

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 18 May 2017 in Hepscott Parish Hall.

1. Present

Philip Ashmore (Chair), David Cowans (Vice Chair) Malcolm Paton, Ken Reed, Carolyn Reid, Sylvia Johnson (Parish Clerk), John Beynon (County Councillor)

Apologies

Fred Dye, Glen Sanderson (County Councillor)

In attendance

PCSO Simon Beavers, Morpeth Neighbourhood Policing Team

5 members of the public attended

2. Nomination and election of Chair for 2017/2018

Philip Ashmore was nominated by David Cowans and seconded by Ken Reed. There were no other nominations and Philip was duly elected chair for 2017/2018.

3. Nomination and election of Vice Chair for 2017/2018

David Cowans was nominated by Philip Ashmore and seconded by Ken Reed. There were no other nominations and David was duly elected Vice Chair for 2017/2018

4. Confirmation of Committee Members for 2017/2018

Apart from current serving Councillors there were no other candidates at the recent Parish Council elections, meaning that no election was held. The Parish Council is therefore made up of the Chair and Vice Chair as above, with Councillors Fred Dye, Ken Reed, Malcolm Paton and Carolyn Reid. There is one vacancy at present and we will look to co-opt into that position.

5. Chairman's report for year 2016/2017

Philip Ashmore read out the Chair's Annual Report for the year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 (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 2016/2017, together with a Financial Statement for that year, showing both income and expenditure. The figures were agreed by the meeting. The accounts have already been audited by the Internal Auditor and will now be sent to BDO for External Audit. The unaudited accounts will be made available for public inspection from 5 June 2017 until 14 July 2017. The relevant information will be uploaded to the website to enable this inspection 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 Hepscott Parish Council, minutes of which are produced separately.

Minutes prepared by Sylvia Johnson, Parish Clerk/RFO, 12 June 2017

Signed as a true copy:

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL AGM: CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2017

As I write this, in mid-May, we are still getting used to the idea of sweeping changes in Northumberland County Council (NCC) administration because of the 4th May elections. We have to say goodbye to Ian Lindley, County Councillor for Stobhill ward, which includes Stobhill Manor. Many thanks, Ian, for the help you gave to the Parish over the last 4 years. We warmly welcome in his place John Beynon. We are very pleased to see Glen Sanderson, County Councillor for the rest of the Parish and established supporter of the Parish Council, re-elected. HPC looks forward to continuing its good relations with our County Councillors, who have been so helpful in the past.

May also saw the re-election, unopposed, of the 6 present members of the Parish Council, and my great thanks go to all of them for their continued, and entirely voluntary, work that they do for the benefit of our local community. It is very much appreciated, please don't take them for granted.

Safe driving in the Parish has continued to be a theme in the last 12 months. Following the installation of the speed indication cameras on the A192 last year we have continued to work hard at dealing with speeding in the village. The Speed Watch Team have been busy during the year and our thanks go to them for giving up additional time to provide us with some facts on speeding through the village and in the wider Parish that give us the valuable evidence for the police to take some action.

Following wide consultation with the village residents it is clear that the majority wish us to pursue a 20mph limit through the village, something that already exists of course on Stobhill Manor. At the moment, although much work has been done and plans drawn up, the problem is inevitably funding, with NCC telling us that sufficient funding does not currently exist. We continue to look for solutions and thank Glen Sanderson for his support for this project. New street lighting in the village will hopefully make it safer at night. Our thanks to David Cowans, Glen and NCC.

Planning issues inevitably take up much of our time with well over 20 applications being dealt with this year. Each one takes some time but the Parish Councillors are always vigilant and my thanks go to them. As usual we have given advice to NCC when consulted, supporting many planning applications, opposing some, but always we hope with the long-term benefit of the whole Parish in mind.

This year has seen the first effects of the adoption of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan by NCC in May last year. The Plan, as you know, is a formal legal planning document. Our Parish was fully involved in its formulation and you will remember the widespread consultation and the support which you gave. The Local Planning Authority, NCC, is bound to take the Plan into account in planning decisions, and this past 12 months has been very interesting. There have been some significant successes for the Neighbourhood Plan, but the apparent ignoring of it in some cases by NCC was bewildering, particularly over the 3 County Hall applications. These applications have considerable impact on Hepscoth Parish (eg flooding threat, traffic generation, congestion, pollution). The disregard of the Plan's view by NCC was one of the causes of the 3 applications being 'called in' by the Secretary

of State for his inspectors to make a recommendation. I am delighted to report that all 3 applications for the County Hall site have now been officially withdrawn and the Secretary of State no longer needs to make that judgement.

The long-awaited NCC Core Strategy for the County is still long awaited! Its plans include extensive Green Belt around the village so its eventual adoption will be warmly welcomed, the last piece of the jigsaw, we hope, protecting Hepscoth village from merging with Morpeth. Unfortunately, a triangle of land immediately south of Coopies Lane industrial estate is proposed as 'safeguarded land for employment use from 2031' as an area for the expansion of the industrial estate if needed. It comes within 400metres of the northern tip of the village and we have opposed it, even if 2031 is a long way off.

During the year, parking in Hepscoth has been an issue. This is partly to do with the success of the Parish Hall as a recreational venue for the Parish, good news. However, some of us want to visit it in cars and on busy days we just don't have enough parking space. A long-term plan is being considered by the Hall Committee and hopefully will provide the solution.

A year ago a flooding sub group of HPC was set up to see if there was anything we could do to alleviate and prevent flooding in the Parish and to prepare ourselves better in the event of any future flooding event. Malcolm Paton has done a great job in drawing up a Parish Flood Plan, helped greatly by Carolyn Reid and Otto Meth-Cohn. It has proved an interesting task but occasionally frustrating, with each of the agencies involved (and there are many!) trying to bounce us from one to another, mainly because they don't want to spend too much money on little old Hepscoth. But we have stuck at it and are making progress and are undoubtedly better informed and prepared. Again, thanks to the members of that group who really have put in a good shift. We are currently seeking volunteer Flood Wardens. Please help if you can and thanks to those who have already volunteered.

The Barratt development has progressed as everyone can see and 2 Barratt representatives made a welcome appearance at the January meeting of HPC. They are very welcome, and a welcome to the Parish to the new residents of the South Fields estate. We continue to meet with Barratt in liaison meetings and raise any issues.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the members of the Parish Council for their help and support over the last 12 months in every one of the issues mentioned above. They all give their time freely and without complaint and work very hard for the community in an entirely voluntary capacity. I also want to offer great thanks to our excellent Parish Clerk, Sylvia Johnson, who is really organised and hardworking and keeps us on our toes doing what we should when we should; we would be lost without her. And of course, thank you particularly to our County Councillors for the last 12 months, Glen Sanderson and Ian Lindley, for their support and help, and welcome to John Beynon.

Phil Ashmore
Chair, Hepscoth Parish Council
17/5/17

HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Financial report for the financial year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

We spent a total of £16,628.28 in the last financial year. This appears to be a big increase in previous years; however, we must take into account that during that financial year we paid £4,256.08 for the balance of the speed warning signs for Barmoor Bank. We had received a donation from Councillor Glen Sanderson for these signs in the previous year, amounting to £9,741.00. After payment of all invoices for the speed signs, we were then able to reimburse Councillor Sanderson/NCC the remaining figure of £3235.22.

We purchased chairs for the Parish Hall, costing £1764.48, for which the Hall Management Committee have since reimbursed us the full amount. Adding these payments together we therefore spent an extra £9,255.78; which would not normally have come from our budget figures. The remaining figure of £7372.50, is a more realistic figure and what we would normally expect to spend per year.

At the end of the financial year the balance of the current account was £18,320.41. The balance of the Chairman's business account was £6,090.36, giving a total balance of £24,410.77

Sylvia Johnson
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

17 May 2017