

**MINUTES OF THE ST NEOT PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD IN COTT YARD, ST NEOT ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER
2024**

Present: Councillors C Smith (Chairman), H Bunt, N Ball, D Glanville and T Hooper.

Sue Blaxley (Parish Clerk/RFO)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7pm

1. Apologies

None

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th August 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Clerk and Councillors G Rogers and N Ball took no part in discussions relating to the Clerk's salary, Doorstep Green maintenance and the wages for the cleaner respectively.

3. Village Shop Project

To discuss financial matters relating to the Village Shop project

Councillor C Smith said that the project is well underway and the estimated completion date by Brad Bolitho is the third week in December. He said there will be other items to be completed after that date including the fencing and landscaping. He said that the project has to be finished by 31st December 2024 and the final claim made to Cornwall Council for CLUP funding by that date.

Councillor C Smith explained that additional costs have arisen in relation to the specification, principally, but not exclusively, because of the building regulations requirements for a commercial building. These are: the provision of an accessible disabled WC, wider steps and more of them, increase the depth of the footings to river level, additional tarmac, the provision of a kitchen and additional electrical and plumbing works. This amounts to approximately £34,000.

Councillor T Hooper said that some additional funding may be available from Cornwall Council as part of the CLUP (approximately £12,800). Councillor C Smith said that some of the extra works could be delayed until the New Year such as the extra tarmac, heaters or the kitchen.

It was agreed that the parish council has to support the project going forward by investing this additional money.

The Clerk outlined the cashflow and explained that the budget will be very “tight” at the end of December 2024.

4. Draft Precept for 2025/2026

To discuss figures for the Precept for 2025/26

Figures detailing the end of year accounts for 2024/2025, the current year’s Precept, the Income and Expenditure as at 31st October 2024 and an estimation of expenditure until 31st March 2025. The draft precept was considered and compared with the other information provided. In terms of income and expenditure, each item listed was discussed and the anticipated income and expenditure justified. It was proposed by Councillor N Ball and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that a formal recommendation to raise the precept by 28.32% for 2025/26, taking the precept from £36,982 to £47,458, would be made to members at the next full Parish Council meeting. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

5. Parish Council Rent Charges and Salaries

To review current Parish Council rent charges for the Pavillion, Goonzion Downs and Cott Yard and to review the expenses and salaries paid to the cleaner and clerk

It was noted that the Clerk is paid at spinal point 33 which will increase in accordance with the NJC scales which are inflationary linked. It was noted that she is also paid administration expenses for the use of her home as an office at £25/month and for the use of her home telephone and broadband at £15/month plus pension contributions, the latter being determined by Cornwall Council. It was agreed that the rent for Cott Yard will not increase for Heather Taylor at the present time. It was agreed that the rent charges for Goonzion Downs be increased by 10% so that the rents charged will be as follows: Mr and Mrs Wilton - £181.50 and Jane Williams - £36.30. It was noted that the cleaner is currently paid £11.44/hour and it was agreed that this will be increased to £12.21/hour from April 2025. It was proposed by Councillor C Smith and seconded by Councillor T Hooper that formal recommendations as outlined in this minute are made to members at the next full Parish Council meeting. All councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

5. Date of next meeting

To be arranged

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:30pm.