

Full Town Council

- Present:** Cllrs Simonis (Chair), Banks, Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Goodman, Hitchin, Maslen, Pitt, Slade, S Smith and Terry
- Absent:** Cllrs Crompton, Dundas-Todorov, Johnson, Kumar, Macnab-Grieve, Mascarenhas, J Smith
- In attendance:** Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Project Delivery Manager

Minutes of the meeting of St Neots Town Council held on **Tuesday 25th February 2025** at **7.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were two members of the public present.

ACTIONS

220 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Dundas-Todorov, Macnab-Grieve and Kumar.

Admin

221 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

222 Council Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of 28th January 2025 as a true and accurate record subject to amending the Cllr Hitchin was not elected a Member of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group.

223 County and District Councillor Reports

It was noted that CCC Cllr Seeff was due to be in attendance but was stuck on a train and would be late.

HDC Cllr Slade reported that the planning application for the Old Falcon had been approved by HDC's Development Management Committee. There are conditions related to the application from the Environment Agency and until these are addressed no work can progress.

Committee Minutes

- 224 i) Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28th January 2025



225 ii) Members received and noted minutes of the Promotions & Events Committee held on 4th February 2025

226 iii) Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11th February 2025

227 iv) Members received and noted minutes of the Operations & Amenities Committee held on 11th February 2025

Members received and considered the following recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee.

228 **RESOLVED** that the Council adopt open space community land at Medland Grove from Persimmon Homes for a one-off commuted sum of £30,000 and the costs of undertaking required tree works for trees on the land.

229 v) Members received and noted minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 18th February 2025

Members received and considered the following recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee.

230 **RESOLVED** to approve Company C is appointed as a preferred contractor to carry out specialist cleaning of three war memorials under the Town Council's care and that £6,190 in funding is allocated from the War Memorial earmarked reserves.

231 **RESOLVED** that the Council release £5,900 in funding from the Community Buildings Earmarked Reserve to pay for unexpected works completed as part of repairing and securing the museum roof.

232 **RESOLVED** that the Council release up to £5,000.00 (£4,398.38 as quoted with 7.5% discount for replacement of all three units and the rest as contingency for related electric works and materials) in funding from the Community Buildings earmarked reserve for the supply, installation, and commission of three replacement air condition units at St Neots Museum.

233 **RESOLVED** to approve the use of unspent funds in the Repairs and Maintenance budget for the installation of CCTV at the operations depot at a cost of £2,550.

234 **RESOLVED** that the Council viA an unspent grant funding of £9,481.46 to the grants budget for the current financial year.

235 **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Town Council adopt the draft Equipment Hire Policy.



RESOLVED to approve Service Level Agreements and funding as presented for the following organisations;

- Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire
- Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre
- Money Advice St Neots

236 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were none.

237 Mayoral Engagements

Members received and noted the following list of upcoming Mayoral engagements to be attended by the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor.

- 7 March – 24 hour Ergo challenge at St Neots Rowing Club
- 8 March – The Little Mermaid, performed by Melodramtics
- 10 March – Cambridgeshire Libraries, mobile library first visit to Wintringham
- 12 March – Kingston School of Art, review of student projects related to St Neots
- 15 March – Little Barford Project update and workshop
- 22 March – Little Paxton community litter pick
- 4 April – Hunchback of Notre Dame, performed by VAMPS

238 Date of Next Meeting

Members received and noted that the date of the next Full Council meeting would be 25th March 2025 at 7:15pm.

239 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.

240 Priory Centre Development

Members received a report from the Project Delivery Manager outlining costs received for the Priory Centre redevelopment and options round value engineering the construction. The Town Council had previously resolved to commit funding to the project in principle to help deliver a quality community facility for the town, which the Town Council would operate. The in-principal commitment was based upon confirmation of final deliverable plans for the building and an understanding of what the Town Council's funding would deliver. The report set out three cost options, showing the outcomes for the build project dependant on the level of funding the Town Council committed towards the project, including achieving a building that includes all features as designed and presented in planning. Members noted that



Huntingdonshire District Council had agreed to a 90-year lease with no break clauses for the redeveloped building, giving assurance that the building will continue as a community facility in the long term under the Town Council's operation.

CCC Cllr G Seeff joined the meeting. The Chairperson explained that the Council were in private session and as such Cllr Seeff would not be able to partake in this part of the meeting.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council leave private session to allow Cllr Seeff to address the meeting and provide County Councillor updates.

241 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the confidential business be deferred and the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

242 Cllr Seeff provided the Council with the following updates;

- Schools are to be involved in the work to better identify and notify consumers of allergens in food. There continues to be a lot of pressure around the country on displaying allergens in food for consumers.
- CCC have agreed funding towards addressing issues with flooding at the Little Paxton bridge. A total of £250,000 in funding was allocated to the matter, with £100,000 will be for short term measures identified in helping address issues and disruption experienced. A further £150,000 is intended for studies and research into longer term improvements.
- The County Council is looking to increase its share of the Council tax by 4.99%, which is the maximum permitted. Pressures on CCC finances have continued following the increase in the real living wage, national insurance for employers along with other increases required to ensure service provision continues.
- The outstanding section 106 monies owed by a developer for a development in St Neots has now been received by CCC. A portion of the money has been used against expenditure already incurred for which the funding was intended. Discussions are ongoing on the allocation and use of remaining funds with CCC Ward Members pressing for allocation and use in St Neots projects.

243 Private Session

Following Cllr Seeff's report it was proposed and seconded that the Council re-enter private Session. **RESOLVED** that 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.

Members returned to considering and discussing a report from the Project Delivery Manager outlining Priory Centre redevelopment costs and value engineering options, including quoted costs. As part of discussion Members received and considered a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee recommending that the Town Council's contribution towards construction costs for the redevelopment of the Priory Centre be allocated from the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Project Delivery Manager, who had worked with HDC's appointed contractors outlined the report and costs. It was explained that a lot of time and detail had gone into the project, helping bring forward detailed costs from sub-contractors. The Building Development Group had considered the information prior to the meeting and were in support of the Council providing the funding required to ensure the building is delivered to the best outcome and in line with the planning permission and all features this includes. It was advised that the overall project costs included contingency and if not used this would reduce the Town Council's contribution.

Following debate, it was proposed and seconded that the Council commit funding of up to £1,950,000.00 from CIL reserves towards the construction costs for the redevelopment of the Priory Centre for delivery of Option 1 and the value engineering as set out.

A recorded vote was requested;

For	Against	Abstained
Cllr Banks Cllr Chapman Cllr Pitt Cllr Goodman Cllr Maslen Cllr Collins Cllr Terry Cllr Bolanz Cllr Dunford Cllr Cooper-Marsh Cllr Slade Cllr Simonis Cllr Hitchin Cllr S Smith	None	None

RESOLVED that the Council commit funding of up to £1,950,000.00 from CIL reserves towards the construction costs for the redevelopment of the Priory Centre for delivery of Option 1 and the value engineering as set out, which will deliver the building as set out in the approved planning application.