

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CASTLE EDEN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2019**

Present:

Councillor Mrs M Wilmer (Chair)

Councillors B Turnbull, D Martin Mrs L Taylor, Mrs J Welch, M Colborn

Also Present:

Councillor R Crute and 1 resident

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors County Councillors Pounder.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. POLICE REPORT

There had been 16 incidents recorded for Castle Eden area in the past month.

There have been no recorded calls of ASB, no recorded calls of theft and no recorded calls of Vehicle crime. There have been 2 calls of criminal damage, both from farms. 3 males have been spoken to in regard to walking on crops and trespassing on private land. These have all been warned as to their behaviour. Two poaching letters have been handed out to the registered keepers of vehicles seen in suspicious circumstances near to Sheraton/ Castle Eden. One of these was hand delivered and the person responsible spoken to.

There were 3 Road/A19 related incidents. Following some incidents where RTC's have occurred along the B1281 near The Village, the Traffic management section has been arranged in order to facilitate the placing of the agreed road markings on this stretch of road. It would appear that the incidents have been down to driver error, but it is felt that further markings could help in future.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

4. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on **17 January 2019**, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Update on Traffic Calming Measures on the B1281, Castle Eden

The main local issue was once again based on continuing reports of speeding vehicles on the B1281 between the Castle Eden war memorial junction and the junction with The Village, Castle Eden. Councillors had been contacted again on a number of occasions over the past month by local residents living along the B1281, and also received representations from the The Village, Castle Eden Residents' Association, all concerned at the prospect of a serious accident at this location. This is an understandable fear, sustained by an additional two accidents during the past month.

Previous reports and updates on the blog site record the continuing contact with the Durham police Traffic Management Officer and the Highways engineers at county hall. Following requests for traffic

calming measures to be taken at this location they have now received an update from the County Council confirming that highways works and associated measures identified in the recently updated Traffic Management Plan for Castle Eden are scheduled to be introduced in sequence.

In the meantime the Traffic Management Officer at Durham police has confirmed that a series of community speed watch events have taken place recently on the B1281.

The Chair explained that the parish council's intention was to erect speed visors in the village. It was queried if any funding was available through Members' budgets to help fund speed visors in the village. It was also suggested that a meeting be arranged with officers at Durham County Council to discuss the type of visors that would be allowed and the costs involved.

Durham County Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP):

The council agreed its annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) at its full council meeting on 20 February 2019. Please follow the link below to the committee section of the council's website, which includes all relevant papers: <https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx>

The headline points to note are that many local authorities continue to operate under extremely difficult financial conditions, with uncertainty around future funding being a major factor.

Durham County Council is now entering its tenth year of austerity, having already faced around £220m of cuts since austerity measures were introduced by the coalition government back in 2010. The council will now need to address an additional £39.5m in funding cuts over the next four years (the period covered by the MTFP), with cuts of £14.2m identified for the coming financial year 2019/20. The government intends to cease traditional central funding for local government by replacing the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) with 75% Business Rate Retention and a revised funding regime based on the outcome of the so-called Fair Funding Review, due to be introduced in April 2020. Future funding for local authorities will also be determined partially on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Increased budget pressures come from a review of the funding formula for schools and a review of Public Health funding. Early indications are that if as expected the government chooses to adopt the Advisory Council for Resource Allocation (ACRA) formula, Durham County Council faces additional cuts in public health funding of around £19m.

Additional funding pressure on the High Needs Block (including SEND) of the Dedicated Schools grant (DSG) is also having a significant downward effect on school budgets.

When added to the downward pressure on the county council's Adults and Children's Social services budgets this is having a significantly detrimental impact on services provided by the council. Additional funding allocated this year by central government to address the pressures identified above have proved wholly inadequate.

In the spirit of transferring blame for austerity onto local authorities the government has announced that it is to "allow" councils to add an additional 2% to annual council tax bills to help towards meeting the funding pressures in Adult Social Care budgets identified in the narrative above. In addition, when allocating central government grant to councils (RSG) the government holds an assumption that local authorities will raise the maximum level of council tax allowed within the referendum limit of 3%, and that proportion of grant is then reduced accordingly.

In acknowledging the budget pressures identified above the council has reluctantly agreed to raise council tax by 4.99% for the coming financial year. This consists of a 2.99% council tax increase in addition to a 2% Adult Social Care precept as identified above. This equates to a rise of £1.45 per week for people living in Band D properties, and a rise of 97p per week for the majority of County Durham residents who live in Band A properties.

Hesleden Footpath #24. Temporary Closure Consent:

Although not in the Castle Eden parish area, works associated with the temporary closure of Footpath #24 at Hesleden are likely to have some impact in surrounding settlements.

The council has received notification from the developer that an extension to the closure period of the Haswell to Hart footpath from 1 April 2019 to the end of February 2020 may be needed to allow for completion of mineral removal and remedial works at the site.

Please note the details *in italics* in the email thread below. Although nothing is confirmed at this stage I will monitor the position and update on significant developments as they arise.

RESOLVED that

- (i) A request be made for financial assistance with the speed visors
- (ii) A meeting be arranged with officers at Durham County Council regarding the processes around siting and purchasing the speed visors

6. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The following consultations were available for comment on DCC website

- Housing Strategy Consultation
- Review of Statement of Policy under the Licensing Act 2003
- County Durham Plan

7. **PLANNING PROPOSALS**

Consideration was given to the following planning application

DM/19/00295/FPA Replace bay window and conservatory with a single storey extension to rear of 2 Parklands Court, Castle Eden

RESOLVED that no objections be made.

8. **STANDING ORDERS**

Consideration was given to the review of Standing Orders, a copy of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that the Standing Orders be adopted.

9. **FINANCE REPORT**

Balance as per bank reconciliation as at 5 February was £21,547.91
Bank statements were viewed by the Chair

There were no payments to authorise.

10. **VILLAGE MATTERS**

a) **ACE Report**

The key points from the last ACE meeting were circulated.

b) **War Memorial**

Discussion ensued regarding the grassed area around the war memorial. Further investigations were to be undertaken regarding the financial costs.

c) **Speed Visors**

Suppliers had been contacted and a number of potential problems/barriers were identified:

- Pure rechargeable battery were technically difficult, most suppliers offered rechargeable batteries supported by solar panels or generator
- Pole mountable was possible but the practicalities of mounting and de mounting was a problem because of unit weight, the ability to do this on a busy road (where we know speeding is a problem) and who would actually do this work
- All ANPR system communicated, via the internet, to a central server. Where would this be? (physically) and who would be responsible for it.

- Data Protection - if recording the number plates of ALL cars passing the system, regardless of speed, would need to make sure the data was secure and only used for speed management. A suitable Data Protection process would have to be in place and maintained.

RESOLVED that a meeting be arranged with officers at Durham County Council regarding the processes around siting and purchasing the speed visors