

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MOOT, THE PRIORY CENTRE, ST NEOTS ON
WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2008**

PRESENT: Cllr R W J Eaton – Town Mayor – in the Chair

Cllr Ms F Birks	Cllr D A Giles
Cllr A Boulton	Cllr D Harty
Cllr B Chapman	Cllr Mrs J Hayward
Cllr Mrs D Collins	Cllr D Terry
Cllr J C Cooper-Marsh	Cllr G Thorpe
Cllr A Cummings	Cllr P K Ursell

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs B Arnold and Cllr Mrs K Cooper, both work commitments.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of personal and prejudicial interests were made by members in respect of Item 13, Grant Aid:-

Jubilee Hall	Cllrs D Giles, G Thorpe and Mrs D Collins (Trustees)
St John Ambulance	Cllr Mrs D Collins (Member)
Holidays at Home	Cllr Cooper-Marsh (Child is beneficiary under scheme)
Citizens Advice Bureau	B Chapman and R W J Eaton (Volunteers)
Volunteer Bureau	Cllr D Harty
Natural High	Cllr Mrs J Hayward
St Neots Boxing Club	Cllr Mrs L Ottolangui (related to a member of the organising committee)

Cllr Les Roberts declared a personal interest in Item 6 (new cemetery and allotments) in his capacity as a Council allotment holder.

Cllr Harty declared personal interest in Items 10 and 11 in his capacity as a Council and District Councillor.

Cllr Thorpe declared a personal interest in Item 11 in his capacity as a District Councillor.

Cllr Chapman declared an interest in Item 4(v) in his capacity as a member of the Joint Project Group.

17. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor reported that he and his Deputy had represented St Neots on 17 occasions since the last Council meeting. These included:

- 1 The Annual Hanger Dance at RAF Molesworth
- 2 Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Open Day
- 3 Peterborough Mayor Making
- 4 Midsummer Fair in Cambridge
- 5 The Opening of St Neots Football Club
- 6 University of the Third Age 10th Anniversary
- 7 Huntingdon Regional College Awards Ceremony
- 8 Royal Society of St George Reception
- 9 Choral Society/Sinfonia Concert
- 10 Girl Guides Olympics Day
- 11 Little Acorns Nursery Fete

He then asked members to note the following diary dates:-

Saturday 5 July, The Mayor's Charity Concert to be held at St Neots Parish Church (RAF Wyton Voluntary Band). Tickets £10.00, Concessions £8.00. Cllr Eaton asked for volunteers to help on the night.

The Mayor then announced that the Civic Parade and Church Service would be held on Sunday 20 July 2008, meeting outside the Priory Centre at 2.15pm. The Church Service will begin at 3pm then the Parade will return to the Priory Centre where light refreshments will be provided.

18. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 4 June 2008 were approved.
- (ii) The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 4 and 18 June 2008 were received.
- (iii) The Minutes of the Eatons Community Centre Committee held on 11 June 2008 were received.
- (iv) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 11 June 2008 were approved.
- (v) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cinema Advisory Committee held on 11 June were approved.

19. PRESENTATION ON PRIMARY CARE PROVISION IN ST NEOTS

The Town Council received a presentation from Matthew Smith of the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust regarding the proposals for the development of a new GP led health centre in St Neots.

Mr Smith explained the background to the proposal; the Government had launched a national programme in December 2007 to create new health centres in every Primary Care Trust area in England to offer primary care services with

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increased hours and a “drop in” service. The purpose of this consultation was to seek views of local people and organisations about this proposal.

Mr Smith stated that the Primary Care Trust had chosen St Neots as it was the largest town in the county but with relatively less health service provision than other areas, ie there is a comparatively higher number of patients per GP compared to the rest of the county. Mr Smith said that their research had found that local patient feedback had indicated a lack of satisfaction with local access to primary care services and this, together with the significant population growth expected in St Neots over the next few years, was the determining factor.

The new health centre would be available to individuals and families who live near the centre and those who live or work or visit St Neots and can use it for “one off” visits. It was explained that a range of services would be on offer not merely consultation services but additional services such as dermatology, pathology, pain clinics, audiology, dental, pharmacy and radiology services. There would also be provision for urgent out of hours care.

Mr Smith sought to emphasise that the new GP led health service in St Neots would not force existing surgeries to close.

The process was to consult as widely as possible and then to report on outcomes to a Public Board meeting of the Primary Care Trust.

The Town Mayor invited members of Council to ask questions and issues were raised in relation to the selection of a suitable site within the town (not yet chosen), the impact on GP services (an additional service not a replacement service), funding and the issue of cross charges. (It was confirmed that there would be no cross charges to existing surgeries.)

Issues were also raised regarding the use of the facility by people from Bedfordshire and other areas and it was suggested that this could be dealt with by means of agreements between the various Primary Care Trusts to take account of this. It was also confirmed that it was a strong possibility that a chiropodist would be added to the list of services.

One Councillor asked whether it was intended to serve the whole of Cambridgeshire with this centre but it was confirmed that that was primarily to serve the people of St Neots.

Following a short debate, it was

Proposed and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council strongly welcomed the proposal and looked forward to seeing the detailed proposals in due course.

Mr Smith was thanked for his presentation.

20. NEW CEMETERY AND ALLOTMENTS

The Council's Consultant, Mr Ted Bocking, introduced the item and his extensive report into the proposal for a new cemetery and allotments at Bushmead Road, St Neots. Mr Bocking set out the history of development of the idea and the negotiations with the landowner. He emphasised that, whilst there was no statutory obligation to provide burial facilities in the town, the existing cemeteries were approaching their capacity and that it was appropriate for the Town Council to make plans for the future. However, the Town Council does have a statutory duty to meet demand for allotments which, given the long waiting list which currently exists, it is not doing at the present time.

Mr Bocking's report set out a number of options and some outline costing figures for the various alternatives which he invited members to consider.

The Council then received two presentations; firstly Dr Richard Earl of Turfrax Ltd who presented a report regarding the soil and drainage analysis of the site. Mr Earl emphasised that there were drainage issues within the site which needed to be addressed in order to satisfy the requirements of the Environment Agency which would be a precondition of obtaining planning permission for the development of the 10 acre plot as a cemetery.

The Council then received a presentation from Mr Peter Mitchell of Peter Mitchell Associates, setting out the design concepts available to the Council for the development of the site. He put forward two alternatives for the layout on a conceptual basis, namely allotments at the southern end of the site with burials at the northern end and also vice versa. There were drainage and infrastructure implications inherent in this choice and he advised that it would probably be cheaper for the Council to create the cemetery at the southern end, ie Bushmead Road end of the site.

A debate ensued regarding issues including the consecration of the cemetery, the merits of woodland or green burial as against a conventional cemetery, the planning issues and issues relating to the cost and the capital programme, and the timescale involved.

A consensus view emerged that the appropriate option was Option 4 set out in the report, namely to purchase the whole of the site, use part of the site for allotments and to use the remainder for woodland burials. The option setting out the cemetery at the southern end of the site was also preferred.

The Town Clerk emphasised that the project needed to be taken in a phased way and that as a precondition to making progress, highways, environmental drainage and planning issues needed to be resolved. He therefore invited members to indicate formally their preferred option and then to instruct officers to proceed with their investigations and negotiations and to report back to Council in the autumn.

Following a further debate, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Council agrees in principle to purchase the whole of the Bushmead Road site, to use part of the site for allotments and to use the remainder for woodland burials,
- (ii) that Option B in Mr Bocking's report be provisionally agreed at this stage, namely the cemetery be built at the southern end of the site with allotments at the northern end,
- (iii) that Messrs Michael Thomas Consultants be retained to advise and to design and negotiate acceptable highway access and other traffic management issues, and to report back to the Town Council as soon as possible,
- (iv) thereafter the Town Clerk and the Council's Consultants be authorised to hold further discussions the Planning Authority with a view to the early submission of a planning application for the development,
- (v) that Peter Mitchell Associates and Turftrax Ltd be retained for the purposes of completing the project, subject to satisfactory cost proposals,
- (vi) that a small ad hoc committee, comprising Cllrs D Giles, Mrs D Collins, L Roberts, P K Ursell and two others be appointed to progress the development but without delegated powers,
- (vii) that a report be brought back to full Council from the Chairman of the Committee in the autumn.

21. EATONS COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Town Council considered a report from the Town Clerk setting out the financial background to the capital costs of the new Eatons Community Centre.

Following a short discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that

- (i) The Town Council seeks borrowing approval for an amount up to £350,000 to be borrowed over 30 years at the fixed interest rate of 5.36% to fund the construction of the Eatons Community Centre and
- (ii) that an application for the necessary loan is made to the Public Works Loan Board once consent is obtained.

22. ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES FOR THE SWIMMING POOL TRUST

The Town Council considered a report from the Town Clerk proposing a formal regime of charges for administrative and other support to the Swimming Pool Trust to be submitted to the Trust for support received from Town Council Officers. The Town Clerk advised that problems had been caused in the past when the District Council had sought reimbursement for its time and resources in managing the Trust. He advised that future difficulties could be avoided by entering into a formal and transparent agreement for the payment out of the Trust revenue resources for Council Officer time.

Following a short debate, it was **RESOLVED** that

- (i) Council agree to a flat rate charging system for time spent by senior officers in dealing with Trust matters at an hourly rate of £30; and
- (ii) Council agree a charging rate of £10 per hour for workmen in managing the Swimming Pool site.

23. POLICE COMPUTERS

The local police would like to install either a new computer linked into the internet or their software on one of our computer. This would enable the PCSO to get call information without walking back to the police station.

Following a short debate, it was **RESOLVED** that

- (iii) Council agree in principle to install a new computer
- (viii) that a report be brought back to full Council after more information is sourced

**24. JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES –
CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Town Clerk advised members of the process for the submission of bids to the County Council for consideration of funding for schemes to enhance highway safety for the 2009/10 bidding round.

Following a short discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that

- (i) that individual councillors be permitted to submit written bids on the pro forma form provided, to the Town Clerk in time for submission to the County Council by the deadline date of 1 August 2008.

25. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME 2008/09

The Town Clerk reported on an approach received from the District Council which advised that a capital fund of £102,000 be made available to St Neots for improvements to those areas of the town which have public access. The letter advised that three suggestions were currently on the table, namely Whitehall Walk, Duck Lane, Montagu Square, Eynesbury and Moore's Walk, High Street, St Neots.

Members welcomed the approach from the District Council and, following a short debate, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) that the suggestions set out in the District Council's letter of 17 June be agreed; and
- (ii) that, in addition to this, consideration be given to seeking funding for the provision of a tarmacadam or other suitable surface for the Eaton Socon car park, and for the provision of a footpath/cycleway along Navigation Wharf from the brook to School Lane,
- (iii) that local Ward members be involved in the planning and development of each scheme.

26. TABLE TENNIS CLUB UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported to members that the Town Council was in a position to complete the sale of the land to the Table Tennis Club at Riversmead, St Neots but that there were delays due to legal issues relating to ownership of adjoining land and access which needs to be resolved by the Club before the matter could proceed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

27. GRANT AID 2008

The Town Council considered the recommendations from the Grants Panel for applications for Grant Aid to be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** as overleaf:

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No.	Organisation	Amount Requested	Purpose	Working Party Recommendations/Reasons
1.	St John's Ambulance	£1,085.00	Purchase of Electric Suction Unit, a wall mounted charger unit and an Entonox bag	£400.00
2.	PNP Gardening Project	£5,000.00	Continuation of gardening project started at Bargroves, but moving to Shortsands	£500.00
3.	Eaton Socon Cricket Club	£2,567.00	Purchase of BOLA 2008 bowling machine	£500.00
4.	Making Links	£8,000.00	This group currently uses the Great Hall and this is a contribution (third) of the annual cost of maintaining the group.	£2,000.00
5.	Holidays at Home	£1,000.00	Fund children for day trips and activities during the summer holidays	£1,000
6.	Vitalise	£628.75	Providing breaks for disabled people to ensure the carers have a rest	£600.00
7.	Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime – project cost	£8,280.00	Contribution to radios to allow businesses to contact the police	Nil The panel felt that supporting local business was a low priority against the other applications.
8.	St Neots Girls Football Club	£300.00	Equipment and Kit	£300.00
9.	Jubilee Hall	£6,633.00	Refurbishment of the hall – replacing lights and the ceiling and decorating the main hall	£1,633.00
10.	St Neots Volunteers Bureau	£2,000.00	Maintenance of service provided	£700.00

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No.	Organisation	Amount Requested	Purpose	Working Party Recommendations/Reasons
11.	Citizens Advice Bureau	£2,800.00	Maintenance of service provided	£2,800.00
12.	DISH	£1,600.00	Assisting families in St Neots with disabled children, and disabled people	£1,600.00 subject to an assurance that the organisation has rec'd accreditation and approval for the next 12 months
13.	Natural High	£7,441.80	Learning opportunities to disadvantaged children	£1,500.00
14.	New Street Baptist Church	£4,000.00	Installation of a stair lift to upper meeting room	Nil The Panel felt that the Church did not serve a significantly wide section of the community
15.	SNAP	£1,600.00	Assistance to domestic violence sufferers in St Neots	£500.00
16.	Relate	£3,042.00	Counselling Service in Eaton Socon once a week	£2,000.00
17.	St Neots Community Archive Group	£1,000.00	Archiving of local material	Deferred decision to the September meeting of Council
18.	St Neots Boxing Club	£4,000.00	Providing boxing equipment	£1,000.00 subject to: (i) written confirmation that the Club has adopted and given effect to a constitution; (ii) that the funding is made available for children and not adults; (iii) that evidence is provided that the Club has an established venue; (iv) that all those involved in the organisation have appropriate CRB checks; (v) that all those involved in the training of children are competent and qualified
19.	St Neots Library	£250.00	Summer Reading Challenge	£250.00

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No.	Organisation	Amount Requested	Purpose	Working Party Recommendations/Reasons
20.	Royal British Legion	£564.88	To cover hire of Priory Centre and travel costs of the Blues and Royal Band to perform in aid of the Poppy Appeal	Nil
21.	VAMPS	Any help!	Increasing costs of the Priory Centre	£900.00
22.	St Neots Players	Cost of hiring Priory Centre	Increasing costs of the Priory Centre	£1,000.00 The Panel felt that a slightly larger grant was appropriate in view of the greater number of performances offered by the Players
23.	St Neots Folk Club	£1,000.00	Increasing costs of the Priory Centre	£1000.00
24.	St Neots Choral Society	£750.00	Contribution to Orchestral costs and hiring of the Priory Centre	£500.00
	GRAND TOTAL			<u>£19,083.00</u>

28. STANDING ORDERS

Council received the report of the Town Clerk which had originally been submitted to the previous meeting.

Following a short debate, it was **RESOLVED** that:-

1) The following changes be

a)	SO 16	Addition of urgent item
b)	SO23	Questions: Delete reference to Leader and Town Clerk.
c)	SO38	Leader/Deputy to be Chair/Vice-Chair of P&R Committee (thus obviating need for election)
d)	SO39	Delete provisions for substitutes
e)	SO40	Chairs of Council/Committees and Town Clerk to summons special meetings
f)	SO52	Delete (attendance at Committee where Councillor is not a member)
g)	SO54	Responsible Finance Officer to report quarterly
h)	SO61	New section to bring in Access to Information Act provisions
i)	SO65	Delete words "by order of Council" (exclusion of member for breach of confidence)
j)	SO66	Election of Leader and Deputy Leader
k)	Various	Consequential renumbering of paragraphs
l)	Various	Changed names of Committees (eg Audit/P&R)

2) That all Councillors be required to hand back their copies of the Constitution to the Town Clerk so that new versions can be issued.

29. ELECTION OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER – PURSUANCE OF THE COUNCIL'S NEW STANDING ORDERS

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Derek Giles be elected Leader and Cllr Gordon Thorpe be elected Deputy Leader with immediate effect.

**30. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 -
EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

31. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Town Clerk advised members as to the current position with regard to the dispute with Millennium Quest regarding the collapse of the Christmas lights in the St Neots High Street.

Members considered a confidential report and an update from the Clerk and, following a discussion, **RESOLVED** that the resolution of the matter be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of the Council and with a requirement to report back at the next appropriate meeting.

32. ASSET REVIEW UPDATE

The Council considered a report from the Town Clerk which informed members of the advice received from the Council's agents as to the sale of certain of the Council's real property assets.

Following a short discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Mortuary building be marketed for sale as a potential residential site;
- (ii) Gate Lodge be marketed as a commercial property;
- (iii) A valuation of Riversmead be obtained with a view to making it available to the Swimming Pool Trust;
- (iv) Agents be instructed to pursue the possible development of part of the Brickhills site for industrial start up units;
- (v) A feasibility study is undertaken to establish the development potential of the "cemetery extension" site at Browns Square.

33. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of issues relating to outside bodies.

34. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The members received a written report from the Town Centre Manager regarding preparations for St Neots in Bloom entry for 2008, the Summer Festival to be held in lieu of the Carnival on August Bank Holiday weekend at Regatta Meadow, St Neots and of current discussions regarding the adoption of the Bargroves Centre in St Neots as a community centre.

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The Town Clerk also advised members of the contact he had received from the County Council inviting members to express their views regarding the proposed closures of post offices within the county during the forthcoming consultation period.

The meeting closed at 10.48pm

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TOWN MAYOR
02.07.08