

**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
CASTLE EDEN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2026**

Present:

Councillor Mrs M Wilmer (Chair)
Councillors D Gordon, L Taylor, J McCallum and J Welsh

Also Present: 2 residents

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs M Wilmer be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs J Welch be elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

COUNCILLOR MRS M WILMER IN THE CHAIR

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Woodhouse.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

RESOLVED that Mr G Fletcher be appointed Internal Auditor for the ensuing year.

6. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED that no Councillors be appointed to outside bodies.

7. POLICE REPORT

There was no police report.

8. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on **23 APRIL 2026**, copy of which had been circulated to each Member were approved and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising
Castle Eden Inn – no report had been received regarding the areas of concerns raised.

9. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

There was no report submitted.

10. **CORRESPONDENCE**

County Durham Red Squirrel Initiative – the group was formed to protect trees and preserve red squirrels and increase their range in West Yorkshire and were seeking donations. Councillors queried what the donation would be used for.

RESOLVED that further information be sought.

11. **PLANNING PROPOSALS**

DM/26/00979/TPO Removal of 3 x Ash Trees that have clear evidence of Ash Dieback fungus removal of 1 x dying Sycamore tree at Trelayne, 4 Parklands Drive, Castle Eden

RESOLVED that no objection be made.

DM/25/00970/FPA Demolition of existing garage/store and erection of attached garage and installation of access gates and piers at The Old Station House, Stockton Road, Castle Eden

The amended application had dealt with a number of issues and would not be used for any business activity. It would be part of the house and would not be visible, only part of the roof line. The new gates had not been addressed, however it was illegal to have gates opening outwards.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

12. **FINANCE**

Balance as per bank reconciliation as 8 May was £51,107.33
Bank statements were viewed by the Chair

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	CHEQUE NO
Co Durham Association of Local Councils	Subscription	£128.69	000781
G Fletcher	Internal Audit	£100	000782
Clear Insurance	Insurance renewal	£962.42	000783

13. **CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION**

Smaller Authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2021 could certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

RESOLVED that the Certificate of Exemption be agreed.

14. **ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/26**

Consideration was given to the report of the Internal Auditor which examined the system of internal controls that were in place to ensure that the Parish Council may obtain an adequate level of assurances for its activities, a copy of which had been circulated.

The report gave details of the annual review of the internal control arrangements within the Council.

Members were advised that all Local Councils in England were expected to complete an Annual Return which summarised their annual activities at the completion of each financial year.

It was Members responsibility to ensure that financial management was adequate and effective, and the Council had a sound system of internal controls.

A section within the Annual Return had been completed by the Parish Council's independent internal auditor and in his view the system of internal controls were adequate for the purpose intended and had been operated effectively. The Report recommended that the internal controls within the Parish Council were satisfactory.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Report 2025/26 be accepted.

15. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/26**

RESOLVED that the annual governance statement be approved and the following confirmed:

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting records and control systems.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate, included them in the accounting statements.
9. Trust Funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.

16. **ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2025/26**

Consideration was given to the Statement of Accounts and asset register for the Year Ended 31 March 2026, a copy of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts and asset register be approved.

17. **STANDING ORDERS**

The Clerk advised that Standing Orders would be reviewed throughout the year.

RESOLVED that the Standing Orders be adopted.

18. **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Clerk advised that new Financial would be reviewed throughout the year.

RESOLVED that the Financial Regulations be adopted.

19. **VILLAGE MATTERS**

Community Speedwatch had been conducted by one of the Councillors and a resident. He circulated statistics of what they recorded during the time period. Four other volunteers would be trained to use the equipment. This information would be forwarded to the police as evidence of the need to have the speed limit reduced. Councillor confirmed that they would like an application making to Durham County Council to reduce the speed limit.

One of the Councillors had visited the mini roundabouts between 5pm and 530pm and recorded a number of offences. There were 16 offences in total and 10 tried to cut other motorists off at the roundabouts. This information would be forwarded to the police as evidence of the need to have the road junction addressed.