

Minutes of a meeting of Casterton Parish Council held at Casterton Village Hall on Thursday 12th September 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present were Councillors Stephen Evans, Ken Humphris and Steve Richmond, three members of the public and Parish Clerk Kevin Price.

Councillor Evans said he had resigned as Chairman of the Council and he proposed Councillor Humphris to be Chairman for this meeting, the position to be confirmed at start of the next meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Richmond.

24/52 Public participation:

Andrew Makinson (Councillor at Ireby with Leck PC), spoke regarding the Sustrans Scheme for a Greenway which passes through part of Casterton parish. There are concerns over the route proposed for Cowan Bridge and a well-attended Public Meeting (attended by Councillor Humphris) had been held in order to assess resident's views. The scheme is in its early stages yet but it was agreed to invite Jim Yeomans of Sustrans to attend a future Parish Council meeting, in order to outline what the proposals are for Casterton.

24/53 Requests for Dispensations: None.

24/54 Declarations of Interest:

Councillor Humphris declared an interest in the Casterton Community Hub (Save the Pheasant) project.

24/55 Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May 2024, having been circulated, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk agreed to circulate the draft minutes to all Councillors prior to them being published. Any Councillors wishing to comment should do so directly to the Chairman who will collate the comments and pass them back to the Clerk within seven days of receiving them.

24/56 Declaration of Casual Vacancy:

Chris Benson had resigned as a Parish Councillor and the Clerk had declared this to Westmorland & Furness Council. The Council will be notified by 19th September, if the Vacancy is to be filled by Election or Co-option. If an Election is held and it is contested, the cost to the Parish Council could be in the region of £2,000.

The Council is already authorised to fill one vacancy by co-option, so, should an Election be requested it will be for a single vacancy.

24/57 Appointment of a Councillor as Founding Trustee of Casterton Community Trust:

Following the resignation of Chris Benson as a Councillor, he ceased to be the Casterton Parish Council Founder Trustee on Casterton Community Trust with immediate effect. It was agreed that Councillor Steve Richmond would take on the role and the Clerk was asked to advise the Secretary of Casterton Community Trust of the change. Councillor Humphris will attend the meeting of Casterton Community Trust on 16th September, as Councillor Richmond is not available on that date.

24/58 Updates/Councillor announcements:

The 80th Anniversary of VE Day will be on 8th May 2025 and Chris Benson had sent Councillor Evans some information about events to mark the occasion. Councillor Evans agreed to speak to Chris Benson and discuss what sort of events might be organised in Casterton.

24/59 Finance:

- a. It was resolved to pay the following accounts:

CALC	£38.17	Outstanding subscription
K M Price	£165.76	Quarterly expenses to 30 th June, Including use of home office and travel.

- b. It was resolved to reimburse Councillor Humphris as follows for payments made during the period when the bank account could not be used:

Zurich Municipal – insurance premium	£465.39
Casterton Community Hub – remainder of grant	£760.00

- c. It was resolved to contribute £10 to Holy Trinity Church, Casterton, for the use of the church for the last meeting.
- d. Former Councillor Chris Benson had refused to sign a cheque that had been authorised in a Council meeting, refusing to sign the mandate to allow the new signatories to function and stopping a cheque, with no valid reason and without any authority from the Council, resulting in the Council unable to operate its bank account for many weeks.

This has now been resolved and it was confirmed that Councillors Humphris and Richmond, and the Clerk, are the authorised signatories, any two to sign.

- e. The report from the Internal Auditor was received with thanks. There were no issues to be brought to the Council's attention.

24/60 Planning: None.

24/61 Website:

Sally Hodge had emailed a brief report which was circulated to all Councillors. All details on the website had been recently updated

24/62 Dog fouling:

Councillor Humphris gave a brief verbal report. He agreed to contact Andrew Vickers at Westmorland & Furness Council to request one of the existing bins be moved to a more suitable location, and also to request advice on possible publicity material to be posted in the area.

24/63 Community Strategy/Development Plan:

The last Parish Plan was in 2013. Councillor Richmond suggested that the Council should have a five-year plan for the village, based on an assessment, via a simple survey, of what residents expect of the Council. He agreed to put some suggestions together as to how this might be taken forward and it will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

24/64 'Save the Pheasant':

Councillor Humphris read the most recent report from the 'Save the Pheasant' group (which is on the website). Due to the change of government, the main source of outside funding is not at present available. An expected sale did not go ahead, and the current situation is unknown.

24/65 Procedure for the Co-option of new Councillors:

The suggested procedure for the co-option of new Councillors, which was circulated prior to the last meeting, was adopted as this Council's official policy. The Clerk will ask for it to be placed on the website as soon as practicable. A meeting between representatives of CALC and Councillor Humphris and the Clerk had confirmed that the co-option procedure followed in March this year was almost identical to that now adopted and that the co-options has been carried out in this manner.

24/66 Code of Conduct:

The Clerk had circulated the Code of Conduct to all Councillors, as a reminder that all Councillors are bound by this code, upon their signing their 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' form.

24/67 Rights of Way Officer:

Councillor Evans agreed to take on this position, acting as lead person to address the longstanding problem of safe walking routes and this could be a first challenge for this role.

24/68 Ongoing issues:

- a. Verges in the parish – there is much interest in the prospect of protecting/improving verges in order to enhance biodiversity, and Councillor Richmond suggested that this could come within the scope of the Parish Plan as envisioned in minute 24/63.
- b. Parish Plan – this had already been discussed under 24/63
- c. Ongoing maintenance of the Village Green: Council Humphris will speak to the individuals who cut the grass at the Village Green and the Village Hall, to see whether one of them is able to take on a slightly wider maintenance role for the Village Green. If so, the scope would need to be defined.
- d. Ongoing maintenance of the War Memorial: Councillor Evans confirmed that this is the responsibility of the Church Council.

24/69 Correspondence:

An email had been received from Mr Richard Murray, requesting the Council to consider, together with other bodies, the creation of a safe walking route from Casterton to Kirkby Lonsdale.

Whilst the Council recognised the safety issue associated with walking to Kirkby Lonsdale down the main road and supports the proposal to develop a safe path it was recognised that this may take some considerable time. As an interim measure a suggestion was made, and supported, for the Council to prepare a map showing the safe walking route from the village to Kirkby Lonsdale via Higher Casterton and Laitha Lane. This would be made available FOC in the Pheasant, garage, Kirkby Lonsdale Tourist Information Centre, etc. Councillor Humphris and Richmond will progress this.

24/70 Date of the next meeting:

***Thursday 14th November 2024 at 7.30pm at Casterton Village Hall.
(This will be the Precept Meeting)***

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed:

Dated:

