



Hetton Town Council



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Hetton Town Council held on Monday 18 May 2026 at The Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton le Hole, DH5 9NE.

Present

Cllr K Angus, Cllr J Bonsall, Cllr D Brennan, Cllr J Defty, Cllr P Dowell (Town Mayor), Cllr R Elvin, Cllr L Gibson, Cllr J Green, Cllr P Hall, Cllr W Little, Cllr R Meadows, Cllr H Morton, Cllr M Pigdon, Cllr K Rowham, Cllr D Thomas, Cllr C Willis and Cllr S Wood-Brass.

In attendance

L Hall, Town Clerk (TC), Members of Public x 6

The meeting was recorded throughout by one member.

1) Election of Town Mayor:

Nominations were sought for the position of Town Mayor.

Cllr P Hall was nominated by Cllr K Angus, seconded by Cllr L Gibson.

Cllr R Elvin was nominated by Cllr D Thomas, seconded by Cllr J Green.

There were no other nominations.

A ballot by show of hands was conducted to elect the Town Mayor. Cllr P Hall received 9 votes, Cllr R Elvin received 8 votes.

Cllr P Hall was **elected** Town Mayor for 2026-2027.

2) Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Cllr P Hall **signed** the acceptance of office, which was witnessed and signed by L Hall, Town Clerk.

3) Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Waterston (unwell), Cllr S Holt (family commitments) & Cllr D Geddis (unwell).

Council **approved** apologies.

4) Declarations of Interest from Members:

There were no declarations of interest.

5) Election of Deputy Town Mayor:

Nominations were sought for the position of Deputy Town Mayor.

Cllr K Angus was nominated by Cllr D Brennan, seconded by Cllr C Willis. 9

Cllr B Little was nominated by Cllr D Thomas, seconded by Cllr R Elvin. 8

A ballot by show of hands was conducted to elect the Town Mayor. Cllr K Angus received 9 votes, Cllr B Little received 8 votes.

Cllr Angus was **voted** Deputy Town Mayor.

6) Election to Committees:

Cllr R Elvin proposed a ratio of 5:3 seconded by Cllr K Angus. It was agreed that Cllr D Thomas and Cllr K Angus agreed to pass this information to Town Clerk within a couple of days.

Cllr Little proposed merging the Management, Policy & Finance Committee and the Staff, Employment and Training Committee as there was a lot of overlap between the two, seconded by Cllr R Elvin. As this was not an agenda item it was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Council.

Management, Policy & Finance - Cllr K Angus, Cllr P Dowell, Cllr R Elvin, Cllr D Geddis, Cllr P Hall, Cllr B Little, Cllr R Meadows & Cllr S Woods-Brass.

Planning and Development - Cllr K Angus, Cllr D Brennan, Cllr J Defty, Cllr D Geddis, Cllr L Gibson, Cllr B Little, Cllr K Rowham & Cllr S Waterston.

Staff Employment & Training - Cllr P Dowell, Cllr D Geddis, Cllr R Elvin, Cllr P Hall, Cllr B Little, Cllr R Meadows & Cllr S Woods-Brass.



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Events & Special Activities – Cllr K Angus, Cllr D Brennan, Cllr D Geddis, Cllr J Green, Cllr P Hall, Cllr S Holt, Cllr H Morton & Cllr S Waterston.

7) Appointments to outside bodies:

The Town Council **resolved** to approve nominations to outside bodies as outlined below.

- Co. Durham Association of Local Councils Executive - Cllr D Thomas
- Larger Councils Forum – Cllr K Angus, Cllr K Rowham & Town Clerk
- Hetton Town Trust – Cllr P Dowell & Cllr K Rowham
- Sunderland City Council Standards Committee - Cllr R Elvin & Cllr B Little
- Sunderland City Council Coalfield Area Committee - Cllr P Dowell
- Eppleton Quarry Liaison Committee - Cllr B Little
- Sunderland VSA - Cllr K Angus
- Hetton Colliery Railway 200 Committees
 - Technology; Learning & Events - Cllr K Angus
 - Lectures - Cllr W Little
 - Publications and Exhibitions – Cllr D Brennan
 - Partnerships & Hetton Heritage Partnership – Cllr P Dowell

8) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2026/27

Council **agreed** to appoint A Simpson as Internal Auditor for 2026/27.

9) Calendar of meetings:

TC referred to the previously circulated meetings calendar. Meetings start at 6.45pm

- 15 June 2026 - ELCAP
- 20 July 2026
- 21 September 2026
- 19 October 2026
- 16 November 2026
- 21 December 2026
- 18 January 2027
- 15 February 2027
- 15 March 2027
- 19 April 2027
- 17 May 2027 Annual Meeting of Town Council
- Annual Town Meeting: Thursday 13 May 2027

Committee meetings to be convened on an ad hoc basis in line with established arrangements.

Town Council **resolved** to approve the proposed dates and start times of Full Council meetings.

10) Public participation:

A member of the public began by thanking the council, particularly Councillor L Gibson, for her support regarding the flooding issues outside Heron Foods. Updates were then requested on the following matters:

- **Zebra Crossing, Station Road** – Sunderland City Council (SCC) had contacted the Town Council to advise that a crossing was not deemed necessary and that existing crossing facilities should be used. As there are currently no crossing facilities in place, the Town Council had gone back to SCC seeking clarification. City Councillors to pursue this matter further.
- **Additional barriers to the footpath outside the Post Office** – The Town Council had received no response to this enquiry. City Councillors to follow this up.

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Signed:

Date:

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- **Traffic flow through Hetton** – The Town Council had received no response to this enquiry; however, Councillor D Thomas advised that she had been looking into the matter.
- **Allotments at Eppleton Pit Road** – Fly-tipping remained on site and no barriers had been installed. The Council agreed to chase this matter up. It was also agreed to invite a representative from SCC Allotments to a future meeting to discuss ongoing issues.

City Councillors, Councillor Michael Quigley (Hetton Downs and Houghton South) and Councillor Alan Davies (Hetton), attended the meeting to introduce themselves to the Council.

11) Minutes:

The following minutes were **agreed** by the council:

- Meeting of Hetton Town Council held on 20th April 2026.
- Events & Special Activities Committee 30th April 2026.
- Management, Policy & Finance Committee 6th May

It was **agreed** to approve the minutes of the Management, Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 14 May 2026, subject to the inclusion of an additional minute recording that a discussion had taken place regarding the potential merger of the MP&F Committee and the SE&T Committee.

12) Reports from Members:

Cllr C Willis

- Byer Street – The area damaged during the installation of the boulders had still not been repaired. Concerns were also raised regarding ongoing issues with quad bikes and electric motorbikes in the area.
- Market Street footpaths – Concerns were raised regarding trip hazards on the pharmacy side footpath. Councillor Dowell also queried the condition of the footpaths on Front Street. The Town Clerk was asked to chase up these matters.

Cllr K Angus

- Rubbish next to NKF bin at the side of Price Wise – Concerns were raised regarding the build-up of rubbish in the area. The Town Clerk was asked to contact the relevant service and request that the bins be emptied and the area cleared.
- Article 4 Direction for HMOs – It was suggested that, now Sunderland City Council was under new leadership, the Council revisit the possibility of introducing an Article 4 Direction in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), which would require planning permission for such changes of use. It was agreed that correspondence be sent on behalf of the Council regarding this matter.

Cllr B Little

- Flower planters – It was requested that Sunderland City Council be asked to trim around the base of the planters, as when the grass is often cut, the grass around the base of such items is left and looks unsightly. It was agreed that this request be made to SCC. It was also agreed that, now the planters had been planted, the Council should arrange for photographs to be taken to help advertise the displays and thank the schools for their involvement.

Cllr D Thomas

- It was noted that reports had been received of a homeless person living in a tent somewhere within the area. Members were asked that, should they have any contact with the individual, they direct them to the City Councillors for support and assistance.

Cllr L Gibson

- SCC had advised that a bin would be reinstalled outside Heron Foods on the 13th; however, this had not yet been done.
- Concerns were raised regarding Gentoo spraying the edges of green spaces to kill weeds, as this was making the areas look untidy. Questions were also raised regarding the impact on animals and wildlife. It was noted that Councillor Gibson was due to meet with Gentoo and would raise these concerns.

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13.1 - Financial report:

Town Council **approved** the report.

Income:

SCC (Precept)	£34,184.50
SCC (LCTSG Grant)	£5,922.50

Sub-Total: £40,177.00

Staffing expenditure:

Town Clerk net salary	£1,711.81
Sub-total:	£1,711.81

Other expenditure:

Lebara (Mobile Phone)	£3.95
BT (Broadband)	£45.53
Scribe (Monthly charge)	£58.80
Moonpig (Condolence Card)	£5.99
A E Simpson (Internal Audit)	£270.00
Hetton Lyons CC (Sponsor Board)	£120.00
OpenAi (ChatGPT)	£40.00
T&A Dixon (Accountant)	£90.00
Amazon (Cheque)	£34.35
Hetton Town Trust (Meeting Cover)	£22.50
Leamside Nurseries (Plants)	£210.50
Hetton ASC (Grant)	£750.00

Sub-total: £1,651.62

Funds Transferred (Community Account to Savings Account): **£40,000.00**

Barclays Current account balance @ 18 May 26: **£7,523.44**

Barclays Premium account balance @ 18 May 26: **£151,967.03**

Town Mayor Fund

Income:

Race Night (cash)	£895.00
Race Night (Transfers)	£164.00

Sub-Total: £1,059.00

Expenditure:

Aldi (Prizes)	£23.65
Amazon (Race Night Package)	£37.98
Price Wise (Raffle Books)	£6.76
Cash (Card Test)	£10.00
Smile Train (Donation)	£1300.00
Daft as a Brush (Donation)	£816.00
Alzheimer's Society (Donation)	£816.00

Sub-Total: £3,010.39

Co-op Account balance @ 18 May 26: **£48.61**

13.2 To review the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

Town Council to consider the annual governance statements below:

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

Signed:

Date:

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3. We did not take all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
4. We did not provide proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting records and control systems.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate, included them in the accounting statements.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit. N/A
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review

Resolved - that the annual governance statement be approved and signed by the Town Mayor.

13.3 To review the Accounting Statement for 2025/26

Consideration was given to the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026, a copy of which had been circulated. **Resolved** that the Statement of Accounts be approved.

13.4 To review the Internal Auditors Report 2025/26

Town Council **approved** the Internal Auditors report.

13.5 To review Community Grant Requests

Community Grant requests were received from Eppleton FC (£750) and Hetton Juniors FC (£750). Town Council **approved** grant requests.

14) Planning Applications & Proposed Traffic Regulations

26/00526/FUL

3 Alexander Drive Hetton-le-Hole Houghton-le-Spring DH5 9LD Change of use from residential dwelling (C3) to short-term serviced accommodation (Sui Generis) and erection of front porch

Council **agreed** to reiterate its previously submitted objections and to raise additional concerns relating to the ongoing management and maintenance of the property.

Paid for parking in the Bonners Field area.

The Town Council did not object to the introduction of paid parking; however, it **objected** to payment being available solely via a pay-by-phone system, as such systems can fail and some residents may experience difficulties using this technology

15) General correspondence:

A resident had contacted the Town Council expressing concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in the park area adjacent to Kingfisher Drive and Redshank Drive.

Councillor D Thomas advised Members that she was in the process of organising a PACT meeting at Kepier Hall to discuss the ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour in the area and agreed to forward the details to the Town Clerk once arrangements had been finalised.

The Town Council is now in possession of the statue in Hetton and appropriate insurance cover was therefore required. The Town Clerk advised Members that the updated quotation had increased from the previous figure of £200 to £313.56. It was noted that this increase was due to general pricing increases by Zurich Insurance.

Members agreed that insurance cover was necessary and **resolved** to accept the quotation provided.

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CDALC Larger Councils Forum

The next meeting of the CDALC Larger Councils Forum will be held at Shildon Civic Hall on Thursday 21 May at 10.00am, where Durham County Council will be speaking on matters relating to battery storage and solar farm developments following the Town Council's previous proposal on the subject. It was **agreed** that the Town Clerk would also attend the meeting.

A resident had contacted the Council regarding ongoing concerns about traffic on the A182. The Town Clerk advised Members that the Freedom of Information request submitted to Sunderland City Council had been chased, as it had now been outstanding for three months.

Councillor D Thomas agreed to pursue the matter further with Sunderland City Council.

16) Update from Town Clerk:

Planning Updates

- **Bog Row School** – Demolition works had been delayed due to outstanding archaeological records.
- **Former Fox & Hounds Site** – Members were advised that the site has now been fenced off.
- **Great Lime Road** – The Town Council had previously requested that a covenant be placed on the land stating that only bungalows should be permitted on the site. The response received from Sunderland City Council did not acknowledge this request and instead stated only that no planning application had been submitted. The Town Clerk had since written back to reiterate the Council's request; however, no further response had been received to date.

Cowley Crescent/Lloyd Avenue East Rainton

The Town Council had made enquiries regarding the possibility of installing a crash barrier at the junction of Cowley Crescent and Lloyd Avenue, following repeated incidents where vehicles had collided with and damaged a nearby property.

Sunderland City Council had advised that current guidelines did not permit the installation of a barrier at this location. However, Members agreed that the matter should be pursued further, particularly given the proximity of the junction to East Rainton Primary School and the associated safety concerns.

17) Date and time of next meeting:

Monday 15th June, 6.45pm at Easington Lane Community Access Point, DH5 0LE.

Meeting closed at 20:20pm