

MINUTES of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2017 at the Council Chamber, St Austell One Stop Shop, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DR at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Bishop, Brown, Bull, Cohen, Colwill, Heyward, King, Leonard, Pearce, Pears, Rees, Styles and Walker.

Also Present: Councillors: Jones, Lanxon and Oxenham.

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hanlon.

CC/17/20) Declarations of Interest

Councillor Colwill declared an interest in the ABC Residents Association and Woodland House Residential Home grant applications.

CC/17/21) Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations received.

CC/17/22) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5th June 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th June 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CC/17/23) Matters to note

The Clerk advised that further to minute **CC/17/09** an order has been placed for new play equipment at the Meadows and that the work should be completed by the end of November.

CC/17/24) Public Participation

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and thanked them for their interest in the agenda.

A number of members of the public spoke with regard to Woodland Road Park and the potential transfer of land to Mount Charles School. Views differed greatly on whether the school should be permitted to have sole use of part of the park and the matters raised included:

- The loss of part of the park historically (including a bandstand and toilets) for the construction of Mount Charles School;
- The degree to which the area was subject to anti-social behaviour;
- The petition signed by over 400 people opposing the transfer of part of the park to the school;
- The need for public space in the Mount Charles area;
- The lack of historic investment in the park;
- The extent to which the park was used by community groups;
- The extent to which the school suffers from anti-social behaviour;
- The safety of school children using the park;
- Conflicts between public use and school use;

- The extent to which the school would use the park if sectioned off;
- The potential to improve security of the park by erecting a fence along the southern boundary;
- The effectiveness of erecting a boundary fence around an area for the school to use;
- The extent to which the park is policed;
- Changes to the rules and guidance with regard to safeguarding.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public present for their contributions.

CC/17/25) Mount Charles School

The Chairman welcomed the Head Teacher of Mount Charles School, Ms Claire Bunting to the meeting. Ms Bunting thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak and outlined the history to the request from the school for a designated play area. She referred to a petition which she had handed to the Council with just under 400 signatures supporting the separation of part of the park for sole use by the school and outlined a range of issues currently experienced by the school including:

- Litter and debris including glass and dog faeces on the site;
- The number of Police incidents recorded at the site;
- The need to install CCTV because of vandalism and damage to the school;
- The health and safety issues associated with use of the park including the need to treat the use as an off site visit;
- Breaches to the boundary of the park on the southern side over the hedge;
- The inadequacy of the existing hard surface yards within the school;
- The inability to use the park at break time;
- The lack of space currently for children at the school;
- The wish to work with the local community and a willingness to allow community groups to book school facilities free of charge in the future.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bunting for her presentation and invited Councillors to raise any questions they might have. In response to questions Ms Bunting advised that organisations such as Stepping Stones would still be permitted to use the fenced off area and that the school would be responsible for the maintenance and stewarding of the area inside the fence. She also advised that there was sufficient space within the top half of the park for a football pitch for use by the school. She also advised that it was impractical to use the sports facilities at Penrice School.

In response to a question, the Clerk outlined the current legal position with regard to the park. He advised that prior to 2009 there was a joint use agreement for the park between Restormel Borough Council and Cornwall County Council. In 2009 when local government re-organisation took effect, the legal agreement became null and void. The school then remained part of Cornwall Council and continued to have shared use of the park. In 2016 the school became an Academy and Cornwall Council granted a lease to the Academy of the school grounds excluding the park. The lease advised that the school would be entitled to joint use of the park on terms to be agreed. Unfortunately, when the land was transferred to the Town Council as public open space, no terms had been agreed. It was accepted that the Town Council had to run the park as public open space and that the school had the right to joint use of the park. There was a need however to regularise the joint use arrangements and to consider the request from the school for sole use of part of the park rather than joint use of all of the park.

Members debated the benefits and dis-benefits of allowing the school to fence off a proportion of the park. There was considerable sympathy and support for ensuring the safety of the school children but concern was expressed at the loss of access to part of the park for the wider community. Reference was also made to Cornwall Council's Open Space Strategy for Larger Towns in which it states that St Austell has a 23% lower than average level of formal open space. The loss of green space at Sandy Hill was also noted following the identification and fencing off of a mine shaft in Sandy Hill Park earlier in the year. Generally, there was support for a compromise.

It was proposed that the Council should try to find a solution that allows the school to have an accessible safe play area and explore ways in which the community can retain access to the park.

An amendment that a decision on the school's request for land be deferred pending the installation of the new play facility in the park and a period of 18/24 months to assess the impact of the play facility improvement on the use of the park was lost 7 votes to 5.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council agrees to form a working group to find a solution to provide a safe accessible daily play area for the school to which the community can retain access.

It was **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** that the Working Group should comprise:

- The five Mount Charles Ward Members
- The Mayor
- The Chairman of the Community Committee
- The Vice-Chairman of the Community Committee
- A representative of the school
- A representative of the community (Mr Courtney Brewer)

CC/17/26) Small Grants Scheme

St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society

The Chair welcomed Meg Prater to the meeting who outlined proposals for additional shows this year for disabled groups.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to provide a grant of £750 to the St Blazey Amateur Operatic Society for its next production, Robinson Crusoe.

*** Councillor Colwill declared an interest in the following two items and left the meeting***

ABC Residents Association

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 to ABC Residents Association for their 2017 Christmas coach trip.

Woodland House Residential Home

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 towards the home's 2017 Christmas activities.

Councillor Colwill re-joined the meeting

Keep Cornwall Fed

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 to Keep Cornwall Fed for funding towards their St Austell based project.

Merlin MS Centre

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 towards the cost of community transport for disabled people in St Austell.

Poltair Residents Association

*** Councillor Lanxon explained the activities of Poltair Residents Association and left the meeting ***

It was noted that the event for which funding was requested had already taken place but that the grant application was received prior to the event.

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 towards events to be held in 2017 by the Poltair Residents Association.

Councillor King abstained from voting on this matter

Councillor Lanxon returned to the meeting

Roselyon Fencing Club

Members expressed concern that St Blazey Town Council do not appear to have been asked for funding and the event might not be sufficiently inclusive to warrant a financial contribution from St Austell Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to make no grant on this occasion but to advise Roselyon School that if they required funding for an event in future that they should provide the Town Council with a presentation.

St Austell Cricket Club

It was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £250 should be approved and that the Town Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve an additional £750 subject to the applicant attending the meeting to provide more details.

Street Pastors

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 towards the running expenses of the Street Pastors.

St Austell Old People People's Welfare Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £250 to the St Austell Old People's Welfare Committee for funding towards their Christmas Party.

CC/17/27) Playground Equipment Removal – Procedure/Consultation Process

Members considered a draft procedure for dealing with the removal of playground equipment which might be either unsafe or obsolete. It was suggested that greater use might be made of the news section within the website and press releases.

It was **RESOLVED** that the procedure as drafted be approved.

CC/17/28) CCTV

The Clerk advised that in conjunction with Newquay Town Council, he was examining the CCTV monitoring service provided by Cornwall Council at its Tolvadden Emergency Centre. He explained that he would report further on this matter in due course.

CC/17/29) Events

It was noted that an event was due to take place in conjunction with the Children's Centre at Woodland Road Park on Sunday 2nd October 2017 and a Stepping Stones Nursery event in Poltair Park on 19th May 2018.

CC/17/30) Projects update

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk provided an update on a number of projects as follows:

Crime and Disorder

- A Safer St Austell meeting will be held on 5th October 2017.
- An action plan is being followed
- There is dedicated Police resource for St Austell around the town centre
- There have been some drug related issues and rough sleeping reported.

Environmental Projects

- A report on grass cutting and environmental issues will be brought to the next Council meeting
- There have been a number of absences due to sickness and holiday which has slowed progress recently but two new members of staff are due to start on the 2nd October

The House

- Progress being made with The House and Young People Cornwall with a view to improving the property and locating Young People Cornwall in the premises.
- Further reports to follow.

Car Park

- Pot holes have been repaired
- Income levels are close to budget

Weed Spraying

- Third spray due to start soon (Oct)

CC/17/31) CALC Conference – Electoral Review

The Clerk advised that a conference was planned by CALC on Saturday 14th October 2017 at New County Hall Truro.

It was **RESOLVED** that any Members wishing to attend the conference should contact the office and that attendance at the conference should be deemed an approved duty.

CC/17/32) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next meetings of the Community Committee are scheduled for Monday 4th December 2017 and Monday 5th March 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm.