

# St Austell Town Council



## Finance and General Purposes Committee

**To: All Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee**

(Councillors: Brown, Bull, Clemo, French, Gray, Lanxon, Pearce, Rowse and Young).

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend a **Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee** to be held in **The Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DP** on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 6pm.**

***\*\*Please note the change of venue\*\****

David Pooley  
**Town Clerk**

13<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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### AGENDA

#### 1. **Apologies for absence**

(Purpose: To note the apologies for absence).

This meeting has been advertised as a public meeting and as such could be filmed or recorded by broadcasters, the media or members of the public.

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## **2. Declarations of Interest**

(Purpose: To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other non-registerable interests in respect of items on this agenda).

## **3. Dispensations**

(Purpose: To receive requests for dispensations under the Code of Conduct).

## **4. Minutes of meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Pages  
1 to 4**

(Purpose: To agree that the minutes of the above meeting be signed as a correct record). (Attached).

## **5. Matters to Note**

A verbal update from the Town Clerk on the actions taken since the last meeting. Note: No decision may be made under this agenda item.

## **6. Public participation (15 minutes maximum)**

The Chairman will invite members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be carried out at the meeting.

15 minutes will be allocated for public participation (this can be extended at the Chairman's discretion). Each person addressing the Council will be allocated a maximum of two minutes.

## **7. Budget Monitoring Report**

**Pages  
5 to 10**

(Purpose: To review the Town Council's budget monitoring report for the period 1st April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024). (Report attached).

## **8. Earmarked Reserves**

**Pages  
11 to 14**

(Purpose: To approve a strategy with regard to the allocation of reserves and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding).

## **9. Health and Safety Audit**

**Pages  
15 to 24**

(Purpose: To note the recent health and safety audit).(Extract from report attached).

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|--|---------------------------|
| <b>10. Risk Management</b>   | <b>Pages<br/>25 to 34</b> |
| (Purpose: To review and update the Council's Risk Management Strategy and Register). (Report attached).              |                           |
| <b>11. Treasury Management Strategy</b>  | <b>Pages<br/>35 to 44</b> |
| (Purpose: To review and update the Council's Treasury Management Strategy). (Report attached).                       |                           |
| <b>12. St Austell Library</b>  | <b>Pages<br/>45 to 46</b> |
| (Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the operational activities of St Austell Library). (Report attached). |                           |
| <b>13. Dates of Next Meeting</b>   |                           |
| (Purpose: To note the date of the next meeting – 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024)   |                           |

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**MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Lanxon and Pearce.

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

**F/23/17) Apologies for absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors: Bull, French and Young.

**F/23/18) Declarations of Interest**

None.

**F/23/19) Dispensations**

None.

**F/23/20) Minutes of meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**F/23/21) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that he hoped to do the work shortly to enable the Sea Cadet legal charge to be lifted. The new photocopier has been installed and the old photocopier removed which is likely to be donated to a local charity.

**F/23/22) Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**F/23/23) Budget Monitoring Report**

The Town Clerk explained a number of variances in the budget monitoring report for the year to May 2023. He advised that car park income is below budget but is showing signs of recovery following a wet August. Other budget heads highlighted:

*Grants* - £3,000 grant income received from Cornwall Council for a bus shelter at Holmbush. The recent grant approvals for BID security guard funding and Studio 4 has created an overspend.

*Play Equipment* - Following the Bethel Park refurbishment project and the Truro Road Park safety surfacing renewal the budget head is over budget. The Bethel Park project will be partially funded by CIL funding and the balance will be met from Town Council reserves. The end of year accounts will reflect the income and transfers from reserves to cover the expenditure.

*Salaries* - The salaries are below budget as the April pay award is still being negotiated with the Unions.

Utilities and fuel costs are slightly over budget, but savings have been made on the insurance renewal. The House, Carlyon Road rental income will be invoiced shortly and a review of the tenancy at Poltair café will be undertaken in the autumn which will include the payment of business rates.

During discussion, Members felt that it would be helpful to have a footnote on the monthly budgeting reports to provide an explanation of the large variances. Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that the Planning and Regeneration Committee is responsible for the Town Centre Revitalisation Project but due to the scale of some of the expenditure the full Council is required to approve large projects. A financial statement will be presented to the Revitalisation Partnership at their next meeting and circulated to a later Planning and Regeneration Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring reports and bank reconciliation statement.

### **F/23/24) Budget Process 2024/25**

The Clerk advised that he would like to talk to Members informally about priorities and budgets during October and two informal meeting dates of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (if required) have been identified. He added that once priorities have been identified he would produce a report and budget for the Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider and make a recommendation to full Council in December.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the budget timetable as set out in the report.

### **F/23/25) Car Park Machines**

The Clerk advised that the car park payment machines are coming to the end of their life which has led to them failing fairly frequently, particularly during damp weather. Due to their age, the machines are no longer manufactured and new parts are difficult to obtain.

The existing supplier has advised that the replacement of all four machines would cost in the in the region of £28,000 to £32,000 but a partial upgrade of all four machines, including the installation of a contactless payment system would be £13,062.50 (£3,265 per machine). The partial upgrade would retain the main carcass of each machine with just the doors being changed which hold the inner workings. The upgrade would include a contactless payment system, a touch colour screen, new main board, new printer, new coin selector and 4G modem and supporting parts.

The Clerk advised that the Town Council has a very small budget for car park machine repairs so any replacement or partial upgrade would have to be funded from reserves.

In answer to questions, the Clerk confirmed that if the machines were upgraded they would still take cash and that the installation of a contactless payment system might have an adverse impact on the "Phone and Pay" app and the "Pay 2 Park" web based payment system.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the four car park payment machines in Priory Car Park be upgraded to the A1000 Contactless system at a total cost of £13,062.50.

### **F/23/26) Car Park Working Group**

The Clerk advised that if Members would like to review the car park charges, he would be happy to facilitate a working group to undertake a review and make a recommendation to full Council. He added that the climate for increasing car park charges is very sensitive at the present time and suggested that it might be prudent to freeze the current charges for the 2024/25 financial year.

During discussion, it was suggested that charging could be introduced on a Sunday but overall Members felt that in the light of the ongoing economic crisis it would be prudent to keep the car park charges at the same level for the time being.

A proposal to consider charging on a Sunday was lost 1 vote for, 3 votes against.

A proposal to freeze the car park charges for the 2024/25 financial year and not convene a working group was carried 3 votes for, 1 vote against.

It was **RESOLVED** to freeze the car park charges for the 2024/25 financial year and not convene a working group.

### **F/23/27) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

The Clerk advised that the Equality Policy had been re-drafted following consideration by the Town Council and re-wording suggestions from Councillors Bull and Fox. The Clerk confirmed that the title had been changed to reflect the amendments made.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

### **F/23/28) Internal Audit Checks**

Members noted the Internal Audit checks carried out by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and the comments notated.

In additional, the Clerk advised that the current agreement with the Town Council's Internal Auditor is due for renewal and a quotation in the sum of £1,100 per annum for three years has been received. The Clerk added that the Internal Auditor visits the Town Council twice a year, on the quarters that checks are not carried out by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and includes the auditing of the year end accounts.

During discussion, the Clerk advised that the "Cyber Essential" accreditation is desirable, but the "Gold Quality Status" is of more value to the Town Council, particularly as the "Foundation Quality Status" achieved a few years ago has expired. It is hoped that time can be found over the coming months to progress the work required to achieve Gold Quality Status.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Note the Internal Audit report undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and;

(ii) Appoint Hudson Accounting for a further three year term in the sum of £1,100 per annum.

**F/23/29) St Austell Library**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she is extremely pleased with the performance of the library which is the top performing site in Cornwall in August for all issues (books/DVD's). She added that the computers are still well used and that they had an excellent Summer Reading Challenge with 901 children signing up to the challenge. She referred to a recent incident in the library and the very professional way that the staff had handled it.

Members expressed their gratitude to the Library Manager and staff for their continued good work and the excellent performance of St Austell Library. Particular thanks was made to the staff for their excellent handling of the incident outlined.

Arising from a question, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that following the success of the Childrens' Literacy Festival she would liaise with the Library Manager about the arrangements so far for the 2024 event and the overall sustainability for it to become an annual event.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

**F/23/30) Dates of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.11pm.



**ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members with an update on income and expenditure to the 31st January 2024 and a copy of the Council's latest bank reconciliation statements.

**2. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

It is a legal requirement for the Town Council to set a budget annually and it is good practice to monitor that budget at regular intervals. The Town Clerk monitors budgets monthly and provides regular budget monitoring reports to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It is part of the remit of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to monitor and manage budgets on behalf of the Town Council.

**3. RESOURCE ISSUES**

None outside of existing budgets.

**4. EQUALITIES ISSUES**

None.

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

None.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members note the attached budget monitoring reports and bank reconciliation statement.

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The budget variance report for January 2024 and the financial year to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 is attached for information. After allowing

for the major improvement schemes at Bethel Park and Truro Road which are due to be financed by grant and reserves and the Town Centre Revitalisation projects which are to be largely funded from grant monies the income and expenditure are within acceptable limits.

Significant variances are explained below:

- **Interest income** – increased interest rates
- **Other grants and contributions** – grants for Bethel Park and Holmbush Road bus shelter
- **Cleaning and domestic supplies** – coding of cleaning contracts (previously contract payments)
- **Contract payments** – works at Priory car park not completed plus transfer to cleaning and domestic supplies.
- **Electricity** – increased cost of fuel following ending of long-term agreements plus dispute.
- **Insurances** – savings following tender exercise.
- **Miscellaneous expenses** – Bus shelter and rooftop garden project
- **Miscellaneous grants** – increased funding for security personnel and Christmas lights
- **Play equipment** – Bethel Park upgrade and Truro Park safety surfacing (to be funded at least in part from Reserves)
- **Rates** – successful appeal against rateable value of Priory car park
- **Repairs/Maintenance Premises** – Increased cost of Poltair Park bat shelter and pavilion demolition.

DAVID POOLEY - TOWN CLERK

# Budget Variance

## St Austell Town Council

### For the month ended 31 January 2024

	JAN 2024	JAN 2024	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %	APR 2023-JAN	APR 2023-JAN	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
		OVERALL BUDGET			2024	2024 OVERALL BUDGET		
<b>Trading Income</b>								
Car Park Income	20,628.94	20,000.00	628.94	3.14%	200,631.08	205,000.00	(4,368.92)	-2.13%
Interest Income	3,956.41	580.00	3,376.41	582.14%	28,516.40	5,800.00	22,716.40	391.66%
Library Income	230.84	550.00	(319.16)	-58.03%	4,618.65	5,500.00	(881.35)	-16.02%
Other Grants and Contributions	-	-	-	-	85,557.54	-	85,557.54	-
Other Income	-	179.00	(179.00)	-100.00%	2,595.62	1,790.00	805.62	45.01%
Precept Payments	-	-	-	-	1,067,220.00	1,067,220.00	-	-
Public Convenience Charges	87.75	250.00	(162.25)	-64.90%	1,915.52	2,500.00	(584.48)	-23.38%
Rent Received	2,500.00	908.00	1,592.00	175.33%	7,950.00	9,080.00	(1,130.00)	-12.44%
Total Trading Income	27,403.94	22,467.00	4,936.94	21.97%	1,399,004.81	1,296,890.00	102,114.81	7.87%
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>27,403.94</b>	<b>22,467.00</b>	<b>4,936.94</b>	<b>21.97%</b>	<b>1,399,004.81</b>	<b>1,296,890.00</b>	<b>102,114.81</b>	<b>7.87%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>								
Books and Publications	-	-	-	-	-	150.00	(150.00)	-100.00%
Cleaning & Domestic Supplies	1,465.85	708.00	757.85	107.04%	15,688.34	7,080.00	8,608.34	121.59%
Contract Hire and Operating Leases	350.92	579.00	(228.08)	-39.39%	613.42	5,790.00	(5,176.58)	-89.41%
Contract Payments	6,683.00	18,251.00	(11,568.00)	-63.38%	128,462.61	182,510.00	(54,047.39)	-29.61%
Electricity	2,755.62	742.00	2,013.62	271.38%	14,047.12	7,420.00	6,627.12	89.31%

Budget Variance

	JAN 2024	JAN 2024	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %	APR 2023-JAN 2024	APR 2023-JAN 2024 OVERALL BUDGET	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
Fuel	421.78	675.00	(253.22)	↓ -37.51%	8,668.54	6,750.00	1,918.54	↑ 28.42%
Gas	955.26	416.00	539.26	↑ 129.63%	4,901.52	4,160.00	741.52	↑ 17.83%
Grounds Maintenance Supplies	1,363.30	1,892.00	(528.70)	↓ -27.94%	17,481.54	18,920.00	(1,438.46)	↓ -7.60%
Insurances	-	-	-	-	10,745.05	18,500.00	(7,754.95)	↓ -41.92%
IT / Communications	5,788.51	1,808.00	3,980.51	↑ 220.16%	20,454.91	18,080.00	2,374.91	↑ 13.14%
Mayors Allowances	-	62.00	(62.00)	↓ -100.00%	91.85	620.00	(528.15)	↓ -85.19%
Members Allowance	-	12.00	(12.00)	↓ -100.00%	-	120.00	(120.00)	↓ -100.00%
Miscellaneous Expenses	31,140.00	3,296.00	27,844.00	↑ 844.78%	94,535.52	32,960.00	61,575.52	↑ 186.82%
Miscellaneous Grants	5,000.00	4,166.00	834.00	↑ 20.02%	60,490.00	41,660.00	18,830.00	↑ 45.20%
Office Supplies	213.26	233.00	(19.74)	↓ -8.47%	2,331.08	2,330.00	1.08	↑ 0.05%
Other Transport/plant expenses	1,820.73	271.00	1,549.73	↑ 571.86%	2,760.66	2,710.00	50.66	↑ 1.87%
Play Equipment	679.20	4,166.00	(3,486.80)	↓ -83.70%	214,976.01	41,660.00	173,316.01	↑ 416.02%
Printing and Stationery	93.88	266.00	(172.12)	↓ -64.71%	1,996.08	2,660.00	(663.92)	↓ -24.96%
Protective Clothing	69.99	229.00	(159.01)	↓ -69.44%	2,051.69	2,290.00	(238.31)	↓ -10.41%
Publicity	-	129.00	(129.00)	↓ -100.00%	776.00	1,290.00	(514.00)	↓ -39.84%
Rates	(23,939.26)	6,036.00	(29,975.26)	↓ -496.61%	27,506.52	60,360.00	(32,853.48)	↓ -54.43%
Recruitment	-	91.00	(91.00)	↓ -100.00%	33.00	910.00	(877.00)	↓ -96.37%
Rent / Room Hire	-	520.00	(520.00)	↓ -100.00%	4,155.00	5,200.00	(1,045.00)	↓ -20.10%
Repairs / Maintenance Premises	18,674.61	2,621.00	16,053.61	↑ 612.50%	35,697.11	26,210.00	9,487.11	↑ 36.20%
Repairs/ Maintenance-Vehicles/Plant	1,457.07	463.00	994.07	↑ 214.70%	8,358.33	4,630.00	3,728.33	↑ 80.53%



Budget Variance

	JAN 2024	JAN 2024	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %	APR 2023-JAN	APR 2023-JAN	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
	OVERALL BUDGET	OVERALL BUDGET			2024	2024 OVERALL BUDGET		
Road Fund / Taxes	-	88.00	(88.00)	↓ -100.00%	645.00	880.00	(235.00)	↓ -26.70%
Salaries / Wages	55,732.50	57,875.00	(2,142.50)	↓ -3.70%	579,206.51	578,750.00	456.51	↑ 0.08%
Small Grants Scheme	750.00	667.00	83.00	↑ 12.44%	7,000.00	6,670.00	330.00	↑ 4.95%
Subscriptions	348.00	616.00	(268.00)	↓ -43.51%	8,076.97	6,160.00	1,916.97	↑ 31.12%
Training	367.00	366.00	1.00	↑ 0.27%	2,897.88	3,660.00	(762.12)	↓ -20.82%
Transport Insurance	56.00	241.00	(185.00)	↓ -76.76%	3,089.20	2,410.00	679.20	↑ 28.18%
Travel and Subsistence	23.50	46.00	(22.50)	↓ -48.91%	472.76	460.00	12.76	↑ 2.77%
Water	87.77	212.00	(124.23)	↓ -58.60%	1,908.58	2,120.00	(211.42)	↓ -9.97%
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>112,358.49</b>	<b>107,743.00</b>	<b>4,615.49</b>	<b>↑ 4.28%</b>	<b>1,280,118.80</b>	<b>1,096,080.00</b>	<b>184,038.80</b>	<b>↑ 16.79%</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>(84,954.55)</b>	<b>(85,276.00)</b>	<b>321.45</b>	<b>0.38%</b>	<b>118,886.01</b>	<b>200,810.00</b>	<b>(81,923.99)</b>	<b>↓ -40.80%</b>

# ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL

**BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT:**

**31.1.24**

	£	£
Business Current Account		52,545.20
Mayor's Charity Account		20.00
Business Direct Reserve Account		41,036.56
Petty Cash		14.56
Library Float		100.00
<b>Total in Bank</b>		<u>93,716.32</u>

<b>Total Unpresented Cheques</b>		0.00
		<u>93,716.32</u>

<b>Outstanding receipts</b>		
Transactions not accounted for		0.00
		<u>0.00</u>
		<b>93,716.32</b>

**Accounting System Bank Balance:**

<b>Opening Bank Balance</b>		<b>116,805.44</b>
<b>Expenditure to date</b>		2604265.35
<b>Income to date</b>		2581176.23
		<u>93,716.32</u>

<b>Accounting System Payment Recorded but yet paid</b>		0.00
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<b>Accounting System Bank Balance</b>	<u>93,716.32</u>	0.00
		does not balance

Note:  
Attach Accounting Statement and remember to adjust for the Outstanding Accounting System Entries after balancing.

Reconciliation Completed: Date: 02.02.24

Reviewed: Date: 02.02.24

**ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL  
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**EARMARKED RESERVES**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To approve a strategy with regard to the allocation of reserves and community infrastructure levy funding.

**2. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Earmarked reserves are used to smooth expenditure peaks and troughs and to fund one off expenditure.

**3. RESOURCE ISSUES**

The Council at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 had earmarked reserves amounting to £573,407.65. The latest budget projections assume the use of approximately £181,000 of reserves to fund one off projects as identified in the body of the report.

**4. EQUALITY ISSUES**

None.

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

None directly.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee authorise the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair to:

- i. Optimise the use of reserves to provide the greatest flexibility of funding in future years;
- ii. Apply CIL funding received from Cornwall Council to the Bethel Park Project;
- iii. Permit funding of up to four CCTV cameras should the outturn spending position allow.

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## **Background**

As we are nearing the end of the financial year, thought is being given once again to the use of earmarked reserves.

Earmarked reserves provide flexibility and a prudent means of smoothing income and expenditure flows between years and also help with saving up for known future commitments.

The current prediction is that there will be a small surplus and not all of the planned contributions from earmarked reserves planned in the last budget round will be needed. This report seeks to provide some discretion and authority to the Town clerk to optimise the use of reserves.

## **Current Earmarked Reserves**

At the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 the Council had the following reserves:

### **1. Projects Reserve - £138,731**

Used to fund projects and smooth spending between financial years and/or match grants and spending.

### **2. Elections Reserve - £25,000**

Helps fund bi-election expenses and the cost of the four yearly main election.

### **3. Play Equipment Repair and Renewals Reserve - £409,676**

Used to save for major play equipment replacement and major play area improvement schemes. The Council has over £1million worth of play equipment.

## **Planned use of reserves**

In the budget report it was envisaged that the following use would be made of reserves to fund expenditure in the 2023/24 financial year:

### **1. Projects Reserve**

Town Centre Partnership Projects	£30,595
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Safety surfacing Truro Road Park	£44,520
Demolition of Poltair pavilion	£25,000
CIL payments	£ 6,955
Other contributions	£ 3,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>£110,476</b>

## **2. Elections Reserve – Nil**

## **3. Play Equipment Repair and Renewals Reserve**

Bethel Park	£71,045
<b>Total</b>	<b>£71,045</b>

### **The outturn position**

The latest projections suggest that there will be an underspend/savings in the current financial year. The Town Centre Partnership projects have been slightly delayed and less will be spent this year than predicted. Approximately £30,000 has been saved by challenging the rateable value of Priory Car Park. Interest earned should exceed the budget by approximately £6,000.

Poltair Pavilion demolition is expected to cost £40,000 (£25,000 allowed from reserves) inclusive of the building of a bat shelter, fences and making good of the neighbours' garages which proved more complicated/expensive than anticipated.

Large items of expenditure expected before the year end include £12,000 for car park resurfacing and £11,700 for new machines. These costs can be met from within the budget.

As we get closer to the year end the amount of the savings will become clearer.

ASB has become a bigger issue in the town centre and in a small number of residences outside the town centre. A quote of £25,000 for 4 new CCTV cameras for the town centre to cover key blind spots has been received. Authority to optimise the use of reserves by amending the agreed contributions to/from reserves and if possible within budget purchase up to 4 additional CCTV cameras is requested.

DAVID POOLEY  
TOWN CLERK



# General Risk Assessment

St Austell Town Council

St Austell Town Council, The Stable Block, Pondhu  
House, Penwinnick Road, ST. AUSTELL, Cornwall,  
PL25 5DP

29 Nov 2023

Jim Stowe



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## Section 1 - Executive Summary

### 1 Executive Summary

Organisation Description	St Austell town council consists of around 22 employees. It is responsible for grounds maintenance, playground maintenance for around 17 sites, one set of public toilets, a car park and a library. The client also lets St Austell Youth Centre to a third party and has some landlord responsibilities there.
Organisation Category	Town Council
Enforcement History / Significant Incidents	None
Areas Assessed	Site visits were carried out on the Pondhu house and library locations. Other areas and activities were assessed on the basis on discussions with relevant staff and records.
Areas Not Assessed	No site visits to ongoing groundskeeping activities were carried out.
Visit Attendance	Steve Skinner, operations Manager David Pooley, Town Clerk Jim Stowe, H&S Consultant
Overall People At Risk	All employees, Councillors, Contractors, Members of the public, Lone workers, New and expectant mothers
Scope	<p>This is a General Risk assessment report for:</p> <p>St Austell Town Council The Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road ST. AUSTELL PL25 5DP</p> <p>It is an assessment of the health, safety (and fire risks) arising from the premises and the activities within and to determine the adequacy of the existing controls and provide information on the further actions required to reduce risks in line with current legal requirements and best practice.</p>
Other Comments	St Austell Town Council continues to display a high level of safety compliance across the organisation and a good safety culture across all staff. Actions in this report are largely related to minor improvements in paperwork and best practice suggestions for H&S improvement.

### 1.2 Actions Requiring Immediate Attention

**There are no Actions requiring immediate attention**

### 1.3 Overall Risk Rating Table






The following risk rating table shows the score attained against each area assessed. The maximum score for each section is 20 points, however, if actions have been identified this score will be reduced in line with the following:

Scoring guide: \* = Deduct 15, \*\* = Deduct 10, \*\*\* = Deduct 5

	Satisfactory	Priority 1 Actions*	5+ Priority 2 Actions**	1-4 Priority 2 Actions or Priority 3 Actions ***
<b>Asbestos Management</b>	20			
<b>Chainsaws</b>	20			
<b>Cleaning</b>	20			
<b>Contractor Management</b>	20			
<b>Display Screens</b>	20			
<b>Electrical Safety</b>				15
<b>Fire Safety Overview</b>				15
<b>First Aid At Work</b>	20			
<b>Gas Safety</b>	20			
<b>Grass Cutting</b>	20			
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>				15
<b>Legionella Management</b>	20			
<b>Lone Work</b>	20			
<b>Management of H&amp;S</b>				15
<b>Managing Manual Handling Operations</b>	20			
<b>New/Expectant Mothers</b>	20			
<b>Outside Work</b>	20			
<b>Ride On Mowers</b>	20			
<b>Stress Management</b>	20			
<b>Tree Management</b>	20			
<b>Vehicle Use (Non-Goods)</b>				15
<b>Workplace H&amp;S</b>	20			
<b>Additional Observations</b>	20			
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>			

