

# SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL MONTHLY  
MEETING** of the **Council** held at **7 p.m.** on  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**  
in  
**Sedgefield Parish Hall**

## MINUTES

**Present** Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)  
Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and  
Cllrs. David Brown, Ann Carr, Mark Cant, Elizabeth Flanagan, Catherine Hart,  
Peter Hinde, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

**Officers** Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies:**  
Cllrs Ciaran Butterworth, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth and Dave Jasper,
2. **Declaration of interest:**  
None.
3. **STC Minutes / Committee Reports:**
  - a. **Minutes of Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group held Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**  
These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AB / M Carr )
  - b. **Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**  
These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AC / PH )
  - c. **Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**  
These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AC / EF )
  - d. **Minutes of the Environment committee held Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**  
These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AC / M Cant )
  - e. **Minutes of the Community Development committee held Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**  
These were confirmed as a correct record. ( MW / AC )
  - f. **Minutes of the Personnel committee held Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**

These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AB / MW )

**g. Minutes of Joint Sedgfield in Bloom and Town Council Meeting held Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**

These were confirmed as a correct record. ( M Carr / JA )

**h. Minutes of the Finance Working Group held Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**

These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AB / M Carr )

**i. Minutes of the Estates Working Group held Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:**

These were confirmed as a correct record. ( AB / JT )

**RESOLVED: To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein.**

**4. Matters of Information:**

**4.1 The Sedgfield Plan:**

To not review The Sedgfield Plan at this time but to do so when there are any significant changes to the NPPF, and/or the County Durham Plan, which would impact upon Sedgfield or to consider this matter again at some point in 2025/26 if there have not been any changes at national or principal authority level, i.e. to ensure a watching brief is kept over the Town's neighbourhood plan.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**4.2 Public Participation:**

Sprucely Farm proposed anaerobic digester – the Town Council submitted a letter of objection to DCC Planners reiterating its objections from May 2024 with request to attend the DCC Planning Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025. The Clerk reported this application was not considered at the April 2025 meeting and at this time a date is unknown for future Planning Committee meeting. The Clerk will continue to keep Cllrs updated on this matter. It was agreed that, depending upon the date, Cllrs Mel Carr and Peter Hinde would represent the Town Council with Cllr Carr speaking and Cllr Hinde shadowing.

The Clerk has informed DCC's Conservation Officer of public concerns regarding the number of litter bins in the Town's Conservation Area as well as the clothes bin which has been located outside the Premier Convenience Store. DCC's Conservation Officer is now investigating both these matters and liaising with other colleagues

including those in Planning Enforcement. He will keep the Clerk updated and the Clerk will duly share information with Cllrs as received.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**4.3 Current Planning Applications:**

Comments on planning applications 1-4 were submitted to DCC Planners.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**4.4 Current Planning Applications:**

No comments or objections were made by Cllrs in relation to planning applications DM/25/00069/FPA, DM/25/00535/FPA, DM/25/00582/VOC and DM/25/00624/FPA.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**5. Dates of Meetings:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated all details of all meetings in April 2025 plus events until November 2025.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**6. Public Participation:**

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr closed the meeting to allow the public to give their views and comments.

County Cllr Chris Lines reported that currently there are 796 comments shown on DCC's planning portal in relation to the Sprucely Farm planning application. Future dates for DCC's Planning Committee will not be known until after the forthcoming elections and DCC's AGM but it is unlikely this application will be considered before June/July 2025. County Cllr Lines said that he hoped following the elections that whoever is elected will get together with representatives of Sedgefield Town Council, Bishop Middleham Parish Council and Fishburn Parish Council to ensure that representations made at DCC Planning Committee will be co-

ordinated and make effective use of the time permitted to speak. At this time the recommendation of DCC's Planning Officer dealing with this planning application is unknown. By the time this application is considered DCC's Planning Committee will have new members and may well have a new Chair and this application could be one of the first to be considered at what could be a meeting attended by a very high number of the public. County Cllr Lines said that was optimistic this application could be successfully opposed.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

**7. Internal Reports:**

**7.1 Chairman's Report:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Chairman's Report which detailed the actions he had undertaken since the last Monthly Meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**7.2 Mayor's Report:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Mayor's Report which detailed the actions he had undertaken since the last Monthly Meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**8. External Reports:**

None.

