

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD USING ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH APRIL 2021 AT 7:30PM

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

David Ambler, Phil Seeva, Hatti Webb and Lorna Burns

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy
Sue Blaxley (Parish Clerk)

There was a one-minute silence at the beginning of the meeting to remember HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:31pm.

Public Participation

Phil Seeva said that he is the Conservative candidate for the forthcoming Cornwall Council elections. He explained that he has been involved in local politics for 8 years both on Liskeard Town Council and Cornwall Council. He said that he was Mayor of Liskeard for 2 years and leader of the opposition party at Cornwall Council for 2 years. He said that he lives in Liskeard with his wife and 2 children, who attend Liskeard School. He said that he has no personal knowledge of St Neot. David Ambler explained that he is also standing for the Cornwall Council elections. He said that he lives in Tremar and knows St Neot very well. He explained that he was a Methodist priest in St Neot and has been on Liskeard Town Council for 4 years. Haviland Bunt said that he is standing as the Independent candidate for Cornwall Council in order to keep the local area on the map. He said that being a local, he has extensive local knowledge.

1. Apologies

None

2. To confirm the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2021, 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 reported that following communication from a parishioner who is concerned that the highland cattle on Goonzion are destroying the trees, the Clerk has written to Julie Downton and asked her to clarify the number of livestock each grazier is allowed to have on the moor and the length of time that grazing can occur as well as clarification on the rights of the parish council as landowner and the rights of the graziers. She said that the animals have recently been inspected by an Animal Inspector and they are reported to be in good condition.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair said that she had received a number of communications:

- An email from Martin Eddy asking for the shop furnishings that were intended for Cott Yard to be removed within the next 4 weeks. They are being currently stored at his late in-laws property and the property is coming to the market;
- An email from SW Lakes Trust informing the parish council that there is a weblink to report any anti-social behaviour at Colliford Lake;
- Emails from Loveny Choir and the WI asking if they can use Doorstep Green. The Chair said that she has advised them to deal directly with Cornwall Council regarding Covid 19 procedures but there is not likely to be an objection from the parish council regarding the use of the area;
- An email reporting that Glenn Young has repaired the door to the shed adjacent to the pavilion and that he will mend the lock too;
- An email from Derek Fairhall saying that he is waiting for quotations for the table tennis table and then applying for grants;
- An email from a parishioner relating to a footpath in the parish. The Chair said that she will reply to the parishioner and forward the correspondence to the new Chair;
- A further email from Mr Dykes which has not been responded to this time as the matter is being dealt with by higher authorities than the parish council, namely Her Majesties Planning Inspectorate and the Crown Court where a hearing is due this summer.

The Chair reminded the parish council that once Covid restrictions were over and face to face meetings are possible, the parish council needed to resume contract negotiations with the Clerk. When Covid lockdown began in March 2020, the parish council agreed a temporary contract of employment. The Clerk has signed this temporary contract to cover the Covid lockdown period. The Chair reminded the meeting that this temporary contract is a modified NALC contract. She said that agreement could not be reached with the Clerk on the amount of sick leave that she should be entitled to. The Chair said that the parish council resolved that in the event of sickness, the Clerk be entitled to 2 months full pay

and 2 months half pay. However, the Clerk has requested that this be extended to 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay. The temporary contract is in line with the latter ie 3 months. The Chair pointed out that the NALC contract for a parish clerk's sick leave is six months on full pay and six months on half pay. She said that she had a signed copy of the temporary contract ready to pass to the next Chair.

The Chair thanked everyone for their support over the years she has been Chair and for everyone's endeavors to improve the parish and push things forwards with that aim as a team. She urged the new parish council to continue to do this. She said that she was particularly proud of the Planning Committee for their efforts to comment on planning applications in accordance with policy and to have an open, transparent and consistent approach in its deliberations. She said that she had thanked Cornwall Councillor M Eddy and Councillor R Berrett at the last meeting of the parish council. She said that it was sad to be losing Councillors A Bellringer and P Crichton from the parish council. She said that Councillor A Bellringer had served on the parish council for 20 years and she thanked him for all his hard work. She thanked Councillor P Crichton for all the jobs she has undertaken in the parish and her fantastic initiatives. She said that Councillor P Crichton had recently received an Unsung Heroes Award from the High Sheriff of Cornwall for all her work with Neighbours Together. She also thanked the Clerk for her support, diligent hard work and integrity. She said that she will miss everyone and wished the parish council good luck going forward.

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

Councillor P Crichton said thank you, on behalf of the parish council, to Councillor Dr L Jones for being a fantastic Chair. She said that she has put in considerable time and effort and much more than everyone knows. She thanked her for everything she has done and said that the parish council is left with good foundations, thanks to her hard work.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

8. Wildanet

To receive and consider a presentation from Wildanet regarding a fibre broadband network in Cornwall

None

9. Asset Register

To approve the asset register

The Chair said that, following the meeting of the parish council in March 2021, the Clerk has added the insurance values to the asset register. Councillor T Hooper asked if these values are correct. Councillor C Smith said that he thought they were accurate. Councillor P Crichton said that some items should be added to the asset register: combined dog/waste bins at bridge by shop, Lampen Bridge and cattle grid to the Holy Well and the bench at Loveny Road near the primary school. The Clerk said that she would do this and put the register on the website. It was proposed by Councillor R Berrett and seconded by Councillor C Smith that the asset register be approved. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. The proposal was therefore carried.

10. Development Near Wenmouth Cross

To consider any action to be taken in respect of the development near Wenmouth Cross

The Clerk reported that she had visited the site on several occasions but no one was there. She said that she has taken some photographs which she circulated to all councillors. She explained that the site is known as Berryfields Smallholding and there are two caravans and some wooden buildings on the site as well as a number of animals. Councillor T Hooper said that social media pictures show children and others interacting with the animals on the site. She said that there is a notice on the fence stating that under Article 61 of the Magna Carter 1215, the owners have signed allegiance to the document which means that they can go against the Crown. However, it was noted that this is not recognized in English law. Councillor T Hooper said that there are, on occasions, dogs loose on the site which is a nuisance to walkers and horse riders. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that a number of parishioners have complained about the site and the matter is being dealt with by Cornwall Council's planning enforcement team.

11. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

To consider the exterior decorating of the Pavilion

The Chair explained that, at the October meeting of the parish council, it was resolved that Sam Moore be contracted to undertake some painting and repair work at the Pavilion. At this time, Andrew Baker also quoted for the works and that his quote, whilst being more expensive, was for different work to that quoted for by Sam Moore. After the winter, Sam Moore had a further look at the building and considers that the building requires a complete re-paint. However, at the March meeting of the parish council, it was resolved that the contract awarded to

Sam Moore in the sum of £780 goes ahead without further delay. However, Sam Moore has said that it will undermine his professional integrity if he goes ahead with this. Some discussion took place as to whether formal specifications are required so that all contractors are quoting for the identical work. Councillor T Hooper said that as long as all those who are invited to tender have the same specification and meet the same person on site, there should not be a problem with comparing quotes. She said that the specification document could contain common terms of reference with specifications for each scheme of works. Councillor D Lucas said that the advantage of a formal template is that it will give structure to the quotations. Councillor T Hooper said that she would send a template to all Councillors prior to the next meeting. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that a template for the works for the exterior decorating of the Pavilion be considered at the next meeting of the parish council. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal except for Councillor N O'Neill who voted against. The proposal was therefore carried.

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

The Chair said that the proposal to share the maintenance of the fence that is on the boundary with the school and the footpath into Doorstep Green from Market View was discussed by the school governors. She said that they have responded saying that the path was created to access Doorstep Green and that the fence was installed by Colin Alford and paid for by the parish council. Therefore, the parish council should take ownership of it and responsibility for repairing it. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the parish council assumes ownership of the fence and responsibility for repairing the fence. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. The proposal was therefore carried. Councillor P Crichton said that some repair work is needed to the fence.

Councillor P Crichton said that the white chairs in the gazebo need re-painting and there is a blockage in the river downstream from the bridge into Doorstep Green. Councillor Dr L Jones said that she would look at the blockage as she understood that some brushwood was left in the river for the spawning of salmon. Councillor P Crichton said that a "No Dogs" sign is needed on the pedestrian gate into the playing field.

Councillor O Burrows said that he had circulated photographs to all councillors of the bridge into Doorstep Green which shows that the cross beam needs to be replaced. He said that the vertical posts may need replacing too. Some discussion took place as to whether the beam is needed to prevent vehicles driving over the bridge. Councillor C Smith said that some height restriction is needed. Councillor A Bellringer said that even with the beam, a 5ft high vehicle can cross the bridge. It was noted that the cross beam does not provide

structural stability for the bridge and that it is quite unsightly. It was proposed by Councillor O Burrows and seconded by Councillor A Bellringer that the beam be removed and a decision be made as to what to put in its place, if anything, at a later date. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. The proposal was therefore carried.

The Chair said that Derek Fairhall is seeking quotations for the table tennis table and that Councillor O Burrows will be liaising with Derek Fairhall.

It was agreed that the ROSPA report would be considered in detail at the next meeting of the parish council.

