

**MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH 2020 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM,
ST NEOT SOCIAL CLUB, ST NEOT**

Present: Councillors Dr L Jones (Chair), C Smith, A Bellringer, N O'Neill, O Burrows, R Berrett, G Rogers, D Lucas, P Critchon and T Hooper.

Sue Blaxley (Parish Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

Public Participation

None

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor H Bunt and from Cornwall Councillor M Eddy.

2. To confirm the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2020, having previously been circulated, were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None

4. To receive a report on any matters arising from the previous meeting

The Chair said that Heather Taylor has confirmed that she will erect a "No Parking" sign on her gate at the entrance to Cott Yard.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair said that she had received an email the BBC asking if the Dark Sky status has benefited the parish. It was agreed that whilst it may have attracted some additional tourism, it has not been particularly beneficial as it is not incorporated into planning policy. The Chair said that Cormac has requested the parish council's views on the proposed cattle grid at Dozmary. She said that as the area is grazed by cattle, the installation of a cattle grid will be beneficial to the biodiversity of the area in that the amount of purple grass will be reduced and the amount of heather increased. Councillor G Rogers queried why the works have been advertised in the press so many times. Councillor P Critchon said that the proposed cattle grid will be quite close to a bend in the road. Councillor Dr L

Jones said that as this is an area of SSSI and hosts a number of unique species of birds, Cormac could consider installing rubber shock absorbers on the cattle grid. It was agreed that the Clerk would respond to Cormac accordingly. The Chair explained that the Clerk has asked Cornwall Council to consider running a code of conduct training session one evening in Liskeard but had not received a response. She said that she would raise this issue again at her training session. She said that she has asked Simon Mansell if code of conduct training is compulsory for councillors and he has responded saying that if the parish council has adopted the new CALC standing orders, it is compulsory for any councillor who sits on a committee. It was noted that Councillors P Critchon and D Lucas attended the training 2 years ago, Councillor R Berrett 3 years ago, Councillors C Smith and N O'Neill will be attending the session in Saltash this month but that Councillors A Bellringer, O Burrows, T Hooper, H Bunt and G Rogers have not done any code of conduct training.

6. To answer any questions from Councillors, previously notified to the Clerk

Councillor T Hooper asked whether, given the government's shift to Phase 2 of the coronavirus pandemic, the parish council should be doing anything to support the community. The Chair said that Cornwall Councillor M Eddy had circulated a very useful link to advice from Cornwall Council and that she will publish this link in St Neot News together with a short article offering some further advice. She said that the parish council has no role to play in going into peoples' houses and offering to help them. She said that if there are incidents relating to the virus specific to the parish, the Clerk and Chair will issue statements of fact as considered necessary. She said this proved necessary yesterday and the parish council were thanked for their work in this respect. Councillor T Hooper said she was satisfied provided she was assured that the parish council can show some leadership if needed.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

8. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

To receive and consider quotations for LED lighting for the Pavilion

The Clerk said that she had requested quotations from Daryll O'Neill and from Brian Moore. She read out a quotation from the former but it was not clear whether this included the outside lights. It was agreed that the Clerk would clarify this with Daryll O'Neill and would also ask Niel Tucker to provide a quotation. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed again at the meeting of the parish council in April.

To receive and consider a request for use of Doorstep Green by Loveny Ladies Choir for a barbeque on July 11th 2020

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that the parish council authorizes Loveny Ladies Choir to use Doorstep Green for a barbeque on July 11th 2020. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

To receive and consider an update on proposed works to improve the ecosystem of the river

The Chair brought everyone's attention to the minutes of the last meeting in which it states that it was resolved to allow Westcountry Rivers Trust to remove some of the sycamore trees from the riverbank alongside the river in the playing field and on the riverside in Doorstep Green with some oak trees planted in replacement and that the obstruction in the river between the pavilion and the bridge into Doorstep Green be removed. She said that it was not agreed that a hedgerow of native species 1m from the riverbank alongside the river in the playing field be planted. She said that Westcountry Rivers Trust has offered an alternative in that a hedgerow could be planted on the river bank itself but councilors did not support this idea.

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to Doorstep Green and the Playing Field

The Chair said that in terms of ash die back, it is necessary to be looking for diamond shaped lesions on the trunks and this is especially important if the affected trees are impacting on a public walkway. She said that a parishioner had also raised concerns about the level of ground water at the far end of the playing field. It was agreed that this was due to the exceptionally heavy rainfall. Councillor P Critchon said that the drain is blocked opposite 10 Church View and often results in flooding which causes a problem for the residents. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Cormac regarding this matter. Councillor O Burrows said that when the obstruction is removed from the river, something will need to be put in its place to prevent balls from flowing away down the river. The Clerk said that this matter was discussed at length at the meeting of the parish council in July 2018. It was agreed that Councillor O Burrows would liaise with Westcountry Rivers Trust to ascertain if they have experience of other measures in other rivers. Councillor C Smith said that a dead tree has fallen in the playing field and that there are also some dead trees next to the power line in the playing field. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Western Power regarding the latter matter and that Councillor G Rogers would cut up the dead tree.

It was noted that the area measuring approximately 2m x 3m around the goal post requires fencing and re-seeding or turfing as soon as possible. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that

the Clerk asks Gary Rogers and Lanhydrock Gardening Services to provide a quotation to lay some new sandy soil on the area and re-seed it and that she be authorised to accept the cheapest quotation. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

9. Cott Yard

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to Cott Yard

Councillor C Smith said that someone has turned on the auxiliary heaters on the heat pump so the electricity bill will be higher than usual as more than 1000kw of electricity has been used since Christmas. Councillor P Critchon said that the carpet in Suite 4 seems to be flaking fibres all over the equipment and users' footwear. She said that she was concerned that the singers who use the suite may be inhaling the fibres. Councillor C Smith said that he had inspected the carpet and the fibres are not air borne and the carpet is not showing any signs of wear. He said the cost of replacing the carpet would be approximately £600 plus £150 fitting fee. It was agreed that the tenant should contact the parish council directly if she is concerned about the carpet. The Clerk explained that she is progressing the new BT broadband package for the archive room.

10. Toilets and Car Park in St Neot

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to the toilets and car park in St Neot

The Clerk said she has requested a new recycling bin for the car park now that the plinth has been installed. The Chair said that Gary Rogers has started work on the new garden area in the car park. He said that he will trim the leylandii hedge at the rear of the car park as well. Councillor P Critchon asked if the bus timetable could be moved into the bus shelter as it is difficult to read it when a car is parked in front of it. Councillor C Smith said that the toilet cistern needs replacing. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor C Smith that the Clerk asks Nigel Ball to undertake this work. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

11. Community Emergency Contact Details

To receive and consider a report from Councillor D Lucas

The Chair asked all councilors to forward their suggestions for additions or amendments to this list within the next two days.

Councillor T Hooper left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

12. Community Projects

To receive and consider an update on proposed surfacing for the parking area at Crowpound Crossroads

The Chair said that some ideas had been received as to the most effective way of treating this area. She said that Cornwall Councillor M Eddy has agreed to arrange a meeting with Paul Allen to ascertain if Highways can offer a solution to regrade the area.

Councillor T Hooper returned to the meeting.

13. Financial Contribution to “A Walk Through History” booklet

To consider making a financial contribution towards “A Walk through History” booklet

The Chair explained that Chris Timms is progressing with this project and that the cost of producing it will be similar to printing an edition of St Neot News. It was proposed by Councillor T Hooper and seconded by Councillor N O'Neill that the parish council pays for the production of the booklet “A Walk through History”. All Councilloors voted in favour of this proposal.

14. Appointment of Trustee

To consider the appointment of a trustee to St Neot United Charities following the retirement of one of the trustees

The Chair outlined the history of St Neot United Charities and explained that approximately £1,000 pa is generated which is given to worthy parishioners as well as a small gift at Christmas to those who have been bereaved. She explained that the parish council nominated trustees are Poppy Critchon, Nigel Ball and Roger Grigg and that the latter has retired. She said there is therefore a vacancy. Councillor D Lucas said that it would be a good idea to involve the village with this charity because many parishioners do not know what it is or how it works. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the Chair advertises the vacancy in St Neot News. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

15. Contract of Employment

To approve the Clerk's contract of employment

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the number of days holiday, as well as the number of months of sick pay, in the standard CALC contract for parish clerks. There was a majority that felt that both the leave and sick pay in the CALC contract were over generous and needed reducing. The Chair agreed to undertake further negotiation between the parish council and the Clerk on both matters.

16. Code of Conduct

To approve the code of conduct

The Chair emphasized that all Councillors must read this document. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor R Burrows that the code of conduct be approved. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

17. Councillor Surgery at Local Produce Market

To receive feedback from the Councillor surgery on Saturday 7th March 2020 and to appoint a volunteer for the next surgery on Saturday 4th April 2020

It was noted that a parishioner has asked if the parish council would consider re-grading the grass verge at Wenmouth Cross which has been planted with daffodils by the WI and which has been destroyed by vehicles driving onto it. It was agreed that this is not within the parish council's jurisdiction and that the concerned parishioners should contact Highways. Councillor Dr L Jones volunteered to attend the market on Saturday 4th April 2020.

18. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy emailed a report in advance of the meeting which read as follows:

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b) Goonzion Commoners

None

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

None

19. To authorise the signing of orders for payment, including –

Julie Ball (Cleaning of Toilets and Pavilion – March 2020) - £195.00
Cornwall Pensions Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £128.10
Classic Fire Ltd (Fire Alarm Servicing – Cott Yard) - £78.00
Mrs S. Blaxley (3 month's salary and expenses) - £2203.00
Chris Timms (Website domain renewal) - £
Julie Rowe (Cleaning Cott Yard) - £

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that all of the above orders for payment be approved. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

20. Finance Report

To receive a current financial statement of the accounts and to review income and expenditure against budget

The Clerk reported that this month the following income has been received: £571.50 from Heather Taylor as rent for Cott Yard, £1,197.19 from Pertemps as rent for Cott Yard, £136.50 from Menheniot Post Office as rent for the Pavilion, £60.00 for website advertisements and £64.78 overpayment from BT. The accounts balance at £66,997.86.

21. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date and venue of the next Parish Council meeting which will be on Wednesday 8th April 2020

The date of the next meeting of St Neot parish council will be on Wednesday 8th April 2020 commencing at 7:30pm.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9:20pm.