

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MOOT, THE PRIORY CENTRE, ST NEOTS
ON WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2009

PRESENT: Cllr G S E Thorpe - Chairman

Cllr Mrs B Arnold	Cllr D Giles
Cllr Mrs J Bird	Cllr D Harty
Cllr B Chapman	Cllr Mrs J Hayward
Cllr Mrs D Collins	Cllr D Terry
Cllr J Cooper-Marsh	Cllr P K Ursell
Cllr A Cummings	Cllr S van de Kerkhove
Cllr R Eaton	

The Chairman proposed a motion to add two items to the agenda on the grounds of urgency.

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ms F Birks (family illness), Cllr Mrs K Cooper (holiday), Cllr Mrs L Ottolangui (work commitment) and Cllr L Roberts (holiday).

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Harty declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Item 7 (Service Level Agreement) as a County Councillor.

53. URGENT ITEMS

(i) The following Notice of Motion had been proposed by Cllr Mrs J Bird and seconded by Cllr D Harty.

“On Item 13 of the Personnel Minutes of 14 July 2009, I wish to propose an amendment to the second paragraph of the recommended resolution to read: “The Mayor is to accompany one other Councillor at a meeting with the external consultants”. I consider it is entirely inappropriate for any member of staff to be involved in a review of the staffing structure.”

Cllr Mrs Bird withdrew the Notice of Motion as the meeting had taken place.

(ii) Cllr Giles reported that, after a recent investigation and hearing, the Standards Committee found that he had breached the Town Council's Code of Conduct. He had undergone the training required by the Standards Committee and read out the following statement:

“On 18 June 2009, a hearing of the Standards Committee of the District Council found that I had failed to comply with Paragraph 5 of the St Neots Town Council Code of Conduct, which states “You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute”.

In reaching this conclusion, the Committee was of the view that I had acted without the necessary authority in relation to discussions, negotiations and exchanges with a former employee of the Town Council, her Trade Union Representative and the Town Council’s retained HR consultants and had failed to declare an interest in respect of my friendship with the former employee when issues relating to the employee were discussed.

Whilst I believed I had been acting in everyone’s interests, I acknowledge that I have breached the Code and apologise to the Council unreservedly.

All other allegations of breaches of the Code had previously been rejected by the Standards Committee.

As a result of the findings I was also required to undertake training in respect of the Code of Conduct organised by the Monitoring Officer, which I have now done.”

53. TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor reported that the Mayoral team had carried out the following Civic engagements this month:

The Mayoral Team carried out the following Civic Engagements since the last meeting:

1 July	St Neots Health Check meeting
2	Hunts Regional College Awards
3	Society of St George – Buckden Towers
5	Little Acorns Fete and Town Civic Ceremony
7	On The Move – Infants Music Festival
	Longsands Art Exhibition – Deputy Mayor
9	Sandy Mayor’s Event- Mayor and Deputy
10	Priory Park Play Group and Carnival Queen Contest
12	Sea Sunday Service and Scouts Fun Day and Linslade Leighton Civic Service - Deputy
13	St Neots in Bloom Judging
14	Barford Power Station, Common Rights Proprietors’ Management Committee and HDC “Green” House
15	St Johns Ambulance AGM - Mayoress
17	Fenland DC Chairman’s Reception
19	Huntingdon Civic Service

24	RAF Wyton
25	Eynesbury Village Fete and Rowing Club Regatta
27	Grant Aid Presentations
28	Ely Mayor's Reception
29	Small Businesses Lunch

Forthcoming Engagements

8 August	Talent Auditions - Deputy
14	Beacon Financial Services Charter Award
22	Finals of Talent Competition
27	Mayor's Charity Golf Day
28	Plaque James Toller Birthplace
29	Festival and Carnival
30	Festival

The Mayor reminded Councillors that the Final of the Town's Talent Competition would take place during the Festival Weekend and that volunteers and support for both events would be greatly appreciated.

54. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 30 June 2009 were **APPROVED**;
- (ii) The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 1 and 15 July 2009 were **RECEIVED**;
- (iii) The Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 17 July 2009 were **APPROVED**;

55. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Chairman of Personnel Committee presented the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 July 2009 and asked Councillors to approve the virement required to cover the costs of a staffing structure review to be carried out by external consultants.

After a long discussion, it was **AGREED** that this item would be deferred back to the Personnel Committee for clarification.

Cllr Ursell asked that his concern that the Senior Duty Officer's post had been filled prior to the proposed staffing review be noted.

56. POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee presented the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 July for approval.

(i) Sidney Banks

As the rent had now been received from Eynesbury Rovers, members deferred this item back to the Policy and Resources Committee for further recommendations.

(ii) June Financial Payments

Members **APPROVED** the list of June's financial payments.

Cllr Harty asked if Council would receive quarterly financial reports in future. The Responsible Finance Officer agreed to provide this.

(iii) Museum Grant

The recommendation that the Responsible Finance Officer arrange a meeting with the Museum Curator and request copies of the Museum's financial statements was **APPROVED**. This to be reported back to the next Policy & Resources

(iv) Priory Centre Window Cleaning

The recommendation to bring the Priory Centre window cleaning in-house for six months was **APPROVED**.

(v) Town Council Solicitors

The recommendation that the Town Mayor sign the Leeds Day Annual Care Letter was **APPROVED**.

(vi) Asset Management Plan

Members **APPROVED** the adoption of the Asset Management Plan.

57. AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman presented the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 15 July. The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

- (i) Responsible Finance Officer and Community Centres Manager to prepare reports detailing costings and attendance figures at the Toddlers' Gym for the next Audit meeting, and
- (ii) The Responsible Finance Officer was instructed to prepare a report on the Priory Centre Overs and Unders.

58. PRESENTATION ON THE TOWN TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Ian Taylor, Chairman of the Town Twinning Association, gave a presentation on the Town Twinning Association.

St Neots is twinned with Faches Thumesnil in France and annual exchanges take place between both towns. Next year is the 20th anniversary of the Town Twinning Association and Mr Taylor requested that members gave some consideration to planning a special event to commemorate this. He outlined some suggestions, for example place naming, tree planting, civic ceremony, sports match or an art exhibition.

The Association were also looking for funding for this. The Acting Town Clerk said that they had a budget heading of £500 which was rarely drawn on and this could perhaps be used towards funding an event, although some would go towards hall hire fees at the Priory Centre if the Majorettes came over for the Christmas Lights Switch-On this year.

The possibility of a Spanish link was also being investigated. This would be of great benefit to the town as Spanish is the most popular European language. There would obviously be costs involved in creating a Spanish twinning link and Mr Taylor asked members to consider how the funding of this could be achieved.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor for his presentation and gave the Council's support for a possible commemoration event next year.

59. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REPORT TENDER

The Operations Manager reported that four tenders had been received for the erection of the Christmas lights. He asked members to review these tenders and instruct him which company to appoint.

Tender 2 had offered a three year deal which would amount to a considerable saving if the catenary fixings were left in situ every year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Tender 2 be appointed to erect the Christmas lights on a three year basis and that the full Contract be brought back to Council for members to approve.

60. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Acting Town Clerk presented a draft Service Level Agreement which had been drawn up by Cambridgeshire County Council for the Eatons Community Centre.

She advised that a Service Level Agreement had been agreed by the previous Clerk and was it was intended that the facility be used for youth provision for three nights a week.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the Service Level Agreement with the amendment to Item 4 that the centre be available to Cambridgeshire County Council from Monday to Thursday only.

It was also **RESOLVED** that, subject to this amendment, the Acting Town Clerk be authorised to sign the Service Level Agreement to enable the £100,000 grant to be released.

61. EATONS COMMUNITY CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

The Acting Town Clerk presented a draft Business Plan for the Eatons Community Centre. She reported that she had applied for a premise license on behalf of the Town Council and that, assuming capacity is maintained at 50% of room availability, the centre could provide a revenue of £1695 per week. Under this hypothesis the centre would not meet the projected budget figures detailed in Appendix 1 (copy attached to the signed copy of these minutes). The centre would not therefore operate on a cost neutral basis.

The invitations to tender for the pre-school had been sent out and were due back on Friday 31 July. There had been three expressions of interest.

Members accepted the proposed fees and charges in the Plan which would be reviewed April 2010.

A discussion then took place as to how the centre would be staffed and the different alarm system requirements which would be necessary if the centre did not have full-time staff on site. The option of franchising the Bar would also be determined upon level of staff required.

Cllr Chapman asked that attention be given to achieving a full return on the costs of the centre rather than just the depreciation of assets in relation to the loan payments.

The Chairman advised Council that the centre is not a business but a community building and that he considered seeking a return on capital invested was not appropriate in this case.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Personnel Committee review the staffing of the new centre as part of the staffing structure review and that the Business Plan and budget be **ADOPTED**.

62. PRIORY CENTRE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Community Centres Manager reported on the need to extend the cancellation period for events. This had been highlighted recently when a hall hirer had cancelled at short notice, resulting in approximately £2,000 loss to the centre's income.

At present, hirers paid a deposit of £75 per event booked. The Centre Manager recommended that it be increased to £100 per day.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the non-refundable deposit to £100 per day.

63. FESTIVAL UPDATE

The Town Centre Manager was on leave but had prepared a report in advance detailing the financial position for the St Neots Festival weekend.

Annex A (copy attached to a signed copy of these Minutes) detailed the current net position based on the income generated to date.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Centre Manager be instructed to bring a full costings reports on the event to the September Council meeting.

64. JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME

The Acting Town Clerk had received one bid for safety measures to be implemented on the Great North Road roundabout.

She advised members that this would require £5,405 funding from the Council to be allocated in next year's budget.

It was **RESOLVED** that the scheme to improve safety at the roundabout at crossing of Old Great North Road and Silverweed/Mill Hill Road, Eaton Ford be submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council and that it be included in the budget for 2010-2011.

65. CEMETERY EXTENSION

The Acting Town Clerk updated members on the current position with regard to the cemetery extension in St Neots.

The Environment Agency have completed their studies and have no objections to the development of burials on the cemetery extension land. Huntingdonshire District Council have agreed that no planning permission is required and that the extension can be used for the purpose of a cemetery as stated in the conveyance document held by the Town Council.

The land now requires to be mapped and fenced off for burials to be able to take place.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the use of the land for a lawn cemetery and that the Acting Town Clerk be instructed to report back with terms and conditions for a lawn cemetery.

66. TOWN COFFEE BAR

The Acting Town Clerk reported that the Town Council gives £10,000 per annum to Cambridgeshire County Council for the coffee bar running costs. When this was initially agreed, the commitment was for the coffee bar to be opened three evenings a week but more recently the bar had only been open for a couple of nights a month.

It was **AGREED** that the Acting Town Clerk go back to Cambridgeshire County Council with a revised Service Level Agreement before any funding is released.

67. OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Ursell reported that he had still not received any communication from St Neots Rugby Club or notification of meetings to be held by Eynesbury Neighbourhood Management Group.

It was **AGREED** that the Acting Town Clerk would contact these outside bodies again with details of the Council's representatives.

Cllr Thorpe reported that he had attended an Open Day at Little Barford Power Station along with the Acting Town Clerk and Council's representatives on this Committee and that he had also attended a meeting of the Town Centre Initiative Management Committee

68. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Acting Town Clerk advised members that the Town Council had now be given Possessory Title for the Eaton Socon Cage and that further information would be reported on insurance and maintenance required.

Cambridgeshire County Council had requested permission to use the Priory Centre as a collection centre for the issue of antivirals, operating for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Members agreed to this request.

Cambridgeshire County Council had also notified the Acting Town Clerk of a new mini-bus brokerage scheme which would give groups greater access to transport. Further details could be obtained from the Community Transport Section of Cambs County Council.

The Clerk had been advised that the new waste recycling site in Cromwell Road was nearing completion. She asked members if they would like her to request a site visit for Councillors. This was accepted.

The meeting closed at 10.08pm.

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CHAIRMAN
29.07.09

Eaton's Community Centre typical running costs assuming run by St Neots Town Council			
No Staff costs are included as these are dependant on hire and are unknown.			
PREMISES	Priory Centre 2009/10	Crem Hall, Huntingdon info supplied	ECC
30 Year Loan, £450,000	19000		Loan Applied for
Repairs & Maintenance Rate	£10,500 £11,500	£4,500 £755	£34,125 2 x £17,062.50 per year True Cost unknown Guestimate Sent letter to valuation officer awaiting figures
Water Rates	£3,650	£630	£2,776 174.00 standing charge
Bio Mass Fuel	£0	£0	£2,148 supplier website cost 17/07/09
Gas	£8,400	£3,500	No Gas Required
Electricity	£13,500	£2,500	£5,500 True Cost unknown Guestimate
Plant/Tool/Maintenance	£2,510	£1,168	£3,000 Lift/Bio Mass/alarms
Waste Disposal	£2,500	£650	£1,321 2 x 1100L waste containers emptied weekly
Lift inspections	£1,030		£1,029 OTIS
Hall Lighting Maintenance	£890		£900 Tower required to hire/ change bulbs twice yr
Engineer Inspection	£1,275	£418	£500 PAT test
Cleaning materials	£3,000	£1,570	£2,000 True Cost unknown Guestimate
	£77,755	£15,691	£68,299
OTHER EXPENSES			
Stationery	£1,000	£1,150	£1,000 headed paper general stationery
telephone	£652		£500 guestimate one phone
Training	£3,000	£500	£500 manual handling/cleaning
Licenses Inc PRS	£4,500	£3,470	£3,500 Premises; entertainment, alcohol, PRS dependant on hire
Audit Fees	£1,375	£0	£1,375 % of Town Council audit fee guestimate from RFO
Marketing	£6,000	£5,000	£5,000 Advertising/brochures
Share of Financial fees	£16,900	£350	£9,000 % Finance Dept Dependant on usage
Insurances buildings/contents/liability	£8,425	£1,812	£2,815 Zurich Insurance Quote
	£41,852	£12,282	£22,690
	£119,607		£90,983
INCOME			
St Neots Town Council			
Room Hire	£100,000.00		£25,000 Support for first year only
Pre-School bar profit	£49,229		£61,398 Dependant on hall Charges 50% usage Dependant on Pre-School Management
Bar	£149,229		Dependant on Franchise or Inhouse
			£86,398

Estimated fit out dependant on requirements which is dependant on the Management System			
KITCHEN REFIT Essential	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Cleaners sink & Bar plumbing	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	Deejaks authorised to carry out the work
Full fitted kitchen	£ 22,727	£ 22,727	Deejak's Authorised to carry out the work/welquip
		£ 25,227	
FOYER - Essential	Unit Price	Total Cost	
First Aid Cabinet	£ 103	£ 103	Esposito
Telephone installation	£ -	£ -	Within the build
Entrance notice board & Signage	£ 550	£ 550	Esposito
		£ 653	
MAIN HALL	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Chairs 200	£ -	£ -	Provided by River Church actual cost £10,000
Tables x 20 (6X2 tressel)	£ 88	£ 1,760	Principal Furniture Quote
Portable hearing Loop	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	Portable hearing loop - one is available at the Town Council Offices
PA System - portable with fixed speakers	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	Portable PA system required
Window Blinds		£ 4,500	Based on Last purchase price
		£ 9,760	
2 MEETING ROOMS	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Chairs 40	£ 80	£ 3,200	£80.00 principle
Tables x10 (6x2 tressell)	£ 88	£ 880	Principal Furniture Quote
Portable Projector & Screen & audio	£ -	£ 899	Esposito
		£ 4,979	
CLEANING - Essential	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Floor Scrubber	£ 1,100	£ 1,100	Esposito
Floor buffer	£ 550	£ 550	Esposito
Mops & Buckets (various)	£ 80	£ 80	Esposito
PPE Clothing	£ 100	£ 100	Esposito
Vaccum Cleaners x2	£ 127	£ 254	Esposito
Various Cleaning Equipment	£ 450	£ 450	Esposito, duster, long reach duster, brushes etc
Cleaning Trolley	£ 198	£ 198	Esposito
Carpet Shampoo Machine	£ 350	£ 350	Esposito
		£ 3,082	
Planting Scheme	£ 4,369	£ 4,369	Operations team to carry out the work
		£ 48,070	SUB TOTAL
Essential protection for the centre	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Unable at present to ascertain costs, reviewing currently			
Fire alarm			Provided within the build
Smoke Detectors			Provided within the build
Fire Extinguishers/Fire Blankets	£		T & J Fire, sent letter with building map
Intruder Alarm		£ 3,000	Awaiting members confirmation
Internal CCTV		£ 3,000	Dependant on the requirements
TV & DVD Trolley	£ 145	£ 145	Esposito
TV & DVD	£ 293	£ 293	Esposito
Projector	£ 810	£ 810	
Internet fitted			Awaiting confirmation
Lighting maintenance	£	£	to be carried out by qualified trademen/need a tower
		£ 55,318	TOTAL

St Neots Festival 2009

Estimated Budget Position as at 15 July 2009

Expenditure	
Operational Costs	
Temporary event notice(s)	50
Event insurance	500
Performing Rights Society	300
PA System	600
Toilets	500
Generators	400
Lighting	300
St John Ambulance	400
Air Training Cadets	300
Marketing	200
Raffle Prize	100
Staff Costs for event set up and take down	
60 Hours @ £10	600
Hire of Great Hall for Quiz Night	300
Car Boot Sale Banner	110
Barrier Tape	10
Contingency	500
Total	5170
Features	
Fireworks	1400
Air display	1080
Total Expenditure	7650
Income	
Sponsorship/ Promotion	
TCI Donation	1500
First Capital Connect (fireworks)	1400
Federation of Small Businesses	500
Platinum Partners	380
Barley Mow Community Fund	250
Programme Advertising	545

Pitch Fees	
Fairground	700
Beer Tent & Food	1100
Trade Stalls	200
Fund Raisers	
Car Boot Sales	
24th May	160
28th June	217
Band Concert 13th June	150
Town Council Contribution	2,000
Total Income	9102
Net Position	1452