

**MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 13th DECEMBER 2023 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM,
ST NEOT INSTITUTE, ST NEOT**

Present: Councillors H Bunt (Chair), C Smith, A Tamblyn, M Rowe, N Ball, T Hooper, H Webb, D Glanville, G Rogers and T Thrussell.

Josie Williams, Henry Boyde
Cornwall Councillor Phil Seeva
Sue Blaxley, Clerk and RFO.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm. He confirmed that no one was recording the meeting.

Public Participation

None.

1. Apologies

None.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023, having been previously circulated, were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declaration of interest in items on the agenda

Councillors H Bunt and G Rogers declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda, Councillor N Ball declared an interest in items 11 and 12 on the agenda and Councillor G Rogers declared an interest in item 14 on the agenda.

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

The Chairman thanked everyone who attended Remembrance Sunday. He said that he had been thanked by a parishioner for including an item in St Neot News regarding dog fouling. The Clerk reported that she had written to Golden Tree Productions regarding the Kerdroya project but had not received a response.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chairman said that a parishioner had offered to assist with machinery for scrub clearance on Goonzion and that the next step was to have a meeting of the Commoners to ascertain if they wanted the works undertaken. He said that a parishioner has requested that a No Through Road sign be erected at the end of Lampen Lane by Lampen Bridge. He thanked Councillor C Smith for installing an outside light at Cott Yard. The Chairman said that he had received correspondence regarding the defibrillators in the parish which will be discussed at the next meeting

of the parish council. He said that the owners of the Halfway House pub are happy to have a parish map erected on their land. In addition, he said that he had received communications from residents in Lampen Lane who are concerned about the proposed new football pitch at the end of the lane. It was noted that the monthly report from PCSO S Edsner had been circulated to all councillors. The Chairman thanked Councillor C Smith, on behalf of the parish council, for erecting an additional sign for the shop. He reported that he had received an email from Matt Thornhill outlining proposals for use of the bus shelter. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the parish council. It was noted that new chippings had been laid at the Crowpound layby. The Chairman thanked Councillors C Smith and M Rowe, on behalf of the parish council, for undertaking these works.

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

Councillor T Thrussell outlined the prices of re-printing the parish map reporting that 10 poster sized maps would cost £41 to print. Councillor G Rogers said that the map was well received at the market. It was proposed by Councillor N Ball and seconded by Councillor C Smith that 10 copies be ordered and that a price be obtained for printing maps half the size. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal. It was proposed by Councillor A Tamblyn and seconded by Councillor N Ball that the maps be sold for £10 each which will cover the cost of printing and some of the original production costs. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

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

8. Village Shop Project

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to the Village Shop Project

Councillor T Hooper said that the Case Officer for the planning application submitted by the parish council for an extension to the pavilion to accommodate a village shop has requested that a Flood Risk Assessment be undertaken. She said that this would cost approximately £800 if it was undertaken by a consultant but that a more simplified report would be cheaper. She said that an Expression of Interest has been submitted for grant funding but this has been temporarily paused as planning permission has not yet been granted. She said that the funding, if granted, would be 90% of the cost of the project. Councillor T Hooper said that Martin Eddy has asked for confirmation that the parish council will contribute £10,000 to the project. It was proposed by Councillor T Hooper and seconded by Councillor T Thrussell that the parish council confirms that £10,000 is committed to the construction costs of the extension to the Pavilion in St Neot. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Councillor T Hooper said that a public meeting was held last week to discuss the Village Shop project at which the results of the shop survey were reported. She said that 86% of the respondents say they visit the shop every week, 97% of respondents said they are happy with the opening hours and the respondents said they were very happy with the staff employed in the shop. She said that some respondents had commented that the shop is lovely where it is and questioned the need to move it to an alternative location.

She said that Country Lane Enterprises are meeting a sustainable turnover in the shop but they do need other revenue streams, particularly parcels and take-out food. It was noted that Country Lane Enterprises are paying a reduced rent for the premises now. Councillor C Smith said that Country Lane Enterprises are not insisting on having a café. Councillor T Hooper said the community really wanted a tea room and that Cornwall Council are very supportive of it for the funding.

