

## CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR MAY 2013-MAY 2014

It has been a hectic year and my maiden innings as Chair. Many thanks indeed go to my Deputy Chair, David Cowans, and to all of the other Parish Councillors for all the help and support they have given me, attending meetings, standing in, handling issues and providing advice, kind words and succour when needed. I must say I couldn't have asked for a better team.

Most of the Councillors have had their first year too—I hope that they found it enjoyable and rewarding. Other new faces were Glen Sanderson, County Councillor, who has always been helpful and supportive, and of course Sylvia Johnson our new Parish Clerk, who has worked so hard for us and so well. 'Older hand' Ian Lindley, County Councillor for Stobhill including Stobhill Manor was also very helpful and supportive throughout the year. Thanks to you all.

'Hectic' means that we dealt with a lot of meaty issues in the year. Having fought off Sainsburys a few years ago we have another threat to the field to the southeast of Stobhill Roundabout; Barratt are planning to build 400 houses there. HPC opposed this vigorously and, having formed the Hepscoth and Morpeth Together group, will be fighting this at the Public Inquiry due to start 22 July. Our thanks go to the support we have had from Alison Byard of Stobhill Manor and from Joan Tebbutt, both of Morpeth Town Council.

HPC has been a very active member of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan group, with representatives on 5 Committees including the Steering Group. This will I am sure prove to be enormously useful to Hepscoth, but I ask for patience as it is proving to be a longer term project. Special mention should be made of the hard work that David Cowans has put in to the Heritage Group. We made strong representations that major new housing in Morpeth should be located to the north of the town and this is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan group. We are also proposing flood management policies that should be of great help to Hepscoth when adopted.

HPC were vociferous in their views on the inner Green Belt boundary around south Morpeth. We hope at least that we will secure Safeguarded Land status there until beyond 2032, but there is no feedback from NCC until the mid-August issue of their latest draft of the Core Strategy. Meanwhile we fear in our darker moments that the Barratt Public Inquiry may render all this effort useless.

Other issues successfully dealt with during the year included nearly 20 planning applications in the Parish, many of which proved to be long running. We supported Loansdean residents hopefully to stop 200 Bellway homes putting rain run-off into Catch Burn, a tributary of Hepscoth Burn. And we tried to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the launch of our website, and regular email newsletters to interested Hepscoth Parish residents.

Above all we have done our best to serve the people of Hepscoth Parish well. I hope and believe that we have succeeded.

Phil Ashmore, Chair.

15/5/14