

MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8TH APRIL 2026 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, ST NEOT SOCIAL CLUB, ST NEOT

Present: Councillors T Hooper (Chair), C Smith, M Rowe, G Rogers and N Ball.

Clyve Ugdale
Sue Blaxley, Clerk and RFO.

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

Public Participation

None

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors D Glanville, T Thrussell H Bunt and A Tamblyn.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th February 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2026, having been previously circulated, were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declaration of interest in items on the agenda

None

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

It was reported that Councillor H Bunt has not yet advertised the surplus furniture for sale from Cott Yard. The Chair said that she had spoken to Heather Saunders about parking and access and safeguarding matters in Cott Yard and the Clerk reported that she has instructed DTGS to undertake the annual play equipment inspection. It was noted that the tenants of the shop have now signed the lease. The Clerk said that she has asked the insurance company about tree inspections and that she has asked Cornwall Council for statements regarding the invoices for street lighting.

5. To receive the Chairman's Communications

The Chair said that PCSO S Edser's monthly report had been circulated to all councillors. She reported that some damage to the car park behind the chapel has been allegedly caused by SWW and that a meeting has taken place with SWW's Operation Manager. The Chair said that she has written on two occasions to SWW regarding the alleged damage to the car park in St Neot but has not received a response. It was agreed that the Chair would write again to SWW about this matter and if there is no response from them within 10 days, the contractor will be instructed

to go ahead with the repair works in the car park as planned. Councillor T Hooper said that she has received a request to use Doorstep Green on 20th June 2026 for a Johnny Cowling event. It was agreed that this was an acceptable use of the area provided that the organisers have undertaken appropriate risk assessments.

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

Councillor C Smith said that Sandra Rowe has asked the parish council to act as custodian for the funds raised for maintenance of the defibrillators in the parish. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor N Ball that the money should be transferred to the parish council as a donation. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

7. To receive a report from the Clerk

None

8. Doorstep Green and Playing Field

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

Councillor C Smith said that he has met with the contractor regarding the grading and re-seeding of one section of Doorstep Green before the summer and they will proceed in due course. He reported that the gully in the playing field has been cleaned out and re-shaped. It was agreed that a Doorstep Green Working Party will be held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 between 6pm and 8pm. Councillor N Ball said that he will continue to empty the bins.

9. Shop and Community Hub

To receive and consider a report on any matters arising relating to the shop and community hub

It was noted that the new lease agreement for the shop has now been signed. Councillor C Smith said that the faulty units on the emergency lighting have now been replaced free of charge. Councillor C Smith said that the kitchen will soon require re-painting. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor M Rowe that Councillor C Smith obtains a quotation for the work and if the quotation is less than £300, the contractor will be instructed to go ahead with the works. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

10. Cott Yard

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

Councillor C Smith reported that one of the tenants in Cott Yard has raised issues about safeguarding in that her students can be seen by users of the salon when the door to the communal area is open. It was acknowledged that the salon requires light and ventilation, hence the door is sometimes open. Also, users of the salon can

see out of the windows. It was suggested that a semi-opaque covering be put on the interior glass which allows for light, but blurs vision and a beaded curtain could be hung in the doorway to the communal area. It was agreed that Councillor C Smith would liaise with Heather Saunders and Heather Taylor and feed back to the next meeting of the parish council. Councillor C Smith said that concerns have also been raised about the use of the parking spaces at Cott Yard. Councillor C Smith reported that the emergency lighting has now been repaired.

11. Toilets and Car Park

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

Councillor G Rogers reported that there is a grey mini in the car park which is untaxed and uninsured. Councillor C Smith suggested setting up a Committee of key people from organisations in the village and parish council representatives to discuss fundraising for the re-surfacing of the carpark and the re-configuration of it to increase parking as well as the provision of an electric charging point. It was agreed that Councillor C Smith would obtain rough estimates of the likely cost of the works so that the amount of money required can be ascertained. It was suggested that some grants may be available for work to community car parks.

12. St Neot Orchard

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

None

13. Attendance at Produce Market

To consider councillors attendance at the produce market

It was agreed that councillors would not attend the market in April 2026 but that Councillor N Ball would attend the market on 2nd May 2026. It was agreed that parishioners can communicate with the parish council in a variety of different ways and that attendance at the market by councillors will only take place if there is a major project proposed or ongoing.

14. Inspection of Trees

To consider drafting a policy for the inspection of trees

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Insurance Company regarding this matter and their response was as follows:

“I’ve sought guidance from Jim Nicholson our Risk Manager on this & he has advised as follows:-

It would depend on the councillor's level of knowledge. They need to think of the scenario of the tree falling on a play area or passing car etc. In court would this level of risk management be sufficient to defend themselves?

If the councillor has knowledge and some form or expertise in trees, then it might be enough. I am assuming he/she is not an arboriculturist or tree surgeon? If he/she is not, then how would they spot early signs of disease? Or problems with branches or weakness?

Personally, unless the councillor can prove he/she has some expertise I can't see it being a successful defence.

This doesn't mean they have to inspect every tree. I would highlight the trees near public areas such as parks or paths and highlight them for the inspections. Trees well away from public area would need far less frequent inspections.

[Management of the risk from falling trees or branches - FOI - HSE](#)

HSE guidance above

I think you need to err on the side of caution here, for instance those tree's around the Amphitheatre where you probably get a lot of passing children should be professionally inspected in my opinion. Unless your councillors have any professional training you could be left in an undefendable position in the event of a claim which I wouldn't recommend. Whilst paying for professional tree inspections may not be cheap if it gives you a defence in the event of a claim it ultimately saves you money in the long run."

Councillor T Hooper said that the Health and Safety Executive require a minimum standard and they suggest zoning the trees so that Zone 1 would include trees that require regular management where there is public access, such as Doorstep Green and the playing field or trees on the boundaries with domestic properties or roads. Zone 2 would cover Goonzion as we adequately manage the footpaths and this is adequate to meet the minimum standard. It was agreed that a disclaimer sign should be erected on the rough track near Linkindale.

Councillor T Hooper said that trees in Zone 1 require regular inspections by a competent person with a good working knowledge of trees. It also requires a record of inspections and trees' defects to be kept as well as a procedure in the event of storms and a procedure to report damage caused by one of the trees owned by the parish council. In addition, it requires an assessment to be undertaken of the management plan.

Councillor C Smith said that if a procedure is put in place, it must be actioned. He suggested undertaken a drone survey of the trees twice a year. It was agreed that Councillor G Rogers is the competent person and could request the professional advice of a tree surgeon if required. It was agreed that Councillor T Hooper would ask people to report any trees of concern to the Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor N Ball and seconded by Councillor C Smith that the trees be delineated into zones, the appointed competent person is Councillor G Rogers who will inspect the trees every 6 months, with a tree surgeon on hand if required and the findings be recorded in the asset register. All councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

15. To receive reports from -

a) Cornwall Councillor

None.

b) Goonzion Commoners

None

c) SE Cornwall CAP

Councillor T Thrussell had emailed councillors informing them that Kerdroya has re-opened and that he has put a new mirror in the public toilet and a sticker on the donation box. In addition, he had circulated a copy of the draft Belonging in Cornwall Strategy consultation.

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

Cornwall Pension Fund (Pension for Clerk) - £259.45
Julie Ball (Toilet cleaning) - £165.23
Sue Blaxley (Backpay) - £333.39
Cornwall Association of Local Councils (Annual Subscription) - £527.19
James Hallam Council Guard (Insurance Renewal) - £5415.89
Corserv Solutions Ltd (2 bags salt and grit bin) - £784.42
Karen Bunt (Community Hub Cleaning) - £64.00
St Neot Village Hall (Room Hire) - £183.75
J R Agriculture (Gully Cleaning) - £280.00

It was proposed by Councillor G Rogers and seconded by Councillor M Rowe that the above orders be authorized for payment apart from the payment to Corserv as the parish council has not received the grit bin. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal, apart from Councillor N Ball, who abstained from voting.

16. Finance Report

To receive a current assessment of the accounts

The Clerk reported that income in March 2026 comprised: £622.92 from Country Lane Enterprises as rent for the shop, £20 for use of the Community Hub, £28.95 from St Neot Historians as a council tax rebate, £675.10 from Heather Taylor as rent for Cott Yard and £1344.50 from Heather Saunders as rent for Cott Yard. She said that the accounts balance at £44,659.51

17. Co-option

To consider applications for co-option onto the parish council

Clyve Ugdale said that he would like to join the parish council as he has lived in St Neot for 18 months and would like to be more proactive in the community. The parish council agreed to the appointment of Clyve Ugdale.

18. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting in May 2026.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 20th May 2026 which will be the AGM.

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