

St Austell Town Council



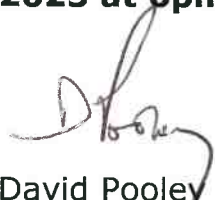
Finance and General Purposes Committee

To: All Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

(Councillors: Brown, Bull, Clemo, French, George, Lanxon, Nott, 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 Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD** on **Monday 20th February 2023 at 6pm.**



David Pooley
Town Clerk

Please note the change of venue

14th February 2023

Tel: 01726 829859
E.mail: david.pooley@staustell-tc.gov.uk
Website: www.staustell-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	(Purpose: To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other non-registerable interests in respect of items on this agenda).	

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.

Please be aware that whilst every effort is taken to ensure that members of the public are not filmed, we cannot guarantee this, especially if you are speaking or taking an active role.

3.	Dispensations (Purpose: To receive requests for dispensations under the Code of Conduct).	
4.	Minutes of meeting held on the 7th November 2022 (Purpose: To agree that the minutes of the above meeting be signed as a correct record). (Attached).	Pages 1-6
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 (Purpose: To review the Town Council's budget monitoring report for the period 1st April 2022 to 31 st January 2023). (Report attached).	Pages 7-12
8.	Bethel Park Improvement Project (Purpose: To authorise the Town Clerk to accept the offer of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding and approve match funding to enable the Bethel Park improvement project to proceed).	Pages 13-14
9.	Insurance (Purpose: To consider the tenders received and appoint a preferred insurer).(Verbal report).	
10.	Priory Car Park (Purpose: To set up a Working Group to review operational matters in relation to Priory Car Park). (Verbal update).	

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11.	Health and Safety Audit (Purpose: To note the recent health and safety audit).(Extract from report attached).	Pages 15-20
12.	Risk Management (Purpose: To review and update the Council's Risk Management Strategy and Register). (Report attached).	Pages 21-30
13.	Treasury Management Strategy (Purpose: To review and update the Council's Treasury Management Strategy). (Report attached).	Pages 31-40
14.	Procurement Policy (Purpose: To consider a draft Procurement Policy) (Draft attached).	Pages 41-44
15.	Equal Opportunities Policy (Purpose: To review the Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy).(Copy attached).	Pages 45-50
16.	St Austell Library (Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the operational activities of St Austell Library).(Report attached).	Pages 51-52
17.	Dates of Next Meetings (Purpose: To note the date of next meeting – 3 rd April 2023).	

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MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 7th NOVEMBER 2022 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Clemo, French (Chair), George, Lanxon and Pearce.

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Thompson

F/22/33) Apologies for absence

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

F/22/34) Declarations of Interest

Councillor French declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 (St Austell BID) by virtue of being a St Austell BID Director.

F/22/35) Dispensations

None.

F/22/36) Minutes of meeting held on 3rd October 2022

Councillor Brown queried the accuracy of minute number **F/22/22 Scheme of Members' Allowances** as it appeared to be contradicted by page 42 of the agenda where it is stated that The Cornwall Council Independent Remuneration Panel has recently commenced a review of the Member Allowances Scheme.

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council is only reviewing Members Allowances for Cornwall Councillors but agreed for clarity that the words "*for Town and Parish Councils*" could be added at the end of minute number **F/22/22 Scheme of Members' Allowances**.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd October 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/22/37) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that further to minute number **F/22/31 Safety Surfacing – The Meadows**, this work has been completed along with a small section of worn surfacing at Sandy Hill. He added that Truro Road Park is expected to be the next play area to have safety surfacing replaced.

F/22/38) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

F/22/39) Budget update

The Clerk advised that it is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget each year and to determine a precept by the end of January at the latest.

He explained the methodology for setting the annual budget and the uncertainties the Council faces this year with regard to:

- The volatile economic situation
- Inflation
- Energy costs
- Insurance costs
- The cost increases of materials/parts and equipment
- The impact of pay awards and employer pension scheme contributions

He added that the following assumptions have been made in the draft budget:

- That the Town Council will stay at the Stable Block at least until the lease expires in 2025;
- The staffing costs will remain the same apart from funding for a Community Project Officer or Regeneration Officer for 2-3 days a week;
- The Town Council renews the library lease and continues managing the service;
- Poltair Café more or less breaks even;
- Continued funding for security guards in the town centre on a joint basis with St Austell BID.

The Clerk advised that the following have **not** been included in the draft budget:

- Pump priming for the next stage of the Town Centre Revitalisation Project
- Funding for a Neighbourhood Plan
- Growth
- Contributions towards capital projects
- Contributions towards Shared Prosperity or Good Growth Funding Applications (reserves would have to be used)
- Additional contribution to the Elections Reserve
- Additional contribution to the Play Equipment Reserve

The earmarked reserves at the end of 2022/23 are expected to be:

- Projects Reserve - £36,000
- Elections Reserve - £25,000
- Play Equipment Reserve - £420,000
- General Reserve - £360,000

The Internal Auditor has assessed the General Reserve as being on the low side, but the Town Clerk advised that its current level equates to approximately 3 months expenditure which he is comfortable with.

The Clerk advised that since the publication of the report, he had received the actual Council Tax base figure from Cornwall Council (6493.15) which changed the minimum Council Tax increase required to 8.4% instead of 9% as outlined in the report. The Council Tax for 2022/23 equates to £141.81 on a Band D property with the Cornwall average currently running at £145 for a Band D property. The budget has £30,000 contingency.

The Clerk stressed that the 9% increase recommended is the minimum increase required for a balanced budget and that each additional 1% on the Council Tax equated to £9,000 additional income.

During discussion, Members thanked the Town Clerk for his detailed report and stressed that the Town Council's ongoing budget should provide resource to assist with the continuation of the Town Centre Revitalisation Project.

The Town Clerk confirmed that funding for either a Regeneration Officer or Community Projects Officer working 2-3 days per week is assumed within the Town Council's budget and that applications will be submitted to Cornwall Council for Good Growth Funding to employ experts to bring each priority project up to "shovel ready" stage and ready to apply for large funding streams such as Levelling Up Funds. He expressed concern with regard to the bureaucracy and complexities of the Good Growth Fund and the urgent need for support from Cornwall Council.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to support the budget as drafted subject to sufficient resource being provided to assist with the continuance of the Town Centre Revitalisation Project in partnership with the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership and Cornwall Council.

F/22/40) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk explained the income and expenditure variances regarding grants and contributions, grounds maintenance, play equipment, insurances, grants, fuel, subscriptions and repairs costs. He advised that generally expenditure is comfortably within budget and that he had no concerns with any of the variances reported at this stage.

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

F/22/41) Community Network Panels

The Clerk referred Councillors to the Community Network Review briefing and noted that Cornwall Council required responses by 18th November 2022. During discussion Members expressed concern with regard to the boundary options suggested, the competing priorities of the different towns, the limited resource of the Community Link Officers and the additional pressures that these proposals could bring. Members recognised the need and value of Community Link Officers but felt that the Community Network Panel meetings could be discontinued in their current form and single issue meetings held instead, bringing together the Town or Parish Councils affected by the issue. Overall, Members felt that the proposals suggested were too ambitious and unrealistic given the very limited capacity of Cornwall Council and Town and Parish Councils.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should draft a suitable response to the discussion document, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, expressing concern with regard to the proposals and a preference for single issue meetings.

F/22/42) St Austell Library

The Deputy Clerk outlined the latest activities at St Austell Library which included school visits, the co-ordination of a children's literature festival for 2023, a "Proud to Care" drop in event, warm space joint working, digital services and SALSA events. She expressed her delight with the performance of St Austell Library and the monthly footfall recorded.

The Deputy Clerk referred to a briefing note from Cornwall Council's Library Service outlining the termination of a contract with the Royal Voluntary Service to provide Cornwall's Home Library Service. She explained that as part of the devolution agreement, the Town Council agreed with Cornwall Council that the RVS volunteers for St Austell area could be based in St Austell library and a desk and telephone were set aside for them which has worked well. It was noted that the Hospital Car Service is also run by RVS volunteers from the library.

The exact client and volunteer numbers from Cornwall Council are awaited, but it is believed that approximately 32 people are receiving a Home Library Service from St Austell Library – 13 of which are within the parish of St Austell. It is believed that 8 volunteers are servicing these clients; again this is to be confirmed by Cornwall Council.

Following an officers' meeting with Cornwall Council, the following offer was put to St Austell Town Council to consider:

- Cornwall Council would review their client list and confirm the number of people living within the parish of St Austell who receive a Home Library Service;
- Cornwall Council would cover all DBS costs for volunteers either transferred over from the RVS or newly recruited up until March 2023;
- Cornwall Council will cover all mileage claim costs between January 2023 and March 2023;
- Cornwall Council will make suitable arrangements to provide a Home Library Service to those clients who are outside of the St Austell Parish boundary.

The resource implications for the Town Council are:

- Insurance for the volunteers
- Mileage claims for the volunteers
- DBS checks for volunteers
- Staff time managing the volunteers and covering sick leave

The Deputy Clerk advised that the cost implications of taking on the Home Library Service for St Austell Parish residents were believed to be approximately £2,000 per annum. The additional library staff time required to administer the service is unknown.

During discussion, Members expressed their disappointment at the stance Cornwall Council is taking with regard to the Home Library Service and the disjointed effect the new arrangements will bring, particularly as there appear to be no significant cost savings to Cornwall Council. Members however expressed their support for the Home Library Service and the Town Council continuing it for clients with the Parish of St Austell. Reassurance was sought that clients living outside of the Parish would retain a service and that the Hospital Car Service would not be affected by the withdrawal of the contract.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should take on the Home Library Service for those clients within the Town Council's boundary with effect from January 2023.

F/22/43) St Austell BID

It was **RESOLVED** to support the renewal of the St Austell BID and authorise the Town Clerk as Proper Officer of the Town council to vote in favour of the renewal of the BID.

F/22/44) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 20th February 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.41pm

ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
20th FEBRUARY 2023
BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on expenditure and income to the 31st January 2023 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 on a monthly basis 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.

DAVID POOLEY - TOWN CLERK

Profit & Loss

St Austell Town Council 1 Jan 2023 to 31 Jan 2023

	Actual	Budget	Var GBP	Var %	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Var GBP	Var %
Income								
Car Park Income	22,668	18,000	4,668▲	25.9%▲	217,447	184,000	33,447▲	18.2%▲
Council Tax Grant	-	-	-	0.0%	15,239	15,238	1▲	0.0%▲
Interest Income	1,796	263	1,533▲	583.1%▲	9,253	2,630	6,623▲	251.8%▲
Library Income	446	417	29▲	7.0%▲	5,241	4,170	1,071▲	25.7%▲
Other Grants and Contributions	90	13,229	(13,139)▼	-99.3%▼	330	132,290	(131,960)▼	-99.8%▼
Other Income	-	139	(139)▼	-100.0%▼	5,705	1,390	4,315▲	310.4%▲
Precept Payments	-	-	-	0.0%	905,520	905,520	-	0.0%
Public Convenience Charges	188	304	(117)▼	-38.3%▼	2,174	3,042	(868)▼	-28.5%▼
Rent Received	2,500	866	1,634▲	188.7%▲	7,850	8,660	(810)▼	-9.4%▼
Total Income	27,689	33,218	(5,529)	-16.6%	1,168,759	1,256,940	(88,181)	-7.0%
Gross Profit	27,689	33,218	(5,529)	-17.0%	1,168,759	1,256,940	(88,181)	-7.0%
Less Operating Expenses								
Transfer to Reserves	-	-	-	0.0%	1,408	-	1,408▲	0.0%
Employee Expenses								
Recruitment	919	146	773▲	529.5%▲	1,184	1,460	(276)▼	-18.9%▼
Salaries / Wages	51,210	50,512	698▲	1.4%▲	522,081	505,120	16,961▲	3.4%▲
Training	640	575	65▲	11.3%▲	1,695	5,750	(4,055)▼	-70.5%▼
Total Employee Expenses	52,769	51,233	1,536	3.0%	524,960	512,330	12,630	2.5%

Profit & Loss

	Actual	Budget	Var GBP	Var %	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Var GBP	Var %
Premises Expenses								
Cleaning & Domestic Supplies	521	681	(160)▼	-23.5%▼	6,957	6,810	147▲	2.2%▲
Electricity	4,774	743	4,031▲	542.5%▲	7,896	7,430	466▲	6.3%▲
Gas	1,084	247	837▲	338.7%▲	3,026	2,470	556▲	22.5%▲
Grounds Maintenance Supplies	2,396	1,820	576▲	31.7%▲	26,004	18,200	7,804▲	42.9%▲
Play Equipment	50	4,167	(4,117)▼	-98.8%▼	15,134	41,670	(26,536)▼	-63.7%▼
Rates	5,912	6,711	(799)▼	-11.9%▼	62,031	67,110	(5,079)▼	-7.6%▼
Rent / Room Hire	-	474	(474)▼	-100.0%▼	4,175	4,740	(565)▼	-11.9%▼
Repairs / Maintenance Premises	2,558	2,808	(250)▼	-8.9%▼	26,077	28,080	(2,003)▼	-7.1%▼
Water	60	217	(157)▼	-72.4%▼	(1,683)	2,170	(3,853)▼	-177.6%▼
Total Premises Expenses	17,354	17,868	(514)	-2.9%	149,616	178,680	(29,064)	-16.3%
Supplies and Services								
Books and Publications	-	-	-	0.0%	132	150	(18)▼	-12.0%▼
Contract Payments	7,822	13,221	(5,399)▼	-40.8%▼	128,095	132,210	(4,115)▼	-3.1%▼
Insurances	-	-	-	0.0%	18,017	6,300	11,717▲	186.0%▲
IT / Communications	1,073	1,845	(772)▼	-41.8%▼	17,618	18,450	(832)▼	-4.5%▼
Mayors Allowances	33	63	(30)▼	-47.7%▼	259	630	(371)▼	-59.0%▼
Members Allowance	-	12	(12)▼	-100.0%▼	15	120	(105)▼	-87.3%▼
Miscellaneous Expenses	14,703	15,825	(1,122)▼	-7.1%▼	119,996	158,250	(38,254)▼	-24.2%▼
Miscellaneous Grants	5,000	3,333	1,667▲	50.0%▲	45,825	33,330	12,495▲	37.5%▲
Office Supplies	210	271	(61)▼	-22.4%▼	2,131	2,710	(579)▼	-21.4%▼
Printing and Stationery	1,128	256	872▲	340.7%▲	3,271	2,560	711▲	27.8%▲
Protective Clothing	131	229	(98)▼	-42.8%▼	2,769	2,290	479▲	20.9%▲
Publicity	-	158	(158)▼	-100.0%▼	890	1,580	(690)▼	-43.7%▼
Small Grants Scheme	-	667	(667)▼	-100.0%▼	4,238	6,670	(2,432)▼	-36.5%▼

Profit & Loss

Subscriptions	Actual 296	Budget 607	Var GBP (311)▼	Var % -51.2%▼	YTD Actual 7,751	YTD Budget 6,070	Var GBP 1,681▲	Var % 27.7%▲
Total Supplies and Services	30,397	36,487	(6,090)	-16.7%	351,006	371,320	(20,314)	-5.5%
Transport Related Expenses								
Contract Hire and Operating Leases	-	1,006	(1,006)▼	-100.0%▼	9,084	10,060	(976)▼	-9.7%▼
Fuel	325	567	(242)▼	-42.6%▼	7,691	5,670	2,021▲	35.6%▲
Other Transport/plant expenses	-	104	(104)▼	-100.0%▼	22,641	1,040	21,601▲	2077.0%▲
Repairs/ Maintenance-Vehicles/Plant	57	433	(376)▼	-86.9%▼	5,478	4,330	1,148▲	26.5%▲
Road Fund / Taxes	-	88	(88)▼	-100.0%▼	585	880	(295)▼	-33.5%▼
Transport Insurance	-	263	(263)▼	-100.0%▼	2,773	2,630	143▲	5.5%▲
Travel and Subsistence	16	72	(56)▼	-77.7%▼	330	720	(390)▼	-54.2%▼
Total Transport Related Expenses	398	2,533	(2,135)	-84.3%	48,583	25,330	23,253	91.8%
Total Operating Expenses	100,918	108,121	(7,203)	-6.7%	1,075,573	1,087,660	(12,087)	-1.1%
Net Profit	(73,229)	(74,903)	1,674	2.0%	93,186	169,280	(76,094)	-45.0%

ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL

BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT:

31.1.23

	£	£	
Business Current Account		254,814.61	
Mayor's Charity Account		1,136.11	
Business Direct Reserve Account		0.00	
Petty Cash		121.30	
Library Float		100.00	
Total in Bank		<u>256,172.02</u>	
 Outstanding credit card transactions		214	
 Total Unpresented Cheques		<u>0.00</u>	
		256,386.02	
 Outstanding receipts			
Late Bankings - Car park season tickets		0.00	
		<u>256,386.02</u>	
 <u>Accounting System Bank Balance:</u>			
Opening Bank Balance		195,008.97	
Expenditure to date		1170387.04	
Income to date		1231764.09	
		<u>256,386.02</u>	
 Accounting System Payment Recorded but yet paid		0.00	
 Accounting System Bank Balance		<u>256,386.02</u>	0.00
			balanced

Note:

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

Reconciliation Completed: 1.2.23

Reviewed: 1.2.23

ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
20th FEBRUARY 2023
BETHEL PARK

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite Members to consider a proposal to improve Bethel Park utilising Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and reserves.

2. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Cornwall Council transferred Bethel Park to the Town Council in 2016. It has long been recognised as a priority for improvement with aging and bland play equipment and a poor environmental value.

