

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 15th 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, Jones, King, Krishnan, Lanxon, Leonard, Oxenham, Palmer, Pears, Rees, Styles and Walker.

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk), Steve Skinner (Operations Manager).

C/17/01) Election of Mayor

Councillor Bull advised that one nomination form had been received, nominating Councillor Walker as Mayor of St Austell for the 2017/18 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Walker be elected Mayor of St Austell for the 2017/18 civic year.

Councillor Palmer abstained from voting on this item

Councillor Walker signed a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Clerk and took the Chair.

C/17/02) Election of Deputy Mayor

Councillor Walker advised that two nominations had been received, nominating Councillors King and Krishnan respectively as Deputy Mayor for the 2017/18 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the election of Deputy Mayor should be undertaken by way of a secret ballot.

A secret ballot was undertaken with Councillor King receiving 12 votes and Councillor Krishnan receiving 6 votes.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor King be elected Deputy Mayor of St Austell for the 2017/18 civic year.

Councillor King signed a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Clerk.

C/17/03) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heyward and Pearce.

C/17/04) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

Councillor Jones advised that he was a member of the Friends of Menacuddle Well Group and STAR.

C/17/05) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/17/06) Minutes of Meeting held on 27th March 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th March 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/17/07) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Regeneration Committee, Cornwall Council had approved Planning Application Number PA17/01999. He also advised that Cornwall Council's Strategic Planning Committee had approved the Eco Town planning application and refused the Wainhomes Northern Expansion planning application.

C/17/08) Mayor's/Retiring Mayor's announcements

Councillor Bull thanked the Members for their support over the past year and wished the new Mayor well. She expressed a wish for civic events to continue in order to encourage the residents of St Austell to take pride in their town.

C/17/09) Public Participation

Mr Wellicom expressed his interest in the Section 106 project at Poltair Park and asked for an update on when the improvement works are likely to proceed.

Councillor Bull advised that an architect had drawn up a scheme including a café, toilet and lighting which was nearly ready to go out to tender.

The Clerk added that drainage and footpath improvements might also be included in the improvement works and possibly the replacement of a piece of play equipment which was nearing the end of its life.

Mr Richard Hurst thanked Councillor Palmer for being the Town Council representative on the St Austell BID during the year and asked that Members support his re-election to the BID for the 2017/18 civic year.

Mrs Earl congratulated Councillors Walker and King on their election to Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively.

She advised that the Menacuddle Well project had not been successful in obtaining a Cornwall Community Foundation grant but the Brewery had confirmed their commitment to the footpath project and Cornwall Heritage Trust were looking at the repairs required to the baptistery.

Mrs Earl expressed her wish that St Austell should pride itself on green initiatives and referred to the Tree Charter that was being promoted.

Mrs Earl concluded that she supported Mr Wellicom's comments with regard to Poltair Park and her desire to see an eco-friendly kiosk/toilet facility.

The Clerk confirmed that the Tree Charter would be considered at the next Community Committee and Councillor Bull advised that she would speak to Cornwall Council about the green credentials of the proposed kiosk/toilet at Poltair Park.

C/17/10) Members' Questions

There were no questions from Members.

C/17/11) Annual Return and Annual Governance Statement

The Town Clerk introduced a report setting out the details of the Annual Return and Governance Statement which is required to be completed and sent to Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors, by the 26th May 2017.

Members noted the guidance published by SLCC and NALC and considered each of the questions in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement in detail before agreeing a response to each question.

In answer to a question, the Clerk explained the Internal and External Audit processes for the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the answer to each question should be as follows:

Question 1 Yes
Question 2 Yes
Question 3 Yes
Question 4 Yes
Question 5 Yes
Question 6 Yes
Question 7 Yes
Question 8 Yes
Question 9 Yes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Responsible Financial Officer and Mayor should be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council.

C/17/12) Annual Return and Accounting Statements 2016/17

The Clerk referred Members to the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the Town Council. He advised that due to the timing of, and slight delays with, the devolution of services from Cornwall Council and savings on Solicitors fees, the outturn was a £70,000 surplus. The Clerk advised that there was still a great deal of uncertainty during this time of transition, particularly with regard to library costs and car park income and that the level of reserves was reasonable under the circumstances.

