

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Casterton, held at Casterton Village Hall on Monday 9th June 2025 at 7.15pm.

(This meeting, originally called for 20th May 2025, was reconvened)

Councillor Ken Humphris, Chairman of Casterton Parish Council, was in the chair and welcomed 24 members of the public, including all of the Parish Councillors, Westmorland & Furness Councillor Hazell Hodgson and Parish Clerk Kevin Price.

There were no apologies for absence.

Minutes:

The minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2024, having been circulated were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman. It was not deemed necessary to read them out in full as they had been available for nearly a year.

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report:

The Chairman gave a full report on the year's activities:

A brief summary of the council's activities during the last 12 months:

- No change was made to the precept so no change to the Casterton element of your council tax
- We commented on 12 Planning Applications
 - Objected to 1 (The Pheasant)
 - Supported 11 with 1 amendment actioned
 - YDNPA granted 10, refused 1, with 1 still pending (Pheasant)
- A beacon was lit on Brownthwaite to remember D-day on June 8th 2024
- The Council currently owns the street lights and directly funds the running costs. Ownership, maintenance and running costs for the street lighting is being transferred to WFC
- Some support has been received from WFC Highways
 - We suggested sites for additional dog poo bins. WFC surveyed the sites and recommended an extra one, which has been installed
 - Their attention to surveying possible dangerous roadside trees, and removing fly tipping has been prompt
 - But less success has been achieved in having potholes repaired

- A village plan, proposed by one of our Councillors, has been quickly developed by a village team of 7 (comprising two Councillors and five volunteers) and a report on this will follow shortly. The Council gave financial support for the project
- The Casterton Community Hub project (Save the Pheasant) has been set up and is functioning with financial support from the council. We will have a more detailed report shortly. The council will speak against the application at the planning committee (probably in July).
- A first step has been taken to re-engage with the local police, who no longer are able to attend our Council meetings, through the new policing pledge, aiming at closer communications with the community. This has started with a regular if infrequent Zoom meeting (contact is Sgt Suzanne Scott O'Neill) and hopefully the relationship will evolve.
- One Councillor resigned, and one new Councillor was coopted
- A formal cooption policy was written and adopted (and has since been copied by other Councils) and is on the website
- A disruption to the banking arrangements occurred after our Building Society improperly allowed a cheque authorised by the Council to be cancelled by a single Council signatory. The resulting problems were eventually overcome and the Council accepted that human error at the Building Society had allowed this to happen. The signatory in question subsequently resigned
- We all know that pedestrians use the A683, at grave risk to themselves. Attempts to identify a complete off-road walking route between Casterton and Devil's Bridge have so far been unsuccessful. As a stop gap, a leaflet identifying several routes avoiding A683, has been designed and printed and made available FOC to local businesses, Kirkby Lonsdale TIC etc
- To further deter walking on A683, three additional NP finger posts have been erected at Devil's bridge, in the Loop Road and at the bottom of Laitha Lane near Wood Close caravan site. Clearer wording is being installed on three others to make clearer the recommended route to Casterton. All these signs have been provided by YDNPA and part funded by the council
- Another volunteer for cooption will be voted on at tonight's Council meeting. If he is accepted, Casterton Parish Council will once again be back to its full quota of five Councillors.
- Finally I have to pay tribute to the village volunteers who make such a huge contribution to village life. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE ONLY:
 - Setting up and maintaining a website, serving both the parish council and the village, which is a credit to the village
 - Researching and publishing many articles on the history of the village
 - Establishing the Save the Pheasant group and all the work that has been done to try and protect this vital asset

- Coming forward to form the Casterton Village Plan group
- Maintaining the availability of the defibrillators by regular inspection and cleaning
- Picking litter on the back lanes
- Mowing and tidying up the village green and village hall grass

Some of these actions were initiated by the Council, some weren't, some involve Councillors directly and some don't but there is no doubting the enormous contribution of these volunteers.

Westmorland & Furness Councillor:

Councillor Hodgson assisted the Council throughout the meeting and her input was valued. She reminded the meeting that a number of grants are currently available to voluntary organisations and she can supply details to anyone on request.

Other matters mentioned included:

- a. Waste Services consultation is open until 15th July.
- b. Rigmaden Bridge initial work has commenced and cranes have been lowered into the river bed. The timescale for this work is not known.
- c. The bridge at Old Hutton is closed until 15th July.
- d. The A683 north of Casterton is to be re-surfaced before September and junction road markings are to be reinstated.
- e. Problems with Ash Dieback are in hand.
- f. The next Respect Meeting is on Barbon on 11th July.
- g. Grit bins. The piles of grit have been filled up.

Reports from organisations and groups in the parish:

The following groups gave reports:

Holy Trinity Church – Stephen Evans
 Village Hall – Jill Hiumphris on behalf of Gill Sykes
 WI – Melanie Harvey
 Casterton Community Trust – Rob Leese
 Casterton Hub ('Save the Pheasant') – Simon Drakeford
 Village Plan – Steve Richmond

(copies of these are available upon request from the Clerk)

Further public participation and any other business:

None

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed:

Dated: