

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 24th APRIL 2023 at 6.00pm in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Clemo, Cohen, Fox, French, George, Guest, Hamilton, Lanxon, Pearce, Pears, Styles, Thompson and Young.

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

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

APM/23/01) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bull, Double, Nott, Rowse and Stephens.

APM/23/02) Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th April 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on the 25th April 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

The Mayor introduced Mr John Burns-Nield JP and his wife Jane from St John Ambulance and explained that St John Ambulance is her chosen Mayoral charity for the year.

APM/23/03) St John Ambulance

Mr Burns-Nield apologised for the absence of Margaret Watts (Unit Manager) as she has been in London with St John Ambulance for the London Marathon.

Mr Burns-Nield advised that St John Ambulance in St Austell is the biggest and most active branch in Cornwall with 12 adults and 30 cadets and that he had been involved with them for 23 years. Mr Burns-Nield thanked the Mayor for choosing St John Ambulance as her chosen charity and expressed his gratitude to all who had contributed to the fund raising.

The Mayor thanked Mr and Mrs Burns-Nield for their wonderful work for St John Ambulance and presented them with a ceremonial cheque in the sum of £2,984.80.

**APM/23/04) Councillor Andrea Lanxon – Mayor of St Austell
Review of the 2022/23 Civic Year**

The Mayor provided an overview of the last 12 months and expressed her thanks to the Clerk and his team. She highlighted the completion of the Town Centre Masterplan as a major achievement and the successful Good Growth Funding bid for a roof top garden project at Old Vicarage Place. She advised that over the last 12 months the Town Council has considered 113 planning applications and approved 15 grants for local organisations. Other achievements she listed as follows:

- Agreed to maintain a defibrillator at St John's Methodist Church
- Entered into a lease with Edible St Austell for the community garden at Landrew Road
- Agreed additional funding towards the security guards in the town centre
- Secured CIL funding to refurbish Bethel Park

- Carried out safety surfacing repairs at The Meadows, Poltair Park and Sandy Hill
- Carried out repairs to play equipment at Truro Road Park and Poltair Park
- Improved the layout of Poltair Park Café
- Planted 99 trees in the last 12 months
- Adopted Trewhiddle roundabout and the adjoining flower beds
- Supported the garden festival and hosted a climate awareness event at the library
- Continued to operate a very successful CCTV service in partnership with Newquay Town Council
- Re-located the mobile CCTV camera which has assisted police investigations
- Froze the car park charges for the 2023-24 financial year
- Cut back Tregonissey Car Park and instructed car park attendants to enforce the 3 hours no return legislation
- Took on the Home Library Service and 7 volunteers from Cornwall Council

The Mayor concluded that she is hosting a coronation cream tea event at the library on Friday 5th May and all Councillors are welcome to attend.

APM/23/05) David Pooley – Town Clerk St Austell Town Council – 2022/23 Financial Accounts

The Town Clerk advised that the 2022/23 draft Accounts have been reviewed by the Internal Auditor and are due to be reported to the full Council on Wednesday 10th May 2023. He advised that the main points to note are:

- Car Park income for the year £260,000 (£16,000 better than 2021/22 but not back to pre pandemic level);
- "Other Income" and "Transfers to Reserves" reflects the accountancy adjustments for the income received from Cornwall Council for the Town Centre Regeneration masterplan;
- Slightly higher payroll costs due to an increased pay award, the funding of a Regeneration Officer for additional days and the permanent employment of two Apprentices;
- Supplies and Services include £110,000 for Town Centre Revitalisation Funding
- Transport figures include provision for a new mower and truck

The outturn for the 2022/23 financial year shows a surplus of £5,000 on a turnover of £1.3 million.

The balance sheet shows a healthy financial position, with assets well exceeding liabilities, no borrowing and a cash balance of £100,000.

APM/23/06) David Pooley – Town Clerk Priorities of St Austell Town Council for the 2023/24 Civic Year

The Town Clerk advised that he has received a Good Growth Fund funding agreement from Cornwall Council for a feasibility study for a rooftop garden and that he would report this to the full Council in May and obtain authorisation for its sign off. He added that the Town Centre Partnership and Masterplanning remains a top priority along with bidding for further Good Growth Funds and in due course Levelling Up funds.

The Clerk suggested that although much improved, anti-social behaviour still needs time and investment to keep it at acceptable levels and stressed the need for continued funding for CCTV and security guards and good communication with the local Police. He advised that St Austell has a new Police Inspector, Inspector Matt Trevivian who is keen to maintain good links with the Town Council.

The refurbishment of Bethel Park is a priority for 2023 with works commencing once the planning permission is in place – hopefully end of May/beginning of June. Publicity boards will be erected around the park once permission has been agreed to advise the public of the works and to explain what the refurbishment will look like once completed. Some significant pieces of play equipment across the Council's parks will need replacing over the coming year and a reserve has been created to assist with this.

Priory Car Park needs re-lining and it is hoped that this will be carried out later this year once the EV charging points have been installed. Cornwall Council has confirmed that these should be in place by the end of May.

The Clerk advised that the public really appreciate the environmental activities across the town with the Trewhiddle roundabout and flower bed receiving good praise during the spring and stressed the need to keep this very visible work adequately funded to keep pride in place and the town moving forward. He advised that communication of the Town Council's work is not as good as it could be and this will be addressed during the year utilising a new reporter at the Voice and more social media posts.

The Clerk advised that securing suitable premises for the Town Council when the lease expires in two years remains a priority as well as engaging with Cornwall Council and Treveth at regular intervals with regard to strategic property matters.

The Clerk added that St Austell Library is a well-supported community facility run by a strong team of staff and volunteers. He stressed the need to remain innovative to ensure that the library remains sustainable.

APM/23/07) Open forum for questions from the public

There were no members of the public present but the following issues were raised by Members:

- The future of the General Wolfe building
- The need to have a senior officer from Cornwall Council to speak to the Town Council on strategic issues
- The need to keep staffing capacity under review
- PSPO signage in the town centre to deter street drinking
- The timescales for the demolition of the Penwinnick Road offices
- The congestion/pedestrian safety at the Mevagissey roundabouts
- Appreciation for the newly installed Beryl Bikes

Arising from the above the Clerk advised that the General Wolfe is likely to be converted into housing and that the demolition of the Penwinnick Road site is protracted due to the presence of bats on the site. The Clerk undertook to speak to Helen Toms about PSPO signage and to Beryl Bikes about the potential to roll the Beryl Bikes out to Wheal Martyn and Heligan.

APM/23/08) Mayor's closing comments

The Mayor thanked everybody for coming to the meeting.

Meeting closed at 7pm.