

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MOOT, THE PRIORY CENTRE, ST NEOTS
ON THURSDAY 14 APRIL 2011

PRESENT: Cllr G Thorpe (Chair) Cllr Mrs L Ottolangui
 Cllr B Chapman Cllr L Roberts
 Cllr Mrs D Collins Cllr S van de Kerkhove
 Cllr Mrs K Cooper Cllr D Terry
 Cllr D Giles
 Cllr D Harty
 Cllr Mrs J Hayward

94. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs B Arnold, Cllr Mrs J Bird, Cllr A Cummings, Cllr R W Eaton, Cllr O Reynolds, Cllr P Ursell.

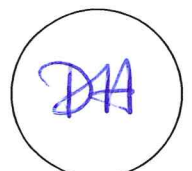
Cllr J Cooper-Marsh was not present.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Harty declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Highways Warden) as a County Councillor.

96. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Special Town Council meeting held on 24 March 2011 were **APPROVED**.
- (ii) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17 March and 31 March were **RECEIVED**.
- (iii) The Minutes of the Operations & Amenities Committee meeting held on 24 March 2011 were **RECEIVED**.
- (iv) The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24 March 2011 were **RECEIVED**.
- (v) The Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 6 April 2011 were **RECEIVED**.
- (vi) The Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 6 April 2011 were **RECEIVED**.



97. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor reported that he and his Mayoral Team had attended 43 engagements since the last Council meeting in February. As this was the last Council meeting prior to local elections, he thanked the departing Councillors Mrs B Arnold, Mrs J Bird, Mr R Eaton, Mrs L Ottolangui, Mr J Cooper-Marsh, Mr A Cummings and Mr D Giles for their hard work over the last four years and offered best wishes to those who were seeking re-election.

Cllr Catherine Hutton advised Members that she had attended the recent Neighbourhood Forum where they had been advised of the possible impact the County Council budget cuts would have on St Neots. She understood that Mike Davey would be addressing the Council in May/June to talk more about this.

One update from County Council that she felt may be of interest to Members was a new project being implemented to repair pot holes. Additional funds had been allocated by Central Government specifically to address the repair of pot holes caused by the recent bad winter. The money must be spent by the end of September.

It had also been announced that funds had become available from Central Government for new street lighting. This project will be rolled out over 5 years.

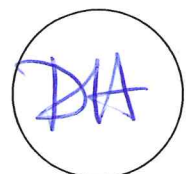
Mr Ian Jackson addressed Council requesting the current status of the Old Swimming Pool site. The Chairman advised Mr Jackson that his question should be addressed to the Swimming Pool Trust. Mr Jackson was advised to email the Town Council so that his enquiry could be forwarded to the Chairman of the Swimming Pool Trust.

Cllr D Giles asked how much the recent resurfacing of the car park at St Mary's Church, Eaton Socon had cost and whether tax payers had contributed to this repair?

The Town Clerk informed him that the resurfacing had cost £9,000 and that Tesco had kindly made a donation for this work, therefore at no cost to the residents of St Neots. The Town Council would maintain the surface of the car park.

98. OFFICE CLOSURE

The Office Manager advised Members that, due to lone working, Huntingdonshire District Council now closed their Customer Service Centre between 1-2pm each day. This had an impact on the Town Council reception and employees and she asked Members to consider closing the Town Council Offices at lunch time, in conjunction with the District Council. Visitors to the Office at this time were minimal so this should cause little disruption to residents or Luminus tenants.



Members **RESOLVED**

that the Town Council Offices close each day from 1-2pm and this to be reviewed.

99. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Town Clerk asked Members to advise the date they would like to hold this year's Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Council Meeting.

She asked if Council wanted to have both meetings on the same night, as in previous years, or if they would like to hold the Town Meeting before the elections on 5 May.

Members **RESOLVED**

that the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Council Meeting be held on Monday 16 May 2011.

100. EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Responsible Finance Officer reported that the threshold for smaller relevant bodies had increased from £1 million to £6.5 million from 2010/11.

Smaller relevant bodies can now prepare simplified accounts and fall within the limited assurance audit approach which the finance team will be undertaking. The main effects of this on the Council's annual accounts will be:

- Fixed assets will not be shown on the Balance Sheet but will go through the Revenue Account as an expense;
- Depreciation will not be charged to the accounts;
- The Memo Reserves – Capital Adjustment and Revaluation Reserve will be removed;
- Public Works Loans will not be shown in the Balance Sheet.

All of these will be replaced with Notes in the Notes to the Accounts.

St Neots Town Council will take part in a consultation process necessary to appoint the auditor required to undertake the limited assurance audit. The consultation for new appointments will start in April and be confirmed May/June. The earliest possible commencement of the new external auditors is expected to be end of June.

The Council's current External Auditors, Grant Thornton, are not contracted as a limited assurance supplier and the Council will therefore have to appoint a new external auditor. This could have a potential saving to the budget for external auditor fees.



Members **NOTED** the report.

101. CONSTITUTION REVIEW

This item was deferred at the Town Council meeting held on 3 February.

Members reviewed the amendments to the Constitution previously circulated and it was **RESOLVED**

to amend Standing Orders 1.6 to read:

“Full Town Council meetings commence at 7pm and are limited to 2½ hours but may be extended by 30 minutes with the agreement of the majority of those present and then by further half hourly increments with majority agreement”.

Members **APPROVED** the amendments to the Constitution.

102. HIGHWAYS WARDEN

The Town Clerk reported that she had received correspondence from Cambridgeshire County Council informing her that they had been running two pilots of a Highway Wardens scheme focussing on relationships between Highways Depots and their local Town and Parish Councils. They have established Highway Wardens with two local electoral divisions.

The Town Council has registered their interest in the scheme.

The Highway Wardens' role will include:

- Improving Council understanding of budget allocation and pressures and network management policy
- Providing a conduit and filter for local concerns over highway issues
- Raising awareness of planned work well in advance
- Facilitate better contacts with other service areas
- Provide better feedback to Councils by attending meetings
- Provide better feedback to the service on perceived performance
- Reduce officer time spent dealing with local Council requests

Further information will follow.

103. 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.



104. SHADY WALK RECREATION GROUND

Members considered the draft Heads of Terms for Lease for the land at Shady Walk.

It was **RESOLVED** that

delegated authority be granted to the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign the Heads of Terms on behalf of St Neots Town Council, in conjunction with Cllr Chapman, subject to receiving a land valuation figure from the District Valuer.

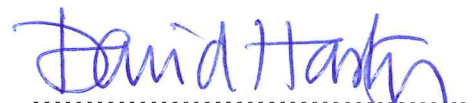
It was also **RESOLVED** that

the Town Mayor, Cllr Barry Chapman and Town Clerk, to be authorised to negotiate the terms of the Lease and that a further meeting of St Neots Town Council to consider approval.

It was also **RESOLVED** that

All Insurances are the responsibility and of Turnstone Estates and councillors were content that the developer will purchase the insurance as set out in the Heads of Terms

Meeting ended at 9pm.



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CHAIRMAN
14.04.11