

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD IN THE MOOT, THE PRIORY CENTRE**  
**ON THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2011**

Present:

Cllr P K Ursell  
Cllr B Chapman  
Cllr Mrs D Collins  
Cllr R W Eaton  
Cllr S van de Kerkhove

71. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

72. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were received from Cllrs B Chapman and P K Ursell for agenda item 4 (Indemnity Agreement for S106 Monies) as District Councillors.

73. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2011 were **APPROVED**.

74. HDC Indemnity Agreement for S106 Monies

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that she had received the Indemnity Agreement for S106 monies for Dukes Road play area. Invitations to tender had been sent out as agreed at the Operations and Amenities Committee meeting on 27 January.

Members **APPROVED** the signing of the Indemnity Agreement by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.

75. January 2011 Payments

The Responsible Finance Officer presented the payments up to 31 January 2011.

Members instructed that a procedure for monitoring the mileage of Town Council vehicles be introduced by the Operations Manager.

Members **NOTED** the report and **APPROVED** the payments.

76. Review of Current Fees

The Responsible Finance Officer presented a review of prices charges for Town Council and Priory and Eatons Centres.

(i) Cemeteries

Prices for burials were increased in 2010 quite substantially to bring the Town Council's fees in line with other burial authorities. The Responsible Finance Officer recommended no increase for 2011-12.

Members **APPROVED** that fees were not increased for 2011-12.

(ii) Photocopying

Cost of photocopying has decreased due to new photocopier, the Responsible Finance Officer therefore recommended no increase for 2011-12.

Members **APPROVED** that charges for photocopying to members of the public are not increased for the financial year 2011-12.

Members agreed that the photocopying provided by the Town Council was a valuable service to local community groups.

(iii) Allotment Rent

Allotment rents had not been increased for at least 5 years. The Responsible Finance Officer recommended an increase of £2.00 for single allotments and £4.00 for double. This would not take effect until April 2012 as Allotment Holders' Agreement requires a year's notice of rent increase.

Members **APPROVED** the increase to take effect April 2012.

(iv) Priory Centre and Eatons Community Centre Hall Hire

As agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 November, there would be no increase in hall hire or 2011-12.

As agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 November, bar prices would only be increased if brewery prices or VAT increase for 2011-12.

77. Play Area Insurance

The Responsible Finance Officer had been instructed at the meeting of 25 November to investigate the possibility of joint insurance schemes with other local authorities for the Council's play areas. He had contacted Huntingdonshire District Council and been informed that it was intended to hold a meeting later in the year between the District and other local Councils to look into joint insurance schemes. No date had been set.

At the meeting in November, the Responsible Finance Officer had been asked to investigate the likelihood of Loves Farm play areas being made the responsibility of the Town Council in this financial year. The Service Development Coordinator at the District Council had informed the Responsible Finance Officer that there were no plans to transfer the responsibility to the Town Council at present but the full extent of cutbacks at the District Council were not yet known.

Members **NOTED** the report.

78. District Valuer's Report

The Responsible Finance Officer reminded Members that it had been agreed at the full Council meeting in April 2010, to defer rent reviews for the Eaton Socon Servicemen's Club, the Museum and the Jubilee Hall for one year. Members are required to review the rents for the Council's Assets.

(i) Eaton Socon Ex-Servicemen's Club

The current rent is £7,800 per annum, which was set in 2004. The last rent review was due in January 2007 but no increase was actioned. The District Valuer recommended a rent in the region of £8,500.

Members **APPROVED** The District Valuer's recommendation that the rent be increased to £8,500

(ii) Museum

Current rent is £6,000 per annum. The last rent review was November 2002. The District Valuer recommended a rent in the region of £10,000. The Town Council gives a grant of £30,000 per year to the Museum.

Members **APPROVED** The District Valuer's recommendation that the rent be increased to £10,000.

(iii) Jubilee Hall

The current rent is £1,196 per annum. The District Valuer recommended a rent between £6,000 and £7,000. The Jubilee Hall Committee had received Grant Aid for 2010-11 to cover the annual rent.

Members unanimously **APPROVED** the District Valuer's recommendation and that the rent be increased to £6,500.

The Chairman said that the Town Council policy was to support tenants of Council owned properties through the Grant Aid system. It was **RESOLVED** that the Ex-Servicemen's Club, the Museum and the Jubilee Hall Management Committees would all be invited to apply for aid through the Grant Aid scheme. Grant Aid application packs would be issued with the letters advising of rent increases.

79. Youth Grant

The Town Clerk advised Members that she had received a letter from St Neots Locality Team Youth Services requesting that the Grant Aid they were awarded in 2010 was carried over to 2011 as the project will not be completed until February/March 2011.

Members **APPROVED** to carry over the grant awarded in 2010 until 21 June 2011.

80. Financial and Non-Financial Report

The Town Clerk updated Members on the progress the Town Council has achieved in the past five months.

- (i) Members **APPROVED** the recommendation to transfer the Coffee Bar budget to Earmarked Reserves until the Coffee Shop is opened in May 2011.
- (ii) Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the Operations Manager completes a schedule report on the Operations Department for the next Finance & General Purposes meeting on 24 March.
- (iii) Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the Community Centres Manager uploads the website to go live by the end February 2011.
- (iv) Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the Operations Manager and Responsible Finance Officer review the current

contract for the public toilets and report to the next Finance and General Purposes meeting on 24 March 2011.

- (v) Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the Eaton Socon Green Car Park bedding area is planted up by 31 March 2011.

Members **NOTED** the Financial and Non-Financial Report.

81. Offsite Back-Up

The Office Manager advised Members that the current back-up unit was inadequate and that the Council's IT company had advised that the current server could not support a larger back-up device. Offsite back-up had been suggested in which the data was stored in two different areas of the country and encrypted to military standards.

Members **APPROVED** that the Town Council's data was backed up offsite.

Meeting ended at 7.15pm.

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**CHAIRMAN**  
**24.02.11**