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<b>Available Score</b>	<b>460</b>
<b>Score</b>	<b>95%</b>

	Intolerable	< 65%
	Substantial	65-74%
	Moderate	75-84%
	Tolerable	85-94%
	Trivial	95% >

### 1.4 Calculated Overall Risk Rating

 Trivial

## Section 2 - General Risk Assessment Action Plan

### 2.1 Action Priority Summary

	Priority 1	0
	Priority 2	0
	Priority 3	5
	Priority 4	8

### 2.2 General Risk Assessment action plan

#### Chainsaws

<b>Observation</b>	Action Required: Chainsaws- Equipment
<b>Recommendation</b>	All chainsaws are examined and serviced by a competent person at a regular and prescribed frequency however no records checks should were available. It is understood that a new contractor has been put in place that will provide records going forwards.
<b>Priority</b>	4
<b>Complete By</b>	27/05/2024

#### Contractor Management

<b>Observation</b>	Action Required: Contractor Management- Competence
<b>Recommendation</b>	Ensure that the contractor holds adequate insurance for the task to be carried out. This may include public liability, employer's liability and/or professional indemnity insurance.
<b>Priority</b>	4
<b>Complete By</b>	27/05/2024

#### Electrical Safety

<b>Observation</b>	Action Required: Electrical Safety- Fixed Wiring
<b>Recommendation</b>	Fixed wiring test for managed building are as detailed below: Status by location: Park café in date. Next test by 07/25 Stable block: completed 2021, confirm date for retest as unclear on certificate. Library: Paperwork unclear as whether all remedials have been completed and date for next test. Ask electrician to clarify as required.



Toilet block in date and satisfactory. Next test due 2025.

**Priority** 3  
**Complete By** 27/02/2024

## Fire Safety Overview

### Observation

Action Required: Fire Safety Overview- Fire Drills

### Recommendation

Carry out a fire drill at least once in every 12 month period. Record the data and results of the fire drill. Over 12 months since drill in Pondhu House, A paper drill can be carried out as part of a regular team meeting where staff are reminded of the procedure verbally.

**Priority** 3  
**Complete By** 27/02/2024

## First Aid At Work

### Observation

Action Required: First Aid At Work- Needs Assessment

### Recommendation

First aid assessment records are available for Pondhu and Grounds keeping teams. Create a similar record for the library to record what is required.

**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

## First Aid At Work

### Observation

Action Required: First Aid At Work- Personnel

### Recommendation

As determined by your first aid needs assessment, provide 4 trained first aiders to cover all working shifts and other absences (e.g. Holidays, sickness etc) within the grounds team. Your first aiders should be trained in the Emergency First Aid at Work qualification.

**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

## First Aid At Work

### Observation

Action Required: First Aid At Work- Equipment

### Recommendation

Record outcomes of monthly first aid kit checks on existing stock check forms.

**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

## Gas Safety

### Observation

Action Required: Gas- Controls

**Recommendation** Obtain record of last gas boiler safety check in the library and hold on file.  
**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

### Grounds Maintenance

**Observation** Action Required: Grounds Maintenance- Noise & Vibration  
**Recommendation** Carry out a survey of vibrating tool time use for 1 week during a busy period to give evidence that levels are being controlled.  
**Priority** 3  
**Complete By** 27/02/2024

### Management of H&S

**Observation** Action Required: Management of H&S - Training  
**Recommendation** Maintain Induction training records as evidence of compliance. Induction record for recent new starter was only partially completed.  
**Priority** 3  
**Complete By** 27/02/2024

### Management of H&S

**Observation** Action Required: Management of H&S - Training  
**Recommendation** Ensure that learning courses on fire safety awareness, manual handling, COSHH awareness and workplace stress are made available to staff. Review other topics on eLearning to determine other courses that will be of use depending on role, e.g. office safety. A quote for 12 licences will be provided to you from WorkNest for this purpose.  
**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

### Stress Management

**Observation** Action Required: Stress Management- Controls  
**Recommendation** Consider placing key individuals on mental health first aider course to assist staff who are having difficulties.  
**Priority** 4  
**Complete By** 27/05/2024

### Vehicle Use (Non-Goods)

**Observation** Action Required: Vehicle Use (Non-Goods)- Controls

**Recommendation**

Check the licences for drivers of company vehicles on an annual basis and keep a copy on file. Review via the DVLA licence check system to ensure that any endorsements on file are viewed.

**Priority**

3

**Complete By**

27/02/2024

## Section 3 - Report Index

### 3.1 Risk Assessments and Audit Index

<b>No.</b>	<b>Hazard Topic</b>
3.2.1	Asbestos Management
3.2.2	Chainsaws
3.2.3	Cleaning
3.2.4	Contractor Management
3.2.5	Display Screens
3.2.6	Electrical Safety
3.2.7	Fire Safety Overview
3.2.8	First Aid At Work
3.2.9	Gas Safety
3.2.10	Grass Cutting
3.2.11	Grounds Maintenance
3.2.12	Legionella Management
3.2.13	Lone Work
3.2.14	Management of H&S
3.2.15	Managing Manual Handling Operations
3.2.16	New/Expectant Mothers
3.2.17	Outside Work
3.2.18	Ride On Mowers
3.2.19	Stress Management
3.2.20	Tree Management
3.2.21	Vehicle Use (Non-Goods)
3.2.22	Workplace H&S
3.2.23	Additional Observations

**ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To approve an updated Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register (e-mailed separately) which are required as part of the annual internal audit.

**2. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The Council is required as part of its governance arrangements to have suitable risk management processes in place and to review these processes from time to time. The nature and scale of risks experienced by the Town Council is changing as services and assets are devolved from Cornwall Council.

**3. RESOURCE ISSUES**

None outside of existing budgets.

**4. EQUALITIES ISSUES**

Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken as and when appropriate as part of the Council's Risk Management process.

**5. ENVIRONMENT ISSUES**

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to improving its environmental impact.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Approves the updated Risk Management Strategy (Appendix 1) and Strategic Risk Register (e-mailed separately).

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DAVID POOLEY  
TOWN CLERK





# ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL

## RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Risk Management Strategy. It sets out:

- What is meant by risk management;
- Why the Council needs a risk management strategy;
- The philosophy of the Council's risk management;
- An overview of the methodology to be adopted and its links with existing processes;
- A summary of the implementation timetable;
- An outline of the associated roles of Elected Members and officers; and
- A summary of future monitoring and reporting lines for risk management.

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Council;
- Integrate risk management into the culture of the organisation;
- Embed risk management through the ownership and management of risk as part of all decision-making processes; and
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice.

### 2 What is Risk Management?

**2.1** *'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.'* Audit Commission, *Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government*, (2001: 5).

**2.2** Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety but applies to all aspects of the Council's work.

**2.3** Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive:

**2.3.1 Strategic Risk** - long-term adverse impacts from poor decision-making or poor implementation. Risks damage to the reputation of the Council, loss of public confidence, in a worse case scenario Government Intervention.

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**2.3.2 Compliance Risk** - failure to comply with legislation, or laid down procedures or the lack of documentation to prove compliance. Risks exposure to prosecution, judicial review, employment tribunals, inability to enforce contracts.

**2.3.3 Financial Risk** - fraud and corruption, waste, excess demand for services, bad debts. Risk of additional audit investigation, objection to accounts, reduced service delivery, dramatically increased Council tax levels/impact on Council reserves.

**2.3.4 Operating Risk** - failure to deliver services effectively, malfunctioning equipment, hazards to service users, the general public or staff, damage to property. Risk of insurance claims, higher insurance premiums, lengthy recovery processes.

**2.3.5 Reputational Risk** – damage to reputation through the actions or inaction of officers and/or members.

**2.4** Not all of these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost-effective. Even where insurance is available, money may not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk, before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

**2.5** Risk is not restricted to potential threats but can be connected with opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive, responses. Measures to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

### **3. Why does the Council need a Risk Management Strategy?**

**3.1** Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided.

**3.2** The Risk Management Strategy will help to ensure that all Committees across the Council have an understanding of 'risk' and that the Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance.

**3.3** There is an Audit requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234) to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk. Risks and their control will be collated in a Risk Register. A statement about the system of internal control and the management of risk will be included as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

### **4. What is the Council's Philosophy on Risk Management?**

#### **4.1 Risk Management Policy Statement**

St Austell Town Council recognises that, in addition to its statutory duties, there are cogent moral and economic reasons to take all practicable and reasonable measures to safeguard people and the natural and built environments. Whilst it is acknowledged that risk cannot be totally eliminated it is accepted that much can be done to reduce the extent of injury, damage and financial loss. Therefore, St Austell



Town Council is committed to identifying, reducing or eliminating the risks to both people and the natural and built environments.

The Council will carry insurance in such amounts and in respect of such perils as will provide protection against significant losses, where insurance is required by law or contract and in other circumstances where risks are insurable and premiums cost-effective.

The Council will seek to embed effective risk management into its culture, processes and structure to ensure that opportunities are maximised.

## **5. What is the Risk Management Process?**

- 5.1** Implementing the Strategy involves identifying, analysing, prioritising, managing and monitoring risks.
- 5.2 Risk Identification** – Identifying and understanding the hazards and risks facing the Council is crucial if informed decisions are to be made about policies or service delivery methods. The risks associated with these decisions can then be effectively managed. All risks identified will be recorded in the Council's Risk Register.
- 5.3 Risk Analysis** – Once risks have been identified they need to be systematically and accurately assessed using proven techniques. Analysis should make full use of any available data on the potential frequency of events and their consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable, then steps need to be taken to control it or respond to it.
- 5.4 Risk Prioritisation** - An assessment should be undertaken of the impact or consequence and likelihood of risks occurring, with impact and likelihood being scored on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 high.

The scores for impact and likelihood are multiplied together. Risks scoring 12 and above will be subject to detailed consideration and preparation of a contingency/action plan to appropriately control the risk.

- 5.5 Risk Control** – Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures, but in exceptional cases more drastic action will be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Options for control include:

- 5.5.1 Elimination** – the circumstances from which the risk arises are ceased so that the risk no longer exists;
- 5.5.2 Reduction** – loss control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/likelihood of the risk occurring;
- 5.5.3 Transfer** – the financial impact is passed to others e.g. by revising contractual terms;

**5.5.4 Sharing** the risk with another party;

**5.5.5 Insuring** against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact; or

**5.5.6 Acceptance** – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Council accepts or tolerates risk.

**5.6 Risk Register** – a register of strategic risks will be collated and an additional system of risk assessments will be maintained for all identified operational risks. Each will be reviewed at least annually.

**5.7 Risk Monitoring** – The risk management process does not finish with putting any risk control procedures in place. Their effectiveness in controlling risk must be monitored and reviewed. It is also important to assess whether the nature of any risk has changed over time.

The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or minimised in the future. It will also inform judgements on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

## **6. How will it feed into the Council’s existing policies?**

**6.1** All reports to Council or Committees will consider risk management issues. Initial identification of strategic and operational risks will be by officers who will compile lists of strategic and operational risks. Regular reports on risk management will be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration.

**6.2 Best Practice** – the current economic climate means that risk management is now more important than ever, it is important for the Council to reassess its objectives and the threats to achieving these objectives. The Council will build risk management procedures into the way that it operates as part of a commitment to quality and continuous service improvement

**6.4 Localism and Partnership Working** – the Council enters into contracts and partnerships with organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Some of these organisations may not have the same sensitivities to the risks that the Council sees as important. Part of the process of setting up future partnerships will be to ensure that all relevant risks are identified and that appropriate control mechanisms are built into the management arrangements for the partnership.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

**7.1** It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance management process of the Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below, are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively right across the Council and its operations, and responsibility for risk is located in the right place. Those who best know the risks to a particular service or function are those responsible for it. The process must be driven by members but must also involve officers.

**7.2 Elected Members** – risk management is seen as a key part of the Elected Member’s stewardship role and there is an expectation that Elected Members will lead and monitor the approach adopted.

This will include:

- Approval of the Risk Management Strategy;
- Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects and services undertaken are adequately risk managed;
- Consideration, and if appropriate, endorsement of the Annual Statement of Internal Control; and
- Assessment of risks whilst setting the budget, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues.

**7.3 Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer** – will act as the Lead Officer on Risk Management, overseeing the implementation of the detail of the Risk Management Strategy.

The Town Clerk will:

- provide advice as to the legality of policy and service delivery choices;
- provide advice on the implications of potential service actions for the Council’s corporate aims and objectives;
- update Council on the implications of new or revised legislation;
- assess and implement the Council’s insurance requirements;
- assess the financial implications of strategic policy options;
- ensure that the Financial Information System allows effective budgetary control;
- inform investment decisions made by the Council.
- assist in handling any litigation claims;
- provide advice on any human resource issues relating to strategic policy options or the risks associated with operational decisions and assist in handling cases of work-related illness or injury;
- advise on any health and safety implications of the chosen or proposed arrangements for service delivery;
- consider the environmental implications of policy and service delivery choices;
- have due regard to the Equality Act 2010 when dealing with Risk Management issues; and
- report progress to Council via the Finance and General Purposes Committee as detailed in para 8.3 below.

**7.4 The Operations Manager** will act as the Lead officer for Risk Management and Health and Safety matters associated with the operational services of the Council.

**7.5 The Deputy Town Clerk** will act as the Lead Officer for Risk Management in connection with employees’ health and wellbeing and human resources issues.

**7.6 Employees** – will undertake their job within risk management guidelines ensuring that the skills and knowledge passed to them are used effectively. All employees will maintain an awareness of the impact and costs of risks and how to feed data into the formal process. They will work to control risks or threats within their jobs, monitor progress and report on job related risks to the Clerk or their line manager.

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**7.7 Role of Internal Audit** – the Internal Auditor provides an important scrutiny role carrying out audits to provide independent assurance to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively.

Internal Audit assists the Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist the Council in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud.

The Internal Audit Report, and any recommendations contained within it, will help to shape the Annual Statement of Internal Control.

**7.8 Training** – Risk Management training will be provided to Elected Members, and key staff. The aim will be to ensure that both Elected Members and staff have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control the risks associated with the services they provide.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities set out above, the Council is keen to promote an environment within which individuals/groups are encouraged to report adverse incidents promptly and openly. To assist with this aspect, the Council will develop and maintain an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, a Confidential Reporting ('whistleblowing') Policy, Employee Handbooks and Health and Safety Handbooks.

## **8 Future Monitoring**

**8.1 Review of Risk Management Strategy** - This Strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the Council's continuing review of its Policy Documents, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Recommendations for change will be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The date of the next review will be February 2024.

**8.2** Once the initial work to establish Risk Registers has been completed, it is crucial that the information is regularly reviewed and updated. New risks will emerge and need to be controlled. Feedback from Internal and External Audit can identify areas for improvement, as can the sharing of best practice via professional bodies such as the National Association of Local Councils.

**8.3 Reporting on Progress** – The Town Clerk will present an annual report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee detailing progress on risk management over the year and providing a summary of the Risk Register(s) and control assurance statements.

## **9. Conclusion**

**9.1** The adoption of a sound risk management approach should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuous service improvement and demonstrating effective corporate governance.

## **10. Freedom of Information**

- 10.1.** In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Council's Website and copies of this document and the Risk Register will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Office.



**ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members with a breakdown of the Council's Treasury Management activity during the 2023/24 financial year and re-confirm the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

**2. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Borrowing and investments by Parish and Town Councils are governed by the Local Government Act 2003. Furthermore, the Town Clerk, by virtue of being a Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is required to comply with guidance issued by that body. CIPFA has issued a Code of Practice and cross sectoral guidance notes relating to Treasury Management. This strategy complies with the legal and professional guidance.

The Town Council is outside of the scope of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The protection of up to £85,000 for each bank account does not therefore apply to the Council.

The Clerk is authorised to manage investments on behalf of the Council in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

**3. RESOURCE ISSUES**

None outside of existing budgets. The strategy assumes a low risk approach to investment which means that investment income will be lower than might be achieved through a higher risk strategy. It however does mean that the Council's reserves are safeguarded.

To the end of January, interest received on investments during the 2023/24 financial year stands at £28,516.40.

#### **4. EQUALITY ISSUES**

None.

#### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The Town Council invests with Cornwall Council who are actively working towards net zero carbon status and have ethical investment policies.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the report be noted and the Treasury Management Strategy be approved for a further year.

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DAVID POOLEY  
TOWN CLERK



## **Summary of Investments**

### **Investments**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Investment</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
As at 31.1.24	Business Reserve Account (Natwest)	£41,036.56
As at 31.1.24	Variable Rate Deposit Account Cornwall Council	£962,869.70

### **Interest Received**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b> <b>£</b>
2022/23	12,837.51
2023/24 to date (excluding accrual)	28,516.40





## ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL

### TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

#### 1 Overview

This document gives guidance on borrowing and investments by St Austell Town Council in accordance with 'the Local Government Act 2003'. It highlights that the Council is committed to professional Treasury Management practices to ensure that:

- Capital expenditure plans are affordable.
- All external borrowing and other long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels, and
- Treasury Management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice defines Treasury Management as:

*'The management of the Council's cashflows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.'*

#### 2 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

##### 2.1 Introduction

The Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing the temporarily surplus funds held on behalf of the community.

This Strategy complies with the requirements set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities *Guidance on Local Government Investments* and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes* and takes account of Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003.

##### 2.2 Investment Objectives

In accordance with Section 15(1) of the 2003 Act, the Council will *have regard to (a) such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.*

The Council's investment priorities are to maintain the security of reserves and liquidity of its investments. As far as possible the Council will seek to invest only in organisations which operate in an ethical and environmentally sympathetic manner.

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

All investments will be made in sterling.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government maintains that borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

Where external investment managers are used, they will be contractually required to comply with the Strategy.

### 2.3 Specified Investments

Specified Investments are those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and which mature in no more than a year. Such short-term investments made with the UK Government or a local authority or town or parish council will automatically be Specified Investments.

For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, St Austell Town Council will use:

- Deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities
- The debt management agency of HM Government
- Cornwall Council variable deposit scheme
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

### 2.4 Non-Specified Investments

These investments have greater potential risk – examples include investment in the money market, stocks and shares.

Given the unpredictability and uncertainties surrounding such investments, St Austell Town Council will not use this type of investment.

### 2.5 Liquidity of Investments

The Town Clerk, as Responsible Finance Officer, will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity and may transfer up to £100,000 between bank accounts as appropriate to take advantage of interest bearing deposit accounts while maintaining sufficient liquidity. Larger investments should be in accordance with this strategy and only be undertaken following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Such investments will be subject to two signatures as with all payments.

Investments will be regarded as commencing on the date the commitment to invest is entered into, rather than the date on which the funds are paid over to the counterparty.

## 2.6 Long Term Investments

Long term investments are defined in the Guidance as greater than 36 months.

The Council does not currently hold any long-term investments.

No long-term investments are currently envisaged.

## 2.7 End of Year Investment Report

Investment forecasts for the coming financial year were accounted for when the budget was prepared. At the end of the financial year, the Town Clerk will report on investment activity to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

## 3 EXTERNAL BORROWING STRATEGY

### 3.1 Introduction

The Council acknowledges the importance of borrowing funds and the financial impact on the Council and the local community. The Council will agree borrowing for specific capital projects (as defined in section 16 of the 2003 Act) and gain approval for borrowing by sending an application to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). All borrowings must be approved by the full Council.

### 3.2 Principles

Before a council can borrow a sum of money, it must first receive an approval to borrow (loan sanction) from the Secretary of State by way of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), unless it is for a temporary loan or overdraft from a bank or otherwise of sums which the council may temporarily require to meet revenue expenditure.

The process to be followed and the criteria applied in deciding whether or not approval should be forthcoming, are detailed in the Guide to Parish and Town Council Borrowing in England, jointly published by MHCLG and NALC.

The Council is only authorised to borrow a maximum of £500,000 in any single financial year for any single purpose.

The Council will ensure the following criteria when considering requesting a borrowing approval:

- The borrowing should be only be used for the purpose of Capital expenditure as defined by Section 16 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- The borrowing amount should not be less than £5 multiplied by the number of local government electors in the area of the Council on the first day of the current financial year (1 April)
- Any unallocated balances including, where appropriate capital

receipts beyond those required for the prudent financial management of the council, should be used in the project for which the borrowing is required.

- The Council should have a realistic budget for the servicing and repayment of the debt, taking into account the future effect on the council's precept and cashflow.
- The Council must not mortgage or charge any of its property as security for money borrowed.

### 3.3 Interest Rates

The Council will look around for the best possible terms when borrowing but will usually use the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).

The Council feels that the fixed term rates offered by the PWLB are relatively cheap and that PWLB loans are most likely to offer stability for the financial planning of the council.

### 3.4 Period of Loan

The Council will determine the period of each loan which should not exceed the period for which the expenditure is forecast to provide benefit to the Council i.e. useful life of the asset.

The maximum period will begin on the date on which the money is borrowed, and will be;

- 50 years for acquisition of, or work on or to, land, buildings, roads or structures or
- 10 years in all other cases.

### 3.5 Current External Borrowing

The Town Council currently has no external borrowing.

### 3.6 Further Anticipated External Borrowing

The Council has no plans currently to incur capital expenditure which will require a loan sanction or external borrowing.

## 4 Review and Amendment of Regulations

This Strategy will be reviewed annually. The Annual Strategy for the coming financial year will be prepared by the Town Clerk and presented for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Strategy at any time, subject to the approval of the full Council. Any variations will be made available to the public.

**5 Equality Act 2010**

Copies of this document in large print (A3 Format) or larger font size, or recorded onto tape as a 'talking book' can be made available for those with sight impairment on request from the Council Office or by telephoning 01726 829859 or e-mailing [david.pooley@staustell-tc.gov.uk](mailto:david.pooley@staustell-tc.gov.uk)

The Council can also arrange to provide versions in other languages.

**6 Freedom of Information**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Council's website.





## St Austell Library Newsletter – February 2024

We can't quite believe we are already in February! Although January always seems an incredibly long month, we have already packed in quite a lot. Practically before we were even taking the Christmas tree down and hoovering up the tinsel, we held our first event of the year....Murder Mystery in the Library. The scene was set for a house party in Cornwall in a stately home with the new heiress celebrating her good fortune, but she is found dead in the Library by her maid! Shock! Horror! Dum, dum, dum! We the audience at the party then helped the local police officer, who had been disguised as a newspaper reporter at the party, solve the Murder. We did a good job and banged the rotter up, good and proper! 😊

Last week was National Storytelling Week and team members, Sonia and Lucy paid a visit to Doubletrees School at their request, to tell them all about us and what we offer and to read to the various year groups in attendance. However, even with all the wonderful topic books we took along, coupled with our marvellous rhyming action book "My Cat Likes To Hide In Boxes", we failed! One child asked Sonia if she had a copy of the Radio Times, TV listings!?! 😊

And, so not as to leave the adults out, we had Cornish Folklore teller Mike O'Connor spinning some tales from his extensive knowledge of the subject. He was also the arranger and adviser on folk music for TV's Poldark.



We will shortly be host venue, supporting one of our own Lucy and her fund-raising efforts with running the London Marathon for Cornwall Hospice Care. It will be eyes down and two little ducks for our Family Bingo evening on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February....yes, it's leap year! We would love it if you came along, dobber's available! 😊

We are also hosting Simon Pollard, headmaster of Carclaze Community Primary Schools with a Children V The Authors Quiz Night on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April....World Book Night, St George's Day and the birth/death of William Shakespeare! This will also be promoting the St Austell Festival of Children's Literature in June, of which Simon is the founder.

We have finally had the plaque put up to commemorate King Charles III succession to the throne and it looks very impressive above his picture, we think you will agree.

With kind regards from Terry and the Library team.