**9. Correspondence:**

**9.1. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 247 Proposed Stopping Up of Highway at North West of Discovery Offices, William Armstrong Way, NETPark, Sedgefield (letter from Ms Kathleen Drinkeld, Department of Transport dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025) [Circulated electronically to all Cllrs 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025]:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated electronically to all a letter from Ms Kathleen Drinkeld of the Department of Transport regarding a proposed Section 247 Stopping Up of Highways at North West of Discovery Offices, William Armstrong Way, NETPark, Sedgefield. Cllrs did not have any objection to this proposal.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**10. Current Planning Applications:**

A schedule of the current planning applications had been circulated prior to the meeting. Each application was then considered and the following comments were made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

**10.1 DM/25/00690/FPA – two storey side extension and garage conversion, 89 The Meadows, Sedgfield:**

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

**10.2 DM/25/00718/RM – approval of reserved matters relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to DM/20/01351/OUT, land to the East of Sedgfield, Hawthorn Road, Sedgfield:**

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

**10.3 DM/25/0076/PN56 – prior approval application for the installation of solar PV panels on the roof of the existing PFF Factory, Salters Lane Industrial Estate, Sedgfield:**

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

**RESOLVED:**

**The comments on planning applications 1-3 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.**

The Clerk reported that DCC's latest list of planning applications had been published and circulated earlier that day and did not include any applications within, or surrounding, the Parish of Sedgfield.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.10pm.



# SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL P&R MEETING** of the **Council**  
held following the Monthly meeting on  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**  
in  
**Sedgefield Parish Hall**

## MINUTES

**Present** **Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chairman) and**  
Cllrs. David Brown, Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Mel Carr, Elizabeth Flanagan,  
Catherine Hart, Peter Hinde, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

**Officers** Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

**1. Apologies:**

Cllrs Ciaran Butterworth, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth and Dave Jasper.

**2. Declaration of interest:**

None.

**3. Matters of Information:**

**3.1 Terrace Hill Discussion:**

The Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent met on-site in Ceddesfeld Grounds with Mr Martin Lowe of Historic England on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. A follow-up meeting has now taken place with DCC's Conservation Officer and Tree Officer(s) who recommend the Clerk now liaises with DCC's Head of Ecology in order that appropriate specifications and costings can be sought so a further Discussion Meeting can be scheduled with Town Cllrs. Priority work relating to budget planning and community events has meant no further action has taken place in relation to this item and this is likely to be on-hold until the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery has been completed. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.2 Trees in Ceddesfeld Hall Grounds:**

The contractor has been informed of their awarded work and a date is now awaited for the scheduling of this work. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.3 Winterton Cemetery Update:**

The resolutions made at the Town Council's December 2024 meeting are yet to be progressed. However, the Clerk has obtained details of a potential sign maker. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.4 Proposed Parish Hall Grant Funding:**

A grant funding application for the cost of a replacement lift and new floor in the main hall of the Parish Hall has now been submitted to Ashcourt Durham and Tees Valley Community Fund. Initial feedback has been received which indicates this funding application has passed to the second stage in the process. Further additional evidence is being sought for submission. The Clerk and Project & Media Co-ordinator to keep the Town Council updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.5 Loft Insulation – Town Council Offices:**

Loft insulation has now been fitted in the Town Council Offices.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.6 War Memorial:**

The contractor has been informed of their successful quotation and some elements of this work has already been completed. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.7 Stage Curtains and Bar Refurbishment – Parish Hall:**

New stage curtains have now been fitted and discussions are underway regarding when/how to get these installed without disruption to Hall users. Several elements of bar refurbishment need to be confirmed and then work will take place to schedule this work, again ensuring there is no disruption to Hall users. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.8 Mayor's Handbook:**

The recently adopted Mayor's Handbook is now on the Town Council's website.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.9 Re-installation of Goal Posts at Station Road Playing Field:**

Grant funding for this project has now been received and an order for the purchase and installation of the goal posts has been submitted to DCC. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**3.10 2024/25 Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control Report:**

This report is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.11 Licensing – Minor Variation – Mess Charcuterie and Bar:**

The Clerk has informed Ms Karen Baker of DCC that the Town Council has no objections to the minor variation being sought.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.12 Scaffolding Outside Hardwick Arms Hotel:**

The Clerk has informed Mr Popple that the Town Council has no objections to this work and requested a copy of the insurance certificate relating to this work.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.13 Quotation For Decoration To Portacabin and Storage Containers:**

The Clerk confirmed that this work has now been completed.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**3.14 Additional Screening 26 Front Street:**

The Clerk confirmed that this work has now been completed.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information and to close this matter.**

**4. Public Participation:**

The Chairman, Cllr Allan Blakemore, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments.

Mr Chris Lines said that in his capacity as a member of the public he wished to thank all of those Town Councillors who had made the decision to stand down ahead of the forthcoming elections for their work, in particular County Cllr and Town Cllr David Brown. To those returning and new Town Cllrs, Mr Lines said that it was great to see so many people step forward to represent and work on behalf of their town.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

**5. Reports:**

**5.1. Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2024/25 Findings Report by Town Clerk, Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent and Gardener:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2025/26 Findings Report by the Clerk, Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent and Gardener. The number of headstones in the process of being repaired, along with the number of headstones now to be laid flat in accordance with Town Council procedures was noted. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated as to when all necessary headstone have been laid flat.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**5.2 Six Monthly Lift Inspection Update Report by Town Clerk:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Six Monthly Lift Inspection Update Report which confirmed the Parish Hall lift complied with LOLER Regulations and its next inspections is due in September 2025.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**5.3. Review of Exit Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Exit Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Exit Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

**5.4. Review of Dismissal Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Dismissal Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Dismissal Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

- 5.5. Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**  
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Welfare Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

- 5.6. Review of Grievance Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**  
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Grievance Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Grievance Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

- 5.7. Review of Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**  
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

- 5.8. Review of Working Without Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**  
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Working Without Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Working Without Default Retirement Age Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

**5.9. Review of Flexible Retirement Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Flexible Retirement Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Flexible Retirement Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

**5.10. Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Disciplinary Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

**5.11. Review of Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To adopt the reviewed Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.**

**5.12 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Update Report by Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Update Report by the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group. The Clerk confirmed that with the exception of herbicide work no other work had taken place on-site meaning no valuation meeting had been held between White Horse and CS2 Ltd on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025. This meant there would not be any payment required by the Town Council in April 2025 and no report to consider under agenda item 8.2. The Clerk had been informed that contractors would be arriving on-site this week.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 8.

**6. Financial Matters:**

**6.1 Invoices for payment by cheques for approval after 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 numbered 111088 to 111114. The Clerk circulated to all an updated list which also included cheques numbered 111115 to 111122. Cllrs confirmed their support for the authorization of all cheques.

**RESOLVED:**

**i) All cheques and invoices were approved for payment.**

**ii) Cllrs Mel Carr and Allan Blakekmore plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques numbered**

**6.2 Financial Budget Comparison Report by Town Clerk:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Financial Budget Comparison Report which explained that due to the tight timings between the 2024/25 year end, production of 2024/25 year end accounts, opening the 2025/26 financial year and producing April 2025 Committee packs that it had not been possible to produce a financial budget comparison for so early in the new financial year. The first financial budget comparison of 2025/26 would be presented at the May 2025 P&R Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the information.**

**6.3 Debtors List as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:**

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive that there were no debtors as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

**6.4 Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:**

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive the Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

**6.5 March 2025 Bank Reconciliations Plus March 2025 Imprest Account and February 2025 and March 2025 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliations Report by Town Clerk:**

The Clerk circulated to all the bank reconciliations for March 2025 plus March 2025 Imprest Account and February and March 2025 Public Sector Deposit Fund.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**6.6 Internal Audit 2024/25 Inspections Update Report by Finance Working Group:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2024/25 Internal Audit Inspections Update Report by the Finance Working Group which was accompanied by the Internal Auditor's Findings Reports relating to accounts payable, audit of events for 2024, allotments 2024/25, main accounting, budget setting and budgetary control plus cemetery income. Full Assurance rating had been received for all audits. Cllr Allan Blakemore expressed his thanks to all Town Council staff for their hard work which had resulted in Full Assurance being achieved. Cllr Blakemore reminded Cllrs that such an assurance rating should not be taken for granted.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**6.7 Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25 Sedgefield Town Council – Report by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25 Sedgefield Town Council – Report by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor. This summarized all the findings of internal audit work undertaken in 2024/25. The Clerk was pleased to report that all Town Council internal audits during the year had achieved Full Assurance rating, a very significant achievement reflecting hard work undertaken by Council staff during the year. The Clerk wished to express her thanks to Cllrs Towler and Dickerson for their work with improving the Youth Club's internal audit results but was disappointed to note that with their latest audit achieving a Substantial/Full Assurance this had meant the Town Council's overall

rating had been downgraded to that rating. It was hoped during 2025/26 the Youth Club's Management Committee would act upon the recommendations of the internal auditor to raise their level of assurance rating.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**6.8 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group which was accompanied by a proposal by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor.

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan.**

**7. Correspondence:**

**7.1 Permission To Put Tables Outside Book Shop (emails from Ms Sarah Atkinson dated 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025):**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all emails from Ms Sarah Atkinson dated 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 requesting permission to put tables outside her recently opened book shop on Church View. Cllrs were pleased that Ms Atkinson had proactively approached the Town Council regarding this matter prior to attempting to use the village green area. Cllr Mel Carr noted Ms Atkinson's request to use the pavement outside the window of the property and instead proposed permission be given to use the grassed area at the front of the property instead so as to not restrict pavement access or impede on the neighbouring property. Cllr Mel Carr said by making this offer that would reflect the Licences which the Town Council has in place with other businesses in the area. Cllrs were in agreement providing the stipulation was included that a clearly defined area would be included in any Licence and that any street furniture would need to be moved when the Town Council's grass cutting contractor required access to undertake their work.

**RESOLVED:**

**The Clerk to liaise with Ms Atkinson, and providing she is agreeable, then instruct the Town Council's solicitor according regarding a Village Green Licence.**

The Chair, Cllr Allan Blakemore, explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and had any members of the public and/or press been in attendance they would have been asked to leave the meeting at this point (Section 1 Sub-Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

**8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from Public:**

**8.1 Village Greens Update Report by Town Clerk:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Village Greens Update Report to all which was duly considered and way forward agreed.

**8.2 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Valuation Update Report by Town Clerk:**

As reported under item 5.12. no valuation meeting had taken place between White Horse and CS2 Ltd on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025 meaning the Town Council did not have any payment to make in April 2025.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.24pm.

APPROVED

# SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the **P&R**  
in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

## MINUTES

### Present

**Cllr. Mark Cant (Chairman)**

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Ann Carr, Mel Carr, Elizabeth Flanagan, Catherine Hart, Peter Hinde, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

### Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

#### 1. **Apologies:**

Cllr Ciaran Butteworth, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth and Dave Jasper.

#### 2. **Declaration of interest:**

None.

#### 3. **Matters of Information:**

##### 3.1 **Heritage Boards:**

This matter is being actively pursued by the Estates Working Group who will bring a report to a future Environment Committee meeting. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

**To receive the information.**

#### 4. **Public Participation:**

The Chairman, Cllr Mark Cant, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. No members of the public were in attendance. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

#### 5. **Reports:**

None.

**6. Correspondence:**

**6.1. Re-erection of Old Hardwick Hall Gate – Grass Cutting (email and attachment from Mr Angus Hearmon dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025) [circulated to all Cllrs electronically on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025]:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all electronically Cllrs and email and attachment from Mr Angus Hearmon dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 entitled re-erection of old Hardwick Hall Gate. Mr Hearmon knew the land upon which the gate is to be re-erected belonged to DCC but had been told by DCC's Clean and Green Team that as the Town Council cut the grass on this land then it was for the Town Council to stipulate the desired gap between the wall and the gate for the purposes of being able to trim the grass and maintain the nearby hedge. Mr Hearmon confirmed the Friends have obtained the required planning approval and funding for this project. Cllrs agreed that as the land belongs to DCC and DCC, as the Local Planning Authority, have granted full planning permission then it is up to DCC to determine the desired gap between the wall and the gate as the Town Council's grass cutting contractor will work within that stipulation.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**The Clerk to convey this information to Mr Hearmon.**

**6.2. Park Gates (email from Mr Gary Hetherington dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025) [circulated to all Cllrs electronically on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025]:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all electronically an email from Mr Gary Hetherington dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025 entitled park gates. Mr Hetherington was questioning if the soon to be installed old Hardwick Park gate would be covered under the Town Council's insurance as it does the grass cutting in this area. Cllrs agreed this land does not belong to the Town Council but instead DCC and therefore the Town Council's insurance would not cover the feature to be installed by the Friends of Hardwick Park. Cllrs requested the Clerk inform Mr Hetherington that he must liaise with DCC regarding his insurance query to ensure the Friends have their gate correctly insured.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**The Clerk to convey this information to Mr Hetherington.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.32pm.

APPROVED

# SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT



Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the **Council** held following the **Environment Committee** in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

### MINUTES

- Present**                    **Cllr. Mavis Wayman (Chairman)**  
**Cllr Ann Carr (Vice Chairman) and**  
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Elizabeth Flanagan,  
Catherine Hart, Peter Hinde and Julie Towler
- Officer**                    Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)
- 1. Apologies:**  
Cllr Ciaran Butteworth, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth and Dave Jasper.
  - 2. Declaration of interest:**  
None.
  - 3. Matters of Information:**  
There were no matters of information.
  - 4. Public Participation:**  
The Chair, Cllr Mavis Wayman, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. No members of the public were in attendance. The Chair re-opened the meeting.
  - 5. Reports:**  
None.
  - 6. Correspondence:**  
None.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.33pm.

APPROVED

# SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the

**APRIL**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**To Approve Sedgefield Town Council's 2024/25**

**Year End Accounts**

of the **Council** held at **6.15pm**

on

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

in

**Sedgefield Parish Hall**

**Present**

**Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chairman) and**

Cllrs. Cllrs. David Brown, Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Catherine Hart, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

**Officer**

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

**1. Apologies:**

Cllrs. Ann Carr, Mel Carr and Elizabeth Flanagan.

**2. Declaration of interest:**

None.

**3. To approve the financial accounts for 2024/25 including: -**

**a. Annual Governance Statement (2024/25 Annual Governance Statement Report by Finance Working Group):**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement Report by the Finance Working Group which detailed the Council's scope of responsibility under the Account and Audit Regulations 2015, the purpose of the Council's system of internal control, an explanation of the Council's internal control environment and a statement of the actual internal controls in operation.

(Cllrs Catherine Hart and John Finlayson joined the meeting)

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the Annual Governance Statement.**

**b. Year End Accounts for 2024/25:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all the Council's Income and Expenditure Account for 2024/25, the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and the Council's Fixed Assets Schedule for 2024/25.

**RESOLVED:**

**i) Cllrs approved the 2024/25 year end accounts including transfer from the General Fund to the Town Council's ear marked reserve for the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery.**

**ii) The Clerk to ensure the 2024/25 Income and Expenditure account plus Balance Sheet feature in the Town Council's Annual Report for 2024/25 which will be launched at the Town's forthcoming Annual Town meeting along with copies via the Town Council offices, on the website and through the residents database as well as promotion through X (formerly Twitter).**

**c. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a completed copy of Section 2 of the Town Council's Accounting Statement for 2024/25 along with an explanation of differences between Boxes 7 and 8 on the AGAR and explanation of significant variances relating to Total Other Receipts (Box 3) and Total Other Payments (Box 6).

The Clerk then explained to Cllrs how Boxes 1 to 11 of this Statement had been completed using the year end income and expenditure account, balance sheet and fixed assets schedule considered under item 3c) as follows:

- Box 1 stated the Council's carried forward balance from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024;
- Box 2 stated the Council's precept for 2024/25;
- Box 3 stated all Council income less the precept;
- Box 4 stated staff costs, i.e. salaries, PAYE, NI, pension contributions and employment expenses only. The Clerk highlighted that the amount stated in the AGAR was less than that stated on the income and expenditure account as the "Personnel" heading also included PPE, travel costs, training costs,

training accommodation and travel costs and any AVC payments. The Clerk explained the difference between the Town Council's personnel budget heading and the information required for the AGAR. The Clerk confirmed that the other personnel costs had been included in Box 6;

- Box 5 reflected that the Town Council's Public Works Loan was fully repaid in 2022/23;
- Box 6 stated all other payments, i.e. total expenditure less staff costs stated in Box 4;
- Box 7 stated the total balances and reserves at the end of the financial year (this is confirmed by adding Boxes 1, 2 and 3 then subtracting Boxes 4, 5 and 6. The final figure matches the figure stated on the Council's balance sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025);
- Box 8 stated the total value of cash and short-term investments (refer to financial summary – cashbook closing figure);
- Box 9 stated the Council's total fixed assets figure;
- Box 10 reflected that the Town Council does not have any outstanding loans;
- Box 11 is not applicable as the Town Council does not hold any Trust Fund(s).

The Clerk pointed out there were differences in the figures stated in Boxes 7 and 8 for 2024/25 and this difference is because the Town Council's accounts are calculated on an income and expenditure basis rather than on a receipts and payments basis, i.e. Box 8 is cash whereas Box 7 includes the closing debtors, final VAT reclaim, creditors, payments in advance and receipts in advance. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report explaining these differences.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that when there is a +/- above/below a 15% variation between a box figure quoted in the last two financial years an explanation for such is required by the External Auditor. The Clerk reported when comparing 2024/25 with 2023/24 there was a significant variances in the areas of Total Other Receipts (Box 3) and Total Other Payments (Box 6). Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an explanation for these variances. Cllrs accepted these explanations and the Clerk confirmed these would be submitted to the External Auditor along with the AGAR.

The Clerk reports that as the Town Council has either an income or expenditure of over £200,000 it is required to submit to the External Auditor additional evidence as

part of their intermediate audit work. The Clerk confirmed that each year the External Auditor requests different evidence and for 2024/25 such related to risk management, significant events and trust funds.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) **To approve the Accounting Statements 2024/25 for Sedgefield Town Council.**
- ii) **The Vice Chair of the Council and Clerk to sign the AGAR on behalf of Sedgefield Town Council.**
- iii) **The Clerk to submit the AGAR and all necessary intermediate audit evidence to the External Auditor.**
- iv) **The Clerk to ensure the Town Council's website is updated accordingly with 2024/25 financial information.**

**4. VAT Reclaim Update For Period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 Report by Finance Working Group:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report detailing that a VAT reclaim for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 for £10,596.73 was submitted to HMRC and reimbursement has now been received in full.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**5. Internal Audit Report Sedgefield Town Council End of Year Accounts (2024/25) by Mr Gordon Fletcher:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all copies of Mr Fletcher's Internal Audit Report Sedgefield Town Council End of Year Accounts (2024/25) which provided the Council with a Full Assurance rating. The Clerk confirmed that subsequently Mr Fletcher had completed and signed the Internal Audit page of the Council's AGAR.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

(Cllr Peter Hinde joined the meeting)

**6. Exercise of Public Rights Dates Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Exercise of Public Rights Dates

Report by the Finance Working Group informing all the Clerk had set the Town Council's exercise of public rights dates as commencing on Tuesday 3 June 2025 and ceasing on Monday 14 July 2025.

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the Council's Exercise of Public Rights dates commencing on Tuesday 3 June 2025 and ceasing on Monday 14 July 2025.**

Cllr John Finlayson expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk and all other Town Council staff for their work throughout the year to ensure the year end accounts process had been completed in such a timely and professional manner.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 6.40pm.

APPROVED