3. RESOURCE ISSUES

Cornwall Council has recently approved a CIL grant of £78,000 towards a project at Bethel Park estimated to cost in the region of £143,000.

4. EQUALITY ISSUES

The improvement plan includes improved access, accessible play equipment and sensory gardens.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The plan includes further tree planting and the creation of a sensory garden.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members;

- Authorise the Town Clerk to accept the grant from Cornwall Council;
- Agree the allocation of £75,000 from earmarked reserves (£70,723.88 from the playground equipment replacement

- reserve and £4,276.12 from the Projects Reserve) for improvements to Bethel Park;
- Delegate approval of the final design to the Operations Manager in consultation with the Bethel ward members;
 - Waive financial regulations and contract standing orders to allow the Town Clerk to let a contract(s) to the preferred suppliers subject to quotations and quality assessments rather than formal tenders.
-

Background

Members have identified Bethel Park as the priority for improvement and work commenced over 4 years ago. Extensive consultation was undertaken and design options explored with 3 suppliers. The design preferred by officers which was used in the drafting of grant applications is from TK Play Ltd.

The funding bid made to Cornwall Council sought a grant of £78,000 for a project with an estimated cost of £143,000. This sum includes some contingencies but prices are increasing daily so an early start is recommended and a fixed price contract is essential. Authority is sought for the Operations Manager to agree the final design with Ward Members and subject to agreement to appoint the preferred supplier(s) based on the quotations received.

The proposed scheme includes accessible paths and play equipment, a toddlers play area with pirate ship, an inclusive roundabout, swings, basket swings, climbing frames and a slide as well as planting and a sensory planting area. More details can be provided at your meeting.

The Town Council is required to find in the region of £75,000 as match funding for this project. The Council currently has £379,676.50 in an earmarked reserve for playground equipment replacement. This reserve is being gradually increased to help with major playground equipment replacement anticipated to be required in the next few years. It is recommended that £70,723.88 be allocated from this reserve to meet the match funding requirement and the CIL funding received previously, £4,276.12, currently held in the Council's Projects Reserve also be allocated to this project.

DAVID POOLEY
TOWN CLERK

General Risk Assessment

St Austell Town Council,
St Austell Town Council

23 Jan 2024

Jim Stowe

worknest



General Risk Assessment

Contents

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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	Office
Enforcement History / Significant Incidents	No recent incidents
Areas Assessed	As noted below.
Areas Not 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.
Visit Attendance	Steve Skinner, operations Manager
Overall People At Risk	All employees, contractors, visitors, members of the public.
Other Comments	St Austell Town Council continue to display a high level of safety compliance across the organisation. A good safety culture regarding the maintenance of plant and equipment, employee engagement and how the facilities under the Council's controls are being maintained is evident. Whilst there are always areas for improvement as noted in this report, it should be stressed that much work has been completed by council staff and continues to be so such as maintenance of trees and grounds to safe standards, equipment maintenance and a high standard of staff training.

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 ***
Asbestos Management	20			
Chainsaws	20			
Cleaning	20			
Contractor Management	20			
Display Screens	20			
Electrical Safety				15
Fire Safety Overview				15
First Aid At Work	20			
Gas Safety	20			
Grass Cutting	20			
Grounds Maintenance	20			
Legionella Management	20			
Lone Work	20			
Management Of H&S	20			
Managing Manual Handling Operations	20			
New/Expectant Mothers	20			
Outside Work	20			
Pesticides	20			
Radiation	20			
Recreation & Play Areas	20			
Ride On Mowers	20			
Stepladders	20			
Stress Management	20			
Tree Management	20			
Vehicle Use (Non-Goods)	20			

Violence At Work	20			
Workplace H&S				15
Sub Total	480	0	0	45
Total	525			
Available Score	540			
Score	97%			

	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	1
	Priority 3	3
	Priority 4	12

2.2 General Risk Assessment action plan

Chainsaws

Observation	Action Required:
Recommendation	Keep records of the issue of personal protective equipment.
Priority	4
Complete By	22/07/2023

Electrical Safety

Observation	Action Required:
Recommendation	Status by location: Park café in date (2020, next test by 07/25), Stable block awaiting certificate following remedials, obtain certificate and retest date. Library: work completed awaiting certs. Toilet block in date and satisfactory.
Priority	4
Complete By	22/07/2023

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

20th FEBRUARY 2023

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).

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.

- 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 10 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.

- 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
20th FEBRUARY 2023

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with a breakdown of the Council's Treasury Management activity during the 2022/23 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 2022/23 financial year stands at £9,252.87.

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.

DAVID POOLEY
TOWN CLERK

Summary of Investments

Investments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Investment</u>	<u>Amount</u>
As at 31.01.23	Business Reserve Account (Natwest)	£0.00
As at 31.01.23	Variable Rate Deposit Account Cornwall Council	£831,805.22

Interest Received

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount £</u>
2021/22	3,449.59
2022/23 to date (excluding accrual)	9,252.87



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 £20,000 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 Disability Discrimination Act 1995

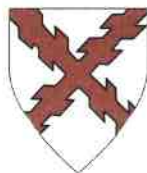
Copies of this document in large print (A3 Format) or larger font size, or recorded onto tape as a 'talking book' can be made available for those with sight impairment on request from the Council Office or by telephoning 01726 829859 or e-mailing david.pooley@staustell-tc.gov.uk

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 Town Council



PROCUREMENT POLICY

St Austell Town Council procures goods and services to a value of circa £500,000 each year.

The Council strives to attain best value for the goods, materials and services that it purchases. Best Value is defined as a balance of price, quality of product and supplier services and economic and social benefits.

The Council operates a transparent procurement process in accordance with its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, which cover, amongst other things, the number of quotations required and tender rules.

The purpose of this policy is to provide additional guidance on the factors that will be taken into account when purchasing goods and services.

Sustainable procurement

- a) The Council recognises the importance of sustainability and will take into account the environmental, social and economic impacts of its purchasing decisions.
- b) The Council is required to consider social value in all services contracts above the EU threshold but recognises that this is good practice for all contracts.
- c) The Council recognises its duty to protect biodiversity under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. To meet this duty the Council will wherever possible purchase products or specify working methods that protect biodiversity.
- d) The Council will, wherever possible, purchase goods that meet Fairtrade standards (or similar).

Local procurement

- a) The Council recognises the benefits to the economy of using local and SME businesses and, where appropriate, the voluntary sector. The Council will seek out local contractors and suppliers wherever possible.

- b) The Council pays a living wage to its employees and will encourage its suppliers to do the same.
- c) All procurement will be in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- d) The Council understands the importance of paying suppliers promptly and will wherever possible settle accounts within a maximum of 30 days, or earlier, by agreement.

Health and safety and insurance

- a) All contractors and suppliers working on Council sites will be required to comply with the Council's Health & Safety policy and any rules specific to the site of operation.
- b) Provision of suitable risk assessments and method statements may be a condition of contracts involving work on Council properties or sites.
- c) The Council requires all contractors working on Council sites and properties to maintain adequate insurance, including but not limited to: Public Liability insurance for £5 million and, where relevant, Professional Indemnity insurance at a level commensurate with the value of the contract.

Community engagement

- a) Where relevant the Council will consult with residents and service users to better understand what is needed, who will use it and what the essential requirements are for an item of capital expenditure. Examples of when this may apply include provision of new play equipment.

Selection criteria

The following factors may be taken into account in the Council's selection process:

- Health and safety record
- Health and safety procedures
- Financial accounts • References
- Location of supplier
- Organisational structure and staffing levels
- Organisation's environmental policy

Procurement procedures and guidance

- a) All contracts over £25,000 will be advertised on the Council's website and the Contracts Finder website.

b) In accordance with Standing Orders the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quotation or estimate.

c) The Council maintains monthly accounts with suppliers of regular purchases. All purchases on Council accounts may only be made by authorised Council officers who must either provide a purchase order or be provided with a receipt. Limits will be set on each account on the maximum value of individual purchases and the overall balance on the account. Expenditure over these limits must be authorised by the Town Clerk in advance.

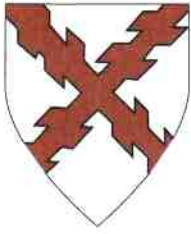
d) Where additional guidance is needed the following documents will be taken into account:

- *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils A Practitioners' Guide (England)*
- NALC (2015), *A Guide to Understanding Procurement*

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation.

Estimate value of contract (Net of VAT)	Contract Requirements
Between £500 and £3,000	The RFO will strive to obtain 3 estimates. A purchase order is required.
Between £3,001 and £25,000	The RFO will strive to obtain 3 quotations. A purchase order is required.
Between £25,001 and £60,000	Procurement exercise to be advertised on Town Council and Contract Finder websites. RFO to either strive to obtain 3 quotations or seek tenders.
Between £60,001 and Procurement threshold	Tender advertised on the Town Council and Contract Finder websites. A contract is required.
Above Procurement threshold	Legal advice shall be obtained on the most appropriate processes. A contract is required.



ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. **Policy Statement**

1.1 St Austell Town Council is committed to pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff and the way in which services are provided for the public.

1.2 St Austell Town Council recognises its statutory duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.

1.3 The Council is committed to promoting equal access to services and facilities and equal treatment for all employees or job applicants irrespective of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, nation);
- religion/belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and that this is managed in such a way that St Austell Town Council complies with Equal Opportunities legislation and Codes of Practice.

2 **Links with other Council Policies and Strategies**

2.1 The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is one of its most important policies and underpins all other corporate policies, procedures and strategies, therefore providing a strong foundation for Equality of Opportunity in the Council and the services it provides.

2.2 This policy links to the Council's other Human Resources / Employment Policies and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

3 **Equality of Opportunity in Service Delivery**

3.1 St Austell Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to its facilities.

The Council will achieve this by:

- recognising and accepting that particular individuals or groups are denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional;
- providing regular training for all Councillors and employees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people;
- delivering services which are relevant, of the highest possible quality and accessible;
- providing clear information about our services and facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats;
- ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective;
- assessing the impact of and monitoring its services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identifying where improvements can be made; and
- ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.

Equality of Opportunity in Employment, Training and Organisational Development

St Austell Town Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity. All employees will have a part to play in achieving this and the Council will ensure that individuals are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Scope - All employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff and all job applicants. This policy has particular relevance to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion.

No employee or prospective employee should receive unfair or unlawful treatment due to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion / belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage / civil partnership, caste and pregnancy / maternity. St Austell Town Council will seek to identify and act upon all unlawful discrimination which denies individual opportunity on any of the criteria mentioned above. Employees and applicants have the right to complain about unfair discrimination through the appropriate procedures.

The Council will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that its recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver its services;
- Only considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, skills and abilities. A requirement for occupational qualifications will only be used for specific posts when absolutely necessary;

- ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time, or employed on a temporary basis;
- ensuring that employment policies and opportunities are of the highest possible quality and that equality, equity and consistency are embedded in practices, pay and conditions;
- making sure that equal consideration is given to people's needs and develop flexible and responsive employment opportunities to tackle those needs;
- encouraging and supporting employees to reach their full potential within the resources the Council has available to it;
- taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination and offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents; and
- taking disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work for the Council or who seek employment with the Council.

5 **Contractors and Suppliers**

5.1 St Austell Town Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all contractors and suppliers carrying out work on behalf of the Council have the appropriate policies and working practices in place to ensure Equality of Opportunity and to comply with the requisite equality legislation and guidance.

5.2 The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- contractors and providers have employment policies, procedures and practices that do not discriminate;
- contractors pay their employees at least the minimum living wage and
- monitor whether contracts and commissioning arrangements meet these equality commitments.

6 **Management and Supervision of this Policy**

6.1 **Council and Committees**

Strong leadership is essential to ensure that this policy is embedded at strategic and service delivery levels of the Council. Whilst the Full Council will be ultimately responsible for implementation of this policy, ongoing review of the policy will be the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee with day to day implementation and monitoring the responsibility of the Staffing Committee in respect of staffing and performance management issues and the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Community Committee in terms of Council facilities.

Councillors

Councillors have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision-making process.

Line Managers and Supervisors

It is the responsibility of managers/supervisors to:

- (i) ensure that within their areas of responsibilities, the standards established within this policy are followed;
- (ii) contribute to the development of any equal opportunities action plans;
- (iii) review the effectiveness of the policy and all related action plans and communicate their views to senior management.

Employees

All employees must:

- (i) co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity;
- (ii) report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- (iii) not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- (iv) not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence on discrimination;
- (v) not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, gender etc;
- (vi) not pressurise job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post.

Breaches of Policy - any breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious offences, such as harassment and victimisation, will be treated as gross misconduct.

Complaints

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Council's grievance procedure.

Existing Employees – employees wishing to raise a grievance alleging unlawful discrimination during an internal selection procedure should discuss this with the Town Clerk in the first instance. An appeal, where necessary, should be made to the Chairman of the Staffing Committee. An investigation will then be conducted by a senior officer who has not been previously involved in the selection procedure and will report to the Staffing Committee. The Staffing Committee's ruling will be final. The employee will receive written notification as to the outcome.

7.3 **Prospective Employees** – any prospective employee wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the Town Clerk within 15 working days, at the latest, of the alleged incident. An investigation will then be conducted by a senior officer who has not been previously involved in the selection procedure and will report to the Staffing Committee. The Staffing Committee's ruling will be final. The individual will receive written notification as to the outcome.

8 **Information and Training**

8.1 Employees will be provided with appropriate training regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion / belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage / civil partnership, caste and pregnancy / maternity.

8.2 The Council will:

- seek to ensure that all employees are developed by the provision of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities in line with organisational needs;
- provide training that complies with the Council's Equalities Policies;
- Include a copy of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy as part of the induction programme / documentation;
- Provide equalities awareness training as part of its corporate learning and organisational development programme; and
- include equalities training as part of its Member development programme.

9 **Monitoring Arrangements**

9.1 The Council will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy. Where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group(s), the Council will develop an action plan to address the imbalance.

9.2 Committee responsibility for monitoring is detailed in para 6.1. above.

10 **Alternative Formats**

10.1 The 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.

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

Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Council's Website www.staustell-tc.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Office.

St Austell Library Newsletter – February 2023

Happy New Year everyone – I know we are quite a few weeks into 2023, but as we have had Christmas and New Year since our last newsletter, it seems the right thing to do. I hope you are all well and have managed to avoid these awful viruses that seem to be plaguing everyone at present. The Library has had its fair share of staffing issues, but we seem to all be back on track now and looking forward to filling our vacancy, having been a person down for some months, due to a previous candidate not taking up the position.....who knew, there's someone out there that didn't want to work in our lovely Library!

Footfall has been steady over the last few months though always seems to dip a bit at this time of year, but our books issues have continued to be excellent, so much so that we have managed to knock Truro off that crucial top spot on more than one occasion.....not bad for a Library that only has a third of the footfall that passes through Truro's doors.....not that we are competitive or anything! 😊

We have had an excellent response to our pre-school singing groups and new story time/Duplo sessions since their re-launch in September. Initially, we were a little concerned as we had changed the format and instead of just being a drop-in session, we made them pre-booked through TicketSource, a free online ticketing system. Once customers became familiar with the system, we have been encouraged by those taking part, saying how much they now prefer these sessions to the previous ones. Although, now the sessions are smaller, customers are delighted that there isn't so many attending in one go, making it more comfortable and personal for everyone.

Just before Christmas we were asked to host a regular monthly session for carers. St Austell Carers group has proved very popular to the community, a chance to meet and chat with someone in a similar situation over a cuppa.

Knit & Stitch sessions are still very popular with a couple of the attendees actually selling their makes in our Craft Cabinet, where we give crafters the opportunity to display and sell their wares on a monthly turn around. So, if you are looking for that certain "je ne sais quoi" gift and you haven't found it, drop in and have a look at what is selling each month. We will also be holding our popular Craft Fayre again around Easter time, so keep a look out for the date.

We hosted many events during the backend of the year, with many thanks to SALSA, our support association, who received significant funding from the National Lottery to be able to fund events here, free of charge or for a nominal amount to bring "Arts to the Community". We were able to enjoy choirs, a ladies folk group, barber shop, Cornish heritage and author talks, culminating in a play preview and a bitesize ballroom event. All were very popular, although the weather, at times, put paid to reducing some of the booked audience attending. We hope to continue in a similar vein this year, especially for topical Cornish events, as the attendance at these were outstanding and fully booked.

All our community drop-in sessions were well supported and attended.....the animal ones proved to be more popular than the human participation. So even though customers were grateful for support on money matters and health and climate awareness issues were addressed.....the lure of doe eyes and long eye lashes, superseded all!



Alpacas in the Library garden card!



Even Alpacas can get an honorary Library card!

Looking ahead we are hoping to host an afternoon tea party here for The Mayor as her end of year comes to a head, combining this with the King's Coronation in May - details to follow. We are also supporting Simon Disney-Pollard, the head-teacher at Carclaze Primary School in his efforts to arrange a children's one day literary festival, which will host an array of local children's authors in June. The aim is to highlight the importance of children choosing to read for pleasure and being recognised as the single most important indicator of a child's future success (OECD 2002) and encouraging families to read as a moral duty. Between 2012 and 2021 the number of children reading for pleasure everyday has reduced from 38% to 23%. The number of 3-4-year-olds who are read to every day or nearly every day reduced from 68% to 50% in the same period.

We hope this event will give the opportunity for children to attend free author performances and book-related events, raise the profile of reading for pleasure, foster a love of children's literature and increase the number of families using the Library. Who knows, from little acorns, the St Austell Literary Festival one day to a Hay like Festival the next!

With kind regards from Terry and the Library team.