

MINUTES of the MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2020 (Remote Meeting) at 6pm.

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

Three members of the public were also present.

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

C/19/196) Apologies for Absence

None.

C/19/197) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

The Town Clerk advised that the Deputy Town Clerk had an interest in Agenda Item 21 (Staffing Committee Minutes) and would leave the meeting at that time.

C/19/198) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/19/199) Minutes of Meeting held on 13th July 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th July be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Oxenham abstained from voting on this item as she was not present at the meeting

C/19/200) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

C/19/201) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor advised that he had recently attended a socially distanced VJ engagement which he had enjoyed very much.

C/19/202) Public Participation

The Mayor welcomed Mrs Earl to the meeting.

Mrs Earl thanked Councillors Brown and Bull for their motion at Agenda Item 9 and expressed her strong opposition to the proposals and the lack of commitment to climate change and quality of build within the "Planning for the Future" document.

Mrs Earl advised that the planters at the station need attention but a previous source of funding by way of a community grant from GWR had been withdrawn.

Mrs Earl advised Members of a proposed Welly Day on Sunday 13th September 2pm to 5pm with tea at 3pm. All Members would be welcome.

The Mayor thanked Mrs Earl for her update.

C/19/203) Members' questions

There were no Members' questions.

Councillor Leonard arrived during the next item

C/19/204) Motion received from Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Bull

Councillor Brown outlined his concerns with regard the Government's "Planning for the Future" consultation paper and advised that he had spoken to a few people who too are very worried about the proposals. Councillor Bull as seconder of the motion, voiced her concerns, particularly with regard to the potential halving of the local democratic input in to the planning process.

During discussions Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- The potential to lose input from local people and local democratic representatives
- The lack of Category 2 accessible homes
- The need to encourage developers to use land banked and brownfield sites before new greenfield sites
- No proposals for social housing
- The need to reform the planning system
- The huge inward migration into Cornwall

Members thanked Councillors Brown and Bull for the informative and well written motion.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Advise Cornwall Council and the Cornwall Association of Local Councils of the Council's deep opposition to the Government's proposals.
2. Make strong representations against the proposals to the Government as outlined in this motion.
3. Write to and lobby the Member of Parliament for St Austell and Newquay urging him to oppose these proposals and to circulate his reply to members of the Council.
4. Lobby the Government to incentivise developers to bring forward developments on approved sites and brown field sites and increase the percentage of Category 2 accessible homes provided.

C/19/205) Eden to Heligan Cycle Trail Project

The Town Clerk advised that, with the support of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, early discussions had been held with various stakeholders about the potential to improve the cycle trails in and around St Austell and in particular the Eden to Heligan trail. The discussions so far have been encouraging and improvements to signage and the marketing of the trails have featured highly in the discussions as well as the

maintenance of the paths, benches and artworks. SABEF has expressed a wish to erect artworks on the trail to add interest. Electric bikes and electric bike hire have been discussed to encourage locals and tourists into the town, as well as a desire to leave a legacy following the Tour of Britain in September 2021. The Clerk advised that initial discussions with regeneration officers have revealed that the recent consultant exercise on the regeneration of St Austell has identified better use of the trails as a way of regenerating the area, as well as improving air quality and health. The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council officers are willing to assist with the project as long as the Cornwall Councillors are supportive. He stressed the need for strong partnership working and that the Town Council could play a co-ordinating role, if supported by Members, in bringing the project together. He re-assured Members that he was not suggesting that the Town Council should spend money outside of the Town Council's area.

Members during discussion expressed their support for the project. They particularly welcomed the potential to encourage electric bikes on to the trails and identified the need to ensure that any improvements are accessible to all and that other users of the trail such as walkers and runners are considered as well as cyclists. Some areas for improvement were identified such as seats in the Carluddon area. It was also noted that many successful projects are worked up and "shovel ready" before funding bids are submitted, so to have a project fully costed up and ready to go would be more likely to be attractive to funders.

The Cornwall Councillors present expressed their support for the initial ideas and the working up of the project.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the creation of an Eden to Heligan Cycle Trail Partnership to explore how the trails might be improved and deliver economic, environmental, health and wellbeing benefits for the area as part of a wider regeneration project.

C/19/206) Budget Projections 2020/21

The Clerk advised that as a result of slowing down expenditure, the financial position for the Town Council is not as bad as first predicted with a deficit of £11,000 forecast at year end before transfers to and from reserves. He advised that although additional costs had been incurred as a direct result of the pandemic, savings had been identified to help balance the finances. He added that the Auditor had described the Town Council's General Reserve of £268,000 as on the low side and suggested that the reserve of £90,011 identified to mitigate the effect of the pandemic be transferred in to the General Reserve to strengthen the Council's financial position.

He explained that the car park income, as predicted, is not recovering particularly well and that Members should plan for reduced car park income in 2021/22 which will result in some difficult decisions during the budget setting process. Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that he would produce a breakdown of the car park income from June to August 2020 and the savings identified so far.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The report be noted;
2. The financial situation be borne in mind when considering spending decisions throughout the remainder of the year;

3. The Town Clerk be authorised to transfer £90,011 from earmarked reserves to the General Reserve.

C/19/207) Work Plan

The Town Clerk advised that it was good practice to review the work plan from time to time and that it had been updated to reflect the latest position.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the revised work plan as at 28th August 2020.

C/19/208) Annual Report – 2019/2020

Members noted the draft annual report and the contents contained therein.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft annual report wording be approved and the Clerk be authorised to finalise and print the report.

C/19/209) Apprenticeship Recruitment

The Town Clerk advised that a recent Staffing Committee had expressed their support for the Town Council to recruit 1 or 2 Grounds Maintenance Apprentices to assist with the extra work load, some of which would come from the SABEF projects, and assist with succession planning. SABEF have in principle agreed to fund one of the posts which, if approved, would leave the Town Council to fund just one position. The Clerk explained the cost implications to the Town Council and the Government funding that could be claimed as long as the posts were filled by the 31st January 2021. The Clerk added that in these uncertain times, he would not normally recommend the recruitment of additional staff, but felt that in the light of SABEF's willingness to sponsor a post and the funding that can be claimed by the Government he was comfortable with this proposal and the budget implications.

Members expressed their support for the recruitment of 2 Grounds Maintenance Apprentices and expressed their thanks to SABEF for their willingness to support 1 post.

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to proceed with a recruitment process to enable the recruitment of two Grounds Maintenance Apprentices with effect from January 2021.

C/19/210) Cornwall Council Public Spaces Protection (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Order 2017

Members noted that Cornwall Council would like to extend the existing Public Spaces Protection (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Order 2017 for a further three years with effect from October 2020. The Clerk advised that there was a need to update and correct some street names and that there was an area in the vicinity of the Co-op which was currently omitted from the Order.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised to notify Cornwall Council of the corrections needed and to agree to a three year extension of the Order.

C/19/211) Rural Market Towns Group

Councillor Brown advised that he attended some Rural Services Network Meetings on behalf of Cornwall Council and found them extremely useful and would support the Town Council joining the Rural Market Towns Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should subscribe to the Rural Market Towns Group.

C/19/212) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports

Councillor Oxenham advised that she had been elected Vice-Chair of SELAG which administered the CLLD Programme.

Councillor Oxenham left the meeting

Councillor Palmer advised that he had attended the BID AGM last week and had received a review of the 2019 year. He explained that the planting scheme in the town centre had been reduced due to a reduction in bid levy fees received. The new owner of the St Austell Voice had expressed support for localism and St Austell BID and the BID were intending to promote a "shop local" campaign and were going to seek the support of the Town Council for this initiative.

Councillor Palmer advised that he was still involved with STAK and doubted the accuracy of the rough sleeper figures recently published for St Austell.

Councillor Thompson advised that he was a member of the Cornwall Planning Partnership and had been appointed to the CIL Group which would allocate funds.

Councillor Lanxon advised that she had not attended any Safer St Austell Meetings due to a change of governance since Covid. She added that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had been attending smaller working groups.

Councillor Bishop advised that he was a member of the Youth Steering Group but that they had not met since Covid.

C/19/213) Cornwall Councillor update reports

Councillor French updated Members with regard to parking problems at local beaches and Charlestown recently and some issues with young people drinking in Charlestown.

Councillor Bull was pleased to advise that the planning appeal for 10 self-build units at 75 Treverbyn Road had been dismissed.

Councillor Brown advised that he had been pleased to be able to intervene and enable a couple to get married.

Councillor Pears advised that he had been campaigning for highways improvements following the application for the conversion of the bathstore to a Tesco Express Unit at Pentewan Road.

C/19/214) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 7th July 2020 to 27th August 2020 totalling £126,633.76 be approved.

C/19/215) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meetings dated 20th July 2020 and 24th August 2020 be noted.

The Deputy Town Clerk reiterated her interest in the next item and left the meeting

C/19/216) Staffing Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting dated 7th August 2020 be noted.

C/19/217) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Council is Monday 19th October 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.