

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Special Town
Council Public Meeting To Consider Planning
Application DM/26/00456/FPA – Hybrid Proposal To
Erect 48 Dwellings With Vehicle Access,
Landscaping and Associated Infrastructure and an
Additional 2 Dwellings with Associated
Infrastructure on Land to the West of A689
Junction/Stockton Road, Sedgefield** of the **Council**



held at **5.30p.m.** on
Monday 20th April 2026
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chair) and

Cllrs. Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

17 members of the public

1. Apologies:

Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth and Tony Stubbs,

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Welcome and Purpose of Meeting By Sedgefield Town Council Chair:

The Chair of Sedgefield Town Council, Cllr Mel Carr, warmly welcomed all members of the public to this meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting was to find out the views of residents to Planning Application DM/26/00456/FPA – Hybrid Proposal To Erect 48 Dwellings With Vehicle Access, Landscaping and Associated Infrastructure and an Additional 2

Dwellings with Associated Infrastructure on Land to the West of A689 Junction/Stockton Road, Sedgefield. The Chair reported the Town Council had taken a lead in making the local community aware of this application by requesting Banks Group hold a public drop in sessions and had issued several public statements. Cllr Mel Carr concluded that whilst the Town Council wanted to know the views of residents to ensure the Town Council's submission to the Durham County Council, the Local Planning Authority, reflected those views, it was essential that residents must also directly submit their views regarding this planning application to the County Council as it is they who will determine this application.

4. Explanation of Durham County Council Planning Process By Sedgefield Ward County Cllrs Chris Lines and Ian Catchpole:

County Cllr Chris Lines outlined the planning application process and said this would follow the exact same process as that for the Barratt Homes application on land near Beacon Lane with the exception that rather than be considered by Durham County Council's Full Planning Committee this application would go before the South and West Planning Committee as it is not considered by the County Council to be a major development. County Cllr Lines said that as yet there is no date identified for the consideration of the Banks Group's planning application. County Cllr Lines said the planning application being considered now on land to the west of A689 junction/Stockton Road, Sedgefield had been lodged with the Local Planning Authority in February 2026 and is now open for consultation. County Cllr Lines had spoken to a Planning Officer earlier that day who had confirmed that the Local Planning Authority has had various discussions with the applicant and understands that following the Banks Group's public drop-in session held the previous week that they would be amending their scheme and more information would follow. Looking at the County Council's planning portal, County Cllr Lines had noted that to date 19 objections have been submitted in relation to the Banks Group planning application.

County Cllr Lines used this opportunity to give a brief update on the Barratt Homes planning application relating to land near Beacon Lane. Very little information has been forthcoming regarding this application and it appears the application has stalled as a result of Durham County Council Officers and Officers from the Environment Agency expressing their concerns regarding flooding and drainage. It appears that the develop will need to undertake significant work in order to address these matters and this may impact upon their aspirations for the site. No date has been set for a Full Planning Committee meeting to consider this application.

Returning to focus upon the Banks Group planning application, County Cllr Chris Lines said that regardless of what happens with the Barratt Homes application, Sedgefield's infrastructure is already stretched and the cumulative effects of additional dwellings could be

very significant. County Cllr Ian Catchpole reminded all that as well as the two applications already referenced there is an application for a further 1500 dwellings at Wynyard which will impact upon Sedgefield's infrastructure. County Cllr Catchpole said he was aware of eight pieces of land around Sedgefield which were being considered for further development and he said it was important to object to such based upon material planning considerations. County Cllr Chris Lines reminded all that whilst the area of land upon which the planning application now being considered is outside of The Sedgefield Plan's Built Up Area Boundary, i.e. the area where residents would be happy to accept development, Durham County Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had this area of land down as being deliverable. The Sedgefield Plan reflects the will of the people of Sedgefield and does currently have weight and standing in the planning process. However, the NPPF have been updated and Durham County Council are in the early stages of the next iteration of their Local Plan so The Sedgefield Plan will need to be reviewed in the future. Durham County Council have put out a "call for sites" whereby land owners and developers can identify potential areas across County Durham where development could take place. Sedgefield is viewed as an attractive location to developers. County Cllr Ian Catchpole reiterated that Sedgefield's infrastructure is creaking so there needs to be very careful consideration of the impact of more housing. Whilst Section 106 monies would be available this is never sufficient to solve problems and in Sedgefield's case would never allow for the physical creation of the space that would then be needed to address issues such as additional school places, additional car parking, additional space at the doctors etc.

5. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, opened the meeting for those in attendance to make their comments. There was no restriction on the length of time that anyone could speak but a request was made that people only speak once.

Mr Chambers asked if the Town Council were allowed to object to this planning application. Cllr Carr confirmed that the Town Council are a consultee and the purpose of this meeting was to determine public feeling prior to Cllrs discussing this application at another Council meeting later this evening. The Clerk confirmed the Town Council have already resolved, if required, to use the services of a planning consultant to assist with any response to this application. It was clarified that objections could only be based upon material planning consideration with examples including, but not limited to, type of housing proposed, highway safety/access, impact on local character/landscape value, impact on amenity (e.g. privacy implications for either proposed dwellings or the relationship with existing dwellings adjacent to the site), flooding/sustainable drainage, impact on trees and impact on ecology/biodiversity.

Mrs Mitchell said that her comments were already on DCC's planning portal and her main objections related to the field flooding, particularly in the corner. She has also cited concerns regarding four entrances and exits from the development being so near together and the implications for that upon road safety. She was not convinced by arguments made by the Banks Group that it would be a sustainable development as residents would walk into and back from the Town when the reality is that residents there would drive in and out thereby compounding the Town's current problems regarding cars and parking. Mrs Mitchell also expressed her concerns regarding the impact of the proposed Wynyard Master Plan upon Sedgefield.

Mrs Bowles said that when the Planning Inspectorate made their decision regarding the new housing development at Eden Gardens the stipulation had been made that the two fields on the opposite side of the road (i.e. the site now being considered by Banks Group) should not be built upon and this should be referenced in objections to this development. County Cllr Catchpole pointed out those objections were only made in 2021 therefore should definitely be cited. Cllr Allan Blakemore said it was essential to look at the Inspectorate's exact wording and their arguments/statements could help in the Town's objection argument.

Mr Spalding said it was his understanding that this field now being considered for planning, plus the adjacent and nearby three corner field had been deemed to be the historic entrance to the village and were to be retained as such with nothing built upon them so as to allow a clear run into the village centre. Mrs Bowles expressed her concerns regarding the impact this proposed development would have upon the views of the church when driving into the village centre. Mr Spalding voiced his concerns regarding the two additional exits/entrances relating to this proposed development meaning there would be four exits within 50 years of each other posing serious road safety issues at a location where traffic congestion is a serious problem.

Mr Bowes asked if Taylor Wimpey had previously had planning application on this land turned down? County Cllr Chris Lines replied that at the time of the Taylor Wimpey application being developed they could not get agreement with the landowner to include this area within the Eden Gardens development. Mr Bowes expressed his concerns regarding impact of this proposed development on traffic on the A689 and believed this was an accident waiting to happen.

Mr Chambers said that his objections were already on the DCC planning portal and were both detailed and lengthy. Within those were his concerns regarding drainage as he had noticed on several occasions the A689 past the proposed site to have been flooded. Mrs Mitchell said

that in previous planning applications concerns regarding flooding had been raised and assurance had been given these matters were going to be dealt with and they have clearly not.

Mrs Spalding noted that with the Barrett Homes planning application there were over 250 objections but questioned why only such a small number in relation the Banks Group application? Cllrs queried if this might be because the land off Beacon Lane is used for amenity purpose such as leisure, dog walking, wildlife and therefore viewed as a potential loss of amenity?

Mr Chambers asked if it was possible the Town Council could put another pro-forma/information sheet into the Sedgefield News as a way of raising awareness and encouraging more to respond? He felt this had been an extremely useful exercise previously. Cllrs agreed to consider this request at their next meeting.

Mr Bowes said that he could not see the 10% biodiversity gain in this planning application as being on the site in Sedgefield and expressed concern that this gain would then take place somewhere else via a reciprocal agreement. Mr Bowes expressed concerns regarding the hedgerow on the site which is full of wildlife and is not reflected in the plans for this application despite him being given assurances directly to the contrary. Mr Bowes said he would share his correspondence regarding this matter with the Clerk directly.

Mr Chambers expressed concern that this development would result in a spare strip of land between the existing and proposed housing, an area that could become prone to anti-social behaviour. This could also see a breakthrough being created to join into the nearby existing housing estates as a walk-through. This action would have an impact upon privacy of existing property owners who are paying Storey Homes for their grounds maintenance.

Mrs Bowles asked all to be mindful of previous developers intentions to close Stockton Road and send traffic through the new estate.

Mr Jones stressed the importance of the cumulative effect of planning applications upon facilities and infrastructure such as doctors, dentists, schools etc. A cumulative impact assessment should be sought. Mr Jones said that whilst financial contributions from developers in the form of Section 106 etc won't solve those problems and that money also takes time to come through and then be spent. A cumulative impact assessment would steer as to whether the development is deliverable. Cllr Allan Blakemore noted that Section 106 was a one off payment for capital projects rather than being a long-term investment. County

Cllr Ian Catchpole said that infrastructure needs to go in alongside any development and not retrospectively. County Cllr Chris Lines reiterated that there is physically no space available within Sedgefield where needed to address the infrastructure problems identified and urged people to think about the heritage and physical place that is the community of Sedgefield.

Mrs Mitchell commented that it is highly likely that each of the proposed dwellings will have occupants with more than one car meaning that proposed visitor parking spaced at the development will actually be used by residents. This would create significant issues regarding access particularly for the emergency services.

Mr Bowes expressed his concerns regarding the style of housing being proposed which would not be in keeping with the existing housing in Sedgefield and felt the design was not suitable. It was also felt that the mix of housing didn't reflect the needs of the local demographics but instead was balanced more in favour of maximizing profits for the developer.

Several members of the public believed there were many residents in Sedgefield still unaware of this application. Several asked if it was possible for the Town Council to devise an insert for the Sedgefield News similar to that issued for the Barratt Homes planning application for land off Beacon Lane. Cllr Mel Carr said the Town Council would consider this request at its next meeting later that evening.

Mr Jones asked if the number of objections would have any impact upon which Planning Committee considered the application? County Cllrs present replied that the Planning Committee was determined by the number of dwellings in the application, i.e. this application will go to Area Planning Committee rather than Full Planning Committee and that will not change regardless of the number of comments submitted. County Cllr Chris Lines said that by going to an Area Planning Committee meeting this made it easier for himself and Ward colleague County Cllr Ian Catchpole being able to speak.

Mr Spalding noted that nationally, including County Durham, a lot of planning applications for large-scale housing developments are given permission but then those developments are never fully built out. He said that such developments should be fully completed before others are given permission otherwise developers will only ever focus upon what they perceive to be the more affluent areas.

Mrs Bowles asked if petitions counted for something in the planning application process? Cllr Jenny Haworth replied that petitions do not add value to the planning process as the Local Planning Authority clearly states they require comments on the applications. Within the room

it was agreed that efforts should be made to increase the current number of objections and ensure residents know they have the opportunity to comment on this matter. Mrs Bowles said it was important to ensure the Planning Committee had as much to consider as possible.

Mrs Chambers said she had found DCC's website and planning portal difficult to use and believed that updates were currently being made. County Cllr Chris Lines said that comments could also be submitted directly via email to planning@durham.gov.uk

6. Summary of Meeting by Sedgefield Town Council Chair:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, thanked the public for their attendance and comments. He reiterated the importance of individuals submitting their objections directly to DCC as the Local Planning Authority. The Town Council will continue to keep the public updated.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 6.27pm.

APPROVED

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the
APRIL MONTHLY MEETING
of the **Council** held at **7pm** on
Monday 20th April 2026
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

MINUTES

Present Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)
Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and
Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John
Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp, Julie
Towler, and Mavis Wayman

Officers Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies:**
Cllr Tony Stubbs.
2. **Declaration of interest:**
None.
3. **STC Minutes / Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 9th March 2026:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / JH)
 - b. **Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 9th March 2026:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / JF)
 - c. **Minutes of the Environment committee held Monday 9th March 2026:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / HC)
 - d. **Minutes of Community Development & Engagement committee held Monday 9th March 2026:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / PH)
 - e. **Notes of Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group held Tuesday 10th March 2026:**

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

f. Minutes of Personnel Committee held Monday 16th March 2026:

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

g. Minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held Thursday 19th March 2026:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / PH)

h. Minutes of Joint Sedgefield Town Council / Sedgefield in Bloom Meeting held Thursday 19th March 2026:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / PH)

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

4. Matters of Information:

4.1 The Sedgefield Plan:

To not review The Sedgefield 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 Sedgefield or to consider this matter again at some point in 2026/27 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. The Clerk had already contacted Mr Stuart Carter of DCC to make him aware of this matter. Mr Carter had confirmed receipt and would be issuing a note to existing neighbourhood plan groups to advise on the review of the County Durham Plan and implications upon neighbourhood plans. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter. To review in 2026/27 depending upon national and County level timeframes.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.2 Planning application DM25/01625/FPA Land to East of Beacon Avenue:

No further information had been received regarding this planning application. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.3 Banks Homes Planning Application:

The Town Council had now been officially notified of this planning application and it

would be considered under agenda item 10. A public information statement had been issued. Banks Group held a community drop-in session on 16th April 2026 in the Parish Hall. A Town Council public meeting had taken place prior to this Monthly Meeting and public comments from that would be considered under agenda item 10. The Clerk had notified Ms Jo-Anne Garrick of Jo-Anne Garrick Ltd to request she assist the Town Council in any comments on this application.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.4 Current Planning Applications:

Comments on planning application 1 had been submitted to DCC Planners.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

5. Dates of Meetings:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated details of all meetings in April 2026 plus civic and town council events until June 2026. The Clerk highlighted a Policy & Records Management Working Group meeting had taken place on 15th April 2026.

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 Ian Catchpole reported he had recently met with Mr Ean Parsons of EDCAT and discussed his leisure facility proposal. As a result of this a Business Plan is now being prepared and County Cllr Catchpole said he would present this to the Town Council's next Monthly Meeting in May 2026.

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

7. Internal Reports:

7.1 Chairman's Report:

No report had been submitted.

7.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from the Vice-Chairman advising of all meetings and events attended during the last month and current month.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

7.3 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 and forthcoming events.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

7.4 Councillor Vacancy Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Councillor Vacancy Update Report which confirmed that DCC notices had been displayed around the Town and shared through the Town Council's communication networks. The Clerk will liaise with DCC on 22nd April 2026 to determine if the Town Council is to have an election or can proceed to filling this vacancy via co-option. If co-option is permitted then the Clerk proposed this be advertised in the next edition of the Sedgefield Extra with a closing date once month after publication.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) To accept the Clerk's proposed recruitment timescale should co-option be permitted.**

8. External Reports:

8.1 Report From Durham County Councillor Chris Lines, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County Councillor Chris Lines. Cllr Jenny Haworth expressed her concerns regarding the update within this report concerning the latest position with the revised governance arrangements for Local Networks, the replacement for former Area Action Partnerships. The report explained DCC Cabinet have approved to put all formal decision making powers into the hands of the new Elected Board Members which takes away the

opportunity for local communities to determine how funding will be allocated in their areas. In the case of Sedgefield, which will be in the same network area as Newton Aycliffe and Middridge, will have five of the seven County Cllrs sitting on the Board representing a single town of a much larger size than other settlements in the network's area. Cllr Haworth noted County Cllr Lines was seeking further information regarding formal safeguards and said she was keen to know more about this matter as previously Sedgefield had been aligned with other Parish Councils in the East Durham Rural Corridor area and had a strong voice within that process. Cllr Haworth said it felt like Sedgefield had lost something significant with the move to Local Networks and felt a democratic deficit could be created. Cllr Allan Blakemore explained why the former AAPs had been a key component in the County Council's successful bid to become a Unitary authority. Cllr Haworth reminded all the AAP Board membership was far wider than just County Cllrs and included representatives from Town/Parish Councils, emergency and health services as well as public representatives. Cllr Blakemore said CDALC's portfolio holder was monitoring this situation closely.

RESOLVED:

i) To receive this information.

ii) The Clerk to write to DCC's Partnerships Portfolio Holder to express the Town Council's concerns and to ask what could be done to overcome those and request an update on the situation regarding the new Networks.

8.2 Report from Durham County Councillor Ian Catchpole, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County Councillor Ian Catchpole.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

9. Correspondence:

9.1 Building Regulations BC/25/02382/FP at Sedgefield Squash Club (email from Ms Sheila Peden, Sedgefield Squash Club dated 16th March 2026):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from Sedgefield Squash Club in which the Club were continuing to keep the Town Council updated on their refurbishment project.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

- 9.2 Consultation on Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document and Article 4 Direction (email from Stockton on Tees Borough Council dated 18th March 2026) [email issued electronically to all Cllrs 19th March 2026]:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from Stockton on Tees Borough Council electronically on 19th March 2026. Cllrs did not have any comments on this consultation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

- 9.3 Consultation on Interim Houses in Multiple Occupation Policy (email from Mr Mike Allum, DCC dated 25th March 2026) [email issued electronically to all Cllrs 26th March 2026]:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from DCC electronically on 26th March 2026. Cllrs did not have any comments on this consultation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

- 9.4. 31 West End, Sedgfield – Future EV Charger (email and attachment from Ms Rebecca Robson, RR Town Planning dated 14th April 2026) [information issued electronically to all Cllrs 16th April 2026]:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all information from Ms Rebecca Robson of RR Town Planning in which she was seeking clarification regarding land ownership and permission for the installation of an EV charger which would protrude from the property's wall by 11cm with accompanying plan providing details of the elevation of such.

RESOLVED:

The Town Council to grant permission for the installation on the requested EV Charger on the condition that no trip hazard is created.

10. Current Planning Applications:

A schedule of the current planning application had been circulated prior to the meeting. This

application was then considered, and the following comments were made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

10.1 DM/26/00065/FPA – change of use from agricultural to residential curtilage land, and rear extension of existing house (amended proposal), Elstob Cottage Farm, Elstob Lane, Great Stainton:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.2 DM/26/00071/FPA – extend existing dropped kerb, 25 Butterwick Road, Fishburn:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.3 DM/26/00456/FPA – hybrid planning application comprising full planning permission for the erection of 48 dwellings, vehicular access, landscaping and associated infrastructure; and outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of 2 dwellings, landscaping and associated infrastructure, land to the west of the junction, Stockton Road, Sedgefield:

Cllrs agreed to object to this planning application based upon the concerns identified during the prior Public Meeting and to request Jo-Anne Garrick Ltd prepare and submit the Town Council's formal objection to this application. It was agreed work would be undertaken to produce an information flier, similar to that used for the last large-scale planning application, and, with permission of the Sedgefield Development Trust, to have this as an insert in the next edition of the Sedgefield News to raise community awareness further and ensure all knew how to submit comments.

10.4. DM/26/00505/FPA – provision of two ground floor windows to west elevation, forming a pedestrian gate access and widening of existing gated driveway entrance, Rook Lodge, West Park Lane, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.5. DM/26/00746/FPA – demolition of existing rear conservatory with replacement rear extension, 41 Station Road, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on the above planning applications 1-5 to be submitted to DCC Planners.

The Clerk reported that DCC's latest list of planning applications had been published and the following applications was within the Sedgefield Electoral Ward:

DM/26/00756/TPO – T1 (sycamore) fell, 52 Roast Calf Lane, Bishop Middleham

RESOLVED:

Cllrs to forward any comments regarding this planning application to the Clerk by no later than 9am on Monday 27th April 2026.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.19pm.

APPROVED

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the
APRIL P&R MEETING of the **Council**
held following the Monthly meeting on
Monday 20th April 2026

in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllr. Jenny Haworth (Chair)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chair) and

Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies:**

Cllr Tony Stubbs.

2. **Declaration of interest:**

None.

3. **Matters of Information:**

3.1 **Terrace Hill Discussion:**

The Clerk and then Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent met on-site in Ceddesfeld Grounds with Mr Martin Lowe of Historic England on 2nd 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. Until priority work relating to the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery has been completed this issue has been put on hold. Note: An update on the ponds in and near to Ceddesfeld Hall

grounds is to be considered on the Environment Committee's agenda. 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 has spoken to the contractor and active work is now underway to schedule these works. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Tree Works At Entrance To Butterwick Road Cemetery:

The Clerk has informed the successful contractor and requested that work is scheduled as soon as possible. The Clerk has spoken to the contractor and active work is now underway to schedule these works. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.4 Phase 2: Cemetery Expansion:

Costings and work schedule have now been obtained and agreed for paving an area within Butterwick Road allotments site near to the container. Work has now been completed to make good the original cemetery entrance so the double gates revert back to being used only for pre-agreed large deliveries. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Community Events Working Group:

Cllrs Allan Blakemore, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Peter Hinde, Myles Mantripp and Julie Towler have said they would like to be involved in the new Working Group. The Clerk to schedule a meeting once current Town

Council recruitment processes have concluded.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.6 Town Council Land Between Butterwick Road Allotments and Butterwick Road:

The scrub land has undergone further clearance. The Town Council's grass cutting contractor will add this area of land into the 2026/27 and 2027/28 contract (this will be an additional cost). For 2026/27 they will cut the area as often as required to bring it back into a maintainable state.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.7 Reviewed Butterwick and Winterton Allotments – Rules and Regulations:

The new rules and regulations are now displayed on the website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.8 Statement of Internal Control and Annual review of Effectiveness of Internal Control:

The report is displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.9 SLA with DCC for HR Advice:

The SLA has been signed by Cllr Allan Blakemore and counter-signed by DCC to continue support for 2026/27.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.10 PACT Meetings:

PACT meetings have now been scheduled in the Parish Hall and will be reviewed

again in September 2026. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.11 Town Council Insurance:

The Town Council's insurance has now been renewed.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.12 Celebrating Sir David Attenborough's 100th Birthday:

Cllr Mantripp has shared information with the Town Council, and this has been circulated through the residents database.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chair, Cllr Jenny Haworth, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments.

County Cllr Ian Catchpole requested clarification on the Dismissal Policy to be considered under agenda item 5.8. as he was a member of the County Council's Standards Board. The Clerk confirm the Dismissal Policy to be considered related to the annual review of this policy in relation to employed Council staff.

County Cllr Chris Lines referred to the comments made by Cllrs at the last meeting relating to the new Local Networks when considering his Monthly Report. County Cllr Lines confirmed that within the Networks there will still be panels of public and stakeholders but that final decisions on the spending of funding will only be made by Durham County Councillors, i.e. panel members can make suggestions but do not make any financial decisions. County Cllr Lines said that as yet it was unknown how the Local Networks would undertake public engagement but hopefully details would emerge soon.

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

5. Reports:

5.1 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 which confirmed this capital project's current position. It is anticipated that more information regarding the scheduling of outstanding works will be presented at the next Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group meeting on 28th April 2026. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Sedgefield Youth Club Update Report by Cllr Kelly Dickerson and Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting a Sedgefield Youth Club Update report by Cllr Kelly Dickerson and the Clerk had been circulated to all. It was agreed by all that the recent meetings with Mr Wayne Gibson of Spennymoor Youth & Community Association had been productive and a further meeting had been scheduled for 20th May 2026. The Youth Club workers have been issued with a list of dates by which to submit to the Town Council Youth Club update reports which can then be taken to future Community Development & Engagement Committee meetings. Cllr Dickerson confirmed she and Cllr Towler had attended the Youth Club earlier that evening and several new systems have been put in place to make improvements. A Youth Club Management Committee meeting is to be scheduled to consider future funding applications. The Clerk confirmed that discussions will take place with Mr Gibson regarding an updated SLA with Spennymoor Youth and Community Association. Cllrs expressed their thanks to Cllr Dickerson for her work in this matter. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated following the next meeting with Mr Gibson.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2025/26 Findings Update Report by Town Clerk and Acting Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2025/26 Findings Update report which confirmed the status of the headstones which had been classified as "Class 1". The 2026/27 Annual Headstone Safety Testing will take place in November/December 2026.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.4 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

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.

5.5 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 with the accompanying revised Guidance having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.6 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.7 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically which highlighted several areas of change required.

RESOLVED:

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

5.8 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.9 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.10 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.11 Review of Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy Report by the Personnel Committee which recommended the Town Council follows Durham County Council's approach and archives this policy.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the same approach as Durham County Council and to archive the Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy with immediate effect.

5.12 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 with the accompanying revised Policy having been issued to all electronically.

RESOLVED:

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

5.13 Assertion 10 Update Report by Town Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting an Assertion 10 Update Report by the Town Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator was circulated which detailed the extensive work undertaken by the Town Council in relation to this matter. Since the production of this report the Clerk confirmed the internal auditor had audited Assertion 10 as part of the 2025/26 year end procedures. Agenda items 5.14 to 5.19 present the proposed additional policies required by the Town Council. Further training has been scheduled for all Town Council staff and Cllrs. Cllr Jenny Haworth expressed thanks to the Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator for their work in this matter.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) Training to be scheduled for Cllr Mavis Wayman.**

5.14 Subject Access Request Policy Recommendation Report by Town Clerk and

Projects & Media Co-ordinator

Prior to the meeting a Subject Access Request Policy Recommendation Report with attached policy had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Subject Access Request Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

5.15 Personal Data Erasure Policy Recommendation Report by Town Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting a Personal Data Erasure Policy Recommendation Report with attached policy had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Personal Data Erasure Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

5.16 Personal Data Breach Policy Recommendation Report by Town Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting a Personal Data Breach Policy Recommendation Report with attached policy had been circulated to all. Cllr Jenny Haworth highlighted item 3.3 and the tight timescale from becoming aware of any suspected breach.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Personal Data Breach Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

5.17 Data Security and Bring Your Own Device Policy Recommendation Report by Town Clerk and Projects & Media Co-ordinator

Prior to the meeting a Data Security and Bring Your Own Device Policy Recommendation Report with attached policy had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Data Security and Bring Your Own Device Policy with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

5.18 Data Security Sharing Agreement Recommendation Report by Town Clerk &

Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting a Data Security Sharing Agreement Recommendation Report with attached policy had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Data Security Sharing Agreement with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

5.19 Privacy Notice Recommendation Report by Town Clerk & Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting a Privacy Notice Recommendation Report with attached notice had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Privacy Notice with immediate effect and to review this again in a further 12 months.

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 9th March 2026:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 9th March 2026 numbered 111384 to 111406. The Clerk circulated to all an updated list which also included cheques numbered 111407 to 111418. 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 Blakemore plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques numbered 111384 to 111418.**

6.2 Financial Budget Comparison (as at 9th April 2026):

RESOLVED:

To receive the Financial Budget Comparison as at 9th April 2026.

6.3 Debtors List as at 9th April 2026:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 9th April 2026.

6.4 Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1st – 31st March 2026:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1st – 31st March 2026.

6.5 March 2026 Bank Reconciliations Plus March 2026 Imprest Account plus February and March 2026 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation Report by Town Clerk:

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.6 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Funding Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Funding Update Report which detailed the latest financial position in relation to this capital project.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.7 Internal Audit 2025/26 – Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit 2025/26 Update Report which was accompanied by reports for the latest Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Capital Programme (Full Assurance) and Sedgefield Youth Club Governance Arrangements (Substantial Assurance). Cllr Jenny Haworth expressed her thanks to Cllrs Julie Towler and Kelly Dickerson, members of the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group and to Town Council staff involved in these audits.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.8 Internal Audit Annual Report 2025/26 Report by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit Annual report 2025/26 (Sunstantial/Full Assurance) produced by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor, reflecting the conclusion of his work for 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

6.9 2025/26 Year End Accounts and Procedures Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2025/26 Year End Accounts and Procedures Update Report which detailed the timetable for the completion of all such work. The Clerk confirmed that all works were up-to-date as per 20th April 2026 and reminded all of the forthcoming Special Town Council meeting on 27th April 2026 to formally approve the 2025/26 year end accounts.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.10 Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27 Report by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all the Internal Auditor's proposed audit plan for 2026/27. Cllrs considered this and agreed with the recommended plan.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27 as presented by Mr Gordon Fletcher, Internal Auditor.

7. Correspondence:

7.1. North East War Memorials Project (email from Mr John Dixon dated 1st March 2026):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated an email from Mr John Dixon of the North East War Memorials Project dated 1st March 2026 in which he was asking if the Town Council would consider joining the Friends of the North East War Memorial Project, a registered charity formed in 2004 with the aim of recording all War Memorials between the Rivers Tweed and Tees. Cllr Mel Carr proposed the Town Council become a Friend and make a donation of £20. Cllrs agreed

RESOLVED:

- i) **Sedgefield Town Council to join the Friends of the North East War Memorial Project and make a donation of £20.**
- ii) **The Clerk to inform the Sedgefield District Uniformed Services Group of this resolution.**

7.2 Sir David Attenborough's 100th Birthday Events (email from Sedgefield In Bloom dated 10th April 2026):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated an email from Sedgefield in Bloom in which the Group were proposing the planting of a tree with accompanying plaque would be a fitting tribute to mark Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday. The Bloom Group proposed this could be a joint venture between the Group and Town Council. Cllr Allan Blakemore proposed the Town Council support this request and that if the Bloom group purchased and planted an appropriate tree at Beacon Lane cemetery then the Town Council would purchase appropriate boulder and plaque similar to those for the Queen's tree. All Cllrs agreed. Cllrs also took this opportunity to thank Cllr Myles Mantripp for his work in promoting community themed events across Sedgefield marking Sir Attenborough's forthcoming milestone birthday.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to liaise with the Sedgefield In Bloom Group as per the Town Council's wishes.

At this point in the agenda the Committee were to consider reports that were exempt from the public so it was **RESOLVED to close the meeting to allow the members of the public present to observe/participate as they wished in the Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting before then re-opening the P&R Committee meeting to consider Reports Exempt From The Public.** The meeting closed at 8.11pm.

The Chair, Cllr Jenny Haworth, re-opened the meeting at 8.15pm. The Chair explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and requested the members of the public in attendance 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 Personnel Update Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Personnel Update Report by the Personnel Committee and duly considered.

**8.2 Replacement of Large Cemetery Hedge at Butterwick Road Cemetery
Recommendation by Town Clerk:**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Replacement of Large Cemetery Hedge at Butterwick Road Cemetery Recommendation Report which was duly considered and way forward agreed.

8.3 Sedgefield town Council Annual Fireworks Display Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Fireworks Update report which built upon those resolutions made at the January 2026 P&R Committee meeting based upon a report presented by the Fireworks Working Group. This latest report was duly considered and way forward agreed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of **APRIL**
ENVIRONMENT of the **Council** held following the **P&R**
in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on
Monday 20th April 2026

MINUTES

Present **Cllr. Mark Cant (Chairman) and**
Cllr. John Finlayson (Vice Chairman)
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Ciaran Butterworth, Mel Carr, Helen Cunningham, Kelly
Dickerson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp, Julie
Towler, and Mavis Wayman

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllr Tony Stubbs.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Heritage Boards:

Funding is not available for this project via DCC. This matter to be reconsidered when the Town Council's 2026/27 budget setting process commences although there may be a possibility that funding could be sourced as part of the Active Travel Group's work to rebrand and republish all walking information within the Sedgefield Electoral Ward. The Finance Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Ponds In and Near Ceddesfeld Hall Grounds:

Discussions are now underway to schedule a meeting to progress the proposals received from DCC's Senior Ecologist. 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 member of the public present wished to speak. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

None.

6. Correspondence:

None.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.13pm.

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 20th April 2026

MINUTES

Present **Cllr. Mavis Wayman (Chair) and**
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Helen
Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde,
Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp and Julie Towler.

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllr Tony Stubbs.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Keswick Coach Trip:

Tickets went on sale on 1st April 2026 and are now sold-out. A report to be brought to Committee after the trip has taken place.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.2 Letter from Sedgefield District Uniformed Services Group:

The Clerk has informed SDUSG that the Town Council's only planned commemorative event will be Remembrance Sunday.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chair, Cllr Mavis Wayman, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. No members of the public present wished to speak. The Chair re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

None.

6. Correspondence:

None.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.14pm.

APPROVED

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the

APRIL

SPECIAL MEETING

To Approve Sedgefield Town Council's 2025/26

Year End Accounts

of the **Council** held at **6.30pm**

on

Monday 27th April 2026

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice-Chairman) and

Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Myles Mantripp, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

None.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. To approve the financial accounts for 2025/26 including: -

a. Annual Governance Statement (2025/26 Annual Governance Statement Report by Finance Working Group):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2025/26 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.

The Clerk highlighted the work “compliance” needed to be inserted between the words “demonstrating” and “with” in the final sentence of the first paragraph under Assertion 10 in Appendix A.

RESOLVED:

With the inclusion of the additional work highlighted by the Clerk, to approve the Annual Governance Statement.

b. Year End Accounts for 2025/26:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all the Council’s Income and Expenditure Account for 2025/26, the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2026 and the Council’s Fixed Assets Schedule for 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

i) Cllrs approved the 2025/26 year end accounts including transfers from the General Fund to the Town Council’s ear marked reserves for Cemetery Lodge Refurbishment, Festive Lighting Refurbishment and Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion.

ii) The Clerk to ensure the 2025/26 Income and Expenditure account plus Balance Sheet feature in the Town Council’s Annual Report for 2025/26 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 2025/26:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a completed copy of Section 2 of the Town Council’s Accounting Statement for 2025/26 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 31st March 2025;
- Box 2 stated the Council’s precept for 2025/26;
- 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 31st March 2026);
- 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 2025/26 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 2025/26 with 2024/25 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 2025/26 such related to financial management, Electors's rights and action of audit reports.

RESOLVED:

- i) To approve the Accounting Statements 2025/26 for Sedgefield Town Council.**
- ii) The 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 2025/26 financial information.**

4. VAT Reclaim Update For Period 1st September 2025 – 31st March 2026 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 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026 for £20,389.19 had been submitted to HMRC.

Cllr Allan Blakemore expressed his congratulations to Town Council staff for conducting the year end procedures so efficiently and timely when considering the current staffing constraints, workloads and challenges being faced.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5. Internal Audit Report Sedgefield Town Council End of Year Accounts (2025/26) 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 (2025/26) 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.

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 Wednesday 3rd June 2026 and ceasing on Tuesday 14th July 2026.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Council's Exercise of Public Rights dates commencing on 3rd June 2026 and ceasing on 14th July 2026.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.03pm.

APPROVED