



ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DISPLAY

Invitation to Tender



BACKGROUND

St Neots Town Council (the Council) is an elected body in the first tier of local government. The Town Council represents the community's interests and provides a range of local services, facilities and community events, adding value and acting as a focal point for the community.

St Neots is the largest market town in Cambridgeshire with a current population of 37,000. The town has easy access to the A1 and is situated 50 miles north of London and 15 miles from Cambridge City.

St Neots Town Council holds an annual Christmas Light Switch On event that takes place on the last Sunday of November. During this event, the Town's Christmas Tree and other Town Centre lights are officially switched on.

TENDER BACKGROUND

St Neots Town Council oversees the Christmas light display in the Market Square and High Street and is inviting tenders for the design, supply, installation, removal, storage, and annual maintenance and testing of high-quality Christmas lights. This contract will cover the festive light displays for the 2025, 2026, and 2027 Christmas seasons, starting in November 2025.

The Council is committed to delivering a high-quality Christmas lights display for its residents. The aim is to create a festive display that impresses the community and celebrates the season.

The primary objectives are the following:

- Deliver a safe and reliable lighting display that aligns with the design brief and specified locations.
- Comply with the established timelines.
- Prioritise health and safety in all circumstances.

During this three-year contract, we encourage changes to the lighting that enhance the display.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

St Neots Town Council is advertising this tender opportunity on the Find a Tender platform and is following an open procurement process. The Town Council is committed to a fair, open, and transparent procurement process. Bids are invited from qualified contractors with proven experience in delivering similar projects, ideally within a similar setting and geographic location.

TENDER APPOINTMENT

After completing the procurement process, the Town Council intends to appoint the highest-scoring bidder to deliver the contract. Details regarding the bidding process, evaluation, and appointment are outlined below.

HOW TO SUBMIT A BID

Submission Requirements

Interested providers must submit all parts of the Application Form and complete all sections from pages 10 onwards.

Bidders must meet all the Minimum Requirements Design Brief or agree to meet them prior to the contract start date to be eligible for appointment.

Bribery

To prevent bribery offences in this tender process, in line with The Bribery Act 2010, offering, promising,





giving of a bribe to any St Neots Town Council employee or St Neots Town Councillor will result in automatic disqualification of the Tender Bid and being reported to the appropriate authorities.

Correspondence

All correspondence related to the procurement process must be sent via email to jacqueline.coleman@stneots-tc.gov.uk

Any direct contact with other employees of the Town Council or any St Neots Town Councillor regarding this procurement is considered a breach of terms and will result in disqualification of the Tender Bid.

Submission Format

All bidders are required to submit a completed application form by email to jacqueline.coleman@stneots-tc.gov.uk

The email should have the subject line as "Christmas Lights Tender" written on it. Bidders must submit their final tender before the submission deadline.

Process for Tender Queries

Any questions or clarification requests regarding the tender must be emailed to jacqueline.coleman@stneots-tc.gov.uk in advance of the deadline set out in the tender timetable.

Requests submitted after the deadline will not be considered. The Town Council will aim to respond to all queries within 3 working days, where possible. Bidders should be aware that, when feasible, all queries and responses will be shared anonymously with all bidders to ensure a fair and transparent process. Bidders must specify if they believe a query to be commercially sensitive or if disclosing it and its response could harm their commercial interests.

Ambiguity, Error or Omission

Bidders are encouraged to promptly notify the designated Town Council contact via email if they identify any ambiguity, inconsistency, error, or omission in this Tender Bid or any related documentation, including any supplementary materials issued during the procurement process.

Post-Tender Clarification

St Neots Town Council may request clarifications from bidders following the submission deadline. These clarifications are intended to finalise the evaluation of tenders and do not provide an opportunity for bidders to alter or enhance their submissions. Bidders should be aware that, when appropriate, St Neots Town Council reserves the right to assess third-party and/or associated costs with any received proposals for cost comparison.

Errors and Discrepancies

Where the tender reveals errors or discrepancies, which would affect the tender figure in an otherwise successful tender, the tenderer shall be told of the errors and discrepancies and given an opportunity of confirming, correcting or withdrawing the offer

TENDER TIMESCALES

Submission Deadline

The deadline for responses is 12:00 PM (noon) on Thursday 23rd May 2025.



Tender Timetable

The following timetable outlines the approximate schedule for the tender process, but it is subject to change:

Activity	Date/Time
Issue of Tender Bid Notice	10 th April 2025
Deadline for submission of Tender Bids	12noon on 23 rd May 2025

TENDER EVALUATION & SELECTION

Procurement Assessment Panel

The procurement assessment panel will consist of St Neots Town Council Officers and nominated Members.

Question Weighting

Bidders must answer all questions in the Invitation to Tender document. Each question is assigned a specific weighting, as detailed in the table below.

Description	Weighting
Health & Safety	15%
Previous Project Experience	15%
Project Management & Communication	5%
Maintenance	5%
Design	30%
Price	30%

Score	Term	Typical Characteristic
0	Unacceptable	No response or extremely limited response. Response inconsistent and/or unworkable and/or does not address our requirements. Shows extremely limited understanding of, and/or extremely inappropriate approach to the matter in question.
1	Poor	Response is limited and is lacking in relation to a significant proportion of material elements, is unworkable and/or inconsistent and only partially meets our requirements. Shows limited understanding of, and/or inappropriate approach to, the matter in question.
2	Satisfactory	Response broadly responds to our requirements at a reasonable standard. Shows reasonable understanding of, and/or acceptable approach to the matter in question.
3	Good	Response meets our requirements of a high standard and exceeds them in one or two respects. Shows very sound understanding of, and appropriate approach to, the matter in question.
4	Very Good	Response meets our requirements at a very high standard and exceeds them in a number of respects. Shows extremely sound understanding of, and highly appropriate approach to, the matter in question.
5	Excellent	Exemplary response; exceeds expectations in all respects, and Bidder could not be expected to answer questions more comprehensively or appropriately.



Confidentiality

The Town Council guarantees confidentiality for all respondents to this Tender Bid.

Right of Rejection and Appointment

St Neots Town Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions to the Tender bid. The Town Council also reserves the right not to appoint a provider following this procurement process.

Costs

St Neots Town Council will not be responsible for any costs incurred in preparing your proposal or any other costs related to participating in this procurement process.

Insurance Requirements

The contractor must provide proof of insurance coverage at the levels specified in this section.

Employer's Liability Insurance

The Council's minimum requirement for Employer's Liability Insurance is £10 million.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

The Council's minimum requirement for Professional Indemnity Insurance is £2 million.

Public Liability Insurance

The Council's minimum requirement for Public Liability Insurance is £10 million.

Contract Duration

The contract will commence in November 2025 and will continue for three consecutive years, concluding after Christmas 2027

Site Access

Potential Contractors are required to attend a mandatory site visit to assess the locations of existing fixtures, anchor points, power sources, road traffic conditions, pedestrian pathways, trees, and potential display locations that may require permissions and satisfy themselves that the requirements of the Council, as detailed in this document, can be met. Please note that site visits do not need to be arranged with the Town Council and the Town Council will not be present for these site visits.

Display

The lights must only go up after Armistice Day, so from 12th November onwards. The lights must be installed and tested at least one week before the Christmas Light Switch On, which occurs on the last Sunday in November. The lights should also be tested on the morning of the Christmas Light Switch On Event to ensure they function properly. All lights and fixings must comply with or exceed the relevant legislation. The lights must be turned off on 6th January in their entirety and then taken down between 7th January and 18th January in their entirety.

	2025	2026	2027
Programme of Works Deadline	28th October 2025	27th October 2026	26th October 2027
Installation/Test Deadline	21st November 2025	20th November 2026	19th November 2027





Switch On	30 th November 2025	29 th November 2026	28 th November 2027
Switch-off	6th January 2026	6th January 2027	6th January 2028
Removal Date Deadline	18th January 2026	18th January 2027	18th January 2028

Failure to meet the obligation to achieve “Installation/Test Deadline” date carries a penalty clause of £750 plus £500 for each subsequent 24-hour period this obligation is not fulfilled.

Failure to meet the obligation to achieve “Switch On” date carries a penalty clause of £750 plus £500 for each subsequent 24-hour period this obligation is not fulfilled.

Failure to meet the obligation to achieve “Switch-off” carries a penalty clause off £250 plus £125 for each subsequent 24 hours this obligation is not fulfilled.

Failure to meet the obligation to achieve “Removal Date Deadline” carries a penalty clause off £250 plus £125 for each subsequent 24 hours this obligation is not fulfilled.

The Town Council reserve the right to end any contract with a successful tenderer if they fail to deliver what they set out within their Programme of Works, or if they fail to deliver what they confirmed they could deliver as part of their completed Tender Bid Submission.

Maintenance

All displays must be tested, with any defects addressed before being sent for installation each year. An additional inspection is required once installed to ensure the display is working properly, and any issues must be resolved before the Christmas Light Switch On Event. The entire circuit must also be tested annually during setup. Furthermore, all displays must undergo PAT testing within three months after removal, following the completion of the annual display. All electrical connections must be carried out by a NICEIC-registered contractor.

Storage and Delivery

All displays must be stored securely in a dry area and fully insured for their replacement value. Each year, the entire display will need to be transported to and from the storage location to St Neots.

Ownership of Christmas Lights

The successful tenderer will own and maintain all the Christmas Lights, rather than the Town Council.

Detailed Tender

The tender submission should clearly outline how the Tenderer will fulfil the Council’s requirements.

Right to Reject

The Council is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any tender. It reserves the right to withdraw any portion of the tender document before awarding the contract and to discontinue the tender process at any point. There is no guarantee that a contract will be awarded

Notification of Decision

The Council’s decision is final. All unsuccessful bidders will be provided with an assessment summary detailing how their tender was evaluated against each assessment criterion, including the scores awarded, relative





importance of each criterion, and the reasons why they were not selected, aiming to provide transparent and constructive feedback.

Compliance

The Council may reject any tender that does not comply with the stated requirements, and its decision in this regard will be final.

No Alterations

Once the tender has been submitted, no changes to the text or pricing will be allowed. Failure to complete any part of the tender documents may result in rejection of the tender.

Cost Clarity

Tenderers should clearly specify what is included within each cost area. The Council will not make payments for costs that are not listed or for services that are ancillary to the main service provision.

Three-Year Agreement

The prices should reflect a three-year agreement. Any cost increases during this period that are not included in the formal tender will not be the Council's responsibility. Tenderers should account for any potential inflation when quoting for the three-year contract

Point of Contact If Awarded The Contract

If you are successful in winning this tender bid, your single point of contact will be Jacqueline Coleman who can be emailed on jacqueline.coleman@stneots-tc.gov.uk





DESIGN BRIEF

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Please find below a detailed design brief for St Neots Town Council's Christmas Lights as part of this Christmas Light Tender Bid. This specification covers all three years of the contract, commencing November 2025 and finishing after the 2027 Christmas period. This is the minimum required lighting offer that St Neots Town Council will accept for this Tender Bid.

Christmas Trees

St Neots Christmas Tree is in St Neots Market Square. St Neots Town Council source a real, 30ft tall Christmas tree, and arrange for its placement in the Square on or around the third week of November.

St Neots Town Council will require the successful tenderer to:

- Provide 4000 warm white Christmas tree lights to cover the entirety of the 30ft Christmas tree located in the Market Square. The successful tenderer will be responsible for the design, supply, installation, removal, storage, and annual maintenance and testing of the lights on the Christmas Tree. The successful tenderer will be responsible for placing these lights shortly after delivery of the tree, ensuring an impressive presentation.
- Provide a lit-up star and place this on top of the Christmas tree

Lamp posts

There are 24 lamp posts located in St Neots Market Square, High Street and Town Bridge. St Neots Town Council will require the successful tenderer to:

Provide lit-up decorations to compliment the feel and heritage of our market town

Festoons

There are 10 anchor points in St Neots High Street to place across-street festoon hangings. St Neots Town Council will require the successful tenderer to:

- Provide 10 across-street festoon hangings. To place these festoon hangings on the anchor points located in St Neots High Street, as shown on the below map.
- Seek permissions from property owners and carry out required health and safety checks to anchor points to determine suitability for proposed lighting installations

Town Green Trees

There are four trees located at Eaton Ford Green, Eaton Socon Green, Loves Farm, Eynesbury Green. Trees are between 6ft – 8ft in height. St Neots Town Council will require the successful tenderer to:

Provide warm white Christmas lights to fully cover the branches on all 4 trees.

Please find below a map of St Neots Market Square, High Street, as well as Church Street, Cambridge Street and Huntingdon Road. The yellow circles highlight where a lamp post is located. The red circles highlight where there is an anchor point to place a festoon hanging, and the red lines highlight the layout of these.

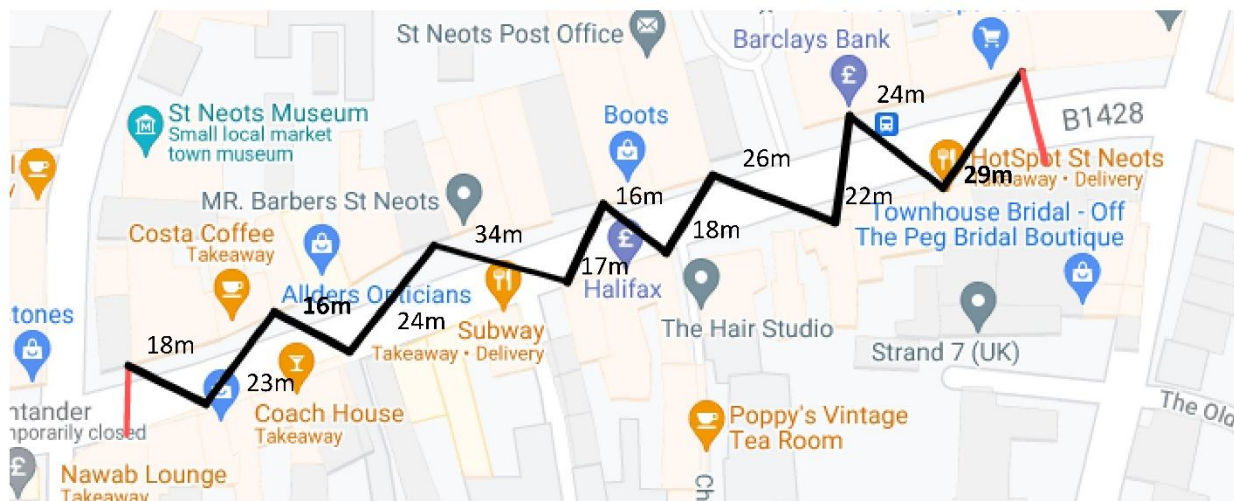




St Neots - Lamp Post Locations - Town Bridge Market Square

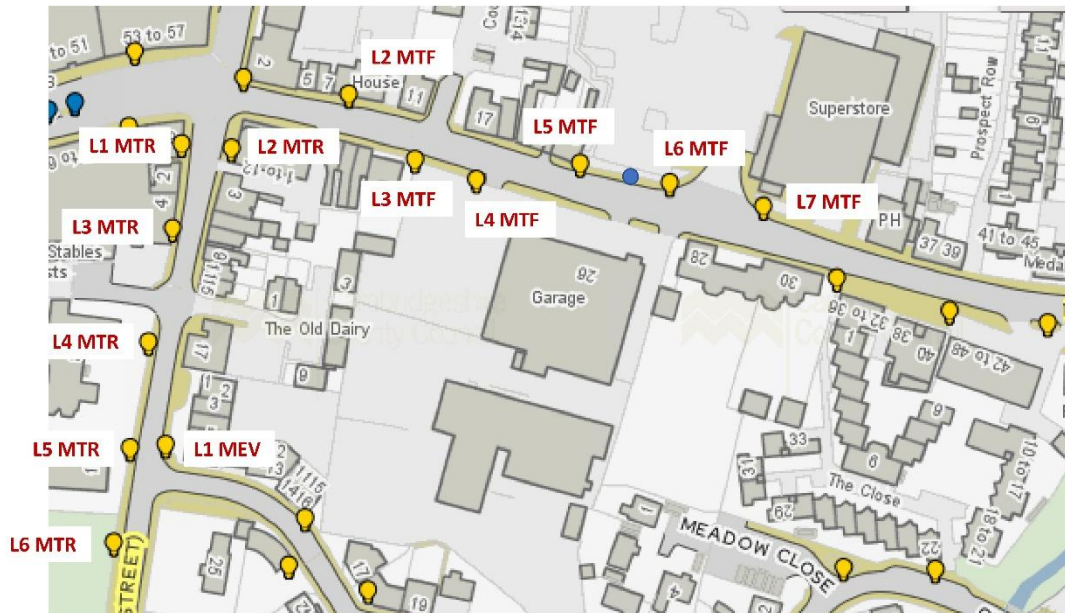


St Neots - Festoon anchor point locations and layout - High Street

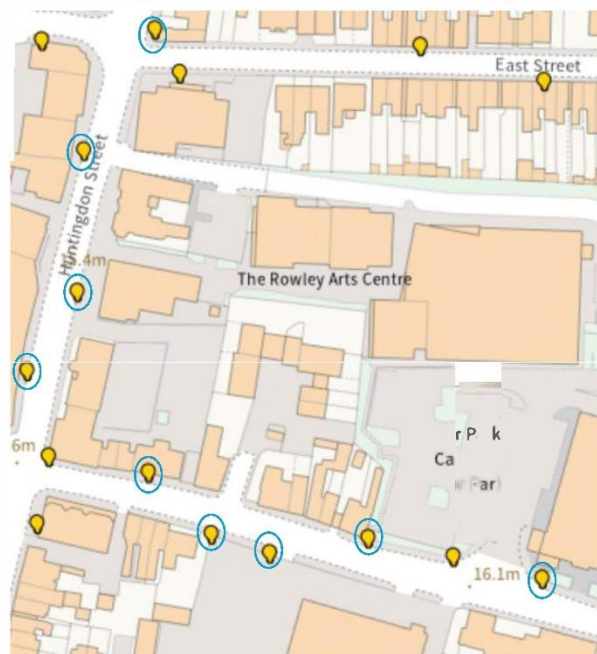




St Neots - Lamppost locations - Church Street/Cambridge Street



St Neots - Lamp Post Locations - Huntingdon Street





APPLICATION FORM

Contact Details and Address

Name of Company	
Country of registration & registration number	
VAT (value added tax number)	
Contact person	
Registered company address	
Phone number	
Email address	
Website URL	
Ownership/shareholders	
Subsidiaries	
Length of time company trading	

Subcontracting

Does your company intend to involve other companies and subcontractors in the performance of the contract? If yes, please list all subcontractors and their responsibilities.

Name of Subcontractor	Responsibility



HEALTH & SAFETY

The Applicant shall provide a statement detailing proposals to deliver this contract in a controlled manner demonstrating how all aspects of health and safety will be managed and maintained for the duration of the contract. This should include the regulatory standards that you and your displays will abide by (e.g. IPAS IMAS G39).

Council's minimum requirements: The Council is looking for evidence that the applicant can manage a safe site and working environment from the planning stage through to completion. To provide details of how health and safety is managed within your company and specifically for this contract enclosing a copy of your Health and Safety Policy, risk assessments and method statements and other declarations or information/instructions issued by your organisation. All appendices need to be clearly referenced.