Members noted the accounting statements and the proposed contributions to and from reserves.

The Clerk explained that the devolution reserve of £110,000 had not been used due to programme slippage and recommended that:

- The Devolution Reserve be reduced to £30,000
- £50,000 be transferred into a Service Improvement Reserve
- £30,000 be transferred into a Repairs and Renewals Reserve

The Clerk concluded that the Town Council was in a healthy financial position going forward but that there should still be caution due to continuing devolution uncertainties.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for his hard work, particularly for keeping the Solicitors fees down to a minimum.

In answer to a Member's question, the Town Clerk explained the Town Council's Treasury Management Policy and the correlation between the detailed Accounting Statements and the external audit return.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- i. Approve the detailed accounting statements and transfers to and from reserves as shown;
- ii. Approve the accounting statements in Section 2 of the Annual Return for 2016/17; and
- iii. Authorise the Clerk and Mayor to sign Section 2 of the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council.

C/17/13) 2016/17 – Annual Report

The Clerk referred Members to draft text for the Annual Report for the 2016/17 year.

Arising from a question, it was agreed that the membership of the Standing Committees for the 2017/18 civic year should be included within the Annual Report as well as the 2016/17 membership.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the production of the 2016/17 Annual Report subject to the 2017/18 Standing Committee Membership being included within the document.

C/17/14) General Power of Competence

The Clerk outlined the background and criteria for a Town Council to adopt the General Power of Competence.

The Council **RESOLVED** that it met the conditions prescribed by the Secretary of State in the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 and that it should adopt the General Power of Competence.

C/17/15) Standing Committees

Members considered a previously circulated report setting out a suggested Committee Membership for the 2017/18 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The Committee Membership list be approved subject to Councillor Leonard being deleted from the Finance & General Purposes Committee;
- The Terms of Reference of each committee be approved subject to a review of each Committee in due course;

- The following Members be appointed to the Staffing Committee

Councillors: Walker (Mayor), Bull, French, Jones, Lanxon, Palmer and Styles.

C/17/16) Election of representatives to outside bodies

It was **RESOLVED** that the following appointments to outside bodies be made for the 2017/18 civic year:

St Austell Carnival Committee

Councillor Heyward

St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce

Councillor Pears

CALC - Larger Councils Liaison Group

Councillor Palmer

Cornwall Council – Town Framework Steering Group

Councillors Oxenham, Palmer and King

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Flood Forum

Councillor Cohen

St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF)

Councillor Brown

St Austell Business Improvement District (BID)

Councillor Palmer

East Cornwall LAG

Councillor Oxenham

The House Steering Committee

Councillor King

St Austell Youth Council

Councillors Bishop, Cohen and Colwill

Councillors Hanlon and Bull were nominated as the Town Council's representative on the St Austell Healthcare Patient Participation Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Bull be the Town Council's representative but that she would ask the St Austell Healthcare Patient Participation Group if Councillor Hanlon can also attend.

Councillor French abstained from voting on this item

St Austell Healthcare Patient Participation Group

Councillor Bull

Anti-Social Behaviour Summit

Councillors Cohen, King, Oxenham and Palmer

It was noted that the five Cornwall Councillors are automatically members of this group.

C/17/17) Grounds Maintenance Service

The Operations Manager outlined the safety improvements that have been made to the parks, the risk assessments undertaken at Priory Car Park and the need for 5mph signage to be installed therein. Further works on the car park such as weed spraying, hedge cutting and shrubbery maintenance will be undertaken in due course. He advised that the summer bedding plant work will commence on the 6th June alongside the grass cutting schedules and other routine work.

In answer to a Members question, the Operations Manager confirmed that the bedding plants are Cornish and that a Tree Safety Report commissioned by the Town Council is awaited.

C/17/18) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 14th March 2017 to 9th May 2017 totalling £112,836.52 be approved.

C/17/19) Community Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on the 3rd April 2017.

C/17/20) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting held on the 24th April 2017.

C/17/21) Schedule of Meetings

It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of meetings for the 2017/18 civic year be noted and approved.

C/17/22) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings were due to take place on Monday 17th July 2017 and Monday 18th September 2017.

The Mayor advised that he was going to be away on Tuesday 30th May and that an alternative date would be sought for the Mayor Making Ceremony.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm