

**Minutes of a Meeting of St Ives Town Council
held on Wednesday 30 June 2021 in the Corn Exchange**

Present:

Town Mayor: Councillor P Hussain

Deputy Town Mayor: Councillor P Pope

Councillors: A Dickinson, J Pallant, J Tiddy, M King, C Smith, D Rowe, T Drye, R D'Souza, N Dibben

In attendance:

Deputy Town Clerk: C Allison

Committee Clerk: S Rawlinson

Admin Assistant: E Egginton

The Town Mayor's Chaplain said Prayers prior to the start of the Meeting.

C32.00 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors N Wells, J Parkin, C Pegoraro and R Fuller (all Personal).

C33.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R D'Souza – non pecuniary interest as a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council.

Councillor P Hussain – non pecuniary interest as a Director of the Corn Exchange CIC and a member of the Burleigh Hill Community Centre Association.

Councillor J Tiddy – non pecuniary interest as a Member of the Corn Exchange CIC.

C34.00 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Agenda Item C41.01 – Planning Committee

A resident who had spoken at the Planning Committee on 23 June stated that he had raised more than just concerns about the method of operation of the Committee.

He had alleged unlawful actions by the Council, in the light of the High Court judgement requiring all meetings to be face to face from 7 May, in that the Planning Committee continued to conduct business remotely. As a public body the Council was required to make all decisions in a public forum. Residents had been prevented from taking part under Public Participation.

He stated that the Council's authority did not exceed that of High Court rulings and it had broken the Code of Conduct and contravened a directive from the Secretary of State and the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

He wished to hear what the Council intended to do to uphold these statutory rights.

The Town Mayor responded that the resident would receive a written response on these issues within the next seven days.

Markets

A St Ives market trader stated that he and his fellow traders were extremely keen to return to their previous location in the town centre.

There were concerns that many more stallholders were likely to cease or greatly reduce trading due to lighter footfall at the new site. Local shop owners had indicated that their businesses were suffering due to the loss of the town centre market. There was also speculation that the guided bus was to be directed through the town centre.

He asked for the Council's support in returning the market to Market Hill.

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Through the Chair, District Councillor Dickinson responded that she had visited the market with the Town Centre Manager and Market Superintendent. The main problem with a return to Market Hill was the red bollards. Work was ongoing between the County and District Councils to look at their removal. There were, she stated, no plans to run the bus through the town centre.

Councillor Dickinson agreed to visit the trader on the Monday market to discuss the issues in more detail.

The Town Mayor confirmed that the Council was very supportive and would do its best to improve the situation.

Agenda Item C44.00 - New Transport Infrastructure for St Ives

A representative from the St Ives Eco Group stated that the group was not supportive of the new road proposed in the consultation but would support investment in improving existing road infrastructure and improvements to cycleways.

The new road would create more traffic and there was a need to reduce vehicle use. It was important to work in harmony with nature and mitigate against climate change issues.

The Town Mayor thanked all those who had addressed the Council for their comments.

C35.00 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 5 May 2021 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

C36.00 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were still not many civic engagements but hopefully the situation would begin to improve. The Town Mayor thanked his Deputy, Councillor Pope, for his support.

The Town Mayor offered his congratulations to the two newly elected District Members for St Ives, Councillors D'Souza and Smith and the re-election of District and County Councillor Fuller and County Councillor Reynolds.

C37.00 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Members were in receipt of Internal Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

RESOLVED: that the Report be received and noted.

C38.00 ANNUAL RETURN AND STATEMENT OF GOVERNANCE

Members were in receipt of Annual Return and Statement of Governance.

RESOLVED: **C38.01** that the Council formally notes its consideration and confirmation that it has maintained an adequate system of internal control throughout each financial year in accordance with Assertions 2 and 6 of the Governance Statement contained in Section 4 of the Annual Return.

C38.02 that the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 be approved and signed

C38.03 that the Accounting Statements for 2020/21 be approved and signed

C38.04 that the Annual Return be signed by the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

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C39.00**SPECIAL MOTION – SOLAR LIGHTS AT THE CEMETERY**

At the Amenities Committee held on 28 April, the decision was made to ban the placing of solar lights in the Council's cemeteries.

Following the receipt of adverse feedback from the community on this decision, five Members (Councillors Tiddy, Wells, Pallant, Pope and Parkin) put forward a Special Motion that this decision should be reviewed.

The proposal to ban the lights had been put forward following the observation of a particular grave which had been draped in solar lights to an excessive level and some Members considered this to be intrusive to other cemetery visitors. It was acknowledged that the more subtle use of solar lighting could provide comfort to grieving families, particularly in the Children's Section.

It was Proposed that the Amenities Committee revisit the solar lights issue and also undertake a full review of Cemetery Regulations.

An Amendment to the proposal was put, and duly accepted by the Proposer, that as part of the review of regulations, the Amenities Committee give consideration to the incorporation of a natural, woodland burial area at the Cemetery.

Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED: **C39.01** that the report and Special Motion are received and noted.

C39.02 that the decision taken by the Amenities Committee on 28 April 2021 (Minute No A84.01) to prohibit the placing of solar lights at the Cemetery be revisited and discussed further.

C39.03 that the Amenities Committee undertake a full review of Cemetery Regulations

C39.04 that the Amenities Committee give consideration to the incorporation of a natural, woodland burial area at the Cemetery.

C40.00**CO-OPTION TO CASUAL VACANCIES**

Five applications for co-option had been received, one of which had been withdrawn prior to the meeting.

The Deputy Clerk advised Members on the system for ballots and that with 11 members present, the successful candidates would require a majority of 6 votes to be appointed.

The meeting was briefly suspended to permit the candidates an opportunity to speak briefly about themselves and why they wished to join the Council.

Mr Mokbul Ahmed

Mr Ahmed stated that he had resided in St Ives for over 35 years and ran a successful family franchise in the town centre. He has been a volunteer member of St Ives Town Initiative for 10 years and had helped deliver events and projects to the benefit of the community. He wished to focus on community issues as a way to thank the people of the town for the way they had supported his family and himself over the years.

Ms Julie Kerr

Ms Kerr had lived in St Ives for most of her life and had always been involved with voluntary work. She currently worked as a volunteer at the Bridge Centre which provided advice and assistance to townspeople. She was also a member of the Covid Community hub and had been impressed at how the various local agencies had worked together during the crisis. She hoped to continue this work as a Member of the Council.

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Ms Shariqa Mokbul

Ms Mokbul was born in St Ives and lived here most of her life. She worked at a long standing family business in the town. Her main focus was to bring back tourism to the town by working with local groups and businesses. She was very interested in creating improvements to green spaces and parks and providing encouragement and motivation to the young people of St Ives.

Mr Alex Thompson

Mr Thompson, originally from the north of England, had lived in the town for 15 years. He had been impressed by the passion of the former Town Mayor in engaging directly with the community via social media and believed this was the way forward to improve engagement with residents. He was trained in business economics, was County Secretary for a trade union and a local school governor. He hoped to bring these skills to bear in a role as a Town Councillor.

With the Meeting reconvened, the Town Mayor thanked the candidates.

The Deputy Clerk stated that the two co-optees selected this evening would be asked to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms but would not join the meeting as Members immediately. They would need to undertake Councillor training on 10 July and would then be eligible to join their first Meeting on 14 July.

A first round of voting was held and the required majority of votes achieved. It was, therefore:

RESOLVED: C40.01 that Ms Julie Kerr be co-opted to serve as a Member of the Town Council.

A second round of voting was held and the required majority of votes achieved. It was therefore:

RESOLVED: C40.02 that Ms Shariqa Mokbul be co-opted to serve as a Member of the Town Council.

The Town Mayor congratulated the two successful candidates and offered his best wishes to the two who had not been successful.

The new Members signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms.

C41.00**COMMITTEE REPORT/MEETING SCHEDULE**

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 23 June 2021.

RESOLVED: C41.01 that the Minutes be received and noted.

Members received the Meetings Schedule for 2021/22.

RESOLVED: C41.02 that the Schedule be received and adopted.

C42.00**REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

A request had been received from St Ives Town Team for the release of the grant funding of £9,390 which had been agreed in 2020 but, due to events not being held during the pandemic, had not been issued. Members had agreed that this funding be carried over to 2021.

