

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 26th JUNE 2023 in The Registrar's Office, Carlyon Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4LD at 6pm.

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

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

F/23/01) Election of Chair

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor French be elected as Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the 2023/24 civic year.

F/23/02) Election of Vice-Chair

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Young be elected as Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the 2023/24 civic year.

F/23/03) Apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Bull and Rowse.

F/23/04) Declarations of Interest

Councillor French declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 by virtue of being a director of the St Austell Business Improvement District (BID).

F/23/05) Dispensations

None.

F/23/06) Minutes of meeting held on 3rd April 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd April 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/23/07) Matters to Note

The Town Clerk advised that he had nothing to add to the minutes.

F/23/08) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

F/23/09) Inspector Matt Trevivian and Acting Sergeant Will Chesterfield

The Chair welcomed Inspector Trevivian and Acting Sergeant Will Chesterfield to the meeting. They spoke about the work and organisation of the Neighbourhood Team and highlighted the excellent co-operation between the Security Personnel, the CCTV monitoring staff and the various agencies operating in St Austell.

They praised the security staff for their professionalism in dealing with a violent male in the town centre recently and explained that extra patrols were planned for the summer months in the town centre, that Will Chesterfield will be the Neighbourhood Team Leader (NTL) for the town centre and that further Police Specials will be allocated to the town centre team.

Inspector Trevivian concluded that the St Austell Sector is doing extremely well in comparison with other Police Sectors in Cornwall and reiterated his praise for the security guards and CCTV provision in the town centre.

Members raised a number of matters including:

- Trends in crime numbers
- Comparisons with other towns and the lessons to be learnt
- The police presence at the recent Flower Festival
- The perception of crime in St Austell and the negative effect of social media
- The legal issues relating to motorised scooters
- Parking on pavements
- Control of street drinking
- ASB in the Lostwood Gardens area
- Knife crime
- Dangerous roads and driving

Members thanked Inspector Trevivian and Acting Sergeant Chesterfield for attending and for their presentation.

*** Councillor French reiterated his interest in the next item and Councillor Young assumed the chair ***

F/23/10) Security Guards

The Vice Chair welcomed Dale Lovatt, Chair of the BID, and Annette Miller, the BID Manager, to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The Deputy Town Clerk introduced a report on funding for the security personnel employed under contract by the St Austell BID. She explained that the cost for 50 hours per week was £43,000 per annum and that the BID had a budget of £17,000 leaving a balance of £26,000. Members acknowledged the importance of the security guards and the need to tackle ASB.

By way of clarification, the Town Clerk advised that the employment terms and conditions of the security guards are the responsibility of the contractors not the Town Council or St Austell BID.

It is **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should increase its annual contribution towards the cost of the town centre security guards to £26,000 on condition that the extra resource helps support the Town Council's civic events and provides for extended patrols outside of the town centre.

*** Councillor French re-assumed the Chair ***

F/23/11) St Austell Sea Cadets

The Town Clerk explained the history behind the award of a grant to the St Austell Sea Cadets to help them purchase their premises and the creation of a secured loan

to ensure the premises were used for the intended purpose for a reasonable period of time. He advised that there had been no intention among members at the time to require repayment of this sum.

The Clerk added that as six years had now elapsed, it would be tidier for accounting purposes and reflect Members' intentions, if the loan could be written off and the charge on the property lifted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to arrange the lifting of the legal charge and the redesignation of the loan to a grant as originally intended.

F/23/12) Budget Monitoring Report

The Town Clerk explained a number of variances in the budget monitoring report for April to May 2023. He highlighted in particular the fall in car park income which he felt was probably due to the good weather which traditionally sees people going to the coast rather than town centres.

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

F/23/13) St Austell Library

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced a report from the Library Manager setting out some of the activities organised and planned at the Library. She explained that St Austell Library is still often the busiest library in Cornwall and highlighted the recent successful children's literary festival which it was hoped would become an annual event.

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

F/23/14) 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 commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.

F/23/15) Photocopier

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council's main printer/scanner/copier was nearing the end of its life and recommended its replacement with a new machine (a Xerox Altalink C8145 Workplace Assistant) provided by the Town Council's existing photocopier/printer supplier at a cost of £5,423. He advised that the residual value of the existing machine was £60 to £80 and that the organisation did not want the machine back.

It was suggested that a local community group or charity might like to have the old machine.

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to:

1. Waive the need to seek three quotes in accordance with paragraph 11.1 of the Town Council's Standing Orders to accommodate the purchase of a printer from the Town Council's existing photocopier/printer supplier;

2. Acquire a new photocopier/printer as specified in the report and to offer the existing machine to local community groups and charities.

F/23/16) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 18th September 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.