

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2020 Meeting held virtually, by Zoom, due to Covid-19 restrictions

1. Attended

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

2. Nomination and election of Chair for 2020/2021

Carolyn Reid was proposed by Philip Ashmore and seconded by Fred Dye. There were no other nominations and Carolyn was duly elected as Chair for 2020/2021

3. Nomination and election of Vice Chair for 2020/2021

David Cowans was proposed by Carolyn Reid and seconded by Fred Dye. There were no other nominations and David was duly elected as Vice Chair for 2020/2021.

4. Confirmation of Committee Members for 2020/2021

All councillors stated their willingness to serve another term.

5. Chairman's report for year 2019/2020

Carolyn Reid read out the Chair's report for the year 2019 - 2020 (copy attached).

6. Matters arising from Chairman's Report

No matters arising.

7. Financial Report for 2019/2020

Bank Balances for 2019-2020: At the end of the financial year the bank statements showed the balance of the current account was £31,251.24 and the balance of the Business Account was £6,174.51, giving a total balance of £37,425.75.

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 2019/2020, together with a Financial Statement for that year, showing both income and expenditure.

Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR)

Due to the Covid-19 situation, the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn have stated that this year's submission deadline for the receipt of the approved AGAR and supporting documentation or the Certificate of Exemption (as appropriate) is extended to Friday 31 July 2020. SJ will prepare this for audit.

8. Contributions and questions from members of the public

Unfortunately as the meeting was held virtually, this year members of the public were unable to attend.

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

Minutes prepared by Sylvia Johnson, Parish Clerk/RFO, 11 June 2020

Signed as a true copy:

Chairman's Report for Annual Meeting of Hepscoth Parish Council on May 21st 2020

I can't believe that twelve months have passed since I inherited the chairmanship of HPC from Phil. All of the Councillors and Sylvia our invaluable parish clerk have been a great help in easing me into the post. During the autumn and winter months they have all been very supportive in achieving the aims of the council as regards the proposed boundary changes of Hepscoth, which included several information leaflet drops throughout Stobhill Manor, Southfields, and the village. Many residents have commented on how much they appreciated receiving firsthand information, and the effort that had gone into delivering it. We still do not know the date of the NCC meeting when the decision of the possible boundary changes will be made, but rest assured that we are keeping a close eye on the situation. All our thanks go to Phil Ashmore for being the driving force behind the fight against the Land Grab.

More recently we have all had another fight on our hands - the dreaded coronavirus. It has been incredible how life has changed over the last three months. Some of us have been taken by surprise by the fact that we are classed as old and vulnerable, never having seen ourselves in that light before. The offers of help have been numerous and many have come from unexpected sources. On behalf of all the parishioners I would like to thank all those who have been able to be supportive to neighbours during this difficult time.

Surprisingly, considering that there has been a lockdown in place, the village streets have been busier than ever, with people from outside the village making use of the walks around the fields to exercise their dogs and keeping themselves fit. I personally have met many new friends on my daily walks. I hope that we will all keep up the activity and continue to chat as we pass by, all be it at a distance.

In addition to the land grab and coronavirus the council has continued to look after the general running of the parish, ensuring that the grass has been cut, the dog bins have been emptied and nagging NCC regarding things like pot holes, narrow foot paths and issues that parishioners have brought up.

Planning applications have continued, some have been unable to progress because of the current working restrictions but hopefully things will open up soon.

We are trying to get on top of some of the unruly hedges and verges around the village, but as with some of the planning issues things have had to be put on hold.

I think we have all noticed that as we emerge from lockdown speeding is becoming a problem again on the main roads and through the village. Hopefully this will improve as drivers get over the feeling of having been released from jail. Our Community Speedwatch representatives will be monitoring the situation. Community Speedwatch is currently stood down on instruction from Northumbria Police.

The flood group has been very active over the last year having worked closely with NCC, Northumberland Water and the Environment Agency who have kept us updated of all the information arising out of the detailed study of the water course through the Parish. We have been very lucky to have had the benefit of the knowledge and advice of Prof O'Connell who has been attending the meetings with the members of the flood group.

Many thanks go to Malcolm Paton for steering the flood group. Our thanks must also go to Andy Youngs who organises the flood wardens and is part of the flood group.

Sadly there continues to be some antisocial behaviour both in Southfields and in the village. Our community police officer is aware of the problems and they are being dealt with.

We were unable to hold a normal meeting in March so attempted a virtual meeting, however despite all endeavours it was not to be, so Sylvia put together a commentary of the “ meeting “which was agreed by all the Councillors and then put on the website. Hopefully the May meeting Scheduled for May 21st, which includes the Annual meeting will be successful. We are greatly indebted to John Sadler for organising the technology to make the virtual meetings possible

I would like to thank Vice Chair David, Sylvia our long suffering Clerk and all the Councillors for their continued hard work on behalf of HPC.

Carolyn Reid, Chairman of Hepscoth Parish Council
20 May 2020

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Financial report for the year 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

HPC spent a total of £7,961.77 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 £2,297.
- Website costs amounting to just under £560.
- Provision of the Hepscoth Herald free of charge to all residences in the parish, including South Fields Estate, costing £281.
- Cleaning bus shelters/emptying dog litter bins/checking toddlers play park, amounting to £1,100.

Due to the current Covid-19 lock down restrictions several companies are still to send us invoices for work completed in the last financial year. These amounts will be charged against our budget for 2020/2021 when they arrive.

At the end of the financial year the bank statement showed the balance of the current account was £31,251.24. The balance of the Business Account was £6,174.51, giving a total balance of £37,425.75.

Sylvia Johnson
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
12 May 2020