

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD USING ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH DECEMBER 2020 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 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 November 2020, having previously been circulated, were agreed as an accurate record subject to an alteration to the first few sentences of minute 18 to read "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, to minute 20 (a), line 9, an additional sentence should be added to read "It was suggested that the parish council contribute to the cost of a flashing sign".

3. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Councillor G Rogers declared an interest in item 14 on the agenda where it relates to the PROW contract for 2021/22 and in item 23.

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

The Chair said that the acrylic signs referring to Covid 19 have been put up in the playing field. She thanked Councillor C Smith for putting up the signs. She explained that Mervyn Chipman has cleaned out the gutters at the Pavilion and has cleaned the slippery verandah and the slippery surfaces on the play tower. Councillor C Smith said that the matter of the cattle breaking through hedges from Goonzion has now been resolved through the provision of fencing. The Chair said that she had not invited clubs and organisations to submit requests to the parish council for funding in her St Neot News article until after the precept had been discussed. She reported that she and Councillor H Bunt had attended

some virtual planning training. She said that she and Councillor R Berrett had completed the asset inspection and a copy of her report had been circulated to all Councillors. Councillor C Smith said that he has two new signs for the adits. The Chair thanked Councillor C Smith for building a Christmas float. He said that he will be doing four separate "float runs" around the parish in the run up to Christmas.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

It was reported that Councillor D Lucas had undertaken extensive investigations regarding ownership of the fence that is on the boundary between St Neot school and the footpath that leads into Doorstep Green from Loveny Road. It was noted that the results of these investigations had been circulated to all councillors and the matter will be discussed at the meeting of the parish council in January.

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

None

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

8. Precept

To consider the precept for 2021/22

Councillor C Smith said that all councillors had received details of the precept and the minutes of the Finance Committee. He said that inflation is currently running at 0.9% and the Finance Committee are recommending keeping the precept for 2021/22 the same as 2020/21 in the sum of £32,320. He said that much of the expenditure will be the same next year although some expenditure figures show significant increases for specific reasons such as improving the drainage from the public toilet. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that the precept for 2021/22 remains the same as for 2021/22 in the sum of £32,320. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

9. St Neot United Charities

To consider making a financial donation to St Neot United Charities

The Chair said that a meeting of St Neot United Charities was held on 7th December 2020 when £1,348.75 was donated in cash or as gifts to those considered in need in the parish as well as money being ringfenced for payment

of school meals or school trips for those parents who are unable to meet these costs. It was noted that the remaining funds in the St Neot Charities bank account amount to £1239.70 and that the demand for funds has increased this year. It was agreed that the people receiving assistance from St Neot United Charities are different to those helped by Neighbours Together. It was noted that the income is approximately £1,200 per annum but the charity is investigating further areas of potential funding. The principle of making a donation to St Neot United Charities was agreed but considerable discussion took place regarding the amount of the donation. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor O Burrows that a donation of £500 be made. Five Councillors voted in favour of this proposal and five against. The Chair had the casting vote and voted against the proposal. The proposal was not, therefore, carried. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that a donation of £1,000 be made. Six councillors voted in favour of this proposal and four against. The proposal was therefore carried.

10. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

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

The Chair said that the Covid 19 signs have been erected in the playing field and the gutters on the Pavilion cleaned out as well as the verandah having been cleaned. It was agreed that the mat placed on the verandah would remain in situ. Councillor G Rogers said there is a hole in the plywood on the climbing frame. Councillor O Burrows said that he would repair this. He said that individuals continue to garden in Doorstep Green and that he hoped that at some time in the future, he would be able to get a working party together.

11. Cott Yard

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

None

12. 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 rubbish bin in the car park had not been emptied by Cormac so Councillor P Crichton had undertaken the task. It was noted that some of the stones in the wall around the car park have become dislodged.

13. St Neot Orchard

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

Councillor G Rogers said that, having strimmed the orchard, he was of the opinion that steps were not required. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that owing to the significant drop in the slope of the land on entering the orchard, steps are clearly needed. The Clerk pointed out that it was agreed at a previous meeting of the parish council that steps are required. She reported that she had received two quotations from contractors who had received the specification drawn up by Councillor P Crichton and Cornwall Councillor M Eddy. She said that the quotation from Mervyn Chipman was in the sum of £800 and the quotation from Colin Alford was in the sum of £550 plus VAT. It was proposed by Councillor R Burrows and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the quotation from Colin Alford, being the cheapest, be accepted. Eight Councillors voted in favour of this proposal and two against. The proposal was therefore carried.

