

# HEPSCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Special Meeting held at 5.30 pm on Tuesday, 21 May 2024 in Hepscott Parish Hall

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### 1. Present:

Andrea Ranyard (Chair), David Cowans, Fred Dye, Malcolm Paton, Michaela Gilhespie, Sylvia Johnson (Parish Clerk)

### 2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/2024

#### 2.1 To consider and agree on any actions from the report of the internal auditor

- No actions were reported by the Internal Auditor.

#### 2.2 To approve the Annual Governance Statement

- The Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Council.

#### 2.3 To approve the draft annual accounts for 2023/2024

- The draft annual accounts were approved by the Council.

#### 2.4 To approve the Accounting Statement, Explanation of Variances and Explanation for "High" Reserves

- The Accounting Statement, Explanation of Variances and Explanation for "High" Reserves were approved by the Council.

#### 2.5 To confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption

- The Certification of Exemption was approved by the Council.

#### 2.6 To approve the Bank Reconciliation

- The Bank Reconciliation was approved by the Council.

The Exemption Certificate for the AGAR will now be forwarded to Mazars, the External Auditors. All documents will be displayed on the Website and on Parish noticeboards for the statutory period, 17 June 2024 – 26 July 2024

### 3. Any other business

**3.1 Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (MNP):** DC had recently attended meetings regarding a review of the MNP. DC asked if Councillors were happy for him to take on this role for the duration of the review. All agreed to this request and were happy for DC to attend on behalf of HPC

**3.2 Parish Hall Extension:** The Parish Hall Management Committee wish to extend the Parish Hall. A meeting had been held recently to discuss this and to look at plans. There is a problem in that the Parish Hall was bought by the Parish Council around 1984 but it is

not registered with the Land Registry. Unfortunately no-one knows where the deeds are held. SJ had an article from "Hepscott Towards 2000" which showed some details of legal work, the sale, grants, demolition, Planning Application and development of St Luke's Mission Chapel/School. The land was bought from Morpeth Borough Council and was registered but the soon to be demolished derelict building was not, nor was HPC's new-build Parish Hall. SJ had contacted local solicitors to no avail and also contacted the Bank of Ireland, which it was thought had given the Parish Council a mortgage. Unfortunately they could not be of any help as we could not furnish them with an account number or any other information. DC proposed seeking initial advice from NALC, however it was agreed that SJ make an appointment with a local solicitor for professional advice.

**3.3 Footpath Extension:** DC had spoken to an NCC employee at the recent Town and Parish Council Conference regarding the footpath through Hepscott Village. To walk through the village from the A192 pedestrians have to cross the road 5 times due to there not being a continuous footpath. HPC has asked NCC to include this in their LTTP since 2017 but have not been successful. We need to keep trying to rectify this and continue to request a continuous footpath through the village.

**3.4 Litter and bins:** It was agreed that we hold a Litter Picking Day on Sunday September 15 at 11:00 am. MP will contact Katie Weightman regarding placing an article in the next Hepscott Herald, asking for volunteers. DC will organise High Viz jackets, litter pickers and bin bags from NCC.

**3.5 Potholes and Overgrown Hedges:** It was reported that some potholes have been repaired in the village, but several still remain. It was agreed that MP contact Edward Mutton at NCC to ask if the others will be repaired soon. FD to send MP an email address for EM.

**Overgrown hedges:** An issue exists with overgrown hedges in the village. MP will write to EM regarding the hedge at No 3 Fieldhouse Close (which has grown over and closed the footpath) and on the C132 between the Orchard and the Railway Crossing.

**3.6 Road Signs:** DC reported that some road signs are broken but it was agreed that this is the responsibility of NCC. NCC will need to be contacted.

**3.7 South Lodge Wood:** An email had been received from a resident of South Lodge Wood complaining about rubbish being dumped in the wooded area. The resident offered to purchase the land from HPC. AR has invited the resident to the July meeting.

**3.8 Rota for charring meetings:** At the APM it was decided that the chair will be taken on a rota basis for the following year. The following rota was agreed:

- July - MP
- September - FD
- November - MG
- January - DC
- March - AR

**Minutes taken and prepared by:  
Sylvia Johnson, Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer**

**Signed as a true copy: .....**