Please attach the following insurance documents:

- **Employer's Liability Insurance** - The Council's minimum requirement for Employer's Liability Insurance is £10 million.
- **Professional Indemnity Insurance** - The Council's minimum requirement for Professional Indemnity Insurance is £2 million.
- **Public Liability Insurance** - The Council's minimum requirement for Public Liability Insurance is £10 million.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300



PREVIOUS PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Please provide a brief description of previous contracts you have delivered which are relevant to this project, including evidence as to your technical capability and if relevant working with councils and/or public sector.

Council's minimum requirements:

The Council is looking for relevant project examples which demonstrate the Applicants' track history of successful project delivery. This will include previous experience in relation to managing and delivering contracts of a similar nature to that required here, as well as detail of how that experience will be used during the delivery of this Contract. The Council is also looking for evidence of the Applicant's previous experience of working collaboratively with key stakeholders.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300



PROJECT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

The Applicant shall provide a detailed summary of their project management methodology and how they manage their clients' expectations throughout the project lifecycle. This includes a description of the project documents you provide and how you plan to achieve a high standard of communication.

Council's minimum requirements:

The Council is looking for details of how you plan the project milestones and delivery, stakeholders, communication, risks and issues, cost and quality. We are keen to learn who will be responsible for delivering these tasks and milestones by means of a detailed project plan and organisational chart showing the internal structure of your organisation or company. A communication plan should be included to liaise with the Council and key stakeholders throughout the life of the Contract.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300



MAINTENANCE

The Applicant will provide information to enable the Council to understand and plan for maintenance to maximise safety and reliability.

Council's minimum requirements:

The Council is looking for details of maintenance requirements and tasks. These include a maintenance plan for the project duration that highlights the maintenance tasks required. We also need details that the displays are correctly tested and inspected prior to installation, safely installed and the process for issues identified and rectification. The plan should also provide maintenance tasks for unexpected weather events and power outages.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300



DESIGN

Council's minimum requirements:

The applicant shall provide a detailed explanation of the lighting they would provide for the Market Square and High Street if they were awarded this tender. The applicant can also provide a detailed explanation of the lighting they could provide for Shortmead Street and Station Road if they were awarded this tender, however if an applicant is unable to provide this element their bid will still be considered. The applicant must include pictures of all lighting products and reference specifically the seven trees in the Market Square, the thirty lamp posts, the eleven festoon hangings, the Laser Lights and the Christmas Tree lights, star, and placement of baubles, and what products would be used for all areas if awarded the contract. In relation to the seven trees and the Christmas Tree, the number of lights that would be placed on each if awarded the contract needs to be stated. The age of all products must also be stated.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300



PRICE

Council's minimum requirements:

Applicants are required to give a breakdown of the costs in accordance with their project plan tasks/milestones for each of the 3 years. The applicant will need to provide a separate breakdown of costs for the laser lights and the lamp post motifs in Shortmead Street and Station Road. The applicant is required to provide a detailed cost matrix that demonstrates the cost of hire for each display and piece of equipment. All costs must exclude VAT.

The Contractor will not exceed the rates quoted within its Bid at any time during the Contract. Please outline the companies financial position.

All responses must be written in Arial 11, in black font. Maximum word count: 1300

COMMERCIAL REFERENCES

Reference 1

Name	
Company	
Position at Company	
Address	
Email address	
Telephone number	

Reference 2

Name	
Company	
Position at Company	
Address	
Email address	
Telephone number	

DECLARATION

- I/we submit myself/ourselves to the terms and conditions of the tender procedure, as defined in this Invitation to Tender document.
- The information provided in this Invitation to Tender document, including any attachments, is complete and accurate to the best of my/our knowledge, and that I/we have not modified the form except by filling in the requested information.
- I/we will inform St Neots Town Council without undue delay if circumstances arise in the course of the tender procedure that affect the information provided in this tender application form.
- I/we understand that false information could result in me/our company being excluded from consideration for future contracts.

Signature:	
Name:	
Position in Company:	
Date:	