

**MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 10th JANUARY 2024 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 and L Jones.

Sandra Rowe, Josie Williams

Sue Blaxley, Clerk and RFO.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm. He confirmed that no one was recording the meeting. He welcomed the new councillor, Liam Jones.

Public Participation

Sandra Rowe explained that there are 5 defibrillators in the parish: Cott Yard, St Neot Institute, Ley, Loveny Road and Tripp Hill. She said that she has purchased consumable first aid kits to go in the defibrillators. She explained that the only one which is in a heated box is at Cott Yard which makes the others vulnerable to cold weather. She said that they still function correctly when they are cold but persistent cold weather reduces the battery life. She explained that Julie Ball checks the defibrillator at Ley and could put it into her porch if cold weather is forecast. She said that she checks the other boxes and the one in Tripp Hill can come into her porch during cold weather. In addition, the defibrillator in Loveny Road could be placed in Andrew Tamblyn's garage. She said that the one outside the Institute cannot be brought inside at night as the Institute has to be locked. Sandra Rowe said that refrigerated food packaging wrapped around the defibrillators may suffice to keep them warm as heated boxes cost approximately £550 plus VAT. Councillor N Ball asked what the cost of running a heated box is. Councillor C Smith said that it uses approximately 5 watts of electricity/hour. Councillor T Hooper asked if the defibrillators are registered on the national register. Sandra Rowe said that only the one outside the Institute is registered as the others are in unlocked boxes and may be more prone to theft if they are listed on a national register.

Sandra Rowe left the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors T Thrussell and G Rogers and from Cornwall Councillor P Seeva.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13th December 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13th December 2023, having been previously circulated, were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declaration of interest in items on the agenda

Councillors H Bunt declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda and Councillor N Ball declared an interest in items 10, 11 and 12 on the agenda.

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

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 has suggested having more wildflower areas in Doorstep Green and the playing field to reduce the grass cutting costs. In addition, he said that a parishioner has reported that vegetation is overhanging Cott Wall. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the owner of the wall and asked for the vegetation to be cut back. The Chairman said that he did a reading at the Candlelit Carol Service before Christmas. He reported that Councillor T Hooper had inspected the play equipment last week. It was noted that the monthly report from PCSO S Edsner had been circulated to all councillors and that the Clerk had contacted Cormac about the slippery pavements in the parish but they have responded saying that they do not consider them to be hazardous enough to take any action.

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

Councillor N Ball said that the parish council's laptop, which is used by the Clerk, needs replacing. It was proposed by Councillor N Ball and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that the Clerk be authorized to purchase a new laptop up to the value of £1,000. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal. Councillor C Smith reported that all the salt bins are full except the one at the top of Halfway Hill which is one third full. He said that the parish council has a quantity of salt to refill the bins if needed. Councillor N Ball said he would check the salt bin at Ley.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

Councillor H Bunt, 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 planning permission for an extension to the pavilion to accommodate a village shop was approved on 19th December 2023 and that, since then, many positive comments have been received from parishioners. She explained that the next step is to apply for Building Regulations which Ray Clarke has estimated will cost approximately £1,000 to prepare the drawings. She said that an Expression of Interest for grant funding was submitted to Cornwall Council on 8th

January 2024 and if this meets with a positive response, a full application for grant funding will be submitted and this should be determined by the end of March 2024. Councillor T Hooper said that the estimated cost of the build is £120,000 and that 10% match funding would be required - £12,000. She explained that there is a shortfall of £500 in this respect and asked if the parish council would consider increasing its contribution to the project. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor D Glanville that the parish council will increase its contribution to £10,500. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Councillor T Hooper said that the Village Shop Steering Group will draw up the tender documents and will invite expressions of interest prior to sending out tender invitations. She said that a panel (two members of the parish council and two members of the Steering Group) will sieve through expressions of interest to decide who to invite to tender for the project. It was agreed that Councillors L Jones and C Smith will represent the parish council on this panel. The Clerk said that a minimum of 3 tenders should be sought which will be opened in a closed session of the parish council without the names of the contractors being disclosed. The tender document submitted by the successful contractor will be scrutinised by the Village Shop Steering Group to ensure it meets the relevant criteria.

Councillor M Rowe asked what the timescale for completion is. Councillor T Hooper said that it is hoped the project will be complete by the end of August 2024.

Councillor H Bunt 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

Councillor H Webb said there is a lot of running water in Doorstep Green.

10. Pavillion

To receive and consider a report on the diversion of the electricity cable from the Pavilion to St Neot Primary School

Councillor T Hooper explained that National Grid has said that the cost of diverting the high voltage cable in the playing field is £8,829.72 plus VAT. Councillor C Smith explained that these works will require an easement which will have to be drawn up by a Solicitor. It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor C Smith that the Clerk contacts Stephens and Scown, Coodes and Foot Anstey solicitors for a quotation for this service and that the Clerk instructs the solicitor with the cheapest quotation to commence the preparation of the documents. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. Councillor C Smith said there will be other costs involved including excavation and re-instatement works when the cable has been re-routed. He also questioned whether the electricity feed to Doorstep Green and the water supply to Doorstep Green will be accommodated in the same trench.

It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor M Rowe that the Clerk be authorized to sign the document accepting the quotation from National Grid and to pay them the sum of £8,829.72 plus VAT for the works. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal except for Councillor L Jones who abstained from voting.

Councillor C Smith said that, when building work commences, provision will need to be made to accommodate the Scouts and the Post Office.

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

None.

11. Cott Yard

To receive and consider the heating and other charges for the tenants in Cott Yard

Councillor C Smith explained that the heat pump uses a lot of electricity and that the costs to the parish council of the heating and service charges are more than the tenants are charged. In addition, he said that the parish council pays for the electricity for the communal areas and the archive and that approximately £800 has been spent this year on repairs to the heat pump. He said that the parish council currently has a contract with Opus Energy until 1st January 2026 at a cost of 38p/unit. He said that the parish council could resolve not to provide heating via the heat pump but to fit heaters in the suites which could be used by the tenants and for which they would pay the electricity costs. He said that 2 heaters per suite would be required at an approximate cost of £500/heater. Councillor C Smith said that another option is to pass these increased costs incurred by the parish council onto the tenants. It was proposed by Councillor M Rowe and seconded by Councillor H Webb that the Clerk writes a letter to Pertemps and to Heather Taylor explaining that, given the increased electricity costs, the heating charge will be increased from 1st April 2024 when a detailed analysis of the costs has been carried out. In addition, the Clerk will write to Pertemps, Heather Taylor and Country Lane Enterprises explaining that the service charge will also increase from 1st April 2024. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

Councillor C Smith said that it is imperative that the deeds of Cott Yard are examined so that an informed decision can be made regarding negotiations with tenants both now and in the future. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor N Ball that the Clerk locates the deeds for Cott Yard. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

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

None

Councillor A Tamblin left the meeting for other commitments.

12. Toilets and Car Park

To receive and consider a proposal for the use of the bus shelter in St Neot car park

A proposal by Matt Thornhill for use of the bus shelter in St Neot car park had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Councillor N Ball questioned whether Matt Thornhill is under the impression that there is an electricity feed to the bus shelter. Councillor H Webb said the bus shelter is still used as a shelter. Councillor N Ball said there is a vast library in St Neot Institute and art for sale is also displayed in the Institute. Councillor C Smith questioned whether there is a restrictive covenant on the bus shelter. It was agreed that the parish council already has numerous commitments for its time and resources. Councillor T Hooper said that the idea is aspirational but the bus shelter is not the right space. It was agreed that there are other spaces coming forward which could be used as detailed in the proposal. It was also agreed that the bus shelter is still required for use as a shelter.

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

Councillor T Hooper said that a parishioner has said that more parking spaces may be required in the car park when the new shop opens. In addition, she said that a parishioner has said that a light is needed above the steps leading from the car park and possibly a hand rail. Councillor C Smith said that the light and handrail could be considered alongside the development of the new shop.

13. St Neot Orchard

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

It was agreed that the parish council should decide on how to progress the orchard and the newly acquired space next to the orchard. It was agreed that councillors will meet at the orchard on Saturday 24th February 2024 at 1:30pm to discuss this matter further. Councillor T Hooper said that Warleggan Young Farmers will give consideration as to how they might assist with the orchard.

14. Grass Cutting and PROW Contracts 2024/25

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

The Clerk reported that Lanhydrock Gardening Services has quoted £266 plus VAT per cut for 2024/25 (£247.25 plus VAT per cut in 2022/23). Some discussion took place as to whether leaving a 3m wide strip adjacent to the river for wilding might reduce the cost. The Clerk reported that Gary Rogers has quoted £1650 for the PROW contract for 2024/25 (£1630 in 2023/24) It was proposed by Councillor T Hooper and seconded by Councillor N Ball that these quotations be accepted. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

15. Defibrillators

To receive and consider matters arising relating to the defibrillators in the parish

Councillor T Hooper said the thermal packaging that Sandra Rowe said seems to be successful for keeping the defibrillators warm could be used as an alternative to purchasing heated boxes. Councillor N Ball said that he would ask the committee of St Neot Institute to consider purchasing a heated box for the defibrillator outside the premises and then the redundant box from the Institute can be used for the defibrillator on Tripp Hill. It was agreed that defibrillators should not be located on private property as they need to be on prominent display in public places with improved signage. It was agreed that the thermal packaging should be used to keep the defibrillators warm in cold weather and that the defibrillators should be registered on the national register.

16. Farmer's Market

To receive a report from the councillor who attended the farmer's market on 6th January 2024 and to appoint a representative to attend the farmer's market on 3rd February 2024

Councillor T Hooper attended the farmer's market on 6th January 2024. She said that many positive comments had been received regarding gaining planning permission for the shop but that some thought should be given to parking. It was noted that Councillor T Thrussell will attend the market on 3rd February 2024.

17. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

None

b) Goonzion Commoners

None

c) SE Cornwall CAP

None

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

Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £177.79
Julie Ball (Toilet, Pavilion and Cott Yard cleaning) - £311.17
EDF Energy (Electricity for Pavilion) - £171.75
Roseland Plumbing and Heating (Heat Pump Repairs) - £582.00
St Neot Institute (Cleaning Materials for Public toilet) - £29.96
EDF Energy (Parish Lighting) - £210.48

DG and RM Wherry (Hedge Trimming on Goonzion) - £108.00

It was proposed by Councillor H Bunt and seconded by Councillor H Webb 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 - £1578.15 (electricity for Cott Yard) and £115.50 from Menheniot Post Office (rent for Pavilion). She said that the accounts balance at £70,031.58.

20. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 21st February 2024

The next meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 21st February 2024 commencing at 7:30pm in St Neot Institute.