

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2023 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, French, George, Lanxon, Pearce and Young.

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

**F/22/62) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bull, Clemo and Nott.

*\*\*Councillor Lanxon advised that she needed to leave at 7pm\*\**

**F/22/63) Declarations of Interest**

None.

**F/22/64) Dispensations**

None.

**F/22/65) Minutes of meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**F/22/66) Matters to Note**

Further to minute number F/22/52, the Clerk passed around a 3D image of the proposed improvement project at Bethel Park which is due to start in May. The legal agreement in relation to the CIL funding should be received from Cornwall Council shortly.

The Equal Opportunities Policy referred to in minute F/22/59 has been re-drafted and will be considered at the next Council meeting.

**F/22/67) Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**F/22/68) Priory Car Park**

The Town Clerk advised that the Car Park Working Group met on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and considered a proposal from St Austell BID which suggested that in order to increase footfall into the town centre the charges during the week should be reduced with any loss of income re-couped by charging on a Sunday. The group considered the proposal carefully but unanimously felt that it was not a proposal they could support and agreed that they would prefer to assist the BID and the town centre in other ways such as contributing towards an increase in the security guard hours.

Councillor Pearce (Chair of the Working Group) advised that it was a good meeting made up of cross party representation but the group felt unable to risk a potential

loss of £40,000 from car park income which would ultimately have to be precepted for. Councillor Young added that people tend to park in the car park which is most convenient and that a 20p difference between car parks would probably not persuade people to change.

Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that 50 Beryl Bikes are due to be delivered to St Austell during the week and placed in 21 locations and assured Members that Beryl Bikes are indemnifying the Town Council against any claims arising from their installation in Priory Car Park. A discussion took place with regard to the hire charges and the French referendum on e-scooters.

It was **RESOLVED** to endorse the views of the Car Park Working Group and make no changes to the 2023-24 car park charges.

### **F/22/69) Asset Register**

The Clerk referred to the Town Council's Asset Register and confirmed that following the closure of Penwinnick Road, all civic assets are now located at the Stable Block with the exception of a granite trough which is due to be re-located to Truro Road Park and a wooden planter that has gone missing from Cornwall Council's offices.

Following discussion, Members agreed that once the Town Council is certain of its future location, a discussion should take place with regard to the practicalities of displaying some of the Town Council's civic assets.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Asset Register as at March 2023.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should bring a report back in 12 months' time to give Members the opportunity to consider the practicalities of displaying some of the Town Council's assets.

### **F/22/70) Budget Monitoring Report**

The Clerk explained the larger variances in the budget monitoring report for the financial year to the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and predicted that the overall year-end position will show a small under-spend.

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

### **F/22/71) Internal Audit**

The Clerk advised that the Chair and Vice-Chair inspect the Town Council's records on a ½ yearly basis which involves carrying out spot checks on the Council's financial systems such as payroll and petty cash.

Councillor Brown advised of an error with regard to a tick against the wrong line on page 13 (Bank Reconciliation).

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Thank the Chair and Vice-Chair for carrying out the audit
2. Note the Internal Audit report subject to the Town Clerk amending page 13 to show the correct response.

### **F/22/72) St Austell Library**

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the Library Manager's report and advised that in addition to the activities outlined in the report, the library's IT has been disconnected from the Penwinnick Road offices but a few issues are still to be resolved before it is fully functioning. She added that the library is supporting the literary festival in June and is hosting one of the author talks. The new member of staff is making good progress and February's statistics show the library continuing to perform well.

Arising from a question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that she would make arrangements for Town Council agendas to be placed in both the Library and Town Centre notice boards.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Library Manager's report and thank the Library Manager and staff for their continued excellent work.

### **F/22/73) Dates of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The meeting closed at 6.48pm.