To consider the installation of a footpath from the orchard to Water Meadow field

Councillor G Rogers said that several parishioners had commented to him that safer access could be gained to the orchard if a footpath could be created from Water Meadow field. He said that he had spoken to Andrew Bunt who owns the field. He commented that the land is very boggy at the bottom end. It was noted that there is an adit in the field which will require fencing off. Councillor P Crichton said that she had undertaken a search with Land Registry and that the parish council owns the land down to the river in a straight line adjacent to the fence as can be seen on the boundary map plan obtained from Land Registry. She said that Mervyn Chipman owns the land between the sewerage works and the orchard. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chair would write a letter to Andrew Bunt and Mervyn Chipman inviting their comments on the installation of a footpath across their land.

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

It was noted that the orchard has been strimmed, as previously agreed.

14. Grass Cutting and PROW Contracts

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

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

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. As a result, Gary Rogers has been asked to provide a quotation for the PROWs contract for 2021/22. This quotation was in the sum of £1,550. It was proposed by Councillor A Bellringer and seconded by Councillor D Lucas that the quotation be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Councillor G Rogers returned to the meeting.

The Clerk had asked the current contractor, Lanhydrock Gardening Services for a quotation for the grass cutting contract for 2021/22. This quotation was in the sum of £244.20 per cut. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor D Lucas that the quotation be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

15. 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. This was from Dean Leonard in the sum of £1,200. She said that she had also received one quotation for cutting the overhanging trees using a tree shear on a digger and putting the resultant debris 3m back into the wooded area. She said that this quotation was from M Barbery in the sum of £250.00. It was agreed that the two quotations do not compare works which are “like for like” and some debate took place as to whether coppicing or cutting with a tree shear would be preferable. It was agreed that the latter would be preferable and that M Barbery comes highly recommended. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that the quotation from M Barbery be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

16. Hedge Cutting on Goonzion

To receive and consider quotations for hedge cutting on Goonzion

It was reported that three quotations had been received as follows: Steven Masters in the sum of £496, Colin Alford in the sum of £350 plus VAT and Ben Simmons in the sum of £180. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that the quotation from Ben Simmons be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal

17. Risk Management Policy Statement

To adopt the Risk Management Policy Statement

It was noted that Councillor D Lucas had circulated a final draft of the Risk Management Policy Statement to all councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Councillor T Hooper and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the Risk Management Policy Statement be approved. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. The Clerk said that she would put the document on the website.

18. Christmas Lights

To consider purchasing some outdoor Christmas lights

Councillor P Critchon suggested that the parish council purchases some Christmas lights to put on the garden walls of houses in the village. Councillor H Bunt said that the parish council had agreed many years ago that they did not want to have the risk of installing Christmas lights in the village. Councillor A Bellringer said that if the parish council provides lights, they will have to be PACT tested and that the village is already very well lit with Christmas decorations this year.

19. Signs

To consider making a financial contribution towards some signage around the parish regarding litter

Councillor T Hooper commented that there is a considerable amount of litter along the Carnglaze Caverns road. Councillor O Burrows said that people who throw litter out of car windows will not adhere to signs and that signs themselves are rather untidy looking. Councillor R Berrett said there is no proof that erecting signs asking people not to throw litter out of car windows actually stops this from happening. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that the parish council does not make a financial contribution towards the erection of signs around the parish regarding litter. Eight Councillors voted in favour of this proposal and two against. The proposal was therefore carried.

20. Minutes

To consider the way agreed amendments to the minutes should be recorded and to consider whether the current first check of the unapproved minutes by the chairperson is adequate or, alternatively, to record meetings so any disputed matter may be checked

The Clerk explained that the current procedure is that when the minutes of a meeting have been typed up, they are amended by the Chair and then distributed to all Councillors as draft minutes and put on the website as unapproved minutes. This is undertaken within a week of a meeting. Any amendments agreed at the next meeting are recorded at that meeting but the actual minutes

remain unaltered. It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that in future, the actual minutes are amended before they are recorded on the website as approved minutes. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. Some Councillors suggested that their comments on the minutes should be discussed via email prior to the next meeting. However, the Clerk and Chair said this would be too time consuming and a far too complicated procedure. It was agreed that Councillors could email the Clerk or Chair with suggested changes to the minutes prior to the next meeting but these would not be discussed until the meeting.

21. Crowpound Car Parking Area

To consider repairing the potholes in the Crowpound car parking area

Councillor G Rogers said that the area is regularly used as a car park. Councillor C Smith said that 10 tonnes of chippings are needed to fill the potholes which would cost approximately £200. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the chippings be ordered and a contractor be asked to spread them around and roll the chippings into the ground. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. Councillor G Rogers said that some of the potholes are the responsibility of Cornwall Council as they are on the highway.

22. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor M Eddy

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy reported on Paul Allen's comments in response to the parish council's observations on the proposed traffic calming measures outside St Neot School. He said that the 20mph speed limit could not be moved to SE of the junction with Loveny Close as this had not been part of the consultation. Similarly, he said that a time activated flashing light was not part of the proposal. Councillor M Eddy said that the cost of such a flashing light is approximately £9,000 but that a mobile flashing light would cost approximately £550 plus the cost of the posts on which it is to be erected. He said that Paul Allen said that a roundel could not be placed in the middle of the road as it would not be appropriate given the width of the road. Councillor T Hooper said that on a dual carriage road, roundels have to be painted on the road in the direction of travel. Councillor G Rogers said that he failed to see how a roundel on which cars are parked, will be effective. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Paul Allen considers that speed cushions are essential to calm the traffic. Councillor G Rogers questioned the effectiveness of speed cushions. The Chair said that Paul Allen has given the parish council the benefit of a professional view and if it slows down some drivers, it has to be a positive move. She said that the whole point of the traffic calming is to prevent children from having accidents on the road outside the school. The parish council had discussed the matter at length in

previous meetings and she feared the work might be postponed. Councillor O Burrows said that all Councillors are agreed that 20mph outside the school is the best option and the signage will be highly visible. Councillor P Crichton asked if sleeping policemen are an option. It was agreed that these are more costly than speed cushions. Councillor H Bunt suggested painting a roundel on the road at Loveny Close junction and putting double yellow lines around the corner of Loveny Close from Loveny Road to stop vehicles being parked there. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy agreed to mention these points to Paul Allen.

Councillor M Eddy said that Paul Allen is drafting a drainage scheme for the Carnglaze Caverns Road. It was agreed that a further letter of complaint be written to Paul Allen by the Parish Council regarding the treacherous conditions on this road due to inadequate drainage. Councillor P Crichton said that it is a good idea to use Cornwall Council's interactive map to report the problem too.

It was noted that the hedges in the Drayes Valley are overgrown. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that he would ask Cornwall Council to cut them. Councillor G Rogers asked whether Cornwall Council is going to top up the salt bins. Councillor H Bunt said that he has the salt to top up any empty bins. Councillor O Burrows said that the salt bin at the end of Lampen Lane is empty. It was agreed that Cornwall Councillor M Eddy would enquire as to whether Cornwall Council will re-fill the salt bins and which roads are on the gritting schedule.

b) Goonzion Commoners

Councillor H Bunt reported that the fencing had been done to keep the cattle on Goonzion. He said that the commoners might undertake some gorse removal in order to install fire breaks near housing.

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

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

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

Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard Cleaning – December 2020) - £390.00

Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £131.99

Mrs S Blaxley (3 month's salary and administration expenses) - £2303.07

Natalie O'Neill (Website Quarterly charge) - £19.76

The Grain (Covid 19 signs for playing field) - £40.80

Gary Rogers Gardening Services (Orchard Strimming) - £200.00

Gary Rogers Gardening Services (PROW maintenance) - £760.00

Richards Builders Merchants (Plywood for Play Equipment) - £108.72

M and R A Chipman (Works to Pavilion) - £80.00

It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that all of the above orders be authorized for payment. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

24. 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 £136.50 has been received from Menheniot Post Office for rental of the Pavilion, £571.50 from Heather Taylor as rent for Cott Yard and £860.76 from Restgarth as payment for utilities in Cott Yard. The accounts balance at £90,930.92.

25. 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 13th January 2021 commencing at 7:30pm.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8:50pm.