

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 9th MAY 2022 in the Council Chamber, 39 Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DR at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Cohen, Fox, French, George, Hamilton, Lanxon, McDonagh, Nott, Pearce, Pears, Rowse and Stephens.

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

The Mayor, Councillor Richard Pears invited Members to stand for a minute's silence to reflect on the recent passing of former Mayor, Mr Derek Collins and Mr Harry Billinge OBE.

C/22/01) Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Richard Pears invited nominations for Mayor for the 2022/23 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Lanxon be elected Mayor of St Austell for the 2022/23 civic year.

Councillor Lanxon signed a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Clerk and took the Chair.

Councillor Lanxon advised that she was honoured to be elected Mayor and thanked Councillor Pears for his encouragement and support during her term as Deputy Mayor. She outlined the key priorities for the year ahead and announced St John's Ambulance as her chosen charity.

C/22/02) Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Andrea Lanxon invited nominations for Deputy Mayor for the 2022/23 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Pearce be elected Deputy Mayor of St Austell for the 2022/23 civic year.

C/22/03) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Double, Guest, Styles, Thompson and Young.

C/22/04) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

The Town Clerk declared an interest for himself and the Deputy Town Clerk in Agenda Item 22 (Staffing Committee Minutes) and advised that if required to do so, they would leave the meeting at the appropriate time.

C/22/05) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/22/06) Minutes of Meeting held on 21st March 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/22/07) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

C/22/08) Mayor's/Retiring Mayor's announcements

The retiring Mayor, Councillor Richard Pears advised that he had attended a production of Mary Poppins at Penrice Academy, a concert for Ukraine at St John's Church, a production of Shrek at the Keay Theatre and Harry Billinge's funeral. Councillor Pears advised that it had been an honour and privilege to be Mayor of St Austell and thanked the Council for placing their trust in him to showcase the good work of the Town Council to other Councils and the public. He thanked his Deputy for the year, Councillor Lanxon, and expressed his gratitude to the Town Council's staff. He advised that a year had not been enough to get everything done but that he was proud that he had helped to start off many projects and looked forward to seeing them come to fruition over the next few months/years.

The Mayor of St Austell, Councillor Lanxon, outlined a list of events celebrating the jubilee that she will be attending including the unveiling of a jubilee tree in the library garden, a jubilee parade in Truro and events at the football club, Carclaze chapel and Lostwood gardens.

C/22/09) Public Participation

None.

C/22/10) Members' questions

There were no questions from Members.

In order to allow Mr Bill McCardle, Regeneration Officer, to leave the meeting in a timely manner, the Mayor agreed that agenda item 17 could be brought forward to the next item.

C/22/11) St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership

Mr McCardle updated Members on the work of the Partnership and the 7 outputs. He explained the need to have a thriving, sustainable events programme for the town centre and outlined the proposal from the BID and its Events and Engagement Partnership Group. Mr McCardle added that he attends the Partnership meetings and had contributed to the proposal.

The Town Clerk advised that the draft proposal needed refining and recommended that the Town Council enters into a trial contract with the BID for a period of four months in the sum of £15,000 and if successful, enters into a second contract for subsequent months. He advised that the events proposed would hopefully increase the footfall in the town centre as well as providing a forum for the appointed consultants to carry out public consultation.

He explained that utilising the Partnership Group would offer a forum which hopefully continues after the Town Revitalisation Fund scheme ends and asked the Council to approve the waiving of the Town Council's Financial Regulations to allow him to negotiate a contract with the St Austell BID for events management without seeking competitive tenders.

Councillor Brown advised that he is on the panel overseeing the recruitment of the consultants to undertake the masterplanning work and that 7 very good applications had been received. Councillor French, as Town Council BID representative expressed his support for the BID's proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the report;
2. Waive the Town Council's Financial Regulations to allow the Town Clerk to negotiate a contract with St Austell BID for events management without seeking competitive tenders;
3. Authorise the Town Clerk to enter into a contract with St Austell BID for up to £15,000 for the delivery of events over the next 4-5 months.

Mr McCardle left the meeting
Councillor Rowse left the meeting

C/22/12) Internal Audit Report for year ending 31st March 2022

The Clerk referred Members to the report of the Internal Auditor and explained that as the Auditors' findings were relevant to the Annual Return which the Council had to submit for the 2021/22 financial year, the details were reported to the full Council for consideration prior to agreeing the Annual Governance Statement.

He explained that the Internal Auditor had found no issues but had recommended that the Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover be increased due to the cash and investments held being likely to exceed £1M from time to time. The Clerk advised that the Town Council is unable to obtain this level of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance at the moment and reassured Members that the Town Council's controls are robust and that he was comfortable with the £1M cover presently in place.

The Clerk explained that the library income referred to in the report is relatively small but on the recommendation of the Internal Auditor, spot checks would be carried out from time to time to ensure that the income corresponded with the till or card receipts obtained.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Internal Auditor be noted.

C/22/13) Annual Governance Statement

The Town Clerk introduced a report setting out the details of the Annual Return and Governance Statement which is required to be completed and sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP, the Council's External Auditors, by the 1st July 2022

Members considered each of the questions in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement in detail before agreeing the following responses.

It was **RESOLVED** that the answer to each question should be as follows:

- Question 1 Yes
- Question 2 Yes
- Question 3 Yes
- Question 4 Yes
- Question 5 Yes
- Question 6 Yes
- Question 7 Yes
- Question 8 Yes
- Question 9 Yes

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. the Mayor and the Clerk should be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council;
2. The Town Clerk should advertise the electors' rights after the accounting statements have been approved in accordance with the External Audit guidance;
3. The annual meetings of the trustees for Truro Road and Poltair Parks should be held prior to the next Council meeting in July.

C/22/14) Annual Return and Accounting Statements 2021/22

The Clerk advised that it had been a difficult year, but the car park income and grant income had both returned better than budgeted. He advised that the accounts include a £140,000 grant from Cornwall Council for the Town Centre Revitalisation Project and £25,000 to assist with the employment of the Regeneration Officer. In summary he advised that overall it had been a good year with better income than anticipated and a cautious approach to expenditure which had resulted in a £10,000 surplus after transfer to reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- i. Approve the detailed accounting statements and transfers to and from reserves as shown;
- ii. Approve the accounting statement in Section 2 of the Annual Return for 2021/22; and
- iii. Authorise the Clerk and Mayor to sign the Accounting Statement on the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council.

C/22/15) Standing Committees

Members considered a previously circulated report setting out the latest terms of reference for the standing committees and a suggested committee membership for the 2022/23 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Terms of Reference of each committee as set out be approved;
2. The Committee Membership list as set out be approved subject to:
 - o Councillor Pears being deleted from the Planning and Regeneration Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Climate and Environment Committee and Staffing Committee;

- Councillor Pearce being deleted from the Staffing Committee;
- Councillor Brown being added to the Staffing Committee.

C/22/16) Election of Representatives to outside bodies

It was **RESOLVED** that the following appointments to outside bodies be made for the 2022/23 civic year:

St Austell Carnival Committee

(Councillor A Cohen)

St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce

(Deferred)

Climate Action St Austell (CASA)

(Councillor C Hamilton)

CALC - Larger Councils Liaison Group

(Councillor M Brown)

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Flood Forum

(Councillor A Cohen)

Rural Services Network

(Councillor M Thompson)

Rural Services Network – Young Person’s Panel

(Councillor E Stephens)

Rural Services Network – Older Person’s Panel

(Councillor P Guest)

St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF)

(Councillor M Brown)

St Austell Business Improvement District (BID)

(Councillor T French)

South East Cornwall Local Action Group (SELAG)

(Councillor M Thompson)

The House Steering Committee

(Councillors J Fox and A Double)

Safer St Austell

(Councillor M Thompson)

Townscape Heritage Scheme

(Councillor McDonagh)

St Austell Revitalisation Partnership

(Councillor George, Councillor Pearce and the Chair of the Planning and Regeneration Committee)

St Austell & Mevagissey Community Network Panel

(Councillors Lanxon and Young)

It was noted that all Councillors are entitled to attend Community Network Panel meetings.

C/22/17) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Clerk advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is paid to Cornwall Council by developers and is used to mitigate the cumulative impact of development on communities and from time to time, Town and Parish Councils are invited to bid to the "CIL Fund" which is what remains after administrative fees and neighbourhood portions have been paid to Town and Parish Councils. He advised that Town and Parish Councils have been offered the opportunity to put in an expression of interest for CIL funding which has a deadline of 23rd June. The criteria set to be eligible for funding is to deliver infrastructure and a benefit to young people and the Clerk advised that an improvement scheme for Bethel Park should meet this criteria. He advised that a draft improvement scheme for Bethel Park was submitted to the National Lottery but unfortunately the Town Council could not satisfy their requirement to demonstrate consultation with non-white ethnic minorities.

The Deputy Town Clerk read out a statement from Councillor Rowse tendering his apologies for having to leave the meeting urgently but expressed his support for an improvement scheme at Bethel Park.

During discussion, Members expressed their concern with regard to the lack of flexibility by the National Lottery with regard to consultation and disappointment that the Cornish are not accepted as a minority group and felt that pressure needed to be placed onto the Lottery and Cornwall Council to ensure that the national rules are changed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should:

1. submit an expression of interest for CIL funding for an improvement scheme at Bethel Park;
2. Make representations with Cornwall Council and the National Lottery with regard to the inflexibility of the consultation required in Cornwall with regard to minority groups and the non-recognition of the Cornish as a minority group.

C/22/18) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 12th March 2022 to 29th April 2022 totalling £227,203.01 be approved.

C/22/19) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting held on the 11th April 2022.

C/22/20) Community Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on the 28th March 2022.

C/22/21) Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Clerk drew Members' attention to minute number F/21/78 recommending approval of the Town Council's Strategic Risk Register and minute number F/21/84 recommending that the Town Council formally declines the proposal from Cornwall Council to transfer St Austell library to the town centre and enter into negotiations with Cornwall Council for a further five year lease to manage St Austell Library.

During discussions, Members stressed the need to discuss with Cornwall Council at the earliest opportunity the strategy with regard to their land holdings.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4th April 2022 and approve the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should at the earliest opportunity set up an informal meeting with Cornwall Council and/or Treveth with the Town Clerk and Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to discuss the Penwinnick Road Planning Strategy.

C/22/22) Staffing Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Staffing Committee meetings held on 19th April 2022 and approve the **RECOMMENDATIONS** contained therein.

C/22/23) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings were due to take place on the 11th July 2022 and 5th September 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.28pm.