

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MOOT AT THE PRIORY CENTRE, ST NEOTS
ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2011

PRESENT: Cllr B Chapman – Chair
Cllr C Duck
Cllr B Farrer
Cllr I Gardener
Cllr A Hansard
Cllr R Harrison
Cllr D Harty
Cllr Ms R Hooper
Cllr Ms C Hutton
Cllr A Jennings
Cllr C Jones
Cllr A Ruck
Cllr D Ruck
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr P Ursell
Cllr A Usher
Cllr K Wainwright
Cllr N Weston

The Chairman asked for a minute's silence for Mrs Daisy Seager, former Councillor and Mayor of St Neots. Daisy, and her husband George, were given the Freedom of the Town in 2005 in recognition of their long service to the town. Daisy had been a District and Town Councillor for many years and was also Mayor of St Neots between 1977 and 1979. Her contribution to the town had been invaluable and she would be sadly missed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Joy Winters spoke about the proposed cinema. She had learnt that four Councillors had objected to the cinema planning application for Shady Walk. She had decided to start a petition for the cinema which had now been signed by 4,000 people. This was presented to the Chairman.

Mr A Crawford spoke. He told Members that he used to work with the youth of the town and knew that a cinema was something they really wanted.

The Chairman reported that the cinema planning application would go before Huntingdonshire District Council Planning Committee on 19 December.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Allen, Cllr S Davison and Cllr G Welton.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C Hutton declared a personal interest in item 6 (Coffee Bar) as a member of the Museum Management Committee. Cllrs B Chapman and A Hansard both declared a personal interest in item 6 as Friends of the Museum.

40. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

- (i) The Chairman introduced the Council's new Town Centre Manager, Katie Hollingworth. He congratulated Ms Hollingworth on her new post and welcomed her to St Neots Town Council.
- (ii) HDC have announced free parking in several of St Neots car parks after 3pm from 5-23 December to encourage more footfall in the town at Christmas.
- (iii) The Town's Christmas Lights Switch-On would take place tomorrow, Friday 25 November, starting at 5pm.
- (iv) The Town Council Offices would be closed between 28th, 29th and 30th December 2011.
- (v) The Town Mayor's Civic Carol Concert will take place on Saturday 3 December at 6.30pm in St Neots St Mary's Church.

41. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29 September were **APPROVED**.
- (ii) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 29 September, 13 and 27 October and 10 November were **RECEIVED**.
- (iii) The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 October were **RECEIVED**.
- (iv) The Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 9 November were **RECEIVED**.
- (v) The Minutes of the Operations & Amenities Committee meetings held on 4 October and 1 November were **RECEIVED**.
- (vi) The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 November were **RECEIVED**, with the recommendation to approve the 2012-13 Budget being considered separately.

42. BUDGET

Cllr A Jennings, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, presented the draft baseline Budget for 2012-13 which had been discussed at Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 10 November. (A copy of the Estimated Earmarked Reserves at 24.11.2011 is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes.)

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Cllr Jennings highlighted some of the proposed projects for the next financial year and others for which funds would be accrued.

- (i) Tarmacking of the Lawn Cemetery's paths to increase disabled access.
- (ii) Fifty per cent funding of the Town's CCTV system with Huntingdonshire District Council.
- (iii) Increase in grant aid funding and possibility of allowing larger community organisations to give grant aid to smaller groups.
- (iv) New play area on the Parklands estate in Eynesbury.
- (v) Funding for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.
- (vi) Refurbishment and reopening of the South Street toilets.
- (vii) Increase in promotion of the town, including development of the Farmers' Market.
- (viii) Long term goals were to find additional allotment land and to provide another cemetery. Money would be put into Earmarked Reserves to build sufficient funds for when land is sourced.
- (ix) Loves Farm Community Centre – providing funds for the fit out.
- (x) Refurbishment of the Priory Centre and enhancement of the Eatons Community Centre to increase hire. This had been achieved by viring funds from budget heads deemed no longer required.

Cllr Jennings thanked the Responsible Finance Officer and Accountant, on behalf of St Neots Town Council, for their swift preparation of the Budget which would allow Council to approve it well in advance of the deadline.

Cllr Jennings reported that the Budget would provide a General Reserves figure of £522,710, based on an estimated 10,700 number of Band D properties for 2012-13. (This figure may change on 8 December.) This would set the precept for a Band D property at £84.23 - no increase on 2011-12.

It was **PROPOSED**:

That Members **APPROVE** the draft Budget for 2012-13, based on an estimated 10,700 Band D properties with the following provisos:

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- a) If the tax base is higher than the estimated 10,700 the additional precept will be added to the General Reserves.
- b) If it is between 10,650-10,700, the shortfall will be taken from the General Reserves.
- c) If the tax base is confirmed at less than 10,650, the Responsible Finance Officer and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will amend and bring back to Council before HDC set the final precept.

Proposed by Cllr Jennings, seconded by Cllr D Ruck, voting unanimous.

43. COFFEE BAR

The Museum had requested the use of the former coffee bar to allow them to expand the service they provide.

It was **PROPOSED**:

That the Town Council enter into an agreement to lease the former Coffee Bar to the Museum.

Proposed by Cllr Chapman, seconded by Cllr Hansard; voting 17 for, Cllr Hutton abstained.

44. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Cllr Gardener **PROPOSED** the adoption of the NALC Model Standing Orders. This was seconded by Cllr Harrison.

The item was deferred to the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

45. ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Cllr Farrer reported that a review of the Planning Committee was in progress and that he and the Acting Town Clerk were looking at changing the start time to 7.15pm and having a representative from each of the 5 wards on the Committee. Item on-going.

The Chairman advised Members of the need to replace the Councillors on the Personnel Appeals Panel.

It was **PROPOSED**:

That Cllrs Wainwright and Jones replace Cllrs Thompson and Farrer on the Personnel Appeals Panel.

Proposed by Cllr Jennings, seconded by Cllr Duck, voting unanimous.

DRAFT MINUTES – AWAITING APPROVAL

46. SWIMMING POOL – HEADS OF TERMS

Cllr Ursell gave Members a brief background to the Swimming Pool site. Heads of Terms had been agreed with a developer approximately 18 months ago but had not been signed. A new proposal had now been put forward for consideration.

It was **PROPOSED:**

To defer this item to the next Operation & Amenities Committee meeting, working under the guidance of Cllr Ursell.

Proposed by Cllr Chapman, seconded by Cllr Gardener, voting unanimous.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

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CHAIRMAN
24.11.2011