



## **Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2025 at The Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton le Hole, County Durham, DH5 9NE**

### **In attendance:**

Councillors K Angus, Cllr P Dowell, W Little, D Thomas, Cllr K Rowham

**Also present:** L Hall (Town Clerk) and 2 Members of the Public

### **1) Welcome by Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

### **2) Apologies for absence**

Cllr J Bonsall, Cllr S Waterston & Cllr S Holt submitted apologies.

### **3) Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 15 May 2025**

Resolved that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 15 May 2025 be **approved** as a true and accurate record.

### **4) Town Mayor: Annual report 2025-2026**

The Town Mayor presented his Annual Report for 2025–2026 (Appendix A) and thanked Members and officers for the support he had received during his year in office.

### **5) Presentation of cheques to representatives from the Mayors Charities**

The Town Mayor presented cheques from the Mayor's Charity Fund to the following organisations:

- Alzheimer's Society – £816
- Smile Train – £1,300

A cheque for £750 was also presented to ELCAP as part of the Council's Community Grant Scheme.

### **6) Public participation:**

Councillor D Thomas thanked Members of the Council and its various Committees for their hard work and commitment to representing the people of Hetton.

SN advised that 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of the Eppleton Mining Disaster and the 140th anniversary of the Elemore Disaster and asked whether the Council intended to commemorate these occasions.

Members acknowledged the significance of the anniversaries and agreed that consideration would be given to how the milestones could be appropriately recognised within the community.

**Meeting closed at 7.10pm**

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## Appendix A

### Town Mayor's Annual Report 2025-2026

#### Introduction

This report is presented to the Annual Town Meeting 2026, where electors of the parish of Hetton can take the opportunity to discuss local issues.

Hetton Town Council serves the communities of Easington Lane, Hetton, Low Moorsley, East Rainton and Hetton Downs.

The Town Council has 20 elected Members. For 2025 - 2026, these are:

Councillors Kerry Angus, James Bonsall, Donna Brennan, John Defty, Philip John Dowell, Richard Elvin, Dave Geddis, Lynsey Gibson, Josh Green, Pauline Hall, Steve Holt, Bill Little, Roz Meadows, Harry Morton, Mark Pigdon, Kay Rowham, Donna Thomas, Susan Waterston, Christine Willis and Sam Woods-Brass.

The Town Council meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month (excluding August) now at the new agreed 6.45pm in the Council Chamber at The Hetton Centre and occasionally at other venues in the district. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is a public participation section (lasting up to 30 mins) for members of the public to raise their opinions, interests and concerns.

If these concerns cannot be answered at the meeting, then these are followed up on and answered.

The Town Council also hold meetings of a small number of Committees to consider specific aspects of Council business. Arranged on an occasional basis, members of the public are also welcome to attend these meetings.

#### Mayoral role

It is usual to start with a set of thanks:

To the Community for its support, whether reflected in attendance at meetings (thank you for attending this evening!), conversations over the phone or via email, or collaboration with other great organisations that share their ideas, expertise, and enthusiasm as we work together for Hetton Town.

To the Council staff, who respond so diligently to the needs of residents, Councillors, and the Council administration.

My chosen charities for the year were Smile Train (£1300), Daft as a Brush (£816) and Alzheimer's Society (£816). The three charities have now each benefited from donations amounting to £2940.

#### Hetton Town Council - general

We have councillors and colleagues who are helping us ensure value for money and effective administration. We are grateful for the way in which our Town Clerk has helped to manage Council projects and provide excellent support for the public,

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including maintaining the Council's commitment to a public enquiries desk, emails, telephone, and public services.

To my fellow Councillors, who have been helpful and supportive. I am grateful for all their voluntary hard work on behalf of the community; as the elected public body for Hetton Town, we have a special responsibility to do all we can to keep this Town special and thriving.

When this Council was elected, we specifically said that we would support the preservation of Hetton Town's unique and wonderful character, using our position as the elected body for this Town to coordinate support for the environment and our residents, invest our income wisely and efficiently, and attract other funds wherever possible. I believe we are doing well in these areas.

I always point out that Hetton Town Council is a Parish Council with limited statutory responsibilities and relatively limited finances, and we are also appreciative of the need to keep those finances tightly controlled and to use the precept carefully to provide services to residents and achieve our aims.

This year, we again only increased the precept in line with inflation, typically by less than the cost of a cup of coffee per household. Nevertheless, although resources are tight, we play a significant role in the community, and, using the money we do have, we can do a surprising amount of good on behalf of the community. We, at Hetton Town, keep our civic traditions alive, including funding the Mayor's welcome activities, arranging community events, supporting the business community and other key organisations, and using our planning influence and the Neighbourhood Plan to keep this, our Town, special.

We look after key assets in the town, and we sponsor and support projects to improve the lives of residents, make the Town Centre more attractive, and improve the general environment. We do all this in partnership with Sunderland City Council and Councillors, and with our great community organisations. And we do it understanding that the money we have is largely from Hetton Town residents and that their needs come first. I would like to highlight just a few of our achievements over the last year.

The Town Council has purchased several large planters located at East Rainton, Broomhill, and Easington Lane sites in the district.

2025 saw the Town Council again run a best kept garden competition and Champions of the Community scheme.

Community Champion Awards were presented for voluntary work in the community, and a success story of a young man chosen for Team GB.

A renewed Hetton Town Council was designed and erected in the Memorial Park; however, it was strengthened in structure due to the very high winds damaging an area of weakness that is intended to be strengthened and supported more securely.

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A Legend on the Bench was situated in the Memorial Park, and is equipped with a solar-powered light which keeps it illuminated through the darkness of night as a beacon of hope for anyone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. The benches carry the poignant message that 'Someone Is Always Listening', along with several helpline numbers, including Samaritans.

The Town Council has played a full role as a statutory consultee in the planning application process, listening closely to residents' views and reflecting these in formal responses to Sunderland City Council. This has continued in 25/26 with high-profile applications attracting public attention and the Town Council's pro-active involvement.

Anti-social behaviour has again blighted the district - the Town Council has been vocal in raising concerns on behalf of residents and vociferous in its liaison with the police and other agencies.

## **Community events**

The Town Council again held its' annual Armistice Day event in November and was pleased to be able to take on a key role in organising and supporting the Remembrance Day event at Easington Lane.

Now established, Halloween and Christmas events were organised and held at The Hetton Centre (the home of the Town Council). These were well attended, with positive feedback received.

A successful Easter Egg hunt was organised in Hetton Park, attended by youngsters, our very own Easter Rabbit, Face Painter and a visit from Alice and the Mad Hatter, characters.

The Hetton Town Council has produced a Newsletter that was delivered to all our residents and updates events, information and happenings within Hetton Town.

The Culture Of Hetton handed the Da Said "Men Don't Cry" statue into the ownership of Hetton Town Council.

This year, as Town Mayor, I was proud to be raising funds for three extremely deserving charities that provide vital support to individuals and families both locally and internationally. In communities such as ours, the strength of local support and generosity plays a crucial role in enabling charities to continue their important work and help us make a meaningful difference together.

## **Communication and transparency**

The Council's Facebook page continues to increase followers and demonstrates that the page has become an established source of information.

Information and documentation about the Town Council's financial affairs is readily available, with the public able to attend meetings and hear "first-hand" the discussions around most financial decisions.

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The role of Town Clerk now belongs to Lisa Hall, who has brought expertise and experience to Hetton Town Council, providing support to the residents of Hetton Town to who we serve.

The Town Council continues to support Lisa constructively and positively, forging steps forward to work with her.

## **Community Grants**

The Town Council has continued to provide financial assistance to a range of community groups.

Beneficiaries throughout this year have been:

Hetton Juniors FC  
Elemore Colliery Banner Action Group  
Hetton & District Art Club  
Hetton Amateur Swimming Club  
East Rainton Cricket Club  
Studio V  
ELCAP

## **Moving forward**

This report provides only a snapshot of the Town Council's role and activities. Residents are encouraged to come along to meetings to see and hear at first-hand the work of their local representatives.

In addition, I have had the pleasure of visiting on behalf of Hetton Town Council:

Hetton Lyons Primary Maypole Event  
Down's Syndrome North East Fishing Competition  
Hetton New Dawn Christmas Party  
ELCAP Pantomime (Aladdin)  
Bramble Hollow/Elizabeth Fleming/Laurels Care Homes  
Hetton New Dawn Christmas Lunch and a special 100<sup>TH</sup> Birthday Presentation  
Royal British Veterans Enterprise Fundraising  
Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid Connection Project (Glebe Centre)  
Hetton Masonic Hall  
Eppleton Quarry Project  
36 (Hetton) Squadron RAF Air Cadets Presentation Evening  
Re-opening of Hetton Post Office Ceremony  
Hetton Academy's Year 9 Graduation Ceremony  
Bob Paisley Bar Launch  
Showmens Guild (Northern Section) Luncheon  
Offshore Wind Farm Project (Robin Todd Centre)  
Armed Forces Day  
Art Exhibition (Seaham Town Hall)  
Hetton Swimming Club Awards  
Mine Water Treatment Scheme + Solar Power (Seaham)

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Opening Ceremony of the Den Hetton Lyons Primary School  
Hetton Carnival  
Tesco Community Champion  
Eskdene Rise Show Home Launch  
Durham Big Meeting Eppleton Banner Parade  
Legend on the Bench Installation (Hetton Memorial Park)  
Studio V  
Sunderland Women's AFC (WSAFC v Sheffield United)  
VJ Day Remembrance Ceremony  
Elemore Music Festival  
Hetton Academy Presidential Election

Thank you to all those above for such warm welcomes and for providing an insight into how our and other communities have aspirations towards the future.

The Town Council looks forward to 2025-2026, playing a leading role in the local community with a continued emphasis on identifying and delivering residents' priorities; working with partners and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the Government's proposed reforms to local government, which are set to strengthen the role of the local council sector.

**Councillor Philip John Dowell**  
**Town Mayor, Hetton Town Council**  
14 May 2025