

CRESSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

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Parish Newsletter 2014

It has been a busy and interesting time for the newly elected council. Seven new members were employed - which is probably very unusual for a Parish Council. Unfortunately, three members have lately resigned due to other commitments with one new councillor, Mr Tom Steele, having recently been co-opted. There are currently two vacancies advertised on the parish noticeboards and website.

Parish Council Meetings

Cresswell Parish Council has six annual meetings that are held in The Village Hall on alternate months. They are usually held on the second Wednesday of the month and start at 7pm. At the beginning of each meeting ten minutes is set aside so that parishioners are able to ask questions that are important to them.

The meeting dates for 2014 are:-

Wednesday 9 April	7pm	Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 14 May	7pm	Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 9 July	7pm	
Wednesday 10 September	7pm	
Wednesday 12 November	7pm	

Dates for meetings in January and March 2015 will be confirmed in due course.

Parish Councillors

At present your parish councillors are:-

- Michael Wright (Chair)
- Drew Laing
- Louise Wright
- Alan Richardson
- Tom Steele

Information, agendas and minutes are available on the Parish website (www.cresswell-pc.org.uk) and posted on the parish noticeboards.

The Parish Clerk for Cresswell can be contacted by e-mail, clerk@cresswell-pc.org.uk or telephone 01670 861438.

Landslip on Beach Road C110

Although the edge of the road had been reinforced with a concrete raft, the soft verge was potentially dangerous to both traffic and pedestrians. The estimated cost to re-instate the landslip was prohibitive. With the full support of ward councillor Scott Dickinson, a safety barrier has now been installed.



Garden Plots

Problems with the garden plots have been an ongoing issue for many years. Last summer the situation worsened with unauthorised campers on the seaward side of the road leaving a disgusting mess. Two extra signs have since been posted, one on each side of the road. The Parish Council are currently in discussion with NCC on what further action can be taken.



Parking

In busy periods the village becomes congested with cars which often double park and restrict access in and out of Cresswell, despite council car parks located at both the North and South ends of the village. NCC has produced a plan proposing double yellow lines. The plan is currently being reviewed by the Parish Council.

Sand Extraction

One of the main concerns recently has been the proposed sand extraction at Hemscott Hill where an application has raised to remove nearly half a million tonnes of sand. Although the applicant has planning permission, this dates back to over half a century ago. This is an area of natural beauty, as well area of special scientific interest. Recently Bronze Age footprints have been exposed on the beach due to sand erosion. A video of the sand extraction showing the area where the footprints can be seen has been made by Demi Wright (age 12) and has been posted on YouTube - search for 'Cresswell Sand Extraction'.

There have been numerous objections to this proposed extraction by local residents and Cresswell Parish Council. The Parish Council will be meeting NCC again shortly to discuss some of the issues raised at their last meeting.

Pele Tower

Arguably the most exciting opportunity in recent years is the Pele Tower which is in desperate need of restoration. Park Resorts Ltd, the current owners, have approached the Parish Council with a view to transferring ownership to the village. The Parish Council, with the help of resident archaeologist Barry Mead, are currently working on a start-up grant application to the Lottery Trust - the objective being to evaluate the future sustainability of the tower.

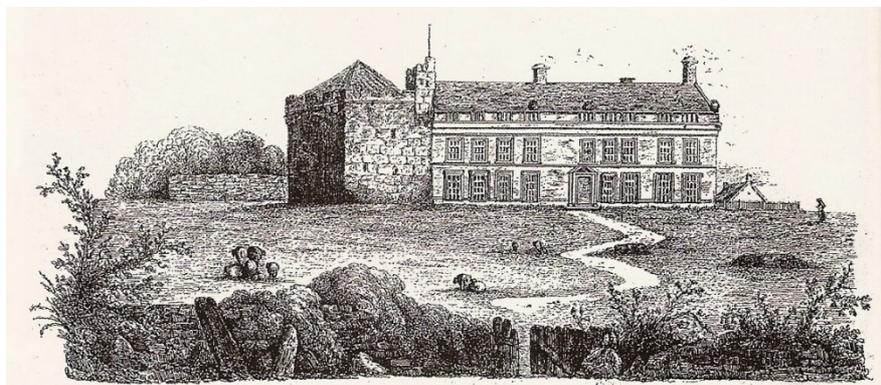
Cresswell Pele Tower: Past, Present and Future

Cresswell Pele Tower was built by the Cresswell family in the 15th century and is one of approximately 80 pele towers in Northumberland.

Pele towers are fortified houses and were built as a defence against the Border Reivers, raiders and robbers from either side of the Scottish border. This time of violence petered out after the union of the Scottish and English crowns in 1603 and many pele towers fell into decay. Some, like the one at Cresswell, were incorporated into later buildings. When originally built, Cresswell Tower was too small to have been lived in permanently and it is likely that the Cresswell family lived in a house nearby which was connected to the tower by a bridge.

The current doorway on the ground floor is the original entrance and, typically, led into a space that was used for storage or for keeping animals. The only way to get to the living quarters upstairs was by a very narrow, twisty stone staircase which was easy to defend. On the first floor there was a kitchen, living area and a deluxe garderobe (toilet). The toilet is still there but not in working order! The top floor was probably used for sleeping and would have been particularly cold and damp as there are no fireplaces at this level. There are stairs from here to the parapet that runs around the top of the tower.

In about 1750 the medieval house near to the Pele tower was replaced by this grand Mansion House. This house was demolished in about 1845.



The Mansion House was in turn replaced by Cresswell Hall, located on the far side of what is now Cresswell Towers Holiday Park. Cresswell Hall itself was demolished in the 1930s but the Stable Block and some other stonework can still be seen in Hall Wood.



Cresswell Hall, 1832

Future Plans for the Tower

Cresswell Pele Tower is currently owned by Park Resorts. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 11 Listed building which means it has to be preserved for future generations. There is no access to the interior at present.*

In recent months Cresswell Parish Council has been in discussion with Park Resorts with a view to transferring ownership to the Parish Council so that the necessary capital funds can be applied for to restore the structure, put a roof on it to protect it from the elements and open it as a visitor attraction to both local residents and visitors.

To this end meetings have been held with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage, as well as seeking advice from conservation architects and safety advisors with regard to access.

These meetings have been very positive and the Parish Council will be seeking a Start-up Grant from the HLF which will allow the Parish Council to get detailed costs for the restoration and ongoing maintenance costs and help with the preparation of a detailed business plan.

If the project is successful there will be volunteer opportunities to help us deliver this ambitious project. Watch this space!

Barry Mead – Local Historian and Cresswell Resident

New Business

The former Drift Inn has been refurbished by the proprietors, Duncan and Kate Lawrence, who have recently opened as the Drift Café.

The Parish Council have wished them well in their venture and hope local residents will give them support.

Finance

With the exception of the cost of a new concrete waste bin purchased to replace the plastic bin which was set on fire at Snab Point, there has been no major expenditure. There has therefore been no requirement to increase the precept for 2014/15.

Main Expenditure 2013/14	£
NALC Membership	45
Came & Co Insurance	400
Clerk's Remuneration	2000
BDO Audit Fee	Nil
Accountancy	40
Admin (hire of village hall)	70
Website Maintenance	100
Village Maintenance	580
Contingency fund (election costs)	350
TOTAL	3585
PRECEPT	3800

Contact Telephone Numbers

Northumbria Police	-	Dial 101 for non-emergency incidents.
Northumberland County Council (NCC)	-	0845 600 6400
Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	-	01670 623051

