

Hetton Town Council



Minutes of meeting of Hetton Town Council held on Monday 16 March 2020 at The Hetton Centre

Note: The meeting was audio and video recorded throughout.

Present

Cllrs R Coulson, J Defty, A Farrow, D Geddis, R Heron, M Hopper, K Pearson (Town Mayor), S Quigley, K Rowham, D Turner, S Waterston and C Willis.

In attendance

G Keedy, Town Clerk (TC)
Members of the Public (MoP) x 4

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from or on behalf of Cllr J Blackburn (self-isolating), Cllr J Cunningham (work commitment), Cllr T Dodds (unwell), Cllr R Elvin (funeral), Cllr J Green (work commitment), Cllr C Sinnott (health safeguarding) and Cllr M Thornton (child care).

Town Council resolved to approve the apologies received.

No apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A Liversidge or Cllr D Liversidge. Town Council resolved to record their absences as unapproved.

2) Declarations of Interest

Councillors A Farrow and R Heron declared non pecuniary interests in relation to Item 13 (Planning matters).

Councillor D Turner declared an interest in Item 13 as a Member of SCC Planning Committee.

3) Public participation

MoP expressed concerns about the poor condition of Fox & Hounds PH, former Bog Row School and properties in Richard Street, Hetton le Hole.

MoP raised concerns about litter in Hetton Park and the grounds of The Hetton Centre.

4) Minutes

a) Subject to the inclusion of revised wording (proposed by Cllr M Hopper and seconded by Cllr D Geddis) relating to Item 14, Town Council resolved to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Hetton Town Council held on 17 February 2020.

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Signed:

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4) Minutes cont ...

b) Town Council resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Events & Special Activities Committee held on 2 March 2020.

c) Town Council resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 11 March 2020.

d) Town Council resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Management & Policy Committee held on 12 March 2020.

5) Reports from Members

Cllr R Coulson expressed dissatisfaction that following a report to SCC of fly-tipping (at Grange View) and his retrieval of documentation potentially identifying the perpetrator, he had not been contacted.

In response, Cllr D Turner advised that the items had been cleared quickly.

Cllr R Coulson also reported that the steep footpath leading from Summer House Farm Estate to A690 was covered in moss growth.

Cllr K Rowham requested that details be sought from SCC re the policy for the investigation, identification and prosecution of fly tipping offenders.

Cllr Rowham added that she had concerns about fly tipping in rear lanes throughout Hetton and the former site of Heron's.

Cllr M Hopper advised that he had received noise nuisance complaints from residents arising from the location of a "scarer" at Coal Bank Farm.

Cllr Hopper expressed concern at a general lack of feedback from SCC and requested that a representative from the customer service team attend a future meeting.

Cllr S Waterston reported concerns about Irwin Street allotment site including large fires being lit and horses being kept on site for breeding.

Cllr A Farrow reported litter from the Hargreaves open cast site.

6) Town Clerk update

TC reported that he had registered with Post Office Shop for a business "30 days invoice" account. This would enable stamps and selected stationery items to be purchased without the need for him to self-fund and then reclaim costs.

Town Council resolved to approve this arrangement.

TC added that he would place an order for stamps ahead of 23 March 20 to avoid the annual price increase.

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6) Town Clerk update cont ...

In light of International Women's Day on 8 March, TC reported that since his appointment in 2018, he had abandoned the long-standing and outdated practice adopted at Hetton Town Council of referring to female Members by their marital status.

Town Council resolved to note and welcome this change in protocol.

TC advised that the two-year EE mobile phone contract was due to expire on 13 April. He sought approval to research alternative suppliers and tariffs in advance. Town Council resolved to approve TC's proposed course of action.

TC advised that a Member suggestion to make a donation of £100.00 to Houghton Brass Band for their Christmas performance at 29 November event had not been formally considered by Council at any previous meeting. Town Council resolved to approve the donation.

TC used this agenda item to provide Council with the latest information received (on 16 March - email and printed copies circulated) relating to Coronavirus.

For Member information and possible participation, Cllr S Waterston referenced a scheme she was volunteering with - "Viral Kindness" which involved providing assistance in the community.

After wide discussion about the potential effects on the Council's ability to operate, Town Council resolved that:

Town Clerk, in consultation with Town Mayor and Committee Chairmen be empowered to do anything expedient and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the Council and to deal with mandatory undertakings to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period of delegation;

and,

No further physical meetings of Town Council or its Committees be held until Government advice allows.

7) Great British Spring Clean

TC reported that he had contacted Keep Britain Tidy Group to enquire about the possible impact of Coronavirus on the event scheduled for 20 March - 13 April. Their response was awaited.

8) Anti-Social Behaviour

TC referred to the previously circulated report, the content of which had been provided by Northumbria Police.

Cllr K Rowham highlighted an apparent discrepancy relating to levels of Anti-Social Behaviour provided in the report to HTC when compared with that presented at the recent Coalfields Area Committee meeting.

Town Council resolved that TC liaise with Northumbria Police to seek clarification.

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9) Events & Special Activities Committee

TC referred to the previously circulated report which replicated a written question submitted by Cllr J Blackburn requesting a change in the composition of the Committee.

Cllr M Hopper read out a statement provided by Cllr R Elvin which outlined the process for Committee appointments.

Town Council resolved that the composition of the Committee remain unchanged.

10) Asset Register 2019-2020

TC referred to the previously circulated documentation and reported that to his knowledge this was the first occasion that an asset register had been compiled for HTC. Items had been included where documentary evidence had been identified in-house or externally sourced to support the values indicated.

TC added that evidence of an Asset Register was a requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. For 18-19, the Internal Auditor had identified that no Asset Register existed and highlighted the need to produce such a document as an improvement action.

Town Council resolved to approve the Asset Register for 2019-2020.

11) Risk Assessment 2019-2020

TC introduced the agenda item and explained that this was the first time to his knowledge that a risk assessment had been undertaken at HTC. TC added that evidence of an annual risk assessment was a requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. For 18-19, the Internal Auditor identified that no assessment had been undertaken and highlighted the need to do so as an improvement action.

Town Council resolved to approve the Risk Assessment for 2019-2020.

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12) Financial report

Town Council resolved to:
Authorise payment (s) by Direct Debit to ICO;
Note the content of the report and approve all expenditure.

Income:

Barclay's Premium Account interest £9.95

Staffing expenditure:

Town Clerk net salary (Mar 20) £1019.91
HMRC (Combined employer/employee liabilities) £452.78
NEST Pension (Combined employer/employee contributions) DD £63.73
Sub-total: £1536.42

Town Clerk expenditure:

Nil

Other expenditure:

Konica Minolta (Biz Hub C308 rental: Feb-May 20) £132.77
DC Services Ltd (Annual website and domain hosting, domain registration) £238.56
Society of Local Council Clerks (TC annual membership subscription) £180.00
EE (invoice 4 Mar 20) DD £29.35
Information Commissioners Office (annual data protection registration fee) DD £35.00
Houghton Brass Band (donation- for Christmas performance) £100.00

Sub Total:

£715.68

Community Grant Awards:

East Rainton Cricket Club (approved at 17 Feb 20 meeting) £200.00
1st Eppleton Scout Group £500.00
Hetton Lyons FC £500.00
Friends of Hetton Lyons Country Park £500.00
Eppleton Cricket Club £450.00
Hetton Primary School £500.00
East Rainton Community Group £500.00
Sub Total: £3150.00

Total: £5402.10

Barclays Current account balance @ 13 Mar 20 £17827.21
Anticipated current account balance if all paid: £12425.11
Barclays Reserve account balance: £28389.70

Town Mayor fund:

Income: Nil

Expenditure: Nil

Co-op Bank balance @ 13 Mar 20: £1286.20

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13) Planning matters

Cllr D Turner had declared an interest as a Member of SCC Planning Committee and left the meeting for the duration of the agenda item.

Town Council considered the following planning applications and resolved to take action as indicated below:

20/00277/FUL - Hetton Lyons Cricket Ground, Lilywhite Terrace, Easington Lane, DH5 0HF
Proposal: Change of use of land and erection of three lane cricket practice area.
No comments or objections.

20/00286/FUL - 12 Lambton Drive Hetton le Hole, Houghton-le-Spring, DH5 0EW
Proposal: first floor extension to side, loft conversion to include the installation of flat roof dormer to rear and conversion of garage to habitable room.
No comments or objections.

20/00293/FUL - 39 Redshank Drive Hetton le Hole, Houghton le Spring, DH5 0GX
Proposal: Installation of 2 no. dormers to front and additional window to gable elevation.
No comments or objections.

20/00238/FUL - Durham Wildlife Trust, Mallard Way, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6PU
Proposal: Creation of reed bed habitat.
No comments or objections.

20/00322/SUB -83 High Street, Easington Lane, DH5 0JR
Proposal: Revised application for alterations to roof to include installation of Velux windows to front and rear, alterations to existing shop front and construction of offshoot to provide 3no. storage units.
No comments or objections.

14) Town Mayor issues

Cllr K Pearson reported that she and the Mayoress had attended the Commonwealth flag raising ceremony organised by SCC.

Cllr Pearson stated that in view of Coronavirus, she would not proceed with the Afternoon Tea charity event.

Town Council resolved to receive the Town Mayor's verbal report.

15) General correspondence

Sunderland City Council:

Traffic Regulation Order, North Road, Hetton le Hole (circulated 24 Feb) **Noted**

Hargreaves Surface Mining: Notification of CLC meeting. **Noted**

Hall Construction: Postponement of Eppleton Liaison meeting. (circulated 25 Feb) **Noted**

NEST Pensions: Service improvements **Referred to Payroll provider**

Keep Britain Tidy: Dog Fouling campaign and Coronavirus - Spring Clean guidance **Noted**

County Durham Association of Local Councils:

Info re Coronavirus (circulated 13 and 16 March) **Discussed under Agenda Item 6**

16) Date and Time of next meeting:

Town Council resolved that the next meeting would be held at 19.15 hrs on Monday 20 April 2020 at The Hetton Centre.

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Signed:

Date: