

## Full Town Council

**To:** All Town Councillors

**Copies:** **County Councillors** – Ferguson, Prentice, Seef & S Taylor  
**District Councillors** – Ferguson, Davenport-Ray, Jennings, Pickering, I Taylor, Welton & S Taylor  
**Town Councillors** – not a member of this committee  
**Local Press, Town Council Website & Noticeboard**

**Agenda** for the meeting of the **Town Council** to be held on **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and made available to the public. Your participation in the meeting indicates your consent to being included in these recordings.

### Public Participation

There will be a 10-minute session before the meeting to allow any resident to address the committee on any matter appearing on the agenda for this meeting.

**Members of the Full Town Council are hereby summoned to attend this meeting to consider the following business.**

C Robson  
Town Clerk

**1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive and note councillor's apologies.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

To receive from councillor's declarations as to disclosable pecuniary interests and/or non-statutory disclosable interests along with the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item of this meeting.

**3 Minutes**

Members to approve the following minutes as a true and accurate record:  
Annual Council Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Attachment 1

**4 Committee Minutes**

To receive and note draft minutes of meetings of the following committees and sub-committees and (if applicable) to approve recommendations therein which do not arise elsewhere;

i) Promotion & Events Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Attachment 2

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| ii) Planning Committee held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2024                                | Attachment 3 |
| iii) Operations and Amenities Committee held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2024               | Attachment 4 |
| iv) Extraordinary Environment and Emergency Committee held on 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 | Attachment 5 |

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council adopt the Climate Action Plan and the priorities set out within it, subject to the following amendments;

- Adding a reference page number to the first footnote.
- Amending 'feel' to 'can feel' in the priority list.

Attachment 6

- v) Grants Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Attachment 7

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to award £10,000 to Money Advice St Neots towards the provision of drop-in services every Thursday in St Neots and that the Town Council confirm whether funding comes from the 2024-25 Grant Aid budget or the Council's General Reserves.

Confidential  
Attachment

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to award £7,400 to Huntingdon Volunteer Centre towards the delivery and progression of the St Neots Car Scheme and associated support services.

Confidential  
Attachment

- vi) Finance and Governance Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Attachment 10

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that a budget of £4,000 be allocated to the redesign of the Town Council website. That £1,247 in earmarked reserves for website programming be allocated to the project, along with £2,753 from the General Reserves.

Attachment 11

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** allocating £2,626 from the AFD earmarked reserves towards the increased health and safety cost of running the 2024 event and noting a resulting overspend of £1,244 which would come from the Council's General Reserve.

Attachment 12

## 5 Funding Request – St Neots Splash Park

To receive a report from the Town Clerk on a funding request from St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO along with supporting documents.

Attachment 13

To consider and resolve a decision and the funding request from St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO.

- 6 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24**  
**Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/2024**  
To receive and note the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-2024 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 and the final internal audit report.

Attachment 14
- 7 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24**  
**Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**  
To consider and approve the statements on the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the 2022-2023 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3. The Clerk and the Chairperson of the Council are to sign once approved.

Attachment 15
- 8 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24**  
**Section 2 – Annual Accounting Statement**

  - i) To consider and approve the Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the 2022-2023 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3. The Responsible Financial Officer has signed to certify that the Accounting Statement has been prepared following guidance in Governance & Accountability for smaller Authorities. The Chairperson of the Council is to sign following approval by the Council.

Attachment 16
  - ii) To note the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return will be from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024.
- 9 Reports from Outside Bodies**  
To receive and verbal reports from Members who act as Council representatives on outside bodies.
- 10 Date of Next Meeting**  
To note the date of the next Council meeting will be 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.
- 11 Committee In Private Session**  
RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment or contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.
- 12 Priory Centre Temporary Closure**  
To receive a report and recommendation from the Town Clerk on options for alternative accommodation during the temporary closure of the Priory Centre and Council Offices which are required due to the upcoming refurbishment project.

## Full Town Council

**Present:** Cllrs Slade (Chair), Banks, Bolanz, Cooper-Marsh, Crompton, Dundas-Todorov, Dunford, Goodman, Hitchin, Macnab-Grieve, Mascarenhas, Pitt, Simonis and Terry.

**Absent:** Cllrs Chapman, Collins, Johnson, Kumar, Maslen, J Smith and S Smith

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and RFO

**Minutes** of the meeting of St Neots Town Council held on **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were 5 members of the public present.

A Member of the public addressed the Council on funding for the Revamp the Ramp CIC skatepark enhancement project, voicing their support for the project.

### ACTIONS

#### 011 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Chapman, Collins, Johnson, Kumar, Maslen and S Smith.

Admin

#### 012 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 013 Council Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 as a true and accurate record.

#### 014 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr Jennings addressed the Council and provided the following updates;

- The District Council held its annual meeting last week at which the cabinet and leadership were re-appointed.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee called in CIL funding decisions for review, one of which was the refusal of CIL funding for a £700,000 extension to the St Neots Fire Station, in part to create a community space and gym. The refusal was upheld.
- The Public Space Protection Order applied for Nags Head area in Eynesbury will be out for consultation. If approved, it will be enforceable by the police.





- A Civil injunction is being looked into to cover the high street due to issues of children climbing on roofs of shops and restaurants, along with associated drugs and drinking issues. A consultation process is underway.
- The HDC Shop Front Grant Scheme which was extended to St Neots resulted in 16 applications. Three have being approved. Most of those rejected had not submitted the proper quotation documents. Those rejected can reapply.

## 015 Committee Minutes

- i) Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.
- ii) Members received and noted minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.
- iii) Members received and noted minutes of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.
- iv) Members received and noted minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

***The Council considered and resolved the following recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee;***

**016 RESOLVED** that Farm and Craft Market pitch fees are paused until January 2025 when the matter of pitch fees and status of Market Square works will be reconsidered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

**017 RESOLVED** that the Council approve the expenditure of £24,495.60 from £70,759 earmarked reserves for play park provision for the purchase and installation of an inclusive seesaw and supporting infrastructure and equipment at Brickhill's play area.

## 018 Revamp the Ramp – Ramp Refurbishment Project Funding

Members received a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee on Council funding for the St Neots Skatepark enhancement project. The Town Clerk informed the Council that the recommendation could be withdrawn as the funding secured by the project was sufficient to allow it to go ahead. The preferred contractor for the work had revised the quotation based on new machinery that allowed the job to be completed a lot faster, therefore lowering the cost.

The Clerk will work with Revamp the Ramp and the District Council to understand the funding position, cost and any restricted funding held by Revamp the Ramp. A update would be brought to the Finance and Governance Committee.

## 019 Standing Orders

**RESOLVED** that the Council continues with the current Town Council Standing Orders without any amendments or changes until such time as the Town Clerk of Council wishes to make changes.

Town  
Clerk

## 020 Scheme of Delegations

**RESOLVED** that the Council approves the Committee Scheme of Delegation for the Council Year 2024-25.

Town  
Clerk

## 021 Committee Membership

Members appointed Councillors to serve on the following standing committees for the 2024-25 Council year;

Admin

- i) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Environment and Emergency Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Bolanz
  - Cllr Banks
  - Cllr Dunford
  - Cllr Goodman
  - Cllr Pitt
  - Cllr Simonis
  - Cllr S Smith
- ii) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Finance and Governance Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Banks
  - Cllr Chapman
  - Cllr Collins
  - Cllr Cooper-Marsh
  - Cllr Goodman
  - Cllr Hitchin
  - Cllr Kumar
  - Cllr Maslen
  - Cllr Pitt
- iii) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Operations and Amenities Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Bolanz
  - Cllr Chapman
  - Cllr Collins
  - Cllr Cooper-Marsh
  - Cllr Dunford
  - Cllr Goodman
  - Cllr Hitchin
  - Cllr Johnson



- Cllr Maslen
- iv) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Promotion and Events Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Banks
  - Cllr Bolanz
  - Cllr Cooper-Marsh
  - Cllr Dundas-Todorov
  - Cllr Johnson
  - Cllr Hitchin
  - Cllr Macnab-Grieve
  - Cllr Maslen
- v) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Planning Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Collins
  - Cllr Dunford
  - Cllr Maslen
  - Cllr Pitt
  - Cllr Slade
  - Cllr Terry
- vi) **RESOLVED** that the following Members serve on the Personnel Committee for the 2024-25 Council year;
- Cllr Chapman
  - Cllr Collins
  - Cllr Dundas-Todorov
  - Cllr Johnson
  - Cllr Kumar
  - Cllr Mascarenhas
  - Cllr Pitt
  - Cllr Simonis
  - Cllr Slade
  - Cllr S Smith

## 022 Appointment of Committee Chairpersons

The Chairperson called for nominations for the election and appointment of Admin Councillors to the roles of committee chairpersons for the 2024-25 Council year.

### Finance and Governance Committee

Cllr Cooper-Marsh was proposed and seconded

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Cooper be elected as Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

### Environment and Emergency Committee

Cllr Pitt was proposed and seconded.  
There were no further nominations.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Pitt be elected as Chairperson of the Environment and Emergency Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

#### **Operations and Amenities Committee**

Cllr Chapman was proposed and seconded.  
Cllr Goodman was proposed and seconded.

The Chairperson moved to a vote.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Goodman be elected as Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Cllr Simonis was proposed and seconded.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Simonis be elected as Chairperson of the Personnel Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

#### **Planning Committee**

Cllr Maslen was proposed and seconded.  
Cllr Slade was proposed and seconded.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Slade be elected as Chairperson of the Planning Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

#### **Promotion and Events Committee**

Cllr Dundas-Todorov was proposed and seconded.  
Cllr Maslen was proposed and seconded.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Dundas-Todorov be elected as Chairperson of the Promotion and Events Committee, to hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.

### **023 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies**

Members considered appointment of Councillors to act as council representatives on Admin outside bodies.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Chapman is appointed as representative to the Common Rights for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Dunford and Slade are appointed as representatives on the East West Rail Stakeholder Group. for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Hitchin and Maslen are appointed as representatives on the Eatons Community Association for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Cooper-Marsh is appointed as representative to the Eynesbury Village Hall Association.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Goodman and Macnab-Grieve are appointed as representatives to the Hunts Volunteer Forum for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Dunford and Banks are appointed as representatives on the Little Barford Power Station for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Dundas-Todorov is appointed as the representative of the Loves Farm Community Association for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Chapman is appointed as representative to Newton and Hadley for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Cooper-Marsh and Dunford are appointed as representatives to the North Weald Solar Farm consultation group for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Bolanz is appointed as representative to the St Neots Initiative for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Bolanz, Chapman and Johnson are appointed as representatives to the St Neots Museum for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Goodman is appointed as representative to the St Neots Rugby Club for the 2024-25 Council year.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Kumar is appointed as representative to the Wintringham Residents Association for the 2024-25 Council year.

## **024 Financial Regulations**

**RESOLVED** that the Council delegates the review of the Financial Regulations to the Finance and Governance Committee with any proposed amendments of updates to be brought to the Council for approval.

## **025 Bank Signatories**

**RESOLVED** that signatories for the Barclays bank mandate remain as currently appointed;

- Cllrs Chapman, Goodman, Kumar and Pitt
- The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and RFO

RFO

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk and Cllr Cooper-Marsh are added as a signatory to the Council's CCLA account.

**026 Payment Approvals**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Goodman is appointed as a third nominated Member, alongside the Chairpersons of the Council and Finance and Governance Committee who can approve payments of over £2,000 in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

**027 Annual Subscriptions to Outside Bodies**

Members received and noted details of annual subscriptions paid to outside bodies for professional memberships.

Members the proposed membership fee for the SNI and why the Council did not qualify as a not-for-profit body which get free membership. Members also asked for clarification of benefits for members.

Town  
Clerk

**028 Insurance Cover**

Members received and noted confirmation of Council insurance cover for the 2024-25 financial year.

**RESOLVED** that the Council confirms arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks is in place for the Civic Year 2024 to 2025.

**029 Policies and Procedures**

**RESOLVED** that the Council accepts its current adopted policies and procedures and delegates the review of all policies and procedures to the Finance and Governance Committee for approval by Full Council.

**030 Calendar of Meetings**

Members received and noted the previously agreed calendar of council meetings for the 2024-25 Council year.

The Chairperson of the Environment and Emergency Committee requested that the meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> November be moved to 5<sup>th</sup> November. This was agreed.

Admin

**031 Summons of Meetings**

**RESOLVED** that St Neots Town Council Members consent for the summons to meetings to be transmitted in electronic form to a designated Town Council electronic email address.

**032 General Power of Competence (GPC)**

**RESOLVED** that St Neots Town Council continues to meet the criteria for the powers of the General Power of Competence and **RESOLVES** to adopt those powers.

### 033 Strategic Plan

Members received and considered a draft strategic plan which had previously been reviewed in 2023. There were no material changes to the plan, although consideration of CIL allocation for the Priory Centre redevelopment had been included.

It was agreed that the heading 'Where we will focus our CIL investment' should be changed to 'Candidate or potential projects for CIL investment'. Investment in the Oast House as should the Council purchase the building should also be added to the potential projects list, recognising the link to the Council's heritage objectives.

It was asked that the Clerk add that 'and budget estimates brought forward' be amended to 'Budget estimates are brought forward for individual consideration by the Council.'

**RESOLVED** adopt the draft Strategic Plan document which will be used for the basis of further development of the Council's objectives and priorities.

Town  
Clerk

### 034 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Cllr Goodman provided a report from St Neots Rugby Club. The Club is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 5<sup>th</sup> July at the Priory Centre.

### 035 Register of Interest Forms

Members noted that Councillors were responsible for reviewing and updating their register of interest (ROI) forms which are held by the elections officer at Huntingdonshire District Council.

Cllrs

### 036 Date of Next Meeting

Members received and noted that the date of the next Full Council meeting would be 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7:15pm.

## Promotion & Events Committee

**Present:** **Committee Members**  
Cllrs Dundas-Todorov (Chairperson), Banks, Cooper-Marsh, Hitchin, Johnson (Deputy Chairperson) & Macnab-Grieve

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk, Events & Communications Officer

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Promotion & Events committee** held on **Tuesday 4th June 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

None.

#### 001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Maslen.

#### ACTIONS

#### 002 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### 003 Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson called for nominations for Deputy Chairperson of the Promotion and Events Committee for the 2024-25 Council year.

Cllr Johnson was nominated and Seconded

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Johnson serve as Deputy Chairperson of the Promotion and Events Committee for the 2024-25.

#### 004 Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Promotion and Events committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 as a true and accurate record.

#### 005 Motion – Town Council Website

Members received and considered a motion that the Town Council budget £4,000 to redesign and launch the Town Council website.

Members raised queries about the usability and restrictions of the current website which the Events and Communications Officer responded to.

A query was raised as to whether maintenance costs for the new site would increase, it was not expected that they would.



**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Town Council acquisition a new website theme using our existing Content Management System (CMS) for the redevelopment of the St Neots Town Council website and budget of £4,000 be allocated from the Council's General Reserve

#### **006 Action Plan**

The Council's Events and Communications Officer provided updates to the committee on the following items;

Members discussed the Summer Bands in the Park, which had recently seen a few cancellations due to wet weather, with Riverside Park ground being too wet to host the performance. A Member expressed support for moving cancelled events to Little Paxton in the future rather than not having them at all. Another commented that it would be outside of St Neots parish and questioned how many people would go.

Priory Park was mentioned as another possible location, although it was acknowledged that the ground can still be very wet after heavy rainfall. The issue of a premises license would need to be addressed with any alternative location. Once complete the Market Square would be the ideal alternative location if ground at Riverside is too wet.

Members queried if those bands that were cancelled could be offered September dates. A new licence application to HDC would need to be made, but the officer would investigate this subject to availability of bands.

Members noted the action list.

#### **007 Christmas Light Switch on Event 2024**

Members received and considered a report from the Events and Communications Officer on the Christmas Light Switch on Event for 2024.

Members noted that works to the Market Square were unlikely to be fully completed by the usual event date and that based on the 'worst-case' scenario provided by the contractor it would not be safe or possible to run a large-scale event on the available Market Square space.

The Events and Communications Officer outlined discussions which had been had on alternative venues, particularly the Waitrose or Riverside car parks. The Waitrose car park was unfortunately not a feasible option as the John Lewis Partnership could not support an event with the closure of the car park. Sundays are considered a busy day for the store and parking for its customers was seen as particularly important.

At the time of the meeting HDC had advised that the Riverside car park could be used to hold an event, but that only part of the car park would usually be made available for an event, as parking was needed for permit holders, café and park users.

The Events and Communications Officer outlined the challenges with holding a large-scale Christmas lights event at Riverside car park without use of the full site.

- A full road closure of the High Street would be difficult and unlikely to be approved due to the size of diversion needed. This created a risk for large numbers of pedestrians coming to and from the event over the town bridge, particularly as all the car parks would be on the other side of the river to the event.
- Having fireworks and a timed light switch on would likely attract very large numbers at a particular time, rather than spreading attendees over the day. This could cause an issue with entry and exit routes.
- Removing the funfair could help manage lack of space, but would be a negative for children and families.
- Using the car park and the what is available of the Market Square would create a pedestrian management issue as it would encourage large numbers to cross between the two sites over the narrow bridge paths.
- Splitting the event over different locations would be difficult to manage from a resource and safety point of view. There would be a necessity to increase security costs.

With use of the full car park there would continue to be risks around running the event, including;

- The car park is subject to flooding and if this occurred the event would need to be cancelled.
- There are very few Christmas lights visible from the car park, making a Christmas light 'switch on' difficult.
- It is not possible to add lighting to the highway bridge, this was previously explored but officers were advised that they would act as a distraction to drivers.

Further options for enhancing Christmas in the town were also discussed, including;

- Removing the fun fair from the Christmas Event to reduce space needed and risks involved. However, this would reduce the value of the event for children and families.
- Installing mini trees on all the shop fronts. This would need individual permissions from every landlord and business, risk assessments, and electricity use agreements. Not possible in the short-term but could be further investigated for future years subject to funding.

Members discussed potential ideas for smaller events through November and December, rather than one large switch on event. Ideas for investigation included;

- A series of smaller light switch-on events at Eynesbury, Eaton Ford, Eaton Socon and Loves Farm, with new permanent trees purchased for planting at Loves Farm and Eynesbury.
- Carol singing events.
- Increased Markets, with themed markets on the area of the Market Square which will be available.
- Increased illuminations.
- Attractions such as large snow globes or displays.
- Ice rink
- Working with Community Groups to fund more smaller events in communities.

Members commented that a series of smaller events across the community could be very positive.

Based on the information available at the time of the meeting it was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Promotion and Events committee plan for an alternative Christmas event that would include a variety of events over November to December, including the purchase of two new permanent Christmas trees for Loves Farm and Eynesbury as part of localised 'switch-on' events.

**RESOLVED** to establish a Working Group to support support the Events and Communications officer in planning and implementing alternative Christmas events over November and December 2024.

**Working Group Membership:** Cllrs Banks, Hitchin, Cooper-Marsh, Dundas-Todorov, Macnab-Grieve

Members agreed that messaging around alternative Christmas plans would need to be clearly communicated.

Members noted that Christmas lights and the tree were planned to go ahead as usual, and that the Christmas lights contract would need to be retendered for the 2025 display and tender documents would come forward in due course.

## **008 Communications Strategy**

Members received and considered a draft communications strategy from the Events and Communications Officer. The Events and Communications Officer presented the draft strategy and asked for feedback.

Members discussed the strategy at length, key points included;

- Communications issued by the Council need to be well written and engaging across platforms, fewer well written social media posts were often more effective than multiple messages.
- Use of images helps improve messaging.

- The What's On Guide was an important part of communicating with the public, and one central properly populated guide would be beneficially, although would require resource.

Members considered what they would like to see delivered in terms of the Council's communications and commented as follows;

- Better promotion of the Council and its activities
- Getting the public more involved in the Council, such as Working Groups
- Better off line communication and reach to residents
- Greater transparency
- Better measuring of social media engagement
- Understanding community satisfaction and what residents want from the Council's communications
- Use of comms and blogs to make information accessible
- Use of forums when engaging on key projects/activities

Members would further consider the matter and feedback to the Events and Communications Officer.

#### **009 Digital Display Boards**

Members received and noted a report from the Events and Communications Officer providing an update on the Huntingdonshire District Council Digital Display Boards project. Members noted the example map artwork that would be used in the board, which was standardised across the boards to be installed in the District.

Members noted that further information on the operating system and content management of the boards was still awaited.

#### **010 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted the date of the next committee meeting as 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

## Planning Committee

**Present:** Committee Members  
Cllrs Slade (Chairperson), Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Hitchin and Pitt

**Absent:** Cllrs Maslen and Terry

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk, Senior Administrator

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning committee** held on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

**008 Apologies for Absence**

**ACTIONS**

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Terry.

**009 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**010 Election of Deputy Chairperson**

**RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Pitt as Deputy Chairperson to the Planning Committee for the Council year 2024-25.

**011 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Admin

**012 Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**013 Schedule of Current Planning Applications**

Members considered the schedule of planning applications, and their responses are appended to these minutes.

Admin

**014 Wintringham Development - Public Rights of Way Proposals**

Members considered communication from Urban & Civic for Public Right of Way proposals in connection with the Wintringham development (application for reserved matters application reference 23/00652/REM).

Admin

John Dunford comment – delegated to me. Support the process to remove the public crossings across the railway and reinstate the underpass as a public right of way.

**015 Development Management Committee**

A meeting was due to be held the following week at which there would be two items on the agenda relating to St Neots. Cllr Slade and Cllr Pitt would not be able to participate in the discussion. No other Members were available to attend.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

# Schedule of Planning Applications – 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
The following application/s are for listed building consent				
The following application/s are in a conservation area				
<b>S1</b>	24/00915/FUL	<b>Anshul Raja - Apavi Group Holdings</b> <b>58 - 62 High Street, St Neots</b> <b>PE19 1JQ</b> Alterations to existing windows and installation of new entrances and display windows.	<b>SUPPORT</b>	Fits in with the local street scene
<b>S2</b>	24/00832/FUL	<b>Lucy Anderson – Fatface</b> <b>45 Market Square</b> <b>St Neots, PE19 2AR</b> Shopfront Refurbishment / Maintenance / Colour Change New Signage	<b>SUPPORT</b>	Fits in with the local street scene
All other applications				
<b>S3</b>	24/00723/FUL	<b>Mr Mark Garrood</b> <b>15 - 16 Howard Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8ET</b> Increase in height of existing chimney flue serving industrial unit	<b>SUPPORT</b>	Members noted the application and support subject to the approval of HDC Environmental Health Officer.
<b>S4</b>	24/00722/REM	<b>Gallagher Estates Ltd</b> <b>Loves Farm Eastern Expansion</b> <b>Development Area Cambridge Road St Neots</b> Application for Reserved Matters Approval relating to 1300388OUT for the appearance, layout, scale and landscaping of foul water pumping station	<b>SUPPORT</b>	Members support the application with the approval of CCC Lead Local Flood Authority.

**Chairperson**

## Operations & Amenities Committee

**Present:** Cllrs Goodman (Chairperson), Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Hitchin and Johnson

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Operations Manager

**Absent:** Cllr Maslen

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** held on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

### ACTIONS

**012 Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

Admin

**013 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**014 Election of Deputy Chairperson**

The Chairperson called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

Admin

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Chapman be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

**015 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 as a true and accurate record.

**016 Working Group**

Members received and noted a list of existing Working Groups and Membership for those Working Groups that report into the Operations and Amenities Committee.

It was noted that Cllr Dunford should be listed as a member of the Moores Walk Garden Working Group.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr S Smith be appointed to the LHI and SID Working Group.

**017 Action list**

Members received the committee action list. The following key updates were received;

**Moore's Walk Garden**

Work was due to start in August 2024. The later date is to increase the chances of a successful planting scheme. Horticulturalist due to come back to Working Group with more specifics on plants chosen.

**Public Toilets**

Work on the new changing places toilet was scheduled to be completed by mid-July 2024. However, the Clerk was awaiting formal confirmation from HDC. The Clerk is in contact with Access in St Neots and has updated them on the status of the project.

The Operations Manager informed the committee the works to redecorate the exterior of south street toilets were due to take place the week of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024.

**Brickhills Bench installation**

It was noted that this needs progressing and the Operations Manager would pursue further surfacing quotes.

**Jubilee Trees**

A Member asked if the trees ordered could be planted around play parks. The Clerk confirmed that the trees had been ordered for a particular location which was already agreed.

**018 Local Highways Improvement Bids 2024-25**

Members received and noted an update from Cambridgeshire County Council on a complex LHI bid submitted for St Neots town centre. The application, supported by the County Council Ward Member, focused on creating better accessible routes to key locations in the town through dropped kerbs, markings and pavement improvements. A feasibility report on the bid had now been carried out and scoring was due to take place in June. A representative of St Neots Town Council was invited to attend to speak in support of the bid.

It was agreed that Cllr Johnson would attend the panel scoring to speak on the application on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr  
Johnson

**019 Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre**

- i) Members received a report from the Town Clerk asking for confirmation that a pedestrian gate be included in a planning application to be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council to surface the trackway and parking area at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community building. The gate would be in the boundary fencing with Duck Lane.



**RESOLVED** that the council include the creation of a pedestrian access gate in the boundary fence between Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre and Duck Lane.

- ii) Members received and considered an initial draft lease with the Mans Cave for a building at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre. The Clerk informed Members that he was awaiting a rental valuation for the property.

Members raised the following points;

A clause prohibiting drinking of alcohol on the premises without prior permission should be included.

A three-year break should be included in the lease.

The Clerk should progress with obtaining a valuation of the property to ensure a true rental value can be established. While it was acknowledged the tenant would be a community group the Council had to truly reflect the value of its asset and the support that was being given to any tenant if a lower rent is agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk obtains a rental valuation for the buildings at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre at a maximum cost of £950.

## 020 Public Toilets

Members received and considered Heads of Terms for new leases to be agreed with Huntingdonshire District Council for the lease of public toilets at Riverside and Tebbutts Road.

Members raised some concerns over a full repairing lease and what contributes HDC might make towards repair and maintenance under a new lease. The provisions under the existing lease should be kept, whereby the amount incurred by the Town Council would be limited.

A lease of 20 years was thought to be potentially too long, but with a break clause of 10 years would be acceptable. Access for maintaining toilets should be included, particularly for SNTC vehicles to park without charge in adjacent HDC car parks.

The Clerk noted Members comments and would go back to HDC with a view to bring forward a draft proposed lease to the July committee meeting.

**021 Play Park Inspections**

Members received and noted an updated play park inspection document and the works which were underway to address issues or recommendations raised.

Members requested that making safe a wooden plank at Bevington play area be made a priority.

**022 Cemetery Land**

Members received and noted a verbal update from the Town Clerk.

The Clerk informed Members that he had heard back from Highways England with regard to potential future cemetery land for St Neots. The Clerk has been advised that Highways England seek to limit land taken to deliver schemes as much as possible. In the unlikely event that any land is found to be surplus at the end of the scheme, it'll firstly be offered back to the original landowner, which is required by law.

In regard to the A428 works, as compound land is not needed after the scheme has been delivered, these areas have been leased. This means that on this occasion they are not able to assist with our request, however they will keep a record of our enquiry should there be any surplus land that the original landowners don't want back. While this is unlikely, it is possible. The project team expects to be more informed of the possibility of this by the time they open the new road to road users.

**023 Strategic Priorities**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk and considered the strategic priorities of the committee which they wished to see the focus of resource over coming years. Members agreed with the priorities set out in the report, but also spoke in favour of adding the museum building repair to the priorities and highlighting heritage investment, potentially supported by a heritage strategy. The wider view of investing in all SNTC owned properties in the long terms was also highlighted.

Members discussed a WW2 pill box and taking ownership of this should the opportunity arise.

Highlighted committee priorities;

**Cemetery Land**

Identifying and securing new cemetery land

**Operations Depot**

Clarifying medium to long term operations depot requirements and securing better depot provision.

**Play Park Investment**

Finalising and agreeing forward planning investment for SNTC sites. Including new provision and increased accessible play.

**Jubilee Garden**

Improving and enhancing the community space and the heritage it links to.

**Local Highways Improvement Bids**

Developing a strong process for the identification, evaluation, and submission of Local Highway Improvement Bids.

**Changing Places Toilet**

Completing the provision of a Riverside Changing Places toilet.

**Museum Building**

Repair and maintenance of the Museum building inline with heritage building survey recommendations.

**Heritage**

Establishing a heritage strategy for the Council's approach to its sites and heritage information.

**024 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the date of the next Operations and Amenities Committee would be on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

## Environment & Emergency Committee

**Present:** Committee Members  
Cllrs Pitt (Chairperson), Bolanz, Dunford, Goodman, Simonis and Slade

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk, Environmental Project Officer

**Absent:** Cllr Banks, S Smith

Minutes of the **Extraordinary** meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** held on **12<sup>th</sup> June 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There was one member of the public present. No member of the public wished to address the Council.

#### 001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Banks and S. Smith

#### ACTIONS

#### 002 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 003 Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Environment and Emergency Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

Cllr S. Smith was nominated and seconded.

**RESOLVED** to elect Cllr S. Smith as Deputy Chairperson of the Environment and Emergency Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

#### 004 Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting subject to amending Cllrs Slade and Pitt were present.

#### 005 Climate Action Plan

Members received and considered the Climate Action Plan for recommendation to the Council.

The Environmental Project Officer introduced the Climate Action Plan, explaining that they were looking for the committee's recommendation of the Plan to the Full Council for adoption. This will give the officer authority to start actioning items within the plan and working to priorities.

The Chairperson guided Members through the key priorities highlighted in the plan, explaining that these are high-level areas officers will focus on, including;

- Developing a proper plan to deliver carbon net-zero and a clear understanding of what net-zero means and should include. For example, the inclusion of offsetting.
- Understanding scopes 1, 2 and 3 and how far we wish to address each scope.
- Outside of Net-Zero the plan includes actions on biodiversity.
- There is a mix of those priorities SNTC has direct control over and those which are more influencing others.
- The plan also puts in place a priority on communication and having others in St Neots participate in our journey by leading by example.

Members discussed a number of matters around the plan at length, key points raised included;

- Scope 3 is very reliant on actions outside the Council's direct control and is particularly challenging. It was not felt that this should be part of the 2030 target.
- Messaging and informing are going to be key. The Council needs to help make residents aware of its actions and those they can take.

Members debated the value of offsetting, including the following key points;

- Making a decision and steer on offsetting will help guide how the officer progresses.
- Concerns over offsetting might be addressed by taking greater control of the process, by for example planting trees ourselves.
- A Member commented that offsetting is greenwashing and should be avoided. Planting of trees is positive, but they do take some time before they offset carbon to a large degree.
- Tree planting is a medium-term fix as when trees die, they will release the carbon back into the environment.
- Another Member commented that while they agreed the Council will reach a point where reaching carbon net-zero won't be achievable by 2030 and offsetting may be a practical interim step.
- The Environmental Project Officer commented that buying carbon offsetting tickets was questionable, but working with the District Council can look at a variety of local natural carbon solutions. Using nature as a carbon sink is a way forward as the Council will never be completely carbon net-zero.

It was agreed it would be helpful for the Environmental Project Officer to produce an options report on offsetting to allow the council to understand benefits and negatives and agree the approach the committee want to take.

It was proposed that the Climate Action Plan be recommended to Full Council subject to;

- Adding a page number to the first footnote.
- Amending 'feel' to 'can feel' in the priority list.

Members went on to discuss the proposed CAP further. Discussion included;

- Navigation of the document, which was challenging due to its size. It was queried if headings could be added to each page, although acknowledged that this was time consuming. A Member commented that it was difficult to navigate the document and column headings on each page, or links throughout the document would be helpful.
- Once adopted the next point should be to produce an action plan for where we want to focus over the next year based on the priorities highlighted. It was suggested that the value grid plotting all actions which was contained within the plan should be used as the basis for this and the allocation of resource.
- Members debated the values of progressing quick to win actions, versus more challenging actions which might have higher impacts and benefits.
- Establishing the current base line and performance of the Council's buildings was key to moving forward and understanding options and impacts.
- The committee and its plans will impact other committees and the resources of the Council. Decisions need to be made in the wider context of Council's objectives and in partnership with relevant committees.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council adopt the Climate Action Plan and the priorities set out within it, subject to the following amendments;

- Adding a reference page number to the first footnote.
- Amending 'feel' to 'can feel' in the priority list.

#### **049 Date of Next Committee Meeting**

Members noted that the date of the next committee meeting would be 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 at 7:15pm.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

## **St Neots Town Council's Climate Action Plan 2024/2025**

NOTE: Some formatting of the final published document on headers and page links is to be completed.

### **Introduction**

St Neots Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and, more recently in 2023, an Ecological Emergency. These declarations highlight our commitment to tackling the very real environmental degradation that is happening at both the local and global scale.

Whilst the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation can feel far-removed from St Neots, there is already evidence of localised changes:

- More frequent flooding, caused by a combination of more intense localised rainfall and increased development, impacts residents and businesses situated in high-risk areas, as well as those commuting, with the numbers affected expected to increase by almost half again over the next 85 years<sup>1</sup>. Whilst those directly impacted feel the effects more greatly, it affects us all due to rising insurance costs, as well as the health risks associated with standing water and overflowing sewers
- We are already experiencing repeated record-breaking high temperatures (both summer and winter) year-on-year<sup>2</sup>. The extreme heat of 2022 caused an estimated 2,985 excess deaths in the UK<sup>3</sup>, and with an increasing upward trend in temperatures, these heat extremes will occur again. Warmer winters mean that diseases and their vectors (i.e., insects) which would normally be killed off by frost are surviving, increasing the distribution and longevity of disease. In addition to the individual impact, is the impact on our health services (through increased disease) and the financial burden that brings (which ultimately rests with taxpayers). Add in the associated drought (as floodwater rarely remains where it falls for long), and lack of available clean water for us, our crops and livestock, and the plants and animals in our local environment, and the resulting wildfires (whether started by humans or not), and we can see evidence of local changes to our climate all around us
- Air pollution not only contributes to climate change, but also significantly impacts on the health of us and our environment. Increased rates of asthma and chronic lung/heart disease, as well as stifled growth of plants/trees, is evident, particularly around busy roads. Reducing air pollution can positively impact the nation's health and the public purse, as well as protecting our natural environment
- Other pollution, such as littering, pesticide use, and improper disposal of chemicals, causes damage to our environment and our food chain. Chemicals and pesticides leach into the soil and waterways, killing wildlife and being absorbed/ingested by our crops and livestock. Litter can physically harm or kill our wildlife and livestock, whilst also causing blockages to our waterways and essential sewage/drainage systems. This type of environmental degradation is almost entirely avoidable, and yet it continues to blight the St Neots landscape daily
- We are already seeing an increase in invasive species in our environment, which not only harm our wildlife and damage the delicate balance of our ecosystem, but often novel diseases are brought with them. Whilst invasive species are typically brought to the UK through human intervention, the overall warming effect of climate change means these species are more likely to thrive.

- The increasing development of and pesticide use on our land, whilst necessary for a growing population, is consequently having a devastating impact on our local biodiversity. Fewer species mean poorer soil quality (affecting our crops), poorer air quality, an increase in disease-spreading vectors, a reduction in cross-pollination/seed spreading, and a reduction in important carbon sinks (where vegetation traps harmful excess carbon, reducing the amount in our atmosphere). In addition, our local nature and biodiversity has a positive impact on our wellbeing, so any degradation endangers our population's health.

With the available evidence of both local and global climate change demonstrating environmental, public health, and economic impacts, it is imperative that we do our part to minimise further warming, and ensure St Neots becomes resilient to the damage already done. In addition, the ongoing loss of biodiversity not only impacts the plants and animals around us but has huge cascading effects on the quality of our environment and our own ability to thrive.

St Neots Town Council have therefore committed to working towards Net Zero Carbon emissions\* by 2030 and improving biodiversity by committing 30% of St Neots to nature by 2030. We have prepared this Climate Action Plan, which includes the actions necessary for these commitments, as a way to prepare and plan how we will meet our ambitions, and to keep us accountable and on target. Whilst there are direct actions for our Council to implement, there are also actions for our town which we will support and promote, but which we cannot do without our residents. For these indirect actions, we ask that all local people pull together to safeguard St Neots from further environmental degradation, securing the future prosperity of our town, and the people and other life that call this place home.

We will review this plan annually to ensure we are on track to meet our objectives, and to update residents of our progress.

*\*Net Zero Carbon emissions: “cutting carbon emissions to a small amount of residual emissions that can be absorbed and durably stored by nature and other carbon dioxide removal measures, leaving zero in the atmosphere<sup>4</sup>”. The most significant actions we can take towards this are to stop burning fossil fuels in our buildings and vehicles, and ensure the energy we buy is from clean, renewable sources.*

1. Environment Agency (2011) Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c39a4ed915d7d70d1d6c9/Great\\_Ouse\\_Catchment\\_Flood\\_Management\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c39a4ed915d7d70d1d6c9/Great_Ouse_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf) pg. 20
2. Met Office (2024) 2023 was second warmest year on record for UK <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2023/2023-was-second-warmest-year-on-record-for-uk#:~:text=2023's%20provisional%20mean%20temperature%20of,instrumental%20temperature%20series%20from%201659>.
3. UK Health Security Agency (2024) Heat Mortality Monitoring Report: 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-mortality-monitoring-report-2022#:~:text=used%20are%20available,-Observed%20excess%20all%2Dcause%20mortality,number%20in%20any%20given%20year>.
4. United Nations (2023) For a livable climate: Net-zero commitments must be backed by credible action <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>



**Key Priorities**

The key priorities identified by the Environment and Emergency Committee are:

- 1. To retrofit our buildings to reach Carbon Net Zero (1.2 and 1.3)
- 2. To transition our fleet of vehicles and tools to electric (1.5.1)
- 3. To only use renewable sources of energy (1.2 and 1.3)
- 4. To set initial carbon emission baselines and define how we measure and reduce Scopes 1, 2, and 3 (1.1)
- 5. Explore opportunities for local natural carbon offsetting (3.3.1)
- 6. Commit to increasing biodiversity across St Neots (2.1.4 and 3.3.1)
- 7. Engage with residents and businesses to join us on our Net Zero journey (2.1.2; 2.1.3; and 2.2.1)

1	<b>Buildings and SNTC Business</b>
<b>Introduction:</b> This section of the Climate Action Plan introduces the actions St Neots Town Council will be taking with regards our buildings and business. This includes both the buildings and assets that we own, and the buildings and assets that we use, as well as the services that we provide to the town, and our internal procurement. We will understand our current greenhouse gas emissions in order that we can work to reduce our footprint. We will ask our staff and Councillors to commit to our aspirations of working towards Net Zero by 2030, so that they, too, lessen their impact. We will work alongside our partner agencies and seek support from internal and external professionals on our journey.	
<b>Progress 2024/2025</b> To be completed at annual revision	

Reference Number	Action	Rationale	Priority	Ease of implementation (1 = easy; 5 = hard)	Costs and payback (where applicable)	Progress
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Getting Started</b>					
1.1.1	Set the Council's emissions baseline and continue to review and report on it annually (including F-gas leakage and emissions)	Necessary for us to establish current greenhouse gas output (includes Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide, and F Gases) to understand where reductions are required	High	2	N/A	In progress – utilising the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool to develop this
1.1.2	Develop an approach to capturing carbon emissions in reports and business case development	To ensure a robust application of our Net Zero goal from the outset of project development	Medium	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.3	Set a carbon budget (exponential) that, as a minimum, aligns with the UK Governments carbon budgets and future budget cycles	To allow measurement in tonnage, making target for Net Zero more tangible	High	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.4	Develop a communications plan for the CAP (internal and external)	To facilitate understanding and importance of the need for and application of our climate and environmental goals	High	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.5	Understand sources and availability of data for scope 3 reporting	Scope 3 is the most difficult scope to set a baseline for and have influence over. Wider research is required to mitigate these issues	High	2	N/A	Not started

1.2	Our Buildings					
1.2.1	<p>Monitor our energy use and use EPC certificates to inform, analyse, and improve on our own estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved insulation</li> <li>Improved heating efficiency</li> <li>Improved windows</li> <li>Opportunities for adding solar panels and wind turbines</li> <li>Opportunities for changing heating (air/ground source heat pumps; thermostatic valves; infrared heating)</li> <li>Switch to LED light bulbs</li> </ul>	<p>Energy bills and EPC's support with setting a baseline from which to improve our estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce heat loss</li> <li>Reduce heat waste</li> <li>Reduced heat loss</li> <li>Able to generate our own renewable energy for electricity, reducing reliance on grid</li> <li>Able to generate our own heat, reducing fossil fuel and grid reliance (air/ground source heat pumps); less heat waste</li> <li>Reduced electricity use</li> </ul>	High	4	Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost and payback. Ranges from <£500 with short payback, to >£20,000 with 10+ years payback, hence, will require individual assessment	EPC assessments of all our properties completed March-April 2024.
1.2.2	<p>Ensure appropriate waste management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recycling bins</li> <li>Collection points for soft plastics, light bulbs, batteries, terracycle products</li> </ul>	Reduced waste means reduced greenhouse gas emissions (in landfill) and reduced need for fossil fuels to produce new products	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.3	Secure cycle parking with CCTV to promote active travel to our venues	Reduces emissions of visitors and staff; CCTV to reduce risk of bike theft and so build confidence in cycle safety	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.4	Install EV charging point(s) at our buildings	To support transition to electric vehicles for our visitors and staff	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.5	Explore opportunities for including additional climate-resilient building structures, including:	As our climate continues to warm, it is preferable to make our buildings more heat tolerable (for the safety of	Medium	3	Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost	Not started

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living walls (10m+ of greenery on the front of buildings can reduce surface temps by up to 5°C)</li> <li>• Allow openings for cross-ventilation</li> <li>• Louvered shade structures</li> <li>• Lime-based whitewash on roofs</li> <li>• Sedum roofs</li> </ul>	visitors and staff) rather than switch on air conditioning (releases F gases) or fans (consume electricity). Adding greenery to buildings not only helps with cooling, but structures can act as carbon sinks and provide habitats for improved biodiversity			and payback	
1.2.6	<p>Reduce water waste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water saving blocks in toilets</li> <li>• Grey water capture for watering planters/gardens or for general external cleaning (i.e., washing decking/paving)</li> </ul>	As our climate continues to warm and our population continues to increase, clean water availability will reduce. Reducing waste will reduce pressure on this vital resource	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.3	The Buildings We Use					
1.3.1	<p>Monitor our energy use and use EPC certificates to inform, analyse, and improve on the buildings we utilise, working with HDC (owners) to ensure improvements come to fruition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved insulation</li> <li>• Improved heating efficiency</li> <li>• Improved windows</li> <li>• Opportunities for adding solar panels and wind turbines</li> <li>• Opportunities for changing heating (air/ground source heat pumps; thermostatic valves; infrared heating)</li> <li>• Switch to LED light bulbs</li> </ul>	<p>Energy bills and EPC's support with setting a baseline from which to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings we use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce heat loss</li> <li>• Reduce heat waste</li> <li>• Reduced heat loss</li> <li>• Able to generate our own renewable energy for electricity, reducing reliance on grid</li> <li>• Able to generate our own heat, reducing fossil fuel and grid reliance (air/ground source heat pumps); less heat waste</li> <li>• Reduced electricity use</li> </ul>	High	4	<p>Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost and payback. Ranges from &lt;£500 with short payback, to &gt;£20,000 with 10+ year payback, hence, will require individual assessment</p>	<p>Not started. We can monitor our own energy use, but the EPC's are the responsibility of the landlord. We will need to work with HDC with regards EPC's and retrofitting</p>
1.3.2	<p>Ensure appropriate waste management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling bins</li> <li>• Collection points for soft plastics, light bulbs, batteries, terracycle products</li> <li>• Appropriate green waste disposal</li> <li>• Appropriate food waste disposal</li> </ul>	<p>Reduced waste means reduced greenhouse gas emissions (in landfill) and reduced need for fossil fuels to produce new products</p>	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.3.3	<p>Secure cycle parking with CCTV to promote active travel to our venues</p>	<p>Reduces emissions of visitors and staff; CCTV to reduce risk of bike theft and so build confidence in cycle safety</p>	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.3.4	Install EV charging point(s) and influence our partners to do the same	To support transition to electric vehicles for our visitors and staff	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.3.5	Explore opportunities for including additional climate-resilient building structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living walls (10m+ of greenery on the front of buildings can reduce surface temps by up to 5°C)</li> <li>Allow openings for cross-ventilation</li> <li>Louvered shade structures</li> <li>Lime-based whitewash on roofs</li> </ul>	As our climate continues to warm, it is preferable to make our buildings more heat tolerable (for the safety of visitors and staff) rather than switch on air conditioning (releases F gases) or fans (consume electricity)	Medium (High for Priory Centre due to opportunity to include in development plans)	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started - waiting for meeting with Priory Centre developers once initial plans are approved
1.3.6	Reduce water waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water saving blocks in toilets</li> <li>Grey water capture for watering planters/gardens or for general external cleaning (i.e., washing decking/paving)</li> </ul>	As our climate continues to warm and our population continues to increase, clean water availability will reduce. Reducing waste will reduce pressure on this vital resource	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Other Assets</b>					
1.4.1	Ensure current bulbs are replaced with LED bulbs as they fail in our street lighting	Require less energy consumption	Medium	1	TBC	Progress TBC
1.4.2	Consider opportunities for installing EV chargers on street lamp posts	To support transition to electric vehicles for our community	Low	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.4.3	Add bee stops to bus stops	Improve biodiversity and safeguard nature by establishing wildlife corridors	Medium	1	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

<b>1.5</b>	<b>Operations</b>					
1.5.1	<p>Undertake a fleet review to plan a reduction in fossil fuel use in Council vehicles and equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce mileage of commercial vehicles</li> <li>• Reduce weight of commercial vehicles</li> <li>• Use clean energy vehicles/equipment where possible (pedal/e-bikes, EV, hydrogen, e-lawnmowers, etc.) – replace when current vehicles reach end-of-life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current fleet consists of mix-powered vehicles and equipment. Develop a test that informs our decision on how and when to transition from fossil fuel vehicles and equipment to electric.</li> <li>• Reduce the weight and mileage of our vehicles to reduce energy use and thus lower their carbon impact</li> </ul>	High	3	<p>TBC – variable for each vehicle/item</p> <p>Payback TBC – weight and mileage reduction will immediately payback; replacement will not payback financially</p>	<p>In progress. Full fleet review to be undertaken as part of establishing carbon baseline.</p> <p>1x electric van, all electric strimmers, and electric mini lawnmowers in place already</p>
1.5.2	<p>Develop an Environmental Asset Management Plan for our green spaces, parks and cemeteries. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mowing schedules - Either mow or don't mow - avoid cutting long grass in autumn</li> <li>• Using native hedging instead of/ as well as fencing where possible</li> <li>• On-site rainwater harvesting/built-in reservoirs for planters</li> <li>• Drought-resilient planting options</li> <li>• Perennials rather than annuals biennials</li> <li>• End-of-season plant sales (to recycle bedding plants</li> </ul>	<p>To meet our biodiversity and safeguarding nature objectives in the face of the ecological emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long grass will have larvae and pupae in it bedded down for winter which will be destroyed</li> <li>• Native hedging supports biodiversity and nature recovery</li> <li>• Reduces need to transport water from the river over distances</li> <li>• Saves water and Ops time</li> <li>• Saves water and Ops time</li> <li>• Saves Ops time; less plants entering waste so</li> </ul>	High	3	<p>TBC – variable costs</p> <p>Payback – most will payback in terms of reduced Ops workload and reduced mileage for team and water transport</p>	Not started

	where still in use)	less emissions from breakdown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stops plants entering waste system so less emissions from breakdown</li> </ul>				
1.5.3	Reduction in pesticide use (review all pesticide use, not just Glyphosate)	Pesticides not only kill weeds, but the chemicals leach into the soil and water supply, harming wildlife	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress – use has been reduced but needs further review
1.5.4	Place hedgehog warning stickers on strimmers	To remind Ops staff of risk to wildlife	Medium	1	TBC Payback N/A	01/03/2024 Not started
1.5.5	Use of polywood and recycled materials in repairs and maintenance (i.e., in public benches)	To reduce reliance on new fossil fuel products	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Procurement and Services We Use</b>					
1.6.1	Printing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce printing to essential only</li> <li>Shift to online agenda's for all Council meetings (where possible – members should not be excluded from participating due to this shift, so hard copy format will still be available for those who need it)</li> <li>Shift to e-storage and e-signing of documents</li> <li>Purchase recycled paper for printing and use this for any printing that will not be for public viewing</li> </ul>	We use 105 reams of paper per year, which is 52,500 sheets of paper. This is approximately 5 trees a year. The majority of this printing is for hard-copy agendas. A shift away from printing will reduce our environmental impact and costs.	High	1	Costs – overall costs should reduce (less paper and printer ink required). Recycled paper costs more than non-recycled paper but this should be negated if less is used. Additional costs incurred if Councillors require devices/equipment	Not started



1.6.2	Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review eco credentials of services i.e., energy suppliers, banks, contractors, goods suppliers, etc.</li> <li>Contractors have a 'zero to landfill' policy</li> </ul>	Will support our aims to reduce our Scope 3 emissions	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress – energy supplier is confirmed as fully renewable
1.6.3	Products and furniture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buy local, fair-trade, recycled, repairable and sustainable products/furniture where possible</li> <li>Environmentally friendly toilet roll, paper towels, soap, cleaning products, etc.</li> <li>Sustainable disposal of equipment and products that we use</li> <li>Sourcing of sustainable bedding plants</li> </ul>	Will support our aims to reduce our Scope 3 emissions	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.6.4	Encourage staff to use Ecosia search engine	Ecosia plant trees using the ad revenue from searches. N.B., not to be used as a means of carbon offsetting.	Medium	1	N/A	Not started
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Staff and Councillors</b>					
1.7.1	Assess carbon impact of staff office commute and encourage a shift to sustainable commuting such as active travel, use of public transport, and lift sharing	To reduce our Scope 3 emissions, and to lead by example	Medium	2	N/A	Not started

1.7.2	Investigate the purchase of e-bikes for staff use to travel between sites. E-cargo-bikes can also be considered for transporting equipment etc.	To reduce use of private/individual vehicles when travelling between sites	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.7.3	All staff and Councillors to complete training on climate change, environmental impact, carbon literacy (or similar)	To increase understanding of climate change and environmental issues and the importance of changing our behaviours	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Events, Markets, and Priory Centre Café (PCC)</b>					
1.8.1	Waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce waste at events and make events and the PCC plastic-and-polystyrene free, encouraging traders to also limit their use of single-use plastic</li> <li>• Ensure recycling bins are available at all events</li> <li>• Ensure litter picking is always completed after events/markets</li> </ul>	Reduce environmental impact of all our events, by reducing need for new fossil fuel products, and preventing harm to our environment from improper disposal of waste	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.8.2	<p>Food and trade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use local food and suppliers for events and PCC, and prioritise local markets traders (within 30 miles of St Neots)</li> <li>• Ensure vegan and vegetarian food options are available at all events and at PCC. Reduce availability of the foods that have the biggest negative impact on the environment (beef, lamb, and pork)</li> <li>• Hold events for The Great Big Green Week to engage the community and local businesses with greener-living. As part of this, host an eco fair which sells only vegan food and sustainable products</li> </ul>	Reduce environmental impact from our trader's vehicle emissions and from the meat/dairy industry	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress
1.8.3	<p>Environmentally harmful practices - fireworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore replacing firework displays with environmentally friendly displays such as video projection mapping</li> </ul>	Reduce environmental impact of pollutants and harm to wildlife	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.8.4	<p>Environmentally harmful practices - other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ban balloons at events</li> <li>• Invest in reusable banners</li> <li>• Invest in deposit cups for events</li> </ul>	Reduce environmental impact of pollutants and harm to wildlife (balloons); reduce need for new fossil fuel production	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress

1.8.5	Hold public showings of climate films/documentaries with Q&A sessions. Support production of a local environmental play	To support community access to climate change and environmental information	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.8.6	Hold cycling and walking events	To encourage active travel	Low	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>1.9</b>	<b>Committees</b>					
1.9.1	<p>Develop an environmental-proofing strategy for all policy decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider environmental implications of all Council projects and decisions at the proposal stage</li> <li>Ask grant applicants to consider the environmental impact of their proposals and ensure this is considered when reviewing the application</li> <li>Request that all development, be it housing, commercial, or infrastructure, is designed and delivered in a way that contributes to nature's recovery, not its decline</li> <li>Encourage development to be located in areas which are less important for nature and which also delivers an overall improvement in the natural world (a 'net biodiversity gain')</li> </ul>	To safeguard the future of St Neots' biodiversity and ensure an easy transition away from fossil fuels is possible for our residents	High	4	N/A	Not started

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage new developments have walking and cycling links and bike storage options</li> <li>• Request that new houses include bee bricks and swift houses. New developments to include ponds, wildlife corridors and native hedgerows at the design stage</li> <li>• Ground source and air source heat pumps and solar panels highlighted as being encouraged for all new homes</li> <li>• Establish a Council Community Grant Scheme which funds only green initiatives</li> </ul>					
<b>1.10</b>	<b>Networking and Wider Engagement</b>					
1.10.1	Link in with Environmental/Climate Teams at CPCA, CCC, and HDC	To share knowledge and resources	High	1	N/A	In progress
1.10.2	Join Global Covenant of Mayors	To share knowledge and resources	Low	1	N/A	Not started
1.10.3	Source wider funding opportunities	To access additional funding to support our efforts for a more sustainable St Neots	Medium	2	N/A	In progress
1.10.4	Work with twin town (Faches Thumesnil)	To share knowledge and resources	Low	3	N/A	Not started

1.10.5	Support wider promotional campaigns (i.e., the Great Big Green Week)	Share the work of other organisations with our community, enabling access to wider information, whilst demonstrating our commitment to tackling environmental issues	Medium	1	N/A	In progress
1.10.6	Partnership working with local developers	To safeguard the future of St Neots' sustainability and biodiversity and ensure an easy transition away from fossil fuels is possible for our residents	High	3	N/A	Not started

2	St Neots Town
	<p><b>Introduction:</b>  This section of the Climate Action Plan sets out how St Neots Town Council will support our residents and businesses to work towards our shared aspirations towards Net Zero by 2030. Here, we will introduce the actions we will be taking to ensure the St Neots community have access to opportunities to reduce their own environmental impact, whilst simultaneously benefitting their long-term health and finances. We will ask our residents and business owners to join us in celebrating the positive impacts of committing to a healthier and more sustainable St Neots for us all.</p>
	<p><b>Progress 2024/2025:</b>  To be completed at annual revision</p>

Reference Number	Action	Rationale	Priority	Ease of implementation (1 = easy; 5 = hard)	Costs and payback (where applicable)	Progress
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Residents and Community</b>					
2.1.1	Update Neighbourhood Plan to include climate and biodiversity initiatives	To safeguard the future of St Neots' nature and ability to thrive in a rapidly changing climate	High	3	N/A	Not started
2.1.2	Host/support local sustainability initiatives, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair cafes</li> <li>• Toy and tool libraries</li> <li>• Clothes swishes</li> <li>• Climate action group(s)</li> <li>• 'Green Heroes' meetings and prizes for biggest contributor to net zero/environmental improvement</li> <li>• Carbon 'weight-watchers' group / low-carbon programme</li> <li>• Green opportunities for young people</li> <li>• Competitions for initiatives, such as prizes for most improved street (in terms of retrofitting) and a postcode lottery for initiatives</li> <li>• Litter picking groups</li> <li>• Hedgehog streets</li> <li>• Community fridge</li> <li>• Community composting</li> <li>• Expansion of allotments</li> <li>• E-bike hire initiative (link</li> </ul>	Improve sustainability for St Neots residents for environmental and cost reasons; engage community with sustainability initiatives to support their transition to lower fossil fuel dependence; support community to improve biodiversity and food availability	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress



	with library and GP surgeries?) • Water stations					
2.1.3	Building community resilience: • Host public meetings with Q&A's • Promote retrofitting schemes and funding options • Support open days for eco homes • Carry out thermal imaging of homes to support understanding of importance of retrofitting • Educate on intricate links between climate change, health, wellbeing, and finances • Develop green corridors to keep pedestrians and cyclists out of direct sun • Water fountains for evaporative cooling • Flood prevention group and support	Support residents to understand the climate emergency and to feel empowered to make changes which will improve their resilience to climate change	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
2.1.4	Ensuring everyone living in St Neots has doorstep access to nature (within 10 minutes of home)	To improve the biodiversity of St Neots, and the health and wellbeing of our residents	Medium	1	N/A (payback will be to town, residents and NHS)	Not started
2.1.5	Communicate regular updates on SNTC environmental progress plus useful links and advice	To ensure residents are kept abreast of developments and can hold us accountable; to support residents to make	Medium	2	N/A	In progress

		environmentally sound decisions				
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Business</b>					
2.2.1	Engage with local businesses to explore ways in which they can reduce their own and their customer's carbon footprint	To contribute to a Net Zero St Neots	Low	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.2	To support creation of a freight transport depot outside of town (Neighbourhood Delivery Hub)	To reduce emissions within the town centre, improving the health of local residents	Low	5	N/A	Not started
2.2.3	Company-sponsored patches of sidewalk - remove grass and plant up with low-maintenance shrubs	To improve biodiversity whilst improving morale of staff at local businesses, fostering sense of community, and reducing burden on Ops Team who can then focus on other areas of improving St Neots	Low	3	N/A	Not started
2.2.4	Encourage blister pack collection points	Encourage recycling locally	Medium	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.5	Monitor and challenge number of fast food outlets (at planning stage)	Reduce impact of a carbon-heavy industry	Low	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.6	Local farm engagement - open farm event for a low carbon farm example	To encourage our local farmers to engage with our ambitions to make St Neots net zero and improve biodiversity and food security	Low	3	N/A	Not started
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Transport</b>					
2.3.1	Active travel: • Promote pedestrian priority over vehicles in	To reduce pollution within the town centre and contribute to efforts to	Medium	3	N/A	Not started

	<p>the town centre to encourage use of the bypass (once A428 works complete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise activities to raise profile of cycling in St Neots</li> <li>• Secure bike parking in town</li> <li>• Support and promote e-cargo bike delivery scheme</li> <li>• Promote and organize active travel challenge with local schools</li> <li>• Promote paths and walking routes</li> </ul>	reduce St Neots' carbon footprint. Tackle, in conjunction with other organisations, the barriers to active travel.				
2.3.2	EV chargers on lampposts	To encourage transition away from fossil fuels by making EV charging more accessible	Low	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Renewable Energy</b>					
2.4.1	Support community hydro-power, wind power, and solar schemes	To reduce local reliance on fossil fuels and ensure energy security through local sustainable generation	Medium	2	N/A	In progress

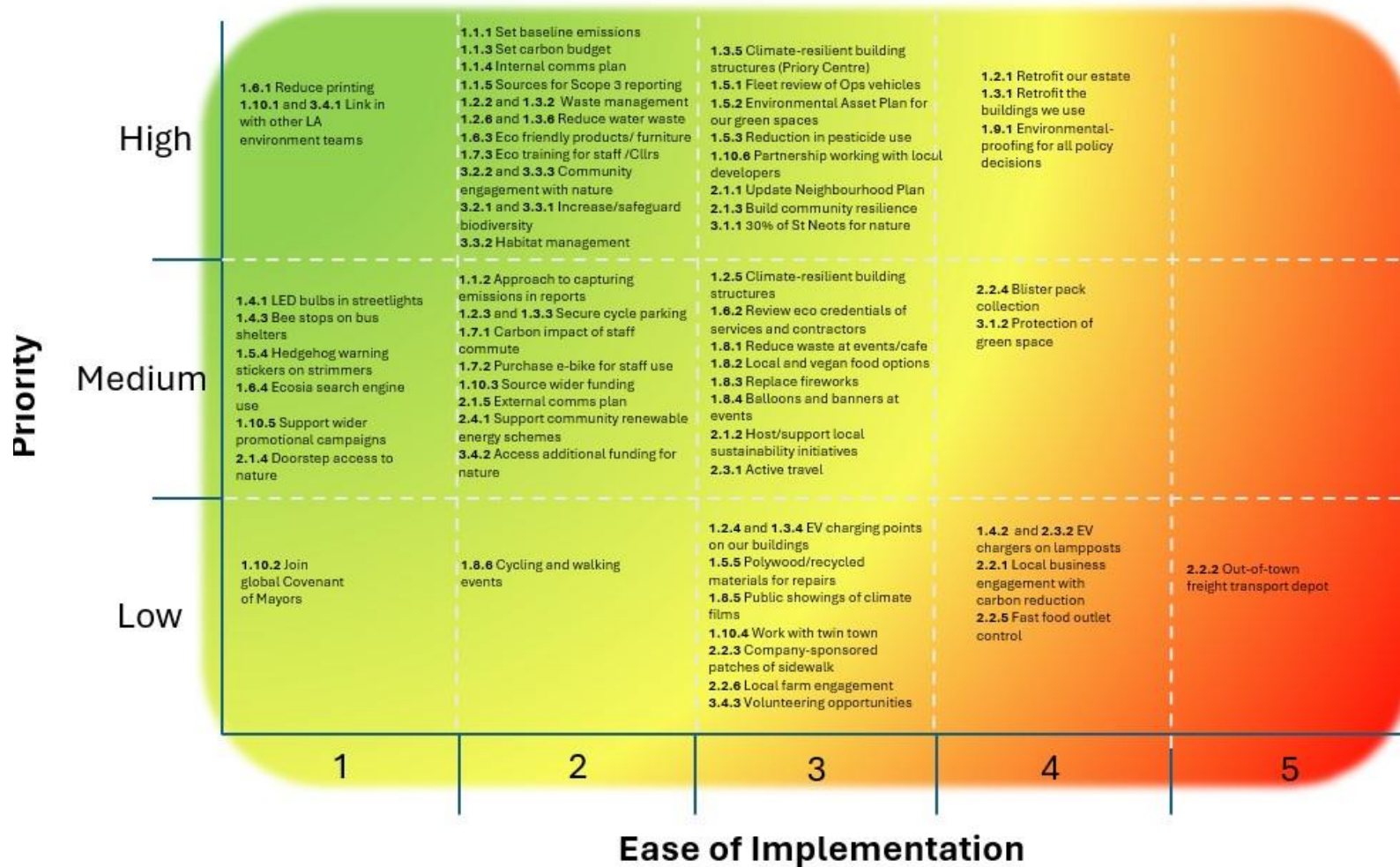
<b>3</b>	<b>Local Environment</b>					
	<p><b>Introduction:</b>  This section of the Climate Action Plan sets out how St Neots Town Council will make space for our local nature, giving priority to improving and protecting biodiversity. Here, we will introduce the actions we will be taking to ensure nature is encouraged to thrive, both for the benefit of our residents and town, and for the benefit of the plants, animals, and fungi that call St Neots home. We will work with partner agencies and seek advice and support from internal and external professionals to get this right. We will also ask the St Neots community to champion and celebrate the wildlife that lives all around them.</p>					
	<p><b>Progress 2024/2025</b>  To be completed at annual revision</p>					
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Ease of implementation 1 = easy; 5 = hard)</b>	<b>Costs and payback (where applicable)</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Protection of SNTC Land for Biodiversity and Nature Restoration</b>					
3.1.1	30% of St Neots for nature by 2030 (UK has committed 30% of land for nature by 2030)	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress
3.1.2	Protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the amount of public green space we own so we can protect it</li> <li>Promote legal protection of our parks</li> </ul>	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	Medium	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

<b>3.2</b>	<b>Fauna (Animals)</b>					
3.2.1	Increase/safeguard biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bug corridors</li> <li>• Wildlife corridors and eco bridges</li> <li>• Swift and bee boxes on buildings</li> <li>• Install bird &amp; bat boxes</li> <li>• Bug hotels, deadwood trees, and log piles</li> <li>• Hedgehog houses</li> <li>• Bee stops on bus stop roofs</li> </ul>	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
3.2.2	Community Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community wildlife mapping project - involve residents and schools to complete surveys to establish a biodiversity baseline for the town and its spaces</li> <li>• Signage and interpretation boards to provide information about biodiversity</li> <li>• Engagement with children and young people about biodiversity</li> </ul>	Set baselines for our current biodiversity; engage our community to do their bit to improve our biodiversity and environment; to facilitate understanding of our work and commitment to tackling the ecological emergency	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Flora (Plant Life) and Fungi</b>					
3.3.1	Increase/safeguard biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and targets for native tree planting</li> <li>• Native hedgerows instead of fences</li> <li>• Perennials rather than</li> </ul>	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues; also supports our ambition to be Net Zero by providing local, meaningful, carbon offsetting through carbon	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	In progress

	annuals or biennials in displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant bulbs and native grasses</li> <li>• Drought-resilient planting options</li> <li>• Rooftop gardens</li> <li>• Street trees and trees in grey spaces</li> <li>• Explore further locations for rewilding</li> <li>• Sponge gardens / rain gardens / bioswales</li> </ul>	sequestration				
3.3.2	<b>Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built-in water reservoirs for plant pots etc. to reduce need for watering</li> <li>• Pesticide amnesty for town</li> <li>• Leave blackberry bushes uncut until fruiting has finished</li> <li>• Leave deadwood in-situ</li> </ul>	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues; reduce pollution from pesticide runoff	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
3.3.3	<b>Community Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with children and young people about biodiversity</li> <li>• Tree guardian scheme</li> <li>• Increased allotments</li> <li>• Community orchards and gardens</li> <li>• Composting in parks etc.</li> <li>• Facilitate conversations with local farmers to discuss restorative and rewilding agriculture among St Neots' farming community; also trying to discourage use of</li> </ul>	Engage our local community to care about our environment and to understand the importance of improving biodiversity; providing residents with the life skills to support resilience against food shortages	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

	pesticides and monoculture					
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Networking and Wider Engagement</b>					
3.4.1	Link in with Environmental/Climate Teams at CPCA, CCC, and HDC	To share knowledge and resources	High	1	N/A	In progress
3.4.2	Source wider funding opportunities	To access additional funding to support our efforts for a more biodiverse St Neots	Medium	2	N/A	In progress
3.4.3	Develop volunteering opportunities – (i.e., ARU link-up)	To share knowledge and gain access to potential volunteers/interns	Low	3	N/A	Not started

## Prioritisation Matrix for Proposed Actions





## Grants Sub-Committee

**Present:** Committee Members

Cllrs Cooper-Marsh (Chairperson) Banks, Chapman, Collins, Goodman, Maslen and Slade

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer

**Absent:** Cllrs Kumar, Hitchin, Pitt

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Grants sub-committee** held on **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were 14 members of the public present who addressed the committee on grant applications being considered by the committee. Each member of the public spoke at the time their grant application was considered.

The Chairperson of Loves Farm Residents Association addressed the Council to thank them for the funding provided to the organisation. They explained the work and activities the Association had undertaken with the funds provided.

### ACTIONS

**001 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Kumar, Hitchin and Pitt.

Admin

**002 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Slade declared an interest in the St Neots Museum application due to a professional contract with the Museum and would not vote on the item.

Cllr Chapman declared an interest as a member of the Eatons Association and would not vote on that item.

Cllr Goodman declared an interest in the Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre as a Town Council appointed representative.

**003 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve of the minutes of the sub-committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

**004 RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the sub-committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

**005 RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the sub-committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

**006 Grant Budget Summary**

Members noted the summary of grants awarded and the level of grant funding available for the current financial year.

**RESOLVED** to approve payment of the £1,400 Community Association grant to the Eatons Community Association for 2024/25.

**007 Grant Aid Applications**

Members received and considered grant applications as follows;

**008 RESOLVED** to award £400 to the St Neots and District Gardening Club towards the 2024 annual show. RFO

**009 RESOLVED** to award £300.00 grant funding to 2<sup>nd</sup> Eynesbury Girl Guides to provide a coach transfer to transport four guide units to a regional guiding event in July 2024. RFO

**010 RESOLVED** to award £1,900.79 to Loves Farm House for the purchase of a commercial refrigerator unit. RFO

*Members asked for feedback to be given to the organisation that they consider establishing sinking funds.*

**011 RESOLVED** to award £2,500 to St Neots Lawn Tennis Club towards the building renovations as part of improving accessibility, inclusivity and environmental impact. RFO

**012 RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to award £10,000 to Money Advice St Neots towards the provision of drop-in services every Thursday in St Neots and that the Town Council confirm whether funding comes from the 2024-25 Grant Aid budget or the Council's General Reserves. RFO

*It is recognised the new grants policy did not allow running costs but that this year was being treated as a transitional year while the policy and implications of its conditions were bedded in. The costs associated with the grant were specific to the delivery of the drop-in sessions project.*

**013 RESOLVED** to award £5,000 to Walking with Eris towards a pilot transition project to deliver coaching sessions to unemployed residents seeking to secure employment.

*Members sought confirmation that the funding provided will only be for the service of St Neots parish and residents.* RFO

**014 RESOLVED** to award £4,668.63 to St Neots Museum towards the 2024 St Neots Living History Festival. RFO

**015 RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to award £7,400 to Huntingdon Volunteer Centre towards the delivery and progression of the St Neots Car Scheme and associated support services. RFO

### 016 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Grants Sub-Committee meeting was to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 subject to a review of the grant aid scheme by the Finance & Governance Committee.

.....  
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

DRAFT

## Finance & Governance Committee

**Present:** Cllrs Banks, Chapman, Collins, Goodman, Cooper-Marsh (Chair), Maslen, and Slade

**Absent:** Cllrs Hitchin, Kumar and Pitt

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Finance & Governance committee** held on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June** at **7.30pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

### ACTIONS

**010 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hitchin, Kumar and Pitt.

Admin

**011 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs declared an interest in agenda item

**012 Election of Deputy Chairperson**

The Chairperson called for nominations for the role of Deputy Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee for the 2024-25 Council year.

Admin

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Chapman is appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee for the 2024-25 Council year.

**013 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 as a true and accurate record subject to amending that Cllr Collins had given apologies.

**014 Payments**

The Chairperson took committee members through each page of the payments.

A Member queried a payment to Balfour Beatty, and it was confirmed the payment related to street light repair and replacement works at School Lane, Eynesbury.

Members received and noted payments for April 2024.

**015 Year End Accounts 31st March 2024**

Members received and noted the following year end account documents;

- i) Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/23 Summary (AGAR)
- ii) Statutory Income and Expenditure
- iii) Statutory Balance Sheet
- iv) Income and Expenditure versus budget summary

**016 Year End Reserves Reconciliations 31st March 2024**

- i) Members received and noted the Reserves Reconciliation for the financial year 2023/24.

- 017 ii) Members received and noted CIL reserves held by the Council and spend by dates associated with those reserves. Noted upcoming date and projects which would use that fund.

- 018 iii) Members received and noted earmarked reserves as at 31st March 2024.

**019 Year End Bank and Investment Reconciliations 31st March 2024**

- i) Members received and noted bank and investment reconciliation (AGAR box 8)
- ii) Members received and noted the Public Works Loan Board Statement (AGAR box 9). It was explained that the loan was for the Eatons Community Centre. Members asked that a new settlement figure and supporting report be brought to the next committee meeting.

**020 Internal Audit Report**

Members received and noted the final 2023-24 Internal Audit report.

Members expressed thanks to all those involved in the accounting and governance process.

**021 Citizen's Advice Bureau Funding**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on funding provided to the Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire and consider any further funding for the 2024/25 financial year alongside information from Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) on funding provided to CARC and the service this delivers. The Clerk advised Members that HDC had informed him they were not able to share the SLA they have with CARC.

Members discussed potential funding for CAB to continue to fund one day a week's face to face service in St Neots. This would be in addition to the one day a week face to face service funded by HDC.

Members discussed potential funding at length, key points included;

- A Member expressed concern that MAST and CARC are delivering the same type of service and there is risk of duplication.
- A Member commented that the CARC (CAB) offer a lot more than just financial advice and that by making referrals to MAST it takes pressure off CAB and allows them to deliver more.
- A Member commented they were minded supporting the funding for CAB as it gives double the face-to-face provision in the town.
- Members commented on the need for face-to-face service and the lack of such a service from CAB is why organisations like MAST are coming forward.

- The SLA between HDC and CARC always used to be in public domain, a member stated they felt HDC should be sharing the contents of the agreement with the Council.
- A Councillor commented that it is a good value service with specialised knowledge.

It was Proposed and seconded to recommend that the Council provide a further £7,500 in grant funding to CARC to facilitate one day a week's face-to-face CAB advice service in St Neots.

An amendment was proposed that if the Council are minded provide further funding it is paid and reviewed on a quarterly basis, with a further payment of £2,500 per quarter for the remainder of the year. The amendment was not accepted by the proposer of the motion.

The amendment was not seconded.

The Chairperson called for a vote on the proposal that the Council provide a further £7,500 in grant funding to CARC to facilitate one day a week's face-to-face CAB advice service in St Neots.

The proposal was not carried.

#### **021 CIL Project Funding**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on CIL funding and consider recommendations to the Council on availability of funds for projects the Council may be minded providing funds for.

The report advised the committee that a funding request from St Neots Aquatic and Leisure for £650,000 for the build of a new splash park on the former swimming pool land was due to come back to the Council for consideration and the committee was asked to consider and advise if the Council had funding available to consider the request.

Members noted that the committee had previously put forward a number of conditions that would need to be met which had been resolved by the committee when the funding request was last considered and deferred. These conditions still stand and the Full Council would need to be satisfied they had been met.

Proposed and seconded to approve the officer's recommendation in the report.

A Member expressed concern that there had been no sight of legal contracts, agreements and consent from the private company involved in the operation, Charity Commission approval, architect site condition and contamination surveys, how charges would be controlled and other documents that they saw as key. It was responded that it would be for the Full Council to decide if the conditions set out in its resolution had been met and if the Council felt it had suitable information and assurances to make a decision on the funding with the documents and information the applicant had put forward.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that should the Full Council be minded providing any funding to the proposed splash park project that any such funding come from CIL reserves subject to the conditions previously recommended by the committee and agreed by the Council for consideration of project funding are satisfied.

**022 Town Council Website**

Members received and consider a recommendation from the Promotion and Events Working Group on allocating £4,000 in unbudgeted expenditure to deliver a new Council website design.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that a budget of £4,000 be allocated to the redesign of the Town Council website. That £1,247 in earmarked reserves for website programming be allocated to the project, along with £2,753 from the General Reserves.

**023 Armed Forces Day**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on anticipated overspend in the Armed Forces Day budget as a result of unexpected costs arising from new Safety Advisory Group requirements for the event.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** allocating £2,626 from the AFD earmarked reserves towards the increased health and safety cost of running the 2024 event and noting a resulting overspend of £1,244 which would come from the Council's General Reserve.

**024 General Reserves Policy**

Members received and reviewed the Council's adopted General Reserves Policy and noted the required 3-to-6-month reserve level based on the Council's current precept. Expenditure over the 6-month reserve level needs to be considered and allocated to projects and ear marked reserves.

**RESOLVED** to accept the amended General Reserve Policy.

It was agreed to bring a report to the next committee on allocation of general reserves.

**025 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the date of the next scheduled Finance and Governance Committee meeting would be 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7:15pm.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

**St Neots Town Council**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Website Improvement Motion</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Events and Communications Officer</b>

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval of a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committees in relation to a recommendation from the Promotion and Events Committee that the Council allocates £4,000 in funding for the redesign of the Town Council website.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 RECOMMENDED that a budget of £4,000 be allocated to the redesign of the Town Council website. That £1,247 in earmarked reserves for website programming be allocated to the project, along with £2,753 from the General Reserves.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The recommendation from the Promotion and Events Committee has arisen from a Member submitted motion which is attached to this report. **(APPENDIX A)**
- 3.2 The recommendation was supported by the Finance and Governance Committee who recommended the allocation of funding from earmarked reserves and general reserves.

**4. Information**

- 4.1 Please see the attached Member Motion form for information.
- 4.2 The Promotion and Events Committee supported the motion to redesign the Council website as part of improving the Council's communications.
- 4.3 Improvement of the Council website was previously identified as a key ambition of the Council and forms part of the current Strategic Plan.
- 4.4 Members are asked to consider the motion and the proposal to allocate £4,000 to redesigning and launching the Council website.

**5. Financial Information**

- 5.1 The Council has an annual revenue budget of £2,000 for the maintenance of licencing of the Town Council's website/s. This is not sufficient to cover costs of re-designing the website.
- 5.2 The Council has a earmarked reserve of £1,247 for website programming which could be allocated towards the proposed £4,000 redesign budget.



- 5.3 Further funding beyond the earmarked reserve would need to be considered and approved from the Council's General Reserves.

## 6. Legal Powers

- 6.1 St Neots Town Council is eligible for and holds the General Power of Competence (GPOC). The GPOC is a power of first resort and allows the Council to do anything an individual can legally do.

# APPENDIX A

## Member Motion – Submission Form

Please complete the below table, providing as much information as possible and return this to the Town Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting at which you wish the motion to be presented.

To be tabled at which committee?	Promotion and Events Committee
Date of meeting at which to be tabled <sup>1</sup> :	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Title of Motion:	
Proposed by:	Richard Slade
Seconded by (if applicable):	
Proposed Resolution:	Acquisition of new theme for St Neots Town Council website
Background/Information: (provided by the proposer)	<p>St Neots Town Council recognises the critical role of a robust online platform in effectively serving our community. Our current website falls short in meeting the evolving needs of our constituents for accessible and user-friendly digital services and information dissemination.</p> <p>To address this issue, I propose the acquisition of a new theme using our existing Content Management System (CMS) for the redevelopment of the St Neots Town Council website. This initiative aims to enhance user experience, accessibility, and overall functionality while reflecting the professionalism and commitment of our council.</p> <p>Benefits of a proposed new theme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved User Experience: A modern and intuitive website design will make it easier for residents to find information and access services online.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Standing Order 9b – no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover had given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least three clear days before the meeting subject to standing order 10a. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced Accessibility: WCA 2.1AA and GDPR compliant with accessibility standards will ensure that our website is usable by individuals with disabilities, promoting inclusivity and equitable access to information.</li> <li>Streamlined Content Management System: A new CMS-based theme will empower council staff to easily update and manage website content, facilitating timely information dissemination and keeping residents informed of council activities and initiatives.</li> <li>Increased Efficiency: Modern website features and functionalities will streamline online transactions and interactions, reducing administrative burdens and improving efficiency in delivering services to our community.</li> <li>Professional Image: A visually appealing and professionally designed website will enhance the council's public image and credibility, instilling trust and confidence among residents and stakeholders.</li> <li>The proposed budget for this project shall not exceed £4,000 in the first year, inclusive of theme acquisition, necessary plugins, customization, and any associated expenses. The website redevelopment project is anticipated to be completed within six months from the date of system acquisition.</li> <li>I propose that the Town Clerk makes the selection and acquisition process of the CMS-based theme, ensuring alignment with council requirements and compatibility with existing infrastructure. Regular progress updates shall be provided to the council throughout the website redevelopment process.</li> <li>In conclusion, the acquisition of a CMS-based theme for the St Neots Town Council website represents a strategic investment in our digital infrastructure and a commitment to delivering high-quality services and information to our community. I urge fellow council members to support this proposal for the betterment of St Neots and its residents.</li> </ul>
Financial Implication(s): (provided by the proposer)	£4,000
Proposer's Signature	<i>R. Slade</i>
Seconder's signature: (if applicable)	
Comments from Officers	This supports the work that officers are doing as part of their review of the Councils websites.

**ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL**

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>ARMED FORCES DAY – BUDGET OVERSPEND</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>DEPUTY TOWN CLERK</b>

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval of a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee in relation to anticipated budget overspend on the Armed Forces Day Weekend due to new health and safety requirements from the Safety Advisory Group.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 **RECOMMENDED** allocating £2,626 from the AFD earmarked reserves towards the increased health and safety cost of running the 2024 event and noting a resulting overspend of £1,244 which would come from the Council's General Reserve.
- 2.2 The increased costs now required to run the annual two-day Armed Forces Weekend event be further considered by the Council as part of its budget setting process in September and October 2024.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council arranges an annual two-day Armed Forces Day (AFD) event each June. An expenditure budget of £17,740 has been allocated to the 2024 event.
- 3.2 As part of organising the event officers produce event management plans, risk assessments and make applications for all relevant licenses and permissions. As part of this process the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) review event plans and provide advice, guidance or instruction on measures to be put in place to ensure events are safe to run.
- 3.3 This process has resulted in the SAG requesting an increased level of medical provision for the Armed Forces Day event than has previously been required or budgeted for. This increased provision is necessary for ensuring the event can go ahead but will result in overspend in the event budget.

**4. Information**

- 4.1 Following a review of the Event Management Plan the Safety Advisory Group have requested a higher level of medical provision at the St Neots Armed Forces Weekend event taking place on 22nd and 23rd June 2024.
- 4.2 The SAG have based the change in health and safety requirements on the recent revisions to the Purple Guide (industry event management guide). The revisions have meant that the AFD event has been moved up to a Tier 2 level.

4.3 Level 2 Tier events require Emergency Care HCP (such as a Paramedic) who can provide Advanced Life Support, controlled drugs, independent assessment skills etc. This is an escalation from previous event requirements.

4.4 The event has formally been covered by St Johns Ambulance (SJA) first aiders. Unfortunately, SJA are unable to provide the additional levels of cover required for the event and as such a new contractor has been sourced.

## **5. Financial Information**

5.1 The medical element of the event has historically cost between £200-300 when using SJA. The new increased requirements, which include a paramedic, first responders and an ambulance have resulted in a substantial increased cost of £3,870. This cost was not accounted for in the original event budget so will lead to an overspend once all other planned costs are accounted for.

5.2 The Council has a revenue budget of £17,740 for the two-day event.

5.3 The Council has an earmarked reserve of £2,626 for the AFD event. This funding was previously committed to enhancing the event by raising awareness of HM Armed Forces services and the 80th anniversary of D-Day through use of a large screen to show a locally produced video, featuring information and interviews throughout the event.

5.4 The Armed Forces Committee have advised that it was unable to use the funds as requested due to concerns over producing a quality and informative video within the timeframes, resource and skill set available. As such the Earmarked reserve could instead be used towards the required cost of increased health and safety.

5.5

<b>Additional Cost</b>	
Cost of Increased Health and Safety	£3,870.00
<b>Funding</b>	
Allocation from Earmarked Reserve towards cost	£2,626.00
Overspend with required funding from General Reserve	£1,244.00

## **6. Legal Powers**

6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

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Date:	25 <sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024
Title:	GRANT FUNDING REQUEST – ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE
Contact Officer:	Town Clerk – C Robson

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide Councillors with the most recently received information/documentation from St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO submitted in support of a funding request being made to the Council for £650,000 for the St Neots Splash Park Project.
- 1.2 To receive a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee on availability of funding should the Council be minded to award funding to the project.
- 1.3 To seek a resolution from the Council on the request put forward by St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO (SNAL) that the Council reconsider the previously deferred decision on whether the Town Council will grant £650,000 in funding to the proposed splash park project on former St Neots Swimming Pool land.
- 1.4 To remind Members of the Council's previous resolution to defer a decision on funding until further stipulated information had been provided in the form of a draft lease/agreement between the parties involved and while matters raised by solicitors had been addressed.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 RECOMMEND by the Finance and Governance Committee that should the Full Council be minded providing any funding to the proposed splash park project that any such funding come from CIL reserves subject to the Council being satisfied that the conditions previously recommended and agreed by the Council for consideration of project funding are met.
- 2.2 That the Council considers the funding request and information provided by St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO and whether the Council is satisfied it gives assurances on the conditions set out in the Council's resolution of 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- 2.3 That the Council considers the £650,000 funding request and resolves its position on whether to grant funding to the St Neots Splash Park project.

**3. Documentation Received**

- 3.1 The following documents/information have been provided to the Council from SNAL in support of their funding bid since the last time the matter was considered;
  - Comments/Response to stipulations/conditions set out in the Town Council resolution for consideration of Grant Funding. (**APPENDIX A**)
  - Business Plan V5-4-1 – Most recent version as available to SNAL website. (**APPENDIX B**)
  - Heads of Terms for an agreement between SNAL and Eat 'n' Bowl. (**APPENDIX C**) - *Confidential*

- Annual Accounts for the period 31 December 2022 (**APPENDIX D**)

3.2 All documentation previously received and shared with Councillors as part of the grant funding request is saved in the Councillor sharepoint file, the link to which is provided here; *Councillor internal link*.

This information was previously provided to Councillors.

3.3 Documentation includes;

- a) Business Plan V4 (*Now refer to most received version V5-4-1*)
- b) Business Plan V5 (*Now refer to most received version V5-4-1*)
- c) Business Plan V5.1 (*Now refer to most received version V5-4-1*)
- d) Tender Evaluation – At a glance summary
- e) Tender Evaluation Report
- f) Scope of Works
- g) Preferred Contractor Covering Letter
- h) Preferred Contractor Terms and Conditions
- i) Preferred Contractor Splash Park Design Proposal

j) Eat’N’Bowl Splash Park Business Plan

k) Annual Report and Accounts Year Ended 31 December 2021

l) Business Plan Appendices;-

- |                                      |                                   |   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| • Site Substructure Plan as Proposed | • Masterplan Animated Walkthrough | • Social Value Information                  |
| • Plans as Proposed                  | • Programme Information           | • Tender Bona Fide Cert Dec 2022            |
| • Sections as Proposed               | • Project Management Information  | • Tree Report                               |
| • Elevations as Proposed             | • Contracts Director CV           | • Flood Risk Assessment                     |
| • 3D View                            | • Designer CV                     | • Phase I & II Geo-Environmental Assessment |
| • Compound Site Plan as Proposed     | • Site Manager CV                 | • Phase 1 General Arrangement               |
| • Site Demolition Plan as Proposed   | • Team and Resources Information  | • Surfacing Layout                          |
| • Site Plan as Proposed in Detail    | • Technical Director CV           | • Plant Room Building                       |
| • Site Plan as Existing              | • Terms & Conditions & Warranties | • Plant Room Layout                         |
| • EIA Final                          | • Performance Specification       | • Traffic Management                        |
| • Transport Statement                | • Test Report                     | • LED Lighting Layout                       |
| • Clean Water                        | • RAMS                            | • Feature Layout Phase 1                    |
| • Waste Water                        |                                   | • Feature Layout Phase 2                    |
|                                      |                                   | • P&I Drawing                               |

3.4 The following documents were also been provided to Councillors and are available in the Sharepoint folder;

- a) Land Registry Documents
- b) Planning Permission and conditions
- c) Case Study – Project delivered by preferred contractor for another Town Council
- d) Questions and answers arising from 2023 discussions

**4. Background**

- 4.1 The Council previously formally considered a funding request of £650,000 from SNAL on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 for the building and delivery of a splash park on the former St Neots Swimming Pool site.
- 4.2 At the time of considering the request the Council raised a number of concerns or points of clarification around proposed operational procedures and arrangements, toilet provision, control of entry fees, management of sessions and a clear agreement between parties involved which gave the Council assurances on the sustainability of the project.
- 4.3 The Council resolved to defer a decision on awarding any grant funding until clarity on a number of points (see **Appendix A**) were addressed and assurances sought via the provision of draft lease/agreement between the parties involved in the delivery and operation of the facility. The Council felt it needed to understand answers to those conditions and that it could be damaging to agree any funding of a substantial amount of public fundings without establishing that they are met.
- 4.4 The resolution included a requirement for legal due diligence and clarifications from the Charity Commission. The legal work highlighted matters that needed to be investigated and addressed in relation to the former Swimming Pool Trust, CIO and the vesting declaration entered into when the CIO became trustee of the Charitable Trust, in place of the Town Council. The Council has made a resolution on how it will progress addressing the matters raised based on legal advice, the conditions linked to that action have been agreed by solicitors acting for the CIO and are currently progressing with solicitors.
- 4.5 Legal advice highlighted the need for the Charitable Trust Deed to be amended to permit the building of a splash park. The CIO have made an application to the Charity Commission seeking the amendment, the outcome of which is awaited.
- 4.6 It is important for Members to remember that the request put forward for consideration is for the building of a Splash Park and it is this Councillors are being asked to consider.
- 4.7 **The Council is being asked to consider a large commitment of public funds towards the building of a splash park in St Neots. The Council has an obligation to ensure that it is using public money appropriately and with any project and funding award the Council should be satisfied that the project and expenditure is;**
- Required and Wanted (Appropriate)
  - Is deliverable and Good Value (Affordable, best value)
  - Is sustainable

**5. Condition 1 – Draft Lease Agreement between parties delivering and operating facility**

- 5.1 The new information not previously provided to Members for consideration is attached to this report. For clarity the letter confirming planning permission and conditions is also attached (**Appendix E**). All other information is available on the Council sharedrive, hard copies of specific documents can be requested.
- 5.2 Members should refer to **Appendix A** for comments on the stipulations set out in the Council's resolution of July 2023.
- 5.3 At this stage a draft lease/agreement as requested by the resolution has not been provided and as such Members do not have this to base assurances on agreements between the parties and sustainability of the project.
- 5.4 A Heads of Terms between the two parties (SNAL and Eat N Bowl) has been provided and SNAL have stated that the these have been negotiated by their agent with the Eat'n'Bowl and are the foundation of what will become the Lease for the site and the Splash Park Operating Contract. They advise the formal Lease and Operating

## AGENDA ITEM 5

## ATTACHMENT 13

Contract will be legally binding documents produced by their legal team based on the agreements in the Heads of Terms.

- 5.5 The view of the CIO is that as they have agreement in principle to the Heads of Terms, and they should not incur additional costs to the CIO and Eat'n'Bowl through employing legal representation to produce these documents until they have confirmed financial and political support for the project.

The CIO advises that if funding were to be provided the following would be implemented and then agreed and signed before any agreed funding awarded was requested.

- The Contract to build and deliver the Splash Park.
- The Commercial Lease for the land with the Splash Park Operator
- The Commercial Contract to cover the operation of the Splash Park.

### 6. Grant Agreement

- 6.1 The resolution also asked that a grant agreement be set up in case the Council be minded providing funding and that the agreement cover off conditions highlighted in the Council's resolution.
- 6.2 The Council's solicitor has drawn up an initial draft agreement should funding be granted.
- 6.3 The solicitor has highlighted that some of the conditions set out in the resolution (**Appendix A**) would be included as "conditions precedent" if the Council were minded awarding any funding and enter into a grant agreement. In this form there would be no obligation on the part of the Council to pay funds to the CIO unless or until all the conditions set out were complied with.
- 6.4 The solicitor has stated that the Council should be relatively satisfied that the project is a sustainable project, as the Council has its own obligations to ensure that it is using public money appropriately before entering into any grant agreement.



# APPENDIX A

## St Neots Town Council

### St Neots Aquatic and Leisure Funding Request

**RESOLUTION** by Council on consideration of funding and comments/documents provide by CIO in relation to the conditions and stipulations set out for consideration of grant funding.

Condition 1 - <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Council defers making a decision on the granting of £650,000 to St Neots Aquatic and Leisure for the proposed Splash Park project until a draft lease between the CIO and Eat n Bowl are brought forward which satisfy conditions set out by the Finance and Governance committee as follows;			
		Evidence / Document / Comment From CIO	Comment from Clerk
1	Assurance on the long-term running of the Splash Park – 25 years seems like a suitable timeframe on which to base the agreement.	Forms part of the Heads of Agreement for Letting	A draft lease agreement as requested by the resolution has not been provided. A Heads of Terms document has been provided which the CIO state will be the basis of the legally binding lease.  The Council's solicitor has commented that the Heads of Terms do not really help in terms of assurances the Council may be seeking, they have also highlighted that they do not clarify whether the lease is on commercial terms or whether they fall within advice that the CIO can lease on different terms other than market rent.  The land can be leased to a third party, relying on the provisions of Part 7 of the Charities Act 2011, because it has the power to lease the Land contained in the 2008 Scheme. In order to lease the Land, a number of steps around ensuring and evidencing the terms of the lease are "the best that can be reasonably obtained." must be carried out. This will be for the CIO to undertake as trustee with relevant legal guidance.
2	Use of the car park remains attached to the Splash Park should the Eat n Bowl withdraw from an agreement to run the splash park.	Forms part of the Heads of Agreement for Letting	
3	Responsibility for maintenance and repair is explicitly set out within the agreement.	Forms part of the Heads of Agreement for Letting	
4	The agreement should state that Eat n Bowl will be compelled to run the splash park for a specified minimum number of days/hours per year in order to operate any kind of other activity on the site of the former swimming pool.	As far as is legally possible, this will be covered in the Operating Contract.	
5	That the entrance fee will be fixed, but that there is a mechanism that allows for review for the CIO/Eat n Bowl.	The entrance fee of £3 per child per session was proposed in response to the feedback from the public consultation and has been accepted by the Operator as appropriate. Such pricing will form part of the Operating Contract. Any request by the Operator to increase the fee can be considered annually during the contract review. However, the CIO will have always have the final say.	

# APPENDIX A

6	Solutions on the delivery of toilet facilities on site in the short, medium and long term will be clearly set out.	Access to suitable toilets has been addressed and onsite toilets have planning permission as a separate building and as part of a future Café complex.	The solicitor has included this condition as a precedent condition in the draft grant agreement should funding be awarded to the project.
7	The inclusion of unisex toilets provision as part of facility provisions from the start of the project.	Access to suitable toilets has been addressed and onsite toilets have planning permission as a separate building and as part of a future Café complex.	
8	Confirmation on the use of water recycling to be set out.	This is confirmed and in the Splash Design Proposal available at <a href="https://www.stneotsaq.org/">https://www.stneotsaq.org/</a>	
9	What process will be put in place to deal with any occasion whereby water usage may be lost or limited impacting the operation of the facility (i.e a hosepipe ban).	The site will have to abide by national legalisation requirements. The fact that the project recycles its water reduces any waste to mainly evaporation.	

Legal Queries			
			Comment from Clerk
1	Confirmation to be obtained in writing that the transfer of land to the Trust was carried out in the proper and legal manner and that the Charity Commission has no other concerns.		Legal advice was obtained in relation to the transfer and vesting declaration previously entered and communication from the Charity Commission. This advice raised matters that needed to be addressed. The Council resolved actions it would take in line with the advice received and solicitors have been instructed accordingly. This is progressing.
2	Confirmation that the terms of the trust have been amended to permit the delivery of a Splash Park.	<p>An application to amend the terms of the Trust to permit the building of splash park has been made by the CIO's solicitors to the Charity Commission.</p> <p>The outcome of that application is awaited.</p>	<p>The solicitor's recommendation was that <i>"the Council does not enter into a grant funding agreement with the CIO, until it is clear that the CIO has the ability to use the Land for a "Splash Park" as opposed to a swimming pool"</i>.</p> <p>The solicitor has advised that as matters stand, if the Council grant any funding to the CIO to fund a splash park, this would need to be held as restricted funds</p>

# APPENDIX A

			and cannot be used until the change in trust on which the relevant land is held. If the CIO did use any funds that might be granted, this would be acting in breach of trust, but ultimately that would be a matter between them and the CIO and not be an issue (other than reputationally) for the Council, i.e., it is the Trustees of the CIO that are obligated to use any funds appropriately.
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Planning Queries			
		Evidence / Comment	Clerk's Comment
1	Confirmation from the Planning authority that the proposed timber effect materials to be used are in line with planning permission and do not require an application of variation.	<p>Agents acting for the CIO advised that in terms of materials, they are specified on the schedule, and thus are controlled by Condition 2 of the planning permission. Any deviation would likely require permission. Planners did not seek submission of materials so as to keep close control, therefore it is likely they wouldn't have much of an issue should a similar effect be able to be achieved.</p> <p>Anticipated to be dealt with under a non-material amendment route.</p>	Should funding be awarded a grant agreement would need to include a precedent condition that the Planning Authority does not require any variations to any planning permission obtained for the Project, or any further planning permission to be obtained to enable the Project to proceed.
2	Confirmation from the Planning authority on whether the proposed modular toilets for phase 1 require a planning application for a temporary structure.	Condition 2 of the approval requires the development to be constructed in accordance with the approved plans. Any deviation from this is likely to require additional permission. For minor non-material changes, there is a non-material amendment route, which is relatively light touch. That is the likely route here.	
3	Confirmation from the Planning authority on whether the 100 - occupancy limit on which the Transport Assessment is based is an occupancy limit defined by the planning approval.	Agents acting for the CIO have looked into the planning queries raised and advised there are no conditions attached to the planning permission which restrict or limit the number of users.	

# APPENDIX A

Condition 2 - <b>RESOLVED</b> – A proposed draft legal funding agreement between St Neots Town Council and SNAL CIO is to be in place and approved by the Full Council, ensuring it satisfies the following points;		
<b>1</b>	£650k is the limit of the grant funding to be provided and this will be granted to deliver the splash park as set out in the specification provided by the preferred contractor. Stick with this until end of August.	<p>Initial draft of a grant agreement provided to Members, for development and agreement between solicitors should the Council be minded granting funding.</p> <p>(1) quite a few of the “conditions” highlighted and matters that it seems as though would need to be dealt with before a grant agreement was put in place, so the solicitor has tried to deal with these as conditions precedent in the agreement.</p> <p>(2) Should funding be awarded there would need to be advice taken on whether there are any procurement / subsidy control issues that need to be considered as part of a final grant agreement.</p> <p>(3) If the Council entered into a grant agreement in this form, then there would be no obligation on the part of the Council to pay any money to the CIO unless or until the CIO complied with all of the conditions within an agreed ‘longstop’ date.</p>
<b>2</b>	The Council will not be approached for further funding for the delivery and/or operation of the splash park or future stages. Check language with authority.	
<b>3</b>	The funding would be capped for a 12-month period, subject to review at that time if not spent. – include 24/7 monitoring this.	
<b>4</b>	Secure and sufficient security monitoring will be in place.	
<b>5</b>	That CIO to commit to hold funds equivalent to 2 years running costs in case a situation should arise where the CIO needs to run the facility. – To build up not on day one.	
<b>6</b>	Agreement of payment terms based on submission of invoices from the contractor.	
<b>7</b>	The Town Council will honour payment terms that are in place and will pay fines due from late payment (legal advice to be obtained) Approval for invoices will come from Brown and Co and release money.	
<b>8</b>	Solutions on the delivery of toilet facilities on site in the short, medium and long term will be clearly set out. The inclusion of unisex toilets provision as part of facility provisions from the start of the project.	
<b>9</b>	Confirmation from the Planning authority that the proposed timber effect materials to be used are in line with planning permission and do not require an application of variation.	
<b>10</b>	Confirmation from the Planning authority on whether the proposed modular toilets for phase 1 require a planning application for a temporary structure.	
<b>11</b>	Provision and agreement of a project milestone plan. – Gant chart will be shared – put that in agreement.	
<b>12</b>	That CIO to commit to hold funds equivalent to 2 years running costs in case a situation should arise where the CIO needs to run the facility. – To build up not on day one.	

# APPENDIX B

# BUSINESS PLAN

V5.4.1

## Confidentiality Agreement

This Business Plan and its contents remain the sole property of ST Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO (“the CIO”). Its use is strictly limited to those readers authorized by the CIO. Any reproduction or divulgence of the content of this Business Plan without written consent of the CIO is strictly prohibited.

It is acknowledged by the undersigned reader that the information provided by the CIO in this Business Plan is in all respects confidential in nature, other than information which is in the public domain through other means and that any disclosure or use of same by the reader may cause serious harm or damage to the CIO. The undersigned reader agrees not to disclose any information without the express written permission of the CIO.

Upon request, this document is to be immediately returned to the CIO.

This Document includes “forward-looking statements.” All statements other than statements of historical fact within this Document, including statements regarding the CIO for its subsidiaries’ strategies, plans, objectives and expectations, are all forward-looking statements. Although the CIO believes that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are reasonable at this time, it can give no assurance that such expectations will prove to have been correct. Certain important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from expectations are set forth herein. Any subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements attributable to the CIO or persons acting on its behalf are expressly qualified in this regard.

Original Signed

25<sup>th</sup> July 2023

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*Signature*

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*Date*

M H MARKS MBE CEng CMgr

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# Executive Summary

## Requirement: Splash Play Area at the Old Outdoor Swimming Pool Site

### Introduction:

The purpose of this business case is to seek funding from St Neots Town Council to build a splash play area at the old outdoor swimming pool site. The project aims to regenerate the area, provide a family-friendly and safe play environment, and address the growing needs of the community, particularly children and families. This business case outlines the political and cost implications of the project, demonstrating its feasibility and potential benefits to St Neots.

### Project Overview:

- The estimated cost for the construction of the splash play area is £795,000.
- Funding allocation: We are requesting £650,000 as a grant from St Neots Town Council, which is available as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.
- The local community has expressed full support for the project, as demonstrated through an online survey.

### Planning and Regulations:

- Full planning permission has been obtained from the Huntingdon District Planning Department, ensuring compliance with all necessary studies, requirements, and regulations.

### Benefits to the Local Community:

- The splash play area will contribute to the regeneration of the old outdoor swimming pool site.
- It will meet the increasing demand for recreational facilities in St Neots, particularly in light of the town's unprecedented growth in housing and population.
- The project will create a family-friendly and safe play environment, enhancing the well-being and quality of life for children and families.

### Timeline and Supplier:

- The construction and commissioning of the splash play area are expected to be completed within 20 weeks of commencement, with an opening targeted for April 2024.
- A preferred supplier with experience in delivering similar projects in the UK has already been identified, which can potentially streamline the process.

### Feasibility and Site Suitability:

- A feasibility study has been conducted, assessing the suitability of the old outdoor swimming pool site for a splash play area.
- Factors such as accessibility, safety, and infrastructure requirements have been considered and addressed.
- All findings and requirements from the feasibility study have been submitted and approved as part of the planning process.

### **Maintenance and Operational Costs:**

- Estimated running costs for the splash play area are approximately £24,000 per year.
- The site will be leased to an operator on a full repairing lease, transferring maintenance and operational costs to the operator.
- The Trust anticipates earning in the region of £30,000 to £35,000 per year in rental income from the operator, helping to offset the costs and ensure long-term sustainability.

### **Risks and Drawbacks:**

- All potential risks and drawbacks have been considered, and no areas of concern have been identified.
- The project will not conflict with other community facilities, but rather enhance the overall attractiveness of the town.

### **Economic Development and Attractiveness:**

- The splash play area will contribute to the economic development of the St Neots area by revitalising the old swimming pool site.
- It will serve as a new centre point for residents, attracting visitors and increasing footfall.
- The plan to potentially build a community centre and a cafe on the site will further enhance the area and provide additional amenities for the community.
- Reserving land for a future 25m indoor swimming pool demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to address future needs.

### **Ongoing funding**

The CIO will be self-sufficient moving forward and will be looking at generation £30k to 35k per year from the site, as a whole, which will allow the CIO to manage any future issues at the site.

### **Conclusion:**

The construction of a splash play area at the old outdoor swimming pool site is a worthy investment for St Neots. The project aligns with the community's needs, enjoys broad support, and presents an opportunity to regenerate the area, create a family-friendly space, and contribute to the economic development and attractiveness of the town. The project is financially viable and allows the site to be brought into full use and will provide the people of St Neots with a fantastic viable facility. We request St Neots Town Council fully support this project.

## Introduction

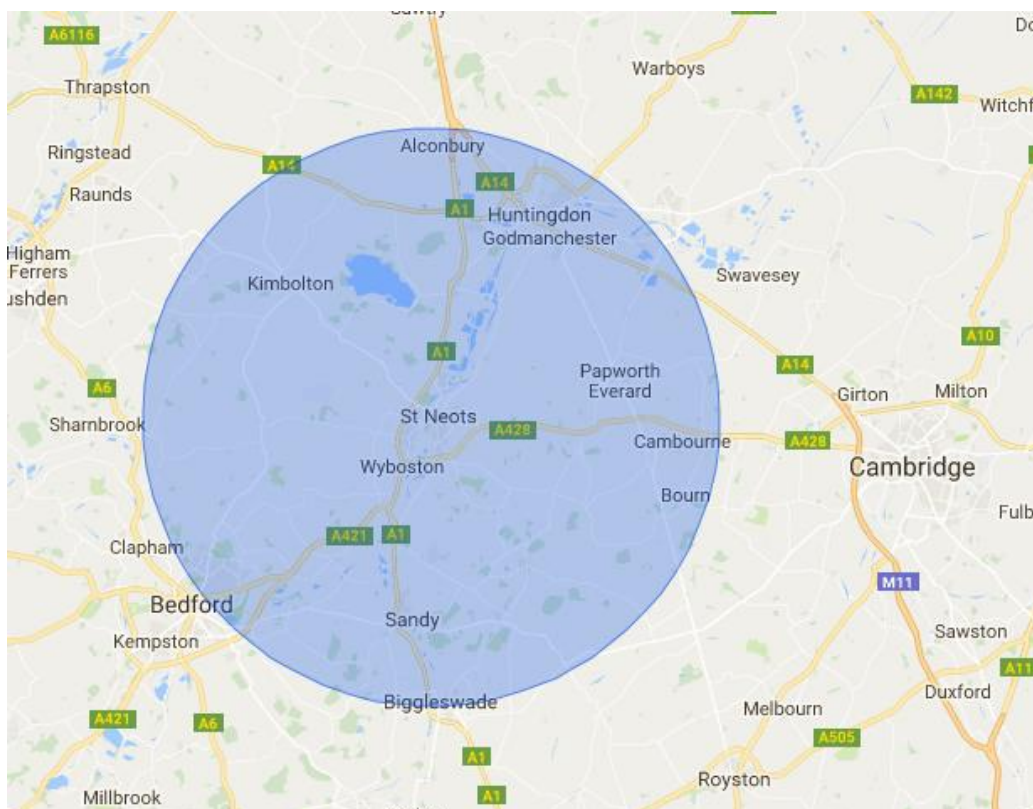
The CIO has been charged with establishing suitable Aquatic facilities to serve the people of the St Neots area designed to create a quality water experience for families of all ages. The Aquatic facilities should serve the entire St Neots Area and will concentrate on providing a pro-active water experience for families, individuals, schools and special interest groups. The CIO aim to deliver an attractive, economical, sustainable and fun-filled facility for their entertainment and enjoyment.

The defunct St Neots outdoor swimming pool land will be utilised as an asset to provide the resources to enable the Aquatic Facilities development in St Neots to be realised. Once the primary site is operational it is hoped that the CIO will be able to provide additional aquatic facilities in and around St Neots. It is expected that that the Facilities will provide a complete range of aerobic, fast, fun and exhilarating experiences, suitable for all and fully inclusive. Additionally, we aim to provide associated lounging and picnicking facilities to allow for the full family experience.

## The Opportunity

The CIO has a unique opportunity to improve Aquatic provision within and around St Neots. Apart from the Ernulf indoor Pool on the Ernulf Academy site, which is part of the St Neots Learning Partnership (SNLP) and the River Great Ouse, there are no other aquatic based recreational facilities in St Neots or local area.

The Aquatic facility should fulfil the family recreational and entertainment needs at a reasonable price. Within the targeted 10-15 mile radius. The population of just St Neots, according to the 2021 Census was 33,670 of which 18% are 15 and under equating to over 6060 and with Love Farm 2, Wintringham and the Little Paxton developments, population numbers continue to increase. Future development of St Neots and neighbouring areas is inevitable so facilities like this will be always needed.



St Neots Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following:

# Entertainment and Leisure

Between 1961 and 2003 an outdoor swimming pool was located on the land next to Priory Park. The pool was closed in 2003 due to financial issues and an inability to secure funding to make essential repairs. In 2005 the pool was demolished and infilled. Ever since, there has been a popular public demand for the return of a (preferably outdoor) swimming pool.

This demand was demonstrated through the Neighbourhood Plan survey. Many people said that they would like an improved or additional swimming pool partnered with the return of the outdoor pool.

Proposals for a swimming pool on the site of the previous swimming pool will be supported. Further uses on this site to act as enabling development for the swimming pool will be supported by the Town Council providing that it can be demonstrated that the benefits of allowing such development to secure the swimming pool outweigh the negative impacts of departing from other policies.

Additionally HDC have declared there is a requirement for an additional pool for St Neots although funding has never been identified from HDC CIL.

The Huntingdonshire District Local Investment Framework found that under a high growth scenario St Neots would require a range of new social infrastructure including a new multi-purpose leisure facility with sports hall and swimming pool.

Many residents identified the need for a new swimming pool or improvements to the existing swimming pool as part of the Neighbourhood Plan survey.

An improved leisure offer in St Neots will have many benefits including reducing the need to travel to other towns for leisure, regeneration, improved economic activity and making the Town Centre more attractive to families.

Delivery of a swimming pool on site of outdoor swimming pool	SNTC, Swimming Pool Trust and PD	Funding to be secured possibly through planning obligations/ CIL
--	----------------------------------	--

## CIO Mission Statement

To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of St Neots and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation, in particular aquatic facilities or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

## Business Objectives

The CIO is a not-for-profit Charity. The CIO endeavour to:

- Engage with Leisure providers to build sustainable facilities.
- Engage specialists to design the Aquatic and other facilities.
- Engage specialists to project manage the implementation.
- Engage specialists to secure the relevant approvals from the relevant authorities.
- Develop the existing site and find other suitable locations.
- Initiate marketing plans to facilitate an advertising program prior to opening.
- The development of an overall radio, TV, and direct mail program.
- Regulate development of the ambitions of the CIO in such a manner to not exceed funds.
- Consider volunteer or commercial options to enable the day-to-day activities at the facilities.

## Organisation

### Legal Structure

The CIO is a Community Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission (1168906)

### Location

The CIO is based in St Neots - Contact address.  
66 Wren Walk, Eynesbury,  
St. Neots  
PE19 2GE

### Intellectual Property

The CIO intends on maintaining a website at [www.Stneotsaq.org](http://www.Stneotsaq.org) to market its services. No other proprietary intellectual property is owned at this time.

### Trustees

Name	Role	Date of appointment
Michael Haydn Marks MBE	Chair	24-Aug-16
Ian Pele Taylor	Treasurer	24-Aug-16
Larry Edward Fitch	Trustee	24-Aug-16
Emma Jayne Speed	Trustee	04-Dec-18
Joanna Louise Drennan	Secretary	17-Jan-22
Allison Schonder	Trustee	13-Jun-22
Katie Dundas-Todorov (St Neots TC Rep)	Trustee	12-July-23



## The Site

The old Pool site is within the yellow border – Red is all the land owned by the CIO.



## Options for the Site

To deliver the best solution for the St Neots people and the site, the CIO considered a range of options.

### Develop the Site

A number of developers have been approached, most wanted to build houses or retirement homes on the site. One was willing to look at providing a pool as part of the build, however, when looking at the running cost of a pool it became clear this was not a viable option. Access to the site once housing was in place would be difficult and parking would be non-existent.

### Sell the Site and Build a splash Park Elsewhere in St Neots

Some indicated that perhaps Riverside Park would be a better location for the Splash Park. After consulting HDC planning and HDC Parks we were informed that this option would never receive planning permission because Riverside Park is a flood plain.

### Build a Swimming Pool

Although the site operated an outdoor swimming pool for a number of years. It was proven not to be financially viable. It fell into disrepair and was eventually filled in as a safety measure. The CIO have discussed various options to provide a Swimming Pool on the site with commercial operators. However, after COVID none of the companies were willing to move forward. We also contacted Sport England directly for the project. In 2022 Sport England have indicated a 25m indoor pool would cost upwards of £6.4m to build, which is way outside what St Neots and the CIO could justify. Nevertheless, we have

found companies in the UK who could build a basic 25m pool for circa £1.5m with a life expectancy of 20 years. Further research indicated that pools are generally run at an operating loss. This has been corroborated by HDC finance figures showing the Ernulf pool operates at a loss of over £100k per year (2019). This figure is also borne out by information from Sport England 2015 figures.

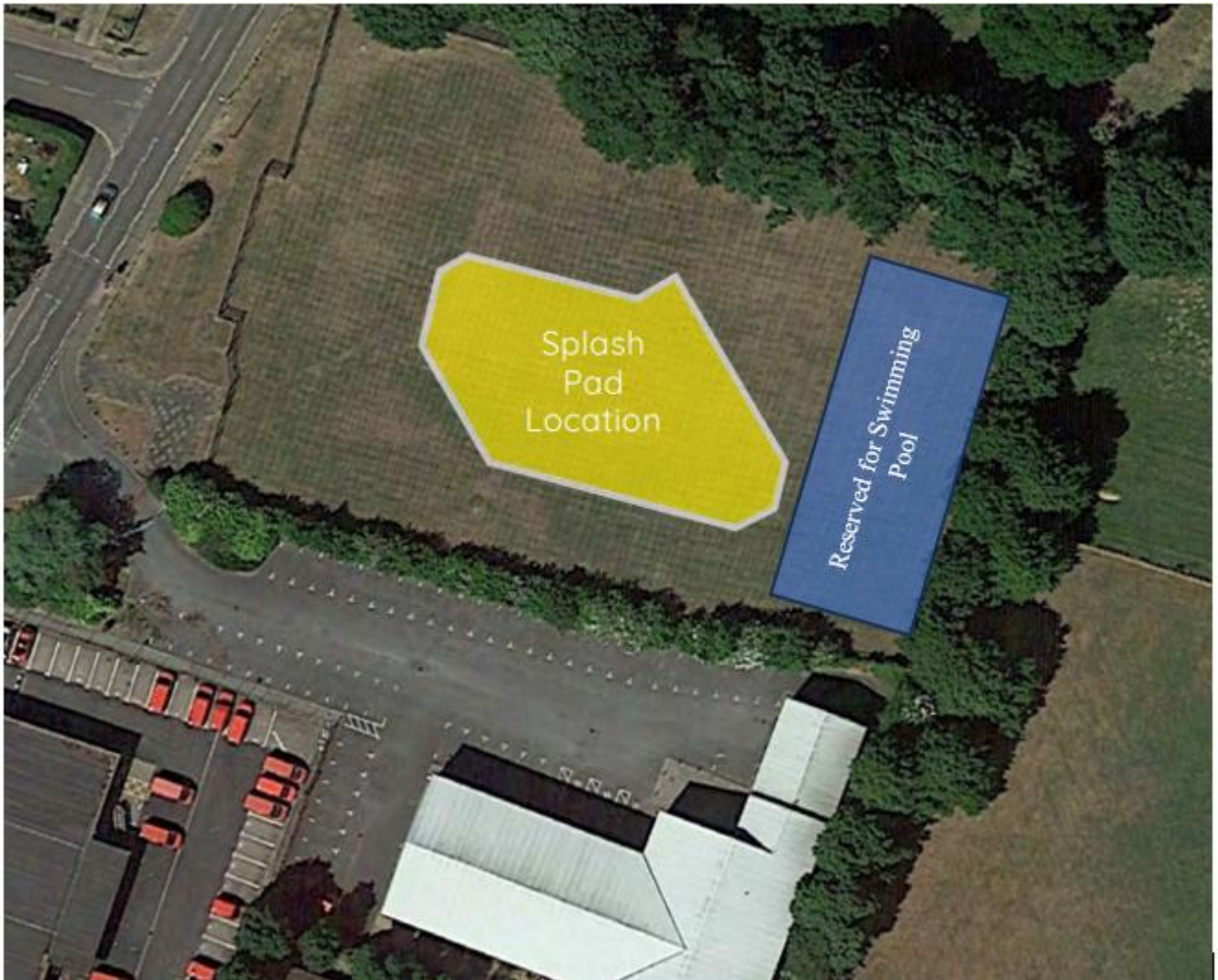
Operation Cost Estimate		
<b>Income</b>	4 Lane	
<b>Swimming</b>		
Fees and charges for recreational and lane swimming	£	240,000.00
Learn to swim programmes	£	100,000.00
Education, club and private hires	£	30,000.00
Miscellaneous use of the facility	£	45,000.00
<b>Sub-Total Swimming</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>415,000.00</b>
Income from sale of items available in the centre:		
Vending products/ swimming caps / goggles etc.	£	28,000.00
<b>TOTAL COMBINED INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>443,000.00</b>
Estimated Throughput	£	14,000.00
Average per day (360)		389
Average per operational hour (16)		24
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries, National Insurance, Pensions	£	333,600.00
<b>Sub-Total Staffing Costs</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>333,600.00</b>
<b>Premises</b>		
Fund for responsive day to day repairs/maintenance	£	22,720.00
Utilities: gas, electricity and water	£	53,392.00
Insurance: premises, equipment, personal injury etc	£	15,000.00
National non-domestic rates payable	£	40,000.00
Products, consumables and materials	£	12,500.00
Miscellaneous e.g. licences, electrical testing, etc	£	6,500.00
<b>Sub-Total Premises</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>150,112.00</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>		
Purchase of stock for sale e.g. vending products, badges	£	16,800.00
Replacement of non-sale items e.g. Floats etc	£	5,000.00
Miscellaneous: e.g. Health and Safety consultants etc	£	5,000.00
<b>Sub Total Supplies and Services</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>26,800.00</b>
<b>Admin and Marketing</b>		
Marketing, media and communications	£	7,875.00
Printing, programmes, leaflets etc	£	5,000.00
Telephones, computers, maintenance and consumables	£	8,000.00
Collections, direct debit handling fees etc	£	5,000.00
Sundry items e.g. temp staff cover, customer surveys etc	£	15,000.00
<b>Sub Total Admin and Marketing</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>40,875.00</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>551,387.00</b>
<b>OPERATING PROFIT / (LOSS)</b>	<b>-£</b>	<b>108,387.00</b>

The CIO have consulted with Woburn Lido CIO, which is run successfully as an all year open cold water pool. The Lido is operated predominantly through volunteer support and a few paid life guards. This model does appear to work and could be considered if the capital cost of building the pool were made



available. As this capital funding is not currently available, the CIO have, reluctantly, dismissed the provision of an outdoor pool on the site as an option for the CIO to deliver at this time.

Nevertheless, the CIO will protect a portion of the site to accommodate the building of a swimming pool, should sufficient funding become available at a future time.



### Build a Splash Park

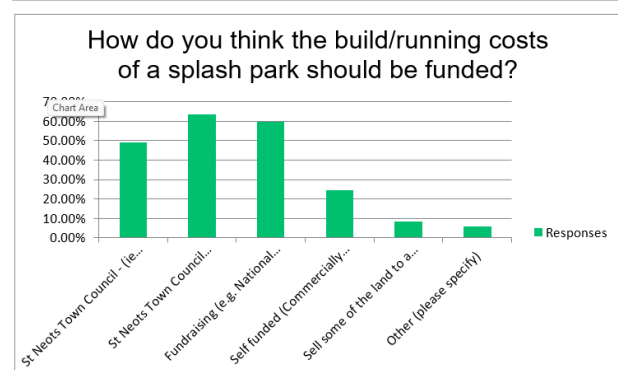
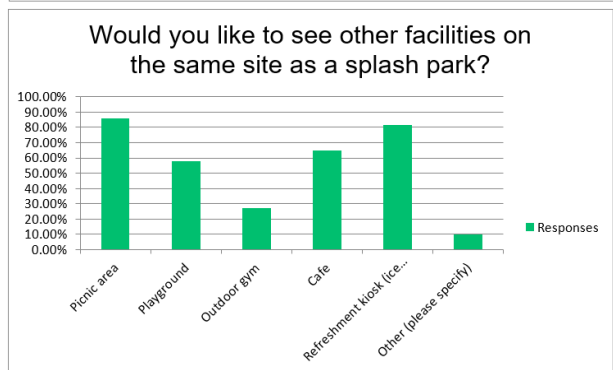
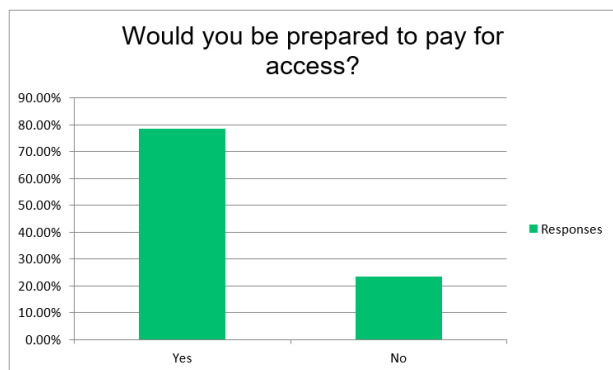
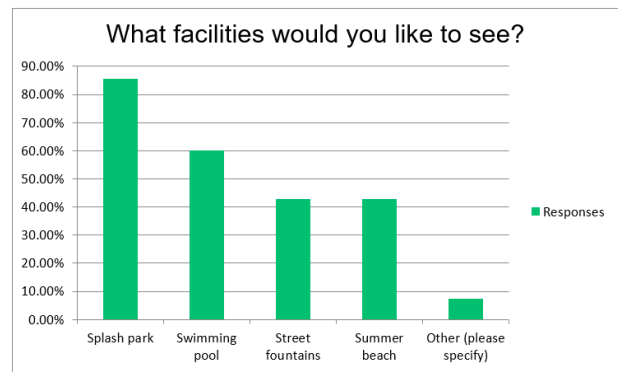
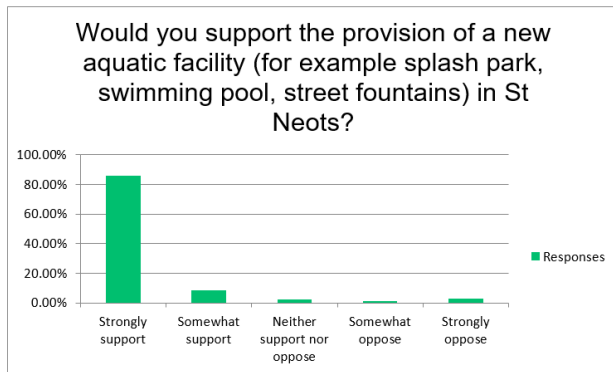
The CIO have visited a number of Splash Parks, the one which impressed the Trustees the most was the one operated in Howard Park Letchworth. It is felt that this style of facility would prove the most appropriate for the Old Swimming Pool site. The use of different in ground jets ensured the site was available and used by all ages of children and adults. With the concrete surface and tailored surrounds the site is accessible to all.





## Survey Results

In 2019/2020 the CIO ran an online survey which attracted over 3000 responses. These were the results.



## The Splash Park Option

The CIO believes, backed by all the research carried out, that the Splash Park option is, not only the most viable solution for the site, but would provide St Neots with a unique facility which will be well used now and into the future. The facility would be fully accessible by all, look attractive at the chosen location and enhance the play provision of St Neots. Additionally, the site, adjacent to the Priory Park is easily accessible by St Neots people by walking, by bike or by public transport.

### Operating a Splash Park

Once built the Splash Park will be leased to the Eat'n'Bowl Management team on a full repairing lease. The Eat'n'Bowl will operate the Splash Park under the oversight of the CIO. The Eat'n'Bowl will introduce other appropriate facilities and recreational activities to the site to make it a year-round attraction and complement the existing Eat'n'Bowl facilities.



### Parking

The CIO, through its partnership with the Bowling Ally has secured access to the adjacent car park.

The Transport study produced as part of the Planning Permission highlighted that there is sufficient parking provision for the Splash Park as the Bowling Ally and splash Park are expected to operate at different peak times.

There is additional parking in Priory Park, which is extended in the summer periods and as indicated on the map, further parking close by.





## The Build Project

Planning permission now has been granted and the project, due to cost constraints, is envisaged to be in 3 Phases.

### Phase 1

Is the major phase, to build the Splash Pad and associated plant buildings and Kiosk and landscape the site.



### Phase 2

To build the Toilet block has been estimated at between £92k-£112K.



It is hoped that the funding for Phase 3 will be quickly available, and this would offer the opportunity of building the family friendly toilets and changing block as a part of the Café which could have a cost



benefit and ease cleaning management. Additionally, a Portable/Temporary unit can be supplied to facilitate additional provision if deemed necessary (Area in Red). Also, the toilets in the Eat'n'Bowl or the toilets in the adjacent HDC council owned block in Priory Park could be utilised, if HDC agreed, in the interim period. Area in Blue and Yellow respectively.



### Phase 3

To build the Café / Community centre which will not only enhance the site but will be able to offer other interest groups a common space to meet and operate with the catering facilities. The CIO believe that building such a facility, along with the additional facilities being considered on the site, would make the site usable throughout the year allowing properly managed groups to access the facility. Should the building receive sufficient funding to allow the build, the CIO would like to investigate running of the building as a community venture in partnership with the CIO and Eat'n'Bowl.



## Future Development

The CIO believes that by partnering with the management of the Eat'n'Bowl the site would be further enhanced. There are discussions regarding other activities being setup on the site. Things being considered are Clip'n'Climb and Lazer Tag etc. This amounts to a significant investment over the next few years.

## Café / Community Building

In Phase 1 there will be a Kiosk build to assist in control and management of the site. It is expected that this Kiosk will serve basic refreshments. As can be seen by the plans, Phase 3 includes a full Café/Community building. Estimated cost of the build in the region of £350K-£450K.

## Financial Projections

The CIO's financial projections show that the CIO can utilise the requested funding to support its' delivery efforts. The CIO projects the following income/expenditure over the next five years as its' business plan is implemented. The CIO currently receives and will continue to receive £12,000 per year income from the Lease of land, the Bowling Ally is housed on, to the Eat'n'Bowl. Partnering with the Eat'n'Bowl to manage and operate the site the CIO is negotiating an additional lease. The CIO intends to use all generated funds to further develop the existing site and to protect the future of the site. Should surplus funds become available, the CIO is already looking to use them to provide further Aquatic and Leisure Facilities in and around St Neots.

### Capital Expenditure Overview

Preferred Tender Quote with contingency	£750,000.00
CIL Grant Request from St Neots TC	£650,000.00
CIO Direct Funding	£100,000.00
<b>Total Project cost</b>	<b>£750,000.00</b>
CIO Planning Expenditure (Already Spent)	£45,000.00
<b>CIO Operational Reserve</b>	<b>£40,000.00</b>

### Capital Expenditure Full Breakdown

Tender Item	The Splash	Ustigate
<b>Phase 1 costs</b>	569,769.40	611,739.65
<b>Phase 2 costs (improved equipment only)</b>	48,213.87	23,529.32
<b>Unpriced items in the original tender return</b>	38,424.60	69,428.74
<b>Total</b>	656,407.87	704,697.71
<b>Additional Costs associated with the Project</b>		
<b>Power Provision</b>	12,393.00	
Water Supply Provision	4,250.00	
Sewer Fowl Extraction Provision	10,000.00	
Brown&Co Management Fees	15,000.00	
Project Contingency 7.5%	51,228.79	
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>749,279.66</b>	
<b>Already Spent and CIO Operational Funds</b>		
<b>Planning and Consultant Costs to date</b>	<b>45,119.94</b>	
<b>Remaining in CIO for operating costs VAT management etc</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>	

## Expected running costs of the Splash Park.

The Splash park Contractor have provided real time running cost estimates. Additionally the CIO have contacted a number of councils to identify true running costs. Based on the information received the following appears to be a reliable estimate.

6 month usage costs		
April Open Cost	£	1,500.00
Water/sewage costs	£	2,570.00
Electrical costs	£	1,500.00
Chemical costs	£	4,000.00
September Close Costs	£	1,500.00
<b>Total</b>	£	11,070.00
<b>Months</b>		6
<b>Per Month</b>	£	1,845.00

## Potential Staff Costs

Splash Parks like Letchworth do not have any staff, however the CIO would envisage a minimum of one member of staff to ensure safety and control of access to the site. The Eat'n'Bowl envisage utilising existing staff at the site as the splash Park opening times are symbiotic to their operating times. Therefore, basing the costs on 2 staff and better than minimum wages we are looking worst case to be £300 per day.

Staff April to September		
Number of staff per session		2
Hours of operation		9
Party Operation		3
Staff £ per hour	£	12.00
Average daily staff cost	£	288.00

Considering the weather and planning to open fully only on dry days when the local schools are off, including weekends, provides the following cost estimates. Based on data from <https://en.climate-data.org/europe/united-kingdom/england/st-neots-8495/#climate-table>.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
<b>Staff cost per day</b>	£ 288.00	£288.00	£288.00	£288.00	£288.00	£288.00
<b>Dry holidays</b>	14	10	6	13	23	7
<b>Staff cost pm</b>	£4,032.00	£ 2,777.81	£1,689.60	£3,678.97	£6,624.00	£1,987.20

## Local Demographic Information

Assessing the potential visitors to the site is hard to predict but we have considered information published here, although the information is a few years out of date and St Neots and surrounding areas continue to grow rapidly. <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-open-data-and-information/statistics>. Based on these figures there is an estimated 55 thousand children between the age of 2 and 15 within the catchment of the site.



## Operational Costs and Income to the CIO

Negotiations between the CIO's specialist Project Management company, Brown&Co and Eat'n'Bowl are progressing toward a lease charge based on a basic rental and a future turnover percentage. These negotiations remain fluid and cannot be finalised until the Project has the full funding.

Both the CIO and Eat'n'Bowl Management have built cost models for the operation of the Site and both agree it is a viable project in the long term. Currently the model is that the Eat'n'Bowl will run the site as a quasi-commercial enterprise reporting to the CIO on matters of cost safety and quality. Should the Eat'n'Bowl fail to meet the requirements of the CIO or fail as a business the CIO has contingency capital to run the park until an alternative solution is delivered. The CIO would, under these circumstances consider commercial and community initiatives for running the site.

## Possible Attraction Options

The Eat'n'Bowl are keen to add attractions on the land to complement the Splash Park. The CIO have looked at such attractions and some are listed below with their possible opening months. This shows the potential of making the site an all year round destination:

- Splash area.
- Play areas.
- Picnic areas.
- Adventure areas (Clip&Climb Lazer tag etc) see table below.

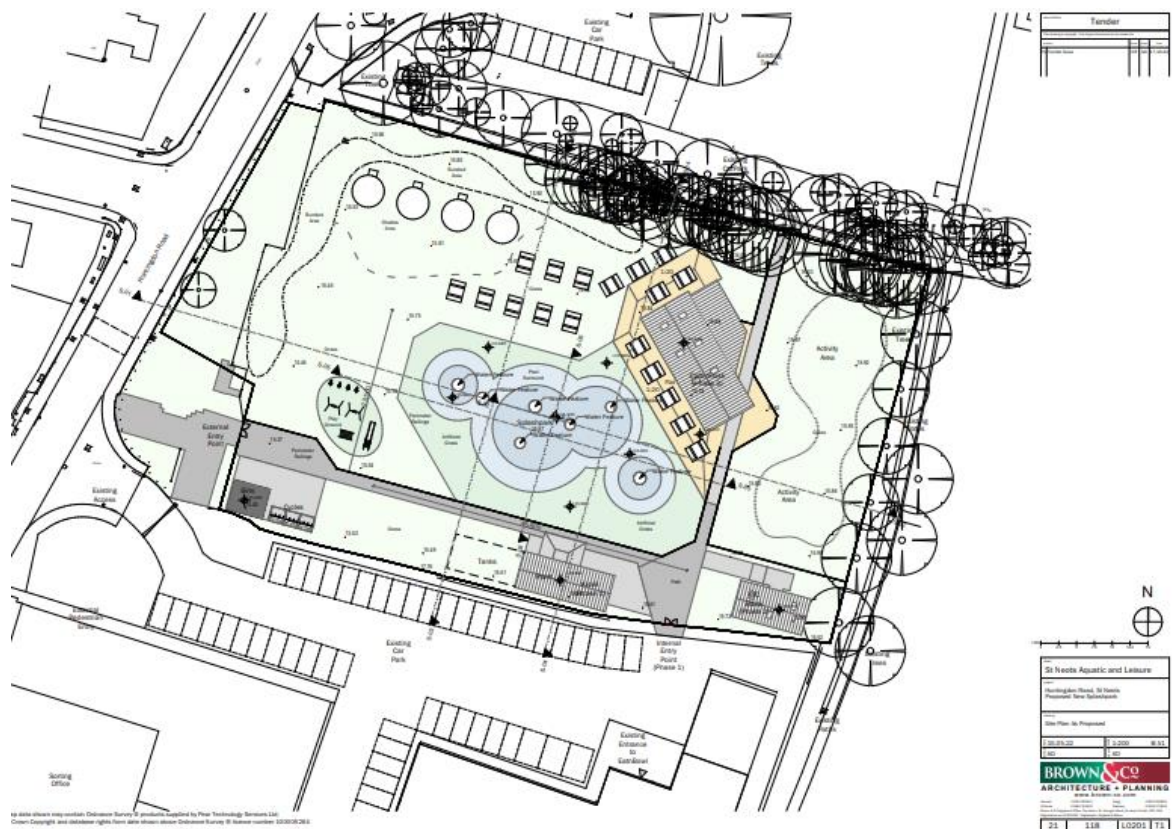
Land Use Ideas	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Splash Park												
Crazy/Mini Golf												
Clip'n'Climb												
Ice Skating												
Lazer Quest												

## Pricing

The pricing for the use of the Splash Park use will be capped at £3.00 per person per session, for the lease period and only changeable on agreement with the CIO. This was the optimum level of charge identified in the Survey carried out by the CIO.

## Site Plans

The CIO site plans and attractions are outlined below:





# The Market

## Industry Overview

Splash Parks are becoming more popular, especially when designed alongside dry play areas and family play and picnic areas. Councils on Cambridge and Letchworth have both seen a fantastic take-up of the facilities they have recently built.

## Market Trends

The definition of a water park is an amusement park that features water play areas. These attractions come in the form of water slides, spray grounds (water playgrounds), lazy rivers, splash pads, or other recreational bathing environments. In more current states of development water parks may also be equipped with different styles of body boarding or an artificial surfing environment such as a wave pool.

More thought is being put into park planning. Most feel it's not just a matter of how much "stuff" can be crammed into a specific space. Research shows a better, more inviting environment encourages people to stay longer. A splash park's success depends on the length of time customers stay at the facility; the longer they stay the more they spend.

Water parks just look like fun and they prove the old Field of Dreams' adage: "If you build it, they will come." Today's water parks are stunning in appearance and visually pleasing to the senses.

The market trend clearly indicates a growing need for the types of products that we intend to provide.

## Target Market

The CIO will target the following types of persons and market segments as customers:

- Family unit weekend with head of household.
- Family unit without head of household (weekdays).
- Youth ages 1-15 years coming to the park individually or in groups.
- School class parties.
- Special interest groups.
- After 5:30 P.M. market for special parties.

The CIO targets these types of customers within a 10-15 mile radius.

## Customer Buying Decisions

The CIO has identified the following factors that can be used to favourably predispose potential customers to select the CIO's products:

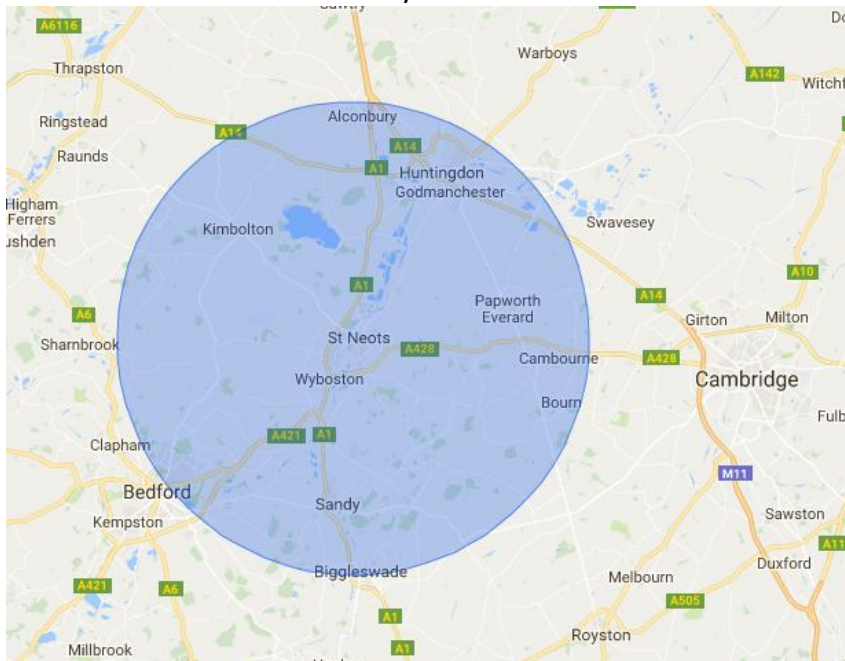
- Location
- Cleanliness
- Variety of fun attractions

- Good tasting food
- Competitive pricing
- Ease of parking
- Excellent customer service

The CIO believes it is well positioned to take advantage of these key factors to help assure its success.

### Competition

The CIO does not have any direct competition within the radius, although Papworth does have a small paddling pool. The CIO believes this is not any real issue.



### Brand Strategy

Building a strong CIO brand with the Eat'n'Bowl and St Neots Town Council will require a coordination of many factors. Initially, the CIO will focus on several core elements that will help build and strengthen the backbone of the brand:

#### Wholesome Family Entertainment

The Splash Park will be synonymous with wholesome family fun and entertainment.

#### Cleanliness

The Splash Park will live up to the highest standards of cleanliness throughout its facilities.

#### Quality Attractions

The Splash Park will be known for the fun that can be had at its site.

### Marketing Strategy

The CIO will assist the Eat'n'Bowl to drive the marketing program. It will endeavour to cover the following areas:

- Pre-Opening **Local** Radio Spots

- Web Presence
- Advertising Brochures and Literature
- Expanded Radio and Television Advertising
- Display Literature
- Newspaper Advertising
- Party/Birthday Packages
- Youth Groups

## Risk - Business Opportunities

The CIO believes the site should be run as a commercial venture with the other facilities on the site. However, as a risk exercise we have modelled the income potential of the site with the CIO running it in the event the Eat'n'Bowl was not able to continue their lease commitments.

In that instance the CIO would receive Business Rate relief <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief/charitable-rate-relief> which is 80% or this with 'discretionary relief' could see the Business Rates on the Buildings becoming zero.

Therefore, the CIO could run the site based on the rounded up to £15,000 for the Splash Park maintenance and running costs and the 2 staff (obviously the CIO could go down the Volunteer route as well, but let's keep this Commercial) then we are back to the breakeven just on ticket price.

Each day costs as follows:

Staff - £255

Operation – (as an example £15k per year/6month/30 days per month = £83.34 per day lets round up again £100 per day)

Total of £355 per day cost

Number of patrons to break even =  $(£355/£2.50) = 142$  which is 36 children per session. Again, these figures only include ticket price and does not take into account food and drink sales.

So for the purposes of the Business plan viability, the CIO is in a great position to run the site should the Eat'n'Bowl not be active or involved.

Obviously the Eat'n'Bowl would not be excited about the opportunity if it was not commercially viable for them. They see the opportunity to bring more foot fall to the Bowling complex as well as the catering profitability. Adding other items on the land like Crazy Golf and perhaps Ice Skating in the winter, to bring the site into use all year round, will be an extra bonus for them. I therefore do not see any legitimate reason why financially this is not a long-term viable project.

The above figures are based on only operating the park on a day the schools are closed ie holidays and weekends. Weather and rain day averages have also been considered. The costs include 2 full time staff. The above does not include income from other activities on the site.

## Risk Reduction/Mitigation

Within the Lease and associated contracts, the CIO will limit the risks. Initially the Lease will be for 25 years and will be a full repairing Lease. The CIO will, periodically fund external specialists to inspect and report on the operation of the equipment and site. The CIO will work with the Eat'n'Bowl Management team to ensure the Splash Park and site as a whole is maintained and operated to the highest standards.

Funds secured form the Lease will be carried by the CIO to ensure the Splash Park can continue to operate should the Eat'n'Bowl cease to operate.

## Appendixes:

### Architectural

21.118.B0101\_T1 - Site Substructure Plan As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.B0301\_T1 - Plans As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.B0701\_T1 - Sections As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.B0702\_T1 - Sections As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.B0801\_T1 - Elevations As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.B1401\_T1 - 3D view.pdf  
21.118.H0001\_T1 - Compound Site Plan As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.L0001\_T1 - Site Demolition Plan As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.L0201\_T1 - Site Plan As Proposed.pdf  
21.118.L0501\_T1 - Site Plan As Proposed Detail.pdf  
21.118.S0101\_T1 - Site Plan As Existing.pdf

### Tender

21.118 - Tender Evaluation - At A Glance.pdf  
21.118 - Tender Evaluation - Weighting of Parameters.xlsx  
21.118 - Tender Evaluation Report.pdf

### Site Reports

1561.1 SPSN EIA.Final.pdf  
2924 - Transport Statement - Splash Park, Huntingdon Road, St Neots Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire.pdf  
Tree report M 004 A.pdf  
UK22.5926 - Phase I & II Geo-Environmental Assessment - Proposed Splash Park, St Neots - (Issue 1).pdf  
UK22.5926b - Flood Risk Assessment - Proposed Splash Park, St Neots (Issue 1).pdf

### Tender Response Splash

SPLASH\_0\_Covering letter.pdf  
SPLASH\_0\_Pricing Summary.pdf  
SPLASH\_0\_Schedule of Works.pdf  
SPLASH\_0\_Scope of Works.pdf  
SPLASH\_1\_Design Statement.pdf  
SPLASH\_1\_Masterplan Animated Walkthrough.pdf  
SPLASH\_1\_St Neots Splashpark - Brown & Co - Design Proposal.pdf  
SPLASH\_2\_Experience.pdf  
SPLASH\_3\_Programme.pdf  
SPLASH\_3\_Project Management.pdf  
SPLASH\_4\_Contracts Director CV.pdf  
SPLASH\_4\_Designer CV.pdf  
SPLASH\_4\_Site Manager CV.pdf  
SPLASH\_4\_Team +Resources.pdf  
SPLASH\_4\_Technical Director CV.pdf  
SPLASH\_5\_Terms & Conditions and Warranties.pdf  
SPLASH\_6\_Performance Specification.pdf

SPLASH\_6\_St Neots Splashpark - Test report.pdf  
SPLASH\_7\_RAMs.pdf  
SPLASH\_8\_Social Value.pdf  
SPLASH\_St Neots Tender Form Dec22 signed.pdf  
SPLASH\_Tender Bona Fide Cert Dec22 signed.pdf

# APPENDIX D

Charity registration number 1168906

**ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO  
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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### Trustees

Mr M H Marks MBE CEng  
Ms J L Drennan  
Ms E J Speed  
Mr L E Fitch  
Mr I P Taylor  
Ms Allison Schonder (Appointed 13 June 2022)  
Ms K Dundas-Todorov (Appointed 11 July 2023)

### Charity number

1168906

### Principal address

66 Wren Walk  
Eynesbury  
St Neots  
Cambridgeshire  
PE19 2GE

### Independent examiner

Kinnaird Hill  
Brunel House  
1 Archers Court  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE29 6XG

### Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc  
PO Box 1000  
BX1 1LT  
  
Natwest Bank plc  
37 High Street  
St Neots  
Cambs  
PE19 1BP



# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

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Trustees report	1 - 3
Statement of Trustees responsibilities	4
Independent examiner's report	5
Statement of financial activities	6
Balance sheet	7
Notes to the financial statements	8 - 13

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# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## TRUSTEES REPORT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

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The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Charity's Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

#### Objectives and activities

The Charity's object is to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of St Neots and the surrounding area, the provision of facilities for recreation, in particular aquatic facilities or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have give due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit, including the guidance 'Public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'.

The charity has three main activities:

- (a) It is working with various operators to lease part of the old outdoor pool in St Neots, Cambridgeshire to develop a swimming pool.
- (b) It provides a lease to the Ten-Pin Bowling Centre which already operates on the site.
- (c) It is developing plans for a splash park on the site of the old outdoor pool site.

#### Achievements and performance

The trustees have continued to develop plans for the new swimming pool and splash park during the year, with ongoing discussions being required to try to obtain the necessary financial support to cover construction costs. the lease of land for the Ten-Pin Bowling Centre continued throughout the year, but the trustees agreed not to charge rent for the period when Eat 'n' Bowl was unable to trade due to coronavirus restrictions. The trustees consider this decision to will help preserve the long-term viability of Eat 'n' Bowl which will, in turn, be of benefit to the charity in the future.

St Neots Town Council is custodian trustee for St Neots Swimming Pool Trust and, in accordance with the terms of the Charity Commission Scheme applicable to St Neots Swimming Pool Trust, the land continues to be a permanently endowed asset following its transfer for St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO.

#### Financial review

##### Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. As noted earlier, the trustees granted Eat 'n' Bowl a rent free period whilst it was unable to trade as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, hoping that a short-term loss of income to the charity will secure income for the long-term as restrictions are lifted.

For this reason, the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the accounting policies.

The trustees are seeking financial support to fund the proposed swimming pool and splash park through grants and donations. There are minimal operating costs at the present time, and all funds generated from the rent of the site to Eat 'n' Bowl are being added to the general reserve.

#### Fundraising

The charity has not undertaken any fund-raising activities during the period. Grants and donations continue to be sought for the future development of the site. There is no intention to use professional fundraisers at the present time.

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

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### Structure, governance and management

#### Constitution

St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO is a registered charity, number 1168906, and is constituted under a Trust deed.

The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr M H Marks MBE CEng

Ms J L Drennan

Ms E J Speed

Mr L E Fitch

Mr R I Taylor

(Resigned 17 January 2023)

Mr I P Taylor

Ms Allison Schonder

(Appointed 13 June 2022)

Ms K Dundas-Todorov

(Appointed 11 July 2023)

#### Methods of appointment or election of Trustees

The charity's constitution, the CIO Foundation document, initially required the charity to have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 12 trustees, with at least one trustee being over 18 years of age. St Neots Town Council was able to appoint up to 3 trustees, with each appointment being for a term of 3 years.

In December 2018, the trustees agreed to amend the charity's constitutions so that, for up to nine trustees not appointed by St Neots Town Council, there should be one representative from St Neots Town Council.

Trustees can be re-appointed for three consecutive terms and may not be re-appointed for a fourth consecutive term, but they may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year.

The charity's trustees have been appointed in order to establish the range of skills required to oversee and manage the proposed development of the new facilities.

#### Organisational structure and decision-making policies

The trustees meet regularly to discuss the charity's plans for the future and to take necessary decisions to enable the development of the charity's facilities.

Decisions may be taken either:

(a) at a meeting of the charity trustees; or

(b) by resolution in writing or electronic form agreed by all trustees, which may comprise either a single document or several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form to each of which one or more trustees has signified their agreement.

#### Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

The charity's constitution, the CIO Foundation document, requires the charity to make available to new trustees, on or before his or her first appointment:

(a) a copy of the current version of the constitution

(b) a copy of the CIO's latest Trustees' Annual Report and statement of accounts

#### Financial risk management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

#### Plans for future periods

The trustees continue to work on plans for the development of a new swimming pool and splash park at the site on Huntingdon Street, St Neots.

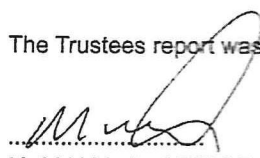
# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO


## TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

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The Trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

  
.....  
Mr M H Marks MBE CEng  
Trustee

  
.....  
Mr I P Taylor  
Trustee

Date: 20-9-23 .....

# **ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO**

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022***

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The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Charity for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

### TO THE TRUSTEES OF ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

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I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2022.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



**Kinnaird Hill**

Brunel House  
1 Archers Court  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE29 6XG

Dated: 20 September 2023

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Endowment funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Endowment funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	3	31	-	31	6,010	-	6,010
Charitable activities	4	12,000	-	12,000	-	-	-
Investments	5	361	-	361	62	-	62
<b>Total income</b>		<b>12,392</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,392</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,072</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Charitable activities	6	1,412	-	1,412	1,118	-	1,118
<b>Total charitable expenditure</b>		<b>1,412</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,118</b>
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		<b>10,980</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,980</b>	<b>4,954</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,954</b>
Fund balances at 1 January 2022		170,082	1,000,000	1,170,082	165,128	1,000,000	1,165,128
<b>Fund balances at 31 December 2022</b>		<b>181,062</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,181,062</b>	<b>170,082</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,170,082</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	10		1,001,936		1,001,936
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	39,549		360	
Cash at bank and in hand		140,172		168,326	
		<u>179,721</u>		<u>168,686</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	12	<u>(595)</u>		<u>(540)</u>	
Net current assets			179,126		168,146
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>1,181,062</u>		<u>1,170,082</u>
<b>Capital funds</b>					
Endowment funds - general			1,000,000		1,000,000
<b>Income funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds			181,062		170,082
			<u>1,181,062</u>		<u>1,170,082</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 20.9.23

Mr M H Marks MBE CEng  
Trustee

Mr I P Taylor  
Trustee



# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

---

### **1 Accounting policies**

#### **Charity information**

St Neots Aquatic and Leisure CIO is a registered charity which operates from 66 Wren Close, Eynesbury, St Neots, PE19 2GE

#### **1.1 Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity's [governing document], the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The Charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, [modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value]. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### **1.2 Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### **1.3 Charitable funds**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the Charity.

#### **1.4 Income**

Income is recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the Charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the Charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

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### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings	Nil
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Freehold land is not depreciated.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

#### 1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the Charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### 1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the Charity's balance sheet when the Charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

#### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the Charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### **1.10 Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the Charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

### 2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

### 3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2021
	£	£
Donations and gifts	31	6,010

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

### 4 Charitable activities

	Income from charitable activities 2022 £	2021 £
Provision of community facilities	12,000	-

### 5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
Interest receivable	361	62

### 6 Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Insurance	474	480
Legal and professional fees	854	554
Bank charges	84	84
	1,412	1,118
	1,412	1,118

### 7 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the Charity during the year.

### 8 Employees

	2022 Number	2021 Number
Total	-	-

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

#### 8 Employees

(Continued)

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

#### 9 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

#### 10 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 January 2022	1,001,936
At 31 December 2022	1,001,936
<b>Carrying amount</b>	
At 31 December 2022	1,001,936
At 31 December 2021	1,001,936

#### 11 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Other debtors	5,198	-
Prepayments and accrued income	34,351	360
	39,549	360

#### 12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals and deferred income	595	540

# ST NEOTS AQUATIC AND LEISURE CIO

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

### 13 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Endowment funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Endowment funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Fund balances at 31 December 2022 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	1,936	1,000,000	1,001,936	1,936	1,000,000	1,001,936
Current assets/(liabilities)	179,126	-	179,126	168,146	-	168,146
	<u>181,062</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,181,062</u>	<u>170,082</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,170,082</u>

### 14 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2021 - none).

# APPENDIX E

Application Number: 22/02222/FUL

## TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

### Planning Permission

Mr Simon Tindle  
Brown&Co  
The Fairways  
Wyboston Lakes  
Great North Road  
St Neots  
MK43 3AL  
United Kingdom

Huntingdonshire District Council in pursuance of powers under the above Act, hereby **GRANT PERMISSION** for:

Proposal: Change of use to splash park facility including associated groundworks, plant and equipment. Erection of cafe/kiosk, plant building, WC building, bins storage area, hardstanding, play equipment, seating, fencing and sun shades. Removal of beech hedge to NE corner of the site.

Site address: Former St Neots Swimming Pool Huntingdon Street St Neots

Applicant: St Neots Aquatic and Leisure Trust

in accordance with your application received on 24th October 2022 and plans (listed below) which form part of the application

Plan Type	Reference	Version	Date Received
Site Plan	21.118.K0001_P2		02.03.2023
Site Plan	21.118.K0002_P2		02.03.2023
Site Plan	21.118.K0003_P2		02.03.2023
Elevations	21.118.K0005_P2		02.03.2023
Location Plan	21.118.L0101_P1		24.10.2022
Floor Plan/s	21.118.K0004_P2		02.03.2023
Materials Layout	Materials Schedule		24.10.2022

Subject to the following condition/s.



Clara Kerr  
Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023



1. Condition.

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

1. Reason.

To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act, 1990.

2. Condition.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in the table above.

2. Reason.

For the avoidance of doubt.

3. Condition.

Notwithstanding the details shown on the plans hereby approved, the café/kiosk hereby approved shall be in accordance with submitted dwg 21\_118\_K0005 P1 unless otherwise agreed in writing.

3. Reason.

In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

4. Condition.

A. Site Investigation Information

No development (except demolition of above ground structures) shall take place until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This assessment must be undertaken by a competent person and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates from the site. Moreover, it must include;

- (i) details of previous land uses;
- (ii) a site investigation survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (iii) an assessment of the potential risks to;
  - a) human health,
  - b) property\*,
  - c) adjoining land,
  - d) groundwaters and surface waters,
  - e) ecological systems and
  - f) archaeological sites and ancient monuments.

\* Property (existing or proposed) includes buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes



Clara Kerr  
Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023





## B. Submission of Remediation Scheme

Where contaminated is found which poses unacceptable risks, as determined by the local planning authority in its response to (A), no development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include;

- (i) an options appraisal and remediation strategy;
- (ii) remediation objectives and remediation criteria;
- (iii) remediation works to be undertaken and the order in which the works will be progressed;
- (iv) a verification scheme providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (iii) have been completed and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of contaminant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

The scheme should be designed to ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use.

## C. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

Where a detailed remediation scheme has been required and approved under (B), no occupation of any part of the permitted development which has been identified in the scheme as being subject to contamination shall take place until the approved scheme has been implemented and the verification report, including the results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification scheme to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall, if required by the local planning authority, also include a reassessment of the long-term monitoring of contaminant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. The long-term monitoring and maintenance proposals shall be implemented as finally approved.

## D. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site;

- (i) it shall be reported in writing to the local planning authority within 1 working day;
- (ii) no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority) shall be carried out until site investigations have been undertaken and a remediation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination will be dealt with;
- (iii) the remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved;
- (iv) no occupation of any part of the permitted development identified in the remediation strategy as being affected by the previously unidentified contamination shall take place until;
  - a) the approved scheme has been implemented in full and any verification report required by the scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority;



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Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023



- b) if required by the local planning authority, any proposals for long-term monitoring of contaminant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- (v) the long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

4. Reason.

To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property, ecological systems and heritage assets, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Policy LP14.

5. Condition.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Phase I and II Geo-Environmental Assessment by EPS, dated 8th July 2022 received by the LPA on 24th October 2022.

5. Reason.

To ensure an acceptable form of development in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

6. Condition.

No fencing shall be erected on or within 0.5m of the public rights of way.

6. Reason.

In the interests of the amenity of the public in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019).

7. Condition.

No planting shall be erected on or within 2m of the public rights of way.

7. Reason.

In the interests of the amenity of the public in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019).

8. Condition.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the accompanying 'Flood Risk Assessment' by EPS, dated 9th August 2022 received by the LPA on 24th October 2022.



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Date 2nd May 2023

8. Reason.

To ensure an acceptable form of development in accordance with Policy LP5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

9. Condition.

All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment by Green Environmental Consultants dated July 2022 reviewed by the LPA on 24th October 2022.

9. Reason.

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of on-site biodiversity in accordance with policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

10. Condition.

No development, demolition, clearance or preparatory operations (including excavations and archaeology) shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved until an Arboricultural Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved Statement.

10. Reason.

This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure suitable protection of the trees on and adjacent to the site for the whole duration of the construction works pursuant to this permission and in the interests of visual amenity, and to enhance the character and appearance of the site in accordance with LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019). This condition is pre-commencement to ensure that site operations do not harm any trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained.

11. Condition.

No development, demolition, clearance or preparatory operations (including excavations and archaeology), hereafter referred to as "the works", shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved, until a Tree Protection Plan including the details of any phasing has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Tree Protection Plan shall be implemented before any equipment, machinery, or materials are brought on to the site in connection with the works, be retained intact for the duration of the construction works and only be removed or altered with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees, shrubs or hedges subject to the protection measures which die or become severely damaged within five years from the completion of the construction works shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species.



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Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023



11. Reason.

This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that initial site operations do not harm any trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained on and adjacent to the site (and if necessary their replacement) in the interests of visual amenity, and to enhance the character and appearance of the site in accordance with Policy LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

12. Condition.

The use hereby permitted within the Splash Park Facility shall not be open to the public except within the following hours:

09:00am to 18:00pm between Monday to Sundays (inclusive)

09:00am to 18:00pm on Bank or Public Holidays

12. Reason.

To protect the amenity of surrounding residential uses, in accordance with policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

13. Note to applicant.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner on seeking solutions:

When an application is received, planning conditions will be used where they can make a development acceptable.

A clear reason for refusal identifies the specific reasons why the development is unacceptable and helps the applicant to determine whether and how the proposal can be revised to make it acceptable.

In relation to this application, it was considered and the process managed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

14. Note to applicant.

15. Note to applicant.

- o Public Footpath No 10, St Neots and Public Footpath No 11, St Neots must remain open and unobstructed at all times. Building materials must not be stored on Public Rights of Way and contractors' vehicles must not be parked on it (it is an offence under s 137 of the Highways Act 1980 to obstruct a public Highway).

- o No alteration to the Public Footpaths' surface is permitted without our consent (it is an offence to damage the surface of a public footpath under s 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971).



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- o The granting of planning permission does not entitle a developer to obstruct a Public Right of Way (Circular 1/09 para 7.1).
- o Landowners are reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain boundaries, including trees, hedges and fences adjacent to Public Rights of Way, and that any transfer of land should account for any such boundaries (s154 Highways Act 1980).

Furthermore, the applicant may be required to temporarily close public rights of way whilst construction work is ongoing. Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) are processed by the County Council's Street Works Team and further information regarding this can be found on the County Council's website at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-licences-and-permits/>



Clara Kerr  
Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023



## NOTES

### **Rights of Appeal under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 Section 78**

If the applicant is aggrieved by the decision of the Local Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant permission subject to conditions, he/she may appeal to the Secretary of State responsible for planning within;

- **Six months from the date of this decision notice.**

Appeals must be made on a form which is obtainable from the Planning Inspectorate, Customer Support Unit, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN. Alternatively all forms can be downloaded from their website [www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk). The Secretary of State has power to allow a longer period for the giving of a notice of appeal but he will not normally be prepared to exercise this power unless there are special circumstances, which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal. The Secretary of State is not required to entertain an appeal if it appears to him that permission for the proposed development could not have been granted by the Local Planning Authority, or could not have been so granted otherwise than subject to the conditions imposed by them, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of the Development Orders and to any directions given under the Orders. He does not, in practice, refuse to entertain appeals solely because the decision of the Local Planning Authority was based on a direction given by him.

If permission to develop land is refused or granted subject to conditions, whether by the Local Planning Authority or by the Secretary of State responsible for planning and the owner of the land claims that the land has become incapable of reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted, he may serve on the Council of the County District in which the land is situated a purchase notice requiring that Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provision of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

### **Claiming Compensation**

In certain circumstances, a claim may be made against the Local Planning Authority for compensation where permission is refused or granted subject to conditions by the Secretary of State on appeal or on a reference of an application to him. The circumstances in which such compensation is payable are set out in Section 114 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



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Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023



## Street Naming and Numbering

In order to obtain an official postal address, any new buildings should be formally registered with Huntingdonshire District Council. Unregistered addresses cannot be passed to Royal Mail for allocation of postcodes. Applicants can find additional information, a scale of charges and an application form at:

[www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/street-naming-and-numbering/](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/street-naming-and-numbering/)

Alternatively, applicants can contact the Street Naming and Numbering Team on 01480 388153 or email [streetnaming@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:streetnaming@huntingdonshire.gov.uk). Please note new address cannot be assigned by the Council until the footings of any new buildings are in place.

## General Notes

This decision notice does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, bye-law or regulation other than Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



Clara Kerr  
Chief Planning Officer

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Date 2nd May 2023





## Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/PAGE ADDRESS  
www.stneots-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

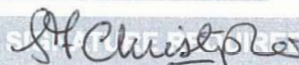
Date(s) internal audit undertaken

26/10/2023 18/03/2024 04/06/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

04/06/2024

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).





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## **St Neots Town Council**

***Internal Audit 2023-24 (Final Update Report)***

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***Stephen Christopher***

***for Auditing Solutions Ltd***

## Background and Scope

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control, and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Auditing Solutions Ltd was appointed to undertake this function on behalf of St Neots Town Council for the 2023-24 financial year.

This report sets out the results of our final audit visit, which was undertaken on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024. It updates the report issued after our two interim audits, in October 2023 and March 2024. Once again, we wish to thank the Town Clerk, the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and other Council staff for providing the information required to enable us to complete our audit work.

## Internal Audit Approach

In carrying out our internal audit work for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Accounting Statements/AGAR. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in key areas in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate, and are fit for the purposes intended.

Our audit programme is designed to afford assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner which ensures effective probity of transactions and a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors, or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

## Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the programme of work undertaken, we have concluded that the Council has continued to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions continue to be of a high standard and provide an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation. We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on Page 3 of the 2023-24 AGAR, having concluded that the internal control objectives as set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council

In the sections below, we have explained the objectives of each area of our audit, summarising the work undertaken and our findings. We are pleased to confirm that there are no matters arising from our audit work that require a formal recommendation. We ask that Members consider the content of this report.

<p>This report has been prepared for the sole use of St Neots Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions</p>
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# Detailed Report

## Accounting records & Banking arrangements

Our objective is to confirm that the accounting records are accurate and up to date, with no anomalous entries in the cashbooks or financial ledgers, and that appropriate banking arrangements are in place.

The Council maintains its accounting records using the RBS Rialtas ‘Omega’ accounting software, which is generally acknowledged as a market leader for this tier of local government.

Barclays Bank continues to be used for day-to-day business banking services. As in the previous year, there are three main accounts in use; a Current Account and Business Premium Account (instant access savings account) for the Town Council’s main transactions, together with a separate Priory Centre Current Account. The two Town Council accounts are combined into a single cashbook within Omega, in order to reduce the number of data entries and to reflect the fact that Barclays continues to operate an automatic daily transfer between the accounts, to retain a balance of £100,000 in the Current Account.

In addition to the Business Premium Account, all other funds not required for immediate use are held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund of CCLA Investment Management Ltd.

Two further Barclays Bank accounts (current account and savings account) are maintained to hold funds relating to the “Mayor’s Charity”, which are set aside for charitable donations. These form part of the Council’s overall funds for accounting purposes.

In our audit work for the year, we have:

- Checked and agreed the opening trial balance on Omega for 2023-24 to the closing balances on the 2022-23 AGAR and detailed financial statements;
- Verified that the financial ledgers remained “in balance” throughout the year;
- Confirmed that the accounting code structure remained appropriate to meet the Council’s budget reporting and control requirements;
- Checked the detail in the Omega cashbooks for the three main bank accounts for four sample months (May, August and December 2023, plus March 2024) by reference to the relevant bank statements;
- Checked the detail of all transactions in the year on the other accounts, again by reference to the relevant bank statements;
- Checked and agreed the detail on the bank reconciliations produced by Omega software for all of the accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, confirming that there were no long-standing unpresented cheques or anomalous entries. We also confirmed that a monthly reconciliation is undertaken by the RFO and independently reviewed by the Town Clerk;
- Confirmed that, on a periodic basis, the bank reconciliations are being verified by a nominated councillor and that the reconciliations as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 were reported to the Finance and Governance (F&G) Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (with the year-end being reported in May 2024);

- Confirmed the balance held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 agreed to a supporting statement provided by CCLA;
- Confirmed that the overall cash balance has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 8);
- Noted that the External Auditors issued their 'report and certificate' on the Council's 2022-23 AGAR on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023 and that there were no matters arising, and
- Confirmed, by discussion, that appropriate procedures remain in place for backing up financial and other IT systems in use at the Council.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Corporate Governance**

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings), all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been, or are being, considered for implementation.

During the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- Our review of Council and Committee minutes has not identified any issues that we consider might have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability;
- The Council has continued to keep both its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders under regular review. The Financial Regulations were reviewed and updated by the F&G Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and formally approved by the Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The existing Standing Orders were re-approved, without amendment, at the Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023;
- A wide range of other policies and procedures are in place and are also being reviewed on a regular basis, in accordance with an agreed timetable;
- The RFO has developed detailed Financial Procedures covering all key financial tasks, to underpin the Financial Regulations;
- At the previous year's Annual Council Meeting, the Council resolved to continue to adopt the General Power of Competence and this remains in place for the duration of the current Council, and
- During the summer of 2023, the Council provided the proper opportunity for the exercise of public rights in relation to the 2022-23 accounts, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## Expenditure

Our objective is to ensure that:

- The Council's resources are released in accordance with the approved procedures and budgets;
- Each payment is supported by an original trade invoice or other appropriate documentation which confirms the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no invoice is available;
- Any discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- An official purchase order has been raised on every occasion when one would be expected (exceptions will include ongoing contracts);
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

To check compliance with the above criteria, we have selected a sample of non-pay related payments across the financial year. Our test sample has included all payments in excess of £4,000, together with a more random selection of every 45th payment as recorded in the cashbook and a sample of invoices relating to the Priory Centre. The overall value of expenditure in our sample for the year totalled approximately £772,500 (including VAT). There were no matters arising from our review.

Operations staff use a fuel card when purchasing fuel for Council vehicles. We tested a sample of fuel card payments made in August 2023 and January 2024, confirming that appropriate receipts had been obtained for all of transactions included on the statements.

The Council makes use of a Corporate Barclaycard, with statements settled in full each month. At present, four managers hold cards, each with an individual monthly spending limit of £1,500. The cards are mainly used for recurring subscriptions, paying for travel and subsistence for meetings and for online orders. During the course of our second interim audit, we reviewed the Barclaycard statement for the period ending 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and confirmed that all payments made were of an appropriate nature and were supported by receipts.

In the course of our audit work, we reviewed the tendering approach followed in relation to the contract for the provision of new accessible play equipment and supporting infrastructure for the Brickhills Play Park extension. We confirmed that the tendering arrangements complied with the publication requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and that a sound approach was taken to the management of the tender process.

We confirmed that VAT Returns continue to be submitted quarterly in electronic format, as required by extant legislation, with detail being reconciled to the Omega financial ledger.

### **Conclusion**

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## Assessment and management of Risk

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has put in place arrangements to identify potential areas of significant risk of both a financial and health & safety nature, and that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks, in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

There is a requirement for the Council to formally review and approve its risk management arrangements during each financial year. We confirmed that this has been done for 2023-24, with the risk assessment considered by the F&G Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 and subsequently approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

The Council entered into a three-year agreement with Zurich Municipal for its insurance cover at the start of the 2023-24 financial year, which will run until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. The policy for 2023-24 includes Employer's Liability of £10m, Public Liability of £15m and Fidelity Guarantee of £2m. This level of cover appears adequate for the Council's ongoing needs and level of annual Precept.

As in previous years, a range of health and safety reviews/inspections are being undertaken throughout the year, including annual RoSPA reviews of play equipment by PlaySafety Ltd. We reviewed the summary report issued following the 2023-24 RoSPA play equipment inspections, completed in April 2023, and confirmed that no areas of high risk were identified. The Operations Manager reported the results of these inspections to the Operations and Amenities Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and outlined the actions being taken by the Council to address the matters raised.

### **Conclusion**

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## Budget Setting, Budgetary Control and Reserves

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust procedures in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and the level of Precept to be drawn down from Huntingdonshire District Council, and that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also consider whether the Council retains appropriate funds in earmarked and general reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

We confirmed that, throughout the year, Members have received regular updates on performance against the 2023-24 budget. The financial position as at the end of the third quarter (balance sheet and income & expenditure account) were reported to the F&G committee on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024, together with a report on the movements in CIL and the earmarked reserves during the year to date. The final outturn position is due to be reported at the June meeting.

During our second interim audit, we reviewed the approach taken by the Council to setting its budget and Precept for 2024-25, confirming that, as in previous years, the budget process involved detailed consideration by the various committees, in particular F&G, before the Precept was formally approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The Precept was set at £2,008,010 (£1,949,524 in 2023-24), which, after taking into account the increase in the tax base, is equivalent to an annual increase of 1.8% for a Band D property. We are satisfied that Members were provided with an appropriate level of information on which to base the budget decision, with comprehensive supporting documentation included in the budget pack produced by the Town Clerk and RFO.

As at 31st March 2024, the Council's overall reserves amounted to £5,240,494, compared to £3,861,594 at the previous year end. Of the total, £755,469 is held as earmarked reserves, compared to £700,778 at the previous year end, a net increase of £54,691. This includes the roll forward of a number of unspent budget allocations from 2023-24, as agreed by the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

In recent years, the Council has benefitted significantly from the receipt of developers' contributions, most recently under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and previously from the earlier 'section 106 (s106)' agreements. During 2023-24, a further £1,121,468 of CIL was received. Whilst some older CIL and s106 monies were used in the year, the total available CIL/s106 monies at the year-end amounted to £2,714,977, compared to £1,633,502 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

The remaining balance of £1,770,048 (£1,527,341) is held as a General Reserve. The increase in the year was due to a number of factors, including a net underspend of £49,292, after allowing for the carry forward of some unspent budget allocations (referred to above), the receipt of £50,000 towards the Public Art Project and unbudgeted income of around £128,000 from bank and investment interest. As a consequence, the year-end General Reserve balance remains significantly higher than the target level of between 25% and 50% of the annual Precept, as set out in the Reserves Policy - equating to approximately 88% of the 2024-25 Precept. However, from our discussions with the Town Clerk and RFO, and review of the minutes, we are aware that the Council is currently considering a number of major capital projects, the funding requirements for which will become clearer in the coming months. Whilst a significant element of the funding will come from CIL monies, we understand that the projects will also require contributions from the General Reserve.

## ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Income**

In addition to its Precept, bank and investment interest, and contributions from developers - through s106 or CIL - the Council receives income from a variety of sources. These include hall hire (Priory Centre and Eatons Centre), allotment rents and cemetery charges.

Our objective is to confirm that robust procedures are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced (where appropriate), with recovery effected within a reasonable time span.

In the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

*Review of fees and charges:* The fees and charges for 2023-24 were approved by the Council as part of the budget-setting process, when it was agreed to increase the fees and

charges for allotments and cemeteries, but that hall hire fees would remain unchanged for the time being. However, in the course of our last year's internal audit work, we identified that insufficient notice had been given to allotment tenants of the proposed increase in allotment rents and, as a consequence, the Council deferred this change until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Cemeteries: We reviewed the interment applications and other cemetery related charges for three sample months (1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023), to confirm that all required documentation had been obtained and the invoices subsequently raised were in order and paid promptly. There were no matters arising from our review.

Allotment rents: We confirmed that, by the time of our second interim audit visit, all of the allotment rents due for the year had been received, with two exceptions. In those cases, the allotment holders had confirmed that they were giving up their tenancy and the allotments are being reallocated.

Hall hire: We reviewed a sample of one week's diary entries (w/c 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 for both the Priory Centre and the Eatons Centre, agreeing these to the computerised diary record and booking confirmations. We confirmed that accounts had been raised for all of the bookings, with income received on a timely basis.

Outstanding debtors: We reviewed the aged debtor position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 for the Priory Centre and the Town Council. We confirmed that effective control arrangements remain in place, with appropriate action being taken in relation to outstanding payments due.

## ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Petty Cash**

When completing the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the AGAR, we are required to confirm that there are effective controls over any petty cash accounts operated by the Council. To meet that objective, we check that:

- Any petty cash accounts in operation are managed effectively and that all expenses incurred are appropriately supported by a trade invoice or relevant till receipt;
- Only low value expenditure is incurred from any petty cash account(s) in use;
- VAT is identified and coded accordingly to the VAT control account for periodic recovery from HMRC; and
- The physical cash held is periodically reconciled to the supporting records.

Two separate petty cash accounts are held, one for the Town Council and the other for the Priory Centre café. During the course of our interim audits, we confirmed that the petty cash recorded on Omega is being reconciled to the underlying accounting records by the Finance Team, on a regular basis. At our second interim, we undertook a physical check of both petty cash floats and found these to be in order, with appropriate receipts for all payments made since the most recent reconciliation.



At our final audit visit, we confirmed that the Finance Team had checked and confirmed the end of end of year petty cash balances and that these had been included correctly in the cash and bank figure in the AGAR, Section 2, Box 8.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Salaries and Wages**

In examining the Council's payroll function, our objective is to confirm that extant employment legislation is being adhered to, that the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation are satisfied regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions and that the requirements of the local government pension scheme are met.

The majority of the Council's staff are paid on a monthly basis, although a few staff continue to be paid weekly. The Council has outsourced preparation of the payroll to a local payroll bureau, which provides all relevant documentation.

To meet our audit objective, we undertook the following work:

- Confirmed that signed contracts of employment are in place for new members of staff appointed during the financial year;
- Checked the detail of staff salaries and wages paid in September 2023 (monthly) and week 25 (weekly) respectively, by reference to the RFO's schedule of staff in post and review of the detailed payroll records - agreeing the gross salaries or hourly rates paid;
- Checked to ensure that tax and NI deductions have been made correctly, by applying the appropriate tax code and NI Table, also ensuring that appropriate amounts are being paid over to HMRC each month;
- Checked that the appropriate employee and employer contributions to the pension scheme have been determined and paid over to the Pension Fund Administrators;
- Checked that the appropriate employee and employer contributions to the pension scheme have been applied in accordance with the current arrangements;
- Reviewed timesheets, where relevant, to confirm the accurate payment of any enhanced hours due to employees and that they had been certified for payment by their section head. and
- Examined the procedures in place for the release of staff salaries and wages by the payroll contractor to individual staff.

During our second interim audit, we checked the calculation of the back-pay to staff resulting from the late agreement of the national Local Government Services pay settlement for 2023/24. This was applicable from 1st April 2023, but not agreed until the beginning of November 2024. We confirmed the accuracy of the calculation of the back-pay and that the payments had been made correctly with the November salaries.

When undertaking our first interim audit, we noted a few instances where staff contracts did not clearly identify the incremental scale point range applicable to a particular post and some other cases where the contract period and end date for staff on fixed term contracts was not specified. We drew these to the attention of the Deputy Town Clerk at the time and, when following up at our second audit visit, were pleased to note that the appropriate action had been taken.

We had also noted that the Council was in the process of developing formal worker agreements for casual staff recruited to undertake bar work at the Priory Centre. As at the time of our final audit visit, this exercise was still in progress, with the contracts yet been issued. We will follow up on this matter during the next year's internal audit.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Asset Register / Inventory**

The reporting arrangements for assets in the AGAR require councils to report the value of each asset at purchase cost or at a suitable proxy where that value is not known, and for community assets to be valued at a nominal £1. The value of individual assets should not change from one year to another, with the only changes being the inclusion of new assets purchased or removal of assets disposed of.

Last year, the Council purchased the Rialtas Asset Inventory System and the details of all assets held were transferred to it from the previous spreadsheet record, by the RFO.

At our final audit, we confirmed that the details of additions and disposals in the year had been recorded on the asset register. We also confirmed that the updated total cost of assets held as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, £4,819,831, has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 9).

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Investments and Loans**

Our objective is to confirm that an appropriate investment strategy is in place, that any funds not required for immediate use, whether temporarily or on a longer-term basis are invested in line with that strategy and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also confirm that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

During the course of our audit work, we have confirmed that:

- The Investment Strategy was reviewed and updated at the F&G meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 and approved by Full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023;
- At present, the Council does not hold any long-term investments. As noted earlier in this report, any surplus funds that are not retained in the Council's main Barclays Deposit Account are held in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund;

- The two half-yearly instalment repayments (principal and interest) on the outstanding PWLB loan as recorded in the cash book and financial ledger agreed to the third party “demand” notice from the UK Debt Management Office.
- The repayments of principal and interest, and the overall loan balances outstanding at the year-end have been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Lines 5 and 10, respectively)

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Statement of Accounts and AGAR**

We have examined the detailed accounts produced by the RBS Omega system and also the draft of the statutory “Accounting Statements 2023-24” that the Council is required to complete and approve (Section 2 of the AGAR). We have agreed the detail to the supporting accounting records and other related documentation.

### ***Conclusions***

***There are no matters arising from this area of our review that require any formal comment or recommendation. We look forward to receiving a copy of the finalised AGAR (Sections 1 and 2), once the document has been approved by the Council.***

***On the basis of the work undertaken during the course of our review for the year, we have completed and signed the ‘Annual Internal Audit Report’ on page 3 of the AGAR, assigning positive assurances in all areas of internal control.***

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

## ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	3,244,389	3,861,594	<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i> <i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,864,357	1,949,524	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	728,495	1,784,726	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	994,024	1,099,465	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	26,799	26,115	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	954,824	1,229,770	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,861,594	5,240,494	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	3,908,412	5,319,056	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	4,575,018	4,819,831	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	247,500	232,500	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval**

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

04/06/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED