

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MOOT, THE PRIORY CENTRE, ST NEOTS
ON WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 2009

PRESENT: Cllr R W Eaton - Chairman

Cllr Mrs B Arnold	Cllr D Giles
Cllr Mrs J Bird	Cllr D Harty
Cllr Ms F Birks	Cllr Mrs J Hayward
Cllr B Chapman	Cllr Mrs L Ottolangui
Cllr Mrs D Collins	Cllr G Thorpe
Cllr Mrs K Cooper	Cllr P K Ursell
Cllr J Cooper-Marsh	Cllr S Van de Kerkhove
Cllr A Cummings	

The Chairman proposed a motion to add an urgent item to the agenda on the grounds of urgency (Item 173).

166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Roberts and Cllr D Terry (family commitments).

167. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Harty declared a prejudicial interest in Item 5 (Policy & Resources meeting minutes of 25 February 2009 – grit bins) as a County Councillor.

Cllr S Van de Kerkhove declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 7 (Play Areas Committee meeting minutes of 12 March 2009).

168. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor reported that he had represented the Town at the following events during March.

- 1) St Neots St Mary's Sportsman's Dinner at the Priory Centre
- 2) Mayor of Godmanchester Charity Dinner
- 3) Launch of St Neots Anglia in Bloom
- 4) ESCA May Queen Selection, Bushmead School
- 5) St Neots Choral Society Concert, St Mary's Church, Eaton Socon

169. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 11 March 2009 were **APPROVED**.

- (ii) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 11 and 25 March 2009 were **RECEIVED**.
- (iii) The Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 2 April 2009 were not available and this item was deferred to the next meeting.

170. POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Cllr Ursell advised that the wording under this agenda item should be amended to read “approve” rather than “adopt” the recommendations contained therein.

The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee then presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2009.

(i) Grounds Maintenance

Members **APPROVED** the following recommendations:

- 1) the Grounds Maintenance leaflet be amended to show 5% per m² and not 0%;
- 2) the leaflet be adopted as a basis for the standard required from the Operations Team,
- 3) the leaflet be distributed for residents at Council Offices, St Neots Library and the Tourist Information Office.

(ii) Cemetery Memorial Requests

Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the report be noted and that costings on three bench options be bought back to the next meeting.

(iii) “In Celebration of Trees” Scheme

The recommendation that the “In Celebration of Trees” Scheme be promoted and publicised around the town and that the requests be reviewed quarterly was **APPROVED**.

(iv) Grit Bins

The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

- 1) Gritting highways is a Cambridgeshire County Council function and not the Town Council’s responsibility;
- 2) The Town Council do not supply grit bins due to previous bins being vandalised and removed on residents’ requests;
- 3) Members recognise the difficulties in locating new grit bins whereby local residents do not want a bin situated outside their properties;

4) In severe weather conditions ONLY the Town Council could supply salt bags for residents to collect at previously identified high risk areas. The residents have the responsibility of using the salt appropriately.

(v) Constitution

Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that the Constitution is reviewed and that Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation are reviewed first.

(vi) Allotments

The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

- 1) The price increase for 2009/10 (copy appended to the signed copy of these minutes);
- 2) The waiting list would be closed until November 2009 when it will be further reviewed;
- 3) The key charge for the allotment sites be increased to £10, of which £5 is refundable upon return of the key;
- 4) The Acting Town Clerk discuss with Huntingdonshire District Council whether Section 106 monies would be available for the purchase of land for allotments;
- 5) The Acting Town Clerk ascertain whether the land at the bottom of Eaton Socon Cemetery could be used for the use of allotments;
- 6) The Acting Town Clerk write to Mr Peter Rowley to ascertain if the Lord of the Manor had any potential land for the use of allotments.

Cllr Harty thanked the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, Cllr Giles, for presenting the Committee minutes in this way as it gave all Councillors the opportunity to study the documents before approval.

171. EATONS COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Eatons Community Committee presented recommendations from the meeting held on 27 February 2009 for Council's approval.

(i) Update

The Acting Town Clerk reported that, due to time constraints and the deferral of these minutes from the last Town Council meeting, some of the following recommendations had already been implemented.

- 1) Deejak to ascertain three quotes for the kitchen area;
- 2) 10 pair cable to be fitted to the Centre and five telephone points, including the lift telephone;
- 3) Ian Kendall, Project Manager, to supply the Town Council with current plans, tender drawings issued, the sections and finishes before end of March. Planning Consent to the times of opening to be included;
- 4) To report back on the Fire Hydrant planning condition when known.

Cllr Harty asked if the Town Council had received all the documents in item (3) above. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that they had been received that day and would be presented at the next Committee meeting. The only outstanding item is the Bond.

The above recommendations were **APPROVED**.

APPROVAL was also given to:

- 1) A Service Level Agreement be sent to Cambridgeshire County Council, and
- 2) The Responsible Finance Officer investigating the Public Works Loan interest rate and reporting back to the next Committee meeting.

(ii) Section 106 Monies

The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that she had actioned this item as the cut-off date was 31 March 2009.

The Chairman of the Council thanked Cllr Harty for his work on the Section 106 Agreement.

(iv) Business Plan

Members **APPROVED** the following recommendations:

- 1) The Priory Centre to facilitate all booking and the Community Centres Manager to oversee the building;
- 2) Opening times for the building have been agreed at the planning stage;
- 3) Catering facilities are offered on site for outside caterers to use at a hire charge;
- 4) Bar facilities to go to tender to franchise the bar;
- 5) Pre-school to go to tender.

(v) Kitchen Fit Out

The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

- 1) Amendments be made to the internal design to remove two internal doors (Lobby and Kitchen Store doors);
- 2) A Tender document be arranged for the Kitchen by Deejaks;
- 3) Three Tenders are required and reported back to the Town Council.

(vi) Tender Documentation

After a discussion on the tender process for the Pre-School, it was **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Acting Town Clerk advertise for Expressions of Interest before 30 April;
- (ii) A Panel of three Councillors and one Youth Services County Councillor be set up for the purpose of prioritising the Pre-School tenders. The selection process for tenders to be completed by May
- (iii) That the Panel comprise Cllrs Chapman, Ms Birks and G Thorpe.
- (iv) That the existing local pre-schools be invited to submit Expressions of Interest/Tenders.

172. PLAY AREAS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Play Areas Committee presented the Committee's recommendations for approval:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following recommendations, subject to satisfactory funding from Huntingdonshire District Council through Section 106 monies:

- (i) Once Section 106 money is secured, the Committee work with Huntingdonshire District Council to design a scheme;
- (ii) To consult with local residents;
- (iii) A trail would be located in the Saxongate, behind Pepys Road School and in between the two mounds central to the grass area;
- (iv) Tenders would be invited from Monster Play, Wicksteed Playscapes and Kompan Playful Living.

173. URGENT ITEM – ST NEOTS HEALTHCHECK

Cllr Mrs Bird, Chairman of the Planning Committee, reported that the Committee had been working on proposals put forward in Huntingdonshire District Council's Healthcheck. One concern had

been the proposed additional housing over the next 20 years, not even 10 per cent of urgently needed infrastructure had been included in the latest version of the Healthcheck.

Several Councillors had attended the meeting held that day in the Priory Centre on Stage II of the Healthcheck and had found it to be a very productive meeting and members were encouraged as their views were now being sought, after the initial lack of consultation.

After a discussion, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Mayor, on behalf of the Town Council, sends a consolidated response to EDAW and Huntingdonshire District Council, based on the Chairman of the Planning Committee's document and that individual Councillors are urged to submit their independent views as well.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Committee Chairman, Cllr Mrs Bird, for her work on the Healthcheck.

174. NOTICE OF MOTION FROM CLLR B CHAPMAN

At the Town Council meeting on 11 March, Cllr Chapman had tabled a Notice of Motion to "adopt the Constitution as issued to St Neots Town Councillors under cover of letter dated 4 May 2007, including inter alia all Orders, Regulations Protocols and Policies at that date". This had been deferred until the next meeting.

Cllr Chapman gave an explanation as to why he had tabled this proposal but, after some debate, Cllr Thorpe stated that to revert back to the original Constitution would negate many of the policies which had been updated since 2007.

Cllr Chapman withdrew his Notice of Motion.

Cllr Thorpe asked that his objection to Cllr Chapman's comments be noted.

175. ZURICH REPORT ON PLAY AREAS

The Operations Manager advised members that the Town Council had received Inspection Schedules from Zurich Insurance on our play equipment. These showed several areas where, apart from wear and tear, general repairs may be required on some of the equipment.

He asked members to note that the allocated budget for the year 2009-10 was £2,000 which may prove insufficient.

It was agreed to note the report with a view to reconsidering this item if and when costs exceed budgeted amounts.

176. REPAIR TO CLOCK

The Operations Manager reported that the Council had received a request to pay for the repair of the Clock hanging from the wall of Brittain's store.

He asked members to consider funding the repair or possible replacement of the defective part of the clock, possibly up to £300.

Cllr Ursell said that maintenance of the clock was not the responsibility of the Town Council. It was installed by the Rotary Club of St Neots in the Millennium year and no agreement was made that the Council would maintain it.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** not to fund the repair of the clock

177. TOWN TWINNING

The Acting Town Clerk reported that the Chairman of the Town Twinning Association, Ian Taylor, had contacted her to advise that it was the Town Twinning Association's 20th Anniversary this year and to seek possible support from the Town Council with any celebrations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Acting Town Clerk invite Ian Taylor to make a presentation to the June Council meeting to raise awareness for the aspirations of the Town Twinning Committee.

178. ANIMAL AID

The Acting Town Clerk had received a letter from Animal Aid requesting that local authorities sign up to the Compassionate Charter which contains 8 simple steps intended to improve animal welfare.

It was **RESOLVED** to decline the adoption of this Charter as it was not considered relevant to this Council.

179. HR CONSULTANTS

The Acting Town Clerk requested members to approve the virement of £1,000 to cover the shortfall in the consultancy fee for the Town's HR consultants.

It was **RESOLVED**

- (i) to defer the virement of £1,000 for the consultancy fee for 2009-10, and that
- (ii) Terms of Reference and a copy of the Consultant's contract be taken back to the Personnel Committee.

180. STAFFING ISSUE

Cllr Robert Eaton advised members that he had attended the Employment Tribunal on behalf of the Town Council and the case was found to be misconceived. The Judge ruled in favour of the respondent, a schedule for the court cost to be sent to the court within 14 days and the panel would decide upon the costs to be paid by the claimant to the town council. The Town Council has made an application to the tribunal panel and are awaiting clarification from the panel on the costs awarded to St Neots Town Council.

Speaking on behalf of the Conservative Group, Cllr Mrs Bird said *“we would like it to go on record that the main grievances Margaret Sharp presented to the Employment Tribunal were inadmissible. After 19 years of service, she only took the St Neots Town Council to a tribunal because she was so aggrieved about the way she was treated by some members of this Council. While she was still employed, the Conservatives made their objections very clear on several occasions and were ashamed of the way the matter was being handled”*.

181. OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Chapman had attended a Carnival Committee meeting and a meeting of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Cllr S Van de Kerkhove had a meeting with Roger Cooper of Sustran who were arranging a series of cycling days to promote Bike Week.

Cllr Mrs Hayward had attended a meeting of the Eaton Socon Community Association and the Town Centre Initiative's Transport Group.

Cllr Mrs Bird had attended two meetings of the Christian Performing Arts proposed Passion Play.

182. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Acting Town Clerk reported on the following items:

- 1) Cambridgeshire Music Gala Concert, Sunday 19 April at Hinchbrooke Performing Arts Centre. Ticket price £5.
- 2) 38th Annual General Meeting of the Samaritans to be held in Peterborough Town Hall.
- 3) Notification of Little Paxton Annual Parish Council Meeting on 17 April at 7.30pm.

- 4) Follow-up on the NE Beds Weight Limit Proposals. Members were informed that the Restriction had been given approval and would come into operation within the next two months.
- 5) Consultation of Further Additional Mineral and Waste Development Proposals – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan. The Acting Town Clerk invited members to view this document at the Council Offices.

The Chairman then thanked members for their support over the past two years as this was his last meeting as Mayor and was given a vote of thanks by the Council.

The meeting closed at 10.14pm.

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CHAIRMAN
08.04.09