

St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership
Tuesday 1st August 2023 at 9.45am – Stable Block/TEAMS

Attendees:

Democratic: Malcolm Brown (TC), Steve Nott (TC), Crystal Pearce (Mayor of St Austell) (TC).

Voluntary/Community: Chris Sampson (Community).

Business: Peter Moody (St Austell Print), Mark Lewis (former Town Centre Business Owner) (TEAMS), Miles Lovegrove (Fluid Branding), Neil Woodward (South West Financial Services).

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

Welcome

MB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Sarah Scoltock the newly appointed Community Link Officer for the St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey, Fowey and Lostwithiel Network Area who advised that she was trialling Cornwall Council's new hybrid meeting software (Owl). For the benefit of Sarah, everyone at the meeting introduced themselves.

Councillor George

Councillor Brown advised of the sad passing of Councillor Deborah George who was also a member of the partnership. He advised that in the relatively short period of time she had been a Councillor she had become popular with the other Town Councillors and, as expected, spoke very passionately about disability and social issues. Councillor Brown advised that the Town Council would be paying tribute to Councillor George at their meeting in September.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Councillor George.

Apologies for absence

Democratic: Steve Double (MP), Anne Double (CC).

Voluntary/Community: Rev Howard Flint (Holy Trinity), Jonathan Aberdeen (St Austell Arts Centre), Dr Stewart Smith (NHS), David Atkinson-Beaumont (Cornwall College), Sandra Heyward (Market House).

Business: John Watkins (White River Place)

Advisors: Louise Wood (CC), Dale Lovatt (St Austell BID), Bill McCardle (TC).

Councillor Brown welcomed Councillor Crystal Pearce, Mayor of St Austell, to the meeting and advised that she had been asked by the Clerk to attend partnership meetings until the vacancy left by Councillor George has been filled.

It is anticipated that this appointment will be made at the September Town Council meeting.

Vacancies

Councillor Brown advised that there are currently two Community vacancies on the partnership following resignations from Rev Howard Flint and Jonathan Aberdeen. It was suggested that a further representative from the church would be welcome, particularly as Mr McCardle is currently discussing potential funding streams with the church for improvements to the church grounds.

Action: It was AGREED that a letter should be sent to Holy Trinity Church seeking a replacement for Rev Howard Flint to sit on the Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership.

Action: It was FURTHER AGREED that a letter of thanks should be sent to Rev Howard Flint thanking him for his partnership support and to wish him well for the future.

Councillor Brown advised that Mr Aberdeen is willing to provide advice on festivals/events but would prefer not to be a member of the group.

Action: It was AGREED to speak to Sandra Heyward about a replacement for Mr Aberdeen at the next meeting.

Action: It was FURTHER AGREED that a letter should be sent to Mr Aberdeen to thank him for his contributions.

Minutes of the meeting dated 27th June 2023

The minutes of the meeting on the 27th June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Rooftop Garden Project

The Town Clerk advised that ten tenders were received of which eight were validated and put forward for evaluation. The evaluation panel comprised of Councillor Malcolm Brown, Peter Moody and Chris Sampson and took place over 1.5 days. The evaluation panel unanimously agreed the preferred tenderer and the Town Council's consultant spent half a day with the panel to assist with the moderation process. The Clerk explained that there was a 10 day challenge period which had to be extended by 2 days due to a last minute challenge from one of the unsuccessful tenderers. The Clerk confirmed that the challenge was resolved, and Hayhurst Consultants and Co will be formally appointed as soon as possible.

Councillor Brown, Mr Moody and Mr Sampson all confirmed that they were extremely happy with the evaluation process and the advice received and that the preferred contractor stood out from the others.

The Clerk added that Hayhurst and Co have worked in Cornwall and appear to have a good understanding of the culture and economics of St Austell and the right experience to produce what is required.

The Clerk advised that Mr Nicholls and Mr Thorne are coming to St Austell on Friday to discuss the contract, project details and timescales with him and then meet with Mike Coles and Neil Woodward because of their roles in relation to the site.

Arising from discussion, the Clerk confirmed that he would encourage the consultants to meet with the partnership and Town Council as soon as possible and that the project completion timescale is January/February 2024.

The Clerk added that a condition of funding is that all media releases must be approved and issued by Cornwall Council. It is anticipated that a media release will be issued within the next few weeks.

It was AGREED to endorse the process and proceed as explained by Town Clerk.

High Street Task Force

The Clerk advised that the visit by the Government's High Street Task Force was postponed and that he is waiting to hear from David Rodda about a new date. It is anticipated that the full partnership will not be involved in the initial discussions but will have an opportunity to input to the process.

Levelling Up Fund

The Clerk advised that the Round 3 Levelling Up Funding was not announced as widely anticipated before the summer recess of Parliament and no further progress has been made during discussions with Cornwall Council and Newquay Town Council. The common theme for both towns is still regarded as the mid Cornwall Metro and the areas around each station which might include facilities for students.

Metro Project

Mr Ellis advised that he is working with the project team on the Mid Cornwall Metro Project which is split into two elements:

1. Heavy engineering workstream (signalling/new platforms) (Network Rail)
2. Active Travel workstream (station enhancements along the route) (Cornwall Council)

Network Rail has received Government approval for their element of the funding bid. Cornwall Council is hoping to get Cabinet approval in September for a business plan and to submit a bid to the Government for Levelling Up Funding for their part of the project.

Town Council update

The Clerk advised that in recent weeks there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour in the town centre which has coincided with an increase in temporary housing placements in the town.

Young People Cornwall has confirmed that they would be happy to be involved in any future projects/consultation that the partnership feels their input would be beneficial.

The Penwinnick Road site has been transferred to Treveth who have agreed to enhance the security of the site with hoarding and additional Heras fencing. The Town Council will be consulted on plans for the site in due course.

Mr McCardle is working with Holy Trinity Church to identify suitable funding for improvements to the church grounds and is waiting the outcome of his bid to GWR for public realm works at the station. He is also having conversations for Cornwall Council regarding Community Levelling Up Funding.

The Clerk advised that a planning application relating to the college new build is due to be considered at the Town Council's Planning & Regeneration Committee on the 21st August 2023.

Councillor Pearce left the meeting

A discussion ensued with regard to the increase in temporary housing in the town centre, the re-opening of the Eastbourne Road premises and the communication between housing providers. Annette Miller advised that the security guards are assisting an increasing amount of people with mental health and welfare needs.

Mr Ellis outlined the difficulties that Cornwall Council is facing with regard to the exponential increase in the demand for housing since 2019 and the re-opening of Eastbourne Road by Homegroup. He acknowledged the Partnership's concerns and confirmed that Cornwall Council's Housing Team are reviewing the points raised by the Clerk.

Councillor Brown advised that the Town Council's Planning & Regeneration Committee at their last meeting had agreed to object to GWR's proposal to close ticket offices and has responded to the survey accordingly. The partnership agreed to support the Town Council's objection.

Action: It was AGREED that the Town Clerk should respond to the GWR survey on behalf of the Partnership objecting to the proposals.

Cornwall Council update (Mark Ellis)

Councillor Brown thanked Mr Ellis for his response on the timescales for reviewing the local plan. Mr Ellis added that due to the uncertainties surrounding the planning white paper, it is unlikely that work will start on the local plan until the middle of next year at the earliest.

Mr Ellis confirmed that Cornwall Council is looking at the original housing plan for St Austell and will answer concerns regarding the increase in temporary accommodation placements in due course.

Mr Ellis advised that responsibility for Penwinnick Road has been passed to Treveth and suggested that they are invited to a future partnership meeting to discuss their proposals for the site.

The General Wolfe building is owned by Corserv Facilities Ltd and following a successful funding bid it is earmarked to be refurbished and brought back into use as housing.

The St Austell Town Centre Revitalisation Partnership will be used as a consultative forum. It is hoped that the project will include some public realm works and possible highway improvements as identified in the masterplan. He confirmed that Cornwall Council's strategic transport team are looking at these issues.

Mr Ellis confirmed that Carlyon Road has been identified as a possible location for a health and wellbeing hub which it is thought could complement the new college campus and football ground projects.

Mr Ellis drew the partnership's attention to the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Funding and invited expressions of interest.

Action: Mr Ellis to send a link to the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Funding to the Town Clerk.

Arising from a question, Mr Ellis advised that he was unsure about the latest position with regard to the White River Place offices but as far as he was aware the land deal had been finalised and they are still due to open in December 2024.

Sarah Scoltock advised that the A30 link road complementary measures had been scrapped due to an over-spend, but there is a small pot of funding through the Cornwall Council Highways Schemes.

The Clerk added that Treverbyn Parish Council is campaigning for speed reduction measures in Trethowel/Ruddlemoor and that this could be linked in with the partnership's wish to include restrictions on large vehicles onto Bodmin Road.

Peter Moody reiterated the need for signage on the Stenalees roundabout to prevent lorries from entering Trethowel/Ruddlemoor and Bodmin Road.

Action: Sarah Scoltock to liaise with Rachel Tatlow about traffic calming measures and signage as outlined above.

Financial Update

The Clerk advised that the funding received for the Masterplan had almost been spent up and that the next tranche of funding from the Good Growth Fund for the Rooftop Garden Project is awaited.

Any Other Business

SABEF Benches

Councillor Brown thanked Peter Moody and SABEF for the bench installation at Carlyon Road. Annette Miller advised that two benches have been installed in Biddicks Court and one at the church.

Poundland Banner

Following a question with regard to the dilapidated banner on Poundland, the Clerk advised that Bill is struggling to find somebody who will take ownership of it to enable discussions to take place about how it can be replaced. Neil Woodward asked about the left-over funding from the Town Vitality Fund. The Clerk confirmed that there was approximately £55,000 held by Cornwall Council which has been allocated for St Austell but not yet identified for a project.

Action: Town Clerk to liaise with David Rodda at Cornwall Council about potential projects for the £55,000.

Education Report

Councillor Brown went through the recommendations identified at the last meeting and the action taken to date:

1. College not present.
2. Contact with Geoff Brown not yet made
3. Ongoing
4. Contact made with Young People Cornwall. Their commitment to engage with the Partnership and St Austell Town Council agreed.
5. Awaiting feedback from Sandra Heyward
6. Ongoing
7. Wifi upgraded recently. Staff are monitoring its effect.
8. Matthew Vowles chasing consultants.
9. Sarah Scoltock to clarify
10. No further action
11. Long term aspiration

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 29th August 2023. 9.45am at the Stable Block.

Meeting closed at 11.25am.