

**Minutes of the Meeting of St Ives Town Council  
held on Wednesday 10 January 2024 in the Town Hall, St Ives**

**Present:**

Deputy Town Mayor: Councillor J Kerr

Councillors: P Hussain, L Valla, M Gleadow, A Riddell, J Tiddy, A Thompson, C Morgan, S Mokbul, M Burke

**In attendance:**

Locum Clerk: L White

Democratic Officer: A Childs

**PRAYERS**

The Town Mayor's Chaplain was not available – at short notice – to say prayers prior to the commencement of the meeting.

The Deputy Mayor made an announcement that the Democratic Officer is pregnant and offered her congratulations.

**C178.00 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors P Pope, J Cantwell and R Chapman (personal).

**C179.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Councillor A Riddell – Agenda Item C199.00** – pecuniary interest as the spouse of a Town Council staff member.

**C180.00 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman of the Flood Action Group (FLAG) referenced recent flooding concerns in the area, and informed members that only two residents had officially reported issues with flooding. He has persuaded a few others to register and report these incidents accordingly, pointing out that it not only pertains to damage to residential property, but also to land. The Chairman felt the recent flood response measures were satisfactory considering it was the highest flooding levels experienced in recent history.

It was noted that the pay and display machines in the Town Centre are still not operative and therefore not generating any income. Noted that this is the responsibility of Huntingdonshire District Council.

Resident raised a query about some grants which were up for discussion based on his knowledge of being a councillor previously.

Councillor C Morgan spoke in response regarding the subject of flooding. He underlined the fact that some areas have more propensity to flooding, where water leaves residents trapped inside their homes. Whilst some of these houses have not technically flooded, the nearness of the elevated water levels affects their daily activities and access to properties. This would be a growing concern in future due to climate change.

A resident wished to speak regarding **Agenda Items C182.00, C188.00 and C198.00**.

182 – he noted that personal details are being used in minutes and permission had not been given. The Locum Clerk pointed out that it was best not to use names in minutes and it was noted that names would be redacted.

188 – Cllrs have been asked to ratify the budget for 2024/25, however there was not enough information provided in the meeting papers to allow residents to comment. It was also

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questioned why the grants were to be discussed under exclusion. The Locum Clerk supported the resident's queries and recommended these be deferred to a later meeting allowing public to comment where necessary. It was also noted that due to staff shortages, there is limited support available for some newer staff which has led to items being placed in the wrong section of the agenda.

**C181.00 CO-OPTION**

**C181.01** It was noted that there were three applications for co-option. After a brief presentation from each applicant, members were given ballot sheets and asked to vote for their preferred candidate. The Locum Clerk counted the votes and announced that the results of the vote were a majority in favour of Mrs Jacqueline Spencer to fill the vacancy.

**RESOLVED:** that Mrs Jacqueline Spencer be co-opted in a new Councillor at St Ives Town Council.

**C181.02** The Deputy Mayor stated that due to the recent resignation of Councillor M Mallol Wright, there would be another upcoming councillor vacancy at the Town Council. She thanked Councillor M Mallol Wright for her service. The Locum Clerk stated it should be added to the February Full Council agenda should an election not be called for the seat in the meantime.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the other candidates and encouraged them to reapply for this new opportunity.

**C182.00 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the removal of personal details (specifically the names of those speaking in Agenda Item C162.00), the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Town Mayor.

The Locum Clerk noted that any other names should be redacted from the public participation section of previous minutes.

**C183.00 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Deputy Mayor stated that due to the Mayor's busy schedule a list of the Mayor's engagements was not available.

**C184.00 COMMITTEE AND GROUP REPORTS**

Members were presented with the minutes of the following meetings, which were received and noted:

**C184.01** **Planning Committee** – held on 13 December 2023.

**C184.02** **Facilities Committee** – emergency meeting held on 11 December 2023.

**C185.00 LANGLEY BREAD**

The Deputy Mayor noted the absence of a committee for the Langley Bread initiative in the town. She stated that the recent event had to be run without an official meeting, or else it was at risk of not happening. Moving forward, the committee must be established and meetings held in preparation for relevant activities. The committee will consist of four councillors from the town council of which one would be the Mayor and another the Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor summarised that the United Charities were a number of charities brought together under one umbrella and included the Langley Bread project. It is based on a historical request; funds were left to the town to be distributed to widows and widowers of the town, which takes the form of food and refreshment donations. It is a selection of groceries

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including bread, butter, jam, sugar and tea given out; this year eighty portions were donated to local residents.

Another activity is bible-dicing, which involves the parish church producing several bibles and inviting local children to dice for the bibles. Finally, the other area linked to the United Charities is Twinning, which has recently fallen off the radar of the council.

The Deputy Mayor stated the recent event held on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 was quite rushed and did not want this to happen again. The committee must be set up; they would meet with the chaplains or wardens from the Parish Church and five additional members would join, to be outstanding members of the public.

Councillors S Mokbul and L Valla expressed interest in joining the United Charities committee. Members agreed that they would join the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in forming the four council members of the committee.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillors P Pope, J Kerr, S Mokbul and L Valla join the United Charities committee.

**C186.00 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Deputy Mayor asked members if there were any interested individuals in joining the Planning Committee. Mrs Jacqueline Spencer, the newly co-opted councillor, was sitting in the Public Seating area and raised her hand to inform the council that she would be interested in joining when it was appropriate to do so.

The Deputy Mayor suggested that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that this item be deferred to the next full council meeting in February 2024.

**C187.00 EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Members were in receipt of the external audit from PK Littlejohn for the 2022/23 financial year.

The Locum Clerk reminded members that the Town Council completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in June 2023. The page presented is the report from the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn. It was noted that the auditor would expect to see in minutes that the council have considered any concerns and noted how they will address these in the future. Concerns included:

The council haven't given the proper provision for the notice of public rights for the 2023/24 accounts. It was noted that the council will need to answer 'no' to assertion four for 2023/24 which has been asked of the council.

The internal auditor has drawn weaknesses to sections N (publication) and L (lack of sufficient information on the council website). The council will need to understand what is lacking and address the concerns as soon as possible.

The External Auditors have stated that not all bank statements were provided when requested; when the external audit is completed that it must be provided.

Councillor A Riddell expressed concern that the date on the external audit paper was 20 September 2023 and it was only being brought before council four months later. The Locum Clerk was unable to answer why it had taken so long to come to council but had noticed it had been received and not presented, and raised with the Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor agreed with Councillor A Riddell's concerns, stating the council would ensure in future that they comply with all necessary procedures. Members were asked if

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they agreed, and a vote was held. Members unanimously voted in favour to comply in future and ensure the necessary actions are taken.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be received and noted.

that St Ives Town Council comply with all required actions and take steps to rectify any missing information for auditing purposes in future financial years.

**C188.00 ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

The Locum Clerk stated this item should be deferred and an extra ordinary meeting scheduled to cover the precept.

**RESOLVED:** that the precept be addressed in an extra ordinary meeting to be arranged at the earliest possible date in the coming weeks.

**C189.00 ROLLING PROGRAMME**

Members were in receipt of the rolling programme.

Councillor M Burke stated that he and Councillor P Hussain had a discussion the previous evening with the Corn Exchange directors regarding the progress of the roof works at the Corn Exchange. He stated that the installation of a full roof is anticipated by the end of the week.

**RESOLVED:** that the programme be received and noted.

**C190.00 ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Members were in receipt of the orders for payment.

Councillor M Gleadow raised again the issue of the lack of order numbers on the invoice listing. The Deputy Mayor agreed this needed to be rectified.

Councillor N Wells clarified that the payments listed for himself were not for NALC, but rather for the Deputy Mayor's travel expenses.

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

**C191.00 BANK RECONCILIATION STATEMENT**

Members were in receipt of the bank reconciliation statement. No queries were raised.

**RESOLVED:** that the bank reconciliation statement be received and noted.

**C192.00 CORN EXCHANGE MATTERS**

No report was received from the Corn Exchange.

There was a brief discussion about this item as it was often on the agenda with little to update. The Deputy Mayor suggested the wording of the agenda item be changed to 'Corn Exchange Updates'.

**Resolved:** That the wording of this item be changed to 'Corn Exchange Updates' and that it be discussed quarterly. Formal meetings are to be set up to enable timely reporting of issues with a rolling agenda of items to be discussed at the Property Committee.

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- C193.00 POLICE MATTERS**  
No report was received, however an email update had been received from Sergeant Andy Caruana.
- C194.00 REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES**  
None.
- C195.00 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**  
To receive a report from County Councillors for St Ives.  
  
Councillors noted that the town council no longer received updates from the county council. The office will contact the County Councillor to request attendance at the town council meetings, and if not available a written report.
- C196.00 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS**  
To receive a verbal update from District Councillors for St Ives.  
  
Councillors provided a brief verbal report covering the change in the council tax structure, council tax benefits, community biodiversity grants and civil parking enforcement.
- C197.00 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**  
  
**RESOLVED:** that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the Meeting.
- C198.00 COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**  
The Deputy Mayor stated that due to the nature of the agenda item and its conflict with the budget and precept setting, it had been recommended that this item would be deferred to an extra ordinary meeting of the full council in the coming weeks.  
  
**RESOLVED:** that the community grant applications agenda item will be deferred to an extra ordinary meeting, to be scheduled once the precept and budget for the 2024/25 could be finalised.
- C199.00 STAFF PAY**  
  
*[Councillor A Riddell exited the Chamber]*  
To consider and agree the NALC pay increases and back pay to April 2023.  
  
The new pay awards for 2023/24 were noted by members. These had been announced in November 2023 which equate to £1 per hour for all staff on the National Joint Council pay structure. Salaries would be back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.  
  
**RESOLVED:** that all salaries be back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 in line with the NJC announcement in November 2023.
- C200.00 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**  
  
**RESOLVED:** that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and the Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9:18 pm.

Town Mayor:

Dated: 14 February 2024

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