

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 16 May 2019 in Heps cott Parish Hall.

1. Present

Philip Ashmore (Chair), David Cowans (Vice Chair) Fred Dye, Carolyn Reid, Malcolm Paton, Anne Colver, John Sadler, Sylvia Johnson (Parish Clerk), Glen Sanderson (County Councillor)

Apologies

John Beynon (County Councillor)

In attendance

Andrea Teasdale, Northumbria Police

2. Nomination and election of Chair for 2019/2020

After 6 years of dedication and hard work as Chair, Philip Ashmore had sadly decided not to stand for re-election. Carolyn Reid was proposed as Chair by Philip Ashmore and seconded by Malcolm Paton. There were no other nominations and Carolyn was duly elected Chair for 2019/2020.

3. Nomination and election of Vice Chair for 2019/2020

David Cowans was proposed as Vice Chair by Malcolm Paton and seconded by Fred Dye. There were no other nominations and David was duly elected Vice Chair for 2019/20.

4. Confirmation of Committee Members for 2019/20

All councillors stated their willingness to serve another term.

5. Chairman's report for year 2018/2019

Philip Ashmore read out the Chair's Annual Report for the year 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019 (copy attached).

6. Matters arising from Chairman's Report

No matters arising.

Members of the Council gave an enormous vote of thanks to Philip Ashmore whose dedication and hard work as Chairman has been invaluable over the last 6 years. Philip was presented with a small gift in appreciation.

7. Financial Report for 2018/2019

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 2018/2019, together with a Financial Statement for that year, showing both income and expenditure, and all forms necessary for the annual AGAR, which Councillors would consider and, if agreed, authorise, at the HPC meeting following the AGM.

8. Contributions and questions from members of the public

No members of the public attended the meeting.

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 2019

Signed as a true copy:

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Hepscott Parish Council: Chair's Annual Report: May 2019

Councillor Changes: During the year a good Parish Councillor, Ken Reed, resigned when 'day job' work pressures caused him to hand in his notice. He was a much-appreciated colleague for 5 years and helped us greatly, particularly with website and parking issues. However the silver lining is that we welcome John Sadler as a Councillor who is a resident of South Fields. In the last year South Fields has grown to about 200 families and it is excellent news that they have an able and energetic Hepscott PC representative in John.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Morpeth Town Council's (MTC) attempted Land Grab this year comes very close to threatening the existence of Hepscott Parish as we know it. MTC's proposal involves them attempting to take half of the Parish's population (South Fields and Stobhill Manor) and half our income, and badly affects residents. We invited MTC to a Parish Council meeting last July to hear their views and had (at times) a heated discussion. We tried to get across the magnitude of the impact of their land grab on our residents (increases in £100-£150 council tax with no advantages) and on our Parish, but to seemingly little effect. If they persist, the issue is decided by Northumberland County Council (NCC) and we shall fight it very strongly on behalf of our residents and Parish. Local elections are approaching in 2021 and we are told nothing can be put into effect until then.

We have done a lot of work this year on speeding and road safety through our active Speed Awareness Team. South Fields is now better protected with the installation of a new speed awareness sign on A196 near Coopies Lane. Nearly all main roads in the Parish are 50 mph, 40 or 30, with only half a mile of A road 60 mph. Stobhill Manor East is 20 mph and has speed bumps; Hepscott village is 20 mph and we are looking at traffic calming measures. With so many families, both young and old in the Parish we can sleep a little easier in our beds, but we are still plagued with driving that is too fast. Hot spots are Barmoor Bank (where we have made persistent, unsuccessful requests for Police radar checks) and in our residential areas.

Roads: Over the last year I hope you will have noticed an improvement in road surfaces, road markings and pot-holes in the Parish. This is NCC's province and the major contributor has been Glen Sanderson, our County Councillor. Many thanks to him.

In the last year we have made further real progress with flood alleviation, thanks to our Flood Group team of Malcolm Paton, Carolyn Reid and Andy Youngs. Organisationally we are much better prepared, with a detailed Flood Plan drawn up and Flood Wardens appointed. We have had better engagement with NCC, who now gives us more regular updates of its Hepscott flood alleviation study.

Planning issues took up a large amount of time in the last year. I am delighted to say that NCC's Local Plan is to be submitted to the Secretary of State this month. Eventual adoption is due in March 2020. If it remains as proposed, Hepscott Parish will be virtually covered by Green Belt, a fantastic achievement.

We have of course also dealt with a multitude of individual local planning applications, from Stobhill Manor, South Fields, Hepscott village and the rural parts of the Parish.

And of course there have been the “usual suspect” issues - litter and dog bins, bus shelters, extra grass cuts, fly-tipping (our thanks to Anne Colver) - were covered.

This is my final Annual Report as Chair as I am not standing at the AGM for re-election, although I will continue to be a Hepscott Parish Councillor. The last 6 years have been a privilege for me. I have enjoyed them enormously and learned such a lot. I have had great and loyal help from Vice Chair, David Cowans and all the Councillors of the Parish Council, both past and present, and give them my sincere thanks for their support over my time. A special mention for Sylvia Johnson, who as Clerk has been absolutely invaluable and without whom the Parish Council would not have functioned - to her my special thanks and appreciation.

I have also had great help from our NCC County Councillors, but it would be particularly remiss of me not to publicly thank Glen Sanderson who has been a great help and support in my 6 years as Chair.

In conclusion I will look back with great pleasure to issues where I hope I have made a contribution - the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, Green Belt and the Local Plan, our work on flooding, our improved road safety and the appointment of our first Councillor for South Fields. But I realise that every issue depends on the work of others in the team. So many, many thanks and best wishes to you all.

Phil Ashmore
Chair

16 May 2019

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Financial report for the year 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

We spent a total of £ £7,776.16 in the last financial year. Some of our outgoings included:

- Supplementary grass/hedge cutting, in the Orchard at the side of the Parish Hall; we pay for gardening services which last year cost just over £1,200.
- Repairs and painting in the toddlers' playpark in Stobhill Manor, which cost just under £500.
- Website costs amounting to £615.
- Provision of the Hepscoth Herald free of charge to all residences in the parish, including the new South Fields Estate, costing £377.

At the end of the financial year the bank statement showed the current account was £28,015.01, with unpresented cheques of £302.00, leaving a balance of £27,713.01. The balance of the Business Account was £6,113.34, giving a total balance of £33,826.35

Sylvia Johnson
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
15 May 2019