ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 22 September 2008

Present: Cllr J Cooper-Marsh - Chairman
Cllr P Ursell
Cllr K Cooper
Cllr D Terry

8. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Chapman (previous engagement).

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes

The Committee received and noted the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2008, which had already been approved at the previous full council meeting.

The chairman asked that it be noted that Cllr Chapman was not present for any significant part of the meeting and although the Clerk pointed out that he had signed the attendance register.

11. Annual Report & Accounts

The Committee received a draft form of the annual report and accounts for 2007/08 prepared by the Council's Finance Officer. The Report comprised of a statement of responsibilities and policies, the income and expenditure accounts, statement of movement of the general fund balance, the balance sheet and the cash flow statement together with a statement of Total Recognised Gains of Losses.

The Draft Report also contains a statement of internal control. The Finance Officer reported that CIPFA had introduced a new framework for good governance in local government which replaced the requirements for the Councillor's to produce an annual statement on internal control with a duty to publish an annual governance statement against which the Council is assessed.

The Finance Officer therefore tabled a first draft of the annual governance statement for member's consideration.

The general discussion and question and answers session related to various details of the draft report and accounts. Whilst a number of minor points of amendment were requested the committee:

RESOLVED that in accordance with the account and audit regulations 2003 (as amended) the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 be received and the documents be referred to the next meeting of full Council with the recommendation for their approval and adoption.

A vote of thanks be given to the Council's Finance Officer, Mrs Porter for the excellent work which she had done in preparing the draft documents thus far: it was noted that Mrs Porter had inherited a difficult position with regards to the Council's finance and accounts and the Committee asked that their appreciation for her hard work be recorded.

12. Rationalisation of Council Bank Accounts

The Finance Officer tabled a report advising members of her concerns arising out of the way that the Council's bank accounts are managed. The Council currently holds six bank accounts. The Finance Officer reported that the Council have irrelatively small amounts in each of them and that the Council is loosing out on interest which it could be receiving. Over the years this may have amounted to a substantial sum.

The Finance Officer felt that it was not necessary or advantageous to the Council to continue with the current complicated structure of banking. She recommends that these be rationalised by reducing the total number of accounts.

Following a short discussion the Committee:

RESOLVED that the Council close the business premium account due to their low interest rates and that the Council move the surplus funds of both Town Council and the Priory Centre into one account to yield the best interest available. The Council to open a treasury deposit account in order to achieve higher interest in the medium term.

The Meeting closed at 7.38pm.

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CHAIRMAN
22.09.08