

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD USING ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7:30PM

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

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy
Sue Blaxley (Parish Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

Public Participation

None

1. Apologies

None

2. To confirm the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2020, having previously been circulated, were agreed as an accurate record subject to an addition to record the agreement to coppice the roadside hedges at Linkindale.

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Councillor G Rogers declared an interest in item 12, part 1, on the agenda and Councillors P Crichton, C Smith and H Bunt declared an interest in item 19 on the agenda.

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

The Chair said that the acrylic signs for the playing field referring to Covid 19 have been ordered. The Clerk said that Colin Alford is willing to repair the post in the playing field and will meet Councillor O Burrows to discuss the matter.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair said that she had received a report of fly tipping on Goonzion. She said that the items have now been removed by Cornwall Council. She congratulated Councillor P Crichton on her receiving a letter from the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of the Queen thanking her and her team for their work with Neighbours Together. The Chair explained that St Neot United Charities will be meeting at the beginning of December and that she considers that given the existing economic circumstances caused by the pandemic, it may be a good idea

to give the charity an additional donation of £800 this year. It was agreed that the matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the parish council. The Chair commented that the bin in the car park is full. It was noted that it is Cornwall Council's responsibility to empty this bin. The Chair thanked those councillors who empty the other bins – Councillors A Bellringer, O Burrows and N O'Neill. She suggested that clubs, such as the scouts, may be struggling financially this year as they have not been able to undertake fund raising and that it may be a good idea to ask them to notify the parish council who may be able to offer some assistance. The Chair said she would include this in her next St Neot News article.

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

Councillor G Rogers commented that he receives a considerable volume of emails from the Clerk at Cardinham Parish Council relating to matters of interest from organisations such as Cornwall Council. The Clerk said that she would forward more emails to councillors.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

8. To consider three possible new initiatives

To create a covered space near the Pavilion using a marquee

Councillor C Smith said that the provision of a covered space in the playing field on the level area of grass in front of the pavilion would enable events such as markets, WI flower show and choir rehearsals to take place. He said that the marquee could be used in conjunction with the pavilion. He also said that a marquee could be rented initially to see if it is used. Councillor T Hooper said that the pantomime could take place there. Councillor P Crichton said that the marquee could be used for people queuing outside the pavilion to use the post office. Councillor G Rogers said that he has never experienced having to queue to use the post office. Councillor O Burrows agreed with the latter comment. He said that a marquee should be useful for years ahead and not just during Covid 19. Councillors agreed that the principle is worth exploring. Councillor P Crichton said that a covering over the amphitheatre in Doorstep Green would be her preference. Councillor H Bunt said that it was a good idea and that the area under the covering could be laid with astro turf to overcome the issue of the grass not growing if it is under cover. It was pointed out that such an initiative should not undermine the hiring of the hall. Councillors G Rogers and O Burrows said they were in favour of having a removable cover for the amphitheatre. Councillor H Bunt said that one way of doing this would be to use tarpaulins used to cover shipping containers. These tarpaulins were relatively cheap and could

be attached when needed to posts erected permanently around the perimeter of the amphitheatre. Councillors O Burrows and H Bunt agreed to examine the idea further.

To consider a legacy project, commemorating the youth club, of an outside all weather table tennis area

The Chair said that she had spoken to Derek Fairhall to discuss ways of recognising his achievement of 33 years of running the youth club and youth room. He has said that he would like a legacy for the youth of the village, not personal recognition. Following this, Derek wrote a letter which was circulated to all councillors. There is £1,130 in the youth club's bank account which could be used to obtain grant funding but firstly he would like the parish council to agree to donate a start-up fund of £500 in the event of a volunteer youth leader stepping forward to allow the youth club to resume. It was noted that the cost of the project is estimated at £5,000 which is £3,000 for the bitumen base and £2,000 for the table. Some discussion took place about the parish council match funding the project. The principle of financial assistance was agreed for the start-up fund and also for the project itself, depending on the outcome of grant applications. Derek wrote that if the parish council was minded to go ahead with the proposals, it would be helpful if he could liaise with a designated councillor or small sub-committee to approve the grant application prior to submission, as it will be made in the parish council's name. The Chair volunteered to be the designated councillor.

To consider opening more PROWs (silver and bronze routes) to give the public greater access to the countryside

The Chair said this was a preliminary discussion. She suggested that the parish council considers a partnering scheme with as many people and organisations as possible in the community in order to open all bronze and silver PROWs. She said there is a national thrust for everyone to reconnect with nature. She said that a large fund would be required to commence the initiative in order to get the paths cleared for use and she suggested the parish council pledge £10,000. She said this would involve working closely with farmers. Councillor H Bunt said that farmers have to keep PROWs on their land open as a legal requirement. Councillor O Burrows said that he thought this was an excellent idea. Councillor N O'Neill said that she supports the principle of the idea as walking routes need to be accessible. Councillor D Lucas said that it is a good idea in principle but the details of all the gold, silver and bronze paths need to be known first. Councillor G Rogers said that some of the gold PROWs do not get used and there are broken stiles and signs on these paths which have been like that for several years. Councillor C Smith said that the priority should be to improve the gold paths first including the stiles, sign posts and clearing them of fallen trees and overgrown vegetation. Councillor R Berrett said that farmers are going to be encouraged to improve biodiversity. Councillor T Hooper said it would be

fantastic if the routes could be improved and advertised. Councillor A Bellringer asked how the community would become involved. The Chair said that many people are coming forward to support the initiative and it is being co-ordinated by Jenny Hart of Re-Imagine Kernow.

9. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

To appoint a volunteer to check the play equipment over the winter

Councillor T Hooper said that she was not able to inspect the play equipment over the winter months. Councillor G Rogers said that he would undertake this task.

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

The Chair said that there are a lot of leaves in Doorstep Green and on the bridge into Doorstep Green. Councillor O Burrows volunteered to sweep these up. In addition, the culvert in Lampen Lane is full of leaves. Councillor H Bunt said that the school have asked if they can erect Christmas lights on the gate into the school from Doorstep Green. It was agreed that the school could do this. Councillor O Burrows said that the padlock on the tool box has been removed but he will not replace it as he says there is no real need for a padlock.

10. Cott Yard

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

It was noted that the covered gully at the rear of Cott Yard needs clearing of leaves and debris. Councillor O Burrows said he would have a look.

11. Toilets and Car Park

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

It was noted that the vegetation in the car park is becoming overgrown. The Chair said that the screws have come out of the hook on the wall outside the toilet. Councillor O Burrows said that he would repair this.

12. St Neot Orchard

Councillor G Rogers, having previously declared an interest, left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

To receive and consider quotations for strimming St Neot Orchard

The Clerk reported that she had received two quotations for strimming the orchard. One was from Dean Leonard in the sum of £250 per cut and the other from Gary Rogers in the sum of £200 per cut. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor H Bunt that the quotation from Gary Rogers be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal except for Councillor P Crichton who voted against as she said she would prefer to see the allocation of paid jobs given to a variety of people.

Councillor G Rogers returned to the meeting.

To receive and consider quotations for the construction and installation of steps in St Neot Orchard

The Clerk said that she was expecting a quotation from Mervyn Chipman but this was not forthcoming as yet. She said that she would send the specification for the work to Colin Alford and the quotations could be considered at the next meeting of the parish council.

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to St Neot Orchard

Councillor P Crichton said that she would check ownership of the land between the orchard and the river as it would be a good idea to have a footpath from the village into the orchard.

13. Grass Cutting and PROW Contracts

To consider obtaining quotations for the grass cutting and PROW contracts for 2021/22

The Clerk said that the parish council does not have to test the market for these contracts every year and if the work currently being undertaken by the existing contractors is considered to be satisfactory, they could be asked to quote for 2021/22. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that Gary Rogers be asked to provide a quotation for the PROWs contract for 2021/22 and Lanhydrock Gardening Services for the grass cutting contract for 2021/22. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

14. Hedge Cutting on the road adjacent to Linkindale

To receive and consider quotations for hedge cutting on the road adjacent to Linkindale

The Clerk said that she had received one quotation for coppicing the roadside

trees at Linkindale. Councillor G Rogers said that he thought the trees would be flail cut. Councillor H Bunt said that there are some big trees that would not be able to be flail cut as they need cutting at base level. Councillor P Crichton said coppicing would be preferable for nature and the hedge would grow back thicker. It was agreed that as the cost is considerable, the Clerk would obtain two further quotations. It was also agreed that, in the interests of highway safety, the hedges on Goonzion need cutting. It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain quotations from Steven Masters, Ben Simmons and Colin Alford.

15. Risk Management Policy Statement

To adopt the Risk Management Policy Statement

It was noted that Councillor T Hooper had circulated a Risk Management Policy Statement to all councillors before the last meeting of the parish council which has been revised by Councillor D Lucas. It was noted that Councillor P Crichton has made comments on this which Councillor D Lucas will address and the matter will be considered at the next meeting of the parish council.

16. Winter Preparations

To consider the preparations for winter

The Chair said that all the salt bins are full. Councillor C Smith and A Bellringer said that they will locate additional salt bins at Ley and at the top of the Halfway House hill. It was noted that the salt bin on Bush Hill is filling with water and may need replacing next year.

17. St Neot Website

To consider the future management of St Neot Website

The Chair said that Chris and Barbara Timms have retired from managing the St Neot website. Councillor N O'Neill said that she would undertake this role.

18. Dog Fouling

To consider making an application to Cornwall Council's "We're Watching You" dog fouling campaign

The Chair said that the posters are free and that there is not a lot involved in the matter. Councillor N O'Neill said it would be quite involved and we would need to have a volunteer who would collect data and send it to the council, which would be time consuming. In addition, she said that the signs are rather "over the top" Councillor C Smith said that the cost is £50 and the signs are not cheerful. He said that Councillor P Crichton has put some cheerful signs on the bins which

work well. Councillor H Bunt suggested putting a bollard in locations where dog faeces are spotted with a sign on the bollard. It was agreed that the parish council will erect signs in areas if there is a problem in the future.

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

19. Neighbours Together

To consider making a financial contribution to Neighbours Together

It was noted that Councillor P Crichton had submitted details prior to the meeting of the work of Neighbours Together and how money had been spent and was now requesting £1,000 for future work of Neighbours Together over Christmas and during the winter. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that a donation of £1,000 be given to Neighbours Together. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

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

20. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that he had circulated Cornwall Council's proposals for the 20mph speed limit outside the school. He explained that Paul Allen was adamant that speed cushions should be installed in order to slow down the traffic. Councillor H Bunt asked if there was an option to have the 20 mph speed limit prior to Loveny Close. Councillor G Rogers questioned why the speed cushions are not going to be nearer the school. Some discussion took place as to whether speed bumps would be preferable to speed cushions. Councillors also questioned why the idea of a flashing sign had been dismissed. It was because of cost. It was suggested that the parish council contribute to the cost of a flashing sign. It was agreed that one of the roundels was not needed as it was in a location where cars park but could also be moved prior to Loveny Close. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that six consultation responses had been received, 3 in favour of the proposals and 3 against.

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said there had been two hearings in the Crown Court on 9th November 2020 regarding Dragons Corner. He said there will be a hearing for the injunction on 1st and 2nd February 2021 which offers an alternative to the Crown Court route.

Councillor G Rogers commented that Cornwall Council are not following their own highways guidance regarding the Carnglaze Caverns road which continues to be flooded and very dangerous. The Chair said that the lack of leaf clearance

on the highways is also becoming dangerous.

b) Goonzion Commoners

The Chair had consulted Julie Downton of the Bodmin Moor Association to establish the legal position in regard to animals straying off common land like Goonzion. She stated that in the case of common land like Goonzion it is the surrounding property owner's responsibility to keep straying animals out, unlike farmland where it is the farmer's responsibility to keep their animals in. Councillor C Smith said that the highland cattle have been roaming from Goonzion through the hedge into Mr Higgin's field and then through the parish council's coppice below the Tripp Hill cattle grid and into private gardens in the village, causing considerable destruction. He said that a solution would be to erect electric fencing on Goonzion along the boundary with Mr Higgin's field to stop this happening. He said the cost is £6.60 per metre. It was agreed that the farmer has a legal obligation to erect fencing to keep the cattle in his land if they do get in and also to fence to keep them out if he doesn't want them in his field. Councillor H Bunt said that if the parish council erects fencing to solve this problem, it sets a precedent. He said that he will speak to Mr Higgins and ask him to take immediate action. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that Councillor H Bunt speaks to Mr Higgins and asks for immediate action but if this is not successful, the matter will be dealt with by email between councillors to discuss the erection of fencing by the parish council. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal except for Councillor D Lucas who voted against.

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

Councillor D Lucas reported that a meeting had been held using Zoom.

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

Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard Cleaning – November 2020) - £390.00
Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £131.99
South West Water (Water for Toilets) - £97.68
Cornwall Council (St Neot News Expenses – October 2020) - £103.20
Lanhydrock Gardening Services (Grass Cutting – June 2020) - £232.20
British Legion Poppy Appeal (Donation) - £50.00
Lanhydrock Gardening Services (Grass Cutting – October 2020) - £232.20
South West Water (Water for Cott Yard) - £8.21

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor G Rogers that all of the above invoices be authorized for payment. 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 income of £379.01 from Ofgem as RHI payments had been received and £571.50 from Heather Taylor as rent for Cott Yard and £1197.19 from Restgarth as rent for Cott Yard. The accounts balance at £91,926.44.

21. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting which will be on Wednesday 9th December 2020

The date of the next meeting of St Neot Parish council will be on Wednesday 9th December 2020 commencing at 7:30pm.

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