

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD USING ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE 2020 AT 7:30PM

Present: Councillors Dr L Jones (Chair), C Smith, A Bellringer, O Burrows, R Berrett, G Rogers, D Lucas, P Critchon, H Bunt and T Hooper.

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy
Sue Blaxley (Parish Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

Public Participation

None

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor N O'Neill.

2. To confirm the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020, having previously been circulated, were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Councillors P Critchon, H Bunt and C Smith declared a prejudicial interest in item 11 on the agenda.

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

The Chair said that Cornwall Councillor M Eddy had offered in March to arrange a meeting with Paul Allen from Highways to discuss re-grading the parking area at Crowpound Crossroads and he could perhaps give us feedback on this. She said that the Clerk had advertised the vacancy for a trustee for St Neot United Charities in St Neot News but there have not been any volunteers. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed at the meeting of the parish council in July. The Chair said that at the March meeting of the parish council, amendments were suggested to the contract of employment for the Clerk in terms of sick pay and annual leave which the Chair has discussed with the Clerk. The Clerk has asked that the matter be deferred until a meeting of the parish council can be held in person and at which, the Clerk could have a representative if she wished to do so. In the meantime, the Chair explained that on 22nd May 2020, councillors agreed, via email, that a temporary contract for the Clerk be put in place.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair said that Westcountry Rivers Trust will commence work to remove the barrier in the Loveny River but before they do so, they are checking on procedural matters with Cornwall Council. She said in addition to informing parishioners via the minutes in February and March, she had written an article in the St Neot News explaining the aim was to improve the Loveny for the upstream migration of trout and salmon. She has spoken to the residents who live near the barrier and they are happy for the works to go ahead. She said that Kath Strang has returned the £100 cheque in respect of the cancelled VE Day celebrations. On behalf of the parish council the Chair expressed thanks as follows: to Councillors P Critchon, H Bunt and C Smith for their work with Neighbours Together, to Councillor C Smith for cordoning off the play equipment and adult fitness equipment, to Councillor O Burrows for repairing the bridge on the play equipment, for filling in the gaps in the matting in the play area and for clearing the ditch in the playing field, to Councillor G Rogers for liaising with Western Power regarding overhanging branches on trees in the playing field and to Councillors G Rogers and N O'Neill for watering the flowers in the new garden in the car park.

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

None

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 Neil Tucker. The latter had not provided a quotation. The Chair reminded councillors of the quotation from Daryll O'Neill which was £673.64 plus VAT to replace all the lights in the pavilion, including the external ones, with new LED lights and to install protective guards on the lights at an additional cost of £144.00 plus VAT. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor G Rogers that this quotation be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Councillor P Critchon asked if the Clerk had written to Cormac regarding the blocked drain opposite 10 Church View which often results in flooding which causes a problem for the residents. She said that she had but had not received a

response. Councillor P Critchon said she would follow this matter up.

The Chair said that at the meeting of the parish council in March, it was resolved that the Clerk asks Gary Rogers and Lanhydrock Gardening Services to provide a quotation to lay some new sandy soil on the area measuring approximately 2m x 3m around the goal post and re-seed it and that she be authorised to accept the cheapest quotation. However, she said that the works were undertaken contrary to the resolution without notification to the Clerk or Chair. The Clerk reminded all councillors that resolutions made by the parish council should always be adhered to in accordance with the adopted standing orders.

The Chair said that she had received an email from the Headteacher at St Neot Primary School asking if the vegetation around the gate into Doorstep Green from the school could be trimmed to allow it to be used by the school children. Councillor O Burrows said that he would attend to this matter. She also said that she was concerned about the tree at the front entrance to the school which is leaning. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Cornwall Council's Arbor culturalist is going to inspect the tree later this week.

The Chair said that before the play equipment and adult fitness equipment can be re-opened, a risk assessment needs to be undertaken. It was agreed that if such areas are allowed to be open again from July 4th, 2020, Councillors T Hooper and C Smith will undertake a risk assessment prior to it being opened.

9. Cott Yard

To consider extending the rent "holiday" for Suite 3

Councillor C Smith asked if the tenant has claimed any grants from Cornwall Council that she may be eligible for to assist her with her financial situation during the pandemic. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that he would speak to her about the funding that is available. The Clerk read out an email from the tenant in suite 3 which said that she received a payment from HMRC which was worked out on her last 3 years' earnings but because her business had just started to grow, the sum given was low. She said that the sum given does not consider general expenses and is also taxable. She also said that people are reluctant to return to the studio despite her inquiries because of Covid-19 and that the school has a very low percentage of students attending as parents are wary to have them return. In addition, she said that the current situation regarding the internet in Cott Barn is inhibiting any progress with online lessons from the studio. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor P Critchon that the rent "holiday" for the tenant in suite 3 be extended until 1st July 2020. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

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

Councillor C Smith said that he had inspected the carpet in suite 3 and that it transpires that the carpet has never been hoovered by the existing tenant. She cleans the carpet using a brush and dustpan which aggravates the carpet fibres. The Chair said that the RHI payments are now up to date with a payment of approximately £1,000 having been credited to the bank account. The Clerk explained that she is progressing the new BT broadband package for the archive room. It was noted that the communal areas are being cleaned by Restgarth and that, for infection control reasons, no one else can use these areas until an external cleaner is employed. Councillor C Smith said that Julie Rowe would resume cleaning the communal areas once the village hall is open so that she can clean both buildings in the same day. The Chair said that she and the Clerk need to undertake a risk assessment prior to the area being cleaned by anyone other than Restgarth. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that the archive will remain closed for as long as possible and that they will be as flexible as possible regarding use of the communal areas.

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 Chair said that the toilet cistern has been inspected by Nigel Ball and by the cleaner and the Clerk and it does not appear that the toilet cistern is leaking. The Chair said that she and the Clerk are working on the requirements for a risk assessment which will be needed before the toilet can be re-opened. She said this is a complex task on which further advice is being sought. She said that if the toilet is re-opened, additional cleaning costs will inevitably be incurred. Councillor T Hooper said the decision has to be taken whether to re-open the toilet or to keep it closed and if the former is decided on, the extra expenditure will have to be incurred. Councillor P Critchon said that, at the present time, there are very few tourists around and there are no events taking place so there is no pressure to re-open the public toilet. Councillor G Rogers said that he misses the toilet being open when he is working in the village. The Clerk said that different parish councils have taken very different views on re-opening their public toilets. Some have just gone ahead and re-opened them whilst others that are cleaned by Cormac have re-opened as Cormac have undertaken their own in-house risk assessment. It was noted that as the Pavilion has never been closed, a risk assessment will not be required for cleaning to resume in that building.

Councillors P Critchon, H Bunt and C Smith, having previously declared an interest, left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

11. Neighbours Together

To consider making a financial contribution towards Neighbours Together

It was noted that Councillor P Critchon had circulated information to councillors prior to the meeting regarding the work of Neighbours Together and that a bank account was now open for the charity which is registered with the RVS. It was noted that a donation of £1,000 is being requested for Neighbours Together. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy confirmed that he will be donating £500 to them from his fund from Cornwall Council. Councillors A Bellringer and O Burrows said that they considered that a donation of £500 would be a reasonable figure at this stage. Councillor G Rogers said that £500 had been set aside in the precept for charitable donations. It was noted that Neighbours Together could also request some finance from St Neot United Charities. Councillor D Lucas said that Neighbours Together is a fantastic charity and the volunteers are doing a brilliant job and that a donation of £1,000 should be made. The Chair outlined how the money has been spent to date. She commented that, as furloughing stops, more people in the parish will be in need and that the parish council may be asked for funding from other bodies. It was agreed that Neighbours Together has done a fantastic job in helping 88 parishioners to date. It was proposed by Councillor G Rogers and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that a donation of £500 be made to Neighbours Together and that a further donation may be considered on the submission of the expenditure accounts. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Councillors P Critchon, H Bunt and C Smith returned to the meeting.

12. Car Safety Measures Outside St Neot Primary School

To receive and consider ways of improving road safety at the primary school entrance

The Chair explained that the task for councillors is to identify the issue in terms of road safety outside the primary school and to identify whether the proposal put forward by Cornwall Council addresses the issue. She said this is a pre-consultation. The next stage is a public consultation by Cornwall Council. The Headteacher said that the safety of the children is paramount and that, in this respect, there is a need to reduce the speed of the traffic along Loveny Road. She said that other measures which have been taken have not achieved that. She said that since the school was built 15 years ago, the number of heavy vehicles and the overall volume of traffic using Loveny Road has increased. She explained that there have been many incidents reported involving speeding traffic along Loveny Road and that effective traffic calming measures are necessary for the safety of the children. She outlined incidents that have been reported since October 2018 where parents or children had been put at risk. Councillor G Rogers said that several vehicles parked on Loveny Road during the day belong

to school staff. The Headteacher said that staff are encouraged to park in the school car park but that the vehicles change daily depending on which staff are in school. She said that the issue is not about parked vehicles but about speeding traffic and safety on the bend at the northern end. In terms of parking near the bend on the northern end, some discussion took place as to whether parked vehicles in this location reduce visibility and therefore the speed of traffic or whether if vehicles are not parked here, it increases the visibility for the children crossing the road. Councillor H Bunt said that a lot of vehicles turn around at the junction with Loveny Close and that the 20mph sign needs to be nearer this junction as opposed to close to the school. Many councillors agreed with this suggestion. Some discussion took place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of speed cushions. Some councillors considered that drivers negotiating speed cushions may fail to see children crossing the road. Councillor P Critchon said that drivers will park on the speed cushions. Councillor C Smith said that many speed cushions have been removed outside schools as they increase vehicle emissions and therefore pollution outside schools. Some discussion took place regarding rumble strips, but it was generally agreed that they are noisy. Councillor G Rogers asked if flashing 20mph signs are a possibility. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that they are if there is an adequate electricity supply. The Headteacher said that if they slow the traffic down, they would be welcomed as a solution. Councillor P Critchon said that flashing lights indicating to drivers that they have exceeded the speed limit could be considered. She said that the 20mph speed limit sign should be sited further away from the school but not so far away that drivers become complacent. Councillor A Bellringer said that drivers will take more notice of flashing lights. He also said that he considers that there should be no parking enforced on the bend at the northern end. Councillor D Lucas said that flashing lights are the preferred solution and that there should always be no parking in the areas delineated on the plan. Councillor O Burrows said that speed cushions are very effective in slowing the traffic as they are a physical barrier. Councillor R Berrett said that flashing lights are preferred. Further discussion took place regarding the location of the 20mph speed limit sign at the northern end, but it was agreed that the preferred location for it would be where the 30mph sign is currently located. In addition, it was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor O Burrows that a 20mph speed limit be imposed throughout the whole village. 5 councillors voted in favour of this proposal and 5 against. The Chair chose not to use her casting vote, so the proposal was not therefore carried. In terms of speed cushions and/speed bumps and/or rumble strips, most Councillors agreed that these were not an option that would adequately address the issue of speeding traffic along Loveny Road. Most councillors agreed that there should be a yellow line as an enforceable "no parking" measure on the bend at the north end. It was proposed by Councillor P Critchon and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that a 20mph speed limit be imposed outside the primary school. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith that the 20mph signs should be flashing signs and be located before Loveny Close where the 30mph sign is currently located and where the existing 30mph sign is currently

located at the northern end. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. It was also agreed that 20mph roundels painted on the road are a good idea. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that an appropriate location for a roundel would be at the junction of Loveny Road and Loveny Close as vehicles cannot and do not park in that location, thus hiding the roundel as happens now. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. It was agreed that the Clerk would respond to Cornwall Council summarising this discussion as follows: First, the Parish Council would like to see flashing school signs which would function at school drop off and pick up times (identical to the ones on the Lostwithiel Road for St Winnow Primary School. The view was that the electricity supply issues must be overcome). They would like these positioned well before the turning left into Loveny Close where the 30mph sign is now and at the northern end, they would like the sign positioned where the existing school sign is currently located.

Secondly, they would like to see a 20mph speed limit along Loveny Road past the school with the 20mph signs located as outlined above.

Thirdly, speed cushions are not considered appropriate. The concerns were that drivers may be more concerned with negotiating the speed cushions and fail to notice children crossing the road, that drivers attempt to avoid the speed cushions to prevent damaging their vehicles which presents a highway danger, they increase emissions from vehicles and would therefore increase the pollution levels outside the school and drivers would park on the speed cushions at busy times.

Fourthly, rumble strips are not considered appropriate due to the noise pollution. Fifthly, 20mph roundels painted on the road are considered to be a good idea and it was suggested that an appropriate location would be at the junction of Loveny Road and Loveny Close as vehicles cannot and do not park in that location, thus hiding the roundel as happens now.

Finally, the Parish Council would welcome a yellow line as an enforceable "no parking" measure on the bend at the north end.

In addition, the parish council would be happy to consider any other suggestions or solutions that may be put forward by Cornwall Council.

13. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Cornwall Council is continuing to support businesses in Cornwall which will undoubtedly be hard hit by Covid 19. He said

that Cornwall Council has set aside £220 million in business grants to support the Cornish economy.

b) Goonzion Commoners

Councillor C Smith reported that the entrance to the adit on land belonging to Carnglaze Caverns is unlocked. It was agreed that the Clerk would email them and ask them to ensure that it is locked. Councillor C Smith also reported that a parishioner has said that people could climb into one of the adits on Goonzion. He thought they were potholers. The Chair sought assurance that the six foot high metal grill at the entrance was still locked as it had been at the annual asset check. Councillor C Smith agreed it was. The Chair pointed out that no one could therefore accidentally wander into the adit, and would have to climb up over the barrier. Councillors therefore agreed no further action was needed here.

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

None

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

None

15. 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: £16,481.15 from Cornwall Council as the first half of the precept, £1,197.19 from Pertemps as rent for Cott Yard, £252.00 from Menheniot Post Office as rent for the Pavilion and £18.84 interest. The accounts balance at £73,505.07.

16. Date of next meeting

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

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

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10:20pm.