

**Crosthwaite & Lyth Parish Meeting**  
**Monday February 7<sup>th</sup> 7.00pm Argles Memorial Hall**  
**Crosthwaite.**

**Minutes**

**1. Registration of attendees.**

Of the people attending 118 fully registered their names.

**2. Welcome and brief background to the business of the meeting.**

John Holmes welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He stated that during the afternoon he had received an email from the Parish Clerk claiming that the Meeting was not a properly constituted Parish Meeting on the basis that the addresses of the Parishioners who had signed the notice convening the meeting had not been included in that notice. JH said that this claim was incorrect, and the meeting had been properly convened in accordance with the relevant legislation. However, if anyone felt that that they would be uncomfortable remaining at the meeting they should leave. No one felt that necessary.

**3. Appointment of Chair**

JH explained that an invitation had been sent to the PC asking for the Chair of the PC to attend and chair this meeting. Unfortunately, the Chair could not attend as it clashed with a previous commitment. Nor could the Vice Chair of the PC attend in place of the Chair of the PC.

As such the Chair needed to be nominated from the floor. Graham Paine nominated John Holmes. This was seconded by Elizabeth Cartmell and unanimously carried.

**4. Chair's address.**

The PC called a Parish Meeting in September 2018 and proposed the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Presentations were made to the meeting from representatives from the National Park and a Parish Councillor from Coniston who had been instrumental in setting up such a plan. The proposal for a Neighbourhood Plan was carried by a significant majority of the meeting. Consequently, the PC went ahead and established a Steering Group to progress the plan, the Steering Group comprising parishioners selected from those who responded to a request from the PC for volunteers.

As yet the contents of this Plan have not been drafted. The newly elected PC initially agreed to continue with the Neighbourhood Plan. But some of the Councillors who were appointed to the Steering group very quickly decided that the Plan needed to be "Paused" – effectively stopped.

The PC took soundings at an Annual Parish Meeting of Parishioners in August 2021. There was a significant support from these Parishioners to continue with the Neighbourhood Plan. No motion was proposed for parishioners to vote on during this meeting, but the sentiments expressed at this meeting were extremely positive and supportive for the PC to continue with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Notwithstanding this the sentiment of parishioners at this meeting the PC still decided to go ahead with the "pausing". Nevertheless, given the weight of support from parishioners they undertook to consider their decision after 3 months.

Again, despite parishioners continuing their support for the Neighbourhood Plan the PC decided at the in November PC meeting to pause the Neighbourhood Plan indefinitely and disbanded the Steering Group. At this same PC meeting JH requested that a motion be proposed that the PC should convene a Parish Meeting to put their intentions to the community and to allow the community to vote as to whether the parishioners wanted to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan. The motion was accepted and put to the PC for a vote. The PC rejected the proposal 3-2.

At the December Meeting of the PC JH advised that there was a group of parishioners, in excess of 6, anxious to arrange a Parish Meeting and were so proceeding. This advice was simply noted and recorded without comment from the Parish Council

The Group of parishioners continued to set up the Parish Plan for February 7<sup>th</sup> 2022 and gave all due notices including to PC on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 and including invitations for the Parish Council to be involved.

At the PC Meeting February 1<sup>st</sup>, the PC decided to lift the "pausing of the Neighbourhood Plan albeit with some significant qualifications. These were such that it was still considered important to proceed with the Parish Meeting.

It is disappointing to note that the PC have tried to stop the Parish Meeting going ahead with semantics and seem to have completely lost sight of the bigger picture.

The Chairman (JH) feels that if a Parish Meeting voted to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan it was only fair and democratic that the PC on deciding to pause the plan should seek the approval of parishioners so to do at a Parish Meeting.

## **5. Presentation by the Group who have served on the NH Plan to date.**

Lisa Bibby on behalf of the Steering Group that was disbanded in November 2021 gave a presentation outlining the process of the Neighbourhood plan and where it had reached before it was paused. It was almost at the point of becoming an Issues and Options document that could be put out to the community for full and widespread consultation. But already significant delays have occurred since the PC was elected in May 2021.

The point was made that the current proposal to restart the Plan with another Steering Group without the inclusion of all members of the previous Steering Group will result in further delays and possible costs that may not be able to be recovered from the Government Grants.

Also, the proposal to relook at the extent of the coverage of the designated area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan will take considerable time and face resistance from the Lake District National Park who really want to have these Neighbourhood Plans cover a complete parish. It also is not fair to exclude other sections of the Parish, namely Gilpin Bridge, The Howe, The Row, the High, Bowland Bridge etc.

A copy of Lisa's presentation will be posted onto the Crosthwaite & Lyth Community Website following this meeting.

## **6. Presentation by a Representative of the Parish Council.**

The Chair referred to a Notice from the PC which it was said had been delivered throughout the Parish this last weekend. Many people had not received this. The meeting was asked to show who had received this Notice and only some 10 people apparently had.

The Notice was read out as follows:

### *CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS REGARDING THE PARISH MEETING CALLED FOR 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022.*

*As you will have seen from the recent document delivered to you, the Parish Council, at its meeting on Tuesday February 2022, recognised the need to address the polarisation and anger within the parish and therefore unanimously passed resolutions to resume work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) on three conditions plus a proposal that the Parish Council may seek to redesignate the area subject to consultation with the community.*

*The Council considers that the three conditions are what would be expected to ensure that any NP would be acceptable to an inspector.*

*The Terms of Reference agreed at the beginning of the process do not follow guidance set out by Locality, an NP advisor, who also advised that all steering group meetings should be held in public, which has not happened.*

*It is also recommended that a Steering Group is made up of councillors along with a cross section of parishioners with a total of up to a dozen members. To date the cross section has not been achieved. Members have resigned due to their views not being accepted or even recognised by the other group members.*

*The 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 meeting was called after an address by a parishioner to the Parish Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 asking in writing that the Parish Council "reconsider lifting the pausing and allow the NP to proceed to its next stage" and make the decision on the continuance of the Plan or accept there is insufficient support to carry it on. **This is what the Parish Council have done.***

*It should also be known that the Parish Clerk at the time of the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 meeting made a statement to the Parish Council regarding his observations on "recent matters relating to pressure on individuals and the Council". This pressure has continued.*

*The Council therefore considers that the meeting called for 7<sup>th</sup> February should have been **cancelled or the proposals withdrawn** as they have been addressed. Furthermore, all Parish Council documents, including those relating to the NP, have been removed from the parish website (without authorisation by the Council) so parishioners are unable to access them. The Council believe that it is undemocratic to proceed with the meeting under these conditions.*

Contact details:  
Malcolm Richardson

*Clerk to Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish Council  
Old Barn Cottage, Borwick, Carnforth LA6 1JS  
07918 620261.*

The above Notice has had little distribution through the Parish and has had to rely on this meeting publishing it.

It is a great pity that this Notice was not presented by a representative from the PC as it contains misleading elements, and the meeting has not been given the chance to challenge some of the statements.

#### **7, Any communications from Parishioners who cannot attend the meeting will be read out**

The Chair read out a total 6 responses that had been received from Parishioners who were not able to attend the Meeting. Whilst these responses cannot be recorded as votes nevertheless it was felt that the content should be made known. Overall, 4 were in support of the proposals of the meeting with 2 against.

It is confirmed that all responses received have been checked to ensure that the Parish Council has copies.

#### **8. General Debate.**

There followed a general debate, and the following points were recorded.

1. Point made that the initial draft of the Neighbourhood Plan (NhP) had not yet been drafted making it difficult to know what it might contain.
2. Complete misunderstanding of the process ie that the Issues and Options document and the draft plan had to be put out for consultation to the Parishioners who would need to fully support it.
3. Without knowing what would be in the draft plan speculation was rife.
4. Concern that no representative from the PC was officially at the meeting.
5. Fear by Farmers and Landowners that the NhP would seek to dictate, or further restrict the future development of their businesses and land.
6. Display of a "them and us "division developing. An obvious reluctance of sections of the community to accept the changes over the years and the changing demographics.
7. Significant support from the meeting for the PC to lift the "pausing" of the Neighbourhood Plan and to include all those members of the disbanded steering group augmented with additional members including Parish Councillors.

8 Sentiments of disappointment were expressed in regard to the behaviour and actions of the PC on this matter.

## 9. Voting on the following resolutions proposals.

Please note: Only members at the meeting who are registered on the Electoral Role of Crosthwaite & Lyth Parish are eligible to vote on these resolutions.

Roger Smith and Adrian Leather carried out the role of Counters for the voting.

### "A" Original Proposals as set out in the original notice of the meeting circulated to all in Parish.

- A1 It is proposed that the Parish Council reverse the decision taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 to pause the Neighbourhood plan process indefinitely and take all reasonably necessary steps to ensure that preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is progressed without further delay.

**Proposed and Seconded. Vote For 57 Against 25 Abstentions 3  
Therefore, motion carried.**

- A2 It is proposed that the Parish Council reverse the decision that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is disbanded.

**Proposed and Seconded. Vote For 64 Against 23 Abstentions 3  
Therefore, motion carried.**

- A3 It is proposed that the Parish Council actively participate in finding additional members for the Neighbourhood plan Steering Group, to address concerns raised by some Parish Councillors.

**Proposed and Seconded. Vote Carried Unanimously**

### "B" With reference to the proposal to resume work on the Neighbourhood Plan passed unanimously by the Crosthwaite & Lyth Parish Council On February 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 (a copy of which is set out below) and using the same Numbering for the conditions.

*" The Parish Council will resume work on the NH Plan on the following Conditions.*

*1. Terms of Reference will be drawn up by the Parish Council to ensure Standards of best practise are met, and the Plan stands the best chance of passing the required tests. The terms of reference will include the criteria the Council apply to the selection of the Group to ensure a representative range of members.*

*The terms will also include a requirement that members of the new Group follow the Nolan Principles and Council Code of Conduct.*

*2. The working Group will be appointed by the Parish Council in accordance with the terms of reference. It is hoped that at least 2 of the former Plan group will be appointed. Mediation will be commissioned, if the Council deem it necessary, to ensure effective communication is established and maintained within the Group, and between the Council and the Group.*

*3. All information gathered thus far must be lodged with the Clerk to the Council: including all emails sent and received in the name of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, records of all meetings and agendas, contact details of all those consulted or involved in any way, and all the evidence generated*

*4. In recognition of the wishes in the Crosthwaite village to have a NH Plan, the parish Council may seek to redesignate a revised NP Development area to include Crosthwaite Green, Churchtown and Starnthwaite areas. This would be subject to consultation with the LDNP and the community. (This has been agreed in Burneside where circumstances similar to ours arose, so there is precedent for this) "*

**It is therefore proposed that:**

1. Subject to (2) below Condition 1 is approved.

2. The Working Party to be appointed by the Parish Council shall include such former members of the Steering Group (at the time it was disbanded) who confirm that they are willing to be members of the Working Group working in accordance with the Terms of Reference referred to in (1) above.

**Proposed and seconded. Vote for 53 Against 17 Abstentions 5  
Therefore, Motion Carried**

3 Condition 3 is agreed: and

**Proposed and seconded. For 70 Against 1 Abstentions 1  
Therefore, Motion Carried**

4. The possible course of action outlined in Condition 4 is not practical or acceptable and at best will only lead to long delays and reinforce division within the community. But the Working Party should consider, in consultation with the community, and as part of the wider consultation required in respect of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the possibility of delineating certain parts of the Parish such that it may be treated differently from other parts.

**Proposed and Seconded. For 75 Against 2 Abstentions 1.  
Therefore, Motion carried**

A request was made from the floor for a further motion as follows.

Would the Meeting agree that the Neighbourhood Plan  
be stopped completely.

**Proposed and Seconded. For 22 Against 57 Abstentions 1  
Therefore, Motion failed.**

10. The Chair thank all for attending and contributing and closed the meeting.

Signed.

..... John Holmes  
Charman..