

Hetton Town Council



Draft Minutes of meeting of Hetton Town Council held remotely on Monday 20 July 2020

Note: The meeting was audio and video recorded throughout.

Present

Cllrs R Coulson, J Defty, T Dodds, R Elvin, A Farrow, D Geddis, J Green, R Heron, M Hopper, K Pearson (Town Mayor), K Rowham, C Sinnott, D Turner, S Waterston and C Willis (to Item 8 only).

In attendance

G Keedy, Town Clerk (TC)
Members of the Public (MoP) x 6
Press - Local Democracy Reporter

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from or on behalf of Cllrs J Blackburn (holiday), J Cunningham (personal commitment) and M Thornton (work commitment).

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

Cllr D Turner declared an interest in Item 5 in her capacity as a Sunderland City Councillor.

3) Public participation

Town Council resolved that a period of up to 30 minutes would be allowed for this item.

MoP queried progress with suggestions for the installation of CCTV in the area. Cllr Elvin advised that the subject would be discussed at a future meeting of Management & Policy Committee.

MoP sought assurances that Hetton Town Council councillors would be supportive of opposition to the proposed Cragdale Gardens development by Gentoo. Several Members provided their individual perspective along with assurances that this would be the case.

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4) Minutes:

- a) Town Council resolved to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Hetton Town Council held remotely on 15 June.

- b) Town Council resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Staff, Employment and Training Committee held remotely on 15 July 2020.

5) Open discussion: The role of Town Councillors and City Councillors

Cllr D Turner left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Cllr M Hopper introduced this item and expressed his personal concern that City Councillors who also served as Town Councillors were not fully engaging with the Town Council; often citing conflicts of interest as the reason for non-participation in business.

This viewpoint was echoed by some other Members.

Following a proposal by Cllr R Elvin, seconded by Cllr K Rowham, Town Council resolved that this topic be referred to a future meeting of Management & Policy Committee for consideration.

6) Reports from Members:

Cllr R Elvin:

Queries if SCC has a rolling programme of taking responsibility for unadopted roads? Seeks explanation for ongoing delay in installation of a play park in the Kingfisher Drive / Fir Tree development at Easington Lane (this was to have been funded by S106 monies).

Complaints received about the poor condition of 64 South Hetton Road. Can SCC please advise what action is being taken?

Concerns about speeding in Lyons Avenue, Easington Lane. Requests details of SCC plans for speed reduction measures in the area and asks that Hetton Town Council is consulted on the design and construction.

Cllr R Coulson:

Expressed disappointment that the Police & Crime Commissioner for Northumbria had been unable to attend the Town Council meeting.

A new cycle lane had been introduced at Old Durham Road, but no notification had been provided to Members.

Further request for the introduction of 20mph speed limit in North Street and South Street, East Rainton.

Concrete path leading from Summer House Gardens Estate to Old Durham Road is overgrown and requires attention.

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Item 6 cont

Cllr S Waterston:

Suggests a "whole" area strategy to address issues caused by traffic volumes and speeding is needed. Requests a joint meeting between SCC, Northumbria Police and HTC to discuss concerns and identify solutions.

Cllr M Hopper:

Expressed concerns about high speed traffic on Moorsley Road causing "rat runs" to Belmont, Pitlington and Sherburn. Suggests traffic calming measures are introduced.

Reported resident concerns relating to Gentoo - including poor customer service and routine repairs and maintenance including delays to basic repairs. Seeks Gentoo response to improve dialogue with tenants.

Cllr K Rowham:

Expressed concern about 10 x derelict / unkempt Gentoo properties in Easington Lane. Details to be passed to TC for referral to Gentoo.

Raised concerns about articulated vehicles becoming stuck in Lyons Avenue.

Cllr Waterston:

Reported that another group of travellers had arrived at Hetton Lyons Country Park, and expressed her concerns at possible lack of toilet facilities.

Cllr A Farrow:

Advised that complaints she and Cllr Rowham had received about poor standard of maintenance at Hetton Cemetery had been addressed by SCC.

Cllr T Dodds:

Concurs with Cllr Waterston re need for a "whole" area strategy to tackle traffic and speeding issues. Added that Houghton Road is being used as a race track.

Cllr C Willis:

Requests the introduction of speed humps in Byers Street.

Cllr R Elvin:

Suggested that in view of comments raised by Members re traffic and speeding, that the appropriate Head of Dept at SCC attend a meeting of HTC to discuss; and that a representative of HTC be invited to attend and address a future meeting of the relevant SCC Committee to raise the Council's concerns.

Town Council resolved that TC refer the issues raised to relevant agencies.

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7) Town Clerk update

TC reported that he had continued to research possible financial assistance for the Post Office. He had established that the business had received financial help from the Government's Covid fund, but this was for loss of trade / earnings and not for use on repairs. TC reported that a Post Office scheme he had identified was not open to Main offices. TC had been unable to identify any other options at this stage

TC advised that Gentoo had responded to his letter of 25 June and this had been circulated to Members.

TC reported that SCC had responded to his letter of 3 July re Areas of Special Local Character and that an officer would be in touch.

TC brought to Councils' attention the requirement to meet website accessibility guidelines and he undertook to circulate information to Members. It was his intention to include the topic at a meeting of Management & Policy Committee.

TC reported that the deadline for approval of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return was 31 August and it would be necessary to convene an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council in August to consider this. He added that this piece of work would need to take urgent priority.

8) Financial report

Income:

Groundwork NE (Moorsley Xmas tree switch-on recharge 19) £168.32

Staffing expenditure:

Town Clerk net salary (July 20) £1028.23

HMRC (Combined employer/employee liabilities) £442.43

NEST Pension (Combined employer/employee contributions) DD £63.73

Sub-total: £1534.39

Town Clerk expenditure:

Zoom Video Communications Inc. (Monthly subscription 15/6 -14/7) £14.39

WH Smith (box file) £4.99

Sub Total: £19.38

Other expenditure:

EE (invoice 4 July 20) DD £18.00

Sub Total: £18.00

Total: £1571.77

Barclays Current account balance @ 15 July 20: **£41,258.11**

Anticipated current account balance if all paid: **£39686.34**

Barclays Reserve account balance @ 15 July 20: **£28397.32**

Town Mayor fund:

Income: Nil

Expenditure: Nil

Co-op Bank balance @ 11 July 20: £1286.20

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Signed:

Date:

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Item 8 cont ...

Cllr R Elvin queried with TC progress with SCC in securing a proportion of monies identified by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for first tier councils.

TC responded that he had received a verbal indication from SCC that HTC would be the beneficiary of £1000.00.

Cllr R Elvin raised concerns about reports circulating on social media of alleged financial mismanagement of £5000.00 of HTC monies and sought the view of the TC.

TC advised that he was unaware of any such financial discrepancy and as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer, he would investigate any complaints made. He added that he had emailed Members on 20 July outlining his position on the matter.

Cllrs D Geddis and S Waterston separately expressed concerns about the slurring of the Town Council, the Town Clerk and bank account signatories.

Town Council resolved to approve the financial report and expenditure.

9) Application for Community Grant Award - Springboard Adventure - £500.00

TC introduced the item and confirmed that supporting documentation supplied by Springboard Adventure was in line with policy requirements and that finance was available.

After discussion, Cllr R Heron proposed that the application for an award of £500.00 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr C Sinnott.

Cllr R Coulson proposed that the application be deferred, pending receipt of further information from the applicant. This was seconded by Cllr K Rowham.

The second proposal was considered first.
Members voted 8 against and 6 in favour. The proposal was not carried.

The substantive proposal was then considered.
Members voted 7 against and 7 in favour. Following the Chairman's casting vote against, the proposal was not carried.

Town Council resolved not to approve the award of £500.00 to Springboard Adventure.

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10) Coalfield Area Committee meeting

Cllr K Rowham provided a verbal update following her attendance at 15 July meeting. Cllr Rowham expressed disappointment at the limited opportunities to speak at the meeting. She highlighted issues around 5G, the provision of laptops to SCC and planning issues.

TC note: this item was affected by poor audio quality.

Town Council resolved to receive Cllr Rowham's update.

11) New Draft National Code of Conduct consultation

TC introduced this item and referred to the previously circulated document. He reminded Members that they were able to comment on an individual basis, but sought the view of Council as a corporate body.

Following comments by Cllr A Farrow, Town Council resolved that TC write to the Local Government Association requesting an emphasis that Members should adhere to the code at all times and not just when attending meetings or acting in their capacity as a Councillor.

12) Planning matters:

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

20/01006/FUL

23 Lyons Gardens Hetton le Hole, DH5 0HL

Proposal: Change of use from garden room to hair salon.

Object on grounds of negative impact on local amenity including traffic and parking.

20/01012/FUL

Rainton House Middle Rainton Hetton le Hole, DH4 6PJ

Proposal: Erection of single storey extension to North West elevation

No objections or comments.

20/01039/TPA

17 The Grove, Rainton Bridge, Houghton le Spring, DH5 8NT

Proposal: Application to remove 2no side branches from Sycamore tree (T84), crown lift to main union by 5m 1no lime tree (T85), crown thin by 25% and remove overhanging branches 1no Beech tree, (T86), crown thin by 25% 1no Chestnut tree (T89), Remove & replace 1no sycamore tree (T90), Crown thin by 25% 1no Sycamore tree (T91) and to Crown thin/reduce by 25% 1no sycamore tree (W1) to provide clearances for light penetration subject to TPO 80.

No objections or comments.

20/00387/FUL

22 Hollowdene Hetton le Hole, DH5 9NQ

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension (Part Retrospective) No objections or comments.

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Signed:

Date:

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Item 12 cont ...

20/01175/FUL

At Windy Ridge Houghton Road Hetton-le-Hole Houghton-Le-Spring DH5 9PT

Proposal: Erection of a first floor rear bathroom extension

No objections or comments.

13) General correspondence

Town Council resolved to take action as indicated below:

Elected Member re GDPR concern (replied 25 06 20) **Noted**

MoP re GDPR concern (replied 29 06 20) **Noted**

Elected Member re Code of Conduct complaint (referred to SCC) **Noted**

County Durham Association of Local Councils re free online training (circulated 02 07 20) **Several members have participated**

Government Digital Service re domain registration and security **Actioned by TC-noted**

CPRE Summer 20 newsletter (circulated 09 07 20) **Noted**

14) Date and Time of next meeting

19.15 hrs on Monday 21 September 2020 at The Hetton Centre or virtual - in line with Government advice.

Extraordinary meeting to be convened in August - date TBC.

15) Town Council IT system

It was proposed by Cllr R Elvin and seconded by Cllr R Coulson that Item 15 be held in public.

Town Council resolved that Item 15 be held in public.

Town Council resolved that Town Clerk seek quotations and appoint a specialist contractor to retrieve data erased from the Town Council computer prior to his appointment.