



Hetton Town Council



Minutes of the Meeting of Hetton Town Council held on Monday 16 June 2025 at The Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton le Hole, County Durham, DH5 9NE.

Present

Cllr K Angus, Cllr J Bonsall, Cllr D Brennan, Cllr J Defty, Cllr P Dowell (Town Mayor), Cllr D Geddis, Cllr J Green, Cllr S Holt, Cllr W Little, Cllr K Pearson, Cllr M Pigdon, Cllr K Rowham, Cllr D Thomas and Cllr S Waterston

In attendance

L Hall, Town Clerk (TC)

Note - this meeting was audio recorded throughout by two members

1) Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Willis (Family Commitments), H Morton (Unwell), R Meadows (Appointment), L Gibson (Family Commitments), S Woods-Brass (Family Commitments) and R Elvin (Working).

Town Council **resolved** to approve the apologies received.

No apology for absence had been submitted for Cllr P Hall.

Town Council **resolved** to record their absence as unapproved.

2) To record Declarations of Interest from Members:

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Minutes:

The Town Council **agreed to approve** the minutes of the Meeting of Hetton Town Council held on 19 May 2025 pending updated nominations for representatives on the Larger Councils Forum.

4) Public participation:

There were no MoP present at the meeting.

5) Town Council to consider the following planning application:

25/01092/FUL

1 Moorhouse Gardens Hetton-le-Hole Houghton-le-Spring DH5 0AD

Conversion of existing garage to bedroom/sensory room with ensuite, and erection of front porch

The Town Council **noted no objections**.

6) Reports from Members, ward matters to be investigated:

Cllr K Pearson:

- The former Crown Pub was noted to have a sign advertising retirement apartments; the TC observed that no planning application has been received in relation to this.
- It was reported that there is a significant amount of weed growth in the area. Some Councillors noted that certain areas appear to have been recently sprayed. TC to contact SCC to request an update on the weed control schedule.
- Concerns were raised regarding the condition of walkways and paths, with broken paving slabs presenting a potential trip hazard. TC to contact SCC to request a survey and update on any planned maintenance.



Cllr D Geddis:

- Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Developments, Easington Lane - have not yet been adopted. TC to follow up with Sunderland City Council (SCC) for an update.
- Residents had complained of a lorry obstructing the road, at the Pavillion Works on Richard Street when making collections, raising safety concerns due to its location on a blind corner. TC to write to the company expressing these concerns
- Pemberton Bank – Overturned Vehicle there had been a further incident at the bottom of Pemberton Bank.
- Manor House – had still not been made safe. TC to draft letters to the property owner, Bridget Phillipson MP, and the Environmental Health team to raise the issue formally.
- Davenports Greengrocer's - being converted into a barbershop. TC reported that SCC had indicated change of use permission was not required. However, members questioned this due to concerns about drainage and requested written confirmation from SCC. The former Vape Shop had reportedly submitted a planning application to SCC to operate as a multi-use venue, including a barbershop. Members raised concerns regarding the growing number of barbershops in the town and questioned the need for additional premises of this nature. Members requested that SCC consider the town's strategic plan when assessing such developments. It was **agreed** to invite representatives from SCC planning to a future Town Council meeting to discuss these concerns. Cllr Dowell will liaise with the Coalfields Area Committee and local Police regarding this issue.

Cllr B Little:

- North Road Car Wash – Environmental Concerns, it was noted that businesses using large volumes of water are typically required to install specialist drain traps. Additionally, it was highlighted that the cleaning solutions used may accelerate surface erosion. TC to contact Northumbrian Water to seek clarification and raise these concerns.
- Suspicious Activity - it has been reported that individuals had been seen walking the streets around 4:00am trying doors. TC to liaise with Police to report this activity and request increased monitoring.

Cllr Gibson (raised by Cllr Waterston):

- Red Gables – enquired whether there had been any further developments regarding the reopening of Red Gables.
- UK Youth – Aldi Sale Proceeds. It was requested that the TC contact UK Youth to enquire about the status of the funds from the sale of the Aldi site.
- Hetton Nursery Sale – an update was requested regarding the sale of the former nursery. Cllr Geddis noted that a recent bid had been rejected, with indications that SCC may be preparing to take the building to auction.
- Meeting with Halo - it was proposed that a meeting be arranged to receive an update on their current projects and activities.

Cllr Waterson:

- Hetton Bogs – it was noted that signs had been placed in Hetton Bogs indicating cattle grazing, believed to be under the management of Durham Wildlife Trust. TC to contact SCC for further information and clarification.
- **Pearsons Estate** – reports had been received of youths playing football on land at Pearsons Estate, resulting in property damage and abusive language towards



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residents. The police and neighbourhood policing team had been contacted. It was **agreed** to request the installation of a "No Ball Games" sign in the affected area.

- Peppercorn Café Planters - concerns were raised regarding the condition of the shrubs outside the Peppercorn Café. The plants appear to be dying due to a lack of watering, and the tubs themselves were noted to be dirty. TC to report to SCC.
- Stephenson House – planning application was submitted last year. Something was noted to be happening in the building. TC to contact SCC and Police.
- Traffic calming measures, Houghton road on Broom Hill Bank. Reports of numerous speeding cars. TC request Police monitor the road.

Cllr Thomas:

- Noted there had been another stabbing in the area and proposed purchasing additional bleed kits - one for each ward. TC to make enquires.

7) Sunderland City Councillor(s) - Hetton and Copt Hill wards:

There were no councillors in attendance.

8) Financial report:

8a. Town Council to consider the report and approve expenditure.

The Town Council **agreed** to approve the report subject to confirmation of agreement to increase the amount for the Town Mayors Fund.

Income: NIL

Staffing expenditure:

Former Town Clerk net salary (hours owed)	£1486.12
Town Clerk net salary	£1112.52
HMRC (Combined employer/employee liabilities)	£988.61
NEST Pension (Combined employer/employee contributions)	DD £158.69
Sub-total:	£3745.94

Other expenditure:

Adobe Ireland (monthly charge for Adobe Pro)	DC £19.97
BT (monthly broadband charge)	DD £41.93
Badgemaster (ID badges)	DC £187.84
ICO (GDPR Annual Subscription)	DD £47.00
L Hall (Postage)	£3.60
L Hall (Pricewise – Stationery)	£4.87
L Hall (Scorpion Computers – Laptop)	£85.00
Scribe (Monthly charge)	DC £58.80
Scribe (Setup fee)	£358.80
Flagpole Express (St Georges Flag)	£41.34
B&Q (Storage Boxes)	£96.00
Durham County Council (TC Recruitment)	£1,350.00
Sunderland City Council (Static Guarding VE Day Event)	£99.18
Hetton Town Trust (Room hire – 15/05 & 19/05)	£112.50
EE (mobile phone)	DD £11.32
The Flag Shop (Armed Forces Day Flags)	DC £85.36
A Simpson (Internal Audit)	£270.00
Sub-total:	£2,873.51

Community Grant Awards (Subject to decision at item 13)

Hetton & District Art Club	£750.00
Elmore Banner Group	£700.00
Sub-Total:	£1450.00

Total: £8,069.45



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Barclays Current account balance @ 11 June 25:

£123,754.56

Anticipated current account balance if all paid:

£115,205.11

Barclays Premium account:

Balance @ 11 June 25:

£29,334.89

Town Mayor Fund

Income:

Transfer from Community Account (Mayors Fund)

£2000.00

Expenditure:

Charitable Donation

£887.50

Co-op Account balance @ 30 May 25

£2,887.50

TC noted the bank balances and suggesting transferring £100,000 to the premium account to earn additional interest. Town Council **agreed** to the transfer.

8b. To discuss online banking and additional requirements

TC noted the requirements for online banking and the Town Councils ability to make electronic payments. It was **agreed** that Cllr K Pearson be registered for online banking to authorise payments.

9) Direct Debits:

9a. Council to discuss the continuation of Direct Debits

The Town Council **agreed** to continue with the current Direct Debits.

9b. Council to agree additional direct debits for Scribe and HMRC

The Town Council **agreed** to the additional Direct Debits.

10) Town Council to consider and note the Internal Audit Report:

The Town Council **approved** the Internal Auditors Report.

11) To consider Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024-2025:

The Town Council **agreed** to the Annual Governance statement and **approved** the Accounting Statement.

12) Town Council to consider Community Grant applications received:

Town Council considered two grant applications.

Hetton and District Art Club: £750 towards 5 art workshops. Town Council **approved** the request.

Elemore Colliery Banner Group: £700 towards transport to Durham Miners Gala. Town Council **approved** the request.

It was **agreed** that TC advertise the Community Grant Scheme and create a press release.

Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Rowham, proposed a motion to suspend Standing Orders to allow discussion of concerns raised regarding remarks made by the General Secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, suggesting that members of certain political groups would not be welcome at the Gala. Following a vote, the **motion was carried** and Standing Orders were suspended.

It was **agreed** that the Town Council write to CDALC and its members to express disappointment at the comments made, and to emphasise that the Durham Miners' Gala should remain an inclusive event that does not exclude any groups. Cllr Geddis to raise the issue at the CDALC Executive meeting.



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13) **Town Clerk update:**

Following training, TC noted that Breakthrough Communications were offering a Data Protection Tool Kit for £495 to ensure councils are complainant by the 2025-2026 AGAR. Town Council **agreed** to purchase the package.

Toilets Hetton Town Centre:

SCC had responded stating that the light in the disabled toilet had been fixed and that the toilets were routinely locked at 6pm except on occasion and a baby changing facility would be led by property services.

The reported leaves at Union Street had been cleared by SCC.

The works at Bog Row had now been completed and the stream returned to use.

Issues at Perkins Close/Downs Lane:

This land is owned by Gentoo, who have stated that bollards couldn't be erected. TC has questioned this and suggested temporary boulders as an alternative. The Police are also regularly patrolling the area.

14) **Council to consider correspondence received:**

Fix my Street – concerns over the former BT Telephone exchange in Easington Lane. The site was not secure and was being used for fly tipping and commercial activity.

Agreed to contact BT for an update.

Invitation to Hetton Academies Y9 graduation event, Monday 30th June at 1.30pm – confirm attendance to Clerk no later than Monday 23rd June.

Dates for SCC Meetings – circulated to all members.

Thank you MS Trust – the Town Council had received a thank you letter from the MS Trust for the donation made from the Town Mayors Fund.

NHS Big Tea – an invite from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Chariry Team to host a Big Tea fundraiser – suggested as a possible Mayors fundraiser.

Parent governor Hetton Lyons Primary School – raised concerns over safety outside of the school. TC had advised contacting Highways at SCC. Town Council questioned the lack of crossing patrol, TC to make enquiries.

CDALC Training Opportunities – information circulated to all members.

Ground Work Trust, Energy Savvy Scheme – TC to share information on website and Facebook page.

15) **To consider the upgrade of Town Clerks equipment:**

The Council **agreed** for the TC to seek quotes for a new laptop.

The Council **agreed** to move the Mobile Phone contract from EE to Lebara and a budget of £80 for the purchase of a new mobile phone.

16) **Date and time of next meeting:**

Monday 21 July 2025 commencing 7.15pm.

Meeting closed at 9pm.