

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 in the Council Chamber at the St Austell One Stop Shop, Penwinnick Road, St Austell at 6.05pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Bishop, Brown, Bull (Mayor), Cohen, Colwill, French, Hanlon, Heyward, Jones, King, Krishnan, Lanxon, Leonard, Oxenham, Palmer, Pearce, Pears, Rees, Styles and Walker.

**Also present:** Retiring Councillors: Double, Lake, Murtagh and Stewart.

**In attendance:** David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk).

**APM/16/01) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keast (Retiring) and Steve Double MP.

**APM/16/02) Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed as such.

**APM/16/03) Kate Kennally, Chief Executive and Paul Masters, Strategic Director – Neighbourhoods, Cornwall Council**

The Mayor welcomed Kate Kennally and Paul Masters to the meeting.

Ms Kennally congratulated all Members on their recent election to the Town Council and outlined the experience that she and Paul Masters had in local government and in Cornwall. She spoke on the importance of working in partnership and outlined some of the successes of Cornwall Council and some of the areas where they needed to do more work. She explained the management structure of Cornwall Council and the roles of each Director including Paul Masters - Neighbourhoods, John Betty - Economic Growth and Development, Cath Robinson - Customer and Support Services and Trevor Doughty - Children, Families and Adults.

Ms Kennally spoke about the challenges of Cornwall, its size, its diversity and its dispersed population and the need to work in different ways and in partnership to improve and maintain services in the various communities. She explained the importance of economic regeneration to areas such as St Austell and the need to increase earnings and prosperity through regeneration. She expressed her pleasure at the work currently being undertaken by SABEF.

Ms Kennally congratulated the Town Council on its work in relation to devolution and stressed the importance of local partnerships and developing local self-confidence. She felt that other areas could learn from and build on the work undertaken by "Team St Austell" as a real difference can be seen in the town.

Paul Masters explained the background to the devolution project from the Cornwall Council perspective and expressed the view that a number of hard negotiations had taken place which was healthy and good for both St Austell and local government generally. He expressed the view that the work undertaken by St Austell Town Council was trail blazing and would make it easier for other local authorities following a similar path in the future.

He explained that there needed to be a debate amongst new Members at Cornwall Council about the role of localism and whether the work undertaken by the Localism Team should be accelerated, whether there should be local budgets and whether the Community Networks should work differently. He talked about the "Shaping Place" agenda and about putting communities in control of services and functions.

Members asked questions covering a range of issues including:

- The need to maintain cohesion within the various agencies in St Austell
- Issues with regard to health, anti-social behaviour and transport
- The role of Cornwall Council in challenging health service provision
- Provision of support for disabilities and the policing of the Equalities Act 2010
- Drainage and flooding issues
- The need for highways and infrastructure improvements
- The impact of Government austerity measures on local government services going forward
- The need to identify further savings in the Cornwall Council budgets and for financial prudence.

Members thanked Ms Kennally and Mr Masters for their attendance and for their informative talks and honest answers to questions.

*\*\*Councillor Double left the meeting during the above item\*\**

*\*\*Ms Kennally and Mr Masters left the meeting\*\**

### **APM/16/04) Mayor's Review of the 2016/17 Civic Year**

Councillor Bull referred to an extensive list of achievements for the 2016/17 civic year and outlined some of the key elements including:

- Moving to new offices
- Recruitment of staff and acquisition of vehicles and plant for grounds maintenance
- Taking over public conveniences, allotments, parks and open spaces
- Upgrading parks and play areas
- Mining surveys
- 138 planning applications considered including a number of major applications
- Helped Cornwall Council to develop strategic planning documents for St Austell
- Supported youth services
- Co-ordinated anti-social behaviour working groups and improved CCTV and radio coverage
- Gave 37 grants to voluntary organisations
- Organised Feast Week
- Undertook a number of environmental projects

She thanked Councillors and staff for their hard work during the year and everyone else for their support and assistance. She stressed the need for pride in St Austell and expressed the view that there had been amazing teamwork in St Austell in the last 12 months. She thanked in particular the officers of the Council for their hard work throughout the year.

## **APM/16/05) 2016/17 Financial Accounts**

The Town Clerk provided an overview of the Council's Accounts for the 2016/17 financial year and explained that the detailed accounts would be available at the Annual Town Council meeting.

He advised that the Town Council's turnover had increased from £263,000 to approximately £520,000 and that this was funded by £440,000 of Council Tax and £80,000 of other income. He explained that the Town Council continued to provide excellent value for money and that the Council Tax level was well below the average for Town and Parish Councils in Cornwall. He further explained that a surplus of £70,000 had been made in the year and that he would provide proposals for setting aside some funding for improvements to parks and open spaces and the replacement of vehicles and plant at the next Council meeting.

## **APM/15/06) Priorities of St Austell Town Council for the 2017/18 Civic Year**

The Town Clerk advised that he had been giving some thought to the possible priorities for the Town Council in the next civic year. He advised that he would be recommending a number of priorities for the Council including:

- Input to the strategic vision and planning for the area including the site allocation development plan document, the St Austell Bay Investment Plan, major developments and the A30 link road;
- The consideration of neighbourhood plans, development plans and/or a Town Plan;
- Town centre issues including the BID and a Town Heritage Scheme;
- Anti social behaviour measures including CCTV and shopwatch radio system;
- To continue to support youth services including The House and Youth Council;
- Service devolution and possibly further phases including The House and Pondhu House.

The Clerk explained that there was a need to consolidate the work undertaken with regard to service devolution and the provision of the services adopted from Cornwall Council. He also explained that there would be a need to review staffing resources and budgets in the next 12 months as costs and resources and service delivery issues become clearer.

## **APM/16/07) Open Forum for questions from the public**

John Kneller advised that the re-election of the BID was a priority for the BID team with consultation being undertaken during July/August and a ballot anticipated in November.

Councillor Bishop congratulated the Rugby Club on their recent successes and asked if it might be possible for the Mayor to issue a framed certificate to the Rugby Club.

Helen Nicholson, Community Link Officer, expressed her gratitude for the huge amount of work undertaken by the Town Council with regard to the devolution project and the amount of legal work undertaken by the Town Clerk.

In response to questions from members it was agreed that a formal nomination process would be put in place for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor positions.

**APM/16/08) Mayor's closing comments**

The Mayor thanked everybody for their attendance and in particular thanked Councillors Murtagh, Stewart and Lake who were retiring as Councillors following the last set of elections and wished new Members the best of luck in the new Council.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.