

DRAFT

Minutes of a meeting of Casterton Parish Council held at Casterton Village Hall on Tuesday September 10th at 6.45pm.

Present were Councillors John Bye (acting chairman for the evening), May Mackie, Claire Wildsmith, Ken Humphris and eight members of the public. Apologies were received from Enid Hastings and Kevin Price

Councillor Bye began by reporting on the Clerk's recent bereavement and a moment's silence was observed.

He then opened the meeting by reminding everyone that this was to be a short meeting as there was a single Agenda item: *"To agree the Date, Agenda and Chairman for a Public Meeting at which the residents of Casterton can decide how funds emanating from the RHI rebate might be distributed for the benefit of the community"* and that there was no Agenda item for Public Participation.

Councillor Humphris was asked to give a brief overview of events since the installation of photo-voltaic panels on the roof of Casterton School. The lack of progress in making arrangements for the disbursement of the very generous grant from the school was unfortunate, and no blame attaches to the school for this. Nonetheless the RHI rebate has been in payment for at least two years, and there are no arrangements in place or planned for it to be used for the benefit of the community. The Council feels that a properly constituted public meeting with an independent chairman, at an agreed date is an appropriate way to proceed. Casterton School wish to be present at such a meeting and said they hoped for an invitation to it from the Parish Council.

It was agreed that Casterton Village Hall was the most convenient venue for the meeting.

Councillors believed that any chairman should have had no involvement with the Green Streets project, and should not be a Casterton resident. Suggestions were: any of the three district/county councillors, a former resident businessman who has now lives outside the village, and the rector of Kirkby Lonsdale. It was agreed to first approach county/district councillor Nick Cotton, before talking to any others, as he is local and known to many residents.

Once a chairman has accepted, Councillor Humphris agreed to check his availability and that of the village hall, to try and identify half a dozen dates for the public meeting between now and the end of October. These would be circulated quickly to all interested parties to find a consensus.

The chairman expressed the view that to agree the Agenda for a Public Meeting was perhaps inappropriate, as the meeting will guide the debate. He suggested 'Topics for Discussion' instead and this was agreed. After some discussion councillors agreed that the topics should include

1. An indication of the likely annual amount, and for how long it might be made available by Casterton School.
2. Who can benefit from the fund - individuals/organizations/whole community?
3. Should the fund be disbursed in Casterton Parish/Cumbria/more widely?
4. Should a new body be set up to handle the fund? A charity/charitable trust/public interest company/other?
5. Do those present at the meeting make decisions, or should wider consensus be sought via a vote covering all residents?

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.15pm.

These Minutes were prepared from the notes of all the councillors present.