12. Cott Yard

To receive and consider a request for a rental holiday for Suite 4

It was noted that the tenant pays £1,680 rent per annum and that, last year, she was granted a rental holiday by the parish council for several months due to her loss of income as a result of Covid 19. The Clerk said that she has asked for a further rental holiday. The Clerk said that the tenant has received a considerable sum of money in grants from public bodies due to Covid 19. Councillor T Hooper said that the tenant has been trading, albeit at a reduced level, and that she has had considerable grants so further support from the parish council should not be forthcoming. Councillor P Crichton said that the tenant undertakes a lot of voluntary work in the parish and her business has been severely affected by Covid19. Councillor R Berrett said that he was concerned about how the grant money the tenant has received is proposed to be spent. Councillor G Rogers said that money has already been given to her by the parish council and that whilst the tenant is hardworking, he feels uneasy about giving further funding to an individual business. Councillor D Lucas said that the rent could be reduced. Councillor C Smith said that many businesses in the parish are suffering due to Covid 19 and will not receive rent relief. He said that the parish council offered financial support last year and that the tenant has received considerable grant funding. Councillor A Bellringer commented that the parish council has been generous so far and many businesses have been suffering as a result of Covid 19. He said that the parish council could be without rent for this suite for a long time and that it would be an unfortunate precedent to set. Councillor N O'Neill said that the rent is not a huge amount of money to the parish council but the tenant has had considerable grant funding. Councillor H Bunt said the rental income is public money which has been budgeted for in the precept. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that the rent for Suite 4 be reduced by 50% until lockdown ends in June. Three Councillors voted in favour of this proposal and 8 against. The proposal was not therefore carried. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor R Berrett that no further rental holiday for Suite 4 be given. Eight Councillors voted in favour of this proposal, two against and one abstained from

voting. The proposal was therefore carried.

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

None

13. Toilets and Car Park

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

None

14. St Neot Orchard

To receive and consider quotations for the formation of a footpath into Water Meadow from St Neot Orchard

The Clerk reported that 3 quotations had been sought from Lynher Construction, Chris Arthur and Colin Alford for the formation of a footpath into Water Meadow from St Neot orchard. Lynher Construction had not provided a quotation. Chris Arthur's quotation was in the sum of £4650 for the footpath and steps and £2,400 for the bridge and pedestrian gate. Colin Alford's quotation was in the sum of £3,200 for the footpath and steps and £980 for the bridge. Some discussion took place regarding this matter. It was proposed by Councillor D Lucas and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that Colin Alford's quotations be accepted. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. The proposal was therefore carried. Councillor C Smith said that he expected that the work would be undertaken at the end of the summer.

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

Councillor H Bunt said that the bench in the orchard needs repairing. Councillor P Crichton said that she is still seeking quotations for labels for the trees in the orchard.

15. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Linda Balfour has sent her thanks for Rev A Balfour's tree that has been planted in the orchard. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that Mr Dykes has complained that he has been racist towards him so Simon Mansell, Monitoring Officer, at Cornwall Council, will contact Mr Dykes and

invite him to submit a code of conduct complaint against Cornwall Councillor M Eddy with the accompanying evidence. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy said that although the parish council had set a nil increase in the parish precept, parish councils ask for a specific amount of money and as the number of residents in Cornwall who pay council tax has reduced during the pandemic, the amount of the precept requested meant that a 1% increase was necessary after all. Cornwall Councillor M Eddy thanked everyone for everything they have done for the parish, both physically and financially. He thanked those who are retiring and those councillors going forward.

b) Goonzion Commoners

Councillor C Smith said that a horse managed to get into Jane William's garden. He said that the boundary fence is in a poor state of repair and it is the responsibility of the parish council to keep the animals out as they are the landowners of this plot. He said that a new fence could be erected at a cost of £500 for the materials from Mole Valley Farmers and a labour cost of £220 from Matt Barbery. He said this would be to install a fence next to the original fence without removing or disposing of the old fence. Councillor T Hooper asked if the existing fence is dangerous. Councillor C Smith said that it is dangerous to Jane Williams and it would look unsightly if it remained in situ. Councillor P Crichton said that animals could get stuck in the existing fence so it should be removed. It was proposed by Councillor G Rogers and seconded by Councillor Dr L Jones that a new fence be erected on the boundary of Jane William's garden and Goonzion and the existing fence be removed. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. The proposal was therefore carried.

c) Liskeard Looe Community Network Panel

None

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

Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard Cleaning – April 2021) - £390.00
Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard Cleaning – Holiday Pay 2020/21 minus £272 PAYE) - £118.00
Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £131.99
Cornwall Association Local Councils (2021/22 subscription) - £436.15
EDF Energy (Electricity for Pavilion) - £74.18
EDF Energy (Parish Lighting) - £104.46
Sue Blaxley (Wreath) - £39.70
HMRC (PAYE) - £298.56
Playsafety (Annual Play Equipment Inspection) - £115.80
Olden Days (Repairs to Pavilion Door) - £33.15

It was proposed by Councillor Dr L Jones and seconded by Councillor H Bunt

that all of the above orders be authorized for payment. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

17. 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, 32p interest and £1197.19 from Pertemps for rental of Cott Yard. The accounts balance at £79,810.40

18. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting which will be on Wednesday 12th May 2021

The date of the next meeting of St Neot Parish council will be on Wednesday-12th May 2021 commencing at 7:30pm. The Clerk explained that this will be the Annual Parish Council meeting at which a Chair and Vice Chair will be elected. She explained that the CALC regulations are that the outgoing Chair will be present for the election of the new Chair as, although not permitted to nominate, second, or cast a vote initially, she will have a casting vote in the event of more than one person being nominated and the votes being tied. She said that the meeting will be held in person in the village hall in a covid secure way as on-line meetings are illegal for Parish Councils after May 7th. The Clerk explained that all Councillors remain in post until four days after the election on May 6th 2021.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9:30pm.