

St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership

Tuesday 25th October 2022 at 9.45am

St Austell Town Council Offices, The Stable Block, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP

Attendees:

Democratic: Anne Double (CC) **(TEAMS)**, Malcolm Brown (TC), Crystal Pearce (TC) **(TEAMS)**, Jordan Rowse (CC) **(TEAMS)**

Voluntary/Community: Sandra Heyward (Market House) (CHAIR), David Atkinson-Beaumont (Cornwall College) **(TEAMS)**, Chris Sampson (Community), Rev Howard Flint (Holy Trinity Church), Alan Lawler (St Austell Healthcare), Jonathan Aberdeen (St Austell Arts Centre)

Business: Dale Lovatt (Business Improvement District), Neil Woodward (South-West Financial Services), Peter Moody (St Austell Print), Mark Lewis (Lewis Estate Agents) **(TEAMS)**.

Advisors: Sara Gwilliams (TC); Bill McCardle (TC), David Pooley (TC), Caitlin Lord (CC) **(TEAMS)**, Mark Ellis (CC) **(TEAMS)**.

Also in attendance: Mike Hawes, Mei Loci and Damon Pearce, Page Architects.

Welcome

Sandra Heyward (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Deborah George (TC), Richard Pears (CC), Dr Stewart Smith (NHS), Steve Double (MP), Jordan Rowse (CC), Louise Wood (CC), Steve Facer (CC), John Watkins (White River Place), Miles Lovegrove (Fluid Branding),

Minutes of the meeting dated 4th October 2022

The minutes of the meeting dated 4th October 2022 were accepted as a correct record.

Actions from the minutes dated 4th October 2022

DP advised that he had liaised with Mark Ellis and an update would be provided later in the meeting.

SH welcomed Jonathan Aberdeen to the meeting who advised that he was born in St Austell and had been involved in the arts scene for a number of years including the Daphne Du Maurier Festival from 1997 to 2015. He added that he is currently at the Arts Centre where he has been for 6 years.

It was **RESOLVED** that Mr Jonathan Aberdeen should be elected to the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership as a Community representative.

Mr Mike Hawes – Mei Loci

Mr Hawes outlined the project brief and the outputs expected. He updated the partnership on the consultation to date and the key themes that people are saying/suggesting. He added that a variety of local shops, a covering on White River Place, regular markets, a night time economy, more planting/greening, free parking and more eating places were common requests. The negative comments received mainly related to anti-social behaviour or the perception of anti-social behaviour.

Mr Hawes explained he had revised the vision and plan presentation based on feedback from the partnership, town council and the public engagement process and proceeded to take the partnership through the final recommended document. Mr Hawes invited questions and responded to all questions and explained the technical details and justification behind the proposals.

Mr Hawes outlined a proposed one way traffic system around the Holy Trinity Church and the positive benefits that this could bring including the widening of footpaths, improved lighting and enhanced planting. He stressed that this proposal would not restrict any vehicular access.

Mr Hawes outlined different options for the Poundland building from large cost to a relatively small cost and the benefits that each option could bring to the town. He emphasised the urgent need to replace the banner on the Poundland building and the potential for lighting or projection onto the building to display images such as live streaming plays/theatre productions (ticketed events) or large sporting events.

Mr Hawes suggested a reconfiguration of Priory Car Park and the removal of the vacant building 24-26 Fore Street to encourage a better flow through Biddicks Court and the town centre. He outlined some suggested uses for the old fire station site (shops, café) and the General Wolfe building (education/arts centre). Reduced road width at the junction of Trinity Street and Truro Road to provide traffic calming is also proposed.

Visuals of a multi-use roof top garden at Old Vicarage Place (winter garden) were shown which Mr Hawes advised could be accessed via external and internal staircases as well as a ramp access from the ground level. There is also the potential for a bridge connection to the adjacent White River Place which could, in collaboration with White River Place, assist with the population of vacant units. It is also suggested that the roof top garden could be partially covered to facilitate access in inclement weather. It is envisaged that the project could be implemented with very little disruption to the function of the town centre.

The High Cross Street Car Park and possibly the old Post Office site are suggested as student accommodation which it is felt will fulfil the demand for student accommodation as well as increasing footfall into the town centre.

Mr Hawes advised that his Highways consultants are meeting with Cornwall Council's Highways officers on 7th November 2022 to discuss the proposed highways changes.

The Chair thanked Mr Hawes for his thorough update.

During discussion, the following issues/points were raised:

- The potential for private funding to improve the wall behind the Barclays pod in the town centre;
- The need for town centre space for voluntary sector organisations such as CAB;
- The pros and cons of student accommodation in the town centre.

Mr Hawes advised that he would circulate the presentation to the partnership and invited the partnership members to e-mail him direct with any further comments, copying in Mr McCardle.

The Clerk asked for a formal proposal to endorse the projects and aspirations identified so far.

It was **RESOLVED** by way of a show of hands from the Partnership Members to support the projects and aspirations identified by Mei Loci through the consultation process so far.

Dale Lovett advised that he needed more time to study the proposals and abstained from voting at this time

Project Update (BM/DP)

Bill McCardle advised that an expression of interest has been submitted to the Shared Prosperity Fund where there are a number of funding streams that could help progress identified projects to "shovel ready" stage and create town centre event management resource.

The partnership suggested that the following projects should be progressed as priority:

1. The winter garden
2. One Way Traffic flow systems
3. Replacement of the Poundland banner

Mr McCardle advised that the Education, Events and Accessibility outcome reports are nearly ready and that they would be circulated to the group shortly. Mr McCardle added that there is a meeting later in the week to discuss the LCWIP and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council received a presentation from Mr Hawes shortly after the last partnership meeting and apart from a few comments which have been taken on board, the partnership's work to date was supported. He added that Cornwall Council has European Funding to instal electric charging points in some of their car parks and Priory Car Park and Polkyth Car Park are on the list for installations. Cornwall Council has experienced delays with the installation of the e-bikes across the town and these are now due to be installed mid/end November.

Cornwall Council – update

Mark Ellis apologised for the lack of Cornwall Council representatives at the last partnership meeting and outlined the difficulties that Cornwall Council is experiencing due to a challenging budget and a reduction in officer resource. He added that all staff have decanted out of Penwinnick Road into Carlyon House and that there is still an intention to have an Integrated Service Hub in White River Place.

Mr Ellis advised that Cornwall Council is waiting to see what the Government do about the Levelling Up Funding and emphasised that if it still proceeds deliverable projects are favoured with good cost benefit ratios. He stressed the need for pre-application advice and advance warning of the applications so that Cornwall Council can resource it.

Caitlin Lord advised that there had been a glitch with the IT systems receiving the Good Growth Fund expression of interest forms and those submitted between 7th and 20th October should be re-submitted to ensure that they have been received.

Action: All Partnership Members to advise any groups that they are aware of who have submitted expressions of interest to the GGF between 7th October 2022 and 20th October 2022 that they should re-submit them to Cornwall Council as a matter of urgency.

Arising from a question, Mr Ellis confirmed that there would be some resource to assist St Austell with funding applications through the Good Growth Team once set up but their duty is to make sure that the funding is discharged fairly and not to be champions of St Austell.

Caitlin Lord suggested that David Rodda would be a good contact.

Financial Update

Mr McCardle advised that £68,000 had been spent against a budget of £140,000.

Any Other Business

None.

Date of Next Meetings

Tuesday 22nd November 2022, 9.45am. Venue to be determined.