

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 25th APRIL 2022 at 6.00pm at the Council Chamber, St Austell Information Service, 39 Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DP.

Present: Councillors: Clemo, Fox, French, Guest, Hamilton, Lanxon, McDonagh, Nott, Pearce, Pears, Stephens, Styles and Thompson.

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

There was one member of the public present.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings.

APM/22/01) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Brown, Bull, Cohen, Double, George, Rowse and Young.

APM/22/02) Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th April 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on the 19th April 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

APM/22/03) PC Gareth Hawken, Devon and Cornwall Police

The Mayor welcomed and introduced PC Gareth Hawken.

PC Hawken thanked the Mayor for inviting him to speak and advised that he is local to St Austell and is the Neighbourhood Beat Manager for the St Austell sector with 20 years' experience. He introduced Wendy Christophers PCSO and explained that the Neighbourhood Team for St Austell is made up of 9 Police Constables, 6 PCSO's and 3 Tri Service Officers headed up by Sergeant Ian Chambers. He advised that both the Neighbourhood and Response Teams have seen an increase in officer numbers which was pleasing.

PC Hawken referred to the crime statistics for 1st May 2021 to 23rd April 2022 compared to 1st May 2020 to 23rd April 2021 and advised that although crime in the sector is up 4.5% on the previous year, it compared well with other local police sectors. He suggested that coming out of lockdown and people socialising again is a factor in the increase in crime seen. PC Hawken advised that anti-social behaviour is down 31.8% and attributed this to there being less problems in the area, the Security Guards heading off issues and the excellent town centre CCTV coverage.

PC Hawken stressed the need to continue reporting via 101, Twitter and webchat and in the event of an emergency 999.

During discussion Councillors and the member of the public raised the following comments/issues/concerns:

- The increase in the crimes committed against the person
- The increase in mental health issues in the community
- Noisy vehicles
- The assistance the Police provide to deaf people

- The effect of the recently introduced 20 mph speed limits

The Mayor thanked PC Hawken for his interesting presentation.

APM/22/04) Mike Tremellen, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Tremellen advised that he is Group Manager for Mid Cornwall Command which encompasses 10 stations, 3 of which (St Austell, Truro and Newquay) are day crew stations and manned from 0700 to 1900. All the other stations are "on call" fire stations where the crews are called and respond from either their home or work address to attend an incident. He stressed that the speed of response is determined on a risk based approach.

He explained the "prevention and protection" work which includes home safety checks and fire safety checks at business premises all of which involves close working with the other emergency services. He added that follow up work is being carried out on properties following the Grenville disaster.

During discussion Councillors and the member of the public raised the following comments/issues/concerns:

- The resilience with regard to local, national and international incidents
- The attendance at road traffic collisions
- The response times in rural areas
- The building regulations and cavity wall barriers
- The work of the tri service officers
- The investigation of deliberate fires

The Mayor thanked Mr Tremellen for his interesting presentation.

APM/22/05) Councillor Richard Pears – Mayor of St Austell Review of the 2021/22 Civic Year

The Mayor outlined the last 12 months as follows:

General

- The induction of 20 Councillors following the Election in 2021 (11 new Councillors, 9 re-elected Councillors)
- The reduction of 5 Wards to 3 following the boundary changes
- Continuing to maintain a good level of services including:
 - 17 parks and open spaces
 - Footpath maintenance
 - Highways/residential grass cutting
 - CCTV
 - 2 x car parks
 - Priory Car Park public conveniences
 - Library
 - The House Youth Centre
- Staff Resource – 10 full time, 11 part time.

Parks and Open Spaces

- 2 x Grounds Maintenance Apprentices due to qualify within the next few weeks
- Creation of 3 wildflower areas at Bethel Park, Brockstone Road and Cosgarne Triangle
- 3 new 5 a-side pitches installed at Bethel Park, The Meadows and Poltair Park
- New safety surfacing at Poltair Park
- Pedestrian safety barrier installed at the roadside entrance to Poltair Park
- New river bank fence constructed at Linear Park
- 120 trees planted in the parks and open spaces

Library

- 8 staff (2 x full time, 6 x part time)
- Consistently the second busiest library in Cornwall
- Normal service resumed following the pandemic
- SALSA still playing an active role in supporting the library with fund raising and events

Grants

A number of grants were awarded including:

- Go Shop Mobility
- St Austell Old Cornwall Society
- Climate Action St Austell
- Saints St Austell Walking Football Grant
- Sally's Cat Rescue
- Cornwall Croquet Club
- St Austell Choral Society
- Studio 4 CIC

Other

- Funding for Town Centre security guards
- Revitalisation Partnership set up and administered by the Town Council
- New Tenants for Poltair Café – due to open in May 2022
- Grants Scheme set up for Jubilee events
- New cashless car park payment system being trialled

APM/22/06) David Pooley – Town Clerk St Austell Town Council – 2021/22 Financial Accounts

The Town Clerk advised that he would go through the 2021/22 Accounts in more detail at the forthcoming Council meeting but explained that the draft accounts have indicated that the car park income is beginning to recover, £250,000 of grants were received in the year from various sources, expenditure is generally below budget and £120,000 has been committed to the playground repair reserve. He explained that the current estimate to replace the Town Council's aging play equipment across the 17 parks and open spaces is approximately £1m and that it is important for the Town Council to be able to replace the play equipment as it becomes necessary. The Council's balance sheet shows a healthy position with good liquidity and no concerns.

APM/22/07) David Pooley – Town Clerk
Priorities of St Austell Town Council for the 2022/23 Civic Year

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had a number of projects in the pipeline but felt that the following would be a priority over the next 12 months:

- Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership – ensure project is completed within the timescales set with a view to bidding for funding to deliver the master plan developed
- Work closely with Cornwall Council to ensure that anti-social behaviour continues on the downward trend
- Building capacity within the management/administrative team
- Refurbishment of Bethel Park
- Continuance of climate change initiatives
- Negotiate a new lease for the library post September 2022
- Continue to demonstrate and communicate improvements in services
- Secure suitable premises for the Town Council post 2023 when the existing lease for the Stable Block terminates

Arising from a question, it was agreed to add the need to work closely with Cornwall Council/Treveth to ensure that the property review being undertaken by Cornwall Council delivers economic and social benefits for St Austell.

APM/22/08) Open Forum for questions from the public

There were no questions.

APM/22/09) Mayor's closing comments

The Mayor thanked everybody for coming to the meeting.