the closure of the Brigsteer and Underbarrow bridges has also kept us busy as we maintained pressure on Highways to resolve the problems.

We have let all the majority of the parish land with the exception of Hubbersty Head.

The work on the neighbourhood plan has kept us busy with the help from Louise Kirkup and Martin Curry, we have managed to get to the stage of informal consultation with the public.

We have ensured that hedges and grass around the parish is maintained, we have also supported landowners with advice about diseased trees and reported when minor byways need clearing.

We have replaced the old notice board near the old post office; this has a public enclosed area for parishioners to use to advertise events etc.

The litter pick in January went well and I would like to acknowledge the work of Mary Harkness and Jordan Perry for organising this.

**CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: APRIL 28, 2025**  
**AGENDA ITEM 4 (b)**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN – UPDATE**

The Neighbourhood Plan has been a long time in preparation and if I may I would like to start by going back to brass tacks and remind ourselves as to what is a Neighbourhood Plan? Very simply a neighbourhood plan is a legal document that supports planning policies for the neighbourhood area. Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish Council has been developing a neighbourhood plan to help guide decisions on planning applications in the Parish. Those planning decisions are underpinned by planning policies that create the framework used by the primary Planning Authority - in this case the Lake District National Park Authority - to decide whether to approve planning applications.

These policies come together in the planning authority's own Local Plan which currently is for the period 2020 to 2035. This sets out the strategy for all new development in the Lake District and provides a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.

As well as providing guidance to assess day-to-day planning applications, the strategic approach of the Local Plan deals with such matters as where and how many new homes should be built, the locations where businesses need more land to expand or to create new jobs and which areas should be protected from development.

So, Local Plans are where some of the big decisions on planning for the future of our communities and use of land are made and seek to provide a consistent approach to decision-making within the National Park. It is worth repeating that the Local Plan sets out the strategic policies that are considered necessary to address the strategic priorities for the National Park.

By their very nature therefore, and as acknowledged by the Planning Authority, the Local Plan does not extend to detailed matters that are particular to specific locations within the Park. In short, they do not drill down to the fine grain of local circumstance. It is the Park Authority therefore that suggests and recommends that these detailed considerations are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans.

But Neighbourhood Plans must not conflict with national and local planning authority policies and crucially, neighbourhood plans cannot stop development. So, for instance, the strategic approach to housing in the Local Plan is strongly focused on making meaningful interventions to the housing market - for the good of communities and the economy. The Park Authority wants to achieve a balanced and resilient housing market with a high proportion of properties in permanent occupation, and a supply of new homes that meet people's needs and maximises the delivery of affordable housing. Its starting point when planning for housing is the Government's approach in National Parks which states that "the Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing" and that the "expectation is that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirement, supporting local economy and key services."

What the neighbourhood plan can do however is to express local preferences on siting and design and can thereby influence strategic developments and individual planning applications. It has an significant role in the identification and protection of important open spaces.

The planning authority cannot be fettered by the neighbourhood plan, but as stated at the outset, it is a legal document and once approved forms part of the planning framework and therefore it must be taken into account in the decision-making process.

It is an acknowledged fact that neighbourhood plans can take a long time to prepare and that for Crosthwaite and Lyth is certainly no exception. Work started back in 2018 and this was followed by an informal consultation on a Community Vision in 2019. A Housing Needs Survey was commissioned in 2020 to better understand local housing needs and a Design Code was commissioned in 2021 to provide locally specific design guidance. These documents are on the website and form part of the evidence base for the Plan.

Many of you will know however that the most recent draft has been made public for the first time lately - at the outset of a period of informal public consultation on its contents. **This** is the document which has been made available at several key locations within the community as well as on the website - where it remains. It is supported by the Design Code which is an important part of the final Plan and the Parish Council has also published a one-page summary of the contents. All this work has been supported by invaluable professional advice from Louise Kirkup of Kirkwells Planning Consultants - whose fees have been covered by external funding.

Now I should say that the informal public consultation is exactly that - an informal process which is not a mandatory part of the procedure, but one which the Parish Council felt would be appropriate at this stage. The Plan as it stands contains a draft Vision, 4 Objectives and 7 draft planning policies which will be used to help determine planning applications alongside the Local Plan. Information on this informal process was circulated by post in March which included a drop-in session on 31 March.

I am aware that a number of residents hadn't received their postal notification of the informal consultation until after the date of the drop-in event and that was unfortunate (though it had been publicised in a number of other ways) but I should emphasise that the main purpose of the circulation was to signpost the accessibility of the draft plan; to provide a summary of its contents and to invite comments via the response form provided.

Comments have been received and are currently being analysed. All comments will be considered and where it is considered appropriate will be incorporated in the next version of the draft Plan. LDNPA have also made helpful comments on the Design Code, which is Annex 2 of the Plan and these likewise will be addressed.

The current draft of the Plan will remain on the website and will be updated with comments received in due course - so, if you haven't yet had a chance to take a look, please do so - and it is not too late to comment on the draft as it stands. More importantly however, the revised version will go out to formal consultation which will commence with LDNPA as the local planning authority but will extend to a wide range of other authorities, agencies and community stakeholders.

You in the local community will be front and centre to this phase and play a key role in the formal consultation process.

Following the formal consultation, the Plan will be examined by an independent examiner and finally local people will be offered the opportunity to vote in a local referendum on whether it should be used to determine planning applications.