Councillor T Hooper said that the Village Shop Steering Group had reflected on the progress made this year and were pleased that due process has been followed and that the process has been transparent. She said that it was agreed that everyone has held their nerve during challenging times. She said that they have learnt that when volunteers come forward, it needs to be ensured that they have the necessary time to give to the work required of them. She said that the Steering Group send their thanks to the parish council for their support with special thanks to Councillor C Smith who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Councillor D Glanville asked when the deadline for applications for funding is. Councillor T Hooper said the funding is available until 2025. Councillor P Seeva said that he had contacted the Case Officer dealing with the planning application to arrange a site meeting.

Councillors H Bunt and G Rogers returned to the meeting.

9. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

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

It was noted that there was a reasonable turnout of members of the public at the working party on Saturday 9th December 2023. The Chairman thanked everyone who attended. Councillor T Hooper said that she had emptied the bin by the gazebo.

10. Pavillion

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to the Pavilion

Councillor T Hooper explained that, in 2005, the parish council agreed with National Grid that a high voltage cable could be laid in the playing field alongside the river, over the bridge into Doorstep Green and into the school. At that time, Councillor T Hooper said that the parish council signed a wayleave agreement that, if the cable had to be moved within 30 years, they would pay. She said that whilst the cable runs under the corner of the scout's store, National Grid would overlook this as the building is not occupied. However, she said that no further building can be undertaken within 2m of the cable. She said that National Grid has said that it will

cost £8,800 plus VAT to redirect the cable behind the Pavilion and across the playing field in the vicinity of the goal and re-join the existing cable. She said it takes approximately 3 months to get the works onto their register of works. Councillor T Hooper said that the groundworks would be an additional cost or the works could be undertaken by volunteers. In addition, she said that the parish council will need to employ a solicitor to agree the wayleave.

Councillor H Bunt said there will be additional re-instatement costs and that great care needs to be taken about the routing of the cable because of any future development in the playing field. Councillor T Hooper said that 90% of the costs of the re-routing of the cable would be covered by grant funding, if it is awarded. Councillor C Smith said that he was disappointed that no one from the parish council was invited to the site meeting with National Grid. He said that other options for re-routing the cable need to be discussed as the routing of the cable is of paramount importance for future development in the playing field. It was agreed that Councillor T Hooper will arrange a further site meeting with National Grid so that members of the parish council can attend.

11. Cott Yard

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

It was agreed that the heating charges for the tenants in Cott Yard will be discussed at the next meeting of the parish council. Councillor C Smith reported that a printed circuit board has failed on the heat pump so it is not working. He said that an engineer will attend to this next week. He explained that the tenants have been supplied with heaters and that he has set the auxiliary heater to 16 degrees.

12. Toilets and Car Park

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

None

13. St Neot Orchard

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

Councillor C Smith said that expenditure needs to be reduced next year so works in the orchard should be carried out by volunteers and more community involvement in the orchard needs to be encouraged. Councillor N Ball said that the scouts would be willing to help. Councillor H Bunt suggested asking Warleggan Young Farmers for assistance.

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

14. Grass Cutting and PROW Contracts 2024/25

To consider the grass cutting and PROW contracts for 2024/25

It was agreed that the existing contractors' work is to a good standard. It was noted that the PROW contract cost £1,630 in 2023/24 but the LMP covered the cost. It was noted that the grass cutting cost £4,000 in 2023/24 but this figure depends on the number of cuts. It was proposed by Councillor N Ball and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that the existing contractors be asked to provide quotations for 2024/25. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

Councillor G Rogers returned to the meeting.

15. Precept

To receive and consider the precept for 2024/25

The figures detailing the end of year accounts for 2023/2024, the current year's Precept, the Income and Expenditure as at 31st October 2023 and an estimation of expenditure until 31st March 2024 were displayed at the meeting plus figures detailing a draft proposal for the Precept for 2024/2025. These figures had been discussed in detail at a meeting of the Finance Committee in November 2023. Councillor C Smith said that there are several rising costs over which the parish council has no control. He acknowledged that there is capital available. He said that having considered all the information in detail, the Finance Committee had resolved to recommend raising the precept by 10% for 2024/25, taking the precept from £33,620 to £36,982. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor N Ball that the precept be raised by 10% for 2023/24, taking the precept from £33,620 to £36,982. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal except for Councillor T Thrussell who voted against.

16. Farmer's Market

To receive a report from the councillor who attended the farmer's market on 2nd December 2023 and to appoint a representative to attend the farmer's market on 6th January 2024

Councillor G Rogers attended the farmer's market on 2nd December 2023. He said that it was well attended and many were impressed with the parish map. He said the following issues were raised: the pavement outside Great Meadow is covered in leaves and moss (Councillor P Seeva said he would ascertain ownership of the pavement); the pavement is slippery outside Cott Yard and around the school; vegetation is growing over the pavement outside the school; people are parking too close to the bridge; the Carnglaze Caverns' road is covered in excess water and the gully needs cleaning and there are leaves on the pavement outside the cemetery. It was noted that the school has invited parish councillors to visit them to explain the work of the parish council. Councillor T Hooper said she would attend the farmers' market on 6th January 2024 and Councillor T Thrussell said he would attend the market in February 2024.

17. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

Cornwall Councillor P Seeva said that Cornwall Council has signed a Level 2 devolution deal which will allow for more say over adult education and green policies. He said the Tamar Bridge consultation has now finished and that Cornwall Council will be lobbying Central Government for financial support as it is not sustainable in the long term. He said that Cornwall Council has allocated £79 million to social housing over the next five years. He said that unlike some other councils, Cornwall Council is not in a position where it will go bankrupt as it has acted cautiously with finances over the years. He said that the new waste and recycling collection service will be effective from April 2024. He said that he has remaining money left in the Community Chest fund which it was agreed that the Clerk would apply for towards the parish maps.

b) Goonzion Commoners

Councillor M Rowe said that the new Luna cattle grid is complete.

c) SE Cornwall CAP

Councillor T Thrussell said that there was a meeting last week but he was unable to attend. He said the meeting was focused on approving what the sub committees had agreed..

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

Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £194.67
Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard cleaning) - £311.17
Source for Business (Water for Toilet) - £181.39
South West Water (Water for Cott Yard) - £42.87
Source for Business (Water for Pavilion) - £18.26
Classic Fire (Fire Alarm and Extinguisher Testing – Cott Yard) - £251.88
St Neot Social Club (Toilet Rolls) - £17.99
Christian Smith (Chippings for Crowpound layby) - £240.00
Sue Blaxley (3 months' salary and expenses) - £2657.65
Andrew Tamblyn (Treatment for Playing Field) - £78.00
Gary Rogers (PROW 2nd installment) - £815.00
Christian Smith (Sign for Shop) - £42.00
Christian Smith (Heater for Cott Yard) - £42.49

It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor M Rowe that all the above orders be authorized for payment. All Councillors voted in favour, except for Councillor N Ball who abstained from voting

19. Finance Report

To receive a current financial statement of the accounts and to review income and expenditure against budget

The Clerk reported that income has been received this month as follows: Country Lane Enterprises - £177.44 (electricity for Cott Yard) and £273 from Menheniot Post Office (rent for Pavilion). She said that the accounts balance at £74,165.54.

20. Co-option

To receive and consider applications for co-option onto the parish council

There were 3 applications for co-option: Josie Willaims, Henry Boyde and Liam Jones. Each candidate explained their experience and what they could offer to the parish council. The candidates left the meeting and the Clerk supervised a secret vote for all councillors. Liam Jones was duly co-opted onto the parish council.

21. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 10th January 2024

The next meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 10th January 2024 commencing at 7:30pm in St Neot Institute.

The Chairman wished everyone a happy Christmas and there was no further business and the meeting was closed at 9:25pm.