

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

I HEREBY GIVE NOTICE THAT the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** will be held in the Conference Room, Dene Park House, Corbridge Road, Hexham NE46 1HN on Monday 15 May 2017 at 6.45pm, when the following items will be discussed:

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To receive the minutes of the last Annual Town meeting held on 9 May 2016, enclosed.
3. Matters arising, if any.
4. To receive Councillor Trevor Cessford, the Town Mayor's Annual report for 2016/17.
5. To consider any resolutions of which due notice has been given.
6. To consider any resolutions, comments or other matters that may be raised by members of the public present at the meeting.
7. (at 7.00pm approx.) Presentation by Inspector Pam Bridges, Northumbria Police
8. Any other business at the Chairman's discretion.

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
9 May 2017

NOTE: After the meeting ends the Annual Meeting of Hexham Town Council will then begin.

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Hagenda0517ATM

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2016

ATM116	PRESENT: Councillor T Cessford, the Town Mayor, in the Chair together with Councillors D Kennedy, T G E Gillanders, Mrs C R Homer, Mrs C Hanley, Dr Mrs N F Rose, J V R Hare, D Clegg and P E Oliver together with eight members of the public.
117	APOLOGIES for absence were given on behalf of Councillors Mrs I C Brook, T Robson, J M Graham and G C Ferguson.
118	MINUTES: The minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting held on 11 May 2015 were received and having been circulated taken as read.
119	MAYOR'S REPORT for 2015/16: The report of Councillor T Cessford is attached to this minute and it was AGREED it be received. A copy has also been placed on the Council website.
120	RESOLUTIONS: No notices of resolutions had been received for consideration and no resolutions or proposals were put to the meeting.
121	PRESENTATIONS were made to the meeting by: <u>Mike Coleman of Core Music</u> , an organisation that had received grant aid from the Council. The main project supported by the Council grant aid was the 'Ukorlele' scheme whereby out of work persons can learn to craft ukuleles, all made from waste products. The scheme has been most successful and finished ukuleles have been sold all over the country and elsewhere. <u>Geoff Cant, the Manager of the Wentworth Centre</u> , then spoke about the history of the Centre, the ways it is now catering for a wide range of leisure activities and its future plans under Active Northumberland, the company now responsible for all leisure within Northumberland.
122	There being no further business before the meeting, the Mayor declared the meeting closed.

Mayor

Signed as a correct record of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 9 May 2016.

COUNCILLOR TREVOR CESSFORD, HEXHAM TOWN MAYOR
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015/16

At the start of my tenure as Mayor I made it clear in my report on the Town Council website that Hexham is blessed that, along with local Councillors, lots of its residents play an active part in the many groups that exist within the town. It has been, and remains, a hope of mine that while at times these groups may have different ideas as to how to proceed, they can all do so with the interests of Hexham as a whole at heart and not that of just one or two individuals.

I and many of my colleagues work on many committees which have Councillors of different political persuasions on, a point that I insisted on when I became Mayor so that everything is open to scrutiny. The same applies with the working groups that also fall within the remit of the Council. I think that this sense of cooperation has helped with the massive workload that the Town Council takes on board. Work I need to remind you that is done by all town Councillors on a voluntary basis.

Hexham is a beautiful and historic town and I firmly believe we are all very lucky to live here. I think everyone should do as I occasionally do, which is to take a relaxing walk around the town to remind me of its character and just to look at everything it has to offer; The Abbey, Old Goal, Moot Hall, Park, Sele, Tyne Green, Leisure Centre, Mart, Racecourse etc., etc. I could go on and often do.

Lots of things happen in Hexham that run perfectly smoothly but unfortunately one or two things don't. The Bus Station for instance. Reports go out that 10,000 residents were ignored by Town Councillors, that's not the case. The meetings were open to the public and everyone who was there will know that a lot of the local Councillors, myself included, fought against the loss of the old bus station but as I said in the very first Council meeting we had with Northumberland County Council to discuss this, I believed it was a done deal. I have seen nor heard nothing since this initial meeting that made me change my mind. As responsible Councillors however, once it became clear that Northumberland County Council were selling the bus station site and we were not being listened too, we were obliged to go for the best alternative for its relocation and the site that is presently being developed was head and shoulders above any other option.

Parking has made lots of headlines and unfortunately this has led to a lot of misinformation being put out for spurious reasons. After free parking came in minor adjustments were made early on with the introduction of medium term bays in the Wentworth car park which has clearly helped some issues that arose. However the Council recognised and always acknowledged that the group to suffer the most was those who came to work in Hexham after the removal of permits. A group of Councillors have been working with Northumberland County Council for over eighteen months to have more land made available for this very reason. Because of developments within the town which have come about since the introduction of free parking we have lost, or are in the process of losing, almost 500 parking places. These are lost places which would not suddenly reappear if we were to reintroduce free parking. Northumberland County Council have admitted to us on many occasions that we need these extra places but as yet have not come up with the finances for more long term parking and/or permit parking. I suggest this would have

been a different matter if we were located in another part of the County. What has never been mentioned is the hundreds and hundreds of those who are more than happy with the present situation. There is land available in Hexham and with a little bit of cooperation from Northumberland County Council this situation can be resolved.

As I write this report I look at my diary and see the many things that are coming up in Hexham very shortly. The reopening of the Bandstand, after an extensive refurbishment, along with the temperance fountain sited just outside the Sele School, the first visit of the Hexham in Bloom judges, the Spring Festival on St George's day, the start of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Beaumont Street and also the Queens Hall, Annual Ceilidh, Book Festival, a Town Twinning visit from Metzingen, the Hexham Gathering, the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations, Armed Forces Day and Hexham Carnival. Again I could go on and on but in truth I have not even reached the summer holidays yet. Among the more notable events in the Council year just finished was the visit of H.R.H. the Duchess of Wessex and of course the very successful Tour of Britain cycle race.

We are a very busy town and these were just a snippet of the many, many things that go on throughout the year, a lot of which are organised by other bodies such as Hexham Community Partnership, Hexham Youth Initiative, Number 28, Residents Associations, Core Music, Sports clubs, etc. Information on these and lots of other clubs/events is available on the Town Council website and the Visit Hexham website.

Can the Councillors do everything themselves? Of course not, so we involve/encourage our residents, community and action groups to take an active part in the decision making of many things; Town Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, Northumberland County Council Core Strategy as well as the greenbelt and planning issues to name just a few.

Neither do we avoid areas just because they may be controversial. It is clear by all that Hexham Market Place needs to be rejuvenated and so, after going out to tender, we have just appointed a company to come up with a series of designs that will be put to residents, businesses and community groups to help us, with the assistance of Northumberland County Council, to push forward its redevelopment. One reason we appointed this company is because they met all our requirements for openness and transparency. This is not, like a previously mentioned development, a done deal.

Throughout all of this year, one of the constant factors that have helped me has been the support I have had from the Town Council's own staff. Predominantly Derick and Jane, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk respectively but also Stephen English and his team of ground staff who have done a brilliant job in all that has been asked of them throughout the year.

Finally I would like to say my own personal and sincere thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Cath Homer, who is an extremely hard working Councillor and a valuable source of support to me throughout the year. I would also like to say thanks to all those Town Councillors who go the extra mile with their involvement on the many Committees and Working Groups within the Town Council's remit, for all their hard work for the good of Hexham.

Trevor Cessford - Mayor of Hexham

April 26th 2016