

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 17 May 2018 in Hepscott Parish Hall.

1. Present

Philip Ashmore (Chair), David Cowans (Vice Chair) Malcolm Paton, Anne Colver, Sylvia Johnson (Parish Clerk), Glen Sanderson (County Councillor)

Apologies

Fred Dye, Carolyn Reid, Ken Reed, John Beynon (County Councillor)

In attendance

9 members of the public attended

2. Nomination and election of Chair for 2018/2019

Philip Ashmore was proposed by David Cowans and seconded by Malcolm Paton. There were no other nominations and Philip was duly elected chair for 2018/2019.

3. Nomination and election of Vice Chair for 2018/2019

David Cowans was proposed by Philip Ashmore and seconded by Malcolm Paton. There were no other nominations and David was duly elected Vice Chair for 2018/2019

4. Confirmation of Committee Members for 2018/2019

All councillors stated their willingness to serve another term.

5. Chairman's report for year 2017/2018

Philip Ashmore read out the Chair's Annual Report for the year 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 (copy attached).

6. Matters arising from Chairman's Report

No matters arising.

7. Financial Report for 2015/2016

The financial report for the year was read by Sylvia Johnson (RFO) (copy attached). Sylvia had forwarded members (via email) a statement showing the full expenditure for the year 2017/2018, together with a Financial Statement for that year, showing both income and expenditure. Due to sickness and holidays the accounts are currently being audited by the Internal Auditor. A Special Council Meeting will be convened to review and authorise the annual accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Once this is undertaken the AGAR will be sent to the new External Auditors, PK Littlejohn, and the accounts and AGAR will be made available for public inspection from 4 June 2018 until 13 July 2018. The relevant information will be uploaded to the website for this purpose as well as being posted on the Parish Hall noticeboard.

8. Contributions and questions from members of the public

There were no contributions or questions from members of the public.

The AGM was followed by the usual meeting of Hepscoth Parish Council, minutes of which are produced separately.

Minutes prepared by Sylvia Johnson, Parish Clerk/RFO, 10 June 2018

Signed as a true copy:

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL AGM: CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2018

In the past 12 months I report that your Parish Council has dealt with a very mixed bag of issues!

Morpeth's land-grab: This issue arose in January and threatens the very size and finances of the whole Parish. Plans are afoot from Morpeth Town Council (MTC) to try to change the Parish boundaries and take South Fields and Stobhill Manor East, currently in Hepscott, into Morpeth, to increase their Council Tax at the expense of ours. This would also increase the Council Tax of the residents by about £100 to £150 pa. We will talk to Morpeth and our residents, but if required, fight this very strongly indeed. If Morpeth were successful not only would these residents be hit, but our parish income would be reduced by half. Fortunately, MTC don't decide, Northumberland County Council (NCC) do, and we are told nothing can happen until 2021 at the next elections.

Green Belt and Core Strategy: I wrote last year that we were awaiting the adoption of the Core Strategy, as it was planned to surround us with Green Belt, so I was very disappointed to see the Core Strategy withdrawn in July 2017 by the new administration, leaving us vulnerable to the developers. I agree that there were some issues with the document, and its assumptions on the need for housing seemed unjustifiable, but the new Strategy will not be in place until at least 2020 and who knows what will have happened by then?

Speed Limits: We've seen speed limits reduced across the Parish - 20mph in Hepscott village in November, the A196 is now 50mph not 60 and the A192 is 40mph from the edge of Morpeth virtually to the Parish boundary. It seems that the will of the people is to reduce the limits and I am sure that our roads will be safer for that. Thanks to Glen Sanderson for his help in these reductions.

The work of our Flood Group has been directed towards helping vulnerable parts of the Parish be better prepared in the event of future flood events, and Malcolm Paton and Carolyn Reid have worked hard in putting together a flood plan that is fundamental to this, and my great thanks go to them. They have also recruited some willing volunteer Flood Wardens. I wish I could say that we had had resounding success with NCC in getting some changes to the bridge and watercourses, but they are trying to be helpful, faced with difficult times.

And many other issues! Thanks to David Cowans and the Hall Management committee, parking at the Hall seems much better. We have also dealt conscientiously with our normal load of Planning Applications. And many, many other things have been dealt with by the Parish Council. My very great thanks to them all, who give of their time entirely voluntarily and should not be taken for granted. Special thanks again to Sylvia Johnson our excellent Parish Clerk, who keeps us organised and doing what we should. Of course, thanks to our County Councillors, Glen Sanderson and John Beynon who have been so helpful to us throughout the year. Most of all, thanks to the residents of the whole Parish who have given help and support on so many issues over the last 12 months.

Phil Ashmore, Chair, Hepscott Parish Council, 17/5/18

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Financial report for the year 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

We spent a total of £9,750.08 in the last financial year. Some of our outgoings included:

- Payment for work on the new car park at the Parish Hall, costing £2976.
- Maintenance of the Orchard, at the side of the Parish Hall; we pay for gardening services which last year cost just over £1,250.
- Website costs amounting to £545.
- Provision of the Hepscoth Herald free of charge to all residences in the parish, including the new South Fields Estate, costing £360.

We reclaimed VAT of £1,718.84, which is done approximately every 18 – 24 months.

At the end of the financial year the balance of the current account was £23,989.17. The balance of the Business Account was £6,093.41 giving a total balance of £30,082.58

Sylvia Johnson
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
13 May 2018