

## Full Town Council

**Present:** Cllrs Slade (Chair), Banks, Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Dundas-Todorov, Dunford, Goodman, Hitchin, Johnson, Maslen, Pitt, J Smith, S Smith and Terry

**Absent:** Cllrs Crompton, Cooper-Marsh, Kumar, Macnab-Grieve, Mascarenhas and Simonis

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Project Delivery Manager

**Minutes** of the meeting of St Neots Town Council held on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were two members of the public present.

### ACTIONS

#### 071 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Cooper-Marsh, Kumar, Macnab-Grieve, Mascarenhas and Simonis

Admin

#### 072 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 073 Council Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 as a true and accurate record subject to amending that Cllr Dundas-Todorov had returned to the meeting following the conclusion of the St Neots Aquatic and Leisure item and to include the names of the councillors in a recorded vote relating to the same item.

### Committee Minutes

#### 074 Members received and noted minutes of the Environment & Emergency Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024.

The Chairperson informed the committee that activities and projects would be gaining more momentum in the coming months as the Council aims to work towards its 2030 Carbon Neutral target.

#### 075 Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

#### 076 Members received and noted minutes of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The Committee Chairperson advised that the agenda had included new Burial Regulations which had been deferred until September 2024 due to the size of the documents. Members were encouraged to consider the documents in detail and send through any queries to the Clerk ahead of the September 2024 Operations and Amenities Committee.

**077** Members received and noted minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**078** Members received and noted minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

*Members considered and resolved the following recommendations from the Finance & Governance Committee;*

**079** **RESOLVED** that the Council continue to offer free memorial plaques for the Forget-Me-Not-Memorial Garden in future financial years and that the Council consider and budget for the provision as part of the 2025-26 budget setting process.

**080** Proposed and seconded that the Council adopt the updated financial regulations as presented by the Finance and Governance Committee, including the following amendments;

- i) Section 5.14 be amended to include the Deputy Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee as a Councillor who can approve expenditure over £2,000, resulting in approval needed from two of any four named councillors.
- ii) Section 5.14 be amended to exclude the need for approval of expenditure of £2,000 by nominated councillors when the expenditure has been approved by a committee or the Council and a minuted resolution is in place.

A Councillor sought clarification on the approval process for expenditure above £2,000 and when officers must seek such approvals.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that wording of 5.14 be amended to read “excluding expenditure already **specifically** approved by a committee”.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the updated financial regulations as presented by the Finance and Governance Committee, subject to including the following amendments;

- i) Section 5.14 be amended to include the Deputy Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee as a Councillor who can approve expenditure over £2,000, resulting in approval needed from two of any four named councillors.



- ii) Section 5.14 be amended to exclude the need for approval of expenditure of £2,000 by nominated councillors when the expenditure has been specifically approved by a committee or the Council and a minuted resolution is in place.

**081 RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the proposed Tree Maintenance Policy.

**082 RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the Freedom of Information Policy subject to amending section 5.1 to read “including, but not limited to:”

### **083 Project Status Summary**

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on the state of a number of projects which had key milestone dates over the August meeting break period.

The Town Clerk introduced Andrew Korolev who had joined the Council as its new Project Delivery Manager. Andrew would be leading a number of key projects and would be supporting other offices in the progression and completion of others.

Members received and noted updates on a number of projects, with particular reference to those where outcomes were expected between the date of the meeting and the next meeting of the Council;

- **Brickhills Play Park** – Seesaw and bench installation is due to happen the week of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.
- **Moore's Walk Garden** – Works to improve the garden in line with the Working Groups recommendations are due to start the week of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.
- **Changing Places Toilets** – Contractors were continuing to work on the toilets with completion of works and sign off anticipated in August 2024. This would be subject to any snagging issues that might be highlighted and sign off from Muscular Dystrophy UK.
- **Museum Repair Work** – Officers are working with museum trustees to progress priority work to the museum roof within delegated maintenance budgets. Work within the scope of maintenance budgets is anticipated to start in September 2024 ahead of poor weather.
- **Temporary Priory and Council Office Relocation** – Works on preparing the rented property known as 7 New Street to offer a reduced Priory Centre offering was continuing. It was anticipated that the site would be operational during the first two weeks of August 2024. The purpose of the site is to help ensure that hireable community space remains available during the closure of the Priory Centre.

The Council is aiming to relocate to temporary premises at Cemetery Road at the start of September 2024 and works to prepare the building would continue over August.

- **Revamp the Ramp** – HDC had engaged contractors to carry out the Skatepark refurbishment works, which would be part funded by the Town Council. Works are due to commence on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

#### 084 Fixed Asset Register

Members received a copy of the fixed asset register which supported the end of year accounts and showed the status of assets at the end of March 2024.

The Clerk advised Members that legal advice on the status of Jubilee Hall Eaton Socon had been obtained and that he was in communication with a representative of the management committee. A full report outlining the situation would be brought to Council in September for information.

Members made the following points;

- A typo in Syndey Banks Field (spelt filed on register) needed correcting.
- Should “MN003 The Round House Wooden Structure St Neots Cemeteries” change to reflect its change of use to the baby-loss memorial garden. The Clerk would seek the advice of the RFO on this matter.
- Should building values change to reflect any leases given to community organisations for those buildings. The Clerk did not think this would be the case as the value was registered on whatever the Council paid for the building, or if it was gifted there would be a £1 value. The Clerk stated he would seek the advice of the RFO and report back accordingly.

RFO

RFO

#### 085 Lease Agreement

The Council considered a report from the Town Clerk seeking authority to enter a hire lease agreement for a storage unit to be located at the Eatons Community Centre during the Priory Centre closure. The unit was required for storage of Council and Priory Centre items during the temporary closure of the building.

**RESOLVED** that the Council approve the Priory Centre General Manager enter into a hire lease agreement for a 40ft container to be located at the Eatons Community Centre at a cost of £2.50 per day for an initial period of three months followed by a monthly renewal on the basis of need as the Priory Centre redevelopment progressed.

GM  
Priory  
Centre

#### 086 Reports from Outside Bodies

Cllr Chapman informed the meeting that St Neots Museum was due to take possession of an important artifact that would be an exciting and important part of the museum collection.

**087 Date of Next Meeting**

Members received and noted that the date of the next Full Council meeting would be 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7:15pm.

**088 Private Session**

**RESOLVED** 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, **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

**089 Community Ownership Fund Heritage Asset Purchase**

Members received and considered reports from the Town Clerk and Project Delivery Manager outlining structural surveys undertaken on a building for which the Council had made an offer to purchase.

Members noted the findings of the surveys and recommendations of the Project Development Manager and Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** to continue to progress the purchase of the building inline with the offer resolved and made by the Council.