

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD USING ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH JANUARY 2021 AT 7:30PM

Present: Councillors Dr L Jones (Chair), C Smith, R Berrett, G Rogers, D Lucas, P Crichton, H Bunt, A Bellringer, O Burrows, N O'Neill 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 9th December 2020, having previously been circulated, were agreed as an accurate record subject to omitting the reference to Councillor O Burrows volunteering to empty the litter bin in the car park in item 12 and an addition to item 13 (b), line 7 to read "adjacent to the fence as can be seen on the boundary map plan obtained from Land Registry"

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

The Chair said that she declared an interest in item 12 on the agenda where it related to parishioners being able to access all Public Rights of Way in the parish. She said that under the revised code of conduct currently under consultation, Councillors can speak on items that they declare an interest in, at the Chair's discretion, if they are community projects, but they should not take part in the debate or vote. Given that councillors are members of several "not for profit" community interest projects (e.g. Neighbours Together, St. Neot United Charities) it makes sense for councillors to be present to explain the issues but then withdraw to allow further discussion and for a vote to be taken. The Chair said she wished to do this for item 12 on Public Rights of Way, if there were no objections from fellow councillors.

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

The Chair thanked the following councillors: Councillors C Smith and H Bunt (and his daughter Amy) for filling the salt bins, Councillor C Smith for arranging for the heating engineer to visit Cott Yard and for repairing the door lock in Cott Yard,

Councillors G Rogers, O Burrows and C Smith for spreading the scalpings at Crowpound, Councillor O Burrows for repairing the plywood on the play equipment, Councillor P Crichton for cleaning the debris from the bus shelters at Goonzion and Wenmouth Cross, for clearing the drain at Lampen Lane and for cleaning the bridge into Doorstep Green, Councillors O Burrows and C Smith for trimming the branches on Tripp Hill, Councillor G Rogers for regularly inspecting the play equipment and Councillors A Bellringer and O Burrows for emptying the litter bins each week.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair reported that St Neot News will be published in February and that, in that edition, she will, as agreed by the council, invite clubs and organisations to submit requests to the parish council for funding if their financial position is precarious due to lockdown during Covid 19. She said that St Neot News has a new treasurer – Harry Bennett – who reports that there has been a slight dip in advertising income.

She said that she has been contacted by a Planning Consultant regarding a pre-application discussion for Colliford Lake Park which may be presented to the February meeting of the parish council. The Chair also reported that a highland cow had chased a jogger across Goonzion on Tuesday. She said that she had received a request for a sign to be erected at West Killatown to prevent HGVs and large vehicles using the Ashford Mill to West Killatown road as it is very narrow and vehicles often get stuck. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the parish council.

The Chair said that she had received a letter from Neighbours Together thanking the parish council for their generous donation. Councillor D Lucas extended thanks to Councillor P Crichton for all the fantastic work she does with Neighbours Together. Councillor H Bunt said that he will acquire another dumpy bag of salt and there are new salt bins to be sited at Ley and Tredinnick Chapel. He said that parishioners should be encouraged to use the salt sparingly. Councillor C Smith said that when he inspected the salt bins, only 3 out of 10 were low. Councillor G Rogers asked if Cornwall Council grits the road into St Neot past Carnglaze Caverns. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that he was unsure. He said that there was some uncertainty as to whether Cornwall Council had re-filled the salt bins this year. Councillor C Smith said that they had been re-filled but any additional salt required has to be purchased. He said that he could purchase two 1 tonne bags of salt for approximately £100. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor G Rogers that Councillor C Smith be authorized to purchase the salt. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. Councillor N O'Neill said that salt could be stored at her property in the centre of the village if this was a useful site.

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 consider responsibility for the fence in Doorstep Green adjacent to the primary school

Councillor D Lucas said that the fence on the right-hand side of the path from Doorstep Green into Market Street will soon require some maintenance. He said that Land Registry had not been helpful in ascertaining ownership of the fence. He said that he has spoken to Derek Fairhall who thinks that the parish council probably own the fence. Councillor C Smith said that plans of Doorstep Green seem to suggest that the pathway and the boundary fence belong to the school. Councillor H Bunt said that the school owns the fence and the pathway to the hedge adjacent to Manor House. He said the path was an existing permissive path to allow better access to Doorstep Green and that the fence was erected by Colin Alford on school property and was double lined at the request of the Headteacher. Councillor C Smith said that the parish council does not own the fence or the ground. He said that one option would be to have a 50:50 arrangement with the school for repairs to the fence. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that from the 1940's, the path has been a permissive right of way into the field and it is of great benefit to the parish to maintain it. It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that Councillors H Bunt and C Smith suggest to the Headteacher that the parish council and school share responsibility for the fence. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

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

Councillor P Crichton said that consideration needs to be given to the ditch which runs across the bottom of the playing field that takes the water from Lampen Lane into the river. Councillor C Smith that the options were a shallow open ditch or a new 6-inch drain pipe. Councillor O Burrows said the latter would be preferable and that it could be covered with soil. Councillor P Crichton asked if the pipe would become blocked. Councillor C Smith said that an H pipe will prevent blocking. Councillor H Bunt said that Colin Alford has replaced the post in the playing field adjacent to the play equipment.

9. Cott Yard

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

It was reported that Councillor C Smith has repaired the door lock. The Chair said that Julie Ball is happy to continue cleaning Cott Yard during the current lockdown and she felt she had adequate protective equipment.

10. Toilets and Car Park

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

The Chair said that Julie Ball is happy to continue cleaning the public toilet during the current lockdown. Councillor G Rogers said that the rubbish bin in the car park has been emptied. Councillor C Smith said that the foul drainage from the toilet needs to be replaced. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask some suitable companies to offer a solution to the problem of the drains blocking and quotations for such work.

11. St Neot Orchard

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

The Chair reported that both Andrew Bunt and Mervyn Chipman had written expressing their agreement in principle to the installation of a permissive footpath from the orchard into Lampen Lane. She said the latter would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter on site. Councillor C Smith said that it may not be necessary to encroach onto Mr Chipman's land. The Chair said that in his letter, Mr. Andrew Bunt had commented that the principle of a footpath was acceptable provided the adjacent field was kept stock proof. Councillor H Bunt said that the installation of a small gate in the existing fence line would suffice for this purpose. It was noted that Andrew Bunt would want the footpath to be maintained by the parish council. The Chair said that since it is grazed land, this is not thought to be a costly issue. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor P Crichton that Councillors C Smith, H Bunt and P Crichton obtain some quotations for the installation of a footpath from the orchard into the village and to liaise with Andrew Bunt. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. It was agreed that Councillor O Burrows would affix the new sign for the orchard to the gate.

12. Capital Projects

To consider expenditure on capital projects

Footpath from orchard to village

It was noted that £5,000 has been ringfenced for this project and that it is underway.

Cover for Amphitheatre in Doorstep Green

It was noted that £10,000 has been ringfenced for this project. Councillor P Crichton said that the provision of a cover will allow the area to be used all year round. Councillor O Burrows said that it has to be an attractive structure. He said that the precise cost needs to be known and detailed plans drawn up. He questioned where vehicles will park if the amphitheater is used intensively. Councillor T Hooper said that such a structure would be a positive thing for the parish. Councillor C Smith said that the parish council would need to spend a minimum of £20,000 to purchase a fully retractable cover. Councillor G Rogers said that a few quotations would be useful. Councillor R Berrett said that unless a lot of money is spent on a cover, the amphitheatre will lose its visual attractiveness. Councillor H Bunt said that if the area is to be covered, a harder ground surface may be needed. He said the security of the structure also needs to be considered. Councillor D Lucas commented that more information is required.

Provision of Financial Support for Organisations in the Parish

It was noted that an item will be put in the next edition of St Neot News inviting organisations to request financial support from the parish council if their financial position is precarious due to lockdown during Covid 19.

Councillors H Bunt and C Smith said that there is a site at Wenmouth Cross which has a number of caravans and livestock on it and appears to be involved in some work with disadvantaged people. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact them and ascertain the nature of the operation with a view towards the parish council considering offering some financial assistance towards their work.

Project for Primary School

It was noted that £500 has been ringfenced for a project for the primary school. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that the Chair speaks to the Headteacher about this matter. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Kerdroya Project

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that a donation of £500 be made to the Kerdroya Project. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. Councillor T Hooper said that the next phase of the project is to introduce young people to the building skills.

Opening more PROWs (silver and bronze routes) to give the public greater access to the countryside

The Chair said that many people have come forward to progress this project. She said that there are 46 public rights of way in the Parish (PROWs) and that the initiative is a collaborative effort between Cornwall Council, the Parish Council and Re-Imagine Kernow.. 42 of the footpaths have now been surveyed as parishioners have volunteered very enthusiastically. She said that whilst landowners have to keep PROWs on their land open and stiles or gates in good repair as a legal requirement, this is aided by Cornwall Council who delegated this to a certain extent to Cormac and also parish councils. She said that Cornwall Council are very enthusiastic about the project as the pandemic had created great interest in access to the countryside and its benefits. She explained that Jenny Hart of Re-Imagine Kernow is the person heading up the project and the group is investigating the possibility of producing a booklet that shows the routes of these paths and their history. She said that of those surveyed so far, three appear to be illegally blocked but most of them require only a little maintenance to make them fully accessible. The Chair emphasised that the aim of the project is to benefit the community by informing them of the routes so people may get out and about walking in the countryside. Councillor N O'Neill said that there is an app called iwalk and that she could put something similar onto the St Neot website. Councillor P Crichton asked what the money donated would be spent on. Councillor Dr L Jones said the money would be spent on items such as booklets, waymarkers as many paths are poorly signed and possibly a toposcope on high points pointing to places of interest. She said that the aim is to work collaboratively with landowners.

The Chair, having previously declared an interest as a member of Re-Imagine Kernow, left the meeting during further discussion relating to Public Rights of Way. Councillor T Hooper said that the parish council could agree to fund the communication of the project. Councillor A Bellringer said that an amount of money could be ring fenced for this project which would be donated when specifics of the items of expenditure are documented. Councillor H Bunt said that specifics of expenditure would need to be approved. 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 in the same unkempt state for several years. He said that money should be spent on improving these first prior to the bronze and silver PROWs. Councillor H Bunt reiterated that it is a legal requirement of the landowners to keep the PROWs open. Councillor A Bellringer

asked who enforces this legal requirement. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that there has been 10 years of underinvestment from Cornwall Council in PROWs and a lack of policing and enforcement. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor D Lucas that £3,000 be ringfenced for re-opening the silver and bronze PROWs subject to approval of each item of expenditure and that £2,000 be ringfenced towards maintenance of the gold PROWs. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal except for Councillor G Rogers who abstained from voting.

The Chair returned to the meeting.

Replacement of Play Equipment

It was noted that repairs are often being undertaken to the play equipment and that it will not last indefinitely. It was proposed by Councillor N O'Neill and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that £10,000 be ringfenced on an annual basis for the eventual re-placement of the play equipment. All Councillor voted in favour of this proposal.

13. St Neot Website

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

Councillor N O'Neill said that she proposed moving from Freeola to Hostinger for a 4-year contract and a £9.99 transfer fee. She said that it will result in a more effective website. She explained that she had invited comments via Facebook and St Neot News on the existing site and that some commented that it is difficult to read text on the dark background and that the site could be modernized in parts. In addition, she said the existing site is very much geared to the history of the parish. Councillor N O'Neill said that she would like to introduce a section into the website relating to parish life and details of clubs and organisations in the parish. She said that it will be complimentary to the parish council website with each website having a link to the other. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor D Lucas that the website be moved from Freeola to Hostinger as detailed by Councillor N O'Neill. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

14. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor M Eddy

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy thanked the builders and haulers of the Christmas float. He explained that it is budget setting time at Cornwall Council and indications are that there will be approximately a 4.4% increase in council tax. He said there is an independent review being undertaken on councillors'

allowances as it is argued that the allowances are not high enough for people to live on so this deters younger people from standing for election. He said that Cornwall Council is now in emergency measures in relation to its Covid 19 response where staff and funding can be moved around in response to the pandemic. He said that Cornwall is slightly behind the curve in terms of Covid 19 vaccinations. He said that he will continue to prune the orchard. He said that there is no gritting route into St Neot and that in the event of ice and snow, Cornwall Council has to be requested to undertake the gritting.

b) Goonzion Commoners

Councillor H Bunt explained that a dog went into a mine shaft on Goonzion earlier in the week and that extensive investigations have revealed that it is a new adit that has opened up. He said that he has put some temporary tape around it and a temporary sign but it needs filling or fencing to make it safe. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Goonzion was professionally surveyed and mapped and all major shafts were fenced. He said that archaeologically it would be wrong to fill it in so fencing would be preferable. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor N O'Neill that the shaft be fenced as soon as possible. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

Councillor D Lucas said that the next meeting is on 25th January 2021.

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

Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard Cleaning – January 2021) - £390.00
Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £131.99
Poppy Crichton (Land Registry search) - £6.00
EDF Energy (Electricity for Pavilion) - £69.15
EDF Energy (Parish Lighting) - £106.16
Richards Builders Merchants (Plywood for Play Equipment) - £2.82
David Lucas (Land Registry Fee) - £17.94
Christian Smith (Christmas Float) £292.71
Christian Smith (Chippings for Crowpound) - £228.00

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that all of the above orders be authorized for payment. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. Councillor C Smith said that £118.60 had been collected from parishioners during circulation of the Christmas float which has been given to St Neot United Charities.

16. 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 £139.50 has been received from Menheniot Post Office for rental of the Pavilion. The accounts balance at £86,767.81.

17. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting which will be on Wednesday 13th January 2021

The date of the next meeting of St Neot Parish council will be on Wednesday-10th February 2021 commencing at 7:30pm.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10:05pm.