

Please Attend a Parish Meeting at the Argles Memorial Hall Crosthwaite On Monday 7th February 2022 at 7 pm

Last week an invitation to attend the above meeting was delivered to all Parishioners.

Since then, there has been a further development in that at the Crosthwaite & Lyth Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday the 1st of February the matter of the Neighbourhood Plan was included on the Agenda.

At that point in the meeting the Chair, Mary Harkness, put forward a proposal to her fellow Councillors that the Parish Council (PC) would review their earlier decision to Pause Indefinitely (effectively stop) progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and disband the Steering Group.

For information a copy of this Proposal is printed on the reverse of this notice.

The proposal was unanimously agreed by Councillors without discussion or debate. Whilst this reconsideration is welcome it is felt that some of the conditions are potentially likely to be unacceptable namely:

1. The proposal to consider reducing the area of the Neighbourhood Plan to only cover the three hamlets of Crosthwaite Village. This would mean that Gilpin Bridge, The Howe, The Row, The High, Pool Bank, Bowland Bridge and Hubbersty Head would not be included in the Plan. In addition, changing the "designated area" 4 years into the process would create significant delays, both from the consultation required to change the area, and, if changed, the requirement to repeat the entire data gathering and research process from the beginning. Furthermore, undertaking the research and data gathering process again would mean that the £4500 government grant currently spent on building this data would be wasted. The preparation of the plan has effectively been delayed since last May and further lengthy delays would be most unwelcome.
2. Given the time, effort and expertise that members of the Steering Group at the date of its disbandment have put in to developing the plan to date it would seem only fair, reasonable and practical to invite all of them to continue, albeit supported by additional volunteers and by a positive and active participation of Parish Councillors. These members responded to invitations from the PC both at the time the Plan was being set up and to subsequent requests for volunteers issued by the PC and were all appointed by the PC to the Steering Group.

It is therefore felt that the meeting on Monday 7th February should go ahead to ensure that the community is fully informed as to progress so far and can ask questions and give input as to the way forward. This is of course a meeting for all Parishioners whether supportive or opposed to the plan proceeding.

Referring to information in the first leaflet regarding an option for residents who cannot attend the meeting to email a reply. Under the rules and regulations of calling a Parish Meeting such responses cannot be accepted as a vote either way. However, if a Parishioner requests that the content of their email is read out at the meeting this can be done. Names of responders will not be divulged unless the responder specifically asks to be named. In the interests of "openness" it would be appreciated if these email responses are copied to both of the email addresses detailed in the first leaflet, namely; crosthwaiteandlyth.pc@hotmail.co.uk and johnmholmes@live.co.uk

Following the calling of a Parish Meeting for next Monday_(7th February), 3 councillors have requested that the decision taken at the 10th of November 2021 meeting to pause the Neighbourhood Plan process indefinitely be revisited

The Council recognises there are electors who very strongly wish to have a ND Plan, as well as those who do not believe it is effective or cost efficient. The pressures on the PC to accede to the group in favour of a ND Plan have been considerable. Council wishes to foster a spirit of cooperation and open minded, respectful engagement.

The PC notes that the majority of those demanding a NH Plan live in Crosthwaite village. Councillors also note that most of those who have expressed reservations about having a Plan live out of the village area.

This polarisation and anger have to be addressed. The PC wants to do whatever is in its power to start a healing process that leads to effective communication and respect. In the interests of community relations, the PC is reaching out to try to bridge divisions.

Here is the proposal.

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 practice are met, and the Plan stands the best chance of passing the required tests. The terms of reference will include the criteria that Council will 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 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 wish in 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 LDNPA and the community. (This has been agreed in Burneside where circumstances similar to ours arose, so there is precedent for this)