RESOLVED: that the grant funds of £9,390 be paid to St Ives Town Team.

C43.00**APPEALS PANEL**

The Council's Complaints Procedure stated that an Appeals Panel consisting of three Members should be appointed on an annual basis. This would generally comprise the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and immediate past Town Mayor.

It was noted, however, that the membership of the Panel needed to be subject to change if necessary dependant upon the nature of the complaint and any conflicting interests the members might have.

It was therefore:

RESOLVED: that the Complaints Procedure be amended to state that the Appeals Panel should comprise the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and immediate past Town Mayor with the facility to substitute other Members as appropriate for the circumstances of the complaint.

C44.00

NEW TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ST IVES

Consideration was given to the Combined Authority consultation on new transport infrastructure for St Ives. (View at www.your-stives.co.uk).

Councillors Hussain, Pope and Dibben had compiled a draft response for Members to consider.

The proposals were still at an early stage and it was apparent that further consultation would be required.

Members agreed that of the three options put forward, Options 2 and 3 would have an adverse impact on residents. Option 1 – the creation of a new road – conflicted with the Council's strategy on climate change and was an area of concern.

The proposed improvements to junctions, bus and cycle routes were generally supported.

The Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the options with the Combined Authority, with the involvement of surrounding villages which would also be impacted by the changes.

RESOLVED: **C44.01** that the documents be received and noted

C44.02 that the response, as drawn up by Councillors Hussain, Pope and Dibben be submitted to the Combined Authority

C44.03 that the response be copied to County and District Councillors for St Ives and Needingworth Parish Council

C44.04 that a meeting between the Town Council, Needingworth PC and the Combined Authority should be arranged to discuss the options in more detail.

C45.00

APPLICATION FOR USE OF COUNCIL LAND

An application had been received for a charity perimeter run around Slepe Hall Field to be held on 28 August to raise funds for the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

RESOLVED: that the request from 'Run All Day for E Triple A' be granted.

C46.00

DECARBONISATION WORKING GROUP

Members were in receipt of report from the Working Group.

The Deputy Clerk had attended a meeting on 9 June, details of which would be included in the next report. She would hold further discussions with Varsity to discuss cheaper options.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

C47.00

BURLEIGH HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION/CORN EXCHANGE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members were in receipt of report of meeting held on 18 May.

The Deputy Clerk stated that a meeting had been held the previous evening with the CIC and Natwest Bank developers to discuss party wall issues etc. Further regular meetings would be held as required.

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RESOLVED: that the information be received and noted.

C48.00**REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES****C48.01 Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre**

The Organiser's Report for Jan-March 2021 was received and noted.

C48.02 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The notes of Meetings held on 12 and 26 May were received and noted.

Councillor Dibben informed Members that informal public consultations would be held in July. As the Carnival had been cancelled the remaining two venues would be Burleigh Hill Community Centre on 16 July between 2pm and 5pm and during trading hours on the Farmers' Market on 17 July.

C49.00**ROLLING PROGRAMME**

Members were in receipt of Rolling Programme.

The Deputy Clerk stated that the first grant for St Ives Cares 2 had been received. At a meeting held earlier that day, the appointment of a co-ordinator had been discussed. The matter would be referred to the next Personnel Committee on 21 July.

Further issues had arisen with the Waits moorings. The Deputy Clerk was progressing this.

RESOLVED: that the Rolling Programme be received and noted.

C50.00**ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

RESOLVED: that the schedule of orders for payment be received and noted.

C51.00**BANK RECONCILIATION**

RESOLVED: that the Bank Reconciliation be received and noted.

C52.00**BUDGET REPORT**

RESOLVED: that the Budget Report be received and noted.

C53.00**BANK SIGNATORIES**

Two further signatories were required to authorise payments.

RESOLVED: that the matter be referred to the next meeting of the Town Council.

C54.00**POLICE MATTERS**

No report was received.

C55.00**CCTV**

Members were in receipt of Incident Report for May 2021.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted.

C56.00**COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

No report was received.

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C57.00

DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

No report was received.

Town Mayor:

Dated: 14 July 2021

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