

**St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership**  
**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 9.45am – Stable Block/TEAMS**

**Attendees:**

**Democratic:** Malcolm Brown (TC), Steve Nott (TC), Deborah George (TC) (TEAMS).

**Voluntary/Community:** Sandra Heyward (Market House), Chris Sampson (Community), Laetitia Mayne (Cornwall College) (TEAMS).

**Business:** Peter Moody (St Austell Print), (TEAMS), Dale Lovatt (St Austell BID).

**Advisors:** Sara Gwilliams (TC), David Pooley (TC), Bill McCardle (TC), Helen Nicholson (CC) (TEAMS), Annette Miller (St Austell BID), Mark Ellis (CC) (TEAMS), Sarah Scoltock (CC) (TEAMS).

**Welcome**

MB welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked HN to introduce Sarah Scoltock (SS) the newly appointed Community Link Officer for St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey Fowey and Lostwithiel Network Area.

SS apologised that she was not at the meeting in person and explained that her background is in adult social care. She advised that she has been in local Government for a couple of decades and looks forward to meeting everyone.

**Apologies for absence**

**Democratic:** Steve Double (MP), Anne Double (CC), Jordan Rowse (CC), Richard Pears (CC).

**Voluntary/Community:** Rev Howard Flint (Holy Trinity), Jonathan Aberdeen (St Austell Arts Centre), Dr Stewart Smith (NHS).

**Business:** John Watkins (White River Place), Mark Lewis (former Town Centre business owner), Miles Lovegrove (Fluid Branding), Neil Woodward (South West Financial Services).

**Advisors:** Louise Wood (CC).

**Minutes of the meeting dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023**

The minutes of the meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

**Matters arising**

The Clerk advised that the Good Growth Team are unable to provide feedback on the unsuccessful bids at the present time.

The partnership expressed their disappointment with this stance and felt that to be successful with future funding bids they need to know why the bids failed.

**Action: Mark Ellis to speak to the Good Growth Team.**

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council's Building Control team have not been in contact following a second request to look at the decaying banner on the Poundland building.

### **Rooftop Garden Project**

The Town Clerk advised that the deadline for tenders to be returned was the 5<sup>th</sup> July and the evaluation of tenders was programmed for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July. There appeared to be a good level of interest with some very professional architects and consortiums having expressed an interest. Several questions have been received on points of detail and four have asked to visit the site. Neil Woodward had kindly shown the interested parties around the site.

A number of tenderers have commented on the budget and suggested that it is very tight and that RIBA 4 status may not be fully achievable within the budget. This is something that will have to be addressed during evaluation. The tender documents provide for consideration of tenders that do not reach RIBA 4 if necessary.

Because the tender exercise is above the Government threshold and will be the subject of greater scrutiny a consultant has been appointed to help with the evaluation process and to ensure sufficient independence.

The Clerk advised that Councillor French is unlikely to be able to undertake the evaluation process now and that an alternative representative from the Town Council was being sought but it may be necessary to proceed with just three evaluation members on the panel.

### **High Street Task Force**

The Town Clerk advised that Cornwall Council had some time ago nominated St Austell as a Town suitable for assistance from the High Street Task Force. He explained that the High Street Task Force is a Government body which calls upon experts in town centre regeneration to support towns across the country. A representative of the task force will visit St Austell next week and meet with a small number of Cornwall Council officers, the Town Clerk and Councillor representatives for a walkabout in the town centre and a short meeting to discuss the town centre and how the Task Force might be able to help St Austell. It is anticipated that there will be a wider workshop at a later stage at which partnership members will have an opportunity to input into the work of the task force. It is hoped that this will provide reassurance with regard to the improvement plan developed and potentially add support to applications for funding.

### **Levelling Up Fund**

The Town Clerk advised that there had been one more meeting with Cornwall Council officers and Newquay representatives but not a lot of progress.

Matthew Vowels was looking into the potential to create student accommodation at High Cross Street, and it is hoped to progress ideas for the site subject to firming up the true demand for student accommodation. The Clerk advised that it was still not certain when an announcement on the next round of levelling up funds would be made but there is a rumour that it might be before the parliamentary recess for summer in July 2023.

### **Town Council update**

The Clerk advised that additional funding had been agreed by the Town Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee for security guards to keep up the battle against anti-social behaviour. He advised that the security guards are working very effectively and were welcomed by the Police.

The Clerk advised that he had received updates from Cornwall Council's property team which suggested that the Penwinnick Road site would pass to Treveth in July, that 70 plus units of extra care development is proposed at Blantyre/Karenza and the planning of the White River Place office accommodation was proceeding.

The Clerk advised that Kingsley Developments had briefed the Town Council's Planning and Regeneration Committee about proposals to provide housing and a small commercial unit on the sites at Higher Trewhiddle previously earmarked for commercial use. The Clerk advised that the Garden Festival organised by the BID had gone well on Saturday and that the guided tours of the Townscape Heritage Scheme properties had proved very interesting. The attention to detail and quality of the workmanship on those properties helped by Townscape Heritage funding was excellent.

EV charging points are now in Priory Car Park and look impressive but are not connected. It is hoped to get an update on the go live date shortly.

Bill McCardle provided an update on grant bids to GWR for public realm work at the station, a health and wellbeing bid for funding for sports equipment at Truro Road Park and the timescales for the next round of rural prosperity fund and community levelling up fund applications. He advised that he had also helped the BID Manager with recruiting for the Garden Festival.

### **Cornwall Council update**

Mark Ellis provided an update on the refurbishment of the General Wolfe. Corserv Facilities Ltd are the registered owners of the property and have received funding for its refurbishment. A stakeholder group to inform the refurbishment has been proposed and it was suggested that the partnership would be an ideal stakeholder group. It was hoped that the re-development could reflect the vision for the areas around the General Wolfe in the Masterplan.

It was **AGREED** that the partnership would act as the Stakeholder Group for this refurbishment.

*\*\*LM left the meeting\*\**

Mark Ellis advised that looking ahead he had started giving thought to the Carlyon Road area and would welcome input from the partnership in due course to the re-development of the site. Ecological surveys of the site had been obtained and topographical and infrastructure surveys were being arranged. He advised that there had been changes to the NHS capital funding strategy but it was understood that the Doctors were still lobbying for funding to develop a central health hub.

Peter Moody referred to the traffic on Bodmin Road and suggested strongly that improved signage is required as a matter of urgency to discourage large vehicles from using the road.

**Action: Helen Nicholson/Sarah Scoltock to speak to Highways Officers.**

Helen Nicholson advised that the majority of funding for the complementary measures in the A30 link road project had been deleted due to cost increases but that plans were being developed to review the St Austell Transport Strategy and it might be possible to address this issue through that process.

The Chair asked that the partnership be given an update on the timetable and plans to review the Cornwall Local Plan.

**Action: Mark Ellis to obtain an update on the Cornwall Local Plan.**

### **Financial Update**

The Town Clerk advised that the Phase 1 budget for the Town Vitality Fund had now been fully committed but that it was hoped to find funding to progress the student accommodation work.

### **Education Report**

Chris Sampson and Malcolm Brown led the group through the recommendations and the following actions were agreed:

1. Establish a St Austell Skills and Education Group to bring together the key local players to better share knowledge and expertise. Also to better communicate training and educational opportunities that meet the needs of the town centre, businesses and the local community. **Cornwall College, St Austell be asked to review and, if appropriate, lead on this.**
2. Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) to continue improving links with the St Austell Business Improvement District (BID) to further develop the school, skills, work strategy. **Councillor Brown to take this matter forward with Mr Geoff Brown, Chair of CELT.**
3. Ensure ongoing engagement with young people from schools and Cornwall College St Austell in the revitalisation of St Austell town centre,

incorporating the key ideas from their projects. The partnership to consider the views of young people whenever appropriate.

4. Create a young persons forum under the auspices of St Austell Town Council to enable ongoing input to the revitalisation of St Austell town centre, possibly through a virtual forum. Town Clerk to ask Young People Cornwall to build upon their work undertaken to date to create a young persons forum for St Austell.
5. Provide space for exhibition and display for showcasing learner work from schools and college. Possibly, utilising the Market House, Old Eden café or empty shops. Sandra Heyward to raise with the Market House Board.
6. Explore options for increasing indoor and outdoor public space within St Austell town centre which can be used for events and public performances. This matter is integral to the Masterplan work undertaken.
7. Continue to develop St Austell Library as a community learning resource and help address "digital exclusion" through the increased provision to the public of internet abled computers, support and guidance. The Town Clerk to write to Cornwall Council expressing the partnership's support for retaining sufficient public access computers and improving the quality and connectivity of the public computers, staff computers and Wifi in the building.
8. Quantify the demand for Higher Education student accommodation in the town centre and the feasibility of creating student accommodation. The Town Clerk to continue discussions with Cornwall Council.
9. Explore the potential for the provision of adult education in town centre premises. Helen Nicholson/Sarah Scoltock to seek clarification that Cornwall Council still intend to re-locate their adult education function to White River Place.
10. Investigate the viability of pre-school/nursery provision in the town centre. Annette Miller and Dale Lovatt confirmed that there are two pre-school/nurseries operating close to the town centre already and that further provision could be provided if the business case existed, and providers approached either the BID or town centre landlords.
11. Explore opportunities for the creation of A' level sixth form provision in St Austell Chris Sampson advised that this is aspirational and was unlikely to happen in the short or medium term.

The Chair thanked Chris Sampson and Bill McCardle for their work with regard to education and young people.

### **St Austell Torchlight Carnival**

Sandra Heyward provided an update on the work of the carnival committee. She advised that the committee had lost a number of members and was now very small. She advised that they are having difficulty identifying suitable venues for the start and finish of the carnival following the closure of the Penwinnick Road offices and the commencement of works at the college.

Members discussed potential solutions but were unable to identify a practical alternative.

### **Any Other Business**

PM thanked all those involved with the reduction in ASB in the town centre for their hard work.

Councillor Nott enquired about Store 21 as it is now very poor condition. Annette Miller advised that she had screened the windows but at the current time the landlord cannot be persuaded to undertake further works to the property.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 (since changed to Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August to accommodate the Cornwall Councillors).