

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 10th MAY 2023 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6.05pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Bull, Clemo, Cohen, Double, Fox, French, George, Hamilton, Lanxon, Nott, Pearce, Pears, Stephens and Young.

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

C/23/01) Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Andrea Lanxon, invited nominations for Mayor for the 2023/24 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Pearce be elected Mayor of St Austell for the 2023/24 civic year.

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

C/23/02) Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor Crystal Pearce, invited nominations for Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 civic year.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Young be elected Deputy Mayor of St Austell for the 2023/24 civic year.

C/23/03) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Guest, Rowse, Styles and Thompson.

C/23/04) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received

None.

C/23/05) Dispensations

There were no requests for a dispensation.

C/23/06) Minutes of Meeting held on 20th March 2023

It was noted that on page 3, minute number C/22/138 before the name "Sampson" in the fifth paragraph the word "for" should be deleted and the word "Mr" inserted.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th March 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/23/07) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the Town Council has received a "notice of no changes" from Cornwall Council following their consideration of the Community Governance Review deferred submissions.

C/23/08) Mayor's/Retiring Mayor's announcements

Councillor Lanxon as retiring Mayor referred to her engagements list and praised the youth choir at Carclaze Chapel, the success of the Cornwall Youth Choir at a recent competition and Pondhu School children for dancing the maypole at the coronation cream tea event at the library. She also referred to the excellent event that Woodland House had organised to celebrate the coronation.

Councillor Lanxon thanked everyone for their support and referred to the number of projects that the Town Council is pursuing and the Town Council's excellent finances. She advised that her Mayoral Charity, St John Ambulance will shortly receive just over £3,000 from the fund raising activities during the year and wished Councillors Pearce and Young a very successful year.

Councillor French thanked Councillor Lanxon for her excellent Mayoral year and referred to her incredible hard work and dedication to the local community and surrounding area. He also thanked her for attending events outside of the Town Council's area promoting St Austell where she could.

It was **RESOLVED** to thank Councillor Lanxon for her excellent Mayoral year.

C/23/09) Public Participation

The member of public present advised that she did not wish to speak.

C/23/10) Members' questions

There were no questions from Members.

C/23/11) Small Grants Scheme

St Austell Running Club

It was **RESOLVED** to award £250 to St Austell Running Club for funding towards the cost of organising the Cornish Imerys Trail Marathon due to take place on Sunday 14th May 2023.

C/23/12) Internal Audit Report for year ending 31st March 2023

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 2022/23 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 and there were no recommendations.

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

C/23/13) 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 BDO LLP, the Council's External Auditors, by the 3rd July 2023.

The Clerk asked Members if any Member had an interest in BDO LLP and no interests were declared.

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 annual meetings of the trustees for Truro Road and Poltair Parks should be held prior to the next Council meeting in July.

C/23/14) Annual Return and Accounting Statements 2022/23

The Clerk advised that car park income had seen a slight increase on 2021/22, interest income had increased significantly due to the rise in interest rates and 2022/23 is the last year that a Council Tax Grant will be received. He clarified that the transfers from reserves related to the Masterplan grant received from Cornwall Council in 2021/22 that had been expended in 2022/23.

The Clerk advised that the payroll increase is due to the pay award, the employment of a Regeneration Officer and the two Grounds Maintenance Apprentices qualifying and being taken on as full time employees. The energy increases are in line with global increases in energy prices and insurance costs rose significantly during the 2022/23 financial year. He added that a recent tender exercise for the Town Council's insurances had resulted in a reduction in insurance premium for 2023/24. The Miscellaneous Expenses include expenditure on the town centre Masterplan which has been funded by the transfer from reserves. He clarified that the increase in expenditure under the transport heading related to the purchase of a ride-on mower and truck during the year.

The Clerk concluded that the outturn for the year is a £5,000 surplus and that the balance sheet shows a good ratio between assets and liabilities and a healthy liquidity.

Arising from a question, the Clerk clarified the reasons for the transfer from 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 2022/23;
- iii. Authorise the Clerk and Mayor to sign the Accounting Statement on the Annual Return on behalf of the Town Council; and
- iv. Instruct the Town Clerk to advertise the electors' rights in accordance with the External Audit guidance.

C/23/15) 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 2023/24 civic year.

Councillor Brown suggested an additional bullet point to be added to the Planning and Regeneration Committee Terms of Reference as follows "*to monitor the work of and liaise as necessary with the St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership*".

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Terms of Reference of each committee as set out be approved subject to the additional bullet point in the Planning and Regeneration Terms of Reference as set out above.
2. The Committee Membership list as set out be approved subject to:
 - o Councillor Clemo being deleted from the Community Committee and added to the Climate and Environment Committee.

C/23/16) Election of Representatives to outside bodies

It was **RESOLVED** that the following appointments to outside bodies be made for the 2023/24 civic year:

CALC – Larger Councils Liaison Group

Councillor Brown

Climate Action St Austell (CASA)

Councillor Hamilton

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Flood Forum

Councillor Cohen

Cornwall Council Levelling Up Fund Working Group

Councillor French

Rural Services Network

Councillor Thompson

Rural Services Network – Young Person's Panel

Councillor Stephens

Rural Services Network – Older Person's Panel

Councillor Guest

Safer St Austell

Councillor French

St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF)

Councillor Brown

St Austell Carnival Committee

Councillor Cohen

St Austell Bay Chamber of Commerce

Councillor Double

The House Steering Committee

Councillors Fox and Double

Townscape Heritage Scheme

Project complete. No representative required.

St Austell Revitalisation Partnership

Councillors George, Nott and the Chair of the Planning and Regeneration Committee

St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel Community Area Partnership

Councillor Lanxon (Substitute Councillor Stephens)

It was noted that all Councillors are entitled to attend Community Area Partnership meetings.

C/23/17) Equal Opportunities Policy

Further to minute number F/22/59 the Town Council reviewed the Equal Opportunities Policy and suggested the following amendments:

Paragraph 3.2

First bullet point to be amended to read:

- Recognising and accepting that particular individuals or groups **can be** denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional

Paragraph 6.1

Paragraph to read:

St Austell Town Council expects Councillors to treat each other with respect and will try to encourage a reasonable cross-section of local residents to **put themselves forward to** be Councillors. **It will seek to make reasonable adjustments to allow all Councillors to take part in Council business.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Equal Opportunities Policy be approved subject to the above amendments and Councillor Bull amending any grammatical errors.

C/23/18) Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 14th March 2023 to 27th April 2023 totalling £186,705.15 be approved.

C/23/19) Community Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on the 27th March 2023.

C/23/20) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 3rd April 2023.

C/23/21) Planning and Regeneration Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting held on the 11th April 2023.

C/23/22) To consider excluding the press and public.

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 (ii) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business of the meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

C/23/23) Good Growth Fund

The Town Clerk outlined the funding agreement received, the risks to the Town Council as the Accountable Body and the progress so far with regard to the tender documentation and procurement process.

During discussion, Members agreed that subject to agreement by the St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership the Town Council should proceed with the feasibility project.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Authorise the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to sign the Good Growth feasibility study funding agreement on behalf of the Town Council and authorise the Town Clerk to proceed with a procurement process subject to the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership being supportive of the approach proposed to the funding and procurement of consultants for the feasibility study.
2. That in the event of a disagreement with the St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership and further discussions being necessary, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor French be authorised to liaise with the partnership and the Town Clerk to seek a mutually agreeable way forward.
3. Authorise Councillors Brown and French to undertake an evaluation process of any tenders received with up to two members of the St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership, who are not Councillors and who do not have a prejudicial interest in the project.

C/23/24) Dates of Meetings

It was noted that the next Town Council meeting is due to take place on the 10th July 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.39pm.